

The Prioritisation and Development of Accountability in Afghanistan:

A norm development examination of liberal statebuilding

A thesis submitted to the University of Manchester for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in the Faculty of Humanities

2016

Karolina Olofsson

School of Arts, Languages and Cultures

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

Afs	Afghani
AGO	Attorney General Office
ANDS	Afghanistan National Development Strategy
CAO	Control and Audit Office
CSOs	Civil Society Organisations
EU	European Union
GoA	Government of Afghanistan
HoO	The High Office of Oversight
IARCSC	Independent Administrative Reform and Civil Service Commission
IDLG	Independent Directorate for Local Governance
IDP	Internal Displaced People
IOs	International Organisations
IR	International Relations
JCMB	Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board
MEC	The Monitoring and Evaluation Committee
MoF	Ministry of Finance
MP	Member of Parliament
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations
NPM	New Public Management
NPP	National Priority Programmes
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OiC	Officer in Charge
OSCE	Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe
PARI	Principle of Affected Rights and Interests
PPPs	Public Private Partnerships
RTI	Right to Information
TA	Technical Assistance
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
USD	United States Dollar

ABSTRACT

Liberal Statebuilding in post-conflict societies is a very complex, intricate and dynamic task that is often based on liberal assumptions. Critiques argue that local contributions to define democracy and its norms, such as accountability, tend to be limited since local experiences are often perceived by the aid and statebuilding community to predate liberal requirements. Democratic norms are consequently often based on external international legitimacy and intentions rather than on domestic acceptance. In order to explore this further, this thesis critically examines the development of one democratic norm, accountability, in Afghanistan by using field data and applying Sikkink and Finnemore's *Norm Life Cycle* to three accountability characteristics. These map out the norm's legitimacy, its methods and relationship between Afghan citizens and government in order to understand the manifestation of accountability.

The objective of the thesis is to assess whether accountability in Afghanistan was developed as intended by liberal statebuilding between 2001 and 2013. Empirical findings show that accountability did not manifest per the liberal democratic definition since the social and political realities that heavily impact norm development were not incorporated in the statebuilding approach. Combining theoretical and conceptual analysis, the research contributes to the Critical Peace Studies and Good Enough Governance literature and concludes that the liberal statebuilding methodology introduced accountability in a de-contextualised way that deprived it of norm contestation and local legitimacy. The thesis argues that this had both positive and negative effects. Accountability was introduced to a context that could benefit from its existence, but its introduction was done in an inconsistent manner that weakened its domestic conceptualisation by ignoring the link between social action and political power. Moreover the international community's role in promoting accountability in Afghanistan both advanced and hampered the development of the liberal norm. Donors were able to raise accountability's profile in the democratisation process but did so from an inaccessible and unaccountable political space that further removed Afghan citizens from policymaking and politics.

The thesis' application of a norm development lens to statebuilding provides a more in-depth and nuanced analysis to democratisation and one that, I hope, is original. It uses this alternative methodology to engage both with academic debate, and with policy development and implementation. The suggested approach allows for a better insight into the merge between liberal concepts and local contexts as it not only confirms the existence of hybridity or merge, but it also elaborates on its quality and consequences. It further proposes a more emancipatory statebuilding process that moves beyond a top-down vs. bottom-up perspective to a more enfranchised and integrated approach.

DECLARATION

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The journey to complete this thesis has had many unexpected turns and I would like to thank Roger Mac Ginty and Tanja Müller for their advice, guidance and patience. They have helped me improve every step of the way and provided me with the invaluable opportunity to reflect and grow. This work would not have been possible without the kind collaboration of numerous Afghan citizens, civil servants and civil society actors. I sincerely and profoundly thank them for their time, hospitality and feedback, and for helping me understand a reality different from my own. Not only have they contributed to the development of this thesis but they have also enriched my perspective and made me even more aware of my own normative pitfalls. This I will continue to carry with me, and honour in every part of my profession.

Many thanks are also due to the Humanitarian and Conflict Response Institute for its support, as without it I would not have been able to dedicate so much of my time to research. I would also like to thank my fellow PhD colleagues for colouring my PhD experience with a lot of humour, encouragement and support. Their spirit and amazing personalities is something I deeply cherish and value. Thank you for everything!

INTRODUCTION

Contemporary news is filled with bomb attacks in Baghdad, terrorist threats in Western countries, aid worker abductions, air strikes in Syria, and casualties in Palestine, to mention a few. Insecurity and conflict are common in our world and affect two thirds of the planet's population, 4.4 billion people, despite the presence of peace missions and a 'protective' international community (OCHA, 2013). According to Uppsala University (2014), there were 35 ongoing conflicts in 2013; some, like Afghanistan, Sudan and Somalia, have been ongoing for decades without any resolution or peace (GHA, 2014). In 2013 the top three humanitarian aid recipients were Syria, 1.5 billion USD, South Sudan, 865 million USD, and West Bank and the Gaza Strip, 654 million USD (OCHA, 2013). Moreover, 22 billion USD were distributed in humanitarian aid alone, and 33.3 million people were internally displaced (GHA, 2014). Refugee numbers increased to 16.7 million in 2013 and flared up additionally in 2015, with 4 million Syrian refugees (ECHO, 2015). In 2012 Afghanistan and Syria experienced the highest battle-related casualty numbers, 7442 and 7528, respectively (GHA, 2014). Aid workers were also impacted and in 2013, 460 were victims of violent crime resulting in 155 killed, 171 seriously wounded and 134 kidnapped (HO, 2014). Afghanistan, Syria, Sudan, Pakistan, and South Sudan accounted for three quarters of these attacks (Ibid). Yet, despite these high human and financial costs, it is estimated that over 50% of post-conflict states return to violence (Galtung and Tisné, 2009; Samuels, 2005; Del Castillo, 2011).

In an attempt to address these problems and threats to international security, liberal statebuilding has tried to create peace and stability by promoting rule of law, good governance and democratic norms, such as accountability (Pugh, 2005). Practitioners and policy makers tend to focus on problem-solving, institutional and top-down solutions that promote liberal best practices to create state system efficiency (Donais, 2009). Others like Oliver Richmond (2010a; 2012b) and Simon Chesterman (2007) question however the foundation of this liberal approach and its ability to render success. Richmond (2010a) and Shahrbanou Tadjbakhsh (2011) argue that the liberal peacebuilding agenda creates static destinations along technocratic and structural processes that dismiss local agency and resilience. From this critical perspective, donors frequently neglect the domestic political sphere in post-conflict countries and perceive local structures and practices as irrational and problematic, rather than potential sources for solutions (Chandler, 2006). Solution-oriented scholars, on the other hand, contend that while the critical objective is noble one, a more pragmatic approach should be taken. Grindle in Evans (2012:101) argues for example for a Good Enough Governance approach where the West should adopt "a more nuanced understanding of the evolution of institutions and government capabilities and be...explicit about trade-offs and priorities in a world in which all good things cannot be pursued at once". While this does not devalue local agency and beneficiary empowerment, it prioritises a slow institutional development that does not force centuries'

worth of institutional development in a few years but establishes merely minimal conditions for political and economic development (Evans, 2012; Booth, 2011; Grindle, 2007).

Although solution-oriented scholars such as Paul Collier (1999), Derick Brinkerhoff and Ronald Johnson (2008), and other critically inclined minds, view liberal statebuilding from different angles, the problem remains the same. Besides the additional risk it brings to local economies and fund efficiency, statebuilding has not always produced stable democratic states (Paris, 2010). Arguably, the liberal objective of creating democratic states causes an imposition that fuels conflict, as well as peace, and it is within this context that this thesis is situated. Although democracy is emphasised by liberal peacebuilding, it is within statebuilding that it becomes a particular channel for implementation. Therefore, this research has selected one statebuilding element, accountability, as its focus, in order to see how far democracy has manifested as a way of living. Whilst many democratic elements can be identified in structures and systems, accountability, if viewed as a norm, gives a deeper understanding of the democratic presence in people's behaviour and engagement. As norms rely on common social consensus, the selection of accountability presents the opportunity to see how deep this democratic element is embedded in a post-conflict society. In order to narrow this further, this research will examine the development of accountability in Afghanistan, using empirical data, to understand the problems that face liberal statebuilding. More specifically, the overall objective of this thesis is to understand the kind of accountability that was developed through liberal statebuilding in Afghanistan between 2001 and 2013, i.e. Karzai period, to investigate whether the norm was developed according to its liberal conceptualisation. In other words, norm development of accountability will be used to assess the liberal statebuilding's methodology to democratisation. To clarify, this thesis will not question the moral premises of liberal interventions but merely interrogate the effectiveness of its methods. This is a useful area of research, as liberal statebuilding both spends a lot of tax money from donor countries and has the ability to significantly impact the life of people in hosting nations. The specific research questions will be presented later in the methodology chapter.

This chapter will present the motivation and rationale behind this research and is divided into three sections. Section One will present the analytical framework, Section Two will elaborate on the contributions this research aims to make, and Section Three will outline this thesis' structure.

Thesis Framework

The motivation behind this research is personal. As a liberal statebuilding practitioner from 2006 to 2012, in Asia and Africa, one cannot help but at times become disappointed with the lack of progress in developing functioning democratic states, especially when one changes

missions and reflects on the footprint one leaves behind. To see countries engaged in conflict year after year, whether it is in Africa, the Middle East, South-East Asia, or Central Asia, the author questions the usefulness of international presence and whether 'our' work is more beneficial to us than to those we are supposed to assist. Being a member of the liberal statebuilding world makes it difficult however to gain perspective and this research is the author's attempt to take a few steps back, gain impartiality, and look at the problem from a different angle in search of answers. Does liberal statebuilding succeed in recreating the liberal norms it advocates, does it consciously create hybrid versions, or is it flexible enough to adjust to local conditions? In other words, the thesis will try to critically examine a component of liberal statebuilding, accountability, by comparing what it ought to create, per a liberal conceptualisation, with what it actually manifests by using primary data collected in the field. It is important to emphasise that although the study of accountability manifestation is interesting in its own right, this thesis will focus on comparing empirical data to a 'fixed' liberal conceptualisation of accountability to determine whether liberal statebuilding was capable of rendering the results it set out to do, i.e. critically questioning the methods that are applied in liberal statebuilding rather than debating its purpose and ethics. This allows the utilisation of norm development to assess liberal statebuilding *methodology* in a more concise manner since it will not only unpack *what* is there, i.e. accountability, but also *how* it came to be that way.

In order to expand on the thesis rationale and framework, this section is divided into four parts. Part one discusses the academic debates surrounding liberal peace, Part two presents the rationale behind democratic norms, Part three justifies the role of accountability, and Part four explains the selection of Afghanistan as the case study.

Contesting Liberal Peace

As explained later in the methodology chapter, this research covered a wide range of literature in order to identify the right academic tools for this thesis. In order to dissect the development of accountability in Afghanistan, this research adopted an innovative approach to analyse its data. Therefore this thesis is a bit unconventional and will not provide the wider literature review that is normally present in PhD theses, as the unusual combination of norm theory, accountability and peacebuilding literature made it impossible to present all the reviewed literature for all of these disciplines due to word limits. Instead, specific literature streams were unpacked to provide the reader an understanding of the building blocks that were used for the analytical framework used in this study. Whilst this might deprive the reader from a broader academic debate, it hopes to provide a more in-depth understanding of the interaction between norm development and statebuilding. The literature presented in this thesis grapples with the below settings.

After the attack of the Twin Towers in New York in September 2001, the US gave particular emphasis to state failure due to al-Qaeda's presence in Afghanistan. The Taliban regime refused to collaborate with the US at the time and failing states quickly became identified as a potential threat to Western 'civilisation' (Lansford, 2003; Krasner & Pascual, 2005). In 2004 the US created a statebuilding department, *Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization*, and in March 2005, the OECD produced the 'Principles for Good International Engagement in Fragile States' focusing on statebuilding (Chandler, 2006). Addressing the problems of failing states was the flavour of the decade and many western countries perceived them as unable to manage socio-political problems that could spill outside their borders. Francis Fukuyama (2004:ix) identified statebuilding as a solution and claimed it "is one of the most important issues for the world community because weak or failed states are the source of many of the world's most serious problems, from poverty to AIDS to drugs to terrorism" (Quoted in Chandler, 2006:3). Stability and peace would thus be generated through economic and administrative reforms that would sustain the democratic values of accountability, integrity and transparency (Joshi *et al*, 2014). Leading aid agencies, international financial institutions and leading states in Europe and North America, from now on referenced as the 'West', consequently, identified both the problem, state failure, and how they were going to 'fix' it, i.e. statebuilding.

The problem/solution equation was identified within the same Western liberal conversation. The role of non-Western countries to address the situation was absent since they were categorised as part of the problem (Richmond, 2010a). However after a "steady expansion of democracy-building programs around the world, a growing number of governments are starting to crack down on such activities [...] [some] have begun to publicly denounce Western democracy assistance as illegitimate political meddling" (Carothers, 2006:55). The voice of the south, or the voice of those affected, is often restricted from the international policy dialogue held, for example, by the UN Security Council, OECD and the G7. Although efforts have been made to remedy this segregation by adding rotating and additional members, such as under the New Deal initiative, political power is still primarily held by the traditional western powers (High Level Forum, 2011). This thesis wants to see how statebuilding is perceived by those who have to live it. By taking the case of accountability in Afghanistan, it wants to explore how people experience the statebuilding process by using empirical data in order to compare it with the liberal democratic conceptualisation. What is clashing/missing/overlapping? Although technical answers to these questions are easy to identify, the deeper denotations are still elusive. For example, although the structural framework for democracy, or accountability, might be present through technical procedures, such as elections, the essence of these concepts might be missing. While some scholars might argue that this type of study is redundant since they perceive the development of accountability in countries like Afghanistan unproductive, the

author would like to argue that although the presence or absence of democratic norms in 'post-conflict' countries are anecdotally recorded, it is the evolution and elements of change that provide a deeper insight into norm development in liberal statebuilding. The thesis will therefore combine theory and empirical data to go beyond the black and white slogan of a two-dimensional contestation that liberal norms are absent/present, to a more nuanced explanation of the interaction between diverse social forces where an intricate patchwork of norm development can be observed. The thesis is ultimately not interested in simply confirming or denying the presence of accountability in Afghanistan, but will rather dissect the norm to explore its normative evolution.

Nevertheless, the workability of liberal statebuilding becomes crucial for both political and financial reasons. On one side, the West's prioritisation in promoting liberal peace has redirected funding and political attention to post-conflict countries, and it is essential to understand whether it delivers what it sets out to create. In this case, 'successful' liberal statebuilding would be interpreted as a liberal mission that is capable of honouring its policy commitments and creating accountability per its liberal democratic definition. This will be further discussed in chapter one.

Statebuilding Through a Normative lens

Although research has examined the impact of liberal interventions, many areas regarding its methodology remain unstudied. Isomorphic mimicry, "the ability of organisations to sustain legitimacy through the imitation of the forms of modern institutions but without functionality", is a rather common phenomenon in statebuilding (Pritchett *et al*, 2012:9). There are technical answers to this, like insufficient consultation, no domestic backing or legitimacy, inadequate capacity or culturally insensitivity, but what lies underneath these descriptive answers (Andrews, 2013)? It is easy to establish a structure, but to create its essence, its soul if you wish, is a rather complicated matter, so complicated that practitioners often leave it unaddressed since they would not know how to start. This is not a statement regarding individuals' will or interest, but rather, a reflection of the technocratic and institutional environment in which they operate. The institutional approach that has dominated liberal interventions up to now emphasise so much on the structural role of the state that alternative solutions are often crowded out of programming (Lemay-Hebert, 2009). Whilst the moral and ethical implication of the liberal agenda is hotly debated, this study recognises that statebuilding *is* taking place and tries to address what exists within the existing political environment. Therefore, this research focuses on the *methods* of statebuilding and not on the *idea* of it. To accentuate, the purpose of this thesis is not to debate the purpose or ethics of liberal intervention but merely to interrogate the effectiveness of its methods.

In order to assess the workability of the liberal statebuilding's methodology, a normative approach was chosen for the purpose of this study since norms shape interest and action. The beauty with norms is that they are inherently consensual and cannot be *forced* upon an individual, which decreases the possibilities for liberal imposition. A normative approach "addresses issues obscured by approaches that treat interests exogenously: it focuses attention on the ways in which interests change. Since norms are socially constructed, they evolve with changes in social interaction. Understanding this normative evolution and the changing interests it creates is a major focus of a constructivist research program" (Finnemore, 1996:155). Although norm theory, thus far, has not been applied to statebuilding, the author believes it can provide an interesting angle to understand the challenges in generating the essence, i.e. norms, of democratic structures. This would be beneficial, both for academics and practitioners alike, since it would move the conversation from *what* needs to be developed to *how*. This innovative approach, hopefully, could move the conversation from bottom-up and top-down, or local vs. external, to a more nuanced understanding of how liberal statebuilding interacts with local realities. In the case of Afghanistan, this thesis will examine the development of accountability to see how the liberal agenda has cultivated Afghan endorsement to develop the democratic norm by using Finnemore and Sikkink's Norm Life Cycle. This norm development lens helps to unpack the nuances between the emergence, acceptance, and institutionalisation of accountability, so as to provide a deeper insight into the link between social practices and political action. Thus distinguishing between the structures and the essence of accountability and providing a deeper insight into the 'success' of liberal statebuilding.

Dissecting Democratic Accountability

A major component of liberal statebuilding is democratisation and although it would have been interesting to understand the entire process, it is simply too large to be covered in a doctoral thesis. The focus on one single democratic element, namely accountability, has facilitated the research and allowed for a deeper analysis of the empirical data collected by the author in Afghanistan. Accountability has become a very popular tool to create legitimacy of democratisation and is one of those elements that cannot be pinned to structure. For example, although transparency and right to information contribute to accountability, they alone do not constitute it. Accountability, unlike most governance concepts, requires a moral community to uphold it (Dubnisk, 2002). It is a term that solicits the consent of participants and is a clear example of a democratic 'essence'. Due to its characteristics and value to the democratic process, it has been selected for the purpose of this study. Nevertheless, this thesis hopes that the case study of accountability can contribute to a wider democratisation debate. This will be further elaborated in the conclusion.

Accountability is frequently associated with transparency, trust and efficiency, but lacks a clear conceptualisation (Mulgan, 2003; Shah, 2007). Nevertheless it is a Western concept, as discussed in chapter two, and has some fundamental characteristics that will be selected for the purpose of this study. Accountability is however traditionally viewed as a relationship between two actors where one can hold the other accountable for their actions (Bovens, 2007). Unlike responsibility, accountability implies a negotiated exchange of power where an actor willingly submits himself or herself to scrutiny in exchange for resources (Mulgan, 2003). These resources can take a financial or political form. The emergence of neoliberalism in the public sector has impacted government operations and processes, which have introduced marketisation into accountability practices (Romzek, 2000). The emphasis on market choice and output clashes with the political conceptualisation of accountability as it diminishes citizens' political rights by treating them merely as customers with monetary power. Subsequently, administrative reforms, democratic practices and bureaucratic structures have muddled up the concept, making it an interesting term to 'export' as part of statebuilding. Therefore, this research will examine accountability thoroughly in chapter two to create a conceptual framework that outlines its liberal democratic definition in order to assess the liberal statebuilding's ability in creating accountability per its characterisation.

The Case of Afghanistan

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, fragile states and conflicts have captured the attention of leading countries, resulting in political and financial investment through liberal statebuilding. Afghanistan has been one of the biggest aid recipients in the last decade (WB, 2013). Due to its role in 9/11, Afghanistan was considered a main threat to international security, and considerable funding was channelled to the country in an attempt to appease the conflict and create stability. In 2011 Afghanistan was the main ODA recipient and received 6.7 billion USD, a consecutive increase from the last three years (WB, 2013). The United States has been the biggest donor and gave, for the same year, 2.7 billion USD for economic assistance and 8.43 billion USD for military operations (USAID, 2011). Together with Iraq, Afghanistan has been the top recipient of US funding for the last decade. Due to its prioritisation in the international agenda and the heavy presence of a liberal statebuilding endeavour, Afghanistan was deemed an excellent choice for the purpose of this study. While some would perceive intrinsic difficulties of promoting liberal norms in countries like Afghanistan, thus unsuitable for this study, the author would like to go beyond the current assumptions about post-conflict countries and explore potential norm evolution as such a process and social change occurs well before the actual manifestation of a full-fledged liberal norm. Moreover the scope of the research has also been limited to 2001-2013 to only cover the period impacted by liberal statebuilding. Moreover, the author had previously worked in the country for three years, the latest post as the Ministry of Finance Transparency and Accountability Adviser, and was familiar with its terrain,

population, culture, and statebuilding context. This facilitated the field research enormously as she was capable of moving across provinces, accessing interviewees, monitoring the security situation, and organising logistics without major complications. Additional information on the field research is given in chapter three.

Contribution to Knowledge

Having outlined the rationale behind this research, the following section will situate this thesis' work within two specific fields in order to highlight the areas in which it seeks to make a contribution. Whilst the author recognises the need to contribute to knowledge and advance research in order to improve our understanding of statebuilding, she also recognises the need to be practical and influence policy to improve statebuilding practices. This section is therefore divided in two parts: 1) Contribution to academic literature, and 2) Contribution to Policy.

Contribution to Academic Literature

Since the thesis examines the development of accountability in liberal statebuilding, the literature of Critical Peace Studies fits nicely within its discourse as it criticises the liberal agenda for neglecting local forms of resistance, agency and bypassing the 'local'. The work of Roger Mac Ginty (2006; 2012a; 2012b), Oliver Richmond (2009a; 2009b; 2010a; 2010b; 2012a; 2012b) and Volker Boege (2008; 2009a; 2009b) has contributed to this debate by unpacking power and interrelations dynamics to provide a deeper understanding of peacebuilding. Critical Peace Studies criticise the liberal peace of being linear, top-down, technocratic and institutionally oriented. It claims that the overreliance on Western knowledge disdains local experiences by judging them as irrational and problematic (Donais, 2009; Björkdahl and Höglund, 2013; Barnett, 2006). Thus, statebuilding occurs outside of the very political sphere that is supposed to sustain it (Chandler, 2006).

A particular line of thought in Critical Peace Studies is the idea of hybridity, the merging of two or more entities into a new identity through negotiation, following no particular hierarchy (Easthope, 1998; Mishra & Shirazi, 2010). Hybridity is usually referred to when a western concept merges with traditional practices and creates a third new identity. While this thesis will not conceptually debate Hybridity, it will analyse empirical data through norm development to help identify the depth of accountability by unpacking the connection between the liberal democratic conceptualisation of the norm and its actual manifestation. In other words, it will compare the accountability that ought to exist, as intended by the liberal statebuilding, with the one that actually prevails and assess its relation to one another to understand its mergence, detachment or contestation. Whilst Hybridity allows for the identification of new practices, it does not cover the quality of these mergences since it does not critically assess the new identity. This research aims therefore to strengthen the analytical capabilities of Hybridity by

providing a more nuanced understanding of the 'merge' through a norm development approach.

Contribution to Policy

The Good Enough Governance argument mentioned earlier in this chapter advocates for a better analysis of domestic states' strengths and weaknesses in order to prioritise institutional changes to generate minimal conditions for economic and political progress. Technical assistance, whether by the World Bank, DfID, USAID or other donors, often focuses on procedural developments. Practitioners therefore consider issues of timing, harmonisation, capacity, volume, quality and structure, important. Questions, such as what comes first, what should link with what, what is needed to make it operational, and do we have the capacity, are but a few of the questions with which a practitioner often deals. The work of Merilee S. Grindle (2004; 2007; 2011), Mark Evans (2012) and David Booth (2009; 2011a; 2011b) tries to address this by minimising the Good Governance agenda to local institutional conditions. Whilst this decreases the pressure of statebuilding, it still does not provide guidance for the prioritisation of this minimalist process. This research aims therefore to help the prioritisation process by providing a better understanding of local engagement with external norms and by identifying norm development characteristics that can contribute to organic growth of democratic norms. This can help policymaking as it suggests an order for human, capacity and financial investment.

To summarise, this thesis aims to take an innovative approach to liberal statebuilding by assessing its methodology, using norm development to analyse accountability emergence from 2001 to 2013 in Afghanistan. It uses norm development and accountability literature to construct an analytical framework to analyse liberal statebuilding methodology. The thesis uses empirical data to contribute to the Critical Peace Studies and Good Enough Governance debates, and it concludes by utilising the research findings to suggest a different approach to democratisation as part of liberal statebuilding.

Chapter Outline

Having outlined the rationale behind the thesis and its areas of contribution, this section will now present the following eight chapters.

Chapter 1: Democratic Norms in Post-Conflict Situations

Chapter one situates this thesis in the liberal statebuilding debate and highlights some of the challenges in carrying out statebuilding in post-conflict countries. It discusses issues of trust, power and cultural/normative attitudes in order to understand key elements that might impact the development of accountability in Afghanistan. It further discusses the challenges of

introducing ideological concepts in political cultures and highlights the importance of mutual interaction between structure and agency. This chapter is one of the fundamental components of this thesis since it identifies the analytical lens of this research. It proposes Finnemore and Sikkink's *Norm Life Cycle* of emergence, acceptance and internalisation to understand the development stages of accountability. It also identifies power as a norm transformation element.

Chapter 2: Accountability, a Statebuilding tool?

Accountability is situated in a statebuilding context and recognises that citizen identity, and donor and non-state actor engagement, impact the development of the concept. Considering the difficult conceptualisation of accountability, this chapter carries out a literature review to deconstruct the term in order to create a conceptual framework for this thesis. Since liberal statebuilding applies accountability based on its Western roots, the literature review is based on quite traditional texts in order to provide a solid baseline for what it ought to accomplish per its democratic usage.

This chapter also highlights that the legitimacy of accountability depends on citizen power and is enacted through accountability mechanisms that generate answerability and enforcement through controlling, regulating and participative means. This part of the thesis is also one of the fundamental components as it identifies three accountability characteristics and builds a conceptual framework to define the 'liberal democratic' conceptualisation that is later compared with the empirical data. The characteristics are: legitimacy, government-citizen relationship, and accountability mechanisms. These are then combined with the analytical lens, Finnemore and Sikkink's *Norm Life Cycle*, to illustrate the thesis' analytical framework.

Chapter 3: Methodology

The methodology chapter presents the research framework and strategy, and justifies its selection of a primarily constructivist and qualitative approach. It specifies the research questions and outlines the data collection process, 103 qualitative interviews and 700 survey respondents, in Afghanistan. It explains the sampling process and risk mitigation strategy, and outlines the data analysis process, including codification and data management. The chapter also outlines the ethics and logistics of carrying out this research.

Chapter 4: Statebuilding in Afghanistan

Afghanistan's historical statebuilding process is outlined in order to understand the context in which accountability has been developed. State legitimacy, which traditionally rested on religious, ethnic and monarchic foundations, is unpacked to understand the formation of state power. Consequently this chapter focuses on the country's unfinished statebuilding process,

rather than on accountability, so as to comprehend the dynamics that influence and guide Afghanistan's political culture. This is important as norms become only sustainable by embedding themselves within the existing structure that generates communal consensus. Unpacking issues around citizenship, national unity, power distribution and traditional practices are therefore vital to understand the context that is responsible for sustaining the development of accountability.

Chapter 5: Emergence and Legitimacy of Accountability

Having outlined the analytical framework and the case study context, the thesis unpacks accountability's emergence and manifestation in Afghanistan by going through its policy development between 2001 and 2013. The chapter shows that accountability was primarily promoted by the international community as a solution to poor government performance, rather than intentionally designed to support the democratic process. To honour the rich empirical data gathered in Afghanistan, this and the following chapter also focus exclusively on the research findings. This chapter presents the research findings relating to the legitimacy of accountability to illustrate the norm's relations to unofficial power structures, institutionalisation and external actors.

Chapter 6: Political Dynamics

Chapter six presents the rest of the empirical findings and explores accountability methods and the relationship between Afghan citizens and their government. Citizens' sense of disempowerment, weak political objective and unclear citizenship identity results in limited political action. Issues of mistrust, lack of communication and impunity challenge the manifestation of an effective and meaningful accountability framework. Moreover the chapter shows that accountability manifests differently across government institutions based on individual agendas, visions and resources. Implementation is consequently inconsistent and often incomplete.

Chapter 7: Building Accountability in Afghanistan

This is the most important component of the thesis as it brings together the empirical data presented in the previous two chapters, compares it to the conceptual framework and analyses it by using Sikking and Finnemore's Norm Life Cycle. The chapter shows that accountability in Afghanistan is at its very initial stages of emergence and has not succeeded in embedding itself within the social and political roots needed for communal acceptance. It shows an artificial engineering of an external norm that sidesteps local contestation and socialisation depriving accountability from an organic norm evolution in Afghanistan.

Conclusion:

The thesis concludes by summarising the research and applying the findings to a wider democratisation debate. It shows that ultimately the study highlights a discrepancy between an institutional and essence approach and suggests a more emancipatory process to statebuilding. This entails a more flexible approach that allows local states to negotiate the democratisation process and decide their own methodology.

CHAPTER ONE: DEMOCRATIC NORMS IN POST-CONFLICT COUNTRIES

Theoretically the victory of liberalism after the Cold War was supposed to represent a period when individual liberties were protected from extensive government power (Paris, 2010; Dean, 2002; Merlingen & Osrtauskaite, 2005). Whilst we have witnessed the emergence of neoliberalism, capitalism and globalisation, it is questionable whether individuals have really obtained freedom to determine the fate of their own countries or whether we have been subdued to a liberal lullaby. Whilst individuals and states have been lavished with auspicious liberal promises to acquire development, wealth and prosperity, scholars, such as Paris, Chandler and Chesterman, suggest that the liberal agenda prioritises the establishment of an obedient global order rather than sustainable peace and freedom. For example, in September 2002, the US identified failing states as a threat to American freedoms and national security, and justified peace interventions in non-liberal states to prevent 'illiberal' practices, such as terrorism, weapons proliferation and narcotics trade (Krasner & Pascual, 2005:153; Nuruzzaman, 2009). Academics, such as Tadjbakhsh (2011), Mac Ginty (2010) and Richmond (2011), suggest however that liberal peace interventions prioritise Western solutions over non-liberal states' and fail to generate durable remedies to state failure. It is within this context that this chapter is situated.

Since this thesis aims to explore the development of accountability in Afghanistan, this chapter will explore the challenges to liberal statebuilding in order to identify different elements that impact the establishment of accountability in a non-liberal state. This chapter will also debate the export of democratic norms as part of liberal statebuilding and discuss the thesis's analytical lens, Finnemore and Sikkink's *Norm Life Cycle*, as a means to study the process of *how* accountability is created in Afghanistan. To clarify, the objective of this chapter is not to question the *idea* of liberal interventions but rather to question the *methods* used to promote it.

This chapter is divided into three main sections: Section one, Challenges to Liberal Statebuilding, will discuss the prioritisation of Western experience and culture in liberal statebuilding and its inability to render stable liberal states. Section Two, Creating a Democratic World, will narrow the discussion to democratisation and its difficulties in creating a democratic political culture. Section Three, Democratic Norm Development, will specialise further and present an analytical lens to explore singular democratic norms. This will be applied to accountability further in the thesis.

Challenges to Liberal Statebuilding

The state has a key role in modern societies since it heavily impacts the economic and political situation of a nation. Its fundamental role in monopolising violence, sustaining national

sovereignty, creating political stability, and distributing wealth has emphasised the role of statebuilding in peacebuilding missions (Damico *et al*, 2000; Bratton & Chang, 2006; Bliesemann de Guvara, 2008; Samuels, 2006). Accountability in itself tends to be part of the statebuilding agenda and it is important for the purpose of this thesis to understand the contextual environment in order to identify a suitable analytical lens. This first section is divided in two parts: First, statebuilding will be critically examined to understand the interaction between host communities and external actors, so as to identify key elements that impact the development of accountability in a post-conflict country; second, issues around Western culture will be discussed to assess the prioritisation of liberal concepts in non-Western states. This will help to contextualise the objective of liberal statebuilding to understand the trajectory of accountability promotion.

Critical View of Statebuilding

Despite evolution, this planet has seen its fair share of brutal conflicts in 'modern' time, such as in Rwanda in 1994 and in Kosovo in 1998/9. Long and ongoing conflicts are still present in Sudan, Afghanistan, Somalia, and Iraq, and the world at large still struggles to clarify its responsibility to defend and intervene. After the Cold War, the 'victory' of democracy cleared the space for a liberal march in which individuals were recognised as the basis of society (Dean, 2002; Pugh, 2005; Parekh, 1992). The promotion of the democratic state rests thus on the idea of rational citizens who are self-empowered and who have a duty to participate and make sensible choices (Mac Ginty, 2012; Joshi *et al*, 2014; Chabal, 2012). Citizens become the key in enforcing government behaviour by providing or withdrawing political support through elections (Bratton & Chang, 2002; Dean, 2002). This rational approach was identified by Western nations as a potential remedy for state failure and conflict in illiberal states and encouraged the prioritisation of statebuilding in peacebuilding missions (Chabal, 2012).

Prior to discussing liberal statebuilding, a few words need to be said about the wider peacebuilding framework favoured by international organisations. As part of the post-Cold War initiatives, the then Secretary General Boutros-Gali (1992) presented *An Agenda for Peace* that aimed to solidify peace by supporting existing structures. He claimed that the "foundation-stone of this work is and must remain the State [and that r]espect for its fundamental sovereignty and integrity are crucial to any common international progress" (Boutros-Gali, 1992:4). This realist interpretation of peacebuilding led to a very top-down, institutional and elite-led process in which democracy and statebuilding were core foundations for its operation (PRIO, 2011). Over the years, peacebuilding has evolved in its scope to include conflict resolution, prevention and development. This entails human rights, security sector reform, refugee/IDP (internally displaced person) repatriation, economic reconstruction, state reform and civil society capacity building (Ibid). This massive peacebuilding agenda requires a strategic alignment that is

currently absent due to multiple conceptualisations and visions. However despite that fact that the term lacks a singular agreed-upon definition, it generally refers to an external intervention that aims to prevent the recurrence of conflict.

From a scholarly perspective, Robert Cox (1981; 1987; 1996) distinguishes two channels of thinking, problem-solving and critical theories, to view these external interventions and their contribution to world order. He argues that problem-solving theories are instrumental and view the world as 'objective' in which peace and security are self-given moral goods. Interventions in this case are viewed as discrete and rely on normative assumptions that prioritise peace above war through neo-liberal economics, democratisation and good governance (Bellamy, 2004). Critical theories, on the other hand, contend that problems, as well as solutions, are socially constructed and prone to strategic normative agendas beyond peace restoration. Liberal interventions in this case are seen to promote a form of control and regulation to conform foreign societies to conventional western imperatives (Pugh, 2005). Cox (1987; 1996) argues that in both cases it is a matter of perspective as problem-solving focuses on response and action while critical theory prioritises self-reflection and power relationships. However, it is important to recognise that although problem-solving presents itself as ahistorical and 'neutral', its standardised and technocratic methodology is only "value-free insofar as it treats the variables it considers as objects [...] but it is value-bound by virtue of the fact that it implicitly accepts the prevailing order of its own framework" (Cox, 1981:130). This theoretical distinction helps to understand the potential objective of peacebuilding interventions. The objective of such an initiative helps to clarify the purpose and intention behind liberal norm exportation and influences the outcome of norm development, such as of accountability.

Within the framework of peacebuilding, liberal statebuilding is the primary system that exports the democratic norms relevant to this study. Although statebuilding, similar to peacebuilding, has no agreed-upon definition, in its basic form it entails the establishment, strengthening and reform of state institutions to restore sovereignty (Fukuyama 2004a;b). In the liberal context, this is done through democracy, economic liberalism and political stability. Pugh (2005) claims however that by associating democratic state functionality with peacebuilding, it has encouraged the assumption that a full modern state is required for sustainable peace. Statebuilding in liberal interventions has been influenced by business models and heavily relies on institutional top-down standardised methods (Krasner & Pascual, 2005; Joshi *et al*, 2014; Centeno, 1993; Hagmann & Hoehne, 2009). This has been promoted amongst others by international organisations such as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the UN secretariat in order to maximise efficiency, delivery and marketization (Mac Ginty, 2015; Bliesemann de Guevara, 2010). Arguably this does not address socio-political cohesion and justice but it tries to create 'negative-peace', i.e. absence of war, by delivering a functioning

legitimate state (Lemay-Herbet, 2009; Pugh, 2005). Within this context the consolidation of political and economic practices creates a liberal-democratic notion of peace in which social cohesion is created by establishing an institutional framework for human interaction where democracy is the result of statebuilding rather than the process of it.

From a problem-solving perspective the amalgamation of legal and administrative structures distributes power between the executive, judiciary and legislative, and solidifies institutional performance and state legitimacy (Ogbaharya, 2008; Hohe 2004). However from a critical point of view, top-down methods reinforce existing power dynamics that are likely to be based on centralised, unaccountable and elite-run structures in humanitarian settings, such as in Afghanistan (Mac Ginty, 2015; Dillion & Reid, 2000). Moreover these liberal technocratic methods grant donors power to influence policy and institutional development. This creates a paradox in which “international administrations compromise a fundamental aspect of a political community’s sovereignty by violating its right to self-governance, but do so with the aim of making it sovereign with regard to the relations between state and society” (PRIO, 2011:15-16)

Regardless of position, several studies conducted by authors, such as Rothschild, Cousens, Druckman and Diehl, have shown that liberal interventions have contributed to peace and security. A Human Security Report in 2005 claimed that only 30% of liberal peacebuilding missions had a success rate in diminishing violence (Krause & Jütesonke, 2005). Other successes have been the return of refugees and creation of stable macro-economies (Paris, 2010). Several quantitative studies have shown that liberal interventions can lead to more durable peace and economic development if there is a high level of implementation (Mac Ginty *et al*, 2015; Mousseau *et al*, 2003; Gilligan & Sergenti, 2008). However, from a qualitative perspective, duration does not equal positive peace and critics contend that liberal statebuilding is quite linear and insufficient (Hood & Lodge, 2004; Nuruzzaman, 2009; Galvanek *et al*, 2012). Sustainable results are few and far in between and many post-conflict countries, including Afghanistan, continue to experience turmoil and instability (Call & Cook, 2003; Bliesemann de Guevara, 2008; Paris, 2010; Yannis, 2002; Chabal, 2012).

It is important for the purpose of this study to go deeper into some of the potential problems in creating sustainable results as it will help identify key elements that impact the development of liberal norms, like accountability, in post-conflict countries (Samuels, 2006). Critical scholars, such as Chesterman (2007), Chandler (2006) and Richmond (2010b), have criticised liberal statebuilding for prioritising Western experiences, solutions and institutions, above local and grassroots experiences. For example, Mwenda (2013a) and Ogbaharya (2008) argue that the prioritisation of liberal policies undermines national authority, overlooks informal structures, and simplifies the root causes to state fragility. Institutional and procedural amendments are in this

case considered insufficient, as changes to the political culture are required in order to cultivate trust, tolerance and participation (Inglehart & Welzel, 2003; Samuels, 2006). By viewing statebuilding merely as a technical activity, it removes politics from what is supposed to be a very political process and deprives post-conflict countries the opportunity of defining their own political vision (Chandler, 2006). Ultimately, the structure of a liberal state does not equal a liberal nation, as the presence of liberal structures does not necessarily result in a liberal society. In the West, many citizens and parliamentarians view countries, like Afghanistan, pessimistically since they continue to be 'problematic' despite being 'given' funding, elections and 'freedom'. Blair (2000:32) expresses it eloquently:

"Elections can be fraudulent, parties can foment hostility and conflict, civil society can advocate the destruction of the body politic, the media can become captive of an authoritarian central government of self-seeking elite elements, public meetings can turn controlled puppet shows, formal redress produces can be manipulated by demagogues, and opinion surveys can be doctored to show false results. Just because these mechanisms are in place, in other words, does not mean that they will inevitably conduce to the public good"

So what are the clashes? Why do these structures fail to generate liberal behaviour? Dean (2002) amongst others, claim that the West fails to accept reality as it is and perceives it rather as it wish it to be. For example, instead of accepting that fragile or collapsed states take, amongst others, their authority from wealth, violence, patronage and coercion, liberal statebuilding bases its approach on an unchallenged democratic rationale. Consequently the liberal agenda fails to acknowledge local power structures and social order, and does not truly understand the 'illiberal' state and its relationship to society (Bliesemann de Guevara, 2010; Yannis, 2002; Carmen, 2003). Western actors in this case not only fail to deal with issues, such as community rights or kinship politics, but they also fail to recognise them in the statebuilding process, consequently, compromising domestic state legitimacy (Chabal, 2012; Bliesemann de Guevara, 2010). In the academic literature, Critical Peace Studies particularly argues that liberal statebuilding perceives traditional social and political practices as irrational, conservative and unfit for liberalism (Richmond, 2010a; Brown & Gusmao, 2009; Yannis, 2002; Lewis, 2002; Cohen, 1969). Thus, liberal interventions dedicate very little resources to include traditional governance systems into the formal statebuilding process despite that these might carry strong legitimacy in the society. From this perspective, local practices are perceived as a threat and problem to statebuilding, which ought to be repressed or ignored, rather than built upon (Richmond, 2010b). This is a key point to understand: The use of belittling terms, such as 'irrational', fails to recognise the bonds that link the social and political spheres, and create a binary preference structure in which Western knowledge is considered superior to local experiences. This inevitably impacts the perception, interaction and power distribution between Western and local actors, and the development of liberal norms, as will be discussed later in the thesis.

The liberal statebuilding's perception of the local is particularly discussed and analysed by the Critical Peace Studies literature, which explores local forms of agency and resistance. Chandler (2006:93), for example, argues that liberal statebuilding views "traditional sectional political interests [...] [as] corrupt and self-serving and to privilege private group interests over the needs of the community as a whole". Whilst this might be partially true, this negative perception of the 'Other' creates a justification for external intervention since local solutions are considered problematic. Local decisions are frequently not trusted since they do not coincide with liberal objectives; therefore, the West only supports those who make the 'right' liberal decisions (Joshi *et al*, 2014). Despite the external influence over domestic policy and statebuilding, international donors often argue for local ownership and shy away from assuming roles of accountability (Chandler, 2006). This theoretical argumentation for ownership restructures statebuilding from Western interests to local needs, from foreign to domestic policy, and it emphasises local participation. Whilst good in theory, in reality, it absolves external actors from responsibility over statebuilding outcomes in post-conflict countries (Chandler, 2006). They blur out the distinction between external and internal actors, and raise issues of authority and legitimacy (Bliesemann de Guevara, 2010). Hence, a key point is: Liberal actors do not trust local solutions and, consequently, disempower local agents whilst creating a linear liberal statebuilding path. This is very much the case in developing accountability in Afghanistan, as will be shown later.

Liberal statebuilding, according to Critical Peace Studies, associates itself with an established peace framework and fails to work within a conflict environment (Richmond, 2010a). Besides failing, the weight of liberal statebuilding can also result in unwanted and harmful outcomes (Bliesemann de Guevara, 2008). For example, self-serving individuals can consider statebuilding as a profitable business and pay lip service to become a responsible member of the international community whilst abusing power for personal gain (Bliesemann de Guevara, 2010; Fukuyama, 2004a; Menkhaus, 2007; Chabal, 2012; Sindjoun, 2009; Bratton & Chang, 2006). Research by Pollis (1996) has also shown that elites can wrap themselves in a liberal cloak to access state structures and power in favour of selected groups, rather than for the wider society. Whilst this might give the perception that political power exists in the executive, it actually dwells in the hands of the local elite, and as we will see, this is very much the case in Afghanistan (Ibid). This is a crucial point to understand since it shows that both formal and informal power impact the statebuilding process and norm development. Furthermore the liberal statebuilding's ability to target particular actors depoliticises the population and deprives local citizens of agency by viewing them as victims (Richmond, 2010a). Moreover, local politicians who support the liberal agenda can be perceived as Western puppets, who no longer truly represent the local population, but who primarily dance to a Western fiddler in order to secure funding and international support (Mwenda, 2013b). Liberal statebuilding in aid

dependent countries can therefore be experienced as imperialistic that restrict human agency (Menkhaus, 2007; Chandler, 2006; Paris, 2010).

The imposing presence of the 'West' has been a recurrent theme in the above discussion and merits further elaboration. Before unpacking it further in the next subsection, it is important to mention that little attention has been given to the merging of Western and local rationalities, i.e. hybridity (Nuruzzaman, 2009). Thus far, liberal methods have been discussed in a white and black narrative in which critics contend that liberal statebuilding suppresses local practices. Reality is however far more complex and intertwined. Hybridity, a means to explain this complexity, is the transcendental emergence of an identity that is negotiated and re-established in an in-between space without following a particular hierarchy (Easthope, 1998; Dean & Leibsohn, 2003; Mishra & Shirazi, 2010). Western knowledge merges in this case with local experience and provides significant social legitimacy (Boege, 2008; 2009a;b; Brown, 2009; Clements, 2007). From an empirical perspective, the interaction between international intervention and local practices is fundamental for this research since it will help clarify how accountability gains its legitimacy and merges with the political culture in Afghanistan. Critical scholars have used hybrid political orders as an analytical instrument to open the space for traditional governance mechanisms (Richmond, 2010a). It looks at processes that support or repress grassroots political participation and analyses how public institutions engage with other societal sources of power and authority. In this case, hybrid political order sees the state as one political actor amongst others and tries to understand how political order is deconstructed and reformed based on culture, identity, customary practices, social norms and institutional behaviour (Richmond, 2010a). Whilst hybridity will not be used as an analytical lens for this thesis, since it cannot detail the process of how two entities merge; it nevertheless identifies a vacancy for this research's contribution. On the other hand, Finnemore and Sikkink's *Norm Life Cycle*, to be discussed a bit later in this chapter, can identify transformation elements that can potentially help hybridity break down mergences into deeper detail.¹ In other words, by analysing accountability from a norm development angle, this thesis cannot only identify where accountability merges with local practices but also of what these consist.

To summarise, Western donors use liberal statebuilding as a means to create stability and peace in post-conflict countries but achieve limited sustainable success. Liberal supporters have prioritised Western experience, knowledge and structures since they do not trust national governments to make 'sound' decisions or match the superiority of liberal attainments. 'Local' governance and social practices are perceived as irrational and they have largely been excluded from the liberal statebuilding process. Consequently, political solutions are generally not socially

¹ More information can be found in the Methodology chapter.

founded, and the murky authority and power lines between international and locals further destabilises democratic sources of authority and legitimacy.

Domination of Western Culture

As mentioned earlier, the dominance of Western culture in liberal interventions is palpable. This is however not a new topic. Europe's historical involvement in colonialism or the US' self-appointed policing role has raised resentment in the global south. Disgruntled voices in the late 20th century protested vehemently against the West's promotion of liberal concepts as 'Universal Values' and its disparaging view of non-Western culture (Groenfeldt, 2003; Spiro, 1986). Culture can be a very personal issue after all since it refers to people's beliefs, values and ways of giving meaning to the world (Richmond, 2010a). Therefore, people took it at heart and demanded through the media for the right for non-Western values to be respected and integrated in their own right (Pollis, 1996). The West's industrial, technological and military advancement has separated the West from the rest. Critics suggest that this portrays people with no agency who need rescue and others argue that the 'West's' approach is more a reflection of who they want to be, rather than who they think others are (Said, 1994; Ning, 1997). The judgement of others as inferior has created a bias towards the meaning of civilisation (Herskovits, 1972). This perception also crystallises non-Western cultures in time since they are perceived as static and unchanging, subsequently diminishing and marginalising their relevance (Ibid). In the author's experience, this is particularly prevalent in complex humanitarian settings, rather than development contexts, where local actors have a better platform to engage and negotiate with the international community.

When speaking of culture, it is difficult to compare since no culture is theoretically above the other and they are continuously transforming (Spiro, 1986). In the case of statebuilding, the evaluation of post-conflict countries is, amongst others, relative to the experiences and culture background of the observer (Herskovits, 1972). Ultimately, people's knowledge is biased from the onset and the West has been criticised for being unable to question its own culture by focusing on the 'local' (Richmond, 2010a). "Western commentators and policymakers have difficulty imagining any other form of viable political community than the state as it is understood in the West" (Richmond, 2010:60a). The West's attempt to build states in their own image, as illustrated by Fukuyama's example of 'getting to Denmark', is a reflection of the West's own development stage where it can only replicate what it knows (Finnemore, 1996). Although the West markets liberal interventions as freeing or civilising, critical scholars and southern activists claim they are rather self-interested and self-referential (Jacoby, 2007; Bliesemann de Guevara, 2010; Said, 1994; Etzioni, 1997). The Western utilisation of sanctions, co-optation, shaming and liberal statebuilders has created an inescapable 'global culture' led by Western experiences and values (Moravcsik, 1995; Finnemore, 1996; Said, 1994). Although this

'global culture' fluctuates and is constantly challenged by emerging aid actors, such as India and China, non-Western countries are more often than not conforming to the group code and incorporating Western norms in domestic policy (Boli, 2005; Herskovits, 1972; Bliesemann de Guevara, 2010). Despite the powerful impact of Western culture on non-Western states, the failure of liberal statebuilding suggests however that there are boundaries. Herskovits (1972:71) explained it in the following way: "any people who, by any method, whether by conquest or persuasion, assume that they can cause another group to change its entire way of life, are building policy on a psychological unreality".

Disappointing results from long, ongoing peacebuilding missions in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Haiti and Sudan, should have created self-awareness within the international community and brought into question the West's approach to statebuilding (Lawson, 1998). Although every peacebuilding mission differs and contexts vary, consistency in failures, such as election fraud, questionable representation and corruption, should raise red flags. Western logic is trained to conclude that similar causes bring similar effects, thus require similar treatment (Chabal, 2012). The bottleneck is consequently identified with the 'problem-maker' rather than with the 'solution-giver', avoiding an analysis of failure trends. The West has focused on how statebuilding ought to be, rather than consider what it *could* be, since it views the solution in the same cultural light as it views the problem (Brikerhoss, 2005; DuBois, 1991; Krasner & Pascual, 2005). This is an important point to understand since accountability's flexibility to think outside the box and adjust to 'illiberal' realities will impact its ability to create a common understanding for its development (Chabal, 2012; Herskovits, 1972).

Thus far, the chapter has shown that the immersion and trajectory of liberal concepts, such as accountability, follow an ethnocentric perspective and prioritise Western interpretations rather than local knowledge. The following section will narrow the field of study to democratisation, the statebuilding component largely responsible for exporting accountability to post-conflict countries, and give more insight into the interaction between ideological conceptualisation and political culture. This theoretical discourse is important to understand in order to compare it later with the empirical data from the case study in Afghanistan.

Creating a Democratic World

Liberal statebuilding is a massive endeavour; it encompasses everything from public service delivery, rule of law, privatisation to democratisation. Although the above section contextualises the liberal statebuilding environment in which accountability immerses, it is within democratisation that it manifests. For the purposes of this research, it is important to understand the democratisation process as it illuminates the purpose of accountability in liberal statebuilding. This section is divided in three parts, each unpacking an additional layer to

democratisation. Section one will situate democratisation in the wider statebuilding agenda. Section two will discuss its approach in post-conflict countries, and section three will conclude by discussing the challenges in creating a democratic political culture.

Democratisation and the Spread of Good Governance

Similar to Christian missionaries, liberal states have lobbied non-Western countries to convert to democracy since democracies are thought not go to war with each other due to underlying normative values and institutional constraints (Roberts, 2008; Hehir, 2007). Democracy is presented as a rational choice to good politics and is perceived by some scholars, like Fukuyama, as the final and desired form of human government (Singjoun, 2009; Chabal, 2012). Democracy rests on citizen power and establishes authority through procedures (Habermas, 1996). It safeguards political participation between the government and the public through majority rule, power distribution, accountability and transparency. One of the main advantages to democracy is that it needs to provide reasons behind decisions and gives citizens the ability to question and sanction decision-makers (Zweifel, 2006; Bovens, 2007). Research in the US has found that public officials, for example, are more likely to behave cautiously if they believe they can lose their position in elections (Besley & Case, 1995). Although differences exist between different western nations, overall, the West's attitude towards elections is rather positive as it gives democracy legitimacy through citizen involvement and prevents abuse of power and resources (Dalton, 2000; Penncock, 1952; Gerth & Mills, 2005).

The spread of democracy in the world happened, according to Huntington (1993), in three waves. The final wave started in 1974 and is still on going. After the Cold War democracy was perceived as "the 'transformative power of liberty'" and generated optimism (Mac Ginty, 2015: 27). In 1996 Boutros-Gali continued to outline the ideology's role in liberal interventions in *An Agenda for Democratization*. He heavily emphasised the need for a 'democratic culture' supported by an accountable infrastructure. With the exceptional mention of technocratic solutions, he claims the UN "does not aim to persuade democratizing States to apply external models or borrow extraneous forms of government. Rather, the United Nations aims to help each State pursue its own particular path [nature and timing of democratisation]" (Boutros-Gali, 1996:4). Field experiences have however shown a different reality but these will be explored later in the thesis. Nevertheless, it is worth mentioning that the presence of democratic structures, such as elections, in liberal statebuilding has been found insufficient in creating a democratic culture as legal frameworks alone cannot generate democratic authority (Paris, 2010; Brinkerhoff, 2005).

Democracy and good governance has also received support from other Western actors, such as the World Bank, IMF and OECD. In the case of the latter, good governance is particularly

promoted in post-conflict states in order to create “effective, responsive and accountability public institutions [as] the bedrock of stable societies” and contribute to the liberal statebuilding agenda (Evans, 2012:98; Doornbos, 2001; Nanda, 2006). Good governance in this case becomes the democratic process in which formal and informal institutions guide and restrain socio-political actions and provide an important check on the state (PRIO, 2011). Although governance traditionally stresses the link between the government and the population, the neoliberal influences stretched the concept to entail wider networks and transnational forms of cooperation (Ogbaharya, 2008). For example, in 1997 45 statebuilding components were linked to good governance objectives while in 2002 these had expanded to 116 (Grindle, 2004; WB, 1994). Good governance was now supposed to address everything from national constitutions, anti-corruption strategies and democratic elections to public financial management (Chandler, 2006; Joshi *et al*, 2014).

At the core of good governance however lie the key values of accountability, transparency and inclusiveness, which are promoted through administrative reform (Joshi *et al*, 2014; Nanda, 2006; WB, 1994). Once again, the liberal approach frames good governance through structural and systematic methods that aim to construct governance by depoliticising the hurdles. This allows for a technocratic approach to state capacity and efficiency (PRIO, 2011). Although these methods increase the government’s capacity, and enhance the structural environment to sustain a democratic nation, critics argue that too much focus on the state can facilitate power abuse towards citizens (Grindle, 2007). The apolitical technocratic nature of current liberal methods supposedly deprives hosting countries from political contestation and scrutiny. Democratisation becomes therefore hollow as trust, tolerance and pluralism are often missing. Moreover, democracy relies on an active civic culture that uses information and technology to establish social goods, this however might be challenging in post-conflict countries since war-affected populations tend to be distrustful of political leaders and operate in opaqueness to cope with a volatile environment (Cole, 1973; Fukuyama, 1995; Damico *et al*, 2000; Lewis & Weigert, 1985). Critical scholars also suggest that citizen participation is encouraged through top-down methods without recognising local structures, such as collective identities (Hamieh & Mac Ginty, 2010). Harvey (2005:69) ironically points out that the liberal state sees “itself forced to intervene, sometimes repressively, [to prevent ‘illiberal’ behaviour], thus denying the very freedoms it is supposed to uphold” and allow post-conflict states to define their own sense of democracy. These challenges in ‘constructing’ democracy are crucial to this thesis since it allows us to understand the impediments that face accountability in a liberal statebuilding context.

Similar to Critical Peace Studies, critical governance scholars, such as Grindle (2004; 2007), Evans (2012) and Brikerhoff (2005), claim that the good governance agenda does not take into consideration local realities. Unlike Critical Peace Studies, Grindle (2004:526) takes a rather

solution oriented approach and suggests that governance interventions should recognise the “weak, vulnerable and very imperfect” nature of government institutions in post-conflict countries. She further reasons that political commitment and leadership in illiberal states might be ‘venal’ and practitioners should apply a minimalistic ‘Good Enough Governance’ approach. Rather than an extensive governance construction process, the Good Enough Governance agenda argues for a prioritisation of what, when, and how things should be done in order not to strain local institutions and generate minimal acceptable government performance (Evans, 2012; Grindle, 2004; 2007). Although this agenda suggests that governance should be adjusted to different types of states, it does not provide guidance to the prioritisation process, making it a very subjective approach once implemented. It is within this context that the thesis aims to make its second contribution. This research can shed some light on the development process of a democratic norm in post-conflict countries and provide some insights that can help the prioritisation process. This can be particularly useful for practitioners and policy makers.

This very pragmatic approach adopted by Good Enough Governance has to however also be discussed in its entirety. Chandler (2006), for example, argues that democracy is seen as the end goal of statebuilding, rather than the political process that leads to modernisation and a participatory society. This approach neglects social engagement in political practices and reduces statebuilding to a technical, administrative and institutional process. This separation of liberal statebuilding from domestic politics is primarily based on the West’s perception that “the political sphere is the problem to be addressed, not the sphere where solutions are to be found”, showing again the discrepancies of power and trust between local and international actors (Chandler, 2006:61). The West’s dismissiveness of local experiences portrays democratisation increasingly as “an ongoing process of regulation and international control rather than one of ‘liberation’” (Chandler, 2006:57). This has generated a debate of what should come first, institutionalisation or liberalisation. Whilst scholars, such as Roland Paris, suggest that liberalisation prior to institutionalisation can be harmful, others, such as Huntington, reason that bypassing local politics is counterproductive since external prioritisation weakens the social bonds between citizens and state. This is a key point to remember since accountability is supposed to mitigate the relationship between the population and the government. If these social and political bonds are weakened, it will severely impact the development of accountability in post-conflict countries.

Reliance on Institutional and Technical Approaches

The avoidance of the political has thus resulted in a very ‘neutral’ statebuilding approach where institution building and technocracy are the preferred methods of good governance construction. Technocracy aims to create self-reliance techniques to liberate citizens from pliable bureaucracies by changing the institutional and political structures (DuBois, 1991). This

structuralism philosophy, particularly promoted in the 1980s, believes “structure not only affects the way that people act, [but] it also effects the way they *are*” (Dowding, 1996:42). Technocratic methods, as part of good governance, suggest that a change in structure can create liberal behaviour amongst post-conflict citizens.

Initially, in Weberian states, technocracy was perceived to liberate individuals from authority, subjectivity, irrationality and corruption by making administrative procedures more neutral and by empowering citizens to be self-reliant (Akin, 1977). Technocracy tends to run a government like a business and standardises norms by emphasising indicators, benchmarking and project management (Box, 1999; Mac Ginty, 2012). It is perceived ultimately to be an unbiased approach that focuses on results and efficiency by applying a professional certification process (Bliesemann de Guevara, 2008; Boli, 2005). Its emphasis on efficiency made technocracy a preferred statebuilding method since donors could measure their investment. It was in the 1990s that the UN’s Agenda for Peace officialised technical assistance for statebuilding and democratisation and redirected it to address macro-economic management, public administration capacity and financial accountability (Galvanek *et al*, 2012; Brinkerhoff, 2005). Issues of participation, transparency and accountability were then based on efficiency rather than on relations, political bargaining, trust and dialogue (Bryld, 2000; Shapiro, 2005; Akind, 1977; Centeno, 1993; Dean, 2001; Lewis & Weigert, 1985). This is a key point for this thesis since the method of how accountability emerges, i.e. the way it is created, has a big impact on how it develops.

Again, technocracy’s emphasis on best practices and international standards removes ‘problematic’ domestic behaviour from the liberal statebuilding process (Hamieh & Mac Ginty, 2010). For example, in the case of Afghanistan and Mexico, technocracy is unable to account for traditional patronage network practices and consequently disregards it from the liberal statebuilding process (Centeno, 1993; 1994). This disconnects political ‘solutions’ from the domestic context and brings into question the legitimacy of political norms (Lynn Jr, 1998; Mac Ginty, 2012). Moreover by addressing socioeconomic issues through a ‘rational’ technical equation, it widens the gap between technocrats and citizens, marginalises domestic civil servants and alters power relationships (Centeno, 1993; Dean, 2001; Bailes, 1974; Shapiro, 2005; Akind, 1977). If technocratic solutions are not based on previous domestic practices, success and sustainability become unlikely (Dean, 2001). Despite this, “international experts and bureaucrats [are increasingly perceived to be able to] better govern a country than politicians accountable to the people who have to live with the consequences of their policy-making” (Chandler, 2006:66-67). Western knowledge is thus again prioritised over domestic realities (Cooke & Kothari, 2002). For example, in Mexico in 1998, a Citizen Participation Law was promulgated to create citizen participation in public service delivery through technocratic

procedures. The law however was quite unsuccessful since only 9.5% of registered citizens used their democratic vote to participate in neighbourhood committees (Harbers, 2007). Similar examples can be easily found, including in the case of Afghanistan, and it highlights once again that statebuilding through structures will have difficulties 'constructing' liberalisation without the support of the domestic political culture.

Establishing a Democratic Political Culture

A recurrent theme in this chapter has been the relationship between the 'external' and the 'local'. Primarily how liberal statebuilding has failed to incorporate local practices and domestic politics into the statebuilding process. Due to the role of the state, any influences over its 'construction' will naturally also impact the government's ability to interact with the local population. The few academic voices of the South present in statebuilding and democratisation debates have argued that "the rebuilding of society [cannot be] through radical regime change, but instead use gradual social change to compel regime change" (Xiabo, 2006:no page). As argued earlier, the creation of structure and procedures inside the government has monopolised the statebuilding's attention and reduced its focus from creating a democratic political culture within individuals (Bianchi & Caputo, 2007; Evans, 2012). For example, in South Africa the presence of a strong electoral system and a solid executive-legislative relationship does not equate to accountability since citizens need to embody and enforce the concept for it to normatively exist (Naicker, 2013). Several examples like this can be found and scholars, such as Pye & Verba (1965) and Chandler (2006), claim that a democratic state needs to emerge out of existing social forces. It is ultimately the link between citizens, public institutions, and political parties that gives strength and legitimacy to the state (Brikerhoff & Johnson, 2008; Brown & Gusmao, 2009). Moreover the dismissal of domestic culture and politics can undermine local institutions and lead to subjugation and instability (Paris, 2010, Yannis, 2002; Brown & Gusmao, 2009). The link between ideological concepts and domestic political cultures is crucial for this thesis since it helps examine accountability's 'hold' in post-conflict societies.

Democratic norms, such as accountability, demand voluntary citizen participation. The incorporation of democratic norms in political cultures would not only create democracy in the mind of the individual, or in government structures, but also in the interaction between the two (Pye & Verba, 1965). Leading scholars in political culture define it as "the particular distribution of patterns of orientation towards political objects among the members of the nation" (Almond & Verba, 1963:13). These orientations are created through cognitive, emotional and evaluator behaviour and are based on multiple variables, including social value systems, governance performance, political history and citizenry tradition (Pye & Verba, 1965; Almond & Verba, 1963). While some scholars believe that political culture constrains human action, Durkheim adopts a more constructivist approach and suggests that citizens were both the subject and

object of society, therefore, capable of agency (Shahlin, 1976). Thus, for accountability to successfully develop in post-conflict countries, and generate citizen enforcement, it needs to penetrate and emerge within the domestic political culture. Political culture, in this case, is referred to as the set of attitudes and practices that generate political behaviour in a given society. This includes judgements, beliefs and norms that guide the interaction between citizens and political actors (Pye & Verba, 1965; Anderson, 1975; Arnstein, 2007).

Besides participation, social structures, such as wealth and education, impact political culture. Although statebuilding address the education system and the private sector in post-conflict countries, local dynamics are seldom incorporated as previously discovered. Family structures and education for example are found to impact an individual's ability to be tolerant, open and cooperative (Pye & Verba, 1965). Hierarchical families and authoritarian societies were found to increase individual obedience through coercion and decrease voluntary participation (Ibid). Moreover, higher educated individuals acquired skills that gained them political salience by engaging in political processes (Dalton, 2000). Education and a strong social capital help to develop a participant political culture since citizens increasingly believe in their own political power. Thus, power and agency have the capacity to change political cultures through individual behaviour. Also, the reproduction of political culture occurs as a transaction between agents (Giddens, 1979). It is very questionable whether liberal statebuilding can merge ideological concepts, such as accountability, with domestic political cultures if it continues to ignore the 'problematic local'.

Giddens (1979) further argues that a system cannot be understood unless the reproduction of rules and resources by the very structure that gave them capacity to act are comprehended (Sewell Jr, 1992). In other words, accountability is dependent both on structure and agency to develop successfully in the Afghan political culture. The relationship between action and structure creates both the mean and the outcome of an interaction (Robert & Scapens, 1985). What is interesting with Giddens is that he identifies resources as sources of power that enable citizens to take action and promote structural change (Giddens, 1979; Sewell Jr, 1992). This element of transformation can help understand whether the essence of accountability in Afghanistan manifests per institutional structures or whether it reconstructs through agency and emerges in local structure, i.e. Afghan political culture. In other words, does structure create the content of accountability or does the content create the structure? A black and white answer is unlikely; however by clarifying these two elements, the thesis aims to find a more nuanced understanding of norm development.

It is important at this point to make some important distinctions. Throughout this chapter, key points to understand the development of accountability have been highlighted. These can be summarised into two different groups:

1. *Key elements that impact the development of accountability:*

This chapter has recognised that the interaction between external and local actors is impacted by power dynamics, political culture, distrust and Western imposition of liberal concepts. The development of accountability is therefore likely to be impacted by power, trust and cultural or normative attitudes.

2. *Identification of analytical space:*

This chapter has also identified two areas of contribution: 1) This thesis seeks to contribute to Hybridity through empirical observation by providing a more nuanced analytical framework to understand mergences between ideological concepts and domestic political cultures. 2) This research's policy contribution is situated in the Good Enough Governance debate and aims to provide a deeper understanding of the development of liberal norms in statebuilding in order to impact its prioritisation process.

Keeping these key points in mind, it is important to identify an analytical lens that can help understand the development of accountability in post-conflict countries and link the key elements that impact accountability with the areas of contribution. This research requires a framework that can understand the construction and reconstruction of accountability through agency and structure. The next section will unpack this further.

Democratic Norm Development

"What is distinctive about the accountability genre among other forms of governance solutions is its reliance on the existence of a 'moral community' that shapes (and is shaped by) the expectations, rules, norms and values of social relationships" (Dubnisk, 2002:6). Accountability provides citizens the space to hold states accountable to agreed political agendas and the mutual expectation of government and citizen behaviour creates a sense of oughtness in society. It is because of these elements that Finnemore and Sikkink's *Norm Life Cycle* is used as this thesis' analytical lens since accountability creates an innate expectation of behaviour. This section is divided into three parts and will first unpack the meaning of norms and norm theory to justify the selection of the *Norm Life Cycle*. It will then present norm development theory to analyse the empirical data in chapter Seven.

Norm Theory in International Relations

Norm theory in International Relations (IR) is interested in understanding how norms shape state behaviour and how they are disseminated in the international arena (Florini, 1996; Clark, 2007). It grapples with their origin, their mechanism of influence, and the conditions upon which norms successfully impact state behaviour (Finnemore and Sikkink, 1998b). Norm 'entrepreneurs', such as activists and international organisations, promote norms to accomplish a specific agenda. It is however contested whether these actions are based on altruism, benevolence, social structure or self-interests. While international organisations are perceived by some to be 'neutral', thus legitimate, authors like Finnemore (1993; 1996b), Sikkink (2009), and Habermas (1981; 1996), argue that even within an organisational context, norms are the result of the social context in which they were created. The origin of international norms becomes thus conditioned by the cultural structures that host them (Cortell and Davis, 2000). Moreover the literature has observed the legitimacy of certain group 'identities' that allow states to claim a particular international 'membership' at a given historical moment (Finnemore and Sikkink, 2001). This not only illustrates the dynamic and influential nature of social structures, but it also highlights the strategic choice states might make in order to achieve specific objectives. For example, as touched upon earlier in the chapter, 'Western' states have been accused of using military interventions and economic exploitation to impose 'their' democratic values on development countries. The influence of strategy versus identity in diffusing norms at the international level becomes therefore disputed. Are norms spread as a way to express an actor's identity that derives from undisputed and defined social structures, or is it the agency of different actors that guide their strategic choice? Although norm theory does not predict political behaviour, it offers a methodological framework to understand the interaction and preferences of different states (Finnemore, 1996). The question for norm theory becomes therefore how much choice there is in norm-based behaviour and the motivation that encourages norm adaptation. While some actors see power, interdependence, and strategic preferences, as the underlying condition for norm adaptation, norm theory continues to grapple with the role of materialism, utilitarianism, choice and persuasion (Finnemore and Sikkink, 2001). While many scholars have studied norms, constructivist and rationalist occupy the biggest contested space.

For rational choice scholars, norms are a reflection of fixed preferences that regulate human activity (Florini, 1996). These preferences are based on the maximisation of utilities, making norms a prescriptive means to acquire targeted objectives (Tannenwald, 1999). Norms are thus the probability of a possibility occurring rather than constituting the framework of the current political dynamics. Rational choice in this case focuses on technical rules, control, agency, power and productivity rather than the process of norm development (Antonio, 1989; Checkel, 1997). Scholars like Moravcsik (1995), and Cortell and Davis (2000) believe that norms constrain behaviour and are strategically used to conduct means-to-ends calculations. This is

very much in accordance with neorealism and neoliberalism, which view states as power hungry in search of wealth and security. Norms in this case are used by the elite to secure their political survival rather than to express normative beliefs (Checkel, 1997). Whilst the fundamental economics-based utilisation rational portrays a sombre picture of humanity, it also liberates people from a fix disposition since actors constantly engage in a dynamic and ever evolving environment in which reality becomes “pregnant with possibilities, waiting to be completed and rationalized” (Hofferberth and Weber, 2015;83). However since rationalist do not perceive identities as rational, anything that is not explained by self-interest becomes difficult to explain. While rational choice can offer interesting explanations as to *why* actors adapt norms, and identify the patterns and timing, it is not as successful in explaining *how* norms are diffused.

For the purpose of this thesis, it is however very important to understand how accountability develops in order to gain a better understanding of its normative composition and evolution. Constructivists take the other side of the scale and offer an alternative explanation. According to them, institutions comprise of rules, standards, values and practices that determine and guide behaviour (Finnemore & Sikkink, 1998a). These are collectively held and gain their legitimacy by being widely recognised and socially constructed (Habermas, 2000; Vetterlein, no year; Björkdahl, 2010). It is this social cohesion that provides norms with power as they “are obeyed, not because they are enforced, but because they are seen as legitimate” (Florini, 1996:365-366). Norms in this case constitute of social structures and need to have social recognition, cultural validation and formal validity to have legitimacy and avoid socially agreed upon sanctions (Habermas, 1996; Björkdahl, 2010). Based on people’s sense of appropriateness, which is based on their social background, people interact with new norms and determine their behaviour (Wiener and Puetter, 2009; Checkel, 1997). Constructivists need therefore to question identities and understand the process of norm development to comprehend the structure and context from which they emerge. Interests and actors are therefore not taken for granted but problematized for analytical purposes (Finnemore, 1996c). Constructivists thus believe in a complex human nature where behaviour is not only shaped by material interests but also by ideational factors where actors can adapt norms that go against personal interests. Issues such as duty, responsibility, identity and obligation are also elements that need to be taken into consideration (Finnemore and Sikkink, 1998b). Constructivist can in these cases explain what rationalist could not do, for example, the adaptation of anti-nuclear weapon and pro-gender equality norms. Whilst constructivism offers the most suitable approach for this study, since it allows the author to engage with the evolutionary changes of accountability, instead of just confirming influencing elements, rationalist logic has its merits. Even amidst constructivist scholars, there are those that acknowledge the role of power in creating reality and the influential role of the elite in shaping norm adaptation (Finnemore and Sikkink, 2001). Norms become then a compromise between an internal sense of identity and an

external interactive response to others in which “identities are socially constructed but [...] actors may make rational choices about how to construct their identities” (Finnemore and Sikkink, 2001:410). This element of choice brings together constructivism and rational choice as it allows actors to be intersubjective. A ‘menu’ of choices is then socially constructed and states can select their preferred ‘dish’ based on the historical and cultural context of the moment (Hofferberth and Weber, 2015). This could arguably be applied to democracy where states in the 21st century increasingly ‘adapt’ to fit with the wider international community. Nevertheless the emphasis of constructivism remains in norm development, before utilisation, as it is the shifts in norms and ideas, according to them, that create social change instead of power (Finnemore and Sikkink, (1998b). Constructivism risks however homogenising norms at an international level and focus only on ‘good’ norms. This ‘fixes’ the norm content making it culturally subjective and dismisses harmful normative commitments, such as they ones generate by Donald Trump in the 2016 elections (Payne, 2001; Hofferberth and Weber, 2015)

While the above debate applies to international relations, the literature on norms does not cover post-conflict countries in great detail. Leading norm scholars, such as Frost (1994; 1998a; 1998b) and Cox (1987; 1996), examined the moral and ethical behaviour of states to understand the connection between domestic values and the international arena (Neethling, 2004; Bakan, 2008). Norm theory in IR tries therefore to understand the dominance of the international system over state sovereignty and argues that norms both shape and constrain state behaviour through shaming, pressure and persuasiveness (Checkel, 1997; Neethling, 2004). Whilst norm research has primarily studied norm development from domestic settings *to* the international arena, this thesis will apply the same logic *from* the international community to a specific country, namely Afghanistan.

Nonetheless it is important to highlight that norm theory has been perceived by some as descriptive, unscientific and intangible (Finnemore, 1996; Neethling, 2004). The biggest criticism of norm theory is that it does not produce an analytical focus and is unable to explain why some norms are more widely accepted than others, or why some are adapted to varying degrees amidst different actors (Florini, 1996; Björkdahl, 2010). Since this research is not about the morality of statebuilding, but focuses rather on statebuilding methods, it will adopt relevant elements from norm theory to fit the purpose of this thesis. Prior elaborating on its methodological usability, the next section will debate the advantages and disadvantages of adopting a norm development approach.

Challenges to Norm Theory

Arguably the world of international relations is filled with contesting interests, and norms are but one way of interpreting state interaction. Norms for example do not explain why certain

cultural arguments survive and spread in particular settings or why they fulfil functional purposes. Moreover it is difficult to distinguish the true motives behind a norm 'entrepreneur'. While these can be guided by social structures, as suggested by constructivists, they could also reflect self-interests and/or psychological motivations. For example, Hurd (2005) suggests that powerful leaders exercise control indirectly by using international organisations (IOs) instead of force or coercion. IOs are however perceived by some as imperialistic, spreading Western cultural values on the expense of local ownership (Cortell and Davis, 2000). Though local resistance can exist, this does not mean it is unified. In this case, justification is important and relates, in contemporary times, on the state of peace and security in the world. Norm theory argues that "the degree to which domestic actors regard an international norm as legitimate may hinge upon how many other states adhere to its tenets (Cortell and Davis, 2000:83). Constructivists would thus see IOs as socially constructed where they "may be created and supported for reasons of legitimacy and normative fit rather than efficient output; they may be created not for what they do but for what they are" (Barnett and Finnemore, 2003:703). Traditional institutionalism on the other would argue that institutions in themselves have their own set of rules and procedures that guide behaviour to the point of suppressing change (Finnemore and Sikkink, 2001; 1998b). Institutions in this case become an authority in themselves as they have the power to classify and organise information and knowledge. In other words, they have the power to structure what is perceived as reality by giving it legitimacy. An example of this can be seen in the current correlation between democracy and peace where the distinction between IOs and domestic governance intersect (Barnett and Finnemore, 2003).

Norm theory's emphasis on norms might however be its weakness, as much as it strength, as it fails to consider other simultaneous variables. For example, international organisations do not only promote one norm at the time, making it difficult to trace; they also experience internal conflicting preferences. This portrays a dynamic and evolving nature that adjusts to external and internal experiences (Steinmo *et al*, 1992). Whilst institutionalism acknowledges self-interest, it is also interested in understanding why institutions prioritise certain objectives above others. In international relations, states and organisations negotiate with peers and strike bargains that are not fully explainable by constructivists. For example some states might agree to democratic institutions in exchange for resources or power, and whilst they give the perception of democracy through elections and parliaments, everyday practices remain undemocratic. This institutional imitation without functionality, isomorphic mimicry, is hard for norm theory to explain as these institutions might have been created for rational interests to assure state survival but might be partially accepted by a local minority (Krause, 2013). In severe cases where state capacity is low, and external reforms take over the national process, dysfunctional organisations can be so entrenched that the 'local' becomes only the puppeteer of

the external (Pritchett, 2013). In these cases where 'partial', overlapping, or 'inconsistent' norm adaptation occurs, norm theory struggles to capture all the underlying dynamics and power currents as it overwhelms its analytical capacity. Furthermore, as illustrated by isomorphic mimicry, the world of international relations encompasses complex political and economic agendas. While constructivists might argue that democratic states express their collective identity by promoting democracy to create peaceful and cooperative order, critical scholars might argue that norms are being instrumentalised to gain political leverage and justify strategic objectives (Risse-Kappen, 1995; Zaum, 2009). Power in this case upstages norms and shows a different reality in which norms are the "mask behind which great powers pursue their interests" (Checkel, 1997:480). For example, while some might argue that United States interests in other states is normative in nature, i.e. referring to the liberalisation of the 'enslaved', others might argue that it is merely a political game in which resources and power are acquired to sustain the nation's power base and authority (Barnett and Dugall, 2005; Payne, 2001). Conversely, developing states might strategically use external norms for self-determination and territorial control. Countries might thus deliver 'right' outcomes to argue against international dominion, secure self-rule, and enhance their own prestige (Zaum, 2006; 2009; Archarya, 2004). Moreover states might seek to redeem their international status and avoid being labelled as a 'rogue state' or 'enemy of the West' (Finnemore and Sikkink, 1998b).

Political contexts, in which actors camouflage their power and economic interests through normative arguments, make it really difficult for norm theory to distinguish norm development (Payne, 2001). Constructivists separate ethics and morals from material interests and norm adaptation in these cases are not purely based on normative belief or self-interests (Antonio, 1989). Norm theory is thus once again overwhelmed by the multiple complexities of international relations. Although institutional and political-economic analysis would have provided legitimate and interesting analytical frameworks for the purpose of this thesis to explore the complex political and power dynamics, this study will nonetheless adopt norm theory since it is interested in explaining the normative *changes* of developing accountability in Afghanistan. Nevertheless, recognising the limitations and simplistic nature of norm theory, this thesis will attempt to mitigate these at the end of the chapter.

Norm Development

Having explored some of the debates surrounding norm theory, this section will now explore how norms work, and their characteristics, before unpacking the analytical framework selected for the purpose of this research. Part of norm theory has gone to understand how norms are disseminated, strengthened, institutionalised and enforced (Tannenwald, 1999). Generally, norms emerge through imitation, emulation or stimulation, and in the case of resistance, additional pressure usually manifests (Clark, 2007; Moravcsik, 1995). While there are cases of

coercion, in which a dominant state imposes its values on others, Finnemore and Sikkink (1998bb) have recorded more cases where persuasion is used to challenge the appropriateness of domestic behaviours (Checkel, 1997). Persuasion can thus be used to secure support from other states, peers and local actors to construct or reconstruct social 'facts' (Payne, 2001). Moreover rhetoric is often used to appear reasonable and induce collaboration. Habermas (1981; 1987; 1996) argues that norms are spread and negotiated through argumentation, persuasion and dialogue. Initially he suggests that norms are repressed since the society is too weak to resist the 'insertion' of external norms. However, the norms move then gradually from denial to tactical concessions, and from partial implementation to consistent rule behaviour. Contestation on norm interpretation, implementation and adherence through discourse become thus the basis for norm validity. Consequently speech can, for better or for worst, be a powerful mechanism for social construction. In so much as discourse can propagate cultural and normative values, the power of dissemination is still influenced by the agent in question. Archarya (2004) suggests that norm adaptation is more likely to occur when local actors, rather than outside agents, promote the norms. Norm empowerment happens thus when local decision-makers and influential societal actors are involved in norm dissemination (Checkel, 1997). It is the shared understanding of behavioural claims that solidify norm manifestation. Norm approval purely for instrumental purposes frequently fails to develop the social foundations for norm adaptation.

Norm acceptance relies thus on social legitimacy, prominence and custom (Risse, 1999). Cortell and Davis (2000) further suggest that norms need a 'cultural match' in which external and internal values find a common ground. Norms need not thus only to be embedded in local discourse but also in institutions and social interactions. Clark (2007) tries to go even further and quantifies acceptance by arguing that norms reach a tipping point when one third of individuals behave accordingly. At this stage remaining individuals adhere to the new norm in order to maintain their group membership. Whilst the author is sceptical of this quantifiable method, nevertheless, it highlights the importance of social interaction. It is important to highlight these elements since it is its salience that will determine whether accountability has indeed developed in Afghanistan.

Moreover the legitimacy of international norms in domestic political culture can only be obtained by recognising local structures, behaviours and customs. The derogative dismissal of non-Western culture and practices observed earlier in this chapter can "be likened to cultural imperialism or colonialism and cause domestic resistance or rejection" (Cortell & Davis, 2000:74). Imposition of norm structures, which exclude agency, are unlikely to be successful since acceptance only occurs through socialisation and contestation. If norms are transmitted through a 'cloning' process, i.e. norms are identically replicated, they will have to compete with

existing norms where only the fittest will survive (Florini, 1996). To illustrate, if liberal statebuilding aims to replicate the Western concept of accountability in Afghanistan separate from social norms, it is unlikely to gain legitimacy since Afghan norms dominate the normative space. Conversely, if accountability is immersed in Afghan normative space, it is contested and reconstructed to include Afghan values and legitimacy.

For the purpose of this thesis, Finnemore and Sikkink's three stage *Norm Life Cycle* has been selected as this study's analytical lens. Since this thesis aims to go beyond the mere confirmation that accountability has, or has not, developed in Afghanistan, but seeks instead to understand the process and change of the norm, this methodological approach has been found suitable. Finnemore and Sikkink (1998a; 1998b) try to capture norm phases and argue that new norms never enter a vacuum but compete instead with other norms and interest. 'Norm building' is therefore based on human agency, commitment, chance and favourable events. During each phase, the motivation and mechanisms behind norm development are different. The norm development cocktail could be based on empathy, commitment, ideals, legitimacy, reputation and/or conformity for motivation and on persuasion, socialisation, demonstration and /or institutionalisation for mechanisms. In order however to create a certain structure they provide a simple, but clear, analytical framework. According to the *Norm Life Cycle*, a norm goes through three development stages. In Stage One - *Emergence*: norms manifest through conviction or persuasion and use existing structures and norms to frame themselves in a social legitimate manner. In this phase people obtain a conviction that something has to change and they challenge 'normality' by questioning its appropriateness. Finnemore and Sikkink (1998b) argue that norms can only step into the next stage of their evolution once a critical mass, i.e. tipping point, of *relevant* actors adopt it. A tipping point is likely to be achieved if a) states use norms to acquire legitimacy, b) the norm in question is prominent amidst powerful states, c) there are intrinsic qualities in the society in which people normatively care, d) the norm derives from an adjacent culture or country, and/or e) the world is touched by a normative wave. Although these indicators are useful, there is still no concrete idea as to why norms tip, making it difficult to calculate when, where and how it is going to happen. While this shows a limitation to the analytical framework, norm theory, as mentioned earlier in the chapter, does not predict political action but focuses instead on social construction.

Once a norm has reached a tipping point, it proceeds to Stage Two – *Acceptance*. In this stage people do not need to be convinced of the norm's validity. Norms at this stage are widely and rapidly adopted through socialisation and demonstration. The authors refer to this process as 'norm cascade' in which the norm achieves broad acceptance and resonate widely with social frameworks (Finnemore and Sikkink, 1998b). Norm cascades are usually caused by pressure to conform or by a need to enhance self-esteem or international legitimation. In this case norm

breakers are induced to become norm followers through socialisation, emulation, praise or ridicule. Norm enforcement takes thus the shape of shaming, co-optation or sanctioning (Moravcsik, 1995; Risse, 1999; Checkel, 1997). While this is essential for norm acceptance, it unavoidably alters the balance of power between relevant actors. Therefore Finnemore and Sikkink (1998b) argue that successful acceptance is achieved once choices, habits, cost of norm-violation, and benefits from norm adherence, becomes socially acceptable.

Going into Stage Three – *Internalisation*: “norms acquire a taken-for-granted quality and are no longer a matter of broad public debate” (Finnemore and Sikkink, 1998b:895). They are legalised and become part of the professional or bureaucratic system through institutionalisation. This stage can be difficult to assess as “the state can change one policy to placate international or domestic pressure but fail to modify a host of other policies and procedures that diminish or undermine the norm’s impact” (Cortell and Davis, 2000:71). Especially in the case of isomorphic mimicry, as previously discussed, norms can be weakened, or completely compromised, if the norm enters national institutions without producing an agenda for normative change. Though norms must penetrate domestic structures to acquire local legitimacy and compliance, norm contestation with the local political culture is essential for norm development. According to Finnemore (1996b), it is only through contestation that international norms, such as accountability, can resonate with local customs, values and standards.

Overall, the *Norm Life Cycle* is simplistic in nature and only looks at a linear evolution of norms. It provides broad development stages that lack transitioning linkages but is nevertheless capable of looking at the normative process and highlight the role of agency and legitimacy. However since norm development has never been used to understand the evolution of democratic norms as part of liberal statebuilding in post-conflict countries, as far as the author knows based on extensive literature review, the following section and chapter will try to mitigate some of these shortcomings by using this building block to develop an analytical framework.

Norm Transformation

Although Finnemore and Sikkink’s *Norm Life Cycle* provides a good analytical foundation, it is important for the purpose of this thesis to account for norm transformation since political “values and attitude [are] not a process of blind adaptation” (Habermas, 1996:336-337). Across this chapter, issues of power have continuously surfaced, particularly in relation to democratic norm development. Considering the challenges to statebuilding and democratisation identified earlier in this chapter, it is imperative to understand how power can impact the development of accountability in Afghanistan. Florini (1996) and Giroux (1991) believe for example that

knowledge and power determine norm action, whilst Gramsci, Mill and Said see power as a norm enforcement capability (Finnemore, 1996). Clegg (1989) on the other hand suggests that norms in themselves are sources of power since they can enable and constrain human action.

Whichever doctrine one subscribes to, it is undeniable that norms and power go hand-in-hand and determine behaviour and agency. This relationship is essential for understanding the development of accountability in Afghanistan since it helps identify the norm's foundation and legitimacy. Power, similar to norms, needs legitimacy and enforcement since it not only reflects compliance but also obligation through authority (Clegg, 1989). Similar to normative development, scholars, such as Foucault, Weber, Lukes and Dahl, argue that power gains legitimacy through the contestation of wills and freedoms (Foucault, 1982; Parsons, 1963; Ledyae, 1997). Although the *nature* of power in this format can be suppressive, constraining and manipulative, Foucault suggests that it can also be productive by tearing down outworn behaviours and replacing them with something new (Mills, 2003; Ledyae, 1997). Giddens, Debnam and Parsons, on the other hand, believe that power can exist in more subtle ways without conflict through persuasion, manipulation and monopolisation of information and knowledge (Ledyae, 1997). Moreover the manifestation of power depends also on the means available. Wealth, coercion and knowledge can increase an actor's leverage, but it is the control of these resources that can influence the behaviour of others (Dowding, 1996; Ledyae, 1997). The movement of power is also important in order to understand how power engages with structure and agency. Marx saw power from a top-bottom perspective, thus engaging with structure directly with little possibility for independent agency (Reid, 2001). Foucault and Giddens claim on the other hand that power circulates and can be seen as the transformative link between structure and agency (Clegg, 1989).

The nature, means and movement of power can help to understand the progression of norm development and is used as a crosscutting theme as part of the analytical lens. In other words, power can unpack the transformation of accountability as it reconstructs and emerges in post-conflict countries. While statebuilding literature recognises the power challenges between the international community and the domestic state, it does not discuss informal power in great detail. As mentioned earlier, and as emphasised by Critical Peace Studies, local forms of government and domestic power structures are seldom included in the statebuilding process. The nature of official and informal power can however be quite different as in the case of Afghanistan. Official power in post-conflict countries tends to be quite authoritative, coercive and/or forceful (Samuels, 2006). It is based on organisational structure and has limited resources. Moreover, official power tends to be distributed along a variable-sum game between the state and the population where the latter is frequently unaware of its own power (Dowding, 1996). Informal power on the other hand is unregulated and based on inducement and

coercion (Samuels, 2006). Furthermore it benefits from the elite's political and social status, and uses their access to knowledge, aid and position to obtain maximum benefit. Informal power reflects a constant-sum game where all participants are assumed to be self-interested (Dowding, 1996). This differentiation between official and informal power can help this thesis to further understand how accountability is transformed and reconstructed in Afghanistan.

To summarise, though alternative theories exist to study the complex political environment surrounding liberal statebuilding, Finnemore and Sikkink's *Norm Life Cycle* has been chosen for the purpose of this thesis since it aims to go beyond the mere validation, or rejection, of accountability. The purpose of this research is to understand the *development* of accountability in Afghanistan and needs an analytical tool that can be used to understand the process of norm development. Additionally this thesis aims to recognise power, trust and political culture to understand the emergence between accountability, as designed by liberal statebuilding, and Afghan dynamics. This research will thus examine the progression of accountability through the norm development stages of *emergence*, *acceptance* and *internalisation* in chapter Seven. It will seek to understand how structure, i.e. Western ideological conceptualisation, and agency, i.e. Afghan Political Culture, interact to construct and reconstruct accountability.

Conclusion

This chapter has covered a lot of ground. In section one, the dominant presence of Western concepts in liberal statebuilding was discussed. On one side, solution-oriented actors argue for standardised, technical and top-down methods to statebuilding as this can, in their view, create liberal behaviour through institutional structures. Critics, on the other hand, contend this liberal approach, and suggest that Western knowledge is prioritised over domestic experiences. Western donors are viewed, in this case, as distrustful of post-conflict countries and their ability to make 'good' decisions, since they are perceived to live in an out-dated and irrational time. The imposition of externally recognised political solutions has resulted in institutionalisation without liberalisation. Issues of power, trust and cultural or norm attitudes were identified as key themes that impact the statebuilding process.

Section two debated democratisation's institutional approach and found that statebuilding did not engage with the domestic political sphere, but rather disseminated democratic norms via a good governance agenda into state structures. Thus, from a critical perspective, statebuilding is done in a vacuum from political and social realities, delegitimising democratisation since it lacks social foundations. This section highlighted the need to understand the interaction between structure, i.e. ideological concept, and agency, i.e. political culture.

Section three identified accountability as a democratic norm and selected Finnemore and Sikkink's *Norm Life Cycle* as this thesis' analytical lens. It further included power as a crosscutting theme to discover whether the concept of accountability is reconstructed in Afghanistan through contestation or cloned in an inaccessible political structure.

Whilst this chapter has identified *how* accountability is being analysed, the next chapter will unpack the term itself to clearly identify *what* needs to be studied.

CHAPTER TWO: ACCOUNTABILITY, A STATEBUILDING TOOL?

Accountability might sound like a dry, even boring, concept to the reader. It is definitely not the sexiest political concept of the 21st century, but if one thinks about what it really means, it is quite exhilarating. To envision a world where governments are not allowed to get away with infringements and abuse of power is emancipating. Even in the 'liberal' world citizens struggle to obtain information that is hidden for their so-called protection. Wikileaks' editor-in-chief Julian Assange and whistleblower Edward Snowden have, for example, been hunted for publicly disclosing information that implicates states in abuse of power and resources (Fahrenthold & Forero, 2013). Whilst some citizens are more willing to cede their privacy and freedom in exchange for security, others question the state's collection of power. Accountability, in this case, becomes the safety line to ensure that governments do not become overly consumed in their own existence. Academically however, accountability has struggled to form a clear concept and multiple interpretations have surfaced since it has been studied from many disciplines simultaneously (Hiskey & Bowler, 2005; Paley, 2002). It has been difficult to establish accountability in terms of what it *should* be versus what it *is*. Internationally, there is no homogeneous understanding of accountability since translation has been very complicated. Generally however, in its most basic format, it "entails a relationship in which people are required to explain and take responsibility for their actions" (Sinclair, 1995:220-221). To dive deeper into the meaning of accountability, in order to examine its role in Afghanistan, this chapter will dissect the concept in order to create a clear definition and conceptual framework for this thesis' analysis. It is important to mention this chapter will use quite traditional 'western' academic literature to discuss accountability as it aims to identify the conceptual roots and manifestation of the norm. Although this can arguably be perceived as ethnocentric, this is done on purpose since the research aims to understand accountability as liberal statebuilding 'exports' it in order to assess its 'successful' transference. Having a solid understanding of the 'western' conceptualisation helps establish a baseline to which the Afghan data can be compared.

This chapter is divided into four sections. Section one will unpack the concept in its political application and section two in its neoliberal interpretation, and section three will situate accountability in the context of statebuilding. Section four will identify accountability characteristics and construct a conceptual framework for this thesis in order to provide a more detailed insight into norm development. This chapter will then combine the conceptual framework, i.e. *what* this thesis analyses, and the analytical lens, Finnemore and Sikkink's *Norm Life Cycle*, i.e. *how* this thesis analyses the data, in order to present the analytical framework.

Accountability in the Political Sector

The word, accountability, has an Anglo-Norman origin and can be traced to 1066 when King William I introduced the Domesday Books to list assets in his realm and hold subjects to account for their contributions (Day & Klein, 1987; Dubnick, 2002; Bovens, 2007). The concept evolved to entail a centralised administrative system of governance that established a relationship between the ruler and the governed and has become “a very specific anglo-saxon expression both in etymology and in social and parliamentary practice” (Spink, 2013:3; Dubnick, 2002; Bovens, 2007). Despite its long history, common usage and association to democracy, accountability has not been clearly conceptualised in academia (Sinclair, 1995; Newell & Bellour, 2002). Accountability will therefore be unpacked in the following two sections in order to establish a conceptual framework to which the Afghan empirical data can then be compared. This section is divided in two parts: 1) accountability in the political sphere; and 2) application of the norm through accountability methods.

The Political Roots of Accountability

The purpose of accountability can be traced all the way to Athenian times when philosophers argued for the restriction of political power by the principle of ownership (Newell & Bellour, 2002; Mulgan, 2003). Initially, public debates were used to reach consensus in Ancient Greece, but as the population and their needs grew, accountability increasingly had to rely on control mechanisms to avoid abuse of power (Mulgan, 2003). In modern times, democracy grants ownership to citizens and accountability emerges through the exchange of power (Hughes, 1994; Held & Koenig-Archibugi, 2005). In a democratic framework, accountability gains its legitimacy from citizens’ ability to vote someone to power and by paying taxes (Newell & Bellour, 2002). This is a key point to remember since it highlights the very foundation that would be needed for accountability to develop in Afghanistan.

The UN expanded the terminology of accountability in the 1990s to entail institutional performance, political opposition, independent judiciary, independent legislature, free and fair elections, freedom of association and free press (Mulgan, 2003). This massive expansion of the concept became cumbersome and, partially, relocated accountability in liberal statebuilding from citizen action to institutional control through administrative structures (Beetham *et al*, 2002). Subsequently, accountability was split into multiple structures, including legislative and political. ‘Legislative’ accountability uses legislation and regulation for compliance whilst ‘political’ accountability creates “a shared set of expectations and a common currency of justifications” through negotiation (Day & Klein, 1987:5). Political accountability is deemed very powerful because policy cannot be implemented or approved without the mutual consent of different power holders (Persson *et al*, 1997). This structural separation decreased the direct voice of the public by prioritising bureaucratic procedures over dialogue and mediation

(Beetham *et al*, 2002). It also diluted accountability in itself since multiple interpretations surfaced based on its usage. Its multiple terminology blurred the concept but continued to acknowledge a relationship between two agents that demand justification of action and that have the capacity to discipline unacceptable behaviour (Newell & Bellour, 2002; Shah, 2007). Sperling (2009) thus suggests that accountability consists of two main components: answerability and enforcement.

The ability to *provide* account, i.e. answerability, entails communication in terms of informing, reporting, explaining, justifying and debating (Mulgan, 2003). Information should not only be accessible but should be given in an honest, open and transparent manner (Sinclair, 1995; Shah, 2007). Descriptive or incomplete information is not sufficient. Information and transparency are a prerequisite for accountability but they are not a substitution for it. The ability to be *held* to account, i.e. enforcement, is crucial to accountability since the concept does not exist without an element of retributive justice (Bovens, 2007). Shah (2007) claims there is a need to sentence and judge the persuasiveness of an argument and provide adequate penalty to hold decision-makers accountable. Nanayakkara (1994) provides evidence and shows that government officials would do the minimum labour required for the highest level of profitability, emphasising the need to be held to account. Accountability can, thus, be very powerful in politics as it gains its democratic legitimacy from citizens and reflects a power relationship between the government and the population expressed through answerability and enforcement. It is important to recognise these conceptual elements as it highlights characteristics that need to be present in order for accountability to develop, according to its democratic usage, in Afghanistan.

Means and Methods of Accountability

Accountability can however take many shapes and forms when applied. There are two main methods: The first one is based on control and regulation and is usually a top-down approach (Newell & Bellour, 2002). These are institutional or procedural structures and include processes, such as oversight, investigations, elections and sanctions. The second type is based on participation, through a bottom-up approach, and includes popular protest, citizen juries, participatory budgeting and moral appeal (Ibid). Both of these methods are examined in the case study of Afghanistan, not only to create a holistic picture, but also to understand the interaction between the two and their role in manifesting accountability as a norm.

Type one is examined first and followed by the second. One of the strongest forms of accountability is based on legislation since it offers enforcement through the judiciary (Hughes, 1994). Legislation enables and controls individual and institutional action and allows judgement in case of violations (Mulgan, 2003; Newell & Bellour, 2002). The enforcement of accountability

happens, therefore, after an infringement, making it an ex-post mechanism. Investigations by oversight and regulator offices are also very important since they are an internal control mechanism that ensures there is no abuse of power or resources (Hodges & Coghill, 2007). These offices require however quite a lot of autonomy to be efficient. Legislation in constitutional democracies is a control framework that focuses on the exercise of power (Bachrach & Baratz, 1962). Legislation however does not equal fairness. Laws are not neutral and can be designed and enforced to benefit the masses or to consolidate power in the hands of the few (Newell & Bellour, 2002). If the legislative framework reflects the mutual expectations of government and citizens, it can be a very effective control mechanism. If it does not, it can be used in a discriminatory and discretionary way to endorse political objectives under the name of accountability (Newell & Bellour, 2002; Bovens, 2007; Shah (Ed), 2007). It is important to recognise these accountability methods, as their presence helps identify how accountability is being developed in Afghanistan.

Elections are perhaps the most important top-down accountability mechanism. It represents voters' preferences, selects competent politicians, and enforces accountability by denying politicians the power to govern (Persson *et al*, 2007; Bovens *et al*, 2008). Parliamentary elections allow citizens both to be represented in the government and to have access to information through their elected MP. However, elections are not without problems. Political parties can reduce public demand by negotiating positions that favour party agendas and, consequently, distance themselves from their constituency (Mulgan, 2003). Furthermore most voters do not have enough information about government performance to hold it accountable (Shah, 2007). Moreover, many democratic countries are experiencing declining voter turnouts since election power is increasingly brought to question (Mulgan, 2003). Elections only give people the option to say 'yes' or 'no' and is thus applied to the government as a whole, creating a very binary view of politics. Government entities that might have performed well are judged together with those that didn't and the meaning of accountability is thus reduced to a simple action of withholding power (Mulgan, 2003). Similarly to legislation, elections are an accountability method that can be used for good and bad. There are several countries that suffer from corruption, violate human rights and abuse power, but are still labelled as democratic, because they hold elections (Newell & Bellour, 2002). Nevertheless there are also good examples, such as Sweden. Traditionally in Sweden parliamentary party coalitions have been led by the first party. In 2006 however the second party, Moderaterna, was capable of forming a majority after the election and took the governing seat from the first party, Socialdemokraterna (Modig & Ahlin, 2010). Party relations and unions, prior elections, became more prevalent to conquer the opposition, creating contestation and political debate. Although election participation had been decreasing before 2006, the numbers, once again, increased to 85.81% in 2014 (Statistiska Centralbyrån, 2014). The union of parties ignited strong political

debate in the society, and youth were awoken from their complaisant political slumber. The election in 2014 was characterised by political confrontation that forced a stronger dialogue between citizens and politicians, creating a remarkable environment for political negotiation (Svensson, 2014). Election can thus be a very powerful accountability mechanism, but again, it has to reflect a power relationship between state and citizens. This shows that although accountability methods might be present in post-conflict countries, their functionality and utilisation is equally important to assess whether the norm is truly being developed.

The second type of mechanism, participation, is considered alternatively as a 'softer' instrument that requires access to information. It is through the "access to information people can assess the performance of government, call for responsibility and accountability, demand compensation for injustice, and enhance their knowledge and freely evolve opinions" (Sundqvist, 2008:1). A citizen requires information to make an informed decision of whether and how to participate in politics. Transparency, therefore, is not only the access to information, but also the right to demand it (Mulgan, 2003). Participation can manifest in many different ways, for example, lobbying, demonstration, campaigning, dialogue and consultations (Blair, 2000; Mulgan, 2003). While the first three clearly present citizens' views, they do not necessarily generate real policy engagement. Decentralisation is another way to generate participation since it creates a closer relationship between citizens and government (Mulgan, 2003). Participation allows citizens to negotiate their expectations of government behaviour, however despite its potential, participation is "too often a matter of government grace and favour rather than obligation" and it occurs frequently after the decisions have been made (Nanayakkara, 1994; Mulgan, 2000; 2003:67). Participation can also be hijacked and used to retain power within a small number of people under the banner of accountability (Nanayakkara, 1994). The recognition of accountability methods, whether controlling, regulating or participative, is essential for constructing a conceptual framework as it allows the thesis to see whether accountability in Afghanistan is being developed from a top-down, bottom-up, structural and/or content level.

Neoliberalism's Approach to Accountability

At the end of the 20th century neoliberalism, which advocated for control of economic factors from the public sector to the private sector, smaller governments were called for through privatisation and liberalisation to counterbalance the weight of the Welfare State (McCourt, 2008). This indubitably impacted the conceptualisation of accountability as it led donors to believe that "fiscal discipline, accompanied by deregulation, trade liberalization and privatization would be sufficient to eliminate stagnation and launch economic growth in developing countries and in transition economies" (Williamson, 2000; Marangos, 2009:202). Economic efficiency became therefore highly associate with accountability, and in 1989, the Washington Consensus,

a primarily free market agenda led by the World Bank, called on states to adopt, amongst many other things, tax reform, interest rate liberalisation, deregulation and specialisation in order to generate high economic return (Williamson, 2000; Pugh, 2005). This contributed to the development of New Public Management (NPM) reforms in the public sector (Minogue, 1998).

In the 1990s, the prevalence of neoliberalism in Western countries carved a place for NPM in liberal statebuilding and impacted several peacebuilding missions, such as in Afghanistan. Neoliberalism relies strongly on the constitutional division of power and rule of law but it is worth remembering that although “mass democracy is almost impossible without a certain amount of economic development, economic development by itself does not produce democracy” (Harvey, 2005; Inglehart, 1988:1229). These differences in philosophy between market approach and democracy need to be unpacked in order to understand how the appearance of neoliberalism has impacted the conceptualisation and practice of accountability in liberal statebuilding. This is important to consider when developing the thesis’ conceptual framework a bit later in the chapter. This section has three parts. Section 1 will discuss accountability’s presence in the market to understand its fundamental rationale. Section 2 will examine accountability within NPM, and section 3 will discuss its application within a liberal bureaucracy.

Accountability from a Market Oriented Perspective

Accountability’s origin in the Domesday Books was heavily associated to accounting. Accounting is fundamental to financial management and outlines clear expectations of organisational behaviour through financial rules and regulations (Roberts & Scapens, 1985). It clearly identifies what should happen and compares it to actual events; budgeting and appraisals are a clear example of this (Gray, 1992). Due to its primarily quantifiable nature, accounting has focused on technical advancement to make systems more efficient and therefore follow a marketisation philosophy by examining the cost versus productivity ratio (Ibid). In the private sector, accountability is linked to efficiency, performance, results and achievements, shifting its conceptual focus from processes and outcomes to outputs (Held & Koenig-Archibugi, 2005; Mulgan, 2000). Thus, decision-making is reduced to an exclusive few where owners, investors and shareholders hold managers to account for corporate performance (Mulgan, 2000). The private sector priority is profitmaking and emphasises the money trail. Accountability, therefore, is more top-down and linear since it relies on a fixed structure, rather than on mediation and trust (Ibid). This is crucial to understand since it alters the process of accountability expectations from dialogue and negotiation to structure. These distinctions are important in order to see whether accountability in Afghanistan was developed from a democratic or market oriented perspective.

Similar to elections, marketisation gives citizens the opportunity to withhold power, in this case financial resources, and change service provider (Mulgan, 2003). Competition for customers' attention encourages companies to provide the best quality for the cheapest price. However market choice gives citizens only an 'entry' or 'exit' option and does not grant them an opportunity to engage in corporate policy (Ibid). Information has often been labelled as 'commercially sensitive' and financial scandals such as Enron and WorldCom or the Financial Crisis in 2008, have led to stricter private sector regulations. For example, Basel III was launched in 2011 to increase banks' transparency and strengthen control mechanisms to reduce risks and solidify the capital base (Basel Committee on Banking Supervision, 2011). In the US, Sarbanes-Oxley legislation was passed in 2002 to increase accounting and auditing oversight and transparency (US Congress, 2002). It is important to distinguish that accountability in the private sector is primarily established through structural control mechanisms, rather than participative means since it highlights whether accountability in Afghanistan was developed for efficiency purposes or to redistribute political power or both.

Neoliberal Manifestation

New Public Management, following the neoliberal agenda and a component of liberal statebuilding, has taken a lot of inspiration from the private sector and applied many of its practices, such as performance oriented budgeting, outsourcing and privatisation (Hughes, 1994; Appleby, 1976; Mulgan, 2003). NPM aims to "change the culture and context within which public managers conduct their duties to increase government's efficiency, effectiveness and accountability" (Romzek, 2000:21). Management is prioritised over administration, contract over welfare, performance over accountability, and audit over expenditure (Minogue, 1998). Theoretically, NPM wants to increase administrative flexibility by reducing bureaucracy, increasing administrative discretion and empowering government officials (Nanayakkara, 1994; Romzek, 2000). Politics is perceived as inefficient and Managerialism is preferred since it demands clear definitions of objectives, benchmarks, targets, indicators, resources, activities and outputs to facilitate clear audit processes (Bovens *et al*, 2008; Nanayakkara, 1994). Accountability in this case is to "ensure greater individual accountability and responsibility. There [is] a strong belief that clearer definitions of responsibilities and tasks improve performance" (Nanayakkara, 1994:15). NPM therefore views accountability as answerability for performance and is based on the values of efficiency, audits, effectiveness and managerialism (Romzek, 2000; Hughes, 1994; Nanayakkara, 1994). Understanding these conceptual nuances will help identify the kind of accountability that was developed in Afghanistan and provide a better understanding of its trajectory. In other words, the manifestation of accountability, as part of the liberal statebuilding in Afghanistan, has the ability to tell us its purpose of existence, whether political or neoliberal.

Decentralisation, privatisation and public private partnerships (PPPs) are a big component of NPM. Local governments are responsible for efficient service productivity and are supposed to act as private entities through market competition and customer responsiveness (Nanayakkara, 1994). This is supposed to grant 'customers' a wider market range to obtain best services. Similar to the private sector, NPM uses market choice as an accountability mechanism since it grants citizens the option to opt 'out' of a given public service (Hodge & Coghill, 2007). The NPM literature, similar to the public sector, is rather process oriented and does appear to have thought through accountability properly. Rather, NPM assumes that efficient delivery, effective governance and managerialism will result in accountability. Again, accountability inspired by the private sector is linear, top-bottom and substitutes negotiation and trust with market choice and efficiency.

Bureaucratic Challenges

This section, thus far, has shown that accountability in the private sector, used in neoliberalism and NPM, relies more on efficiency and market choice and has a rather structural and technocratic orientation. It is important to understand how this perception of accountability manifests in bureaucracies to comprehend its potential implications for liberal statebuilding and for the thesis' conceptual framework. This subsection will first discuss accountability in public administration and then proceed to discuss the NPM consequences.

Max Weber, the father of the study of modern bureaucracy, presented it as an impartial structure, separate from politics, with a cadre of neutral civil servants (Fry & Nigro, 1996; Mingoue, 1998). The bureaucratic structure rests on professionalism and on technical superiority; it is responsive and accountable to the parliament, thus indirectly to the people (Gerth & Mills, 2005). The operational framework is based on legislation, procedures, rules, hierarchy, ethics, and neutrality (Hughes, 1994). Accountability, in this case, is based on due process, compliance with rules and procedures, and providing a standard service to all (Mulgan, 2003). It is within the bureaucracy that accountability particularly suffered from conceptual haziness since multiple administrative and political structures created different interpretations; for example, Political, Professional, Technical, Managerial and Bureaucratic accountability. Political accountability, as described at the beginning of this chapter, is responsive to policy and is based on negotiation and representation. Professional accountability on the other hand is based on professional standards and has its own internal board that sets the code of conduct and holds members accountable to them (Mulgan, 2003). Technical accountability is technically specialised and relies on professional ethics (Romsek & Dubnick, 1987). Managerial accountability is the mediation between those who design and those who implement government policy, whilst bureaucratic accountability is the relationship between a supervisor and a subordinate and is assessed on procedural adherence and managerial decisions (Ibid).

Even this selective assortment of interpretations shows overlaps, particularly between Bureaucratic and Managerial accountability. It also intersects with Legal accountability, which is different from Legislative accountability. Legal accountability is contractually based between a government agency and an external entity (Mulgan, 2003). This array of interpretation has weakened the conceptualisation of accountability as a norm since it caused more confusion than clarity, although arguably, also becomes more precise in specific circumstances (Sinclair, 1995; Neweel & Bellour; 2002). However if every norm is conceptualised by every enactment, analytical studies may become difficult since they would fail to establish a normative baseline. This conceptual 'confusion' is vital to understand since it impacts the liberal statebuilding's ability to export a clear democratic concept to post-conflict countries and impacts for example the development of accountability in Afghanistan. In order to bring some clarity to the conceptualisation, this debate will shift the examination of the norm from its structural framework to power relations. The role of power in accountability was particularly influenced by the work of Herman Finer and Carl Friedrich in the 1940s. Finer (1941) argues that control over elected officials should be held externally, i.e. citizen oversight, whilst the administrators should be disciplined internally. He separates responsibility from efficiency, where the latter is needed for sound operations but should be externally controlled in order to be accountable. Finer (1941) advocates thus to distinguish between a sense of duty and loyalty to one's position, where the former is held accountable by the public through citizen participation, mobilisation, free press and freedom of speech; and where the latter uses internal sanctions and answerability to generate responsibility (Sperling, 2009). Friedrich, on the other hand, believed that internal mechanisms based on morality, performance and professional ethics are sufficient to generate accountability (Mulgan, 2000). Accountability in this case requires the government to hold itself accountable through division of power, legal framework and policy (Sperling, 2009).

The Friedrich and Finer debate is ultimately about power and who has the legitimacy to hold the government to account. This was a crucial point to take into consideration for the thesis' conceptual framework since the success of accountability in statebuilding, and in Afghanistan, depends on the recognition of a legitimate source of power. Ultimately, traditional power structures in post-conflict countries often have a resilient way of adjusting to structural changes; if accountability cannot take advantage of this, it is very unlikely it will succeed to develop (LaPalombara, 1967).

NPM, similar to Finer, separates politics from bureaucracy, but focuses only on obtaining managerial freedom from policy-makers to avoid the inefficiency of politics (Mulgan, 2000). This is highly problematic due to several reasons. One, NPM separates public service providers from the power sources that grant accountability its legitimacy, i.e. elections and citizens; Two,

whilst marketisation might render higher levels of efficiency, it does not equal accountability; Three, by viewing citizens as 'customers', it diminishes people's relationship with the government since citizens are no longer served based on their *rights* or *entitlements*, but rather, on commercial value (Radin, 2006; Mulgan, 2000; 2003). Furthermore a commercial relationship detaches civil servants' obligation to give account to someone they do not recognise as legitimate since managerialism requires them only to be accountable to their manager (Mulgan, 2003). Consequently, the usage of market choice and the separation between the bureaucracy and politics reduces government answerability and citizens' ability to influence public policy (Ibid). This is another crucial point since it targets the very core of the power relationship between the state and the population and brings into question the legitimacy of accountability.

Moreover by using private companies and private goods to deliver public services, NPM distances the bureaucracy from public jurisdiction by freeing it from liability and scrutiny since legislation and parliamentary investigations do not apply to private companies with the same authority as if it had been an internal government agency (Mulgan, 2003). This is crucial to highlight since it shifts the boundaries of responsibility. Moreover, outsourcing has made it difficult to identify decision-makers and budget efficiency, obscuring who should be held accountable (Bovens, 2007; Bovens *et al*, 2008). Consequently the disconnection between revenue and expenditure has made it difficult to enforce accountability due to lack of information. NPM not only impacts the legitimacy of accountability but also its ability to generate answerability and enforcement. The distinctions between the norm's democratic and neoliberal conceptualisations are important to keep in mind for empirical analysis in order to assess the kind of accountability that was developed in Afghanistan.

To summarise, this chapter has so far unpacked the fuzzy concept of accountability and shown that it is a power relationship between citizens and state that is exercised through answerability and enforcement. Accountability mechanisms, such as elections and participation, can be very useful if expectations of government performance are negotiated between state and citizens. Unlike the political utilisation of accountability, marketisation sees it as a top-down linear activity based on market choice, structure and efficiency. Before utilising this discourse to create a conceptual framework, the below section will discuss accountability's role in liberal statebuilding in order to understand the main influences in exporting the norm.

Accountability in Statebuilding

Having unpacked the existing concepts of accountability, the chapter will now proceed to discuss its existence in the international arena. Accountability, which became "an instrument to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of public governance, has gradually become a goal in

itself. Accountability has become an icon for good governance" (Bovens, 2007:449; ODI, 2007; EC, 2001; DfID, 2011; Blair, 2000). Its contextualisation in liberal statebuilding is therefore relevant for the purpose of this thesis since it helps identify the purpose of accountability in liberal interventions and create a baseline for its existence. This section is divided in two parts. It will first examine accountability as part of the liberal statebuilding and then proceed to discuss the actors who influence the norm's development.

The Role of Accountability in Statebuilding

Donors have increasingly prioritised accountability to create stronger democratic processes and better development outcomes in non-Western states (EC, 2013). For example, in October 2012 the European Union passed a new policy to engage with non-state actors in peace missions as a strategy to develop democracy and accountability at the grassroots level (EC, 2013). Similarly, from 2007 to 2012, DfID funded 17%, 728 million GBP, of its bilateral programmes under 'Governance and Civil Society', only second in its prioritisation list after health (DfID 2012). Slowly, western donors have increasingly recognised the need to construct positive relationships between domestic social capital and governments to generate accountability. Consequently liberal statebuilding now recognises that "accountability and rule of law are not luxuries that can safely be postponed until order and security are restored; they are inseparable from the latter" (Ball, 2005:30). Given this increased attention to accountability, it is important to understand who promotes accountability in post-conflict countries and how 'Western' actors define the concept, as it provides a baseline for the norm's trajectory in liberal statebuilding.

The World Bank sees accountability as an amorphous concept that is essential to state responsiveness (Stapenhurst, no year). While it does not define it per se, WB argues that accountability is present "when there is a relationship where an individual or body, and the performance of tasks or functions by that individual or body, are subject to another's oversight, direction or request that they provide information or justification for their actions" (Stapenhurst, no year:1). Whilst this explanation recognises a relationship between two entities and the need for answerability, it does not cover enforcement. DfID (2001:4) is more concise and defines accountability as "the ability of citizens to hold leaders and public organisations to account". USAID (1998:163) sees it similarly and recognises that accountability "depends on governments taking full recognizance of, responding to, and being monitored by, organized public opinion. Transparency and accountability as defined here encompass the concept of responsiveness and are served by sharing decision-making with local government entities". Both DfID and USAID's definition indicate a liberal vision of an *active* citizenry in holding governments accountable. The EC on the other hand has a more institutional interpretation and sees accountability as the justification of action and identification of roles, responsibilities and processes (EC, 2001).

Generally dominant Western donors appear to recognise the importance of building a relationship between state and population to create accountability in post-conflict countries, thus following a political conceptualisation. These situations, however, might be a bit challenging due to the presence of violence, social fragmentation, multi-ethnic identities, patronage and coercion (Rose & Miller, 1992; Dean, 2002). Post-conflict states often include 'twilight institutions' that combine official and unofficial power holders and experience intense power struggles, as is the case in Afghanistan (Hagmann & Hoehne, 2009; Bratton & Chang, 2006). These structures, however, are rather unsuitable to sustain responsiveness since the "extent to which it [post-conflict government] wants to scrutinize its own administration and performance is never impressive" (Ball, 2005; Hagmann & Hoehne, 2009; Corrales, 2004:20). Furthermore donors' definition of accountability relies on an active united citizenry, which is often weak in post-conflict countries. Citizens in this case "do not perceive themselves as citizens or national [...] They define themselves instead as members of particular subnational or transnational social entities [...] People have confidence in their community and its leaders, but may not trust in the government and state performance" (Boege *et al*, 2009a:607). Whilst this might be quite accurate in countries that are still experiencing the aftermath of internal conflict, such as Sudan, Somalia and Afghanistan, it might be less accurate for countries that experienced external conflict in their history. Additionally, trust in war-torn societies that experience a humanitarian crisis is relatively low, and if citizens do not trust each other and have an apathetic and fatalistic view of the government, they are less likely to generate the social capital that is needed to enforce accountability (Pye & Verba, 1965). According to Pye and Verba (1965), if people do not identify themselves with a nation, they are unlikely to participate in political processes to alter the political culture, a factor that is very relevant to the case of Afghanistan.

Accountability is challenged by the absence of a united identity and the presence of power grabbing, patronage and social fragmentation. Moreover unofficial power can have quite a leverage in post-conflict countries as it can validate ethnic and clientele identities that impact government structures through patronage and nepotism (Boege *et al*, 2009). At the initial stages, 'raw' post-conflict governments tend to gain limited amount of power from democratic sources, i.e. citizens, but tend to be rather hierarchical in nature (Shi, 2001; Lohmann, 2003; Lewis, 2002). This further questions the role and right of citizens to hold the government accountable. However, the process of shifting state legitimacy can be a delicate affair and produce further tension and fragmentation since it challenges traditional power structures and replaces them with citizen power (Pye & Verba, 1965). Moreover, despite that citizens in these situations lack a clear political identity, collective groups tend to be stronger (Pollis, 1996). Collectives in post-conflict countries are shaped by multiple, crosslinking and interpersonal relationships and tend to adhere to approved social values (Pollis, 1996; Licht *et al*, 2007).

Although liberalism advocates that individuals are free to form their lives, donors' definition of accountability do not account for a 'collective' choice. In this case, the liberal notion of accountability is upheld by authoritarianism where the "freedom of the masses would be restricted in favour of the freedom of the few" (Harvey, 2005:70). So far, the texts suggest that donors primarily conceptualise accountability based on its democratic 'western' usage, i.e. emphasise on state answerability towards the population, rather than per its marketization orientation. Whether this applies to Afghanistan will be discussed in chapter five.

The fragile accountability identity of citizens and collective groups in liberal statebuilding begs the question of who promotes the concept. Even in countries that experienced a more united citizenry, inhabitants have felt that the international community hijacks accountability by making elected politicians more accountable to external actors than to the local population (Shah, 2007). For example, in Uganda and South Africa, popular writings and blogs suggest that people feel disempowered by the presence of international organisations (Mwenda, 2013a; 2013b). Young NGOs have also been found to use a strong 'Good Governance' vernacular to satisfy donors', rather than citizens', interest in exchange for funding (Mwenda, 2013b). Citizens, both in countries that have weak and strong unity, have consequently had a hard time engaging with accountability due to the dominant role of international actors, which has to some extent also distorted the meaning and objective of the norm (Dubnick, 2002; Bovens, 2007). To 'export' accountability has thus proven to be quite complicated and, at times, has even legitimised authoritarianism rather than democracy (Zweifel, 2006; Sperling, 2009). For example, donors have redirected accountability from the population by demanding non-Western governments to be accountable to donors, despite being non-transparent themselves (Cooke & Kothari, 2002; Rubin, 2006). Donors have also been known for caving to political pressure and striking compromising deals to advance agendas that were harmful to the democratisation process (Sperling, 2009). Accountability in liberal statebuilding faces thus many challenges in building the necessary power relationships described in donors' definitions.

Accountability within the International Community

Due to the complexities in exporting democratic norms donors have officially shifted their statebuilding approach from coercion and contestation to more facilitation, empowerment and capacity building (Chandler, 2006). While this policy shift might not completely reflect reality, it has nevertheless created a dimension "where it appears that non-Western states have ownership of policies which are externally imposed and where it is the poorest and most excluded sections of non-Western societies which are the agents of policy" (Chandler, 2006:77). The emphasis on domestic ownership has altered the lens of accountability from donors to post-conflict states, despite domestic policies that are heavily influenced by external actors. Chandler (2006) contends that local actors are deprived of political autonomy to decide their

own fate and assume accountability themselves. Whilst every case varies, countries that are experiencing humanitarian crises and have limited revenue sources are more prone to this statement, due to aid dependency, than countries that are in a more stable development setting. Said (1994) coheres and claims in *Culture and Imperialism* that it is the most powerful that have the luxury to distance themselves from foul play in faraway lands. Paris (2010:355) refines and claims that the West shies away from “*illiberal* behaviour of international administrators, including their relatively unconstrained and unaccountable exercise of power and methods to discourage local political activity and participation”. The questionable integrity of the ‘exporters’ of accountability in liberal statebuilding raises many queries, including why accountability should be ‘exported’ if those that promote it are not accountable themselves (Ferguson, 2003). This is important as it shows that donors can impact the development of accountability in post-conflict states, not only through policies, but also indirectly through their own behaviour.

The ability to hold donors accountable is therefore relevant. International Organisations (IOs) are primarily accountable to funding states, but not equally to all, since priority is given to those with the highest financial contribution and the strongest geopolitical position (Zweifel, 2006; Newell & Bellour, 2002; Sperling, 2009). Donors themselves tend to be accountable to their own parliaments that are far away from the statebuilding arena. It is difficult to identify decision-makers in the international community and obtain detailed information about their actions (Zweifel, 2006). Consequently, the inability to hold policy debate and scrutinise the international community can create quite an undemocratic and unaccountable environment (Held & Koenig-Archibugi, 2005). This can impact the development of accountability in Afghanistan if those who preach it do not live by it as will be discussed in chapter seven. Accountability struggles further since there is no shared collective identity of a population, no elective representatives nor a common political agenda at the international level (Ibid). Accountability’s source of power, citizens, is in this case missing, compromising legitimacy. For example, transnational corporations and NGOs, at times, speak on behalf of certain communities without being directly elected or without having official political support (Nanayakkara, 1994). These organisations, in these cases, are not recognised as legitimate accountability enforcers since the principle of collective action and official representation is missing (Newell & Bellour, 2002). Although grassroots organisations have arguably a better sense of community concerns and issues than top-down actors, legally, structurally and officially this relationship is not sufficient to act on behalf of the community as accountability enforcers.

Although liberal statebuilding, on one hand, is perceived by donors to be above national politics, since they are merely enforcing international norms, donors also try to adjust to

accountability pressures (Chandler, 2006). There have been several High Level Forums on Aid Effectiveness since 2006 to increase donor accountability. Initially, donors acknowledged the need for accountability of international policies, but argued that the enforcement mechanisms should be that of traditional national parliaments and political elected representatives (OECD, 2006). In 2008, the Accra Agenda for Action recognised the existence of non-state actors and agreed on greater donor transparency to achieve development results (High Level Forum, 2008). Despite these advances, enforcement mechanisms continued to be that of traditional political structures, such as parliamentary scrutiny in donor countries. Moreover, NGOs continued to be perceived as merely programme implementers. In 2011, the High Forum in Busan invited CSOs and the private sector to participate, and it recognised the need for mutual accountability. The Busan Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation stated: "Mutual accountability and accountability to the intended beneficiaries of our cooperation, as well as to our respective citizens, organisations, constituents and shareholders, is critical to deliver results. Transparent practices form the basis for enhanced accountability" (High Level Forum, 2011:3). This document acknowledges the legitimacy of accountability, based on impact, instead of elections, by recognising the need to be accountable to beneficiaries. This is a key development since it opens the power relationship of accountability beyond that of state and citizen. This is very useful for assessing accountability in Afghanistan as it allows the thesis to examine the norm not only for its existence but also for its impact.

Accountability development, as part of the liberal statebuilding, is therefore impacted by more than just the local state and population. Its conceptualisation at policy level is predominantly western, and its purpose is to fulfil a democratic function to redistribute power. Despite these policy orientations, NPM, which gives accountability a more marketisation orientation, is present in liberal statebuilding and conflicts with some the norm's basic political functionality. Whether this is the case in Afghanistan will be discussed later in this thesis, but this chapter will utilise the text presented so far to conceptualise the norm for the purpose of this thesis and to build a conceptual framework to which the empirical data can be compared.

Conceptual Framework

The different interpretations of accountability have made it difficult to know when accountability is achieved since it is very context dependent. As seen above, accountability has been centred on processes and outcomes, i.e. what it should *achieve*, rather than on conceptual purpose and rationale, i.e. what it *is*. Violating behaviour can therefore often be interpreted as non-forthcoming rather than unaccountable (Shah, 2007; Mulgan, 2003). This is very problematic since exporting accountability based on processes without its political function risks using accountability for labelling purposes since it guides the liberal statebuilding's attention to structural outcomes, rather than on norm development (Sinclair, 1995). For the purpose of this

study, it is important however, to bring some conceptual clarity in order to create a baseline of what the liberal statebuilding wanted to develop in order to assess with the empirical data whether it was successful. Arguably, this creates a rigid definition of accountability, however for this research's purpose it serves as a point of reference to see whether liberal statebuilding in Afghanistan was able to create what it set out to do and, thereby, facilitate a critical analysis of its methodology. This section is divided in two parts and will first define accountability per the text presented in this chapter before outlining the thesis' conceptual and analytical framework.

Conceptualisation Discussion

As seen earlier in this chapter, the underlying legitimacy of citizen power is its ability to call the government to account (Nanayakkara, 1994). It is exercised through political negotiation during elections and policy dialogue (Mulgan, 2003). Accountability, in principle, is thus directed towards the power source since it has the legitimacy to pass sanctions, terminate your 'contract', and grant you further power (Roberts & Scapens, 1985; Nanayakkara, 1994). For example, the Ukrainian Revolution in February 2014 was awakened by citizen dissatisfaction over government performance and they withdrew their votes, i.e. democratic power, resulting initially in civil unrest and conflict but causing a change in the Ukrainian socio-political system, including the formation of a new interim government. Although governments can be very potent, democratic power lies fundamentally with citizens, should they choose to seize it. Linear and hierarchical power relationships on the other hand, such as those found in post-conflict states, remove the negotiation element of expected behaviours (Roberts & Scapens, 1985). Moreover, information, goals and objectives might be contrasting for different levels of the hierarchy, resulting in a very incoherent, anarchical and survival-oriented system (Ibid). In the case of NPM, it is also linear power flow, but the accountability relationship is specified through contractual and performance-based agreements and incentivised by profit and achievement (Shah, 2007; Hodge & Coghill, 2007).

Consequently, the structure of legitimacy guides power either in a circular notion, such as in democratic accountability, or through a linear trail, such as in NPM and hierarchical systems and therefore is an essential norm characteristic. In the first case, human action constrains government performance through political negotiation and vice versa. In the case of NPM, market choice impacts government performance but citizens are unable to guide it due to limited access to policy-makers and the absence of political negotiations. Consequently, both constraining and enabling accountability elements are limited within this framework. Moving on to hierarchical systems, these are very difficult to assess since they operate both with formal and informal power, creating a very dynamic and fluctuating environment. Official bureaucratic structures can be mixed with traditional domestic structures where hierarchical order constrains and enables action (Samuels, 2006). This is a very competitive environment where agency is

generally controlled through coercion and violence (Dean, 2002; Dowding, 1996). The flow of power is crucial therefore to understand where accountability gains its legitimacy in Afghanistan.

Although the above paragraph serves to give a general understanding of the power underlying the legitimacy of accountability, it also simplifies government performance. Governments, even with similar ideological characteristics, can differ considerably. Traditionally, liberal governments have reported on their operations based on inputs, processes, and compliance with laws and regulations (Malachowski, 1990). Accountability has been reinforced through the checks and balances of the judiciary, executive and legislature, as framed in constitutions (Newell & Bellour, 2002; ODI, 2007). Answerability and enforcement is generated by the *mutual* recognition of power. Although a constitutional framework facilitates that, direct citizen power can also manifest through participation (incl. elections), monitoring and access to information (Waterman & Meier, 1998). The mutual recognition of citizen power is thus key to construct accountability as it recognises the decentralised power status of the state and needs consequently to be included in its conceptualisation.

Legislatures, in a traditional context, have access to a lot of information that they can pass on to the public through the media and technology (Mulgan, 2003). Despite these structural assurances, most Western states have acknowledged citizens' ownership and rights to information and promulgated Right to Information (RTI) legislation. In liberal states, parliaments also have a very important role in generating answerability and enforcement since they have the power and ability to question, investigate and scrutinise public officials and government operations (Mulgan, 2003). In hierarchical structures, answerability and enforcement are a bit more difficult since they are more likely to hide information because "public servants are still constrained by the need not to appear openly critical of their ministers" (Mulgan, 2003:58). The similar linear power flow of NPM exposes governments to the 'Accountability Trap' where administrators are keener to meet manager's requirements and deliver outputs without necessarily accomplishing service delivery or assessing its quality (Bovens *et al*, 2008; Radin, 2006). Short-term deliverables and fulfilling performance targets become more important and risk neglecting long-term goals (Mulgan, 2003). While NPM claims that administrative discretion helps inhibited discussions and encourages improvement in the public sector, this can also disrupt the information flow between citizens and government (Waterman & Meier, 1998). As a result, compromising answerability and enforcement can jeopardise the legitimacy of accountability by weakening citizen power.

A government-citizen relationship that does not acknowledge citizen power can still be responsive and responsible, but no longer accountable. If the political purpose of accountability

is removed, the relationship between government and citizens will transform to a simple power relationship. In other words, the state can be responsible for, but not *to*, the population. This is important to understand for the purpose of this thesis as the key relationship of accountability, per its democratic usage, is between these two actors. Moreover, it is the negotiated agreement between government and citizens that creates performance expectations, any deviation from it would be seen as excuses, apologies or pretext without accountability (Day & Klein, 1987). To summarise, accountability, as originally and western defined, relies on the mutual recognition of power between government and citizens to generate answerability and enforcement. Thus, citizens have the *right* to participate in the political sphere and *negotiate* political expectation. Based on the above discussions, this thesis defines accountability as follows: *A power relationship between citizens and government that generates answerability and enforcement and is based on negotiated political objectives.*

Despite the multiple structures that channel accountability power to generate enforcement and answerability to constrain government action, citizens under the democratic ethos have the agency to change the structures. For example, in India the heavy right-to-information advocacy campaign in the 1990s led to the Right-to-Information Act in 2002. It was not until 2005 that it was implemented, but it has been a very powerful tool to impact government performance (Agarwal, 2011). An example is the Adarsh Society Scam where politicians and military officials took over a building meant for widows and veterans. Citizen participation equipped with RTI led to the resignation of the Chief Minister of Maharashtra and to the investigation of multiple state officials (Ibid). In this case, Indian citizens were able to amend the structures that channel accountability power to have a bigger impact on government action. This example illustrates how the mutually acknowledged relationship between government and citizens contributes to answerability and enforcement. NPM's philosophy to separate the administration from politics severs this relationship and, consequently, fractures accountability since it deviates the source of power from its enactment. This distinction between political action and marketization needs to be considered when analysing the empirical data from Afghanistan.

Based on the above discussion, three accountability characteristics are selected as the foundation for this thesis' conceptual framework based on its normative features rather than its operational functionality. These are Power Relations, Government-Citizen Relationship, and Accountability Methods. The latter refers to the various methods, such as participation and regulation, used to implement accountability. These are used to examine the case study of Afghanistan and will be explained below.

Accountability Characteristics

This chapter has unpacked accountability and discovered its multifaceted nature. The terminology has been interpreted in various ways based on processes and structural objectives. Whilst this has its advantages for operational purposes, the distinct applications massacre the concept and limits accountability to what it *is* in a given sector, i.e. descriptive, rather than on what it *ought* to be. This is not to say that accountability has not been conceptually discussed but rather, that its definition is not internationally, or even Westernly, agreed. For the purpose of this thesis, three characteristics are selected to create a conceptual framework of accountability. These are: Power Relations, Government-Citizen Relationship, and Accountability Methods. These are chosen based on their contribution to the definition of accountability selected for the purpose of this thesis and are outlined below:²

Power Relations: Throughout the chapter it has been clear that the source of power is crucial for accountability. The direction and movement of power identifies who should be accountable to whom and creates an agreement on constraining and enabling criteria of action. Moreover, the means of agreement, which in the democratic context refers to elections and political negotiations, determines the creation of expectations. It is the ability to negotiate that portrays the mutual recognition of power, which is an essential characteristic of accountability.

Government-Citizen Relationship: The relationship between citizens and government has been core to the discussion in this chapter. The recognition of citizens' role in the political sphere and citizens' self-identity determine the interaction the population has with the government. The nature of this relationship is therefore a fundamental accountability characteristic since it illustrates the government's ability to respond, address and adjust to citizen demands.

Accountability Methods: The method of how power is channelled is important to the manifestation of accountability. It is through accountability methods that answerability and enforcement can take place through controlling, regulating or participative means. It is important to understand how power is wielded in order to examine whether it is realising its objective in generating accountability. It is the ability to provide and to be held to account that is a critical accountability characteristic.

The author believes that these three characteristics help *define* accountability rather than describe its actions based on a specific context. As mentioned in the beginning of this chapter, this conceptual framework is used as a baseline to assess whether accountability developed in Afghanistan per that liberal statebuilding's liberal democratic conceptualisation. Recalling Finnemore and Sikkink's *Life Cycle* presented in the previous chapter, this research analyses

² Definition: A power relationship between citizens and government that generates answerability and enforcement and is based on negotiated political objectives.

each of these three accountability characteristics, i.e. the conceptual framework, against the three norm development phases. It is the combination of the conceptual framework and the analytical lens that provides this thesis' analytical framework as illustrated below.

The table below shows the three characteristics of the conceptual framework along its columns, and the three norm development stages along its rows to illustrate the analytical framework. First, in order to highlight the empirical data, the data findings will be presented in chapters five and six along the three accountability characteristics (columns) to see how each of these components manifested in Afghanistan. Second, at the beginning of chapter seven, the research findings will be analysed to see whether the liberal statebuilding mission in Afghanistan was able to construct accountability per the conceptual framework. In other words, was it able to create accountability as defined by its liberal definition? The focus here is on accountability itself, i.e. did the norm manifest as conceptualised? Third, at the end of chapter seven, the thesis will analyse the data through the analytical lens (rows) to understand the actual development of the norm and assess the liberal statebuilding's methodology in exporting a democratic concept. The focus here is on the actual methodology to see whether the approach is successful in conceptually generating the norms as intended. Additionally, power is used as a crosscutting theme to understand norm transformation and how accountability constructs and reconstructs in Afghan society.

Table 1: Analytical Framework

<i>Accountability</i>	Power Relations: Power flows, who is accountable to whom	Government-Citizen Relationship	Accountability Methods: Ability to generate answerability and enforcement
Emergence: Norm manifestation and it tries to gain social legitimacy			
Acceptance: Norm approved through socialisation and demonstration			
Internalisation: Norm is legalised and institutionalised			

Fourth, this combined analytical approach to statebuilding is, hopefully, original, and will contribute both to academic literature, and policy development and implementation, by proposing an alternative methodology to democratisation in chapters seven and eight (conclusion).

Conclusion

This chapter has shown that accountability is a key component to the good governance agenda and the democratisation process in liberal statebuilding. Dominant western donors see it as an important citizen activity to hold governments accountable and produce better development results. Although donors have recognised the need for citizen participation in governance, their own prioritisation, requests, and engagement impact post-conflict state behaviour. Subsequently, the development of accountability in statebuilding is impacted by clear citizen identity and power relationships, including those of non-state actors and donors.

The chapter primarily examined accountability and unpacked the concept in its political setting and showed that it is a power relationship between the government and the population based on answerability and enforcement. It also presented some accountability methods, such as legislation, elections and participation. An important point to remember is that a structural implementation of accountability can be void of its actual meaning and used for harmful practices whilst legitimatising it in the name of democracy.

Moreover, marketisation of accountability identifies it as a top-down linear activity based on efficiency and structure. New Public Management, a component of liberal statebuilding, uses this approach and unavoidably hampers accountability by separating government performance from citizen power. This is an important element to consider in the oncoming chapters since the manifestation of accountability helps identify its purpose in the liberal statebuilding process. The distinction between efficiency, as promoted by NPM, and political power distribution, defined by democratisation, will help identify the norm's trajectory in Afghanistan.

A conceptual framework of three accountability characteristics: power relations, government-citizen relationship, and accountability methods, was also proposed. These three were selected based on their ability to define accountability built on this definition: 'A power relationship between citizens and government that generates answerability and enforcement and is based on negotiated political objectives'. The analytical framework, combination of the analytical lens presented in the previous chapter, and the conceptual framework, was also presented. Having identified together with the previous chapter *how* and *what* will be analysed in this research, the next chapter will explain this study's methodology.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

This chapter is designed to provide the reader further understanding on the rationale for the particular approaches taken in the doctoral research. Based on the research objective, a research strategy was developed to establish a suitable methodology for the thesis; its ontological and epistemological foundations will also be justified in this chapter. Although this thesis aims to see whether accountability in Afghanistan was established per the liberal democratic definition, thus quite compatible with a deductive objective, this thesis is an inductive research piece (Hart, 2003; Punch, 2001). Rather than identify artificial quantifiable accountability measurements, the research has detected behaviour and performance patterns through the empirical data in order to provide a broad space for Afghans to self-identify and conceptualise accountability based on their own experience (Blakie, 2000). This of crucial importance since it allows the research to distinguish between the accountability that *is*, and the accountability that *ought* to be in order to see whether these two match or have merged into something new, or alternatively, whether these have evolved completely differently.

This chapter is divided into five main sections. The first section presents the ontological and epistemological rationale of the research framework whilst the second section presents the research strategy. After justifying the foundations for this research, the third and fourth sections will present the methodological decisions that were made in collecting and analysing the data from the field research in Afghanistan. Section five provides a space for self-reflection on issues of positionality and conflict-sensitive research.

Research Framework

As mentioned at the introduction of this thesis, this research aims to understand the kind of accountability that was developed through the liberal statebuilding in Afghanistan between 2001 and 2013 in three government entities. Under this general umbrella, the research aims specifically to address the following research questions:³

1. Has accountability in Afghanistan manifested per the liberal democratic definition?

This question tries to understand how the Afghan demand for accountability has impacted the Western supply of accountability as part of the statebuilding suite. It looks at the interaction of Afghan realities with the desired idealistic liberal outcomes. In other words, did accountability manifest as intended by the liberal statebuilding? The conceptual framework provides a baseline for the liberal democratic definition of accountability to which the empirical material from fieldwork is compared.

³ These will be concretely answered in chapter seven

2. How have the social and political realities in Afghanistan impacted the creation of accountability?

This is a key point in the research since it aims to understand the cultivation of accountability amongst Afghan citizens, an imperative to the conceptualisation of the norm since its enforcement relies on individual self-regulation. It further aims to understand the interaction between informal and formal practices in generating political (accountability) behaviour.

3. How has the presence of international donors impacted the development of accountability in Afghanistan?

This question strives to understand how the international community impacts power distribution and power relations in generating a political norm, i.e. accountability, in a post-conflict country.

Having identified the objective of the research, it is important to select suitable ontological and epistemological paradigms to interpret the data. For the purpose of this research, a paradigm that understands the complexity of human behaviour in dynamic environments catalysed by conflict, such as in Afghanistan, is paramount. The research requires a deeper understanding of the constant changes in cognitive, institutional and value orientations of individuals and society. The most common disciplines in social sciences that relate conceptual manifestations to the subject of research are, amongst others, positivism, critical theory, constructivism and structuralism (Punch, 2001). Whilst Positivism provides better data reliability and validity in theoretical constructions, its fundamental reliance on natural laws provides limitations for social studies since it simplifies the complexities of human behaviour (Bryman, 2004). Critical Theory, on the other hand, focuses more on the distribution and balance of power, justice, education and religion amongst different groups and entities in society (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005). Whilst this paradigm might be useful to understand the dynamics between those actors that impact the development of accountability in Afghanistan, it would deviate the focus from norm development (technical) to the human motivations underlying norm manifestation (political). Naturally, these two entities are intertwined and their mutual influence, nevertheless, will always be present.

Constructivism focuses on the creation, assertion and destruction of phenomena by social action, which would be suitable to understand the constant changes present in conflict zones (Bryman, 2004). Whilst Constructivism helps to understand the human interaction with the democratic norm of accountability, Structuralism helps to understand the norm creation in itself. In this case, human behaviour is both the product and creator of institutions and dominant values, i.e. norms (Hart, 2003; Blakie, 2000). Structuralism argues that the pillars of structure are power, resources and rules, which are based on culture, knowledge and beliefs (Blakie, 2000). This further helps the research to unpack norm transformation by identifying the means

that impact the development of accountability in Afghanistan. Whilst no paradigm is better than the other, but merely provide different vehicles to conceptualise research, both Constructivism and Structuralism have been found suitable for this research. Although most research is primarily based on one paradigm alone, it was found that the selection of one single paradigm could limit the complexities of a post-conflict scenario. To summarise, this research is based on Constructivism to understand the human interaction with accountability, and Structuralism to understand the actual norm development of the democratic norm.

Having established the research framework, the next section will proceed in further specifying the scope of this research by unpacking the research strategy.

Research Strategy

This research aims to contribute both to policy and academia by providing a deeper understanding of Western norm development in post-conflict countries. As previously mentioned in chapter one, this thesis does not question the idea of liberal statebuilding per se, but rather deals with the realistic recognition that this Western practice exists today, and focuses on its methods of delivery. This research aims thus to generate two primary contributions.

Contribution 1: Despite the backup of Western power and resources, over 50% of states return to conflict after international peace interventions (Galtung and Tisné, 2009; Samuels, 2005; Del Castillo, 2011). The work of Carothers (2007), Hehir and Robinson (2007), and Cousens (2005) have not only shown that the international community fails to deliver democratic states, but that they also contribute to illiberal practices in post-conflict countries. Scholars and policy makers continuously struggle to solve this Rubik's Cube, and those that are more practically inclined, such as Good Enough Governance practitioners, often wonder about the sequence of events, resources and power intervention. These questions echo across many political science disciplines, including Functionalists, where for example, Paris (2010) contends that state institutions ought to be built before actual liberalisation. Often, the ability of post-conflict states to manage conflict and pluralism has, consequently, been brought to question (Chandler, 2010b). It is within this framework that this doctoral research aims to make its first contribution to policy makers by providing a deeper understanding of how local communities engage, or resist, external norms and how the *method* of norm dissemination can contribute to organic growth of democratic norms.

Contribution 2: Within the wider statebuilding context described above, Critical Peacebuilding scholars, such as Mac Ginty (2010), Richmond (2009a; 2012b) and Tadjbakhsh (2011), criticise the liberal agenda for devaluing local forms of agency and resistance. Their approach puts the

'local' at the core of peacebuilding and provides an analytical lens for unpacking power and interrelation dynamics to understand issues of emancipation, 'the everyday' and hybridity (Paffenholz, 2013). Whilst Critical Peace Studies explain the presence or absence of local interaction, it has thus far to provide a more nuanced analytical framework to explain the quality of such interaction. For example, hybridity is supposed to be the emergence of a new identity that is negotiated and re-established without following an assumed hierarchy (Mishra & Shirazi, 2010; Dean & Leibsohn, 2003). Whilst it is important to identify the emergence of a new identity based on the interaction between the 'local' and the 'external', it would also be interesting to understand how this emergence occurs. This research therefore tries to contribute academically to Critical Peace Studies by suggesting norm development as an analytical framework to understand not only the presence of local engagement and resistance, but also the *quality*.

Research Stages

In order to answer the research questions and generate the desired abovementioned contributions, this research went through four research stages.

Stage One: A comprehensive literature review of accountability was carried out. Whilst the study of accountability is present, primarily in political science, its conceptualisation was rather murky. Very little research has been dedicated to clarify the multiple-identity disorder of accountability, and scholars appear rather satisfied with the differences in interpretation depending on their respective field of study. The lack of conceptual clarity and scholarly ownership made it initially difficult to situate this research in a particular school of thought. The absence of research of accountability in a statebuilding context expanded the literature review to themes of power, trust and norms to understand the constructive elements of accountability during an international peace mission. Furthermore, in order to understand the dynamics facing accountability during a post-conflict setting, an additional literature review of statebuilding and good governance was carried out.

Stage Two: The first stage helped to identify norm development as an analytical lens to understand the process of Western norm immersion in a post-conflict country. As explained in chapter one, Finnemore and Sikkink's *Norm Life Cycle* provided a vehicle to understand the different saturation phases of accountability in a post-conflict state. By differentiating the different norm stages of emergence, acceptance and internalisation, it helped the research to recognise how accountability gains its acceptance, power and legitimacy during a liberal statebuilding process. Moreover, the literature review helped to identify power as a transformation element to norm development.

Stage Three: Having identified the analytical vehicle for the research, the literature review also helped to create a clear conceptual framework as presented in chapter two. Accountability was broken down into three conceptual characteristics: power relations, government-citizen relationship, and accountability methods. These three elements were chosen based on the accountability definition used in this research since they jointly generate a 'holistic' view of accountability rather than merely reflect individual accountability components.⁴ For example, an accountability component is participation. Whilst statebuilding might be able to generate partial participation, this in itself does not create partial accountability. To clarify, accountability components are vertical elements that *describe* accountability whilst accountability characteristics are horizontal elements that *define* accountability. Additionally, the selection of accountability components over characteristics would have created confusion in the conceptual framework since these elements are conceptually big enough to stand on their own.

Stage Four: In order to answer the research questions, it was imperative for the research to select a specific situation, Afghanistan, and analyse accountability in a real life context. The use of contemporary empirical data allowed the research to examine the development of accountability in a post-conflict country and gave greater insight into the dynamics of norm exportation in liberal statebuilding missions. Although a comparative study might have been interesting, the selection of a singular case allowed for greater depth.

Thus far, this chapter has justified the foundations of this research by presenting the research framework and strategy. The next section will elaborate on the data collection process.

Data Collection

The main objective of this research is to understand what kind of accountability developed in Afghanistan by understanding how people engaged with the norm and how the norm itself morphed during the liberal statebuilding. The data required for this research, therefore, would require a methodology that would allow the researcher not only to understand the official manifestation of accountability, but also see how people behave, identify and interact with the norm in the country itself. Qualitative research provides a rich context to the motives and drives behind human action and is able to generate more nuanced data (Alasuutari *et al*, 2009). Qualitative methods usually include interviews observations, focus groups and content analysis (Punch, 2001). Due to its content richness, qualitative research can be difficult to analyse and validate (Blakie, 2009). Quantitative research, on the other hand, can manage larger data banks with higher accuracy and is capable of providing comparative and causal relationships (Marsh & Elliott, 2008). However, it has been criticised for generalising human behaviour

⁴ Accountability Definition: A power relationship between citizens and government that generates answerability and enforcement and is based on negotiated political objectives

(Blaxter, 2002). Although both of these methodologies carry their own worth, qualitative methods are generally found more compatible with social sciences as they help to understand the multifaceted nature of human kind. Due to this reason, this research primarily adopted a qualitative methodology since it fits nicely within the research's ontological and epistemological constructivist dimension and is best capable of capturing the transformation elements of norm development. Accountability after all relies primarily on human interaction and self-subjugation to socially constructed standards. Although this is a qualitative study, a citizen survey was used for the purpose of this thesis. The justification for using a singular quantitative method in a qualitative research was to capture citizens' perception of accountability, which would have been impossible through qualitative methods due to the high volume of respondents.

Having identified the appropriate methodology for the research, Afghanistan was selected to study the metamorphosis of accountability. The decision to choose Afghanistan was based on three criteria: 1) Afghanistan is one of the biggest ODA recipients and is high on the international agenda since it is perceived as a threat to global security and Western civilisation. Afghanistan not only 'attracted' the attention of the liberal peace agenda, but also the political and financial resources of Western nations. In 2011, Afghanistan received 6.7 billion USD in ODA, sustaining it as the main aid recipient in the world (WB, 2013); 2) Afghanistan is currently hosting an international statebuilding mission, which heavily promotes good governance and accountability, as part of donors' strategy to stabilise the country (GIROA, 2010); 3) the researcher felt comfortable working in Afghanistan due to her previous working experience in Muslim post-conflict countries for several years. Moreover, she had worked in Afghanistan's good governance sector for three years prior to the PhD process.

Having specified the primarily qualitative nature of this research and justified the selection of Afghanistan, the next section will explain the primary data collection process.

Empirical Process

This research used primary data, consisting of interviews and household surveys, collected between May and July 2012. This field research was not funded or hosted by any organisation but organised directly by the researcher. She primarily stayed with a friend who worked for GiZ while in Kabul and rented rooms from civil society organisations when visiting provinces. She paid and handled for all logistics directly and used private local taxis and recommended drivers to move around. The purpose of the data collection was to understand the type of accountability that was developed during the liberal statebuilding process through qualitative interviews and citizen perception surveys. In order to answer the research question, this study aimed to capture different groups' interpretations and experience of accountability in Afghanistan. It explored formal and informal rules of engagement with accountability and the

motivation that led different agents to engage with the norm. Considering the top-down nature of the statebuilding process in Afghanistan, and the centralised promotion of accountability, this research targeted three types of participants (GIroA, 2008; 2010):

1. *Public Officials and Policy Makers:* Accountability, as explained in chapter five, is primarily conceptually 'present' in the Afghan public sector. Due to the Western norm's dissemination format through international agreements, Afghan policy-makers and senior officials are amongst the first 'locals' to interact with accountability. Their experience, identification and behaviour towards the norm are, therefore, crucial to this research in order to understand political actors' engagement and acceptance of accountability. The 'supply' of accountability, ultimately, lies in the hands of public officials.
2. *Non-State Actors:* In order to narrow this category, participants were selected amongst non-state actors who had or could have an engaging role with the government. This included donors and Afghan NGOs, social associations, media outlets and academics. The inclusion of these participants in the research was of crucial importance since they are the other side of the power relationship that 'demands' accountability from the state. Arguably, this selection of participants prioritises the elite; however since accountability is a new concept in Afghanistan, the research prioritised those participants who were most likely to have been exposed to the norm. This allowed the research to understand participants' interaction with accountability at a deeper level than expanding the research to include those who have yet to engage with the concept.
3. *Citizens:* Although the emergence of accountability as a democratic norm is relatively new, the perception of Afghan citizens is paramount since accountability reflects citizen power in holding the government accountable for its performance. The manifestation of accountability is naturally very important, but so is the perception since human belief can alter behaviour as much as rules and structure.

As a result, three data collection techniques were selected to engage with the abovementioned participants; these were direct observations, interviews and survey. While this section introduces their basic framework, the following subsections will further elaborate on the scope and depth of the interviews and survey. Direct observation and interviews are traditional qualitative data collection techniques. The use of observations is always useful to record unspoken behaviours, reactions and attitudes while providing the researcher a tool to be continuously alert and self-reflective (Flick, 2002). This technique allowed the research to record human interaction in a conservative and heavily politicised environment and served as a triangulation mechanism. For the purpose of this thesis the researcher documented amongst

other things her observations of human interaction between 1) government officials in central ministerial and regional meetings; 2) citizens and public servants at subnational level to observe the reaction, action and attitude of both parties while providing and acquiring a public service; 3) shura members in villages to observe their structure and interaction patterns; and 4) all interviewees were observed to see their reaction to specific accountability situations/questions. Interviews, on the other hand, come in different shapes and sizes; they can be personal or held in a focus group and be structured, unstructured or semi-structured (Punch, 2001). Due to the sensitive and political nature of accountability in Afghanistan, focus groups were discounted since individuals tend to adjust to group dynamics and provide different answers than in individual interviews (Flick, 2002). The selection of personal interviews can provide participants with higher levels of confidence, trust and confidentiality (Punch, 2001). Although structured interviews can render high levels of comparability, since they require specific answers, they limit participants' answers to the interest of the researcher, rather than the participants' experience (Flick, 2002). Unstructured interviews are similar to conversations and have open questions; they primarily focus on the individual's experience. Whilst this can provide a rich context, it can also be rather descriptive. Semi-structured interviews, which were used in this research, can assure that specific issues are covered while allowing for a bigger explanatory and reflective account from the interviewees (Blaxter *et al*, 2004).

In order to capture the required information, 103 semi-structured interviews, primarily in English, were carried out in a personal interviewing style and consisted of open, closed, specific, multi direction and conceptual questions. The sequence, location and timing were carefully monitored and re-evaluated to obtain relevant and valid data (Flick, 2002). The interviews were also recorded in order to provide a detailed verbatim account of the interviews. Although recording can make interviewees anxious and create a lot of work in transcribing and analysis, it also gives 100% accuracy and allows the interviewer to manage the interview more efficiently and professionally (Blaxter *et al*, 2002). Moreover, participants were given the option of no recording if desired.

Semi-structured interviews were identified as particularly useful to understand how the two first types of participants engaged with accountability. The interviews, therefore, were divided into five interview sections:

1. Emergence of accountability

Question Sample:

- In your opinion, what were the key elements that promoted the development of accountability?

- Are there any segments of the Afghan society that are specifically demanding for accountability? If yes, which and how? If no, why not?

2. Framework of Accountability Policies

Question Sample:

- How would you define accountability?
- Has there been enough support given to implement accountability policies? If yes/no, please elaborate.

3. Prioritisation of Accountability

Question Sample:

- How should accountability be supported in order to be effective?
- Is accountability introduced at the right time? If no, when would be the right time? If yes, why?

4. Implementation of Accountability Policies

Question Sample:

- How well do civil servants (nat/sub-nat) understand accountability policies?
- Do Afghan public institutions have the resources to implement accountability policies? If yes/no, please expand.

5. Suitability of Accountability

Question Sample:

- Which method or process should one use to develop accountability policies in Afghanistan?
- Is accountability suitable for the current political situation in Afghanistan? If yes/no, why?

These five interview sections provided the first two categories of participants with a roadmap whilst allowing them to freely express their experiences and interpretations. While the questions were slightly altered between the two categories, the interview sections remained the same to preserve the integrity of the roadmap. The rich empirical narratives have given this research the main bulk of its voluminous and rich data and are therefore exclusively presented in chapters five and six. The last and final component was collected from the third category of participants through a citizen survey conducted primarily in Dari. Whilst individual citizen interviews could have provided rich data, this methodological technique was found unsuitable since most average citizens had limited interaction and exposure to accountability. Moreover, the experience of individual cases would not have provided enough data to understand *citizens'*

perceptions, but rather just rendered case-by-case opinions. The survey was thus designed to evaluate: 1) citizens' understanding of accountability, 2) the existence of accountability in the Afghan state, and 3) the degree of government accountability.

A good questionnaire measures the factors of interest (listed above), elicits accurate information and convinces respondents to cooperate (Czaia & Clai, 1996). In designing the questionnaire, it was important to consider issues of validity, discrimination, response rate, relevance, equal meaning and reliability (De Vaus, 2002). The survey was made relatively simple and short to entice participation (Gilbert, 2008; Czaia & Clai, 1996). Afghanistan has one of the lowest literacy and access-to-education rates in the world (EU, 2009). Therefore since citizens with little education were found prone to acquiescence, and are more easily influenced by questions, the survey used dichotomous and nominal questions to avoid confusion (Lemon, 1973; McFarland, 1981).⁵

In order to measure the factors of interests, an analysis plan for the survey was developed to assure adequate data was collected (Fowler Jr, 1993). The survey variables were defined as following:

- Dependent Variables
 - Age
 - Income
 - Location
- Independent Variables
 - Definition of Accountability
 - Perception of Government
 - Degree of Accountability
- Control Variables
 - Education

The dependent variables allowed the researcher to analyse segments of the population more closely in their selection of independent variables. Education was used to increase validity by providing a control element as its relation to income and political action is widely recorded in the literature (Czaja and Blai, 1996).

To summarise this subsection, this research has primarily used direct observations and semi-structured interviews to collect qualitative data amongst public officials, policy makers and non-state actors, and a citizen survey to capture citizens' perception of accountability. The following

⁵ Please refer to Annex 1 to view the survey

two sections will continue unwrapping the empirical process by explaining the methodological sampling.

Quantitative Process

Quantitative research, in this case a survey, requires a quite thorough sampling process, which is often impossible in post-conflict countries due to large population movements and unreliable and inaccurate population lists (Haer and Becher, 2012). Despite its complications, quantitative research has been conducted in Afghanistan by organisations, such as The Asia Foundation, Integrity Watch Afghanistan and the European Union. They use a more flexible methodology and acknowledge the challenges in generating data validity (EU, 2009). Whilst random and stratified sampling is highly problematic due to out-dated census and inaccurate population records, cluster sampling is the most beneficial strategy in a post-conflict setting (Haer and Becher, 2012). This research therefore used geographical maps to generate territorial lines for cluster sampling.

In designing this survey, the research used the findings of the National Risk and Vulnerability Assessment 2007/2008 to calculate its sample. The survey targeted Afghan adults in urban areas that had been exposed to government policies, which are more likely to be found in urban areas. The biggest urban centres in Afghanistan are the regional capitals: Herat, Kabul, Jalalabab and Mazar-e-Sharif.⁶ Considering time limitations and physical accessibility, four geographical sites were selected for the survey: Kabul capital, Kabul province, Herat and Mazar-E-Sharif.⁷ The cluster sample size was calculated using the following values (EU, 2009):

- Population size: 35.32 million
- Percentage of the population targeted for this survey: 48%
49% of the population are under the age of 15 and 3% are above 65
- Response Rate: 70-75%
Average NGO survey response rate, applicable to Afghanistan since people do not suffer from 'survey fatigue'
- Confidence Interval: 5%
- Confidence Coefficient: 95%
- Number of Clusters: 16
4 per regional capital
- Estimated Design Effect: 1
- Eligible per household: 1

⁶ Kandahar is excluded from this list as it is in one of the most contested areas of the country and has limited formal government exposure.

⁷ Please see Annex 2 for more information

Using these parameters, the sample size for each cluster was calculated at 32, making a total sample size of 512 (Groves *et al*, 2004; WB, 2011; Kalton, 1983). Since Afghanistan does not have accurate population lists and the study is using geographical maps for the research, cluster size was assumed to be equal. However, in order to mitigate field uncertainties an additional 66 surveys were given to Herat, Kabul Province and Mazar-e-Sharif and distributed evenly. Also due the capitals' superior population size, 250 surveys with a minimum of 60 surveys per cluster were conducted, making the total survey size 700.

Each geographical location was divided into 8 clusters and 4 clusters were randomly selected; please see Annex 3 for more information. The techniques of random walk within the clusters and random intervals between households were adopted for the research since they have proven quite suitable for post-conflict countries (Haer and Becher, 2012). Moreover since the survey was conducted in a traditional, hierarchical male-dominated society, women and youth tend to be disproportionally represented due to social norms (European Social Survey, 2006). In order to mitigate this, the sample size has been adjusted to create a proportional representation of youth and women using NRVA demographic statistics. The survey therefore aimed to achieve the following distribution⁸:

Table 2: Survey Demographic Sampling Distribution

Age	Female	Male
15-24	21%	22%
25-39	15%	14%
40-64	14%	14%

With the help of local researchers, the author was able to identify university students in each of the regions to carry out the survey. These were trained by the researcher in university and local think-tank facilities in each region and were asked to collect 75 surveys (83 in the capital) during a period of 3 weeks. To recapitulate, 700 questionnaires, primarily conducted in Dari, were carried out face-to-face in the Afghan capital and in Herat, Mazar-e-Sharif and Kabul sub-national region. Special considerations were taken to assure the participation of youth and women, which might otherwise have been marginalised due to prevailing social norms. The following subsection will continue explaining the sampling process for the qualitative data techniques.

⁸ The survey succeeded to achieve the targeted distribution in all regions except Herat where female participants were slightly overrepresented due to human error but this was then mitigated in the analysis.

Qualitative Process

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, semi-structured interviews and direct observations were primarily collected from public officials, policy makers and non-state actors. In order to narrow the sample size, public institutions, donors and Afghan civil society were selected based on their exposure and engagement to accountability and good governance initiatives. Amongst Afghan government institutions, three bodies were selected due to their key role in promoting, implementing and enforcing accountability policies:

1. *Ministry of Finance (MoF)*

Ministry of Finance has received significant donor support to assure budgetary integrity and a healthy Public Financial Management, which are essential to accountability since two of the biggest citizen leverages are taxation and budget expenditure.

2. *Independent Directorate for Local Governance (IDLG)*

IDLG is responsible for local subnational representation and is the most important institution that is responsible for managing government-citizen relationships at grassroots level. This institutional linkage is crucial for accountability since it oversees the negotiation of political outcomes between the population and the state.

3. *Anti-Corruption Institutions - The High Office of Oversight (HoO) and The Monitoring and Evaluation Committee (MEC)*

Both MEC and the HoO are responsible for identifying corruption, thus providing a channel for accountability enforcement in the case of abuse of power or resources.

Having identified the population, the research identified the sampling size by narrowing it to central senior officials and policy makers who had been directly involved in generating or implementing accountability policies. It then selected a random 10% of senior officials from the detailed organisational charts.⁹ The sample number varied in each institution as they are of different size but overall 32 public officials were interviewed. Most of these were male, as most senior officials in Afghanistan are. For more information, please refer to Annex 5.

Afghan NGOs, social associations, media organisations, academics and donors were also selected based on their involvement in demanding, promoting and enforcing accountability. At the sub-national level, the research took advantage of the qualitative sampling strategy to conduct semi-structured interviews and direct observations at the sub-national level. Similar processes were carried out in Herat, Mazar-e-Sharif and Kabul Province. All the interviews were carried out in the participants' natural setting in order to see their interpretation of their

⁹ Please see Annex 4 for more information on the *general* ministerial structures

environment, social structure and institution (Blakie, 2000). At the capital level, most interviews were conducted in English while those in the provinces were conducted primarily in Dari, with the occasional case in Pashtun. In the case of the latter, simultaneous translation was carried out by professional translators recommended and vetted by large international newspaper agencies although the researcher has a basic understanding of Dari. One of the key difficulties in researching accountability in Afghanistan was the translation of the norm, as it did not correspond 100% to the liberal interpretation. However this was important to record and explore since this thesis tries to assess whether the liberal statebuilding managed to construct what it set out to do. Given that this would be done in an Afghan context, the local conditions, including the verbalisation and utilisation of accountability, needed to be explored. Moreover, in order to maintain moral and professional obligations towards the participants, a transparent research process was also upheld throughout. Participants were informed about their options regarding consent, confidentiality and participation in advance, and all partaking was done on a voluntary basis. Those participants who chose to remain confidential were given a particular code to protect their identity. The code consists of two letters and three digits. Although the coding is part of an internal research system, the initial letter and digit will allow the reader to trace the code throughout the thesis to see whether the same interviewee has been quoted in different places.

Table 3: Qualitative Interviewee Coding

Code	Meaning	Code	Professional Level
S	Participant Type 1	1	Ministers, Governors, Ambassadors, Head of Organisations, Deputy Ministers
C	Participant Type 2	2	Director Generals, Mayors, CSO Directors, First Secretaries (Embassies)
		3	Directors, Technical Advisers, CSO Managers
		4	Civil Servants, CSO Project Staff

For example, 'Governance Expert – SN303' will let the reader know that the interviewee was a public official at a mid/upper level management status. In total, 32 public officials, 16 sub-national civil servants, 32 CSO representatives, and 23 sub-national associations were interviewed. A list of the 103 semi-structured interviews can be found in Annex 5.

To summarise, the research collected 700 citizen surveys and 103 semi-structured interviews amongst policy makers and non-state actors in Kabul (Capital and Region), Herat and Mazar-E-Sharif between May and July 2012.

Post-Conflict Research

Although research and data collection strategies are very useful, dynamic and volatile environments can present surprising challenges. This required backup plans for access, logistics, research and security purposes. This subsection will present some of the challenges

the researcher encountered during the data collection process. For example, problems accessing geographical locations or people were usually resolved with time as most areas and people became accessible at a second or third round. Moreover, as Afghanistan is a cash-based economy, the researcher had to ensure that sufficient cash was available at all times for transportation, telecommunication, accommodation and logistics.

Research problems on the other hand, such as awkward interview questions, were re-evaluated immediately in-house for reformulation according to the research's objective. In case of cultural sensitivity issues, local researchers were consulted. Unsurprisingly, another challenge was conducting quantitative research in a post-conflict country. Due to cultural sensitivity issues, and in order to avoid 'ghost' surveys, surveyors worked in pairs (woman and man) to assure gender outreach, representation and serve as a control mechanism. Additionally, although the university students received training by the researcher, the lack of experience and presence of quantitative research in Afghanistan made it difficult for the surveyors to understand the absolute need for methodological compliance. For example, surveyors, at times wanted to help respondents, who they perceived as illiterate, and provided additional probing and explanations to the survey questions. Continuous follow-up, communication and research management mitigated these problems.

Another issue that impacted the data collection process was translation. Translators were hired occasionally in each of the regions and identified with the help of media contacts as news agencies have a network of fixers who are capable and used to facilitate access and translation to international journalists relatively fast. The author preferred working with media or research connections in all regions rather than civil society translators as they are more accustomed to the interview style used in this research. Although translators were thoroughly briefed on the research, the chance for misinterpretation and misunderstandings were nevertheless higher than usual as they were often unaware of professional translation guidelines despite their impeccable language skills (Find & Kosecoff, 1998). Moreover, since the researcher was unable to process participants' answers directly, in case of translation, it limited the researcher's ability to adjust completely to the interviewee's style and needs. However, training and translator briefings were useful to maintain control over the interviews' objective. Survey translation, on the other hand, was addressed by back-translating the questionnaire twice by local researchers in order to establish the most agreeable expressions and terms in Afghan society. Survey answers were however not translated since they were numerically nominated and could be systematically analysed.

In general, issues relating to accessibility, logistics and research required higher levels of effort and work than in non-humanitarian settings, but they were all surmountable and manageable

problems. Issues of security on the other hand, were well beyond the control of the researcher. In order to conduct research safely, security and evacuation plans were made to limit unnecessary risks for the researcher, surveyors and participants. A communication and security network was established with International Organisations, NGOs, embassies, security forces, local civil society and public ministries. Security reports and intelligence will vary across organisations and their share volume can make it difficult to distinguish real security threats from rumours and inaccurate predictions. To address this issue, military and security information was triangulated with grassroots reports and insecurity patterns. In order to mitigate the insecurity, the author established solid security connections to ensure that the right information was accessed at the right time and used different intelligence information for different purposes, such as for daily exposure and travel arrangements. Moreover, the researcher registered with local police stations a week prior to data collection in order to avoid community disgruntlement and conflict. In the presence of a continuous volatile high risk, the data collection plan was abandoned and redesigned if possible. Technology such as computer, telecommunications and working facilities also contributed to the researcher's security as it facilitated access and dissemination of security information. Identification of adequate dress code, meeting places, movement areas, time and association were also security factors. Moreover having worked and travelled extensively in Afghanistan between 2009 and 2012 helped the researcher with the data collection process as she was very familiar with the local context and knew how and when to access different resources. Additionally former professional and social networks helped identify and access resources relatively fast. For more information, please refer to Annex 6.

A key point to remember is that although security poses a big challenge for researchers and research participants, security should not prevent the creation of knowledge if there is no direct threat to human life. The vast majority of security threats were manageable with adequate strategy, planning and resources. Ultimately, if "researchers and analysts are not prepared to engage in research until the guns fall silent, knowledge and understandings tend to be stuck at the pre- and post-war level". (Haer and Becher, 2012:2).

Data Analysis

The chapter has up to this point presented the rationale behind the research's framework, strategy and the data collection process. The current section will explain how the data was stored, codified and analysed.

The researcher is aware of how much time participants dedicated to contribute to this research and it is important to honour their commitment by treating the data with integrity. In order to show data validity, the research applied member checking, peer reviews and triangulation

(Groves *et al*, 2004). Each interview participant was allowed to review his or her transcript and provide feedback if wanted, and research findings and analysis were also shared with governance experts in Afghanistan for their inputs and comments (Bateson, 1984). This evaluation process created a space for reflection to assure that the research reflected Afghan realities accurately when compared to the analytical framework. It also created a sense of appreciation amongst participants, as they could see the product of their participation and encouraged their belief in research. Additionally, triangulation was used to increase data reliability. Multiple information sources, such as organisation reports, academic journals and news articles, were used to cross reference the empirical data (Flick, 2002). This helped to deepen the scope and analysis of the development of accountability in Afghanistan.

The researcher aimed to produce a credible study by using multiple research techniques and handling the data adequately. The empirical data was therefore documented in five different ways: field notes, surveys, databases, audio recordings and transcripts. Moreover, the codification of interviewees and respondents was repeated twice in order to assure that the information could not be associated with a particular person (Fowler Jr, 1993). Additional descriptive coding, using gender, age group and date, was applied across the board (Blakie, 2000). Topic and analytical coding was used to construct patterns, typologies and concepts (Ibid). The data was then further analysed in chapter seven to provide a deeper insight into the complexities of norm development in Afghanistan.

Qualitative data, in particular, was categorised and mapped out according to the three accountability characteristics in the conceptual framework: power relations, government-citizen relationship, and accountability methods. These were further broken down by identifying patterns and key themes; please refer to Annex 7 for more information. Quantitative coding on the other hand was a bit different since the data was classified and allocated codes and column numbers under each variable (Fowler Jr, 1993).¹⁰ The data was then analysed to establish patterns and correlations. While codification assists in organising the data, it was also important to analyse research findings as a whole in order to assure contextualisation to Afghan realities.

This thesis carefully considered the research's foundation, objective, strategy, techniques and management in order to create a valid piece of research that can help the dissemination of accountability in post-conflict settings. Whilst liberal statebuilding might encompass valuable democratic practices, all is not positive as explained in chapter one. Harm is still being generated in post-conflict countries, more often than not, by ignorance rather than malice. This study hopes to generate, through a comprehensive methodology, ideas to reduce Western footprints and facilitate an organic statebuilding process.

¹⁰ Please see Annex 8 for more information

Self-Reflexion

Although the researcher aimed to be as neutral as possible, no researcher is completely unbiased since s/he inevitably influences the construction, selection, collection, analysis and interpretation of the data (Blakie, 2000; Flick, 2002). Similar to other traditional, hierarchical and Muslim countries, Afghanistan can be a bit difficult to navigate for female researchers. The researcher had to perform a balancing act between her researcher role, perceived outside identity and personal character. Due to her physical complexion, the researcher was often confused for being Afghan, which impacted social interactions since Afghan social norms were initially applied to her. For example, when the researcher tried to wear the veil, she quickly discovered that her individual identity was suppressed by a 'female' identity. Social interactions with men became complicated and unclear as she had to struggle to create a neutral, open and equal environment. The author therefore chose to remove the veil in the capital and experienced an attitude change. People then perceived her as an 'international' which had its own complications since internationals were associated with Western culture and social norms. The attitude towards foreigners varied amongst people based on their own experience and could manifest a wide range of behaviour. However, the label of 'international' allowed for a more neutral research environment since social interaction was more relaxed and equal. Moreover, at times, participants felt more comfortable discussing with a 'neutral' party than with one that might be affiliated to the political or ethnic opposition.

Afghans are also very friendly and hospitable people who often invited the researcher to their homes and social life. Although this created a warm and more trusting rapport between the interviewee and researcher, it also created challenges in maintaining a professional relationship. Relationships in Afghanistan quickly become personal and social, which also reduced the privacy boundaries. In order to avoid that, the research tried to keep a friendly, but a bit distant relationship with participants. Since it is in human nature to socially interact with other individuals, the researcher was also aware not to dive too deeply into the expat world since it could disconnect her from Afghan realities as experienced by the population. Her ability to navigate both worlds offered her a fascinating insight into how both Afghans and internationals perceived their own realities. Naturally, they were not two homogeneous groups and the differences amongst them made for very interesting observations.

Due to the nature of this study and the considerable representation of Afghan public officials in the research, the author also had to adjust to a very hierarchical and politicised environment where age, ethnic and political affiliation influenced social interaction. Issues of power and trust frequently impacted civil servant behaviour amongst themselves, as well as with 'outsiders'. The researcher had to continuously be aware of these political dynamics in order to navigate the environment smoothly and collect data as impartially as possible. Moreover, the researcher had

not only to adjust communication styles based on different types of participants, but she also had to adjust her approach in different geographical areas. People in the capital were relatively more open minded, accustomed to 'internationals', and higher educated than those in the regions. People in regional hubs, even in Kabul region, tended to be more traditional, which had its pros and cons. People's attitude to liberal ideas or the 'West' tended to be more critical, but simultaneously, their adherence to traditional values also manifested in a more polite and respectful manner. Based on the participant's background, the researcher had to continuously be aware of her own behaviour in order to minimise the perception of a distant outsider. Cultural social codes, therefore, were used to mitigate this gap.

Working with local, i.e. to the region, university students, translators and fixers also helped assembling a view of the regional contexts relatively fast and tap into local dynamics and networks. Working with male students and translators went relatively smoothly as they were used to this kind of work and they carried themselves with competence and confidence. Female counterparts required however a more delicate approach as they often had to be encouraged and coached to take a more confident stand. It was only in the case of one translator, in Balkh, where things did not work out as planned. During the first day of interviews, the author was increasingly dissatisfied with the translator's performance as he attempted several times to shorten the questions and answers, provided misleading information and attempted even to take control of the interview process. The translator's performance lead the researcher to believe that he might not show up the following day so at the end of the first day she contacted her media contacts to find an alternative translator should it be needed. The following day, the initial translator did not show up and the standby translator arrived one hour later after the work was supposed to start. Although that pushed the schedule back a bit, all the interviews were carried out. The initial translator came however later in the evening to demand his entire pay but the author handed him only one day's pay and refused to pay the rest of his salary upon which he started to raise his voice and behave in an aggressive manner. He threatened to ruin the researcher's reputation, a very important element in Afghan society, and to call the police. The author remained however calm and said that it was not a problem and that she could facilitate both by calling the police and the people who had recommended him. As the researcher started dialling, the guard of the CSO guesthouse positioned himself beside her and the initial translator had a change of heart and left. The second translator, the driver and CSO guards were briefed on the situation and asked to be more vigilant in case they saw something out of the ordinary but the rest of the stay in Balkh unfolded peacefully. Besides this unpleasant experience, all other collaborations proceeded without any major problems. Few gatekeepers, mostly at subnational government level, were encountered during the data collection period. These were often bypassed by using higher connections. Previous contacts amongst civil society, donors, multilateral organisations, peacekeeping agencies, government, media, social

associations, cultural clubs and academia massively helped in finding alternative ways to access interview participants. Both in the case of hurdles and gatekeepers, the researcher was fortunate enough to have one foot in the 'real' Afghan society and another in the international community as this granted her additional access to Afghan structures and support systems whilst shielding her from social expectations. The researcher was aware of this balance and tried to handle it with care, respect and transparency to ensure the integrity of the research process and of her own person.

Moreover during the researcher's professional experience in Afghanistan, she had gained a deep insight into the interaction between international and local actors. She had been able to observe the arrogance of some international actors towards Afghans and the resentment and anger this created amongst local counterparts. She had also been able to understand the political pressures and financial requirements both international and Afghan actors experienced by their respective government bodies and the diplomatic environment this created. These experiences both helped and compromised the researcher's neutrality as she was capable of identifying strategic, prioritisation, implementation and political patterns quicker than a person without this professional background. However, at the same time her conclusions were often biased based on her previous experience in the country. This required a bit more work and self-awareness as she often had to revisit notes, documents and transcripts to make sure that her assessments were made/re-made as neutral as possible. While this took additional time, it was a rewarding process as she was able to critically assess herself and recognise in hindsight that she was more of a 'liberal expat' than she had previously believed while working in Afghanistan. For example, she had previously failed to incorporate traditional Afghan governance systems when developing or influencing policy at the Ministry of Finance in Kabul since they were structurally incompatible with the liberal system she was putting in place. Her assessment of 'incompatibility' was based on an efficient, structural and liberal approach, which was re-assessed as part of this research and helped her identify the biased rationale she had previously held. This assisted her in re-assessing the field data from a broader and more neutral angle. The experience in itself provided an opportunity for personal growth and was warmly welcomed. For visual documentation of the field research, please refer to Annex 10.

This research also complied with the university's research ethics procedures and aimed to produce knowledge for its own sake to advance the understanding of contemporary human interaction within the study's framework. The researcher tried to conduct herself as considerable as possible and to honour and respect each participant's contribution by reporting the research findings accurately. To the best of her ability and knowledge she adhered to best practices and hopes this research can be useful for both practitioners and academics.

Conclusion

This thesis aims to contribute to statebuilding policy and Critical Peace Studies by exploring the method in which democratic norms are developed in post-conflict countries. In order to generate this, a clear methodology framework was produced and presented in this chapter. Section one justified the selection of constructivism to assess people's interaction with accountability in Afghanistan and of structuralism to evaluate the development stages of the norm in a statebuilding context. More specifically, it identified the three research questions that guide this study:

1. *Has accountability in Afghanistan manifested per the liberal democratic definition?*
2. *How have the social and political realities in Afghanistan impacted the creation of accountability?*
3. *How has the presence of international donors impacted the development of accountability in Afghanistan?*

Section two presented the research stages of developing an analytical and conceptual framework to explore the abovementioned questions. Section three detailed the data collection process, including the justification for qualitative and quantitative collection techniques and the sampling process for semi-structure interviews and the citizen survey. Different logistics, access, research and security challenges and their mitigation actions were also explored to understand the research dynamics in Afghanistan. Section four discussed the coding process and management of the empirical data in order to demonstrate data validity. This chapter concluded with some self-reflective thoughts.

The thesis, thus far, has presented the study's analytical and conceptual framework by debating the challenges of liberal statebuilding and democratisation in chapter one, and of accountability conceptualisation in chapter two. This chapter, chapter three, provided a methodology structure for the research, which will now be applied to the case of Afghanistan. The subsequent chapter will start by contextualising the research's case study.

CHAPTER FOUR: STATEBUILDING IN AFGHANISTAN

Chapter one situated the scope of this thesis' research to liberal statebuilding and questioned the methods through which democratisation takes place in post-conflict states. Issues of trust, power and normative attitudes have been highlighted to contest the idea of a linear statebuilding process (Tadjbakhsh, 2011; Richmond, 2010a; Chandler, 1999). In order to question the methods of liberal statebuilding in more depth, the thesis has further narrowed the research topic to accountability in order to focus on the development and manifestation of one singular democratic component. Furthermore, as explained in the methodology, due to its high profile in international relations and aid assistance, Afghanistan has been selected as the case study for this research in order to examine the development of accountability as a norm in a post-conflict setting.

This chapter will set the wider context and go through the Afghan statebuilding process in order to contextualise the environment in which accountability develops. The purpose is to identify the case study's boundaries and therefore will not discuss the emergence of accountability as such, but will rather prove a historical overview of the statebuilding process, section one, and unpack the political dynamics in Afghanistan, section two, to further comprehend the local political culture. This is important as it will identify the local dynamics that can contribute, as well as counteract, the development of accountability.

Historical Overview of Statebuilding in Afghanistan

Afghanistan is a beautiful, mountainous and culture rich country. It is home to many ethnicities, including Pashtuns (majority), Tajiks (large minority), Hazaras and Balochs (EU, 2009; Lansford, 2003; Ewans, 2005).¹¹ Afghanistan has however experienced many natural and human-made disasters and today, 36% of the population lives in extreme poverty, and 48,6% is under the age of 15 (EU, 2009). Illiteracy, weak economy, high unemployment and conflict are some of the problems that face modern day Afghanistan (TAF, 2013). This thesis is however interested in the political and statebuilding activities that engage and manage these social and economic manifestations. This section will therefore outline the statebuilding process in Afghanistan from 1747 up to modern day to understand the background of Afghan authority and institutions. This is crucial to comprehend as it sketches the backdrop of the political framework that influences the emergence of liberal statebuilding and accountability.

Feudal State

In 1747, Afghan tribes united for the first time under the authority of one king, Ahmad Shah; he founded the Afghan state and established institutions per the neighbouring Persian model

¹¹ If interested in the ethnic composition, please refer to Annex 9

(Hopkins, 2008; Lansford, 2003). The Pashtun tribe influenced the political culture strongly as they had access to resources and tribe power, which frequently secured political positions (Lansford, 2003). The second largest ethnic group, Tajiks, were of Persian origin and tended to lead a sedentary life; this granted them greater access to higher education and a larger presence in the civil service.

The state, at that time, used a feudal system to distribute power and resources and the king ruled through personal charisma and a divide-and-conquer governance style to obtain balance between ethnic groups (Saikal, 2004). Supporting elements to accountability, such as trust, power distribution and institutional performance were, at that time, absent as the government's structures of power were hierarchical and linked to ethnic groups (Lansford, 2003). Moreover, the legitimacy of the state derived from divine right and was used to unite tribes as they "were otherwise too divided to unite on any other basis" (Barfield, 2010:123). The role of religion and ethnic structures monopolised the legitimacy of power enforcement and answerability to top-down actors and reduced the role of citizens, which would have been needed for the establishment of accountability.

Rentier State

The new-born Afghan state not only had to achieve internal balance between ethnic powers, but it also had to navigate regional power currents. Afghanistan was subjected to powerful foreign interests, amongst others from Britain in India, Napoleon in Persia and the Russians in the north (Maley, 2002). Britain and Russia, in particular, used Afghanistan as a buffer zone by making "sure that [they] had sufficient influence in the country to pre-empt any moves by the other" (Saikal, 2004:27). Amidst internal and external power contestations, the Afghan state suffered from poor integration and leadership in the 19th century (Barfield, 2010; Saikal, 2004). Britain used the political fragmentation to its advantage and forced several treaties upon the king; by the end of the 19th century, Britain seized control amongst others over Afghanistan's fiscal, defence and foreign policies (Ibid).

Although Afghanistan never became a colony, the state was highly influenced by external powers through funding and coercion (Barfield, 2010). The lack of government resources reduced the state's revenue sources to external aid, pillages and winner's spoils, making it a rentier state. The Afghan state, at that point in history, was unable to monopolise violence, power and territory, reflecting the characteristics of a very fragile state (Ibid). Consequently, the government continued to use a divide-and-conquer strategy, violence and religion to create stability amongst ethnic groups (Barfield, 2010). Whilst this created more order, it did not appease internal ethnic power struggles (Saikal, 2004). With the added component of external

aid and influence, power continued to flow in a hierarchical and top-down fashion and the presence of answerability mechanisms to develop accountability were still absent.

Islamic State

Tired of foreign influences, King Amanullah Khan used religion in 1919 to legitimise political action and, for the first time, appealed to the population to declare Jihad against the United Kingdom (Saikal, 2004). After gaining independence from Britain in 1919, the King "wanted an Islamic-based, western-inclined transformation of Afghanistan into a sovereign nation-state" (Saikal, 2004:43). His advisor, Mahmud Tarzi, worked to reduce Afghanistan's dependency on external aid by strengthening the role of the state through judiciary, administrative and military reforms (Lansford, 2003). The reforms aimed to create a more efficient, accessible and fair state by separating powers, establishing checks and balances, standardising institutional performance, and creating a base for a bureaucratic system along Weberian lines (Rasanayagam, 2003).

Elite urban groups generally agreed with Tarzi and advocated for power sharing, responsibility, sovereignty, national unity and socio-economic progress to counterbalance the internal power struggles, external financial dependency, and unsteady access to revenue (Ibid). Traditional power-holders, conservatives and tribal leaders, particularly in rural areas, were resistant to this 'modern' agenda and caused multiple uprisings and internal power struggles (Maley, 2002). Despite a large opposition, democracy increasingly surfaced in debates as a potential political avenue amongst urban intellectuals and students (Rasanayagam, 2003). In 1964, Afghanistan's most liberal and democratic constitution was introduced and called for limited royal power, oversight bodies, separation of powers and an independent judiciary (Maley, 2003). Additionally, public reforms redistributed power from tribal lines to bureaucrats by removing royal members from the civil service and by granting decision-making power to technocrats (Rasanayagam, 2003). Government positions were however still aligned to ethnic lines so power continued to run in a linear and hierarchical flow (Saikal, 2004). Although these reforms did not encompass accountability per se, or address the sources of power, or the legitimacy of political action, the contestation of power distribution is nevertheless an essential requisite for the development of accountability.

Communist State

The opposition to the progressive agenda gained more ground in the second-half of the 20th century, and in 1973, Prime Minister Mohammed Daoud Khan organised a coup d'état and deposed the last king of Afghanistan and became the country's first President (Feifer, 2010). Daoud, supported by the Soviets, led an authoritarian regime and promoted Pashtunism as the basis for Afghan identity and nationalism. His highly centralised and tightly regulated

governance style not only set back the previous power sharing reforms, but also regressed the progress done under King Amanullah to gain financial independence from external powers (Feifer, 2010). Daoud's attempts to monopolise power increased his reliance on Soviet support, since the centralisation of power created additional division and fragmentation amongst ethnic groups and reduced his internal powerbase (Ibid). At the end of the 1970s, Afghanistan's fiscal health was considerably below the minimum requirements for a modern state since its Gross National Product (GNP) was at 6%, and 75% of development programmes were funded by Soviet aid (Halliday & Tanin, 1998; Saikal, 2004). During that time, Afghanistan also experienced a reduction in their human resources since many doctors, engineers and bureaucrats left the civil service (Lansford, 2003).

Interestingly, despite that Daoud led a very aggressive centralisation agenda, and disbanded all mechanisms for checks and balances and opposition, he interestingly kept the justification for political action within the democratisation language to illustrate Afghanistan's commitment to modernisation, illustrating some domestic acceptance of democracy at the time (Kakar, 1997). The Soviets however soon tired of supporting Daoud's self-glorifying dream and financed the removal of Daoud prior to invading Afghanistan in 1979 (Ibid). The Soviets, who had supported Afghanistan with military equipment, technology and advisors, installed a communist regime with new administrative reforms and bureaucratic processes (Feifer, 2010). Although Afghanistan's government structures were increasingly more compatible with a modern state, the governance style remained traditional and power continued to flow in hierarchical lines. Consequently, the public reforms initiated under King Amanullah and the Soviets succeeded in creating accountability structures, but failed to generate true answerability and enforcement since power remained centralised in the hands of ethnic power-holders.

Warlord State

Internal resistance against the Soviets was financed by the US, amongst others, as part of the Cold War (Maley, 2003). Loose allegiances formed under the Mujahedeen, who used a decentralised security network approach, solidified subnational tribal associations. Shortly after the Soviet's withdrawal in 1989 "the country was essentially divided into a number of small fiefdoms as military commanders or tribal leaders established suzerainty in the rings outside government control" (Lansford, 2003:136). The Mujahedeen consisted largely of armed ethnic groups from rural areas that had little governance experience. They formed Afghanistan's first Islamic State in 1992 and sold government positions and loyalty in exchange for weapons and money (Saikal, 2004; Rasanayagam, 2003). The state reduced considerably in human resources and service provision and warlordism was allowed to flourish. Pakistan used this vacuum of leadership and territorial control and provided assistance and weapons to Pashtuns to gain more influence in Afghanistan (Rasanayagam, 2003).

The standardisation and institutionalism that had fuelled Afghanistan's statebuilding process in the last 70 years deteriorated considerably under the Mujahedeen (Saikal, 2004). Resources, once again, became scarce and revenue consistency was reduced to ad-hoc 'trade' and winner spoils. Arguably, power was no longer gathered by the state through political support, but applied directly by those ethnic groups that could wield resources and weapons. The external accountability structures that had been created during previous statebuilding reforms were no longer applied; similar to other democratisation efforts, the development of accountability came temporarily to a halt.

Taliban State

The armed Pashtuns, funded by Pakistan, eventually led to the creation of the Taliban in the early 1990s. They wanted to create a pure Islamic Emirate based on the Pashtun village governance structure, Pashtunwali, which will be explained a bit later in the chapter (Wimmer & Schetter 2003; Saikal, 2004). The Taliban opposed the Mujahedeen and, initially, had a lot of support in Afghanistan since "most Afghans initially perceived that the Taliban were fighting to unite the country in order to restore the central government and not in order to augment individual or group power" (Dorronsoro, 2005; Lansford, 2003:145). In 1996 the Taliban gained control over the collapsed state, and by 1998, they controlled 90% of Afghanistan (Lansford, 2003). This in itself was quite unusual for Afghanistan's statebuilding since the state had primarily operated in urban areas and had little influence or control in rural regions. Although power was once again centralised, inexperienced Pashtuns and religious Mullahs were put in key positions of authority (Dorronsoro, 2005). This limited basic public service provision since the government lacked skilled and capable civil servants (Rasanayagam, 2003; Dorronsoro, 2005).

The Taliban applied Sharia law and ruled through strict Islamisation. They enforced repressive policies towards minority ethnic groups and widened the already broad gap between tribal and national identities (Dorronsoro, 2005). Although the Taliban managed to sustain territorial control and social order through repression, ignorance and poverty, the Taliban did not *govern* Afghanistan; they ruled it. Any remaining democratic structures of accountability were obliterated during this period.

Modern State

The Taliban, however, were driven from power by the US after refusing to hand over Al-Qaeda members post the Twin Towers attack on September 11th 2001 (Michailof, 2010). Afghanistan's collapsed state and lack of political leadership pushed the country up the international agenda. In December 2001 the international community hosted a Bonn Conference that resulted in the establishment of an interim Afghan authority under Hamid Karzai (Dorronsoro, 2005). Despite

that the “World Bank assessed the quality of Afghanistan’s governance institutions as falling in the bottom one percent of all countries”, the central state was resuscitated and traditional ethnic power lines were once again reactivated (GIROA, 2008a:6; Barfield, 2010; Dorronsoro, 2005). Additionally, in order to maintain a light international footprint, warlords and regional power holders were used to create order and security in the rural areas since “the Americans never had any intention to build democracy or a new state” (Lansford, 2003; Roy, 2010:172).

Instead of focusing on statebuilding, international donors channelled initially their assistance to the reconstruction and recovery of the country and Afghanistan soon became the largest aid recipient in the world (Parkinson, 2010; Roy, 2010). Between 2002 and 2013, 62 billion USD were pledged to Afghanistan, but donors repetitively continued to fund efforts outside government control (Poole, 2011). For example, by 2009, 62 active donors channelled 77% of their funds with little or no government involvement, despite that the national revenue was a mere 1.3 billion USD (Shah, 2009; Poole, 2011). Due to poor results and slow progress, amongst other factors, the international community advocated adamantly for democratic elections in 2004 and changed its approach in 2005 to economic growth, development and aid efficiency to achieve stability in the country (GIROA, 2006; Bennett *et al*, 2003). However because of questionable government performance, international donors refocused their attention specifically on democratisation and governance in 2008 and on government oversight, ownership and citizen participation by 2010 (GIROA, 2010; FROG, 2011).

Donors increasingly pushed for a neoliberal agenda based on the Washington Consensus promoted by the World Bank to incorporate Western democratic norms (Marsden, 2003). This included, amongst others, the prioritisation of establishing result-based performance, a small government and a free market (GIROA, 2004). Subsequently, the international community increasingly found itself encouraging and participating in the Afghan statebuilding process. The Afghan government frequently showed its reliance on foreign aid and alignment to Western norms in its policy making (Shah, 2009). For example, Afghanistan’s National Development Strategy (ANDS) commits the government to the governance principles of “openness, participation, accountability, effectiveness, efficiency, coherence, equity, inclusiveness, justice and rule of law”, illustrating the strong influence of liberal statebuilding (GIROA, 2008a; 62).

Critics argue that Afghan policy at that time reflected more “the concerns of the GoA and donors rather than the daily preoccupation of Afghan citizens” and that donors followed more their own priorities and policies, rather than address Afghan needs (Gardizi *et al*, 2010:28; Michailof, 2010; Fänge, 2010). Arguably statebuilding of the modern Afghan state prioritised adherence to liberal requisites as a solution to poor government performance, instead of establishing strong government institutions. Although accountability was promoted by the

liberal agenda, power continued to run in a hierarchical fashion along ethnic lines (Lansford, 2003). The development of accountability from 2001 will be addressed more thoroughly in the next two chapters.

To summarise, the Afghan statebuilding process has been an unfinished endeavour, largely influenced by competing ethnic politics, intervening foreign powers and a ruling elite. Tribal politics fuelled a ferocious competition for power, where the use of excessive force diminished the space for trust, cooperation and national unity. The lack of territorial control, revenue and strong subnational institutions increased the ruling elite's dependency on external actors and ethnic allegiances, reinforcing a top-down power structure. This is contradictory to the circular power distribution needed for democratic accountability as illustrated in chapter two. Moreover, foreign powers were often used "to bolster their [elite] own power, often at the expense of the central state" (Lansford, 2003:32). The centralisation of power and alignment to tribal groups challenged the development of accountability since the traditional ruling style did not support the democratic structures created by the public reforms in the 20th and 21st century. This shows a big hurdle for the development of accountability since the methodology to address power dynamics was crucial for norm development. From this historical perspective, accountability does not appear to have emerged. Political and economic interests have diverted statebuilding to the acquisition of wealth, territory and power; reflecting more a rationalist reality in which actors' behaviour is guided by their self-interest. This will be further evaluated at the end of the chapter.

The chapter, thus far, has provided an overview of the statebuilding process in Afghanistan since 1747 and outlined the sources and flow of state power. Although it has revealed sporadic initiatives to create power sharing, check and balances, and standardised institutional performance, the political dynamics in Afghanistan need to be explored in order to apprehend the impact of power flow. This is useful for the thesis' research since it allows us to comprehend the context that supports the development of accountability.

Political Dynamics in Afghanistan

In order to understand the political dynamics in Afghanistan, this section is divided into two parts and will unpack issues around citizenship and political engagement. First, it will focus on issues of ethnicity and national unity to understand Afghan citizenry. Ultimately, a sturdy citizenship identity, as illustrated earlier in this thesis, is central in creating a government-citizen accountability relationship. Second, it will examine issues of representation and citizen engagement in order to comprehend the policy-setting arena. This is important since the negotiation ability to set the political agenda influences the ability to generate answerability and

enforcement. This is also crucial for the development of accountability as covered in chapter two.

Afghan Citizenship

A clear identification of citizenship is important in generating accountability since it identifies who is eligible to hold the state accountable (Held & Koenig-Archibugi, 2005). In the case of Afghanistan, its ethnic patchwork has played a crucial role in its history and statebuilding process. The existence of multiple ethnic groups not only reflects different group characteristics, but also influences the way political actors identify, interact and integrate. For example, Lansford (2003) suggests that Afghanistan's topography limits the contact between different ethnic groups, and similar to other mountainous populations, they tend to be self-reliant, distrustful and reserved. Additionally, the harsh environment and lack of easily accessible resources have encouraged a predatory behaviour resulting in a survival, defence and attack approach (Ibid). Limited government outreach and predatory behaviour have also encouraged people to find resources and safety in the nuclear units of family, clan and tribe (Saikal, 2004). Ethnic identity, rather than a national citizenship identity, is therefore a fundamental element to self-identification in Afghanistan. Ethnic groups continue to be "political actors in their own right [... who] built patronage networks and political alliances in the regions they ruled" and actors of authority with educational and judicial privileges (Barfield, 2010:135; Dorronsoro, 2005). They have their centres of power in rural areas, which are perceived as religious, tribal and poorly educated (Hopkins, 2008).

Additionally, ethnic groups in Afghanistan tend to organise themselves around "personal fidelity whereby the supporters of the regime are rewarded based on their loyalty" and not on their skills level (Lansford, 2003:58). Tribal leadership often reinforces tribal identity as a way to acquire safety from the state and national unity has been difficult to obtain due to weak citizen identity (Dorronsoro, 2005). Although the Afghan state acquired political support and power from ethnic groups across its statebuilding process, the relationship has been volatile and filled with mistrust, competitiveness and conflict. Interestingly, this created a vicious cycle between power and authority where an educated, wealthy ruling elite relied on rural tribal support whilst seeking autonomy from it (Hopkins, 2008; Dorronsoro, 2005). In an attempt to control tribal opposition, the Afghan state has often used coercion, remuneration and constraint in its statebuilding history (Barfield, 2010). Due to the hierarchical flows of power, the Afghan government has directed itself towards the leadership of ethnic groups, rather than individuals. Even in the 21st century, citizen needs are reportedly neglected and "de jure [government] positions [are] based on their de facto power [...] to influence the de jure structures according to their [own] interests" (Evans *et al*, 2004:13; Rotberg, 2007). Consequently, the formation of a solid citizenship identity has been challenged by the prevalence of ethnic self-identification.

Moreover, the interaction within ethnic groups, and between them and the state, has not only been impacted by power struggles and lack of trust, but also by the unequal representation of different ethnicities. To treat ethnic groups as equally sized in numbers and importance, and to portray a binary relationship between ethnic groups and the state, would simplify the power dynamics in Afghanistan. Pashtuns, for example, have had an important role in the statebuilding process since they often held royal and political positions (Lansford, 2003). The Pashtunwali, a tribal code of conduct, has impacted Afghanistan's political culture (Rzehak, 2011:1). The code strives to sustain equilibrium and integrity between men and is based on the prominent social values of honour, loyalty, independence and pride (Coburn, 2009; Ewans, 2005; Rzehak, 2011). Furthermore, the "Pashtunwali follow[s] the dichotomy of honour and shame. Behaviour, consequently, is guided by the question as to how it is evaluated in the eyes of others" and, therefore, promotes an opaque and hierarchical governance style (Rzehak, 2011:1). Additionally, ethnic representation in this case tends to follow a hierarchical order based on gender, age and wealth, which disables stable transfer of power since leaders are encouraged to prove their worth by ruthlessly climbing the hierarchical ladder (Barfield, 2010; Rzehak, 2011). Identity in Afghanistan, consequently, is not only shaped by ethnic affiliation, but also by diverse cultural traditions that may or may not be shared by the majority of the population.

Furthermore, the rural population in Afghanistan prioritised economic growth, tribal governance methods, and access to services in the statebuilding process whilst the urban elite focused on political modernisation and centralisation of power (Saikal, 2004; Wimmer & Schetter, 2003). The inconsistencies of priorities and lack of trust between rural and urban areas created additional challenges to statebuilding as the state was unable to create a national political agenda that fostered national unity and a strong citizenship identity (Halliday & Tanin, 1998). In the absence of an amenable agenda, both state and ethnic groups utilised religion to mobilise and unite the population (Barfield, 2010). Interestingly, this is one of the few channels that power-holders used to address citizens since all other political engagement in the statebuilding process tended to leave citizens unrecognised until the first democratic election in 2004. In the early days, the state used its religious regal legitimacy to justify political action, but struggled to uphold the same position since the downfall of the monarchy (Lansford, 2003). Nevertheless, religion has had the ability to connect the Afghan population and create a potential link to a common identity.

Moreover, the use of Shuras (religious consultation councils) and Jirgas (tribal dispute resolution mechanisms) in mitigating citizen action has strengthened the population's relation to local, rather than national, mechanisms. Jirgas, in particular, are frequently used in rural areas and gain their legitimacy from Islam, communal endorsement and tribal custom (Jones-Pauly &

Nojumi, 2004). They are locally led initiatives guided by the principles of solidarity, equality, integrity, debate and communal acceptance, and rely on communal consensus, rather than majority-rule (Roy, 2010). Jirga members are selected based on "local reputation of respect, ability, and honesty, or simply a reputation for being a 'good Muslim'" and plaintiff and defendants alike have the right to disagree with the ruling and dissolve the sentence (Jones-Pauly & Nojumi, 2004:836). This seldom happens since Jirgas are socially valued and trusted. Even in 2013, 65% of people still held Jirgas in high esteem and granted them confidence (TAF, 2013)¹². Unlike government top-down structures, these grassroots practices have been able to unite citizen action based on traditional and religious values. However despite its ability to generate local order and cohesion, they have been unsuccessful in creating a *national* sense of identity.

Up to this point, the section has shown that Afghanistan's statebuilding process was heavily influenced by ethnic groups, some more than others, and political opposition and power were usually negotiated between ethnic and government power-holders, i.e. leader-vs-leader. This has guided citizens' identity towards their ethnical lineage, rather than creating a sense of national unity and restrained citizen action at grassroots level. Moreover, the entrenched hierarchical centralisation of power and the proximity to tribal governance practices have hampered the implementation of democratic reforms. These practices have been present in Afghan history well before 2001 and carry therefore more weight than current population movement implications as they still operate as a fundamental survival mechanism to acquire security and navigate everyday life. Again, this is of crucial importance since accountability is not likely to develop meaningfully without the redistribution of power and the recognition of citizen engagement in the political arena. A fragmented population or a weak sense of citizenship is unable to generate the power needed to create answerability and enforcement as previously explained in chapter two. Moreover, although local forms of governance might fill in a certain vacuum, the lack of consistency and standards amongst different villages challenges a unified direction for democracy and accountability.

That is not to say that there has been no direct engagement between citizens and the Afghan state. For example, in the 20th century, Afghan kings, particularly King Amanullah, tried to incentivise citizens to move against foreign powers since the state alone was too weak to achieve that (Barfield, 2010; Saikal, 2004). However the state generally perceived citizens too illiterate to provide "a sufficient intellectual pool [...] on which it could rely for law enforcement and better policy deliberation" (Saikal, 2004:60). Without the social capital to digest the need for political debate, citizens failed to identify their political role; therefore the state used them

¹² This thesis will from time to time quote TAF (The Asia Foundation) numbers, which were collected during annual national surveys. For more information on the methodology, please refer to one of the surveys listed in the bibliography.

as part of political strategies, rather than part of consultative and participative reforms (Saikal, 2004). Afghan politics puts "a high premium on secrecy, deception and the veiling of motives" and even in the modern day, the "President, and his friends, [... are perceived able to] decide who can be touched and who cannot – for reasons that most of the time will remain quite opaque, even to those involved" (Coburn, 2010a:8; Van Bijlert, 2009c:3). The Afghan state has therefore shown that it is more interested in protecting their own interests, rather than representing those of the people.

Interestingly however, the state has used the democratic language of participation and citizen representation to legitimise political action since the mid-20th century (Ruttig, 2012; Lansford, 2003). Moreover, Afghanistan's government has progressively paid lip-service to public participation since the beginning of the 21st century as a political strategy to diffuse tribal power, gain donor support and appease civil society (Barfield, 2010; Saikal, 2004). Political activity outside state control and authority has created tension in the eyes of the government and been addressed through repression (Hopkins, 2008; Lansford, 2003). Consequently, although citizenship identity remains challenged by ethnic affiliation and power grabbing, the de jure democratic structures create at least a base for their potential political involvement. National unity, therefore, is still developing and whilst it is inconclusive, religion provides a common threat amongst the Afghan population. These unfinished statebuilding and citizenship identity formations are noteworthy since accountability relies on citizens' ability to influence the political agenda in order to generate answerability and enforcement. The next section will unpack this further to understand the impact of democratic reforms on Afghan politics and its potential implication to the development of accountability.

Political Engagement

Thus far, the chapter has shown that Afghanistan's on-going statebuilding process is heavily centralised due to weak political opposition, national disunity and tribal politics. This creates considerable hurdles for the development of accountability due to stagnant power circulation and fragmented citizenship identity. The chapter has also highlighted progressive reforms in the 20th and 21st century that were primarily structural. This section will unpack some of these to understand the underlying political dynamics in Afghanistan and their relationship to democratic practices in order to further assess the environment in which accountability emerges.

Even before the initial modernisation reforms in the 20th century, tribal representation to the monarchy was used to create ethnic balance (Saikal, 2004). These lacked power since they seldom were able to impact royal decisions and were merely advisory (Wimmer & Schetter, 2003). Using this blueprint, Afghanistan's first bicameral assembly was established in 1930, but was primarily used by ethnic groups to acquire resources and power, rather than to generate

true oversight and representation (Larson, 2009a; Siakal, 2004). The Afghan parliament was formed and disbanded several times during the statebuilding process, and it seldom managed to represent the population since it often resulted in ethnic rent-seeking behaviour (Coburn, 2010a, 2010b; Saikal, 2004). It was not until the 1980s that political parties emerged; however these lacked ideological vision and were "shaped by persons, not programmes" (Halliday & Tanin, 1998; Larson, 2009a; Ruttig, 2013:2). Even today, there is no legal framework to sustain a pluralistic and peaceful opposition and the parliament continues to be perceived as a means to access wealth and foreign aid (Rotberg, 2007; Amiri & Benish, 2010; Coburn, 2010b).

Starting from the parliamentary elections in 2004, Members of Parliament (MP) fundraised amongst local communities and acquired patrons amongst wealthier MPs and supportive executive officials (Lough, 2011). The use of patronage networks in the 21st century is still accepted amongst citizens since it is perceived as a sign of strength, influence, power and legitimacy (Coburn, 2010a). Although citizens might complain about this approach, it is not "because they [are] especially opposed to corruption, but because they [are] upset that they had not gained access to the privileged networks of those taking advantage" (Coburn, 2010b:6). Democratic structures of parliamentary representation are perceived to be more valued by Western donors than by Afghans, who identify political parties as dangerous in regards to ethnic balance and who prefer 'politics by consensus' as a more legit and peaceful form of policy-making (Barfield, 2010; Nixon, 2008; Larson, 2011). The parliamentary structures of citizen representation and accountability, therefore, are not experienced entirely by the Afghan population as a mechanism to generate answerability and enforcement, but rather as a means to secure resources. Broadly speaking, the democratic structure is consequently being used to secure power rather than to share it, thus reinforcing the hierarchical power flows and the relegation of citizen participation. This provides a clear example where the government structure supports the notion of accountability, but where power and traditional governance disempowers its implementation. Naturally, not all MPs behave uniformly; there are those who promote a more democratic approach, but these will be discussed further in chapter six.

The association to democracy and democratic reforms is, in itself, a very important point to examine in order to understand the political dynamics in Afghanistan. Democracy, particularly after 2001, has been associated with Western values and experienced by some as "altogether alien and unwelcome" (Larson, 2011:21). Democracy is largely perceived to negatively impact social values and "is not currently associated with a fair, transparent system in which all citizens have the same basic rights and opportunities" (Larson, 2011:49). Although 50% of people in 2009 identified freedom as a benefit from democracy, only 19% thought that it entailed a government of the people (TAF, 2009). As a male student in a democracy study expressed,

“Democracy is the government of the people by the people for the people, but in Afghanistan we have the government of the outsiders by the outsiders for the Afghan people. The actual definition is reversed in Afghanistan” (Larson, 2011:21). Interestingly however, it is not the political system or government structures that clash with people’s beliefs but the values that are perceived to touch social life (Ibid). Democracy based on Islamic values is therefore referenced as a preferred method to accept elections, representation and accountability, or as Larson (2011:50) puts it “there is not way that democratic institutions will survive in Afghanistan unless their scope and remit are considered by Afghans to coincide with Islamic principles and a fundamentally national, Afghan character”.

The biggest democratisation efforts in Afghanistan have however been promoted around elections; critics claim consequently that democratic statebuilding reflects more Western donor objectives than Afghan priorities (Bennett *et al*, 2003; Suhrke, 2007; Larson, 2011). Donors perceived elections as part of their exit strategy and as a method to establish democratic legitimacy; however, the “relationship between elections and political legitimacy [is] less clear-cut for Afghans” since many perceive outcomes as more important than political processes (Barfield, 2010:300; Morgan, 2007; Coburn, 2009). The ability to provide employment opportunities, public services and security weights more in Afghan politics than democratic processes (Coburn, 2009). Moreover the assumption that citizen participation in elections equals democratic yearning simplifies a more complex situation (Larson, 2011; Bennet *et al*, 2003).

Although people in Afghanistan have shown interest in democracy, 22% in 2009 believed that elections could not change the outcome of political action (TAF, 2009). Several studies conducted by Afghan think tanks, such as Afghanistan Analysts Network and Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit, reported a lack of personal power amongst citizens (Van Bijlert, 2009b; Larson, 2010). This does not mean that people do not take ownership of their votes, but rather, that they use them as commodities to access resources by exchanging them for monetary remuneration (Coburn & Larson, 2009; Larson, 2010). Votes are reportedly sold in bulk to political parties through the head of villages; whilst urban elites perceived the rural population as illiterate and prone to manipulation, collective voting is perceived by local communities as a means to assure adequate representation (Larson, 2010; 2011). In 2009, 59% of the population answered that collective voting should precede individual voting; in 2013 this number had decreased, and 81% believed that people should individually decide their political position, regardless of community opinion (TAF, 2009; 2013). Nevertheless due to the bartering in elections, votes tend to be cast based on ethnicity and social-economic preferences (Amiri & Benish, 2010). Therefore the single non-transferable voting system in Afghanistan lacks transparency since there is “little reason [for candidates] to be accountable to anybody

outside their small support base" (Saltmarshe & Medhi, 2011:6; Lough, 2011; Larson, 2009a). Transparency in this case is given to patrons, rather than citizens, and results in inconsistent agendas, fragmented ideological positions and mistrust between voters and representatives.

To summarise, although elections are used by both Afghan and foreign political elites to induce democratic legitimacy and power emphasises the role of citizens, democratic "policies and procedures do not necessarily change the rules of the game, but rather provide a different 'vocabulary' for the various power struggles" (Van Bijlert, 2009a:17). Similar to the democratic structure discussed earlier (parliament), elections are used as a means to secure resources in order to address basic needs rather than a democratic process that enables citizens to negotiate the political agenda or transfer power to the government. The incomplete application of this democratic process indicates a higher priority for resources than for governance. However this unavoidably reemphasises the centralisation of power since only those who have it can provide it. Democratic reforms and accountability are encumbered in such context since power does not flow along government structures, but adhere to hierarchical and traditional practices. The potential for norm development, consequently, is challenged by power blockages that reduce citizens' ability to generate answerability and enforcement.

The concentration of power and prevalence of ethnic politics appear as a consistent theme in Afghan politics. The unofficial power structure has hampered the development of a service-oriented administration and reduced the political space for citizen participation since people are disempowered and unable to directly interact with the government (Rotbert, 2007). Citizens' participation in policy-making however is crucial for accountability since it demonstrates citizens' ability to negotiate political outcomes and hold the government accountable to them. Encouragingly, in the 21st century, Afghan citizens have grown more vocal since they are deeply disappointed with the state's performance in delivering public services, notwithstanding Afghanistan's access to unprecedented amounts of aid (Coats, 2009). Citizen complaints are often ignored, repressed or dealt with violence, illustrating a gap between citizen and government priorities (Parkinson, 2010:37; Coats, 2009; USAID, 2009). High government positions, including governors, are still appointed directly by the President and are allocated as a means to establish balance between ethnic groups rather than address citizen needs (Nixon, 2008). Consequently government institutions operate on "the ability and willingness to accommodate (or undermine) the dominant political, tribal or economic interest in the area", rather than establish a responsive and professional bureaucracy (Van Bijlert, 2009a:7). Moreover, critics accuse Karzai for "not really [being] interested in building an institutionalized state structure [...] [;his] model of government was patrimonial, in which the government administration and its assets were an extension of the ruler" (Barfield, 2010:304). Consistent with Afghanistan's statebuilding history, state power is sustained through a patron-client system

in order to create balance between power-holders, which consequently, marginalises citizen involvement.

Moreover, although citizens' proximity and interaction is higher with subnational government bodies, these continue to have very little power and have no say in their budgets or project design (Nixon, 2008; Evans *et al*, 2004). Despite local government's weakness in influencing policy, they generate more trust amongst the population than central government institutions. For example, in 2013, 59% of people reported to have confidence in Provincial Councils compared to 45% in central ministries (TAF, 2013). Jirgas, as mentioned earlier in this chapter, still have a large influence despite that they have lost a bit of ground lately; whilst "elders used to be honoured for their age and status, it is increasingly those with close links to government that command respect" (Saltmarshe & Medhi, 2011:46). Specifically, confidence in Jirgas has steadily declined from 71% in 2007, to 68% in 2009, and ultimately to 65% in 2013 (TAF, 2009; 2013). Despite this decline however, Jirgas continue to be a more trusted form of governance than official state practices since they are perceived to be effective and reflect local norms and values (TAF, 2009). Coherent with Afghanistan's statebuilding process, citizens continue to be more impacted by grassroots institutions, but these have no power in influencing policy-making. Furthermore there continues to be a consistent gap in government outreach and performance between the centre and the regions.

Although Afghanistan's statebuilding process has been influenced multiple times by foreign powers, the presence of international donors in the 21st century has also impacted citizens' ability to participate in politics. Political agreements between the international community and the Afghan government have remained an exclusive dialogue between internal and external power-holders. For example, in 2010, the communiqué following the London Conference shows a "neglect[...] to address the participation of individual citizens and civil society organisation in political and administrative processes" (Gardizi *et al*, 2010:28). However, this will be discussed in further detail in the next chapter.

This section has shown that the democratic structures, developed in the 20th and 21st century, are used for rent-seeking behaviour to achieve tribal balance, rather than provide governance. Democratic structures remain superficial since they do not alter traditional power flows. Afghanistan's governance style resembles more of an almighty kingdom than a democratic state since it is infested with hidden agendas, patronage networks, lack of transparency and mistrust. The lack of collaboration, participation and cohesiveness is not only prevalent between citizens and the state, but also amongst government institutions, particularly between rural and urban areas. Similar to the Afghan game, Buzkashi, patronage networks and tribes work simultaneously, individually and in teams. Whilst groups might compete against one another,

members of the same groups also compete against each other to climb higher in the internal hierarchy. These practices not only keep the traditional governance style alive and reinforce hierarchical power, but they also generate massive mistrust between and amongst political actors. Nevertheless grassroots authorities continue to have a big impact in people's lives since they operate under the social values of consensus, debate and communal representation. These initiatives, however, have been disconnected from the Afghan statebuilding process and remained a parallel system to the state.

Whether at grassroots or central level, Afghan governance has weak political values and is deeply impacted by social practices. Arguably one can say that social practices have been recreated in the political sector for so long that they have become political values, but in that case, these are based more on traditional and cultural practices than on political ideologies. The lack of national unity, citizenship identity and ideological orientation amongst political parties has prevented the development of concrete political principles and the solidification of political opposition. As a result, Afghan political dynamics are characterised by power grabbing, ethnic allegiance, lack of transparency, mistrust and hierarchical loyalty. These are applied to acquire tribal balance and achieve state legitimacy through the centralisation of power. Interestingly, despite this unofficial power structure, democratic reforms continue to take place in the 21st century, and political action keeps being justified in democratic 'language'. For example, although the democratic structures of parliamentary representation and elections have yet to change power flows, they are part of Afghanistan's on-going statebuilding process.

This chapter has consequently shown that large components of Afghanistan's statebuilding process have been forged by self-interests and power-seeking individuals. Though actors have made mean-end calculations to maximize their utilities, occasional behaviour at the beginning of the 20th century show however that progression towards democracy was not taken due to instrumental purposes but rather because there was a common understanding amongst the elite that such a progression would be good and desirable for Afghanistan. In the 21st century however, under donor influence, actors were mobilised through a liberal framing, and while the new democratic "structures do not necessarily reflect truly shared normative understandings, [...] some actor's interests changed as a result of targeted persuasive appeals" (Payne, 2001:41). This background chapter has thus illustrated a complex environment in which norms are not only impacted by internal and external social structures but also by instrumentalisation, power and agency. Consequently, although the challenges for developing accountability are considerable, as illustrated across this chapter, the potential for norm emergence is present. This will be explored further in the next two chapters.

Conclusion

This chapter has set the wider context for the thesis' case study and outlined Afghanistan's statebuilding history and its political dynamics. During Afghanistan's unceasing statebuilding process, state legitimacy has frequently rested on ethnicity, religion, and monarchy. Although the Afghan state continues to centralise power from ethnic groups in the 21st century, the religious and regal foundations crumbled with the ousting of the monarch in 1973. While tribal power reinforces state power, the ruthless competition between ethnic groups fragments national unity and citizenship identity, and hinders the development of a clear political agenda for Afghanistan. Moreover, the use of patronage networks to create balance between unofficial power-holders fuels distrust, lack of transparency and centralisation of power.

Afghanistan's statebuilding process has also been characterised by weak citizen participation and a disconnection between rural and urban priorities. Unsurprisingly, people engage nevertheless trustfully with local forms of authority, such as Jirgas, that operate on social values and norms. Social values and tribal practices have influenced the political arena where strong political values have yet to be established. Although sporadic initiatives in the 20th and 21st century tried to modernise the Afghan state through standardised institutional performance, power sharing, and checks and balances, democratic reforms remain structural and superficial. Even in modern times, the president is perceived as a ruler who can demand, judge, centralise power and bypass the institutional structures of a modern state (Banerji, 2008). Ultimately, Afghan government institutions exist in a fundamental dual system where the structures are compatible with a modern state, but its governance process is still based on patronage relationships (Nixon, 2008). In other words, structures and processes are still used to obtain power and resources, rather than to pursue a political agenda. This is important to understand for the purpose of the thesis since it identifies the potential power-holders who would be able to wield power to enforce accountability. Moreover, it highlights citizens' ability, or lack thereof, to generate answerability and enforcement by negotiating political objectives. Additionally, this chapter has shown that although democratic reforms have yet to alter power dynamics, the mere existence of these structures creates a base for accountability to potentially develop.

Having created a general overview of the statebuilding process and the political dynamics in Afghanistan, the next two chapters will focus exclusively on the development of accountability by using primary data collected between May-July 2012. The next chapter will use field research findings to address the emergence, power and legitimacy of accountability in Afghanistan.

CHAPTER FIVE: ACCOUNTABILITY EMERGENCE AND POWER RELATIONS

As illustrated by the previous chapter, Afghanistan is still going through a lot of changes and the state is caught between new 'modern' structures and old traditional practices. Since 2001 Afghanistan has experienced a new dosage of democratisation, which has partially supported the emergence of accountability through democratic structures and processes. However, the norm is still challenged by citizens' inability to seize power and generate answerability and enforcement. In order to highlight the empirical data, meet the research's objective, and understand the kind of accountability that was developed during the liberal statebuilding process, the empirical findings will be presented in the following two chapters to comprehend how people perceive and interact with the norm at the field level.

Chapter two created a conceptual framework consisting of three accountability characteristics in order to study the development of accountability in further depth. These characteristics, *Power Relations*, *Government-Citizen Relationship*, and *Accountability Methods*, were chosen due to their contribution to the definition of accountability selected for this thesis.¹³ They will be used as a reference point to the research findings in order to assess whether liberal statebuilding managed to develop liberal democratic accountability, or a different format of it. As mentioned in the Methodology Chapter, the field data particularly focused on three Afghan government bodies, the Independent Directorate of Local Governance, Ministry of Finance, and Anti-Corruption Institutions (The High Office of Oversight and The Monitoring and Evaluation Committee). These institutions were chosen due to their key role in promoting accountability and implementing 'soft' services, such as asset registration, budget preparation and provincial councils.

In order to appreciate and dive into the research findings, this chapter will focus on *power relations* whilst the following chapter will address the two outstanding accountability characteristics. This chapter is divided into two sections: Part one will outline the manifestation of liberal democratic accountability from 2001 until 2013 by focusing only on policy development, and part two will use primary data to explore the power relations that influence accountability. The purpose of this chapter is to present the research findings in order to analyse norm development and evolution in chapter seven.

¹³ Definition of Accountability: A power relationship between citizens and government that generates answerability and enforcement and is based on negotiated political objectives.

The Manifestation of Liberal Democratic Accountability in Afghanistan

Accountability is a hard word to translate overall, including for Afghan languages. In Dari, accountability is most frequently associated to *Shafofiat*, meaning transparency, and although this does not equate accountability, many laymen use it in everyday language. *Hesab Dehi*, the most compatible term, refers to a one-way relationship on financial matters where trust, honour and one's word are key characteristics. Although this resembles the definition of liberal democratic accountability, it also has differences. For example, its conceptualisation does not apply to governance situations and does not recognise power distribution. This definition speaks of a one-way power line in which actor A is answerable to actor B, but this does not mean that actor A has authority over actor B. Undoubtedly however the Dari definition of accountability does not incorporate enforcement and sees answerability as an honourable, rather than compulsory, gesture. Thus, the translation of accountability differs from the liberal interpretation of the norm. However in order to really apprehend how accountability is used, perceived and interpreted, it is important to first understand *how* the norm emerged in Afghanistan. This section will therefore outline the emergence of accountability between 2001 and 2013, using policy documentation only, as part of the liberal statebuilding initiative. Research findings will be presented in the second half of this chapter.

Policy development from 2001 to 2004

After the fall of the Taliban in 2001, and the initial international conference in Bonn, donors and Afghan representatives spent their resources on securing and stabilising the country rather than on strengthening national governance and democratic accountability (Denissen, 2009). The international community had expected a short engagement in Afghanistan and argued for presidential elections in 2004 in order to create democratic legitimacy (Bennett *et al*, 2003). Critics, however, considered elections premature since Afghanistan still lacked a professional and efficient cabinet and government institutions. However, the elections were still held and some speculated that US President Bush was keen on a successful election in order to show a 'win' on his War-on-Terror prior to the 2004 US presidential elections (Ibid).

Consequently, between 2001 and 2004, accountability had a very small role to play in Afghan statebuilding since the engagement between the Afghan government and Western donors was dominated by reconstruction, recovery, reform and constitution efforts (Poole, 2011). Due to this focus, liberal statebuilding was more concerned about service delivery than governance and adopted a Washington Consensus approach. This emphasised effectiveness and prioritised, for the time being, output over outcome. For example, in Afghanistan's first 'modern' Strategy Paper in 2004, the government aimed to create a "small Government whose role will [...] be limited to ensuring the security and safety of citizens, creating an enabling but properly regulated environment for the private sector, and ensuring that all citizens have access to

public services” (GIROA, 2004:63-64). This approach to the public sector reflects a huge reorientation from the state’s earlier performance under the Mujahedeen or the Taliban as it utilised a cost efficiency lens to assess government operations.

Within these policy prioritisations, accountability was only referenced once in 2004. The same Strategy Paper outlined that the Afghan state would be driven “by an accountable result-based ethos” reflecting a result-based governance approach, most common in NPM, as discussed in chapter two (GIROA, 2004:64). This is important to understand for the purpose of the thesis since it indicates that accountability primarily emerged in Afghan policies with the objective to generate efficiency in government performance, rather than redistribute power and impact the political process. Furthermore, the presence of democratic elections, theoretically, should have been a major contributor in generating accountability; the fact that they were conducted to create state legitimacy, rather than power sharing, suggests a different political objective. Accountability was referenced too seldom during this time to draw any conclusive observations as to its role in the Afghan statebuilding process.

Policy development from 2005 to 2007

By 2005, no real nation building had taken place, and the old frictions between urban and rural areas resurfaced (Barfield, 2010; Parkinson, 2010). Despite parliamentary elections in 2005, the single transferable vote system resulted in a less structured opposition where many warlords and Islamist leaders competed for resources, rather than engaging in oversight activities (Amiri & Benish, 2010; Larson, 2009a; Rotberg, 2007). Similar to older times, the centralisation of power and resources caused regional resentment and dissatisfaction. Furthermore there was a growing disenchantment with the international community since it gave “a lot of cash [...] without clear directions on how it was used” (Henrik Lindroth, 220512).¹⁴ For example, the volatile Southeast hosted most of the remaining Taliban and received a lot of aid whilst the stable northwest remained quite poor (Parkinson, 2010; Barfield, 2010). This strategy was adopted to stabilise insecure areas, but resulted in disadvantaging peaceful regions.

In the face of poor development outcomes and fragile national stability, the international community and the Afghan government met once again in London in 2006 (Bennett *et al*, 2003). This conference led to a bigger “undertaking [which] was conceptualised as a project of social engineering – complete with timetable and benchmarks for international agencies to monitor the process” (Suhrke, 2007:1291). This included the establishment of the Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board (JCMB) that was supposed to provide better monitoring and coordination between the international community and the Afghan government (Shah, 2009). Moreover, Afghan policy-makers developed the Afghanistan Compact to address issues around

¹⁴ Qualitative interview conducted with Henrik Lindroth, Program Manager and TA for an HoO.

socio-economic concerns, security and governance. Under the latter, it aimed to improve aid efficiency through increased capacity, coordination, oversight and civil society participation (GIROA, 2006). Additionally, more attention was given to subnational governance. Provincial Development Councils (PDCs) and The Independent Directorate for Local Governance (IDLG) were established as an attempt to strengthen coordination and subnational performance (Shah, 2009).

Accountability, similar to previous years, was only slightly referenced in government documentation. For example, in the Afghanistan Compact, the Afghan government stated its commitment to combat "corruption and ensure public transparency and accountability" (GIROA, 2006:2). Accountability still remained unexplained and non-conceptualised in Afghan policies, which, at that time, were developed to produce better development results and to improve the outcome/cost ratio. Consequently, the statebuilding process during this period appeared more reactive than strategic. In other words, policies were passed to address existing problems rather than as a long-term plan to create strong and stable democratic institutions. Due to aid ineffectiveness and weak progress, the policy arena between 2005 and 2007 showed a deviation from recovery to monitoring and oversight in an attempt to improve cost efficiency and aid outcomes. This included a higher donor involvement and monitoring of government performance, which consequently, exposed the Afghan statebuilding to a higher influence from donor strategies.

Policy development from 2008 to 2009

In 2008, the Afghan government developed a full-fledged National Development Strategy (ANDS) based on subnational consultation. This strategy identified three main areas of government involvement: Security, Governance, and Economic and Social Development (Shah, 2009; GIROA, 2008). The document is quite extensive and provides timeframes and outcomes for all three sectors. It particularly emphasises security, economic growth and poverty reduction. The objectives under Governance are quite small, despite that the "government's guiding principles for improving governance are openness, participation, accountability, effectiveness, efficiency, coherence, equity, inclusiveness, justice and rule of law" (GIROA, 2008:61). This dense usage of international norms is one of many examples that reflect the influence of the liberal agenda in Afghan statebuilding (Marsden, 2003).

Another example is the first Strategy Paper for IDLG, written in 2008. In it, it states: the government's "goal is to develop an effective, accountable, and effective public administration at the central, provincial, and district levels capable of ensuring security, equitable provision of basic social services, and an environment conducive for economic growth" (IDLG, 2008:22). Similar to ANDS, it provides a rich menu of everything a government ought to do without

providing concrete guidance for its implementation. However unlike previous documents, the IDLG Strategy Paper addressed citizen participation and suggested that “any Afghan citizen who is willing to contribute in this policy and law making exercise is our rightful stakeholder” (IDLG, 2008:14). The document even goes as far as to identify the current role of the population:

“There are growing numbers of challenges that threaten peace and stability in the country, but poor governance stands prominently amongst them [...] shortage of professional human capital and corruption are the secondary factors in deterioration of situation around the country. Combination of all these factors have pushed people away from the government and has created growing gap between the people and the government” (IDLG, 2008:1)

This segregation between state and population, and the lack of efficiency and integrity, were at that time very prominent concerns (Poole, 2011). This pushed good governance to the top of the list and guided the donor-government policy dialogue around new transparency, anti-corruption, accountability and participation policies (MoF, 2010b; Parliament, 2008). For example, the High Office of Oversight was established in 2008 and promoted the development of Whistleblower, HoO and Access to Information laws. The Ministry of Finance passed at the same time the Public Finance Management, Procurement, Accounting and Audit laws to “ensure that these laws and regulations are implemented and enforced diligently to improve transparency and minimize corruption and other rent seeking activities” (MoF, 2008:17-18). IDLG also developed the Subnational Governance Policy and provincial, district and municipal laws to “create an effective and accountable management of public resources (IDLG, 2008:23). Consequently the period between 2008 and 2009 demonstrates a higher focus on good governance. However, despite that accountability gained priority in the above-mentioned policies, it remained nevertheless an overall aspiration rather than a full-fledged conceptualisation and implementation strategy. The legislation at that time was poorly defined, creating loopholes and demanding accountability *from* subnational offices, parliament, and civil society *to* the central government, rather than vice versa. This is key to understand since the appearance of accountability in Afghan policies did not reflect a change in power dynamics or power distribution, but acted more as a control factor to adequate resource management. This, in turn, highlights the importance of aid efficiency, rather than citizen representation in the statebuilding process. Nevertheless, the framing of accountability reflects norm dissemination through persuasion and discourse. Similar to Habermas’ position elaborated in chapter one, accountability is increasingly being adapted through donor interaction and negotiation. Though rationalist theories would serve to explain this exchange of ‘services’ it would not help this thesis to understand the development of accountability in Afghanistan. Norm Development theory will therefore be applied and unpacked in chapter seven.

Policy development from 2010 to 2013

Despite these safeguards against adequate resource management, corruption continued to increase. By 2013, Afghanistan shared the last rank, together with Somalia and North Korea in Transparency International's Corruption Index (TI, 2013). Corruption is relevant to the development of accountability since it reflects the government's ability to account for taxes, resources and power. In 2010, as a countermeasure against corruption, the Independent Joint Anti-Corruption Monitoring and Evaluation Committee (MEC) was founded per the London conference (MEC, 2013a). MEC was created to provide additional oversight over the government's operations and identify weaknesses in governance policy implementation (MEC, 2010). This includes the evaluation of reforms, legislative updates, institutional changes, systematic reforms and capacity building to ensure that democratic structures were not only created, but also enforced (MEC, 2010). For example, MEC (2013b) identified that whilst policy dictates that all government contracts ought to be published, only 1200 were, and many did not provide full details. Moreover, three government institutions, including the Kabul Municipality, did not publish contracts at all.

This emphasis on adequate policy implementation highlighted the need to reorient accountability and integrity away from policy orientation and good governance aspirations to an implementation strategy (GIROA, 2010). Although security continued to be a top priority, the conceptualisation and implementation of accountability became clearer during this period. This is particularly due to the Kabul Process that aimed "to translate the ANDS into result-oriented, prioritized bankable programs" (MoF, 2010a:4). The Kabul Process entailed the development of 22 National Priority Programmes (NPP) to create a more strategic implementation plan for ANDS and highlight local ownership. It also advocated for another renewal of the state through national consensus and "the engagement of local authorities, civil society and parliament in the development and monitoring of national development policies and plans" (GIROA, 2010a:4; 2010b). Specifically to governance, the government claimed it was "only through *an integrated understanding* of the major obstacles to effective, participatory, and accountable governance in Afghanistan [...] [that] appropriate policy and institutional reforms [can] be introduced" (MoF, 2010c:3). It further stipulated that achieving "the objectives associated with good democratic governance requires a responsive system of representative, accountable, and effective governance that: (i) protects citizens through an impartial, accessible, and fair judiciary supported [...] by a competent and resourceful civil service that operates transparently and is accountable to its constituents" (MoF, 2010c:2). Observably, from the abovementioned policies, the Kabul Process was heavily influenced by the liberal agenda, despite its emphasis on Afghan ownership. It asked for 'result-oriented governance reforms', 'accountable government', 'legitimacy of public institutions', 'enabling environment for economic and social development', 'measures systems and procedures', 'effective accountability' etc. (MoF, 2010c). This alignment to liberal objectives was also observed by the author between 2009 and 2012 as part of her

professional experience in Afghanistan. The dominance of liberal ideas not only dominated the policy environment, but also civil society, media and the NGO community.

Amidst this heavy and extensive liberal agenda, the notion of accountability does however become clearer. For example, in the National Priority Programme Two, responsible for national transparency and accountability presented in July 2011, the government aimed to increase capacity, strengthen legal and institutional mechanisms, and engage civil society in order to generate accountability (MoF, 2011b). Unpacking NPP2 shows however that the national programme was designed to address corruption, rather than generate accountability. For example, some of its activities are the development of complaint mechanisms, asset registration, administrative procedure simplification and strengthening of the penal and audit laws (Ibid). It targets audit structures, quality standards and monitoring systems to increase accountability, public trust and government legitimacy by reducing corruption (MoF, 2011b). Accountability, in this context, becomes the *method* to target corruption rather than the end goal in itself. Another example that illustrates this is the National Audit Law where the "Auditor General is obliged to present to the President within six months after completion of the fiscal year an audit report of financial account of the government in the previous year" (Parliament, 2010:4). The law's objective, in this case, is to create oversight and grant a power-holder the ability to execute control over a given situation. Power continues thus to flow along traditional lines illustrating an internal answerability objective, rather than political accountability.

HoO, the custodian of NPP2, promotes "its vision of a national state with the highest standards of integrity based on fundamental principles of efficiency, transparency and accountability in the public domain" (HoO, 2010:9). HoO emphasises the need for accountability in its strategies, but outlines clear caveats as to why it cannot enforce them fully (Ibid). Examples of these are lack of political will, capacity and resources. Whilst some accuse the HoO of being an anti-integrity organisation, it is noteworthy that similar to other years, it only received 0.1%, or 2.66 million USD, from the 2012 national budget (MoF, 2012). Consequently, despite that NPP2 makes an effort in creating an implementation strategy for accountability, its upholder, the HoO, has institutional limitations that jeopardise the development of accountability. Another accountability upholder is IDLG, the lead agency for National Priority Programme Four. NNP4 is responsible for local governance and "is committed to establishing [...] effective, strong and accountable government institutions [...] at subnational level [...] These government institutions need to coordinate the delivery of essential services and to be accountable to the citizens of Afghanistan" (IDLG, 2012:16). IDLG received 1.1%, or 51.66 million USD, from the 2012 national budget and supports provincial, district and village level entities (Ibid). It particularly aims to create local representation, accountability and transparency by clarifying roles and responsibilities, generating better coordination and consultation, and harmonising laws at the

subnational level (IDLG, 2012; 2013). Similar to previous years, IDLG particularly emphasises citizen participation and representation in its policies.

Similar to NPP2, NPP4 strengthens the role of oversight and control to respective government institution, but fails to qualify success (IDLG, 2013). These strategies clarify implementation tactics and institutional structures, but still struggle to measure the depth of government operations. In NPP1, responsible for financial and economic reforms, and in NPP3, assigned to efficient and effective government, the Ministry of Finance also plays a big role in creating accountability. Unlike HoO and IDLG, MoF had a higher budget (2.3% or 1.14 billion) in 2012 and is more NPM oriented (MoF, 2012). It aims to create an "Efficient, Transparent and Result-based Budget for National Good" and emphasis on result-based and efficient governance across its policies (MoF, 2013:6). Due to this approach, measurable results are a continuous part of the monitoring process for MoF. Distinct to other ministries, MoF has expanded the role of accountability in its NPPs to engross donor action. For example, it claims that "accountability of planning, actions, expenditures and development results from both the government and the Development Partners" (MoF, 2011a:8-9). This development is very interesting as it expands accountability beyond its traditional political borders. Moreover, although this identifies the actors that need to be responsible, the 'to whom' part is still a bit vague.

Consequently, between 2010 and 2013, good governance, accountability, ownership, anti-corruption and handover have dominated the policy arena. Despite this heavy policy emphasis on governance, primarily promoted by international donors, budget support remained quite low. For example, in 2012 the National Directorate of Security received 32% of the national budget (MoF, 2012). The sectors of infrastructure, education and agriculture received 22%, 14%, and 11% respectively, compared to Governance and Rule of Law, which only received 5% (Ibid). Nevertheless the strategic policies developed under the Kabul Process helped to clarify accountability based on its role in the implementation plans. These policies showed that accountability is used as a method to address corruption and to generate hierarchical control and oversight over government performance, rather than as a political process to mitigate power between different stakeholders. Subsequently the emergence of accountability is thus far instrumentalised. A political-economic analysis could have provided a more robust understanding of why accountability manifested the way it did, but since this study is more interested in the *process* rather than the outcome, norm development theory will be applied a bit later in the thesis.

Thus far, this chapter has outlined the appearance of accountability in Afghanistan between 2001 and 2013. Accountability had very little role to play in policy making from 2001 to 2007 since the government was busy addressing issues of reconstruction, recovery and development.

However the lack of significant socio-economic progress and increased volatility led to a stronger oversight of aid and donor involvement. This slowly unravelled into heavy donor presence in the Afghan statebuilding process through the promotion of the liberal agenda. National policies were soon filled with liberal jargon to address aid ineffectiveness, corruption and poor development results. Statebuilding of the 'modern state' appears therefore to be reactive to economic and political crises rather than a thought through plan to create strong democratic institutions.

The need to generate better aid results and reduce corruption pushed accountability high in the priority list. Although it surfaced in several policy documents between 2008 and 2009, and thus spread, it only served as an overall objective without really providing an implementation strategy for how to actually create accountability. The norm was indirectly used to accentuate the power of the state by highlighting the need for hierarchical control. Between 2010 and 2013, accountability gained further depth through the Kabul Process and its implementation strategies of ANDS. The policies show that accountability was being implemented as a method to create internal oversight and fight corruption, rather than to distribute power and endorse citizen representation. For example, although citizen participation was mentioned multiple times across IDLG policies, this was used to create state legitimacy rather than acknowledge citizen power. The objective of these policies was therefore not to create accountability in itself but to use it as a supporting structure for other statebuilding purposes. Consequently the emergence of accountability in Afghan policies manifested as a solution to diverse problems rather than as a strategic engagement in the statebuilding process.

Whilst policy development provides an interesting insight into the emergence of accountability in Afghanistan, it does not illustrate the actual manifestation of it. Black and white text does not tell us how accountability is felt, experienced, sensed or perceived; it merely gives us an indication of what is there. The next section will start exploring accountability using primary data to gain a better understanding of the norm in the liberal statebuilding process.

Power Base for Accountability

Before diving into the research findings, it is worth recollecting the meaning of power relations for the purpose of this thesis. In chapter two, 'power relations' was selected as one of three accountability characteristics of the conceptual framework. Power Relations identify the source and direction of power, as it determines who is accountable to whom. This in turn sets the boundaries that constrain and enable political action. Moreover the liberal democratic baseline for power, also explained in chapter two, is used as a control element to the primary data presented in this section. Its meaning, founded on the 'government of the people', recognises

the power of citizens to create answerability and enforcement of negotiated political expectations through elections and political dialogue.

This section will unpack the field data to identify the power relations of accountability in Afghanistan and see whether it has emerged per the policy framework. This section is divided into three parts: 1) Power Dynamics, 2) Relationship Ties, and 3) Negotiation Abilities. Each of these will examine power relations in Afghanistan to determine their influence on accountability.

Power Dynamics

This section will start by exploring the power dynamics in Afghanistan by first outlining the power structures that are in place. It will then present the research data to understand the discrepancies, if any, between what is and what ought to be.

The current constitution in Afghanistan is based on the 1964 constitution, arguably the country's most democratic one, and grants the president ultimate powers (Barfield, 2010). Despite the presence of power-sharing structures and democratic elections, presidential appointments and decrees bequest the head of state the ability to impact government output at all levels. For instance, the direct appointment of cabinet members, governors, judges and chiefs of justice, aids the president to impact the performance of the executive and judiciary at national and subnational levels (Jones-Pauly & Nojumi, 2004; Barfield, 2010). Critics have argued that this centralised notion of power reinforces its flow along traditional lines rather than distribute it alongside democratic structures. For example, in 2008, the Asia Foundation carried out a national survey and asked citizens whether they thought politicians used power for their own benefit or to help people; 41% of the population strongly agreed whilst 35% agreed somewhat (TAF, 2008). Moreover, it is generally perceived that "the push to adhere to the timetable for democratic development laid out in the Bonn Agreement came at the expense of having elected local, provincial, and parliamentary officials of unsavoury backgrounds, which, in turn has weakened the longer-term legitimacy of Afghanistan's new democratic institutions" (Mullen, 2008:83). Consequently, democracy is losing support in Afghanistan since power is not distributed as preached (TAF, 2008).

The research conducted for this thesis came to similar conclusions as it showed that the discrepancies between official structures and unofficial power flows impact the development of accountability. Accountability, which is considered as a democratic norm, is primarily jeopardised by obscurity since unofficial power flows make it difficult to identify who should be accountable to whom and through which means. The 103 interviews showed that whilst some respondents did not believe that the Afghan government wanted to share power to generate accountability, others believed that there was a political will, but obstructed by internal power

grabbing dynamics. Specifically, 44% of respondents felt that the Afghan government does not support the distribution of power to generate accountability, whilst 30% believe that they do; the majority of which consists mainly of civil servants. The remaining percentage felt that the commitment to generate accountability varied from institution to institution and that it was impossible to provide an overall commitment from the government. The below quote illustrates the above point:

"They [Government] are like having two kinds of personality. When they are with foreigners they are very good, very proper, everything is good, but when they are in position to implement they are quite different. They think about their ethnicity, they think about their language, they think about their party, they think about their friends – not about Afghanistan, not about the people" – Abdul Mujeed Khalvatgar, Executive Director, NAI Supporting Open Media in Afghanistan

From a structural point of view, the legislative body of a democratic government is supposed to create answerability and enforcement. Theoretically, it is a key component in generating accountability since members of parliament are elected by citizens to represent their interests, as illustrated in chapter two. In 2004 when the first democratic elections were held in Afghanistan, few people appeared to resonate with the political contestation of power. TAF (2004:7) concluded in their yearly survey that "[p]olitical tolerance, regarding parties or between persons, is low among the Afghans interviewed", and only 30% of citizens were willing to allow party meetings to take place. After two parliamentary mandates, the parliament is still considered too weak to generate answerability and enforcement due to lack of knowledge, capacity and political orientation. For example, in 2011, MoF recognised that the "National Assembly (Parliament) is new and the capacity is low regarding the understanding of the Qatia [core budget financial statements] accounts and annual CAO [Control and Audit Office] audit reports. Parliament's role in relation to the Qatia accounts needs to be developed and well-understood so Members know what information they need and should demand in the report in order to make sound decision on policy and budgetary planning" (2011b:39).

The thesis' research findings come to similar conclusions. Despite the parliament's theoretical key role in generating accountability, very few interviewees made reference to the legislature in creating enforcement. Consistent with the statebuilding process outlined in chapter four, the lack of recognition of power between the executive and the parliament has led to a mud fight where the executive refuses to be called by the parliament and often accuses the legislature of corruption and incompetence (Hewad *et al*, 2013). The parliament has simultaneously been unable to provide a solid opposition due to weak or non-existent political agendas, but increasingly serves an oversight function. It is unclear whether answerability is generated for strategic rent-seeking purposes or for accountability. The research shows however that few interviewees identified the parliament as a potential partner in generating accountability as a

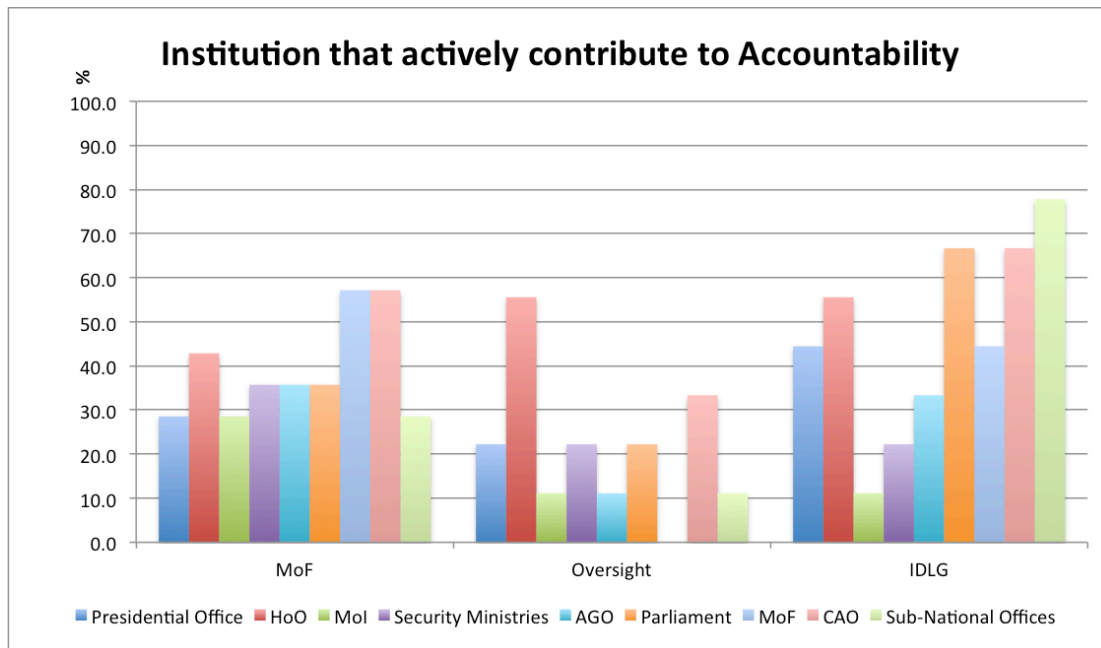
norm. Perceptions do not always represent a full picture, but they do illustrate the current absence of parliamentary power as experienced by the interviewees. The below quotes illustrate some of these opinions:

MPs "are either politicians or extremely weak people, meaning no capacity, they do not know how to question, then there is a large majority that is very corrupt so they don't actually represent the people [...] parliament would have been one actor that could do that [generate accountability] but you know, the current parliament [...] there is no way they will do their job"
– Seema Ghani, Executive Director, MEC

"the parliament, the people who are supposed to look at the implementation of the law in order to judge whether the law is implemented or not, he himself doesn't know what the law is"
– Aming Khuramji, Director General for Policy and Oversight, HoO

Interestingly, interviewees mostly identify accountability power in the executive. The below graph, although statistically insignificant, shows how 32 MoF, Oversight and IDLG respondents perceive other government institutions in the accountability framework. Ministry of Finance respondents identify CAO as a key actor in generating accountability, whilst IDLG, unsurprisingly, highlights the role of representative bodies such as subnational entities and the parliament. HoO on the other hand perceives itself as a clear leader and enforcer of accountability. It is noteworthy that across the interviewed institutions, HoO has a marked presence, despite that a majority of interviewed civil servants view the organisation with mistrust and inefficiency. This can be explained by the presidential support and backup of the institution, rather than per the organisation's operations. In other words, the direct link and collaboration between Karzai and Dr. Ludin, Head of HoO, highlights a power relationship that impacts more the perception of power in HoO than the institution's performance in generating accountability. It is noteworthy that this potential explanation is an educated assessment of the political dynamics in Afghanistan during the period of the research and not a direct analysis from the interviews since individual identification was too sensitive for the research.

Graph 1: Accountability Institutions that generate accountability



The ability to share power and have the faculty to enforce accountability is not only distributed horizontally between government institutions, but also vertically between central bodies and subnational offices. This is important to understand since the norm cannot gain legitimacy and power without validating the authority of actors to generate answerability or enforcement. As explained in the previous chapter however, Afghanistan's 'modern' decentralisation started only in 2007 since it was considered too dangerous due to regional warlords (Barfield, 2010). IDLG's mission became "to consolidate peace and stability, achieve development and equitable economic growth and to achieve improvements in service delivery through just, democratic processes and institutions of good governance at sub national level" (IDLG, 2008:2). Needless to say, it is a tall order for any institution.

Additionally, IDLG's strategy, similar to other Afghan policies, is embedded in liberal norms and recognises that "sub national governing units will be fully committed to provide open and transparent, accountable, participative, effective, coherent, and inclusive governance based on consensus and rule of law" (Ibid). By 2010, the Afghan government further emphasised the importance of local government accountability towards the local population and simultaneously recognised that "subnational governance in Afghanistan is currently composed of a range of entities whose roles and responsibilities are not well defined and whose competencies and resources are insufficient to address the challenges of local development" (MoF, 2010c:4). Subsequently Afghanistan's subnational structural framework supports elected councils, civil society participation, and access to information, transparency and accountability, but suffers from lack of capacity and resources (MoF, 2010c; IDLG, 2010).

Complementary to the above, the field data collected for this research shows that the centralised system in Afghanistan depletes subnational entities from autonomy, progression and independent thinking. For example, the hierarchical government structure restricts power and authority in subnational government by preventing independent budget and development planning. Respondents were often unable to provide a holistic picture of accountability at subnational level since they argued that regional performance was highly correlated to local power structures, which are also associated to ethnic power dynamics. The majority of respondents argued that accountability manifested differently not only in the 34 provinces but also in the 365 districts due to local power holders. Therefore, the image portrayed by interviewees was that of an intensely fragmented subnational approach to the norm despite policy structures to create standard operations and distribute power. The image portrayed so far from the data suggests that power relations have a big impact on the development of accountability. The intrinsic power relations in Afghanistan are however so inherent to the society that they not only influence political action but also constitute social structures. Though Finnemore and Sikkink's *Normative Life Cycle* struggles to engage all of these complex relations, as discussed in chapter one, it will nevertheless help to map out the progress of norm development in chapter seven. The below quotes are extracts to illustrate the centralised nature of government and regional inconsistencies as identified by research participants:

"at the provincial level [...] all they have to do is wait to get an amount of money and spend it where they have been told to spend it" – Basir Saber, Direct General of Policy and Planning, IDLG

"I see some governors at the provincial level who are supporting this [accountability]. It depends to the personality of governors and the person who is working on this but I see some changes in some departments like newly established departments [...] in other departments, I don't see such things" – Donor CN406¹⁵

Moreover the research showed a lot of mistrust and lack of dialogue and consultation between the central and subnational governments. Structure wise, representative councils are supposed to hold the executive accountable, but the research shows multiple types and levels of mistrust. For example, central civil servant interviewees reported uneasiness with subnational capacity, whilst subnational respondents were dissatisfied with arcane orders. The lack of collaboration, capacity and information seems to reinforce a strict line of authority to assure obedience. This, in turn, appears to restart the circle by limiting the circulation of information and power. Below are some quotes to illustrate the gap between the centre and the regions.

"they [provincial departments] still don't trust us with the truth so we have to be really clever and smart to find out the reality" – Civil Servant SN300

¹⁵ Please review the Methodology chapter for interviewee codification

"there is a joke amongst Afghans [...] apparently some people in Faryab [...] saw this Iranian plane violating Afghan airspace so they contacted Kabul and they sent a message saying 'what should we do about this?' – Six months later they received a letter 'shoot them down'" – Civil Society Representative CN400

"One thing that I am little bit concerned [...] [about, is] the lack of trust between centre and provinces. This is something that will not allow for transparency and accountability and actually direct engagement of the people with the government" – Nargis Nehan, Executive Director, EPD

Consequently, similar to other studies, this research found that political power in Afghanistan is extremely centralised and seldom shared, vertically and horizontally. The lack of power distribution impacts the legitimacy of accountability on multiple levels. One, it makes it unclear who should be accountable to whom; two, it weakens accountability's validity since the lack of collaboration and transparency disconnects the actors who are tasked with creating answerability and enforcement, i.e. fragmenting the responsibility for implementing the norm; three, it redirects power through unofficial channels undetectable and unmonitored by the democratic structures that support accountability.

Besides power sharing between different government entities, such as legislative and judiciary, power and resources are also supposed to be effectively distributed amid institutions. This impacts the legitimacy of accountability as it reflects government responsiveness and effective use of power and resources. Afghanistan's civil service in 1391 (2012) consisted of 809,786 civil servants, an increase of 9% compared to the previous year (MoF, 2012). This large cadre is supposed to attend the needs of 31 million people, compared to the UK, who had 448,835 civil servants in 2013 to serve 64 million people (ONS, 2013; MoF, 2012). Afghanistan has double the amount of human resources to assist half the size of the British population and claims that "the true measurement of success for these endeavors is whether the Afghan people [...] will begin to accept their government as service-oriented, credible, and legitimate" (MoF, 2010c:3). Looking at Afghanistan's Tashkeel (Civil Service Formation) however, the vast majority of Afghan civil servants (including service personnel) are found in the security and education sectors, 31% in Ministry of Education, 25% in Ministry of Defence, and 25% in Ministry of Interior (MoF, 2012). This leaves 19% left to provide all other basic public services and assure effective governance. IDLG, which is in the 10th place of the Tashkeel, for example, hosts only 1% of civil servants (MoF, 2012). This puts into question the state's ability to create legitimacy based on its service performance and effective use of resources. Moreover, this impacts accountability since citizens are, theoretically, the power holders to restrict government behaviour if performed outside the agreed political framework.

The field research showed that institutional performance is strongly linked to political leadership. Civil servant respondents claimed that accountability and institutions' ability to collaborate, share information and perform effectively depend strongly on individual leaders.

While institutionalism would have been an interesting way to look at the data to assess the institution's ability to recreate and enforce accountability, the author felt that the strong influence from leaders was better captured by norm development since it would help to map out norm promoters, followers and antagonists. Some interviewees, particularly at MoF, reported for example a sense of empowerment in creating a ministry that they envisioned within the agreed political framework, others reported feeling stuck between wanting to deliver services effectively, initiate reforms and being unable to do so in fear of abuse of power. The below quotes are selected examples to reflect the interviewee's views on political leadership.

"most of these institutions if you look into them deeply, they are very much personality driven or very much revolving around personalities that lead these institutions rather than having the institutions as a framework [...] we have to change this perception of management in Afghanistan but this is not only for these institutions, this is all over the country. This is the way the frame was set ten years ago in Bonn [The West's selection of Karzai as president], everything evolves around personalities" – Senior Government Official, SN100

"He [Minister] said 'you guys have to pay for my house rent' and we said it is an UNDP programme and that we didn't have much authority and that we couldn't pay. He said 'ok so then you guys have to pay me 20 000 dollars each' and we had to say that we [...] cannot save that much money each year [...] then he said 'I don't need people who make excuses and I really need the money'. What happened? After a week he sent a letter to both of us saying 'you don't have allegiances to me but more to my deputy minister and I don't need you guys, you are fired from this very day and you have to leave'" – Academic, CN404

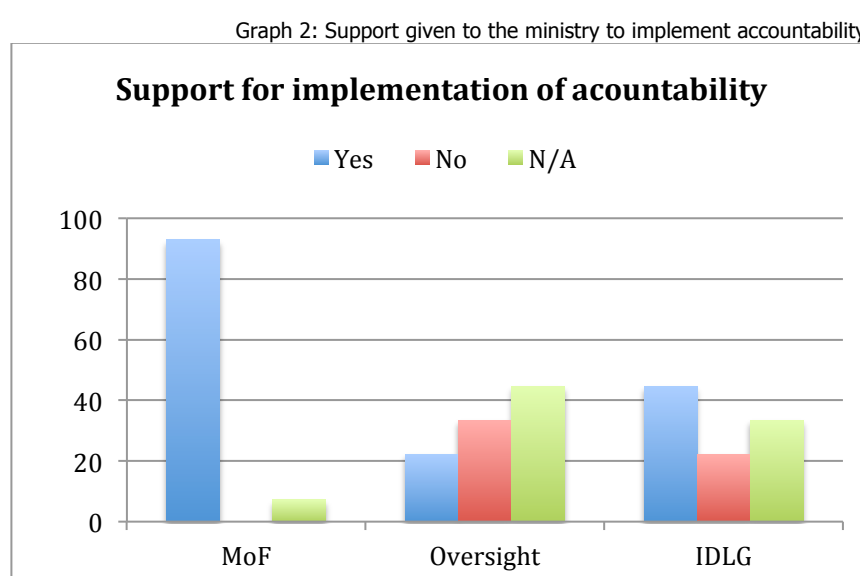
"if our minister doesn't support us, we cannot do anything; but since he is supporting us, and providing all possible things to us in every manner, we are doing our job very well" – Senior Civil Servant SN200

Moreover, whilst a supportive and motivating environment is reported in some ministerial departments, others are described to have a chronically discouraging milieu prone to abuse and corruption. Respondents, both amongst civil servants and non-state actors, reported a general low desire in the government to truly become effective and change the system. Some participants shared very interesting details of specific political figures off the record to the researcher and although this information cannot be shared due to privacy clauses, the consistency in which some civil servants are pushed to operate outside their comfort zone and the law is discouraging. Furthermore the occasional individual who expressed a desire to change the system without leadership expressed feeling exposed and unprotected to potential physical and violent retribution. Two of their quotations are presented below:

"if I come up with anything else or try to simplify the process, I will be punished immediately because I have just crossed the line. There is too much power in the hands of one person. The atmosphere of suffocation, the atmosphere of too many imposed restrictions and too much power" – Civil Society Representative, CN400

"about one hour ago I had a meeting with the representative of the security department and he was talking about some dangers that were threatening us [...] if we investigate cases, they threaten us" – Hamid Karimi, OiC Herat Office, HoO

The concentration of power amidst a few is prevalent in the research. This is not only reported to control institutional performance based on personal preferences, but also in restricting power distribution within a single entity. Institutional power sharing and accountability, on the other hand, were reported within institutions that experienced support by the political leadership. For example the below graph shows the answer of 32 civil servants and illustrates that whilst most of MoF's respondents believe there is enough support to implement accountability, primarily due to the political leadership of the ministry, IDLG, HoO and MEC are more disharmonised. This was partly due to negative leadership and disjointed institutional performance.



The fact that many Afghan political leaders belong to the diaspora also raised a few issues on their own. The diaspora was not part of the research's objective, but came out naturally from a small number of interviewees. Diaspora leaders are considered to speak 'donor language', and donors appear more comfortable channelling funds through them since they support Western liberal ideals. The few interviewees that raised this issue were concerned about centralising power amongst individuals who did not have local acceptance, legitimacy and credibility. They argued that the high presence of corruption, missing funds and ineffective performance happened under their watch. The below quotes illustrate some of their sentiments.

"many people who came to work for the government, they feel irresponsible. They kind of feel they were not attached to this country so if you have double citizenship and you are here only to make money from the government, through the government, from the donor community [...] then you do not feel responsible for this country and for this people" – Faraidoon Shariq, Founder, Youth Leadership Forum

"the people of Afghanistan, the tiny educated elite in this country, many of whom have one foot in Afghanistan and the other foot in Dubai or London or Germany, the UK and all that. The minute things go the wrong way, they are going to leave this country, many of these people we work with, they will not be living here, in fact they are dual-citizens [...] they are going to leave this country as soon as they realise they can't lord over the rest anymore" – Expat, SN103

Additional to the centralisation of power and subjective government performance, missing funds and corruption are also highlighted in relation to power and legitimacy generation. In 2012, 1.25 billion USD were paid in bribes and households surviving on less than 30 000 Afs (\approx 60 USD) per year were more likely to pay bribes than those earning more (IWA, 2013; Mullen, 2009). Uneducated people from rural areas were more likely to be victims of corruption due to their limited knowledge on public service delivery. According to IWA's 2012 Corruption Perception Survey, "11% [of participants] stated that it was acceptable for a civil servant to take bribe if he/she has a low salary. Also 11% stated that it was acceptable if a civil servant asks for bribes in exchange for reducing taxes and custom duties" (IWA, 2013:16-17). Interestingly however, 96% of respondents reported feeling guilty paying bribes despite that 55% had never sought government services in the given year (IWA, 2013). The most corrupt institutions were identified in rule of law, 29% had paid bribes to the courts, 26% to Ministry of Interior (Police), and 23% to Ministry of Justice (Ibid).

The presence of corruption in a country can be detrimental for the legitimacy of accountability since it reflects citizens' inability to impact government behaviour and enforce the norm. It also restricts citizens' ability to acquire public services and impacts their own self-confidence in engaging successfully with the government. The research shows that bribery in Afghanistan was, to some extent, justified due to poverty and limited resources. The presence of grand corruption and patronage created a sense of justification for lower civil servant bribery since their 'profit' was deemed as a very small piece of a very large cake. Corruption is perceived so far spread that Najiba Ayubi, Executive Director to Killid jokes 'someone went to Karzai and said 'there is a lot of corruption', he said 'how much do you pay me to take care of it?'. As an example, out of the 103 interviews, 5 respondents commented spontaneously to have experienced corruption two weeks prior to the interview. Moreover the majority of participants primarily identified their opinion of government accountability based on public service delivery. Therefore, any hindrance to effective distribution, such as corruption, is bound to impact their perception of the norm. The below quotes were chosen as an example to reflect the Afghan frame of mind around bribery.

"nobody looks to the future but everybody is concerned about today. You have a situation in which you have all the people being uncertain about the future and they want to make the most out of today; fill their pockets and see what they can do because there is no tomorrow" – Barry Salam, Managing Director, Channel 7

"I am giving you an example [...] we have been forced to pay bribes for the collection of our taxes [...] if they do not sign the document, we should pay fines so to avoid the fines we are paying bribes and this is very very surprising. In a country you pay taxes but instead we have to pay bribes to pay the taxes" – Sanjar Said, Owner, Newspaper 8-Times

"people who bribed many millions of USD dollars live in palaces and I who only took a hundred Afs from a driver, I am jailed for three months'. I mean let alone the complaint he is making, he wants to legitimise his taking a hundred Afs because the people who are ruling this country took millions of USD" – Gran Hewat, Researcher, AAN

The presence of corruption and questionable government performance has impacted citizens' confidence and trust in the Afghan government. Participants report a decrease in state legitimacy, voter turnout and citizen power. The centralisation of power in the hands of a small government elite and unofficial actors deviates government attention from public service delivery and citizens to internal power grabbing politics. This increases citizen grievances, mistrust and feelings of disempowerment, which further deepens the gap between the population and the state. The below quotes are selected both from a government and civil society representative to illustrate the perceived attitude between Afghan citizens and the state.

"I think there is an overall lack of willingness to serve the people. When you go to a hospital, the doctor who is working in this hospital [...] gives you his business card and asks you to come during non-official times to his private clinic" – Abdul Mujeeb Khalvatgar, Executive Director, NAI

"people are losing their patience [...] they are not coming to the government because there is no speedy justice, there is no speedy delivery of public services. People are disappointed" – Saeed Kharmoosh, Director General for Local Council Affairs, IDLG

The negative influence of corruption on norm development is evident in the data, however norm development theory, as covered in chapter one, has thus far limited experience engaging with 'negative' norms. Moreover the influence of interacting norms, one being perceived as 'good' while another one 'bad', is an area that is still poorly explained by Finnemore and Sikkink's *Normative Life Cycle*. While the role of corruption could be better explained by political-economic analysis, thus highlighted in this and the following chapter, its premises would also struggle in unpacking *change* and the interaction between corruption and accountability. Currently there is no way of telling "how the pre-existing norm helps to define the emerging norm" but by identifying the evolution of accountability, this thesis hopes to provide a better insight into the mergence between an external norm and the local context (Archarya, 2004:244).

To summarise, the field research findings suggest that Afghanistan's government structures and policies that ought to support accountability are not fully operational due to centralisation of power, rent-seeking aspirations, inconsistent government behaviour and unrecognised accountability actors. This section has shown that democratic structures, such as the

constitution, parliament, and subnational representation, and legislation fail to command power away from unofficial power conduits. Power is centralised, rather than shared between different government entities, levels and ranks. This weakens the legitimacy of accountability since the norm fails to significantly infiltrate and impact political power and behaviour in the Afghan government.

Research participants portrayed a deeply ruptured government, both at central and subnational level, where accountability was only implemented on a benevolent basis. Accountability was at the mercy of individual leaders and their personal preferences. The political subjectivity of the norm muddled the role of accountability actors, who, theoretically, are supposed to generate answerability and enforcement. This not only made it unclear who should be accountable to whom, but also puts into question the legitimacy of accountability since its mere presence is disrespected and unacknowledged by many who are supposed to uphold it. The hierarchical and one-way power highway reflects more a subject's responsibility towards its leader than an egalitarian system regulated by accountability. Although individual Afghan leaders might generate opportunities for accountability, research participants did not identify the government as a cohesive power unit that generates legitimacy for accountability. Moreover the unamiable relationship between the population and the state is influenced by corruption and mistrust, which disempowers citizens in their political engagement with the government. This causes further injury to the legitimacy of accountability since citizens' power and participation in accountability generating activities, such as elections, consultation and policy dialogue, weakens.

To conclude, the research findings, so far, have portrayed an incomplete platform for accountability that suffers from poor power support from the Afghan government. The next section will seek further clarification by exploring some of the wider political relationships in order to further explore the power relations of accountability and ultimately assess whether it consists with the conceptual framework definition.

Relationship Ties

As observed earlier in this thesis, the role of social relationships, particularly those with ethnic affiliation, have played a significant role in Afghanistan's statebuilding. Unofficial relationships continue to channel power and influence Afghan politics to secure resources and social status (Saltmarsh & Medhi, 2011). Due to their importance, they are relevant to accountability since they are capable of influencing its development, legitimacy and power relations. Interestingly, the role and significance of social relationships is officially recognised by the Afghan government. For example, MEC (2012e:65) argues that under general circumstances "[i]nstitutions are established with independence to ensure that they have room to operate

outside of politics and can protect the public interest, but institutions have simply not progressed that far in Afghanistan and are beholden to politicians and vested interests". Additionally, the government acknowledges in official documents that "inappropriate appointments and selections take place based on relationships rather than regulation [...] They misuse their position and government resources and never pay attention to the accomplishment of their responsibilities to benefit the people of Afghanistan [...] [it further] has a negative impact on national unity [...] [and is] a reason for people to no longer trust government administrations and organizations" (GIROA, 2008b:18). Therefore, the presence of unofficial power relationships in Afghan politics is officially acknowledged to harm state legitimacy.

The field research reflects similar standpoints. A significant amount of interviewees across all sectors mentioned the influence of ethnic power on the political agenda despite democratic structures that are supposed to assure power sharing, accountability and government responsiveness. Research participants also mentioned the utilisation of democratic structures for personal purposes as individual leadership has more power than ideological perspectives or political platforms. This reflects the influence of personalities on institutional performance rather than vice versa. Moreover the researcher also encountered several actors who had dual political roles, one in the government and one in an official power structure, frequently with conflicting interests, if assessed from a democratic and not a power perspective. Consequently, weak institutionalisation and inconsistent agendas weaken the development of accountability since they contribute to ambiguous and unfocused political objectives. The below quotes illustrate interviewee reflections on 'personality' governance.

"it is very selective, very subjective and it is certainly not fair [...] it is very ethnically driven and when you have that kind of system in place, you are not going to go very far. You are going to create political conflict and the system comes to a standstill because they are against each other. There is an internal conflict going on, as opposed to combining efforts to push the national agenda forward" – Expat, SM103

Leaders "do everything to serve their own political agendas and purposes, they don't think that they are really responsible to the population [...] if somebody in charge is from one tribe then that tribe is in power basically. That clan is empowered, not that person and by being in power, I mean the traditional way of power" – Barry Salam, Managing Director, Channel 7

A significant amount of interviewees also suggested that the influence of tribal politics weakens the legitimacy of accountability since civil servants are more responsible to their appointers than to the public. The patronage system creates an opaque environment where no official method is available to negotiate political goals or to hold individuals accountable. Whilst a significant group of participants, particularly non-state actors, complained that tribal power frequently interfered in government affairs and prevented policy implementation, another smaller group highlighted the serious risks in destabilising tribal power. Whereas the first group perceived the presence of social/tribal relationships as undermining accountability due to their

close-knit unaccountable decision-making circle, the second group argued that tribal power stabilises the fragile peace in Afghanistan, and any deviation from the social order could have severe, if not life threatening, consequences. Note, the second group did not necessarily advocate for this approach, but expressed it merely as a reflection of their perceived social reality. Within these parameters, survival, peace and security had a higher priority than political accountability. The below quotes highlight some of these opinions.

"If the president makes a decision, he will be threatened by different parties to get privileges or to change his decision in their favour. This makes the issue really complicated" – Senior Civil Servant, SN206

"Most of the officials, the high ranking officials who are involved in these cases, they have links with major political factions who are influential in the government. They receive political protection for what they do [...] I believe that the main reason for the failure to create an accountable government in Afghanistan, and improve accountability, is the political system and not the institutions, which are designed to bring accountability" – Civil Society Representative, CN405

"I have a friend who made a very accurate observation, he said 'in Afghanistan five people decide, 30 million people guess'" – Naweed Kawusi, Deputy Director, HRRAC

Besides unofficial power relationships, traditional relationships found in Jirgas and Shuras were also identified by research participants as accountability influencers. The preference of unofficial governance systems has been mentioned earlier in this thesis, but the field research helped situate their role in relation to accountability. A national corruption study by IWA (2013) shows that 44% of respondents who experienced corruption turn to traditional forums and inadvertently weaken state legitimacy by rendering government services irrelevant. Although social changes brought by modernisation have weakened customary norms, the majority of research participants identified Jirgas as inherited social structures that embody the norm of accountability (Saltmarshe & Medhi, 2011). Interviewees, particularly subnational candidates, claimed that accountability resonates strongly with the community governance system since it reverberates with their culture and innate value system. Issues, such as information sharing, dialogue, negotiation, answerability and participation are core principles at community level since regional government outreach was historically almost non-existent in Afghanistan's statebuilding process. Consequently research participants found more legitimacy for the norm amongst social values than amidst political structures. This is a key finding of the research and is consistent with the literature reviewed in chapter one. Norms that are supported or associated with pre-existing norms are more likely to be adapted since they resonate with peoples' normative background and existing social structures (Archarya, 2004). This will be further analysed in chapter seven. The below quotes illustrate the above argument:

Accountability is "actually inherent to the culture and to the social system of governance in Afghanistan, people demand openness, accountability and direct responsibility" – Governance Expert, CN300

"the decisions that have been made in Jirgas have been made as part of consultations with the people and that is where they get their legitimacy. Now whatever happens within the government system in Afghanistan, it does not have any legitimacy because nobody knows about it" – Samira Hamidi, Executive Director, Afghan Women's Network

"You know, tribal elders have always done that, that is the traditional structure" – Bilal Sarwary, Reporter, BBC

Thus, tribal and social relationships have both a positive and negative impact on the legitimacy and power relations of accountability. Due to the presence of patronage and unofficial power relationships, very little, almost fictional, legitimacy is found in political structures. On the other hand, tribal and social relationships at a very small scale sustain accountability due to the cultural value system found at community level. In other words, unofficial relationships negatively impact accountability in the political sphere but positively support it in the social arena. The link between social forces and political action will be discussed later in chapter seven.

Another power relation that impacts the legitimacy of accountability is that between donors and government. The influence and power of foreign governments is recognised widely by the Afghan society and state. For example in IDLG's National Priority Programme, the government recognises donors and NGOs as active contributors to Afghan governance (IDLG, 2012). It further states that "many of the most high-performing [government] agencies are still largely dependent on international technical assistance and Afghan national technical advisers contracted by donors" (IDLG, 2012:13). In the field research, participants identified the international community as an important contributor to the development of accountability. A small but significant amount of participants highlighted an arbitrary and questionable methodology in promoting democratic norms. Interviewees argued that donors handpicked certain Afghan individuals and granted them unhealthy amounts of power to promote predefined Western benchmarks. Around a fourth of respondents believed that accountability was promoted, and, to a certain extent, imposed to satisfy external demands. This was perceived to shift the government's focus away from citizens to generate donor satisfaction. The below quotes have been extracted to illustrate the abovementioned point.

"The government is now in super overdrive mode [...] not just because the government has decided that it should. It is very much because the donor community has said the government should" – Adviser, SN304

At "the end of the day, you are totally dependent on someone else and that someone else has their own agenda and maybe that someone else is lobbying for an agenda which you don't

want or your people don't want. That creates this gap between the government and the people" – Ameen Habibi, Director General for Strategic Policy and Implementation, MoF

"I mean accountability to whom? What I see is the push to hold the Afghan government accountable to foreign donors, rather than to its population. I think the issue of accountability and corruption became part of the political agenda as a result of a change in the American administration. I am not sure if it is sustainable, it is a political convenience" – Wael Ibrahim, Executive Director, ACBAR

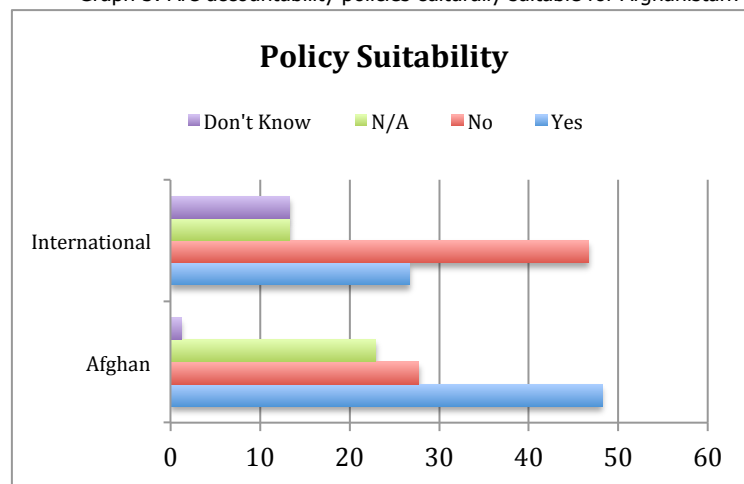
Donors on the other hand, struggle to identify a suitable way to deal with the situation. Several interviewed donors expressed their search for a break to a never-ending maze by finding the 'right' partners or individuals to work with; people who could share similar visions and understand the 'right' way forward. All donor respondents agreed that the international community had made some mistakes, but few acknowledged how deep the hole had been dug. Despite unsuccessful aid outcomes, donors continue to search for a balance between what is practically possible and what is politically wanted. Researchers and participants alike argue that the international community's political objectives are primarily based on Western values, rather than on Afghan needs (Barfield, 2010; Van Bijlert, 2009a; Roy, 2010). The below quotes reflect some of the thoughts on donors' approach in Afghanistan.

"look the problem was that I think the invading powers, the US tried to do it on the cheap. So they didn't have a day-to-day plan. It was all about you know, breaking the Taliban regime and handling down Al Qaeda, and then hopefully like a Tetris frame, the development would fall in place by itself somehow. Well it didn't." – Henrik Lindroth, Project Manager, UNDP

"I think we donors have to take a lot of blame because some of us have not been as diligent as we should have been so there is a lack of accountability on the side of donors as well in certain cases. Even though we discuss about it, I don't think there is a real desire to address it on our side and that is a tragedy because we are dealing with millions of dollars. When Dr Ludin [Head of HoO] says that the donors are corrupt, it resonates with the Afghan public because we could not counter that demonstrably; though we believe that we are not corrupt because consciously we did not engage in corruption. The way we support the system that lends itself to corruption, that makes us culpable. That is where our failure is, that we are unwilling to address the gaps, the lacuna, all that we should and we could; hoping that the Afghans themselves would do it but we also know that they are not going to do it" – Expat, SN103

Despite the absence of a holistic and clear donor approach to Afghanistan, almost all research participants perceive accountability policies to be donor driven. Although a considerable amount of interviewees see the policies as solid documents, the vast majority, similar to donors' political objectives, believe accountability policies mismatch Afghan realities on the ground. When asked whether this was a cultural relativity issue, 45% of all respondents said no. When dividing the data between international and Afghans, 49% of Afghans believed the policies were culturally suitable compared to 47% of internationals who thought they were *not*, as illustrated by the below graph. The findings are not statistically significant since only 15 internationals were interviewed, but the finding serves, nevertheless, as an indicator to illustrate that 'cultural relativity' interestingly strikes a higher chord amongst internationals than nationals.

Graph 3: Are accountability policies culturally suitable for Afghanistan?



Out of the 28% of Afghans who thought the policies were not suitable, the vast majority claimed that it was not a cultural issue per se, but simply that the policies were too advanced and ahead of time. The Afghan respondents who believed accountability policies were culturally inappropriate were interestingly found exclusively at subnational level where previous research findings indicated a strong connection to accountability's normative values. When asked for specific details regarding policy unsuitability, respondents were unable to provide information, but appeared more to have a general grievance towards the west and a perception of cultural invasion and intrusion in government affairs. Norm resistance is however normal, especially if promoted by external actors who do not have local legitimacy. Nonetheless in large doses it risks compromising norm emergence (Archarya, 2004). Though this kind of resistance can be observed by several critical studies, it is the impact on norm development that is interesting as it goes from the 'failures' of liberal statebuilding to the potentials. If the process of norm evolution can be identified, it helps unpack methodological challenges and opportunities to improve aid assistance. Subsequently, a key research finding is that the values of accountability are not necessarily rejected, but that the method in which they are manifested is problematic, particularly amongst those distant from the decision-making table. This is consistent with the author's own professional experience in Afghanistan. The below quotes serve to illustrate interviewee's sentiments towards accountability policy-making.

"it is not like the document is not rich, it is rich, but it is because it is above our capacity and our understanding. It is above our practical daily work" – Samira Hamidi, Executive Director, AWN

"These policies have really been developed and in fact conceptualised by donors [...] this is their idea, this is their brainchild. It is imposed on the Afghan government as a framework in a way that donors can effectively [...] [decide on] accountability issues and determination of benchmarks within international forms [...] with little consideration of Afghan owned input" – Governance Expert, CN408

The influence of donor power, unsurprisingly, has not gone unnoticed by the Afghan government. In several Afghan policies, the government highlights and requests international donors to align their interests and contributions to Afghan priorities. For example in IDLG's (2010:8) subnational policy, it asks the "international community, including the PRT, DST and Donor Agencies, [to] not establish parallel structures and [to] work through and reinforce GoIRA government bodies and mechanisms". MoF has been particularly vocal on this issue since aid to GDP ratio is 71%, and 100% of the development budget is based on external aid (MoF, 2010b). It has argued that all "Aid programs must respond to Afghan priorities; donors should strive to support Afghan priority programs [...] [and] not undertake actions that duplicate existing government programs" (MoF, 2010a:3). As well as asking for transparency, the Ministry of Finance has taken this issue further and advocated for donors to consult and coordinate with the Afghan government to increase aid effectiveness and accountability (MoF, 2011a). In 2011 and 2012, the Afghan government requested, at international forums in Busan and Tokyo respectively, for mutual accountability. In their position paper, the Afghan government stated:

"The Afghan government acknowledges that development assistance to its country is provided through the generosity of tax payers of donor countries and thus the latter have a responsibility to account for these resources. This acknowledgement underscores the felt need of the Afghan government to utilize donor assistance in the most effective and efficient manner. To meet this end, the government of Afghanistan is making an effort to establish institutional structures and processes to ensure proper accountability for donor investment" (MoF, 2011a:8-9)

As a response, the *Implementation Tokyo Framework* recognised the need "To hold each other accountable, the Government and the International Community are to establish a transparency and regular monitoring process, building on a reinvigorated Kabul Process and Join Coordination and Monitoring Board" (GIROA, 2012:1). Although this officially recognised donors' accountability towards a hosting country for the first time, the concept and implementation mechanisms of mutual accountability remain a bit abstract. Interestingly, although research participants had previously identified a mismatch between donor objectives and Afghan needs, interviewees, particularly amongst civil society respondents, also suggested that donors had become too lenient on the Afghan government in an attempt to find political compromises. They further claimed that donors' willingness to sacrifice the government-citizen relationship in exchange for donor compliance decreased accountability. A very small number of interviewees took this further and advocated for stricter consequences if donor conditions were not met. An example of their statements is presented below:

Donors "should say this government is not actually meeting the benchmarks and be a little harsh and actually reduce the funds or something in certain areas. A little punishment, I think we have to be treated like children sometimes" – Seema Ghani, Executive Director, MEC

"if conditionality is not reached and if we say you must do this, you must sort out the Kabul Bank crisis, what if the Afghans don't sort it out? What are we going to do then? So it is a bit like a parent with a child [...] you have to discipline the child in a way that they know that you mean it" – Greg Wilson, Advisor, IDLG

Interestingly, both of these quotes refer to hierarchical relationships where knowledge and experience alters the power dynamic between two actors. The two positions described above appear contradictory where on one side donor influence is criticised for representing external political interests, rather than Afghan needs, and on the other side, donor involvement is requested to regulate government behaviour. This shows the complex nature of the donor-government relationship and highlights the interlacing dynamics between local experience, national needs and external knowledge. Moreover it goes to attest that the power relationships that influence policy making and the development of accountability are not as linear or clear-cut as theory might suggest. As Ameen Habibi, Director General for Strategic Policy Implementation at MoF says "we are also not only accountable to the people who we are serving but also to the international community who is providing support to us [...] [because] credibility or legitimacy comes from the people as well as from the international community". This highlights the co-dependent relationship between donors and the government and the uneasy nature between local experiences and external knowledge. Accountability, therefore, not only relies on internal power relations to acquire legitimacy but also on external relations.

Ability to Negotiate Accountability Outcomes

Besides the source and direction of power channelled and guided by different relationships and interactions, legitimacy also requires a mutual understanding of accountability as it marks the boundaries that constrain and enable political action. A shared understanding of the norm sets the parameters that enable accountability actors to negotiate outcomes and objectives, as outlined by the conceptual framework. In the field research, civil servant participants were asked to conceptualise accountability and respondents primarily fell along two groups.

The first group consisted primarily, if not exclusively, of civil servants with technical mandates who had experienced administrative reforms that aimed to create effective government structures. These reforms were primarily promoted through New Public Management projects in Ministry of Finance and at ad hoc subnational entities. Civil Servants in this group related to accountability along Weber's definition of bureaucratic responsibility and associated the norm to rules, professionalism and performance. The norm in this context, was situated along hierarchical power lines and was considered useful for planning, prioritising and procedure simplification. Furthermore, interviewees identified accountability as a governance activity that rendered effectiveness and improved output. Respondents gave the following examples as accountability activities: programme budgeting, monitoring and evaluation, and technological advancement. Thus, accountability along these lines is tightly associated to effectiveness and

focuses primarily on structures and processes that minimise costs for maximum output. The below abstracts were selected to highlight some of these views:

"Accountability is like accountancy [...] it is good to have an accounting system so you know how much is spent, how much they should spend, what we should expect. This is called accountability from my point of view" – Sayed Hamid Azizi, Director of Public Awareness, ARD, MoF

Accountability is for "example if a person is holding a position and he is assigned tasks and he is doing it properly, the way it should be [...] using full authority and not misusing it, I would say that person is accountable of the tasks that he was assigned to" – Senior Civil Servant, SN211

"for sure I am accountable to the people but at the same time because I am DG, I am accountable to the Deputy Minister, who is accountable to the ministers, who is accountable to the cabinet, that is how it goes" – Ameen Habibi, Director General for Strategic Policy and Policy Implementation, MoF

The second group of participants associated accountability with transparency. This group consisted mainly of civil servants within institutions that possessed strong governance mandates, such as IDLG and HoO. Accountability amongst this group was perceived as a linear reporting activity that the government ought to give in order to create a sense of answerability. Although this definition recognises the role of citizens and is more along a governance approach, interviewees still did not identify it as a relationship where political negotiations and citizens' right to information are essential components. Research participants gave the following examples of accountability activities in order to elaborate their argument: Provincial Council Forums, Accountability Week in Herat and Governor Rating in Kabul. These activities share the characteristics of public gathering, government reporting and Q&A sessions. Although these activities emphasise dialogue and transparency, they have clear limitations. For example, participation can be restricted to an exclusive group, and questions and concerns are not followed up systematically, neither by the government nor by citizens. Moreover, citizens tend to use these forums to express grievances without having a strategic agenda for a desired outcome and do not attend regularly. The interaction and engagement of these forums therefore, can be rather superficial, but research respondents report nevertheless, that these activities are improving and gaining momentum as time goes by. The below quotes are given as examples to illustrate the perception of accountability within this group of participants.

"Accountability and transparency, these two terminologies are used interchangeably but of course accountability in Afghan terms, is that the government should really share accurate information with the public [...] it is a clear way of knowing what is exactly happening, how much is given, how much is spent and everybody should be very open to accurate information exchange" – Senior Civil Servant, SN203

"Accountability is this relationship of law enforcement [...] This relationship should be based on trust and confidence. The people should know what the civil servant is doing [...] and what

quantity. They should be aware of every detail, this is accountability” – Subnational Civil Servant, SN207

The field research has identified two very distinct ways of conceptualising accountability. One focuses on output and hierarchical responsibility, whilst the other recognises citizens and aims to generate a kind of outward answerability. This is a key point to consider since the first interpretation, reflecting an NPM approach, tends to disconnect citizens' role in the political process, as discussed in chapter two. The incoherent conceptualisation of the norm is problematic for the legitimacy of accountability since it fails to identify clear boundaries for political action and power relations. The Afghan government partly attributes this inconsistent foundation of democratic norms to an erratic donor approach to statebuilding. For example, the Development Cooperation Report suggests that donors have avoided strengthening institutions and that technical assistants (TAs) "have not been able to transfer the required knowledge and skills to Afghan institutions. Therefore with the exit of TAs, the vacuum will exist as it was before the deployment of TA" (MoF, 2010b:43). Democratic norms, such as accountability, are criticised for being 'transferred' through procedural changes, rather than through values and principles (Lister, 2006). Since procedures vary depending on institution and needs, the interpretation of the norm is prone to alterations, leading to inconsistent conceptualisations.

Power relations, subsequently, rest on a very unstable ground in Afghanistan. The field research has primarily identified two sources of power that originate from international norm recognition and local cultural values. These two sources manifest however with complications. Although accountability is recognised and acknowledged by community governance value systems, these local grassroots practices remain unconnected to the wider statebuilding agenda and do not have an official role or power in the political structure. This source of power remains untapped and unutilised in developing accountability as part of the liberal statebuilding process. The second source derives from the international community, which heavily advocates for accountability in the political arena. This power has created a lot of political structures and processes to support the norm in the political framework but suffers from disharmonisation. Although accountability is recognised as a valued norm, its implementation and integration into the Afghan government system is fraught with inconsistencies due to the complex relationship between Afghanistan and external actors. The discordance between external knowledge, local experience and national needs thwarts the development of accountability since it fragments its implementation and hazes its conceptualisation. This, in turn, weakens accountability's power relations since ambiguous norm boundaries grant insufficient authority to constrain and enable political action.

Moreover, unofficial power relationships delegitimise accountability since it jeopardises structures of representation, power sharing and citizen participation. The presence of patronage

networks and personal or tribal political agendas destabilises the government's relationship, responsibility and responsiveness to the population. The centralisation and monopolisation of power amidst chieftains and marginalisation of citizens deliver a hard blow to the legitimacy of accountability and almost vaporise it from the political framework. Consequently although accountability is represented structurally, as seen earlier in this chapter, the norm is wounded and unable to impact government behaviour. In other words, accountability does not find a democratic source of power in Afghan politics, but is heavily impacted by local power relation and dynamics.

Conclusion

This chapter has opened the exploration of accountability in Afghanistan. It initially did so by outlining the appearance of the norm in Afghan policies between 2001 and 2013. It showed that the policy framework, which supports accountability, is heavily influenced by liberal statebuilding. Accountability was primarily promoted by the international community as a solution to poor development results, ineffectiveness and corruption, rather than as a strategy to democratisation. It was not until 2010-2013 that accountability started to manifest in implementation strategies and gain a lush conceptualisation.

The chapter also showed that structurally, accountability is quite consistent with the liberal democratic notion of the norm presented in chapter two. Officially the Afghan political framework recognises the parliament, subnational representation, division of power, citizen participation, elections, etc., but unofficially, the presence of patronage networks deviates power along unmonitored and untouchable channels that relegates the citizen's role in Afghan politics. To summarise, tribal power groups have a big influence in policy implementation whilst international donors have a big say in policy making.

The field research data presented in this text helped to explore the first accountability characteristic in the conceptual framework: power relations. Although research participants illustrated a very fragmentised government where the norm is delegitimised by unofficial power relationships, weak institutionalism, and poor conceptualisation, they also acknowledged ad hoc progressive advancements in individual cases. Two particular power sources for accountability were identified, one amongst traditional community practices and another in the international community. Although the former grants legitimacy for accountability in the social arena, it is officially not part of the liberal statebuilding. The latter, on the other hand, grants accountability external legitimacy but hampers its immersion in the political sector by the controversy experienced between local experiences, external knowledge and national needs.

Additionally the field research was unable to identify a democratic power source for accountability in Afghan politics, but highly recognised the impact of Afghan power on norm development. Due to accountability's fragile legitimacy and power base in Afghanistan, the norm is unable to regulate power, impact government behaviour and grant authority to accountability actors. This impacts their ability to negotiate political outcomes and generate answerability and enforcement.

The chapter also identified two key findings, which will be discussed further in chapter seven. One, accountability finds more legitimacy and power amongst social values than political structures; two, whilst the essence of accountability is not necessarily rejected, its manifestation is experienced as problematic. These points are particularly interesting when considering norm development as part of liberal statebuilding since they help us understand the point of interaction between external and local actions. Though alternative theoretical frameworks such as institutionalism, discourse and political-economic analysis would have provided a better picture of the influencing factors and motivations behind norm development, the colourful findings encourage an alternative approach in order to unpack issues of change, organic norm progression, hybridity and sustainability. Acknowledging the complex nature of statebuilding, and the social implications that brings, the author feels there is a need for a more nuanced understanding of norm exportation than merely confirming its failure or success. This will however be unpacked a bit further in chapter seven.

Before getting ahead of us and applying the analytical framework identified in chapter two, the next chapter will continue unpacking the research findings.

CHAPTER SIX: POLITICAL DYNAMICS

In order to get a better picture of the development of accountability in Afghanistan, this chapter will present the remaining research findings to elaborate on the two outstanding accountability characteristics. Whilst the previous chapter touched lightly on the relationship between government and citizens, this chapter will start by exploring this in depth. This fundamental relationship is a defining element of accountability and its manifestation will give invaluable insight into the norm progression in Afghanistan. The second part of this chapter will unpack Accountability Methods to understand how answerability and enforcement manifest in real-life. This will help identify issues, if any, outside the formal government structure that impact government behaviour.

This chapter will then bring the presentation of the research findings into full circle and illustrate the complex nature of norm development in liberal statebuilding. The richness of the data sets a smorgasbord of accountability aspects to be critically assessed against Critical Peace Studies and good enough governance in the next chapter. This chapter will now present the remaining field findings in comparison to the remaining components of the conceptual framework.

Accountability Relationship between Government and Citizens

In chapter two, the government-citizen relationship was highlighted as a fundamental characteristic to accountability since it exposes government's ability to respond, address and adjust to citizens' demands. It reflects the strength and depth of citizen power to negotiate political outcomes, sets the boundaries for political action and enforces the norm if agreed political parameters are violated. This section will study citizens' power in Afghan politics by first exploring citizens' role in the political sector and, secondly, by examining agency. Unique to this section, the data of the research survey carried out by the researcher will be presented below in order to provide a bigger space for citizen perception.

Citizen Acknowledgement and Recognition

As outlined in previous chapters, citizens' identity, political role and relationship with the government have been weak throughout Afghanistan's statebuilding history. People's ability to negotiate political objectives and participate in the political sector has been overshadowed by tribal power and influence. Before diving into research findings however, a few facts will be mentioned in order to understand the general mood amongst citizens in Afghanistan¹⁶. In 2004 with the first democratic elections and a new wave of democratic civic education, 58% of

¹⁶ This is to remind the reader that this thesis will continue using TAF (The Asia Foundation) numbers, which were collected during annual national surveys. For more information on the methodology, please refer to one of the surveys listed in the bibliography.

citizens associated democracy with political rights, 39% with freedom, and 20% with a 'government of the people' (TAF, 2004). At the time, there was "a very broad consensus among Afghans regarding four basic democratic values [...] equal right for all [...] (89%), accountability of political leadership to the people (88%), the involvement of political parties in peaceable politics (80%), and peaceable opposition to government (78%)" (TAF, 2004:57). By 2009, only 42% of the population felt that the country was moving in the right direction and people showed "greater ambivalence towards government institutions. Only 57 percent express[ed] confidence in the public administration" (TAF, 2009:24). Despite this dip in positivity, when asked how well the state carried out its responsibilities, 71% still gave a positive assessment (Ibid). By 2013, this number had increased slightly to 75%, and 57% of the population believed that the country was moving in the right direction (TAF, 2013). By 2013 the population identified insecurity, corruption and unemployment as the biggest problems facing the country (TAF, 2013). Although people continued to talk about public service efficiency and government performance, ideological debates on democratisation had scaled down.

The decreased momentum in democratisation debate amongst the population is quite interesting because it diminished as it gained priority in Afghanistan's liberal statebuilding process. The Afghan government increasingly recognised the role of citizens in politics and "examine[d] ways to increase public participation in decision-making in order to in part, strengthen the legitimacy and effectiveness of the government" (IDLG, 2012:66). For example in NPP2, the government aims "to strengthen the legitimacy of the Government of Afghanistan, build public trust in it and create an enabling environment for social and economic development" by developing accountability and transparency (MoF, 2011b:8). This entails the establishment of complaint mechanisms to raise citizen concerns. IDLG specified civil society and citizen participation in subnational politics while MoF increased its budget transparency from 21% in 2010 to 59% in 2012 (IDLG, 2008; TAF, 2013). Despite these progresses, coordinated citizen action that demands accountability is still met with force and few Afghans actively engage in the political arena (TAF, 2013).

Similar to the previous chapter, the field research shows once again, that despite structural changes to increase citizens' political participation, power flows remain hierarchical. Research participants reported a lack of power amongst citizens to impact government behaviour. Power was still perceived to flow in a single direction and centralised by the government. This is a big challenge to accountability since the lack of de facto recognition of citizen power deteriorates the power exchange needed to hold someone to account. Interestingly, when asked how the accountability relationship should look, respondents gave clear examples with unequal distribution of power where the person who is entitled to hold someone to account is the main

power holder. Curiously, when illustrating these potential scenarios, participants chose to use anecdotes to describe social, rather than political, interactions. The below quotes exemplify:

"this is an Islamic society and the people believe in Islamic values. Islam gives high value to the principle of accountability. Islam views the government as the servant of the people and regard the people as the King [...] like if you have a servant and [...] if you gave him money, you will be asking him on what he spent the money" – Senior Civil Servant, SN206

"in the morning when I go to the office from home, I give 1000 Afghani to my wife to spend it and take anything from the market that she wants to cook [...] when I come back home, I evaluate and see whether there is anything that was bought for 1000 Afghani or not. If anything is missing, I tell my wife how to it and what to do" – Amin Khuramji, Director General for Policy and Oversight, HoO

The de jure recognition of citizen participation but the absence of de facto power, raises the question of why accountability is being promoted in the statebuilding process. As part of this research, 700 citizens in the capital and Herat, Kabul and Mazar provinces were asked for their opinion in a perception survey¹⁷. As the below graph illustrates, the responses were scattered across the chart. The data was compared to citizens' income status in order to identify potential predilections along social status. The value of the Afghani during the time of the survey, summer 2012, stood at 52 Afs for 1 USD. The data shows that the wealthiest respondents believed accountability was promoted to advance political agendas and improve development projects, whilst the two lower income categories believed it was to gain support from the population. These answers would indicate a political objective in promoting accountability rather than an interest in developing democratic processes, supporting a rationalist perspective. The middle class respondents, earning approximately between 6000 and 18000 dollars per year, thought however that accountability was promoted to advance democratisation and increase government responsibility. The dispersed distribution shows that citizens are unsure as to why the norm is being promoted.

¹⁷ For more information on the methodology, please refer to chapter three.

Graph 4: Why is accountability promoted?



While the perception might not mirror the actual reasons as to why accountability is gaining priority in the statebuilding process, it illustrates nevertheless a weak communication channel between the government and the population. It also shows that the democratic process is taking a different speed and form amidst citizens and in the government. Many describe the relationship between the Afghan government and the population as 'underdeveloped' and heavily impacted by corruption, causing mistrust, frustration and limited access to public services (UNDP, 2009; TAF, 2013). Despite that public reforms have historically been more successful with citizen participation and cohesion, Afghan citizens remain unrepresented and fragmented (Lister, 2006; Hyman, 2002). In the words of IDLG (2012:11-12) "In general, the voice of the people is barely heard within the system of government and governance. The non-government sector has been undermined by years of internal strife and international exclusion from decision-making process. The formal democratic representation system is underdeveloped and lacking the means to call local authorities to account".

The field research shows that civil servants are quite aware of this struggle and fall primarily along two spectrums. One group of civil servants, primarily consisting of older civil servants who had served during the Communist and Mujahedeen regimes, believe there was no space for citizens in the political arena due to their low levels of education and capacity. Citizens in this case, were viewed as ignorant, recipients of government action, and eligible for state control. From this perspective, the government has the right, and even the moral obligation, to guide people towards a better solution, as identified by the state. The other group consisted primarily of younger civil servants who argued that people needed to be taught how to ask for government information and how to create citizen demand for accountability. The below quotes serve to illustrate this point:

"The ordinary folks, the ordinary farmers, they are busy making a livelihood for themselves, they do not have time to check on the quality of the school and they do not have the expertise"
– Senior Government Official, SN100

"I believe when it comes to accountability, it has two sides. On one side you have the people who are governing [...] on the other side you have citizens because the end-user is also very important and unless you have an educated end-user who asks for information, then that means that there won't be much pressure on the governing body to share a lot of information"
– Ameen Habibi, Director General for Strategic Policy and Implementation, MoF

"They [citizens] do not suggest a good way of solving the problem, but they do complain"
– Civil Servant, SN300

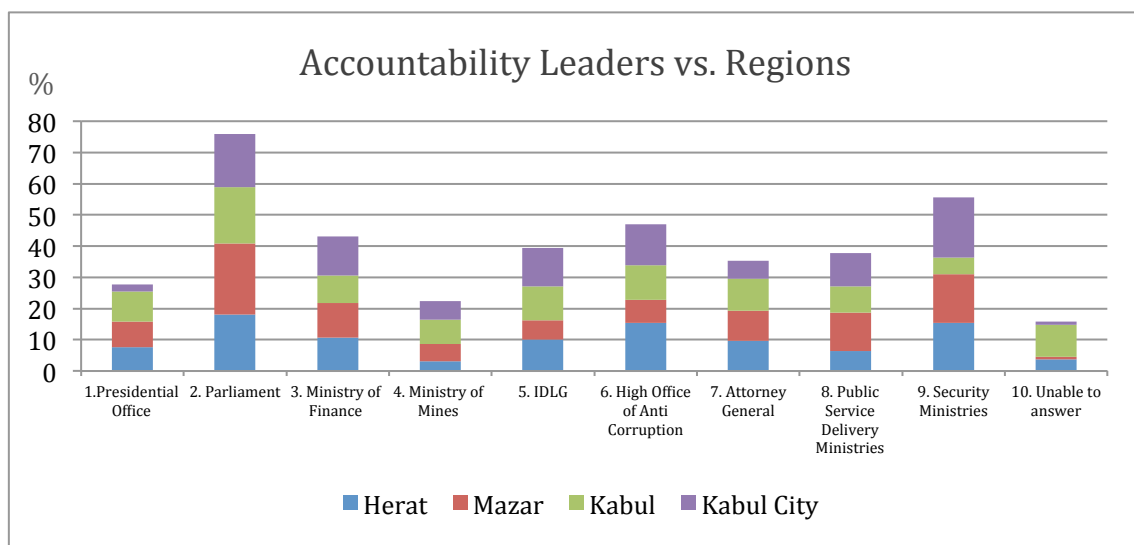
"we also need to educate our citizens to ask for accountability from the government and also from the donors [...] I would say that our citizens are not very active in demanding their accountability rights from the government and the international community" – Hami Jalil, Director of Aid Management, MoF

Additionally there is a sense of repression in the society. Sixty one per cent of citizens believed in 2009 it was not acceptable to talk negatively about the government, and only 40% believed they had freedom of expression (TAF, 2009). In 2004, it had been 52% while 58% believed the government did not care about people's opinions (TAF, 2004). This number escalated five years later to 74%, and consequently, only 23% of the population reported seeking assistance from the government when faced with a problem (TAF, 2009). In the field research, Berry Salam, Managing Director of Channel 7, explains "you don't build that sense that you belong to a particular society and that somebody has to be responsible and in charge in this society". The research further showed a struggle amidst the population to create a clear citizenship identity and a political role. This reportedly impacted the relationship between the government and the population, as the latter was too scattered to generate political opposition. Interestingly however, 51% of citizens in the field survey believed that the government was accountable to the nation despite their fragile relationship. When asked which institutions are leading the accountability agenda, the vast majority of citizen participants identified the parliament. This is surprising, since the previous chapter highlighted the parliament's weakness in manifesting accountability; yet this result is understandable since the parliament is a key representative institution that directly links the population with the central government.

The below graph shows the key accountability-leading institutions, per region, as identified by survey participants. The results show a quite consistent opinion of the institutions across the provinces with the exception of the Presidential Office, Ministry of Mines and IDLG. People in Kabul City did not really identify the Presidential Office as a leading agency in implementing accountability, whilst people in Herat felt similarly towards Ministry of Mines. Similarly, people in Balkh did not overly identify IDLG as an accountability-leading institution. Amongst the highest-ranking institutions, there are a few surprises such as Security Ministries and Public Service Delivery Ministries. These institutions are structurally not mandated to generate accountability;

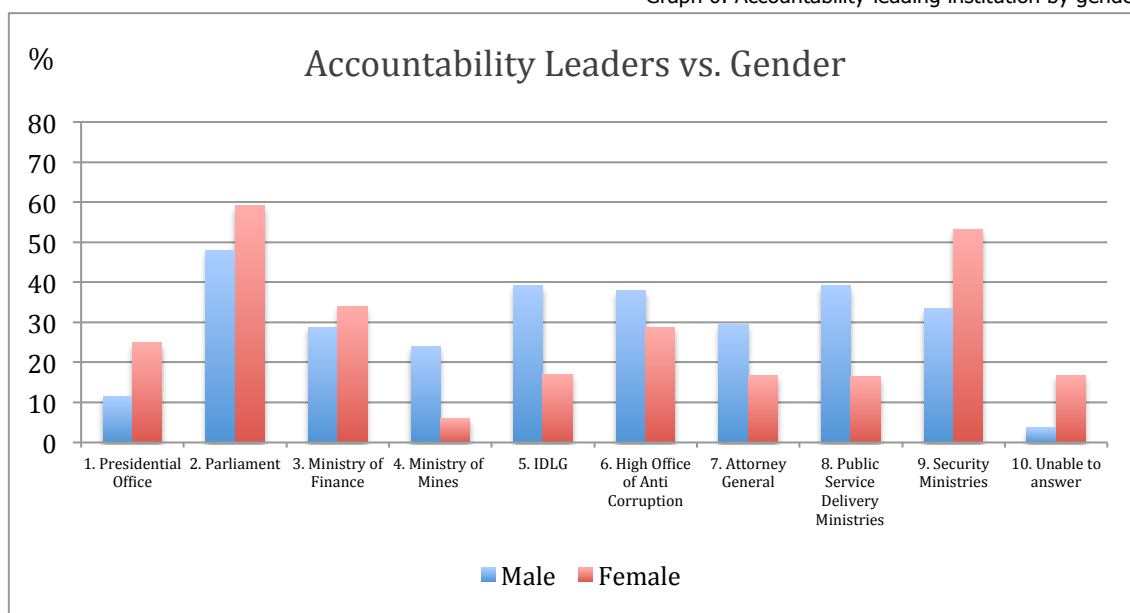
however, their importance in Afghan society might have emphasised their presence. Based on the researcher's direct experience, Afghanistan still depends strongly on security ministries due to the instability in the country and people often relate, both positively and negatively, to them in their everyday existence. For example when speaking to elders about school constructions in Chintal District, Balkh Province, they often referred to rule of law officers as authority figures that impacted the development of their infrastructure projects. Similarly a lot of people are dependent on public service ministries, and they experience the highest government-citizen interaction in the political arena. Besides the parliament, the fact that people are quite evenly scattered across the spectrum shows a lack of orientation in the accountability framework.

Graph 5: Which institutions are leading the accountability agenda?



The same data was also organised by gender, as observed in graph 6. The data supports the previous finding regarding the parliament's leading role in implementing the norm. Additionally the Ministry of Finance also received equal attention from both genders, showing a consistency in citizen perception. High Office of Oversight was also not too far behind. Women in general identified the Parliament, Security Ministries, MoF and HoO as the leading agencies in implementing accountability. With the exception of security ministries, women are not too far away from the official liberal democratic structures that are supposed to provide accountability. Female participants also scored highest in the 'unable to answer' category. This could be due to their limited role in public life and the political sector. Men, on the other hand, had quite an even distribution amongst all the institutions, showing a less precise focus. Nevertheless they identified the Parliament, IDLG, HoO and Public Service Ministries as the accountability-leading institutions. Besides the latter, their answers are quite consistent with Afghan policy structures.

Graph 6: Accountability-leading institution by gender

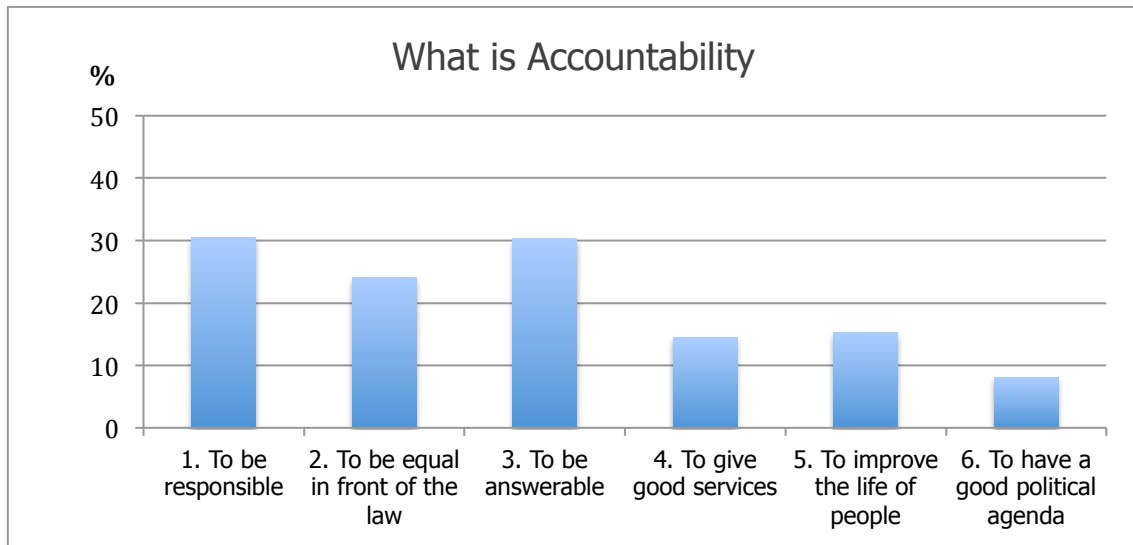


These two tables show that although citizens' lack an orientation in the accountability framework, there is a certain awareness of who ought to implement the norm. Nonetheless awareness does not always result in action or participation. The below section will expand on citizens' ability to create their own accountability role.

Citizen Agency

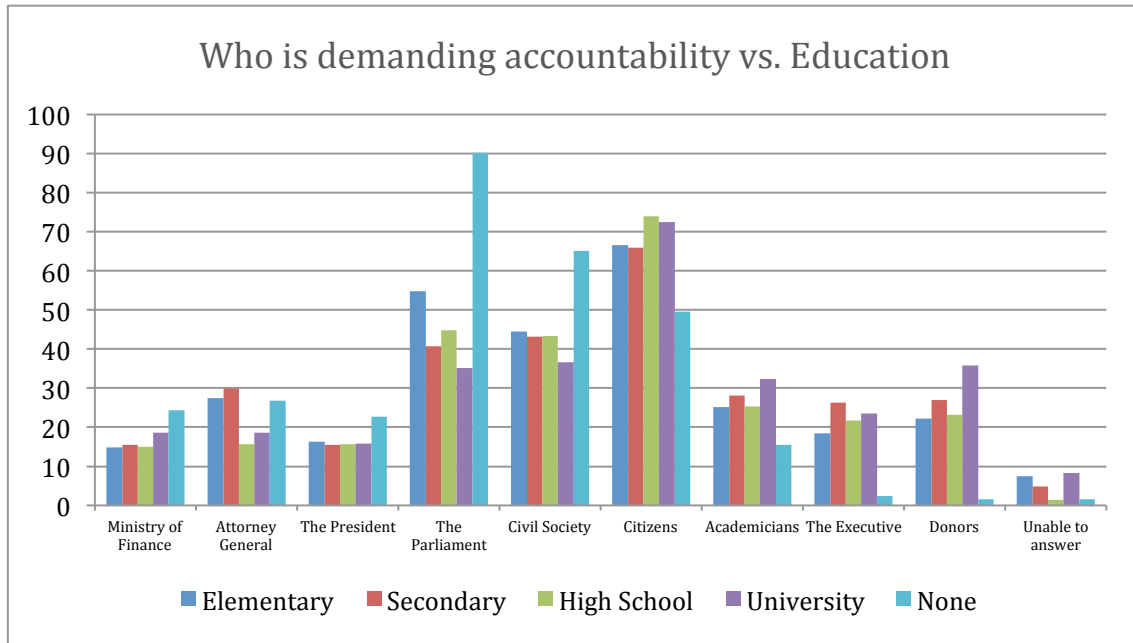
In order to understand citizens' accountability actions, it is important to first comprehend what people understand by 'accountability'. As part of the research survey, 700 random citizens in a household survey were asked to define accountability so as to appreciate their associations to the norm. The below graph shows that Afghans relate quite well to accountability and associate the norm primarily to responsibility, answerability and justice. These are values that are frequently associated to communal governance systems, Jirgas, and suggest that the conceptualisation of accountability orients itself amongst existing social norms, supporting a constructivist viewpoint.

Graph 7: What is Accountability?



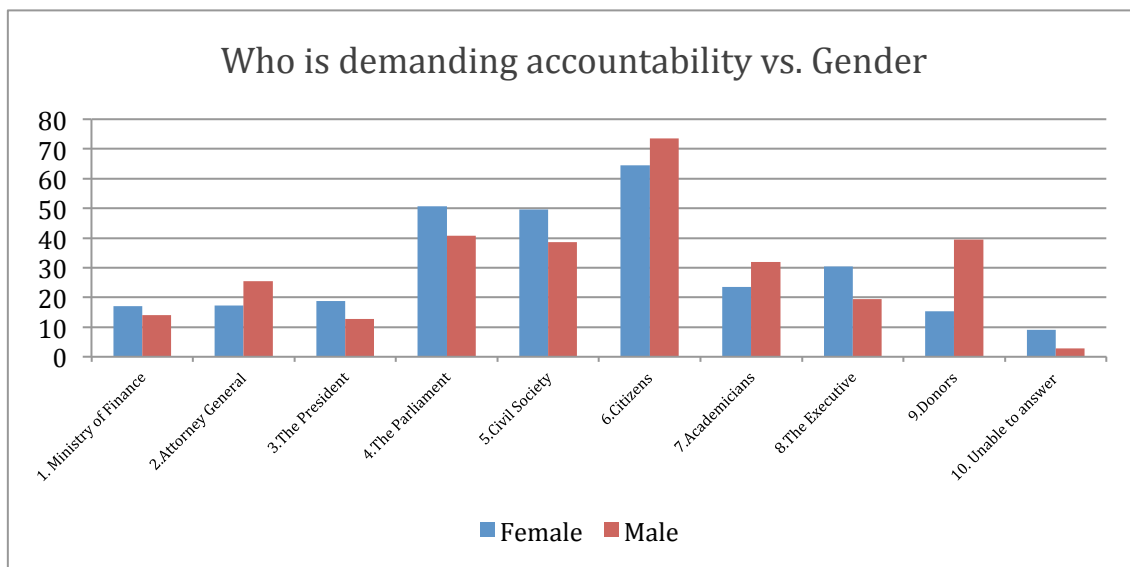
The data shows so far that the conceptualisation of accountability is intricate and depends both on the supply (government) and demand (citizens) side for its evolving definition. Whilst some supply elements might be utilitarian, others, particularly on the demand side, are socially constructed. Though other theoretical frameworks might have been capable of addressing some of these elements, the complex *interaction* between different interests and social structures can be better captured by norm development theory as it encompasses an evolutionary process. However to proceed and to gain a better understanding of the conceptualisation of the norm, citizens were also asked to identify who demands accountability in Afghanistan. This helps locate sources of action, according to citizens' perceptions of the political framework. The data shows that 66% of citizens identify themselves as key actors in demanding accountability. Graph 8 shows that people primarily identify three accountability demand sources, namely the population, civil society and the parliament. Interestingly, people with no education scored a bit lower on the citizen category, compared to those with formal education, and higher on parliament and civil society. This sustains the previous finding that the parliament carries an important accountability role in the eyes of the population, which is very interesting since the previous finding amongst civil servants did not identify it as such.

Graph 8: Who demands accountability in Afghanistan?



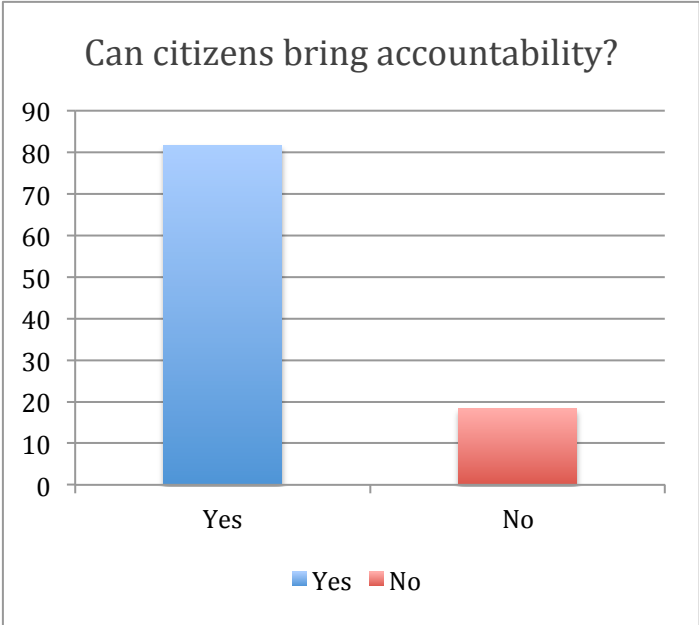
When comparing the same data to gender, we see in the below graph a quite consistent distribution between male and female respondents. Men identify the top three demand sources as citizens, civil society and the parliament, while women categorise citizens, the parliament and donors. Moreover there is a 10% difference between female and male participants in the 6th category since more women believe in citizens' role to demand accountability. The distribution of the answers and consistency between the genders show that, unlike graph 4, which showed the leading institutions in implementing accountability, citizens have a better idea and perception of who ought to demand accountability than who supplies it.

Graph 9: Accountability demand actors vs. Gender



Furthermore as illustrated by graph 10, 82% of citizens believed that the population could actively generate accountability. This is a surprising finding since previous studies have identified a demoralised population in bringing about change. For example in 2009, only 56% of people believed they could influence government decisions, and in 2013, 68% of people still were afraid to participate in peaceful demonstrations (TAF, 2009; 2013). Even MoF (2008:1) acknowledges that the lack of ownership in liberal statebuilding has “certainly demoralized the Afghan public as they do not believe they have a voice in rebuilding their country”. This is consistent with the author’s own experience after talking to countless groups of elders, women circles, shuras and community groups. Discussions at community level, in her experience, often illustrated a sense of disempowerment in influencing government behaviour or national policy but a strong sense of ownership to alter things at village level.

Graph 10: Citizens’ role in generating accountability



The survey’s high score could however be indicative of what citizens feel they could do rather than what they are currently doing. The qualitative field research shows that the state’s hierarchical use of power has impacted citizens’ perception of their own ability to impact government behaviour. As described earlier in this chapter, the lack of information, trust and power, according to research participants, has cultivated a belief amongst the population that they are unable to change their political circumstances. This creates a sense of impotence and victimisation, which are quite frequent in post-conflict societies. The below quotes express some of these opinions:

"I think that the current system has made the people very irresponsible somehow. They feel that because they do not have any influence over the power, they do not have any

responsibility to monitor or to take action to protect the system and work for the system” – Sanjar Said, Owner, Newspaper 8-Times

The "psyche in Afghanistan is that [...] you have to pay extortion money left, right, and centre, and you know that you could be harassed [...] I think that comes from many years of being mistreated or persecuted, or extorted by the government” – Civil Society Representative, CN103

Nevertheless, despite disappointments and feelings of disempowerment, 90% of survey respondents answered that, regardless of the current situation in Afghanistan, the government should be accountable. Moreover qualitative research participants claimed that people are becoming more vocal and airing their discontent, but that messages are still being articulated in forms of complaints rather than strategies. People still struggle to create a strategic vision for their participation in the accountability framework but as the presented data suggests, citizens are aware of their accountability role. It is just a matter of activating it. Seema Ghani, Executive Director of MEC articulates it beautifully:

"As individuals [...] we know what the problems are but we don't know how to ask, we haven't learned the way to use our power, people have so much power, they just don't know how to use it, because of division I think [...] ethnic problems have been one of the issues [...] the perception is that we were actually pushed by our neighbours, by foreigners to remember our ethnic group, what language we speak, but I think it is internal"

So far, this section has shown that citizens understand accountability quite well and are familiar with their own role in demanding it, but their agency is lacking. There is a sense of helplessness amidst the population, which disempowers them from taking action. Yet, this is reportedly changing and people are increasingly active in demanding accountability. Although their orientation in the accountability framework is quite hazy, they identify the Parliament as a key institution to implement and demand the norm. They further identified civil society as a demand source for accountability. Although Afghanistan's civil society is relatively young, particularly in the governance sector, their importance has been recognised by the government (IDLG, 2012). For example, as part of ANDS, the Afghan government recognises that in order to "address and respond to critical public needs, public institutions require an informed and engaged civil society that understands and reinforces the principles of rights, especially women's rights, and democratic governance for all segments of the population" (MoF, 2010c:5).

Civil society participation in governance was initially associated with women's rights, human rights and community development (Currion, 2010). It was not until late 2009 that CSOs started to work specifically on accountability. Their involvement was initially limited to politicised complaints but started in 2010 to have a more strategic orientation (Currion, 2010; IWA, 2011). Despite their recent participation, CSOs have made significant advances in their advocacy and monitoring activities in order to hold the government accountable (Waldman, 2008). The field research shows that similar to citizens, civil society has also struggled to create

a constructive relationship with the government. CSOs are primarily perceived as contractors or service providers rather than partners. Moreover, government officials question civil society's legitimacy as it is often fragmented and supposedly donor driven. Several civil society interviewees reported being ignored by the government and perceived as actors to be monitored and controlled, rather than engaged. The below quotes highlight some of these frustrations.

"we have been involved with them [JCMB] Sometimes they have been positive but sometimes we are just ignored" – Civil Society Representative CN100

"What happens is that you have a minister, or somebody else high ranking, that comes, speaks for 15 minutes and just says the good things that they have done and then without any consultation [...] they just leave the meeting or session [...] or even when they do stay, they will answer 4 or 5 questions but please try to keep your questions brief and please try to respect the atmosphere of the gathering [...] when civil society tries to bring forth a subject, which is in a very challenging state to the government, [...] it is always taken very personal. It is always considered an attack on the ministry or on the minister himself; so instead of trying to work with civil society to solve the problem, civil society is either shut out or blocked out of the whole thing" – Naweed Kawusi, Deputy Director, HRRAC

That is not to say there is no collaboration or civil society consultation. Due to the Kabul Process outlined in chapter five, civil society organisations have increasingly been consulted in policy development. Interviewees report that Ministry of Finance, particularly, has taken initiatives to expand consultation and cultivated a little bit more patience with the emerging civil society. CSOs, on the other hand, have made an effort to improve its technical capacities. Research participants, both on MoF's and CSOs' side, suggest that this has shifted the power balance between the ministry and civil society, creating a more appreciative relationship where CSOs are now treated more as allies and partners than as implementers. Although CSO consultations still lack capacity, and are reportedly still restricted to a small number of 'elite' activists, MoF participants report their participation as useful. The below quotes have been selected to portray this encouraging development.

"In Afghanistan you would see that there are four, five, six, whatever number of civil society organisations or individuals who constantly promote civil society representation who do not always understand technicalities. Therefore their feedback is almost general and always on the political side rather than on the technical side" – Wael Ibrahim, Executive Director, ACBAR

"we are consulting and engaging civil society [...] Not like when we are finished, even at the beginning when we started this process to develop this paper we consulted them, we got their feedback and views and we incorporated their comments into the main paper [...] they [CSOs] are service oriented but still I think the feedback they are providing is useful [...] and I think they enriched our document" – Senior Government Official SN102

"the ministry is sharing the annual budget of Afghanistan with me but if I go and sit there like a blind and dumb person then it is not worth it. When I went for the first time I couldn't comment, so what did I do in the second year? I talked to a technical person [...] this is a capacity building which I did in the last two years because I really want to be an active member

of civil society and to be honest to my mission [...] the ministry just wants to show that they are sharing but now I am preparing for it” – Civil Servant Representative CN100

CSOs’ relationship with MoF is quite important since the ministry is the custodian of the National Priority Programmes and influences the wider policymaking framework in Afghanistan. IDLG and Oversight interviewees also report civil society participation, but its role and impact is minor than with MoF. The field research, consequently, has shown that civil society’s relationship with the government predominantly reflects an unequal power relationship where the latter tries to monitor and control the former. Although Civil Society has shown more action and participation than citizens in demanding accountability, their power position is still weak.

Nevertheless, citizens’ and civil society’s accountability roles are recognised by the government though injured by the centralisation of power as it unbalances the relationship between the population and the state. Again, this is not a new finding but illustrates the multiple impact power has on the norm. To conclude, although the citizen-government relationship is recognised in Afghanistan as an important contributor to accountability, it is fraught with power imbalance. This cripples citizens’ ability to generate answerability and enforcement according to the conceptual framework and further delegitimises the norms’ progress in the country. Moreover this specific accountability characteristic is of particular interest to norm development since it deals with the interacting identities of government and citizens. They are not only essential to accountability but they help also to understand the interaction and coalition building process within social and political systems. This will be further explored in chapter seven.

The research findings presented so far in the thesis have unpacked essential characteristics needed for the development of accountability. The next section will shift the focus slightly from development to implementation in order to gain a better understanding of how accountability manifests in Afghanistan.

Accountability Methods

The third and last accountability characteristic to be examined in this thesis is Accountability Methods. In chapter two, this component refers to the controlling, regulating and participative methods used to generate answerability and enforcement. This characteristic gives the study an interesting dimension as it reflects how power is wielded to hold and call someone to account. Unlike previous chapters, which discussed power dynamics and relationships, this section will offer an additional angle to the development of the norm by focusing on the government’s operational ability to implement accountability methods. This section is divided into four components. Part one will discuss answerability in Afghanistan, part two will address enforcement, part three will highlight information sharing, and part four will elaborate extensively on the practical realities in manifesting accountability.

Ability to Generate Answerability

Afghanistan has many accountability mechanisms that generate answerability through representation and participation. The biggest ones are parliamentary representation, subnational representation, and citizen and civil society consultation. Critics contend however that despite “been set up as participatory institutions, [representative entities] have little scope to perform the vital tasks of representing their constituencies and holding the executive to account” (Saltmarshe & Medhi, 2011:4). Currently the mandate of elected bodies is interpreted along traditional lines and perceived as positions of power to access service provision (Ibid). Representative bodies are seldom given significant amount of power and representatives are more responsible towards their patrons than to citizens. Additionally, the executive frequently criticises elected representatives and perceives them as competition. Representation in this case becomes more a political tool to gain public trust and support for the government than a democratic process. The literature reflects this quite well and as Saltmarshe and Mehi (2011:54) states: an “examination of procedures, policy documents and draft legislation reveals the state is extremely reluctant to devolve power to such [representative] bodies in any meaningful way [...] ‘participation’ implies neither responsibility nor accountability. It is a notion far removed from scrutiny and oversight”.

Although the Afghan government commits itself to “create a motivated, merit-based, performance driven, and professional civil service that is resistant to the temptations of corruption and which provides efficient, effective and transparent public services that do not force customers to pay bribes”, it also acknowledges the underdeveloped legal framework and institutional capacity surrounding accountability mechanisms (IDLG, 2008:23; MoF, 2010c:5). For example, in its *Strategy and Policy for Anti Corruption and Administrative Reform*, GIROA (2008b:62-63) states “most employees and people are not aware of previous laws, the new laws are also not being provided to official sources and people [...] Frequently, they sign orders that were previously written by relevant offices and issuance of such uninformed orders lead to crimes and illegal performances”. Consequently, though many policies and laws specify citizen and civil society consultation and participation, they are regularly obstructed by lack of information, knowledge, capacity and integrity (Saltmarshe & Medhi, 2011; GIROA, 2008b). The role of citizens and civil society is also, at times, misinterpreted and perceived as government instruments rather than oversight actors. For example, HoO’s (2010:28) *Anti-Corruption Strategic Plan* identifies civil society as carriers and implementers of government messages and entities that need to be “train[ed] to understand HOO’s perspectives on fighting corruption [...] to reach out to increase public awareness with a consistent message”.

Answerability mechanisms, particularly around participation and representation, are, to some extent, used strategically to gain government legitimacy. This does not necessarily reflect an intentional Machiavellian plan to undermine democracy or accountability but illustrates a

particular development stage in the statebuilding process. However, reality is seldom black and white and whilst some individuals might lack the understanding of these answerability mechanisms, some attempt to comply and others purposefully violate them. The field research showed a range of answerability responses, particularly at the subnational level where government-citizen interaction is at its highest. The findings were too inconsistent to identify a particular trend but showed that whilst some subnational officials were not interested in implementing answerability mechanisms, whether this was due to prioritisation or self-interest is unclear, others attempted to increase participation to gain citizen support. A sense of fear was however prevalent amidst the majority of subnational civil servant interviewees. These fears were often referenced to citizen disapproval, security threats and powerbrokers' disgruntlement. The vast majority of fear appeared to be linked to unpredictability, shame or fear of 'losing facing' in front of superiors, citizens, peers and patrons. These fears are not unusual in post-conflict societies where disagreements are still, at times, solved through violence rather than dialogue but can be counterproductive in areas that are transitioning into peace and stability. The below has been chosen to illustrate some of these concerns:

"it [district assessments] was not made available to the public. The governor just appreciated those [district governors] who were good because it would have a very bad affect if we published the result with the lowest performance district governors; they would face with a bad challenge in their districts and that would be a problem" – Haroon Hassan, Kabul Governor's Governance Adviser, Kabul Region

Power to Create Enforcement

Answerability is not enough, as defined by the conceptual framework, to create accountability. As discussed in chapter two, the ability to hold someone to account is imperative in constructing the norm since it provides remedy channels to address grievances, complaints and misbehaviour. Enforcement mechanisms are described in the penal code, disciplinary policies and oversight functions. In the case of Afghanistan, the parliament is supposed to hold the executive to account through enquiries, committees, investigations, debates and scrutiny. The majority of Afghan parliamentarians have however very little education and are at times illiterate (Larson, 2011). There is no educational requirement for MPs and whilst this gives people an equal right to get elected, it also impacts the depth and substance of the legislative's role. Consequently the "experience of what these [MP] representatives have been able to provide during their term in office are usually negative [...] the majority were corrupt, embezzling public funds for their own use and accumulating considerable sums of money for themselves and their families" (Larson, 2011:28). In TAF's 2009 national survey only 12% of citizens reported consulting MPs for help, and in 2013, 29% expressed dissatisfaction with MPs' ability to monitor and provide oversight over the executive and the president (TAF, 2009; 2013). Additionally one third of respondents in 2013 argued that MPs do a bad job in representing their constituencies and their needs (TAF, 2013). Again, similar to the previous

chapter, this illustrates the parliament's struggle, both from a power and operational perspective, to generate the norm since it lacks the capacity and integrity to hold the executive to account.

Additional to the parliament, Afghanistan also has disciplinary policies and laws to regulate civil servant behaviour and enforce accountability. Oversight and regulating institutions, such as the Independent Administrative Reform and Civil Service Commission (IARCSC), MoF, Control and Audit Office (CAO), HoO, MEC and Attorney General Office (AGO), have developed an extensive disciplinary framework. For example, MoF (2011b:37) states that a "transparent and reliable public financial management system requires an independent and effective oversight mechanism [...] In a democracy, an independent and well-developed supreme audit institution is an important pillar in the efficient and effective functioning of the Government". CAO has an implementable legal framework to address this vision and audit the government but out-dated practices, weak technology and endless bureaucracy reduces the institution's effectiveness in calling and holding someone to account. Additional to CAO, the work of HoO and MEC are supposed to offer preventive and remedy mechanisms to increase government integrity, but despite specific institutional mandates these institutions struggle to create concrete outcomes. MEC reports a repeated lack of collaboration and good will from HoO. For example, in one of its reports, it states "HOO indicated that they completed the investigation and sent the report to the OAA [Office of Administrative Affairs], but would not share a copy with MEC. MEC's monitoring of this article indicates that HOO has signed memoranda of understanding [...] However, information that has been published by HOO regarding assets was ambiguous and did not provide details of the origin of the assets and appears not to have satisfied constitutional requirements" (MEC, 2013b:17). HoO on the other hand "faces significant challenges in obtaining the information needed for verification and in the administration of the process of registration due to both an inadequate legislative framework and a young administrative and control system including insufficient and rudimentary technological systems" (MoF, 2011b:60).

Both the lack of collaboration and progress show deficits in HoO's and MEC's institutional performance. Although MEC is supposed to generate oversight, their advisory mandate prevents it from taking actual steps in creating enforcement. HoO on the other hand, lacks precision, transparency, intent and clarity in its work. The legislative framework, although structurally present, has sufficient gaps and ambiguity to weaken enforcement mechanisms (Parliament, 2008; 2010). Inconsistent adaptation, shallow structures and multi-layered power structures pose a challenge for norm theory, as mentioned in chapter one. The theory is not able to disentangle multiple interests and explain why the norm is adopted at different degrees within the same setting. The thesis' inclusion of power helps therefore to identify underlying manifestations and will be explored in the next chapter. In the field research, civil servant

respondents' attitude to CAO, HoO and MEC were filled with inefficiency and mistrust. Interviewees complained about multiple reporting formats and repetitive demands without coordination. Central level civil servant participants perceived the interference of oversight bodies as scavenge for control and display of political power, rather than a check and balance mechanism to improve government performance. Many reported a perceived abuse of power to target political enemies and advance political agendas under the name of accountability. This particularly applied to MEC and HoO and is a key finding since the utilisation of accountability mechanisms for hidden agendas can really compromise the conceptualisation and development of the norm. CAO on the other hand was rather trusted, but still perceived as being very inefficient. The below quotes have been selected to illustrate some of these perceptions.

"There are too many oversight and control in place for an ordinary civil servant [...] most of our time is served responding to the investigations and queries of these organisations [...] too many organisations enquire on many a single issue" – Hamid Jalil, Director of Aid Management, MoF

"there is a kind of mistrust between the controller organisation and the organisation that is being controlled [...] Mistrust does not mean they are in conflict with each other, but mistrust means that they are not working properly and they are ready to be misused, or mistreated, or bribed" – Abdul Mujeed Khalvatgar, Executive Director, NAI

Despite the institutional weaknesses in enforcing accountability, several respondents, particularly at subnational level, raised the issue of punishment for abuse of power and resources. Many subnational civil servants claim that government performance and justice would be improved if they had access to more funds. Although it is true that subnational entities have no control over their budgets, this can also reflect their frustration in their inability to influence decision-making and acquire wealth, power and autonomy. Regardless of the source of grievance, participants highlighted the lack of accountability enforcement. Violations, particularly amongst high-ranking officials, are ignored; governors are recycled rather than dismissed, and civil servants are lightly reprimanded, rather than disciplined. The new Civil Service Law in 2005, which was supposed to address misbehaviour, does not really specify corrective action. For example Article 25, Section 2, states that a "civil servant who does not perform his day to day duties in accordance with the relevant legal documents will be disciplined" but does not specify what that entails (Wolesi Jirga, 2006). Another example is Article 25, Section 6: Civil Servant ought to "behave appropriately towards clients and co-workers" without stipulating what propriety means (Ibid). Once again, although enforcement mechanism exists in policy and laws, the incomplete, vague and ambiguous foundation cripples it in its implementation. Below are some quotes to illustrate the enforcement environment in Afghanistan.

"People need to really learn a lesson, I mean people really need to understand that if I do something wrong, I'll be punished for it" – Bilal Sarwary, Reporter, BBC

"right not when governors don't deliver, they are moved from one place to another. That creates an environment where people cannot trust the government and this is why people also turn to the insurgency and other forms of weakening the state institutions" – Governance Expert, CN300

"we have the Civil Servant Law and there we have rules and regulations so we give you first advice, then a warning, then reducing of salary, then change of positions and the fifth step is termination of the position" – Sayed Hamid Azizi, Director for Public Awareness, MoF

Moreover, interviewees also reported a lack of independence and objectivity in complaint and investigation mechanisms. Structurally, complaints are often addressed by a single person of authority, who is frequently in charge of the entity that generated the grievance. For example an interviewee reported receiving 124 complaints, out of which only 3 were deemed worthy of an investigation. The other 121 were 'solved' by giving the civil servant in question a 'talk'. These findings were not uncommon amongst research participants in charge of disciplinary affairs. Even HoO (2010) reported in its *Anti-Corruption Strategic Plan* that they had received 242 investigation cases out of which only an unspecified minority had been referred to the Attorney General Office. The lack of results from imprecise procedures is not an uncommon finding. AGO, which is supposed to investigate and persecute defendants, is associated with a lot of ambiguity. Amongst the central civil service participants AGO was described as a contemporary boogeyman that commanded an unquestionable authority. Respondents also expressed a lack of information; they did not know why AGO ruling or performance took a particular shape. Interviewees reflected an inability to question AGO and a readiness to collaborate unconditionally, though this was more based on fear, rather on knowledge. Unlike other enforcement mechanisms, AGO was perceived as an active enforcer; however, its objectivity and intention remained unclear. The below quotes were selected as an example to the sentiments expressed in relation to AGO.

"when we asked people why are you doing this, everyone was afraid from the attorney general because nobody – first of all very few people know the actual law and what it is because some people think that they know the law [...] without knowing the law [...] Somehow they are very scared and that is why they want to make sure not to do any mistakes that tomorrow could take them to jail" – Naveed Ahamad Niaz, Budget Reform Manager, MoF

"At the moment I see most of these institutions are set up in a way that one organisation is accountable to another organisation, it is not the citizen to whom we are accountable [...] we always worry that the attorney general and auditors come to scrutinise us [...] we should be looking beyond that, to out public, to out citizens" – Hamid Jalil, Director of Aid Management, MoF

A lot of participants, particularly amongst civil society, reported a culture of impunity that enabled political actors to perceive themselves outside the accountability framework. "The lack of proper governance and enforcement of laws and regulations has created a thriving environment for corruption, further undermining the development process" (MoF, 2008:1). Critics have argue that the Afghan government has shown itself both in legislation and reform

an “unwillingness to police itself or punish or remove abusive individuals who are powerful or who are protected by the powerful” (Clark, 2010b:3). A minority of respondents directly accused the political leadership for enabling and thriving in an environment of impunity whilst others, also a minority, sympathised and suggested the centralised system created an overbearing weight to be everywhere at once. The below quotes illustrate:

“criminal people do not get punished, this doesn’t happen in Afghanistan, they don’t get punished, especially high ranking officials” – Civil Servants, SN300

“In our society some people are over and above the law, they are not accountable to the law” – Senior Civil Servant, SN207

“You know for a single person to make all the decision, when you have so many other to please, is very difficult. There is a political will but the implementation [...] [is] not there [...] it looks like the president is under huge pressure from outsiders, one is the people around him and one is the internationals. I don’t know 300 something advisors – imagine? One advice per day? How many advices would that be? I mean a person can go crazy” – Samira Hamidi, Executive Director, AWN

“I think the President is not too much in touch with the public. I think the President has been in office too long [...] it is not because he is a bad person, it is because [...] he has to deal with so much political stuff [...] if I were him, I would go crazy too” – Civil Society Representative, CN400

To summarise, although enforcement mechanisms exist, they are often structurally incomplete hampering their operational ability. Legal or policy gaps, unclear formulation, incomplete mandates, lack of collaboration and imprecise procedures weaken enforcement as they are used to perpetrate impunity. This shows that the structural changes in Afghanistan are not part of the social structure. Moreover, accountability mechanisms are used as a camouflage to advance self-interested political agendas, which can severely damage the conceptualisation of an emerging norm. This can also be manipulated to bring democratic legitimacy to illicit and abusive practices. The findings have thus far supported a rationalism perception where actors adjust their behaviour to acquire self-interests. Theoretical frameworks, such as political-economic analysis and institutionalism, could have explained this into further detail since the data in chapter five and six merely describe the current situation and interaction in Afghanistan. However since this thesis is more interested in *change* rather than a two-dimensional picture of power and interests, the process and development of accountability will be discussed in chapter seven.

Ability to Disseminate Information

The role of information is essential to create answerability and enforcement as it grants political actors the tools necessary to take action. In Afghanistan, an Access to Information law was promulgated in December 2014, i.e. post this study’s framework, but policies outlining information sharing were in place for the time scope of this research. For example MEC’s

mandate emphasised the role of transparency, public information and citizen participation (2010). MoF (2013:1) developed a Citizens' Budget and recognised citizens' need "to be informed and involved in the budget preparation and expenditure process of the Government". It also advocated the need to share development information with the Afghan population and not only with donors (MoF, 2010b). The field research shows however that interviewees, particularly non-state actors, felt deprived due to lack of information. Citizens' lack of information on public service procedures left them vulnerable to corruption and abuse of power. Not knowing how long a service should take, how much it should cost or who was ultimately responsible for meeting their needs left them in a bargaining position where they constantly had to negotiate the release of a kidnapped service whilst guessing the characteristics of a fair deal.

Civil Servant respondents on the other hand reported sharing information vertically to their supervisors, but not horizontally. Information sharing to the public was a one-way street where the type and quality was determined by the giver, not the receiver. The type of information that appeared permissible was shared in big bullet points and related to public service activities and budgetary information. Any information request relating to decision-making, policymaking or which might be perceived as a monitoring activity of a person's or an entity's behaviour, was mistrusted. The few civil servants who chose to speak on this subject reported questioning the person's intentions since they thought information could be used to bring them harm. Denying information was, thus, a protection mechanism that enabled a cycle of mistrust and suspicion between institutions, state and citizens. Interestingly this shows that most information is denied primarily to protect the giver from potential harm, rather than deprive the receiver from knowledge. Therefore the objective is not to intentionally prevent the empowerment of others, but to secure one's position and appease one's fear. Whilst this might be understandable in a volatile environment, it is counterproductive to accountability since it festers a mistrust that corrodes its operational framework. It also diminishes citizens' right to information since civil servants perceive themselves as owners, rather than custodians of information.

Moreover at subnational level, IDLG (2010:7), acknowledged the need to disseminate information and to "[s]trengthen government accountability mechanisms and enhance external public control over government [...] [P]ublic officials [will] at all levels [be] legally obliged to regularly provide information on government dealings to the wider public and to enable democratically elected councils to request and receive relevant information". Although the usage of 'relevant' still provides an opening for subjective interpretation, the biggest challenge, according to the field research, is the lack of information *within* subnational offices. The vast majority of interviewees did not believe subnational offices had sufficient information on accountability methods. They claimed that provinces were seldom strategically consulted and

often marginalised from accountability implementation planning. Although civil servant respondents in Herat and Balkh were greatly unaware of accountability policies and methods, they took local initiatives to promote transparency. In Kabul region they were more aware of the policies due to their proximity to the capital, but they had very little impact on their work. The below quotes serve to illustrate the access to information at subnational level.

"we don't have the documents, we can't get the documents from the ministries. We tried to get the documents from Kabul even two, three times but we couldn't get this document" – Abdul Naser Aswadi, Head of the Economy Department, Heart Province

"I don't think there is much awareness amongst the civil service, especially in the provinces. The further you go there is no contact with Kabul. Kabul is a far place for people in the provinces, especially in the districts. I mean it is very difficult for me to contact my boss and talk to him, let alone an ordinary civil servant who may wish to talk to someone in Kabul and express his views" – Senior Government Official, SN100

To recapitulate, lack of information is not only between the state and the population but also amidst government institutions. This fosters mistrust, which harms the norm as it halts implementation and calcifies political action. This creates static political entities protected from scrutiny and contestation that, ultimately, disable the government's operational ability to provide answerability and enforcement. Moreover, civil servants' tight control of information reduces citizens to passive recipients instead of handling them as empowered governance participants.

Manifestation of Accountability in Afghanistan

Thus far, this section has shown that although answerability and enforcement mechanisms are in place, their operation capabilities remain low due to fear and lack of information, knowledge, capacity and integrity. The field research showed however that accountability methods do not align specifically to the baseline provided by the conceptual framework and are impacted by a wider range of elements than those described by answerability and enforcement mechanisms. Issues of ownership, technical capacity, effectiveness and performance were found to impact the manifestation and implementation of accountability. The below text will elaborate.

Besides the abovementioned implementation challenges, research interviewees also reported attitude problems in manifesting accountability. Several participants argued that civil servants' outlook on their own role impacts the government's operational capacity to deliver the norm. For example, interviewees across all categories reported a lack of work ethic amidst civil servants who had been appointed by nepotistic alliances and lacked the necessary skills. Allegedly, these civil servants performed ineffectively and irresponsibly. Although IARCSC tried to address these ineptitudes through meritocracy reforms and by creating civil servant standards, the vast majority of respondents reported it as a failed attempt. Moreover several

interviewees reported a discrepancy between an 'old' and a 'new' mind-set where the older generation had a lot of experience in government practices, but lacked higher levels of formal education. Research participants argued that 'older' generation civil servants tended to stick to traditional social and bureaucratic rules whilst 'younger' civil servants tended to follow new reforms. Contrarily, the 'older' generation civil servants complained about large salary discrepancies since most were directly appointed by the state, whereas younger educated civil servants were frequently employed by donor projects. Salaries could be as much as 10 times higher, demotivating the 'older' generation from carrying out their jobs effectively. This is a big problem since most of the civil service consists of 'older' civil servants. The below quotes have been selected to illustrate the above point.

"they had 115 people under that particular directory but only 15 people could be counted on [...] these 15 in most cases were careless, not because they were careless [per se] but [...] it is very difficult for 15 people to the work of 115 people" – Naveed Ahamad Niaz, Budget Reform Manager, MoF

A "huge problem in Afghanistan is that people don't know the difference between personal and business. You can't be friends with somebody on the outside and then come in and expect to be their boss because [...] the person takes it very personal and then they stop paying attention" – Naweid Kawusi, Deputy Director, HRRAC

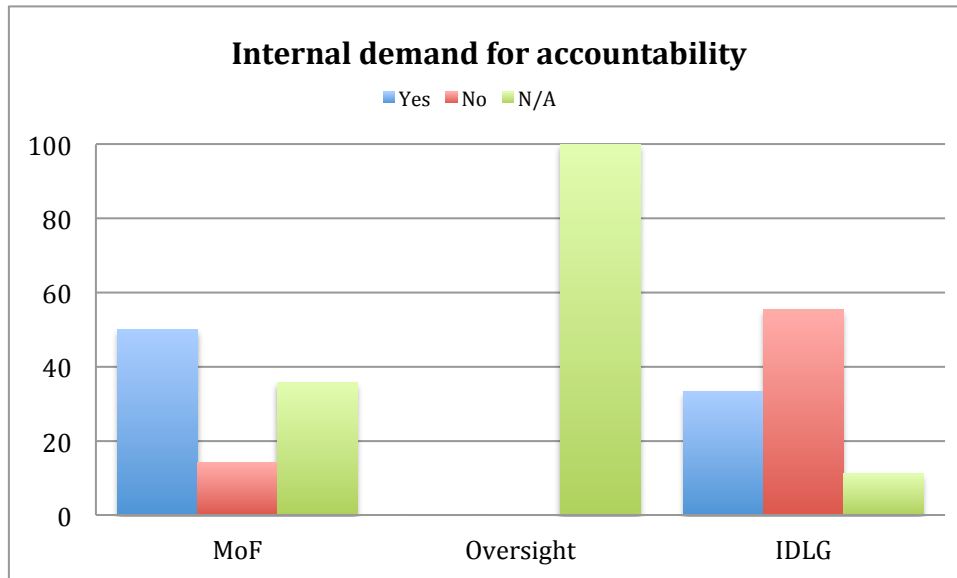
"most of their auditors are old people who have learnt the audit techniques of the past and they have not been updated [...] They have to work on performance audits or information system audits, on process audits, private bank audits. These are the areas they should look into rather than just stick to one financial audit and carry it out every year and the year after and the year after that" – Senior Civil Servant, SN200

"If you hire someone as civil servant, they think 'I am here forever' since it was part of the Russian government system. When you hire someone the government is liable to pay all the salaries, provide housing, provide food and all those kind of stuff" – Academic, CN404

Moreover, young civil servant respondents also explained that the institutional environment has a big impact in their operational capacity to implement accountability. Despite their support to administrative reforms, the unofficial hierarchical social order requires the young to cave to the old, and this indirectly stifles a 'new' mind-set. In an interviewee's words "traditionally in my country we have to respect a lot our elders and if they are somewhere and they would like to talk about something, even if they are not right, we have to say yes. It is not important how interesting your ideas are but what is really important for those sitting there is to know how old you are so that is a limitation for us" (Academic CN404). Furthermore, when asked whether there was an internal demand for accountability within HoO, MoF and Oversight entities, civil servants, again, identified the institutional leader as a determining factor in creating a supportive environment. The below graph shows for example that 50% of MoF 14 interviewees felt there was an internal demand for creating accountability in the shape of NPM reforms, system improvements, fiscal accountability, financial reporting and a more comprehensive audit strategy. HoO respondents, on the other hand, were unable to identify an internal demand for

the norm since most of them were unaware of their colleagues' activities and hesitated to give a concrete answer.

Graph 11: Is there internal demand for accountability in your institution?



Despite the leadership's imperative role in implementing accountability, leaders are allegedly frustrated over their own inability to fully influence the performance of the institution. Mir Ahmad Joyena (Former MP, AREU) puts it in his own words "the Minister of Public Health [...] she cannot go to every small project to monitor it and see what is happening. The people below her, they are corrupted themselves. She told me 'I cannot change everybody, I cannot replace everybody'". Furthermore when civil servant participants were asked whether they felt they had enough resources to implement accountability, 40% believed they did, whilst a considerable 38% did not. As illustrated in the below figure, MoF stood out in the research, with 71% of respondents, who believed they had enough resources. Interviewees who did not concur, referred primarily to insufficient human resources, qualitatively rather than quantitatively speaking. Additionally there was also a significant minority who felt they did not have the right equipment to install sophisticated systems of monitoring, evaluation and investigation to improve accountability by strengthening system efficiency.

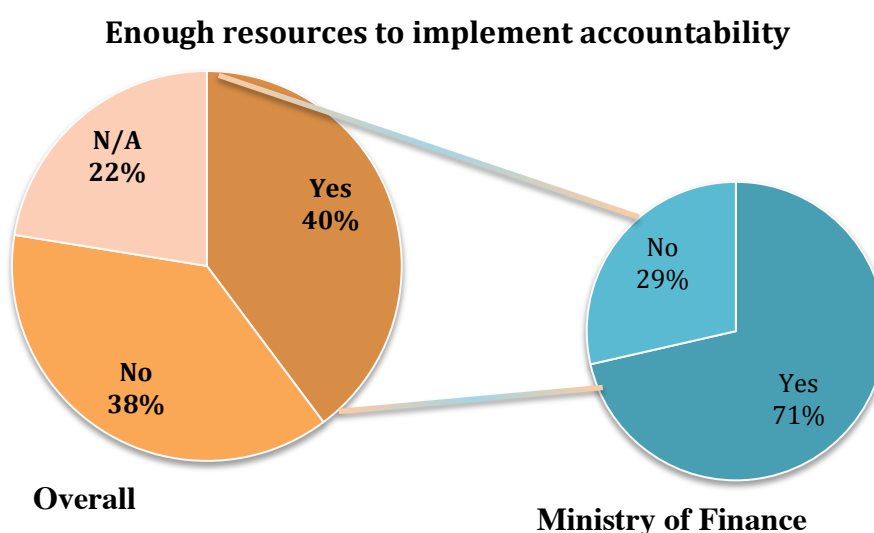


Figure 1: Does your institution have enough resources to implement accountability?

Consequently, environmental constraints impact an institution's operational ability to implement the norm. 'Intangible' elements, such as attitude and mind-set, in relation to self-identification and peer interaction impact civil servants' motivation and operational ability to manifest accountability. This is a key finding since it identifies potential issues that need to be addressed when introducing a new norm in statebuilding. Additionally in an attempt to experience institution's accountability attitude, this research rated all interviewed civil servants from 1 to 10 based on their performance, from the moment they were contacted until the last point of contact. Each post was rated on: their accessibility, whether the post had been filled, and if the person was accessible; their level of transparency during the interview; the quality of information provided; their understanding of good governance vs. good government; and their awareness of wider government accountability. The total ministerial scores of 32 central civil servant interviewees are presented in the below table, and we see that, although MoF and IDLG have very similar levels of transparency and information, IDLG scored considerably higher in the 4th column. This was mostly because MoF staff perceived accountability primarily in terms of structure for effective government whilst IDLG saw it more from a governance point of view. This finding makes a lot of sense since MoF experienced many NPM reforms whilst IDLG hosts a heavier governance mandate and has a stronger relation with representative bodies. In all three entities, the quality and transparency of the staff could vary considerably, depending on the department, indicating inconsistent performance and vision within a singular institution. For example, MoF had some of the most transparent staff in two departments but not so much in others, thus reducing the overall score. Furthermore, IDLG scored quite low on accessibility since many of the posts were still open and unassigned. Though IDLG opened in 2007, the institution still has a sense of 'newness' and is still shaping its identity.

Table 4: Ministerial rating on interviewee's accountability attitude

Institution	Accessibility (Filled posts and openness to meet)	Level of Transparency	Provided Adequate Information	Understood the difference between good government vs. governance	Were aware of relevant accountability activities outside their own institution	Total (Maximum 10)
Ministry of Finance	5.7	7.8	7	4.8	4	5.86
Oversight Institutions: HoO and MEC *Without MEC and Int. Advisers	4.8	6.7 (5.2)*	6.3 (4.5)*	5.4 (3)*	3.7 (2.9)*	5.38 (4.28)*
Independent Directorate of Local Government	4.4	8	7.8	7.4	3.5	6.22

Moreover despite that both MEC and HoO are oversight institutions, their behaviour was quite different. HoO was rated as the most inaccessible and non-transparent institution of all entities. Across the board, all government bodies scored quite low on the fifth column since many focused on their own activities without extensively knowing how other government institutions contribute to the overall accountability framework. The lack of cooperation and information between government institutions is quite palpable. Each ministry was perceived as its own island and uninvited guests were considered a sensitive topic. Although this can arguably be said about many governments, stable states tend to have a more solid governmental identity that creates a certain level of unity and collaboration. This finding was also supported by the findings presented in the previous chapter and by additional respondent interviews where the absence of a cohesive strategy and holistic government approach were reported. The below quotes serve to illustrate.

"You will not see consistent performance from the ministries, it is mainly due to lack of coordination and support by ministerial institutions" – Nargis Nehan, Executive Director, EPD

"the ministries also don't really talk to each other, they are separate entities, often dominated by one group in society. Holding them accountable is difficult because the exchange between them is limited and often one ministry is very much inward oriented and is not so much affected by the overall government framework" – Nora Roehner, Advisor, IDLG

"it is a bit confusing still within Afghanistan, sometimes even at the cabinet level they are arguing which institution has the right to address accountability and transparency, which institution should be reporting to whom" – Fardeen Sediqi, Director General for Operational Policies, MoF

The operational challenges outlined in this section are not new and are widely recognised by governance actors in Afghanistan. For example, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) tried to build accountability and transparency in Afghanistan through trainings, capacity building and civil society participation. UNDP argued "[a]ttitudinal change of civil servants [...] form a critical element in strengthening accountability, transparency and integrity [...] [and] will also be strengthened by, and facilitate citizen's, communities' and civil society's ability to monitor and hold the government accountable for the delivery of services" (UNDP, 2009:16). Despite the agency's reference to 'attitude', a lot of statebuilding assistance, nonetheless, has been procedural and structural driven. In the field research, a significant group of civil servant respondents suggested that accountability initiatives were too focused on technical and procedural issues, rather than on changing the mentality and mind-set of people to support and sustain the democratic norm. Consequently, the objective of 'constructing' accountability was identified within a system, rather than within people. This is another key finding since it highlights the current methodology in addressing operational challenges in implementing accountability. The below quotes serve to illustrate interviewees' reflections on the matter.

"the international community [...] they are very focused on process, I mean indicators when it comes to the government – 'pass this law, create X entity, create Y entity' [...] [but] let us be the one to deal with how we do it. You tell us for example you need this dish, let me cook it, let me be the one who puts the ingredients together and you are the one at the end of the day having it" – Ameen Habibi, Director General for Strategic Policy and Implementation, MoF

"accountability and transparency are not about [...] the policies we have, it is about the mind-set and also the way how people think, the way how people are respecting these policies" – Naveed Ahamed Niaz, Budget Reform Manager, MoF

"the people of society should be ready to accept this policy concept and it should be easily implementable [...] the policies and strategies that we copied and gained from abroad, we didn't have a good platform for their implementation. The people were not ready, the institutions, the government institutions were not ready" – Fardeen Sediqi, Director General Operational Policies, MoF

Additionally, operational weaknesses in implementing the norm have been addressed through a lot of capacity building by the international community. Civil servant respondents argue that it is not a matter of technical knowhow to manifest accountability, but rather social capability. Several interviewees recognised this social or mind-set limitation, but donors appear to have difficulties linking this 'abstract' challenge with policy development. These findings are

particularly congruent with constructivists as it illustrates the necessity of social structures and normative conditioning to generate social change. The author found this particularly powerful since the very agents, who in theory are supposed to embrace norm adaptation, articulate this particular need to change their environment. Donors, and external actors to the norm adaptation process, continue on the other hand to prioritise institutional and structural approaches. To continue, civil servant respondents, particularly at central level, described the accountability development process as erratic and reactive, rather than strategic. Many participants showed discomfort with the speed in which policies were developed and civil servants reported not having the time to change the laws and other policies to harmonise the environment in which accountability is supposed to thrive. A small group of civil servants additionally questioned how this rushed policy making environment would impact government credibility. The below quotes illustrate interviewees' observations.

This is "a country where the culture of conflict still exists, we are still at war. To move from the culture of conflict to the culture of peace takes time. It requires a certain sort of mind-set that you accept blame, you accept failure and you accept that somebody does better than you, and that you contribute because [...] in those situations the culture of people will prevail and that would be the objective that matter to you" – Nader Yama, Director of Strategy and Programmes, IDLG

There "are different limitations that the donors should understand. Sometimes they are putting such an extreme pressure on the government that the government cannot respond [...] we have our own limitations, social limitations, religious limitations" – Senior Civil Servant, SN203

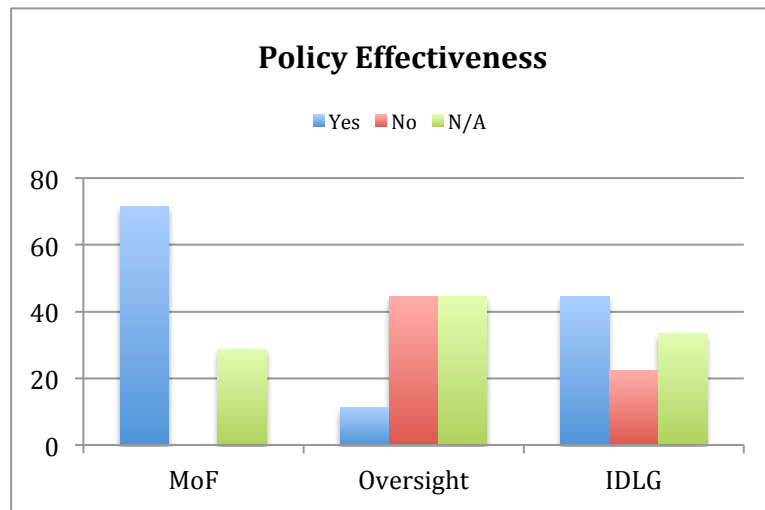
"I saw someone once who did a policy in 7 hours. To me that was surprising because I have prior experience with policy making and to me it was a very long and tedious process that involved not just me but a lot other people too and when that person gave me a policy in 7 hours, I was astounded" – Naweed Kawusi, Deputy Director, HRRAC

"I asked about specific policies, specifically about accountability and transparency in the mining sector. When I asked them, they said 'ok, we have been tasked within one week to develop 2-3 national policies' – can you imagine how you can develop within a week or within two weeks a national policy that can be implemented for accountability and transparency?!" – Najla Ayubi, Executive Director, OSA

Considering participants' view on the policy development environment, it is not surprising that only 26.5% of 32 civil servant interviewees believed that accountability policies were effective in their implementation. It was the only category where interviewees provided a caveat to their answer and a total of 6% contended that it was too early to tell whether the policies would indeed create the desired outcome. As illustrated by the below graph, the majority of MoF interviewees believed policies to be effective, while HoO respondents perceived it the least. This finding is consistent with the levels of technical, political and financial support given by the international community. Donors have provided a continuous and significant support to MoF while very little to HoO. IDLG has also received quite a bit of support, though not as much as MoF. Consistent with the overall research findings, this shows that the perception of policy

success does not only depend on the support given to develop policies, but also to implement them.

Graph 12: Do you think accountability policies have been implemented effectively?



Even officially, MoF (2010c:21) recognises that “existing accountability measures have been either ineffective or not implemented well, and thus, they have had no measurable impact”. The little ‘success’ that occurs is often reported in terms outputs, rather than outcomes. For example, MoF measures its accomplishments in recruiting civil servants, dealing with civil servant complaints, simplifying procedures or issuing licenses (MoF, 2013; 2012). While some of these undertakings could impact the manifestation of accountability, its mere establishment does not guarantee effective implementation. Progress is there for sure, but institutional practices for check and balances, scrutiny and oversight are still sorely lacking in their fundamental essence (MoF, 2010c). In other words, while “in many areas institutional frameworks and reforms have been designed, promulgated, and in some cases put in place, implementation has often been slow or negligible” (ADB *et al*, 2007:16).

To summarise, the government’s operational capacity to implement accountability is impacted by individuals’ mentality, institutional environment and political backing. Elements that are difficult to explain by merely using political-economic analysis but that nevertheless impact institutional performance and norm development. The data shows that there is a recognised need for a change in attitude, or mind-set, but current operational challenges are addressed through technocratic and capacity building initiatives. So far, accountability policies have been ineffective in their implementation but they have a higher probability for success if support is given both during the development and implementation phase. These are important elements to consider in manifesting new norms as they impact the development of accountability and identify potential areas of engagement. However, this will be analysed in the following chapter. Unsurprisingly, the research also shows that Afghan ownership for accountability policies is very

low since many civil servant interviewees perceived them to be done for Afghans rather than with them. Although Afghan ownership in policymaking has increased with the Kabul Process, as outlined in Chapter Five, 'Afghan' still refers primarily to the capital elite and not the general population. When donor research participants were asked whether they thought Afghan policies reflected the needs of the Afghan population, rather than of the government, several answered that there had been citizen consultations but few had more information on the nature of these sessions and whether they had resulted in actual policy formulation and citizen endorsement. Donor respondents appeared to operate on the assumption that governments reflect citizen needs and consequently, saw no need to directly engage with the population on policy issues, hence maintaining the dialogue between the government and themselves. The below quotes elucidate participants' narratives on ownership.

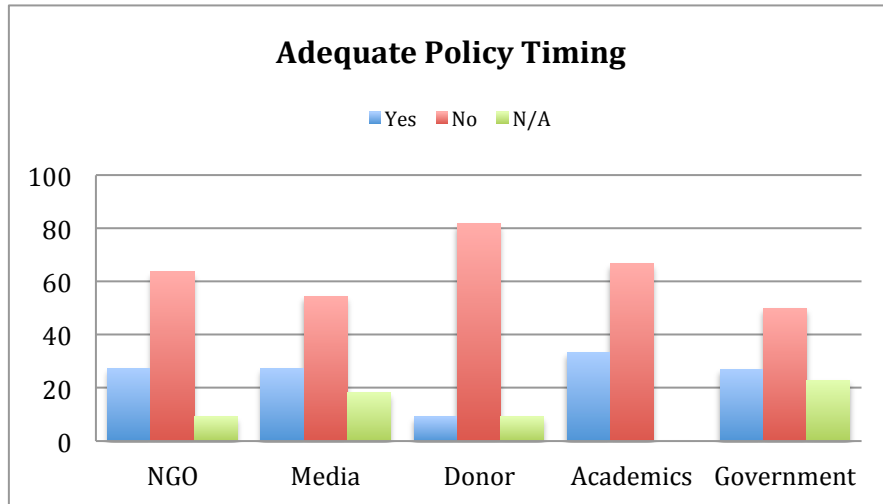
"luckily this time, at least the process was really led by the Afghan government, before I remember when the ANDS was here and only few government senior officials were involved [...] but this time because of the need and consultation process, NPP was much better than before" – Senior Civil Servant, SN203

"if there is a semblance of fairly top-heavy policy development environment, you are always going to be sceptical if this is really going to represent the view of the local people [...] we all want the government to have development policies that are coherent and congruent with people's thinking and they have to be grounded on cultural values and so on, but do we really pose that question when it comes down to endorsing an idea or concept? We probably haven't done so, have we?" – Donor, CN303

It "was not enough ownership for most of my colleagues. Someone comes, give us the documents, we have to fill it in, like we have to fill it in [...] and that was enough for people to not fully commit to it" – Nora Roehner, Advisor, IDLG

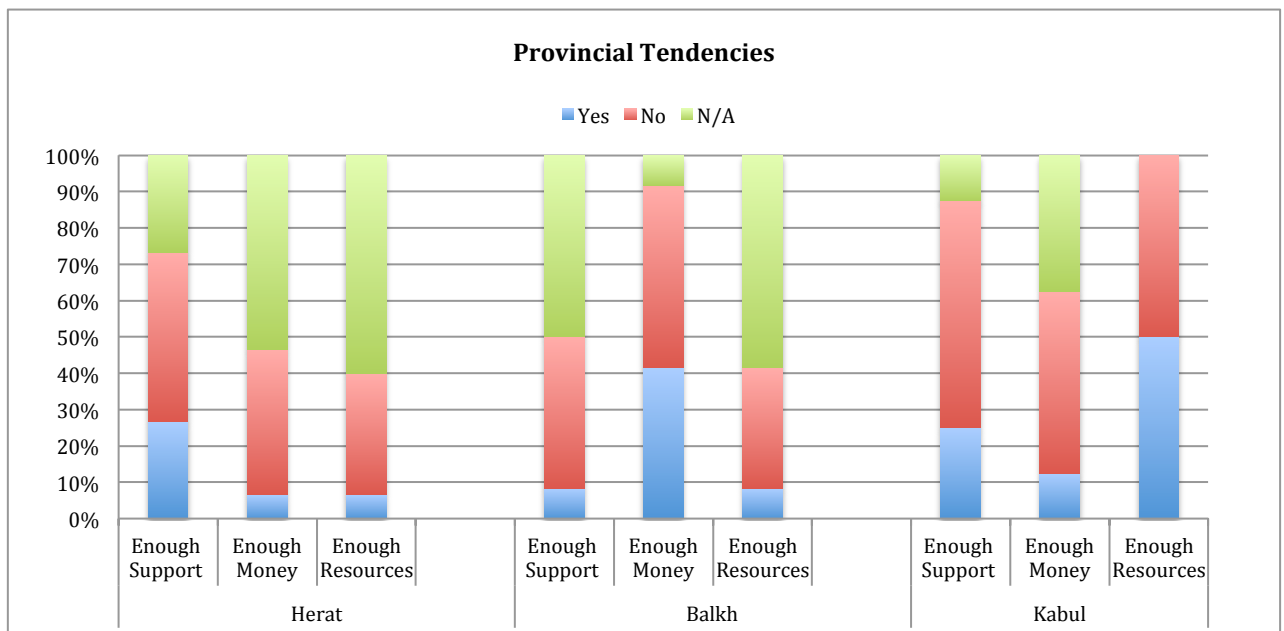
Moreover, when asked whether accountability had been promoted at the right time, 58% of all 103 interviews answered that it should have been introduced at another point in history, as illustrated by the below graph. When asked for more detail, surprisingly, interviewees felt that accountability should not have been introduced in the future, but just after the fall of the Taliban. 58% of respondents thought that accountability, as a concept, should have been introduced right after the first Bonn Agreement. Interestingly, the majority of the 50% of civil servants who had answered 'no' always added 'it is not too late, even now' to their response. Moreover the majority of civil servants who thought accountability had been correctly introduced were primarily located at subnational level or within HoO.

Graph 13: Have accountability policies being introduced at the right time?



Before concluding, a little bit more should be said about subnational implementation. Unsurprisingly all three provinces covered in this research felt differently towards accountability, as observed in graph 13. In Kabul province, i.e. the region not the capital, civil servants felt a lack of support and funding in implementing the norm. Although they had taken local initiatives to increase public support and participation, these initiatives remained true to Afghan traditions and not to accountability policies. In Herat, one of the wealthiest regions in Afghanistan, respondents did not feel they had enough access to central funds and resources to implement accountability, but implemented nonetheless their own measures. Although the implementation of accountability did not follow policy outline, the environment in Herat was, by far, the most open and contributed to the actual essence of the norm. There were constructive signs of collaboration between the government, civil society and citizens and albeit premature, the government-citizen engagement held a lot of promise for establishing a foundation for the norm.

Graph 14: Provincial Tendencies



In Balkh on the other hand, the environment was quite different. As shown by the above graph, civil servants expressed a massive lack of support and resources to implement accountability. Unlike other regions, Balkh's accountability initiatives followed official government practices to increase transparency and participation. Despite their adherence to government policies, guidance and 'proper' behaviour, research participants were demonstrably restricted in their ability to air their views during the interviews. Even media interviewees were extremely self-censored. Citizens appeared however quite satisfied due to regional economic growth and prioritised their access to resources above that of accountability. This is not an uncommon finding as expressed by another civil society respondent:

"when we talked to people in Herat we saw that they were quite vocalised, they demand that [accountability], they knew better how to demand it. When we went to the south side of Afghanistan, which was mainly Nangahar, there people got excited about it despite that it was actually a new initiative for them, they were excited about it. But when we went to the north side of Afghanistan, specially Balkh, we talked to people, we didn't see any excitement on their face instead we saw fear in their face, mainly they were thinking how they could ask the government and demand transparency and accountability" – Nargis Nehan, Executive Director, EPD

The manifestation of accountability in the regions varies considerably and the policy framework is almost non-existent. However policy implementation, or lack thereof, does not guarantee the manifestation of the norm. Besides Kabul, the other regions did not feel they had enough resources to implement accountability. Lack of support and funds were however reported across all regions. Subnational operational capacity to implement accountability is difficult to assess since the very foundation for accountability mechanisms and policies appear to be absent. However, in an attempt to understand the regions' attitude to accountability, 16

subnational civil servants were also assessed based on their level of transparency, information quality, understanding of good governance and awareness of accountability activities outside their own institutions. Similar to ministerial ratings provided earlier in this section, the table in the next page shows the subnational scores. The regions marked considerably lower than the central ministries on the first three categories with the exception of Kabul province on the 'Adequate Information' category. This could be related to the fact that capital vicinity provides access to a bigger employment pool with more qualified staff. Although the difference is small, the subnational offices in Balkh and Herat scored higher than the central ministries in the fourth category. This could be due to their provincial presence; a smaller number of civil servants provides better networking possibilities and awareness of each other's work.

Table 5: Provincial Ratings

Subnational Government	Level of Transparency	Provided Adequate Information	Understood the difference between good government vs. governance	Were aware of relevant accountability activities outside their own institution	Total
Balkh	6.25	5.75	3	4.2	4.8
Herat	6.75	6.25	4.75	4.3	5.5
Kabul	6.875	7.5	4.5	3.25	5.5

This section on Accountability Methods has shown that answerability and enforcement mechanisms to control and regulate government behaviour exist in Afghanistan. These mechanisms are frequently used for political purposes to acquire citizen support and establish government legitimacy, rather than to function as democratic processes. Their implementation is compromised by fear, incomplete mandates, unclear formulations, imprecise procedures and lack of knowledge, capacity, collaboration, information sharing and integrity. The utilisation of accountability mechanisms for undemocratic motives disempowers citizens and creates an environment of mistrust and impunity. Moreover, the reluctance of civil servants to open themselves up for scrutiny and contestation disable the government's operational ability to provide answerability and enforcement.

This section has also shown that the manifestation and implementation of accountability is impacted by intangible elements, such as attitude, institutional environment and mentality, which are hard to digest by mainstream political theories. These issues are unrecognised and unaddressed by the liberal statebuilding process as its efforts went to 'construct' accountability within systems, rather than within people. Yet, at this stage the Afghan state is more impacted by singular leaders than by institutionalism, showing once again the need for an alternative theoretical framework. Moreover civil servants' motivation and operational ability to manifest accountability is impacted by political backing, unofficial social rules and an enabling environment.

Accountability methods are consequently existent but impacted by a range of issues that are not directly recognised by liberal statebuilding. This creates a gap between the manifestation of accountability and the conceptual framework, which will be discussed in the following chapter.

Conclusion

This chapter has brought the research findings into a full circle and presented most of the empirical data. It has shown that the development of accountability is negatively impacted by the citizen-government relationship since citizen power remains unacknowledged in Afghanistan. Despite citizens' official accountability role, they are unable to impact government behaviour and negotiate a political vision for the country. Although citizens have an unclear vision of the accountability framework, they are aware of their own role in it. A sense of disempowerment, unclear political objectives and a lack of citizenship identity restrict citizens from openly engaging in the political arena. All of which impact the development of accountability since its conceptualisation is impacted by both the demand and supply side of the norm. The data has shown that both the identity and motive behind accountability actors impact the evolution of accountability in Afghanistan. Unlike constructivists' and rationalists' point of view, the data shows a far more complex scenario in which accountability is not only influenced by self-interests but also by social structures. This might pose a challenge for the Norm Life Cycle applied in this thesis and will be discussed in the following chapter.

Moreover, the Afghan government and the population experience the democratisation process differently. The weak relationship between both actors is fraught with mistrust and frustration due to corruption, impunity and lack of information. Citizens perceive the promotion of accountability primarily as a political rather than an ideological, i.e. democratic, strategy and are frequently treated by older civil servants as passive agents that need to be guided. However, the situation is progressively changing and citizens and civil society are increasingly more vocal and engaging. Furthermore, younger civil servants identify them as potential partners rather than actors who need to be monitored and controlled.

This chapter has also shown that the manifestation of the norm varies considerably across all government levels. Implementation is frequently reported as incomplete, struggling or failing due to curtailed mandates, unclear formulations, imprecise procedures, fear and lack of knowledge, integrity, collaboration and information sharing. Moreover, the government's operational capacity to implement accountability is impacted by unofficial social rules, political leadership, and civil servants' attitudes and motivation. In other words, the "issue of accountability, in fact, has been raised repeatedly at national and international levels, regrettably with no real impact in producing better results" (MoF, 2010b:14).

The research also revealed that the implementation trials derive from a very weak and unstable policy foundation. Policies are developed erratically at the wrong time to follow external demands and are not endorsed by the population. They have also failed to attain Afghan ownership since they are developed within government systems through a technocratic approach, rather than within people. Moreover, accountability methods are frequently used for political objectives, rather than as democratic processes. This contributes to an environment of impunity and disempowers answerability and enforcement mechanisms' ability to control and regulate government behaviour.

At subnational level the picture aggravates since the accountability framework is mostly non-existent and at the mercy of local leaders. Most importantly however is the lack of recognition of people's, rather than systems', need to incorporate new values, rather than merely implementing new structures. Structural changes do not necessarily change people's behaviour, particularly in environments that are dominated by personalities rather than institutionalism. As Nadar Yama, Director of Strategy and Programmes at IDLG, puts it "you can only awaken someone who is really sleeping but you cannot awake someone [...] who pretends that he is sleeping".

Together with the previous chapter, the research findings have painted a picture of a very fragmented and non-transparent government that does not have a holistic approach and that is very much influenced by unofficial power dynamics and individual leaders. A distorted self-perpetuating system channels the government's attention to power-seeking activities away from citizen needs and uses accountability mechanisms to justify political action. Although the research recognises the presence of accountability structures and mechanisms, these are often void of content since political actors fail to incorporate them; consequently creating a gap between the manifestation of the norm and the conceptual framework presented in this thesis. Moreover, accountability in Afghanistan has primarily been promoted as a solution to development problems rather than a statebuilding strategy. Whilst some might argue that this

does not deter accountability from becoming well established, the following chapter will illustrate, by using norm development theory, that it does.

The research also revealed that accountability not only has a source of legitimacy and power amidst community governance systems but also that its value is recognised amongst the population. While citizens recognise their own accountability role, they struggle to enact it. This illustrates that accountability has a certain anchorage in Afghan society, despite its' struggles in the political sector.

Notwithstanding the challenges to the development and implementation of the norm, the research has also identified progressive elements. People are increasingly more vocal, the parliament is improving its oversight function, and the government continues to engage with accountability. To conclude, accountability does exist in some type of form in Afghanistan. The next chapter will try to provide further clarity into this 'form' by exploring the actual manifestation of accountability through a norm development lens.

CHAPTER SEVEN: BUILDING ACCOUNTABILITY IN AFGHANISTAN

The thesis has now come to its pinnacle. Having previously laid out the theoretical landscape and presented the research findings, this chapter will now combine these two components to understand the kind of accountability that was developed in Afghanistan as part of the liberal statebuilding process. It will primarily discuss the research findings to answer the research questions presented in chapter three and draw on the findings outlined in chapters five and six. These address the development of accountability in Afghanistan and try to comprehend how the socio-political realities and the presence of the international community have impacted the emergence of the norm. Additionally, it will try to uncover whether accountability has been manifested per the conceptual framework presented in chapter two, i.e. has liberal statebuilding been able to develop accountability per its own liberal democratic definition. The outcome of these discussions will then be applied to the Critical Peace Studies and Good Enough Governance debates in order to understand the wider implications of the thesis' research. This might resurface some familiar arguments presented in the previous chapters; however, this is important to conclude the theoretical and conceptual debates and lay the groundwork for the norm development analysis in the second half of this chapter.

Behind the essence of accountability, the purpose of this chapter is to ultimately provide a more nuanced picture of norm development and propose an alternative methodology to liberal statebuilding. In order to develop a more detailed image of the interaction between an external norm and local settings, Finnemore and Sikkink's Norm Life Cycle, introduced in chapter one, will be applied in this chapter to assess accountability's progression and evolution in Afghanistan. This can then be used to further understand how hybridity occurs, as it not only reveals the emergence, but also the quality of the amalgamation. This chapter is thus divided into four sections. The first three sections will discuss the research findings along the accountability characteristics in the conceptual framework: Power Relations, Citizen-Government Relationship, and Accountability Methods; the fourth section will apply the analytical lens to discuss norm development.

Power Relations

Chapter five showed that accountability has a questionable legitimacy and power base in Afghanistan as the norm is unable to significantly impact government behaviour. Although the norm is structurally present, it is heavily impacted by power dynamics. This section will discuss the research findings and try to answer the research questions in order to see how these relate to the theoretical debates. This section is divided in three parts: Part one will deliberate on the findings, part two will examine how accountability was introduced, and part three will apply these findings to the theory.

Findings Deliberation

As discussed in the previous chapters, the political arena in Afghanistan is impacted by powerful elites. These reduce collaboration, increase mistrust, and influence irregular structural behaviour, preventing a holistic government approach. Consequently, the relationship between government institutions and subnational entities is impaired by authority lines outside the democratic framework. These unofficial and unmonitored power lines create blind spots for abusive government behaviour and delegitimise the foundation of accountability by capitalising citizen power. According to Poskitt and Dufranc (2011), this kind of mistrust and power monopolisation is common in conflict settings since power balance has yet to be achieved through organic and peaceful political negotiations. Liberal methods in this case delegitimises accountability since it jeopardises structures of representation, power sharing and citizen participation.

The field research shows that structural solutions were able to create pockets of increased government responsiveness, information sharing and citizen participation. This strengthened the state's democratic infrastructure but failed to redistribute political power outside the hierarchical system. The data showed that patronage networks, which destabilise the state's relationship and responsibility to the population, outnumber individual progressive leadership. Challenging the power status quo in this case was perceived as defiant rather than a necessary democratic process. Issues such as decentralisation, citizen participation and policy involvement threaten consequently the current power groups' monopolisation of dominance (Shah, 2003). Habermas (1996) claims that a government's inability to create stability in the political arena reflects weak political power since the state lacks confidence and strength in managing contestation. Richmond (2010a) further suggests that power negotiations can be used to deconstruct and reform political structures. In the case of Afghanistan however, the research shows that power is often not democratically shared, but aggressively grabbed. This reflects an ambiguous government identity and an unfinished political process in the statebuilding endeavour that contradicts the norm peace assumption underlying problem-solving methods. Conflict in this case might be deemed a necessary step towards peace as it redistributes resources and power, and cannot be overstepped as easily as liberal technocratic solutions might perceive. This is not an exclusive Afghan finding but can be observed in every nation's history at one point or another (Tilly, 1990).

The lack of transformation from social power into political power and the persistent presence of coercive power contribute to the above argument and indicate a governmental immaturity eroded by mistrust, rather than stable political contestation (Habermas, 1996). Therefore, the research findings suggest that the foundation for accountability legitimacy, i.e. power sharing and citizen power, has failed to manifest per the liberal democratic definition in the conceptual

framework since shifting power dynamics and fluid state boundaries present a volatile foundation for norm development.

Despite the lack of legitimacy and power base within the government framework, the field research identified two power sources for accountability outside the state's parameters. One of them was located within the international community that heavily advocated for accountability in Afghanistan and backed the establishment of several political structures and processes to support the development of the norm. Legitimacy and power relations was sustained through international approval and whilst it incentivised the adoption of structures, the norm manifested only superficially. Mac Ginty (2006) and Carothers (2007) suggested that the resemblance of a political structure, i.e. institutional mimicry, could be used to justify donor involvement whilst simultaneously consolidating power for undemocratic purposes. In the case of Afghanistan, the lack of legitimacy and power base for accountability within the state, covered above, and the presence of accountability structures, suggests that the norm was incorporated as an exchange for funds rather than internal ownership.

Moreover, the legitimacy created by the international community is not untainted, as the research also shows that donor behaviour negatively impacts the development of accountability. For example, the international community's selection and endorsement of local 'liberal champions' to promote the liberal statebuilding agenda prevents the development of an organic power balance in the political sector. Donor power, conditioning and influence have created a dual relationship with the Afghan government. On one side, donors exercise de facto power to impact Afghan policymaking and redirect government responsiveness to the international community and away from the population whilst simultaneously expecting citizens to hold the government accountable for the policies that donors promote. This is consistent with the 'donor accountability' literature presented in chapter two. Moreover this external intervention can concentrate power in the hands of a few, harm democratic values and prevent a natural power struggle needed to achieve political balance and create legitimacy for accountability. On the other side, donors have to follow international and diplomatic standards, which prevents them from de jure executive powers and officially removes them from the political system. These entangled and at times contradictory power movements illustrate an inconsistent and broken power circulation between political actors in Afghanistan.

The inconsistent alignment between de facto and de jure power impacts accountability's ability to take root in the political arena since confusing norm boundaries are unable to generate sufficient authority to constrain and enable political action. Moreover, the research showed that external knowledge and international legitimacy clashed with local experience and national needs since the latter were not respected or prioritised in the development of the norm. This

weakens the norm's legitimacy and power base since vague conceptualisation hampers its manifestation. To summarise, the presence of international donors has both induced accountability by exchanging funding for norm adaption but compromised norm development by exercising de facto, but not de jure, power. The implications of this will be further discussed later in the chapter.

The other power source identified by the research derives from local cultural values. Afghan community governance systems support accountability values and grant it acceptability in the Afghan society. A key research finding showed that accountability gained more legitimacy amongst social organisations than political structures since the norm's values were not principally rejected, but rather, it was its methods of implementation that stirred resistance. This source of legitimacy and power could potentially create a strong support for the development of the norm but it remains disconnected from the statebuilding process and does not have an official role in the political framework. It is important to highlight that whilst some accountability values are present in the Afghan society, these do not translate into accountability in itself but rather provide a strong foundation for full norm development. Nevertheless, this unutilised social resource is, at this time, unable to officially impact the development of accountability.

To conclude along the research questions:

Has accountability in Afghanistan manifested per the liberal democratic definition?

Power for accountability has not manifested per the liberal democratic definition due to the presence of patronage networks, external influence, and unmonitored and unofficial power flows. External and unofficial power influence from power holders and the international community has redirected answerability and enforcement away from citizens. This, consequently, has disarmed the liberal democratic structures that ensure citizen empowerment, participation and representation.

How have the social and political realities in Afghanistan impacted the creation of accountability?

Politically, the staccato power circulation between political actors in Afghanistan makes it really difficult to identify who is de facto accountable to whom. Although accountability structures define de jure as the distribution of political power, the research suggests that these structures are largely sabotaged by hierarchical power flows and power grabbing behaviour. Moreover weak institutionalism and strong charismatic leadership repress political contestation. This shifting and inconsistent political interaction shows a fragmented state with an unstable political foundation that tests the establishment of legitimacy and power for accountability. Socially, cultural values, to a large extent, support accountability values. However, these remain

disconnected from the structural statebuilding process and are currently unable to impact the creation of the norm in the political sector since social action has yet to transform into political power in Afghanistan.

How has the presence of international donors impacted the development of accountability in Afghanistan?

International donors have both helped to introduce accountability to the political structure and crippled its implementation by exercising de facto political power whilst remaining de jure unaccountable. Moreover the prioritisation of international knowledge over local expertise has framed accountability along liberal structures that clash with Afghan political realities and create ambiguous norm boundaries and interpretations. This blurs the conceptualisation of accountability and, consequently, weakens its legitimacy and power base since it is unable to establish the foundations needed to impact government behaviour.

Again, this illustrates quite well the ruptures in the norm's power base and its precarious foundation in the Afghan political framework. Whilst this is a noteworthy observation, the thesis is not only interested in discovering what impacted the development of accountability, but also how. The below section will further elaborate on the development of legitimacy of accountability.

Norm Development

This section will not apply norm development theory to the research findings since this will be done later in the Norm Discussion portion of the chapter. It will, however, provide a normative angle to the development of power base for accountability.

Chapter five outlined the emergence of accountability in Afghanistan and showed that the norm was primarily introduced in the political sector through agreements at international conferences. The norm was consequently introduced through dialogue and inducement by the international community, but not necessarily negotiated, since the definition and conceptualisation of accountability was absent in Afghan policies until 2010. Even post-2010 the norm took a very liberal identity in the policy framework and showed no sign of hybridity, Afghanisation or local contestation. Moreover the initial absence of implementation and adherence frameworks in Afghan policies suggests, again, that donors introduced accountability as a correction measure, rather than as a strategy to develop a democratic norm. Had accountability been introduced earlier, as suggested by the majority of Afghan respondents, the objective for norm development would have been more aligned to democratisation purposes, rather than damage control. The international community has therefore impacted the timing, objective and purpose of developing accountability. These however do not support norm development but rather

reflect the prioritisation of Western needs for a political solution to donor investment. Furthermore the insertion of accountability into an unfinished statebuilding process and the absence of norm negotiation illustrate a poorly thought through engagement that gave little consideration to norm legitimacy. Donors appear to have 'inserted' accountability in an assumed empty space without giving thought to the political realities and social elements that could have been used to create the norm's power base and legitimacy.

Authors, such as Kelsall (2008) and Tadjbakhsh (2011), claim that the usage of traditional structures can generate authority, power and legitimacy for liberal solutions and that traditional and liberal values can coexist if there is mutual respect. This however has not been the case for accountability in Afghanistan, as observed in earlier chapters. Although community governance systems have the authority to generate answerability and distribute public shame if violated, these practices have not been used to support the norm development of accountability. Since accountability was developed in this 'empty' political space, little attention was given by the liberal statebuilding to social organisations since they were perceived to predate liberal requirements, hence illegitimate. This limited donors' focus to structures, processes and capacities that simulate Western conditions rather than utilise local practices. Authors, like Poskitt and Dufranc (2011) and Booth (2011a), argue that donors ought to improve their understanding of local realities in order to prioritise the statebuilding process rather than Western needs. This external prioritisation and approach damaged accountability's ability to find a power and legitimacy nest in Afghan politics since social organisations were not even included as political entities.

Consequently, norm development of the power base of accountability has not been 'manufactured' or strategically targeted in Afghanistan. The international community primarily introduced accountability in Afghan policies, but little attention was given to norm negotiation, contestation, hybridity or Afghanisation. The research does not detect any effort to strategically develop norm legitimacy or power relations by using local values or structures, whether social or political, to develop accountability. The methods, i.e. structures, processes and capacity building, of developing accountability show on the other hand an attempt to clone and reproduce the norm by its liberal democratic conceptualisation as a problem-solving recipe. This however, has not manifested as observed by the previous section. This is important to understand since it highlights the unsuitable methodology of liberal statebuilding in exporting democratic norms.

Theoretical Implications

Having unpacked the norm development of power relations of accountability and deliberated the field research along with the research questions, this section will now apply the above findings to the theoretical debates presented in chapter one.

As mentioned earlier in the thesis, liberal agents, such as the UN, EU, World Bank and IMF, support the 'exportation' of accountability as part of good governance to create responsiveness to citizen needs (ODI, 2007; EC, 2001; Newell and Bellour, 2002). This has largely created international legitimacy for accountability and portrayed it as a liberal tool to help states strengthen their political processes in managing contestation, combatting corruption and guaranteeing citizen representation. Based on this very foundation, accountability was 'exported' to Afghanistan, but authors, such as Carothers (2006:55), suggest that after a "steady expansion of democracy-building programs around the world, a growing number of governments are starting to crack down on such activities [...] [and some] have begun to publicly denounce Western democracy assistance as illegitimate political meddling". The intention of developing democracy, and accountability by affiliation, is thus brought to question. This section has clearly shown that the legitimacy of accountability was not strategically constructed and that power is centralised and hierarchical. It also showed that citizens were marginalised from the political processes needed to create norm legitimacy, despite that structures support their existence in the political framework. This distinction between *de jure* and *de facto* power application illustrates that the legality of accountability structures does not automatically create norm legitimacy (Habermas, 1981; Dix *et al*, 2012). In other words, the legitimacy of accountability does not derive from wherever donors think it should come from, but from local acceptance, values and belief systems (Fukuyama, 2006). The research therefore brings into question the 'export' of accountability since the norm does not appear to have been introduced for the benefit of Afghan statebuilding, but rather to advance donor interests. This supports the critical perspective introduced in chapter one as the liberal intervention in this case had an explicit agenda (Cox, 1981).

This is not a new finding, but it begs one to further examine the relationship and the perception between the international community and Afghan actors. In the literature Critical Peace Studies distinguishes between the 'local' and the 'external' and argues that the latter views itself as more knowledgeable and rational, thus superior to local experiences (Richmond, 2012b; Barnett, 2006; Sending, 2009). Critical scholars, such as Mac Ginty and Richmond, suggest that the 'local' is portrayed by liberal peace as someone who needs saving from traditional practices, customary mechanisms, underdevelopment and conservatism. Richmond (2010a:56) even frames it as reducing the population to a "depoliticised biopolitical mass in need of rescue, and hence denied political agency". This delegitimisation of local experiences and the West's assumption of the universality and self-evident legitimacy of liberal norms creates a self-

acclaimed legitimacy and power base for donors to guide developing states into a liberal world (Donais, 2009). However, as seen by this section, this approach creates a power imbalance that devalues local legitimacy and blocks organic power balance since political negotiation and contestation is suppressed or controlled, depending on the viewpoint. Preventing this necessary political struggle illustrates, according to Donais (2009), the West's presumption that it knows best how to create prosperity for Afghanistan. Moreover this illustrates a linear and clean progression when statebuilding is historically a lot more complicated and messy than envisioned by the liberal agenda (Tilly, 1990). Authors, such as Moravcsik (1995), Grindle (2004) and Kothari (1972), authenticate and suggest that democratisation and liberal statebuilding is based on the West's industrialisation experience rather than on a wider perception that respects alternative ways to development. From this 'western' point of view, the liberal state then becomes the optimal route for modernisation with implicit norm assumptions (Finnemore, 1993; 1996b; Moravcsik, 1995).

A problem with this argument is that the 'local' and the 'external' are treated as homogenised groups. The research findings show however a wide diversity of actors and it is important not to over-romanticise the local and their abilities to navigate the statebuilding framework. While Critical Peace Studies emphasise the resilience and ingenuity of beneficiaries, the data shows that these 'counteractions' are not as consistent or prevalent as one might wish it to be. This will be further discussed in the next section. Academic literature needs therefore to expand its span to account for the nuances in the 'local' and the 'external' as the data shows clear divergent power dynamics between and amidst internal and external power actors (Peterson, 2013). For example, aid agencies, foreign legislative bodies, and ministries of Foreign Affairs and Defence, impact the development of accountability in Afghanistan differently. Foreign state representatives negotiate the official accountability agreements at international conferences whilst relying primarily on secondary information gathered by foreign ministry officials. Their perception of the 'local' is therefore quite different from for example Aid Agencies' that have been present in Afghanistan for a considerable amount of time and have a richer understanding of the local population and its practices. This simplification of the 'local' and the 'external' deprives academic studies from understanding the kind and depth of support, or mimicry, that exists amidst both groups and squanders the opportunity of identifying the means and characteristics of actors who engage with norm development versus those who pursue power whilst presenting themselves as liberal supporters, or alternatively a hybrid of both (Björkdahl & Höglung, 2013; Richmond, 2009a; Risse-Kappen, 1991).

Institutional mimicry is thus also a form of resistance as it provides a mechanism to appease donors whilst resisting political transformation. As Lister (2006:13) contends "Formal rules can be relatively easily changed, but cultural rules and values take much longer to change. While

more training, more qualified staff and organisational restructuring can improve organisational capacity, broader institutional reform is necessary for sustainable improvements". Nevertheless, as argued in chapter one, isomorphic mimicry is not necessarily a bad thing since it allows institutions to pave the path for what they would want to be but are yet not. However, the lack of transformation of social values into political action in Afghanistan is problematic and highlights the separation of political institutions from societal forces. This creates what David Chandler refers to as 'statebuilding without politics' and shows that in the case of Afghanistan institutional mimicry is not of a benevolent nature but is rather tainted. (Herhir & Robinson, 2007:71). Unlike Boutros-Gali's (1996) democratisation agenda, the Afghan context was modified to an ideal democratic system, rather than vice versa (Tadjbakhsh, 2011). Normatively speaking, the imposition of the liberal conceptualisation of accountability deprived the norm from autonomy, domestic legitimacy, power base and political determination since Western rationale was used as a baseline, rather than founding it on domestic foundations (Sikkink, 2009; Habermas, 1981). Furthermore the speed, time and scope of accountability were determined by external sources rather than by local needs supporting the ahistorical depoliticised approach of problem-solving theories

To summarise, research findings are quite consistent with the critical arguments presented in chapter one that debate the intention and legitimacy in promoting liberal peace. The study shows that the intention behind the development of accountability was to satisfy donor needs. Norm legitimacy was primarily based on the perception of international superiority, which predominantly acknowledges liberal knowledge and experience. The international community's method to 'export' accountability counteracted the official intention to increase government responsiveness by depriving the norm from organic contestation and conceptualisation. Consequently, the inability of liberal statebuilding to value domestic foundations jeopardises the power base and relations of the norm since it fails to link societal forces with political entities. In other words, donors' approach to develop accountability creates a norm outside the Afghan context embedded in political structures that suffocates the very principles they seek to establish. Moreover, the research also showed the need for a more nuanced understanding of internal and external actors since their simplification creates a binary view of statebuilding as it portrays the construction of a norm between two actors, when in reality it is a lot more complex. This is important to highlight since it reflects the literatures' approach in examining the interaction space between the 'external' and the 'local'. Without a further dissection of the actors, the literature can observe the existence of an interaction, such as in the case of Hybridity, but restricts itself in exploring its quality and depth. This will be discussed in the last section of the chapter.

This section has debated one of the three accountability characteristics. The next section will continue the exploration and discuss the relationship between the Afghan government and its citizens.

Government and Citizen Relationships

Democracies are supposed to manage conflict peacefully by addressing competing views through political processes but the field research showed that the Afghan state has yet to develop this capability (Tadjbakhsh, 2011; Egnell & Haldén, 2013). The previous chapter showed that accountability was not perceived as a citizen's right or entitlement, but as a benevolent gesture bestowed upon them by the state. This section will discuss the impact of the government-citizen relationship on the development of accountability using the same structure as the previous section: 1) Findings Deliberation, 2) Norm Development, and 3) Theoretical Implications.

Findings Deliberation

Per the liberal democratic definition of accountability provided in chapter two, accountability fundamentally relies on the horizontal power exchange between a government and its citizens through the negotiation of authority and political objectives. This usually manifests in the form of representation, elections and participation. Although the international community spent a lot of money on elections, the field research findings suggest that accountability was not promoted in association to democratic elections and citizen representation, but rather as a solution to government performance. This resulted in decorative structure that did not acknowledge citizen power, weakening citizen representation, engagement and participation. For example corruption, obscurity and inefficiency encumbered citizens' ability to access public services and to participate in policymaking. Citizens, in this context, are viewed as passive subjects of services that need to be controlled, rather than active political actors who negotiate outcomes. Although this reflects an unequal power relationship, the findings also identified a group of civil servants, particularly from the younger generation, who believe citizen power could be beneficial for effective governance if nurtured. Although this is not a new finding in academia, it shows an evolving citizen political identity in Afghanistan. Though it is still predominantly ambiguous, small advances are nevertheless significant. The research also showed that civil society's relationship with the state displayed similar characteristics to the average population, however, a bit further developed due to Kabul Process participation and consultation.

This disjointed symmetry between the population and the state is also reflected in one of the key findings that shows that the Afghan government and citizens have experienced the democratisation process at different speeds. This lack of harmonisation and unclear political roles between the two most important accountability actors has created an environment of

mistrust, weakening the democratic governance system since citizens believe the norm is promoted for political, rather than democratic purposes (Poskitt & Dufranc, 2011). Again, although Afghanistan's political structure supports citizens' role in the political sphere, it is ultimate trust that binds these two actors since it develops the confidence in the delivery of negotiated political outcomes. Trust is consequently a core ingredient in establishing power balance between the citizens and the state; however, it is sorely lacking in Afghanistan (Habermas, 1996). The accountability relationship between the population and the government is not manifested per the liberal democratic definition presented in the conceptual framework, though some advancement in recognising citizens as political actors has been made.

Furthermore, the lack of citizen power recognition is not only made by the state but also by citizens themselves. The research findings in the previous chapter showed that Afghans are aware of their accountability role, but lack vision, strategy and methodology in demanding accountability. This weakens citizens' ability to create a cohesive political identity with specified objectives. Moreover by following the power status quo and enabling the state's identity as accountability custodians, citizens not only feel disempowered but are also creating their own confinement. This brings into question the critical argumentation of the 'local' as it shows a clear limitation to their resilience. Although citizens in Afghanistan are far from helpless, the research data shows that they are also far from empowered political actors. Citizens ultimately use participation and consultation forums to express emotional grievances and look towards others, such as the parliament and enforcement institutions, to act on their behalf to generate accountability. This orientation separates citizens from the political process by transferring their political power away from them, reemphasising their role as passive recipients of accountability, rather than as enforcers. This disjointed relationship shows a deep gap between the supply and demand sides of accountability and disables the negotiation of political outcomes. Citizens have very little space or opportunity to impact national policy and have a very limited role in setting and enforcing the political agenda. Subsequently, citizens' unclear political agenda or identity negatively impacts the development of accountability as it weakens a fundamental accountability power channel.

The relationship between the Afghan government and the population is further complicated by the presence of international donors. The research showed that the need for external funding makes the Afghan state more responsible to the hand that feeds it than to the population. This is not unusual for aid dependent countries, but it redirects the government's attention along hierarchical lines to form financial accountability towards the international community. The prioritisation of donor approval thus transmits state responsiveness along vertical, rather than horizontal lines. This is very important to understand since the external involvement of political actors impacts the norm development by hijacking the political processes that stimulate citizen

power and thus redefines the conceptualisation of accountability along financial, rather than democratic lines. Furthermore, the distinction between de jure and de facto donor power creates problems since the population is unable to hold donors accountable for policy decisions as they are outside of the official political structure. Afghans' inability to hold donors accountable further weakens citizens' role in the political sphere since they are unable to access a political space that impacts their everyday lives. This shows that, although donors are keen to promote accountability in Afghanistan, they are not accountable to the population they impact, reinforcing the literature presented in chapter two.

As a result, the research findings suggest that despite the presence of horizontal accountability structures that supports the government-citizen relationship through political negotiation and contestation, the manifestation of accountability per the liberal democratic definition is absent. Citizen power is unrecognised by both accountability actors, and the lack of a clear citizen political identity and agenda negatively impacts the development of accountability in Afghanistan. The horizontal accountability relationship between citizens and the population and the stronger vertical financial relationship between donors and the state entangles accountability power flows and further tests the organic establishment of power balance and norm development. Most interestingly, the research findings once again show a disconnection between social and political action, reflected by separate democratisation experiences. As before, this gap hampers the norm development of the government-citizen relationship. Furthermore the international community has negatively impacted the relationship between government and citizens by hijacking political power and creating an inaccessible political space to the population.

The following section will continue discussing the research findings by looking at accountability's norm development.

Norm Development

Norm development for the government-citizen accountability relationship is quite confusing. On one hand, the research shows that the democratic structures that promote the circulation of power between citizens and the population have been promoted. However, these were for the most part, not strategically designed to develop accountability. Once again however, norm development rests on the structural supply side rather than in the evolving demand side. The conceptualisation of accountability becomes a bit blurry since the 'construction' of the norm does not cultivate the normative 'oughtness' of citizen power. This further illustrates the lack of strategic vision to norm development by exposing the social and political entities to different norm exposures. The work of Galtung and Tisné (2009) has documented these discrepancies in post-conflict environments and suggest that there is an 'open moment' for norm dissemination

when the country in question achieves higher levels of stability and local capacity. This time interacts however with what they call 'Late Awakening', when corruption increases and donors are increasingly showing signs of fatigue. In other words, in the first couple of years, donors are willing to invest a lot of funds, particularly around elections and civic education to create democratic legitimacy, as time passes however, donors increasingly desire to hand over to the state and redirect their focus to institution building and effective governance. Besides identifying these inconsistencies in addressing the social and political realms, the research also showed that the development of the government-citizen accountability relationship shows no utilisation of social values, indicating once again that accountability is not being promoted within the mentality of people. This prevents the norm from organically seeking legitimacy and power relations amongst local values that support answerability and enforcement.

On the other side, the lack of donor information and the inaccessible political space navigated by the international community impact the norm development of accountability by association. Since accountability partly gains its legitimacy from international approval, donor behaviour can illustrate the norm values of accountability by example. Unaccountable behaviour can give a damaging image of accountability since it helps to illustrate a contradictory conceptualisation of the norm by those who promote it. Citizens' limited role in impacting government behaviour and donor policy influence, illustrates a severely crippled accountability entity. Norm development of citizen-government relationship is however hard to assess since a lot of the statebuilding engagement addressed this issue indirectly through democratisation rather than accountability development. The fate of the norm rests thus on assumptions and democratic structures rather than strategic norm development that build accountability from both the demand and supply side. The link between social action and political power would theoretically have been particularly important in this accountability characteristic since it is a fundamental element to the norm, however it was not strategically addressed. Despite this significant crack in norm development, this is not to say there is no relationship between the Afghan state and the population, but rather the relationship has not been particularly impacted, positively, by the insertion of accountability as part of the liberal statebuilding process.

Theoretical Implications

The occurrences discussed above illustrate a linear power relationship between the Afghan government and the population, and between the state and the international community. Curiously, both of these relationships are guided by the exchange of resources for loyalty. In the case of government-citizen relationship, the population is expected to withstand government control in exchange for public services compared to the donor-government relationship where the latter is expected to implement the liberal agenda in exchange for foreign aid. In the literature, Reich (2006) describes these rapports as patron-client

relationships where the client is supposed to commitment himself to the goals and strategies of the patron. In the case of the donors-state relationship, the prioritisation of liberal peace creates local tensions and conflict since it seizes most of the government's attention and separates citizens from the political process (Ledyaev, 1997; Poskitt & Dufranc, 2011). Milliken (2005:261) additionally suggests that countries "will be pushed and pulled to conform to [... the liberal agenda a]lthough the outcome of this process is supposed to be a democratic country, there is nothing democratic about the process". According to Chesterman (2007), despite multiple studies on neo-colonialism, liberal problem-solving agents keep emphasising the temporary and benevolent nature of foreign peacebuilding missions. In the case of Afghanistan, this belief is combated since there is a widely held national resentment that donors do not act as they preach (DeYoung and Partlow, 2012; Narten, 2008). The research shows that by wielding power arbitrarily to promote the liberal peace, donors create an inaccessible political space that delegitimises accountability since the norm is largely inapplicable to them. As illustrated in chapter one, authors, such as Pouligny (2005), Chandler (1999), Barnett (2006) and Richmond (2012a), further argue that citizens in peacebuilding missions are unable to provide input and voice their concerns regarding the changes initiated by donors as they become depoliticised and are perceived to lack agency.

Additionally, the study showed that this inaccessible and unaccountable political space impacts citizens' relationship with the government since they have a *de jure* role to enforce accountability, but lack the *de facto* power applied by donors. Despite this correlation however, donors are extremely reluctant to formalise a political relationship with another state's inhabitants since it is perceived as too intrusive and bordering imperialistic (Chesterman, 2007). As discussed in chapter two, accountability in the private sector is also based on impact as private businesses are ethically obliged to incorporate it in their corporate practices due to their ability to impact citizens' lives; however, this has not been applied in the political sector, despite that donors are increasingly impacting people outside their jurisdictions (Narten, 2008). Accountability in politics is determined by the exchange of power, representation and negotiation of political goals but this has been difficult to establish at an international level since there is no global identity, international political agenda or elective body. In line with the literature presented in chapter two, an acknowledgement of donor power would officialise an accountability relationship between donors and local citizens, which at the moment, is sorely lacking despite the advances made at the High Level Forums discussed in chapter five (High Level Forum, 2011; GIRoA, 2012). This political disconnection between donors and local citizens also delegitimises accountability since the political actors who impact Afghan politics, and who promote the norm, operate outside of its reach. This inaccessible political space needs to be further researched in order to understand how the behaviour and accessibility of liberal agents impact democratic norm development.

The research findings suggest the government-citizen accountability relationship has not been established per the liberal democratic definition outlined in the conceptual framework since the norm was not developed strategically along the social and political sectors, but rather relied rather on wider democratisation reforms. In other words, there was no norm development strategy to develop accountability amongst social and political actors; instead the norm relied on the assumption that democratic structures would inevitably lead to accountability and vice versa. Although the political structure in Afghanistan supports the accountability relationship between the state and the population, lack of trust, citizen disempowerment, centralisation of power and donor involvement, weaken its implementation. The below section will elaborate on this further by discussing accountability methods.

Accountability Methods

This last accountability characteristic looks at the regulation, control and participation elements of accountability in order to understand the development methodology of answerability and enforcement. A similar structure will be applied as in the previous sections.

Findings Deliberation

As presented in the previous chapter, accountability mechanisms manifest differently across entities, institutions and regions in Afghanistan. This highlights a great variation in bureaucratic performance and government output. As Shah (2003:217) contends "new reform-types have failed to make lasting and effective impressions on recipient countries. Unresponsive, unaccountable, inefficient and ineffective bureaucracies seem impossible to change with the current tools in place". Despite the difficulties in establishing effective bureaucracies, the research findings suggest that answerability and enforcement mechanisms are present in the government but instrumentally used to advance political agendas and gain state legitimacy rather than to create accountability. Although the norm was mainly promoted through administrative structures and bureaucratic reforms, these methods were insufficient since the norm remained a benevolent gesture to the population rather than a citizen right. Consequently, despite their structural presence, accountability methods remained superficial, dysfunctional, and were unable to manifest per the liberal democratic definition due to unwavering hierarchical power flows.

The previous chapter also showed that fear and lack of knowledge, capacity, information sharing and integrity compromised the implementation of accountability methods. Furthermore impunity was safeguarded through imprecise procedures, incomplete mandates, legal and policy gaps and unclear formulation. This unaccountable environment was perpetuated by attitudes, mentality, unawareness, rent-seeking behaviour and traditional practices. This is not to say these occurrences were malevolent in nature but rather that the Afghan bureaucracy was

dominated by a status quo that was largely counterproductive to democratic objectives. Moreover these social and political realities were unaddressed by the liberal statebuilding since, a key finding, accountability was constructed within systems, rather than within people, resulting in a haphazard and inconsistent implementation at the mercy of political leadership, rather than institutionalism.

Moreover, Western donors' preference of NPM reforms guided the norm development of accountability along result-oriented and measurable standards and did not address social norm embedment amongst those individuals who were supposed to implement accountability. As discussed in chapter two, NPM's emphasis on bureaucratic structures, managerialism, rules and professionalism compromised the conceptualisation of accountability by prioritising hierarchical power structures to political process and by overshadowing the norm's political role with financial compliance. Additionally, the NPM approach failed to connect the political sector with the wider Afghan society and did not create an opportunity for norm contestation. This is a consistent research finding and further reinforces the gap and disconnection between social forces and political action in liberal statebuilding. Further, accountability methods not only reinforced hierarchical authority lines through their structural approach, but they also weakened norm contestation in the political process, essential for norm legitimacy. Moreover, donors' preference of technical and procedure changes were driven by outputs and financial accountancy, which are beneficial for audit purposes, but as Valters (2014:1) suggests, "the logic framework (logframe) approach – rarely allow the flexibility to analyse the messy social processes that these interventions are dealing with". Also, accountability policies were frequently developed in English and assembled in Kabul, marginalising segments of the population, favouring the elite and reflecting primarily the view of the privileged. The research findings, therefore, bring into question donors' reliance on technocracy and its ability to standardise government action since accountability methods in Afghanistan are inconsistently, superficially and poorly implemented.

Norm Development

The development of accountability methods is consequently important for norm development as norms are, by definition, hosted within an individual's personal will based on social consensus and cannot be forced upon someone unless their own value system permits it (Habermas, 1996; 1987; 1996). Therefore, compliance to mechanisms rely on norm emergence as otherwise structures remain superficial. However, despite this essential embedment, the research findings presented in the previous chapter suggest a discrepancy between the Afghan population and the government in their prioritisation and association to accountability. For example, citizens show a higher connotation to accountability amidst Jirgas and perceive the parliament as a key answerability mechanism to generate accountability. The government, on

the other hand, prioritises administrative reform whilst giving some weight to subnational representation. These two prioritisations show a heavy emphasis on structural development parallel to some governance guidelines to support representation and participation. Whilst all of these components are needed to develop accountability, they show a lack of harmonisation and long-term planning since Afghan policies do not provide a transition plan to develop a cohesive norm development agenda.

This statebuilding approach shows that accountability was primarily 'constructed' at the central state and failed to address political realities, such as fear, nepotism and work ethic, to create answerability and enforcement mechanism. This suggests that accountability was developed on top of existing Afghan structures in a perceived empty space. Political realities and behaviour that were perceived as incompatible with accountability were marginalised since they were often identified as problems for accountability to solve rather than building blocks that needed to be contested for norm development. Whilst this might make sense in the liberal rationale, this approach deprived Afghanistan from building norm legitimacy and supporting power relations for accountability within existing realities, rather than rely on external ideological preferences. Interestingly enough, the research findings suggest that the distance between political realities and liberal objectives appear further for expatriates than to Afghans. As illustrated by the previous chapter, cultural relativity struck a higher cord amongst expats than amongst the local population.

Moreover, consistent with the critical literature presented in chapter one, liberal statebuilding not only failed to recognise and value the political environment in which it was inserted, but it was also unsuccessful in dealing with the individuals, both political and social, who were supposed to develop accountability. This neglect reduced norm contestation from dialogue and interpretation to tactical concession via isomorphic mimicry; "the ability of organisations to sustain legitimacy through the imitation of the forms of modern institutions but without functionality", is a rather common phenomenon in statebuilding (Pritchett *et al*, 2012:9). Furthermore, the international community's lenient stand to institutional mimicry by not withdrawing funding or by enforcing its 'warnings', additionally suggests that it prioritises diplomatic and political stability over norm legitimacy (Dix *et al*, 2012; Andrews *et al*, 2013). Consequently accountability methods manifested only through structural application and mimicry without norm manifestation. Liberal statebuilding was unable to engage with social and political realities and crippled local ownership by removing local norm contestation (Chandler, 2010a; Tadjbakhsh, 2011). This deprived accountability from building a political nest from where it could cultivate its emergence. Brikerhoff and Johnson (2008) argue that state formation cannot occur without social roots; however, as observed by the research findings, the

development of accountability was not supported by a methodology that encouraged social empowerment for political action.

Theoretical Implications

The method or approach to construct a statebuilding element says either a lot about the objective of the action or the competence of those who do it. As the previous subsection revealed, the development of accountability in Afghanistan was conducted at a structural level resulting in a shallow and weak norm manifestation. This brings into question the intention behind liberal norm exportation, a subject heavily discussed in academic debate. David Chandler (1999; 2006) questions the liberal and benevolent nature of international interventions and suggests instead that these are used to advance Western interests. Fukuyama (2004:98) complements and claims the "international imperium may be a well-meaning one based on human rights and democracy, but it was an imperium nonetheless and set a precedent for the surrender of sovereignty to governance by international agencies".

Whether well intended or not, liberal justification for international intervention is based on the perception of state failure or collapse (Schwarz, 2005). Authors, such as Richmond (2010a) and Chandler (2008), suggest that state fragility is not addressed by liberal forces due to their compassionate composition but rather because they are perceived to threaten Western values. As previously mentioned, non-liberal societies are these cases perceived as 'less' than the West where the local population is perceived as primitive, helpless and dysfunctional (Donais, 2009; Björkdahl & Höglund, 2013; Barnett, 2006; Sending, 2009, Chandler, 1999; Richmond, 2012b). Under such a paradigm, liberal values are seen as superior to local approaches and "a colonial logic of development [is created] that reduces war-torn societies to states that have fallen from the ladder of human progress and need a cure of 'liberal statebuilding' to get back on track" (Tadjbakhsh, 2011:57). This simplified logic clearly identifies both the problem, state failure, and the solution, statebuilding.

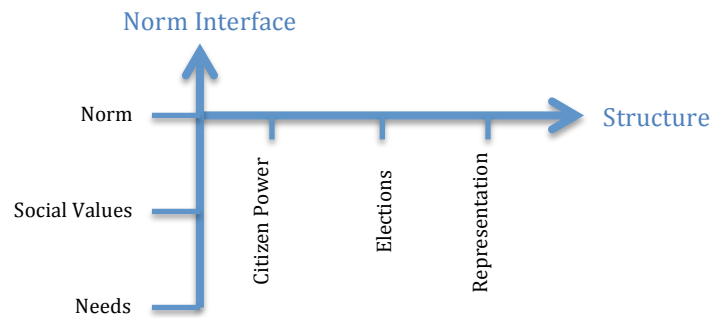
In the case of Afghanistan, the data shows that the liberal problem-solving approach that adopts top-down and institutional methods has some success in creating a democratic infrastructure but fails to generate ideological values; resulting in a slight change of behaviour without norm foundations (Donais, 2009; Joshi *et al*, 2014). This problem-solution approach also removes all external responsibility from statebuilding as internationals 'only' provide guidance whilst local counterparts are perceived more as part of the problem than the solution (Ryerson, 2012; Turcan, 2011; Richmond, 2010). Afghan knowledge and experience is thus treated as threatening to liberal values and purposefully ignored as they are seen to predate liberal statebuilding (Richmond, 2009b; 2012b; Brinkerhoff, 2007; Chabal, 1994; Chandler, 2008; Tadjbakhsh, 2011; Kubicek, 1998). The research shows however that norm development

requires a social and political foundation in Afghan realities, rather than an artificial infrastructure exterior to the Afghan context. Sidestepping Afghan knowledge and practices creates a liberal statebuilding 'solution' detached from society. Although this might structurally create a state that fits within the international governance system, it does not permit for local political emancipation and norm contestation, key for self-empowerment and ownership.

The Good Enough Governance literature suggests this should be addressed by lowering the expectations and by adapting liberal interventions to local realities (Carothers, 1997). This entails "a more nuanced understanding of the evolution of institutions and government capabilities' and 'be explicit about trade-offs and priorities in a world in which all good things cannot be pursued at once" (Grindle in Evans, 2012:101). In other words, statebuilding should start at the development stage of the hosting country rather than squeeze centuries' worth of institutional evolution in a few years (Evans, 2012; Booth, 2011; Grindle, 2007). Good Enough Governance suggests that international interventions should analyse the strengths and weaknesses of hosting states and prioritise the institutional changes required to generate the minimal conditions for political and economic development (Shah, 2003; Grindle, 2004; 2007; Carothers, 2007). The research findings advise however that less of the same will not create better results as it is not the quantity that primarily weakens norm development, but the method. Scaling down the liberal expectations just perpetuates the patronising view of the 'local' and domestic knowledge and experiences. The adaptation of a norm development lens suggests a shift in the statebuilding approach from structure, technological oriented, to norm interface, human oriented.

The author, therefore, would like to suggest the adoption of the below graph as a contribution to the Good Enough Governance debate. In the horizontal line, the graph shows the logic in constructing accountability along a structural lens. For example, in order to acquire democratic representation and legitimacy, liberal statebuilding claims that elections need to take place to channel citizen power. However as observed by the research findings, structural adjustments do not necessarily result in norm behaviour. Consequently, to reduce the conditions from right-to-left, as suggested by the Good Enough Governance debate, would keep statebuilding in the 'structural business' without introducing the norm within the people that ought to maintain it.

Graph 15: Statebuilding Method Prioritisation



In order to integrate accountability within the behaviour of political and social actors, the graph suggests adopting an emancipatory statebuilding method to create norm interfaces. The vertical axes of the graph shows an example of these interfaces needed to create norm *conditions*, rather than the output itself. In other words, instead of constructing accountability, statebuilding can generate conditions that address social needs and values to create norm manifestation. This would allow hosting countries to naturally evolve their institutions and organically develop their own notion of accountability, rather than adopting a Western image. Moreover, whilst structural changes do not necessarily change power flows, as heavily observed in the research, norm evolution has the capacity to impact power structures in society through norm contestation. This does not suggest that the structural approach should be abandoned as certain institutional developments can only occur through procedural and technical processes, such as Public Financial Management, but rather that a more emancipatory approach should be adopted to encourage the values that lead to democratisation. This normative lens is messier than a sterile structural approach but has the potential to render deeper results. This will be discussed further in the next section.

The need for a more people-centric approach is not alien; authors, such as Chesterman (2007) and Mac Ginty (2010), have argued that a transformation in governance requires a change in mentality as much as in politics. Institutional approaches have repeatedly proven insufficient in generating normative substance without the collaboration and fortitude of local counterparts (Pietz & Von Carlowitz, 2007; Reich, 2006; Donais, 2009). Moreover, the prioritisation of bureaucratic effectiveness and institutional structures identifies democracy as the end goal of statebuilding rather than a fundamental process to it and emphasises on the scope, rather than the strength of the state (Coyne, 2004; Tadjbakhsh, 2011; Santiso, 2002). Additionally this structural methodology deprives the existence of hybridity and local solutions as 'failing liberal practices' are blamed on local counterparts rather than being perceived as incompatible approaches to domestic issues (Richmond, 2012b; Darby & Mac Ginty, 2008). Similar to Booth (2009:3), the thesis' research heavily suggests that political practices and "institutions work better when they build on what exists, make use of indigenous institutional creativity or are

otherwise rooted in their socio-cultural context. They work badly when they rely heavily on the implementation, without major modification, of models that have worked well in other times and places”.

Scholars, such as Boege and Clements, argue that local forms need to be part of political organisations to sustain peace and democratisation since domestic legacies tend to persist and impact the current political dynamics in a hybridised fashion (Egnell & Haldén, 2013; Richmond, 2010). Ultimately liberal statebuilding is “a balancing act between external normative intervention and local agency rooted in the norms and ideas of the agents themselves” (Tadjbakhsh, 2011:67). However, this was not really observed in the thesis’ research since social and political initiatives to develop accountability in Afghanistan did primarily not interact. The local solutions that incorporated elements of accountability were more representative of local practices than norm adaptation. Hybrid forms of accountability were not observed, neither was ownership. This is an important research finding as it reinforces the literature’s suggestion that liberal statebuilding operates in a parallel space, rather than as part of existing systems. Moreover, according to Critical Peace Studies, ownership in liberal statebuilding revolves more around the compliance to ‘right’ liberal solutions rather than the freedom to chose an independent socio-political path (Richmond, 2012a; Reich, 2006; Sharbatke-Church, 2011; Donais, 2009). Hosting states, in this case, are treated more as contractual partners with obligations, rather than beneficiaries of aid with rights entitlement (Hehir & Robinson, 2007; Tadjbakhsh, 2011).

To summarise, the research findings are quite consistent and suggest that top-down problem-solving methods are able to some extent to create a democratic infrastructure that arguably supports the notion of ‘negative peace’. The norm essence, of accountability in this case, is however harder to manifest as this approach disconnects the social and political sectors and disables the domestic foundations needed for norm development. Moreover, the Good Enough Governance’s argument to minimise statebuilding expectations is challenged since doing less of the same would arguably generate similar structures without norm behaviour. Therefore the author suggests an emancipatory approach that incorporates norm interfaces to generate democratic conditions instead of treating democracy as an outcome, rather than a process, of statebuilding. This would allow for local ownership, domestic norm adaptation and hybridity, elements that are currently lacking in the development of accountability in Afghanistan.

This chapter has, thus far, deliberated on the research findings, commented on norm development and discussed the theoretical implications of the three accountability characteristics that make up the thesis’ conceptual framework. It has also answered the three research questions guiding the research and concluded that accountability did not manifest in

Afghanistan per the liberal democratic definition. It also showed that social and political realities in Afghanistan heavily impact the development of accountability, both in a negative and in a positive way, but they are not incorporated by the liberal statebuilding, despite their crucial role in norm development. Additionally the chapter also concluded that the international community had a positive impact on accountability by introducing the norm and promoting its structures, as well as a negative influence by impacting Afghan policies from an inaccessible and unaccountable space.

The research findings are quite consistent with the critiques of Critical Peace Studies and show that accountability primarily based its norm legitimacy, power relations and methods on liberal knowledge, rather than domestic experiences. This 'constructed' accountability in an artificial institutional vacuum that failed to create a political nest for accountability since the norm was not exposed to domestic politics, social contestation and local ownership. Accountability was not strategically prioritised as part of the statebuilding process to strengthen the democratic relationship between the state and citizens, but was rather resorted, at an ad hoc basis, as a potential solution to poor government performance. This resulted in a very uneven, disjointed and disharmonised statebuilding experience for social and political actors. Moreover, due to a weak vision and strategy, issues such as trust, fear, mentality and empowerment went unaddressed by the liberal statebuilding process, despite their heavy normative influence.

Norm Discussion

Having discussed the three accountability characteristics in the conceptual framework: power relations, government-citizen relationship and accountability methods, this last section will apply Finnemore and Sikkink's Norm Life Cycle to analyse the research findings. This section is arguably the most interesting component of the thesis since it suggests a new approach to view and analyse a statebuilding component. The text is divided into two parts. Part one will discuss the advantages of using a norm development lens whilst part two will dive deeper into its analytical properties and suggest a norm development approach to unpack hybrid formations.

Norm Lens

Habermas (1981; 1996) argues that the transformation of political values and attitudes is a result of a socially accepted will formation based on mutual understanding of a norm. The "integration of a highly complex society cannot be carried out in a systematic-paternalistic fashion, that is, in a manner that bypasses the communicative power of the public of citizens" (Habermas, 1996:352). Yet, this is something largely neglected by liberal statebuilding as it is easier to construct systems, rather than alter the mentality of people. Whilst behaviour can be modified to some extent through systematic changes, to ignore the importance of norm development would deprive democratisation of political legitimacy and fundamental power

relations. An enforced system exercises force to create institutionalisation whilst norm development uses soft power, in the form of knowledge and communication, to create norm validity, legitimacy, authority and a sustainable power base. Furthermore it is essential to remember that young institutions are heavily influenced by personalities and that bypassing the human element is detaching the essence that vitalises the system.

Neglecting the deconstruction and reformation of domestic norms leads to unsustainable and fragile statebuilding outcomes since traditional power and governance patterns have a way to persist external interventions (Heydemann, 2006; Cliffe & Luckham, 1999). Government institutions tend to be negotiated by local actors and developed out of norm contestation; sidestepping this phase deprives the population from overcoming their own struggles and from developing mediation mechanisms required to establish a democratic state (Hehir & Robinson, 2007; Richmond, 2010). Ultimately, "normative contestation is in large part what politics is all about" (Coicaud & Finnemore, 1996b:342). Politics needs debate, negotiation and determination to create legitimacy. That is not to say that institutionalisation is not important, or that structural and technocratic solutions are apolitical, but rather that people's mentality and attitude are crucial to sustain a democratic culture (Burris, 1993; Sullivan & Transue, 1999; Almond & Verba, 1963; Pye & Verba, 1965). Therefore it is important for academic research to not only observe the importance of norms in statebuilding but also to understand how these develop and influence the local political culture.

In the case of Afghanistan, the research clearly shows that accountability was not developed equally, harmoniously or strategically in the political and social sectors. In order to unpack this further, Finnemore and Sikkink's Norm Life Cycle, presented in chapter one, will be applied to the research findings. In stage one, *Emergence*, Finnemore and Sikkink suggest that norms surface through persuasion and use existing structures to create a social power base and legitimacy. As observed in the previous chapters, accountability was introduced in Afghanistan through donor encouragement and policy making. This largely took place through inducement, rather than persuasion. Persuasion would have required the Afghan government to believe in the liberal peace argument through rationale and although there are civil servants who agree, the motive behind norm adaptation was based on financial needs, rather than ideological intentions. This clearly goes against the constructivist belief underlying Finnemore and Sikkink's work, and illustrates a realist setting in which agents chose to adapt *and export* accountability to advance their own interests. Power and economic interests illustrate at this stage a very political, rather than normative, process to accountability.

During this initial phase of norm development, validity is theoretically created through social approval. It is the link between social forces and state institutions that generate political action,

a power base for accountability and norm legitimacy (Habermas, 1996; Merquior, 1980). Moreover there needs to be a collective understanding of the norm's conceptualisation in order for citizens to self-police themselves to normative standards. This however is sorely missing in Afghanistan since there is no agreed conceptualisation of accountability between, and amidst, social and political actors. Where the former orients itself by social structures, the latter takes primarily a utilitarian position. Moreover the interaction between both sectors is fragile, highlighting the norm's weakness and superficiality in the Afghan context. Although the social values of community governance systems resonate with accountability, these have not been used as part of the liberal statebuilding or norm development. Consequently, the 'match' between accountability and domestic institutions, local interests and cultural values remain unaddressed (Cortell & Davis, 2000). This is particularly concerning since the identity and motivation behind norm development are crucial for its evolution. This highlights a deep crack in the norm's foundation jeopardising not only its evolution but also its sustainability.

Nevertheless, accountability has gained presence in political rhetoric due to the Kabul Process and Afghan media and civil society. Although accountability stands on shaky legs due to the lack of domestic endorsement, this opens the space for political action to promote accountability. Risse (1999:532) calls it Argumentative Self-Entrapment; it is "whereby oppressive states start 'talking the talk' for purely instrumental reasons but then are increasingly forced to justify their behaviour in front of international and domestic audiences until they are engaged in a true dialogue with their critics". This self-entrapment illustrates the power of discourse and of the international community since it through their 'encouragement' that donors were able to impact Afghan structures to incorporate the norm. Nonetheless it also highlights the boundaries of international power since there is no normative behaviour that links the political and social sectors to create a mutually understood concept of accountability. This will be discussed in the next Norm Cycle phase.

In Finnemore and Sikkink's second stage, *acceptance*, norms are endorsed through socialisation and resonate widely with social values. In order for socialisation to take place, norms need to contest the domestic political culture in order to deconstruct and recreate a norm understanding through local agency. Within the same environment, norms, similar to cells, tend to duplicate the inherited information and will only change if exposed to a different 'host' (Finnemore, 1996b; Florini, 1996). In the case of liberal statebuilding this is very important since political emancipation can only occur through political determination. If a liberal norm is not socially contested, but inserted into an artificial environment, norms will be disconnected from the hosting environment and will be unable to impact political determination. This was the case for accountability in Afghanistan since the norm was introduced in government structures detached from social and political realities.

Though institutionalism might have been able to describe in depth the influences and context behind institutional performance, like isomorphic mimicry, this thesis aimed to go beyond the mere illustration of norm existence, or not, and identify the composition of norm development. For example, without norm contestation, accountability is not able to negotiate issues of trust, participation and collaboration, thus remains shallow in the political system. Whilst this highlights, once again, donors' power to impact government behaviour to create accountability structures, it also highlights the government's agency to resist external demands by generating institutional mimicry without embracing normative changes. Norm theory suggests that it is the process that determines the depth of norm immersion; however in the case of Afghanistan, the research clearly shows that the norm was developed based on its output and destination (Tannenwald, 1999). This liberal prioritisation overlooked the need for norm contestation and deprived accountability from contributing to political determination. Moreover, norm development of accountability should theoretically experience large doses of citizen power, which were considerably weak in the statebuilding process. The disjointed power and political interaction shows that accountability has not reached a level of acceptance in Afghanistan per Finnemore and Sikkink's Norm Life Cycle.

In stage three, *internalisation*, norms are legalised and part of institutional systems. Interestingly, in the case of Afghanistan, accountability does make part of Afghan legislation and policies, but curiously, does not display a habitual behaviour pattern. This highlights the artificiality of accountability since it clearly demonstrates a lack of organic growth. Consequently, accountability has been inserted to create what accountability *should* entail, i.e. liberal objectives, rather than allow the norm to have an organic evolution based on Afghan social and political realities (Florini, 1996). Norms tend to compete with existing structures, behaviour and values and only the fittest survive but in the case of accountability, the norm has not failed to spread across the social and political sectors and failed to develop in any great depth in its areas of insertion, i.e. government structures. This clearly shows a disconnection between institutionalisation and political determination.

Based on Finnemore and Sikkink's Norm Life Cycle, accountability, despite displaying a confused identity, is present in Afghanistan due to institutional mimicry and its existence in political rhetoric. Although the norm is at the initial stage of the Norm Life Cycle, it is struggling to fully emerge due to the ruptured link between the political and social sector. Without norm contestation, accountability cannot redistribute power, connect supply and demand, and establish a collective understanding of its meaning. From this perspective, a statebuilding endeavour that aims to establish a democratic norm without the incorporation of social forces in political action and norm immersion is doomed to fail before it starts.

Thus, accountability has partly emerged disjointedly and is present in political structures but has not reached acceptance. This inconsistent manifestation through the life cycle stages illustrates an artificially manufactured norm where sequences of its existence have been inserted by force. The latter referring to non-organic growth imposed by internal and external power and economic self-interests. Reviewing the development of accountability through Finnemore and Sikkink's Norm Life Cycle has had its advantages and challenges. Unlike other theoretical frameworks, like institutionalism and political-economic analysis, that would have rejected the existence of accountability in Afghanistan, a norm development lens has allowed its artificial nature to surface by focusing on the process rather than the outcome of norm manifestation. Another advantage of the theoretical lens is that accountability was not only analysed based on its behaviour, but also the agents' identities and their communication and interaction. These advantages provides analytical and policy opportunities that will be discussed at the end of this chapter and in the thesis' conclusion.

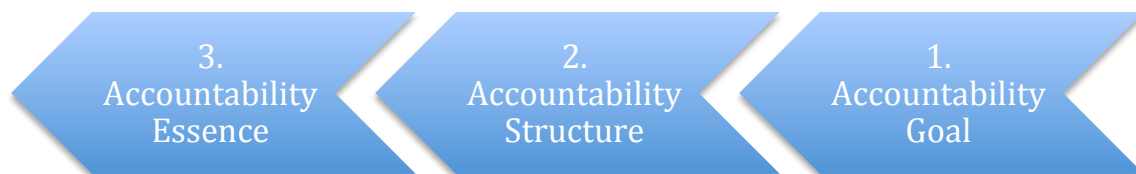
The challenges have however also been many due to the Norm Life Cycle's narrow theoretical scope. The foundation for the theoretical framework is based on a constructivist perspective, which was often found lacking since it only focused on how accountability emerged rather than on why. In this case, the constellation of actors was deemed static, which the data has consistently disproved since donors, the afghan elite, international agencies, and citizens, to mention a few actors, have illustrated fluctuating positions at different times and stages of the statebuilding process. Moreover the model only looks at what *ought* to develop, i.e. a pre-defined liberal definition of accountability, and does not account for differences in manifestation or conceptualisation. This gives a very narrow trajectory in which norm adapters can either accept or reject the norm without having the opportunity of redefining it. Moreover norms are constantly evolving and the Norm Life Cycle does not give the flexibility for norm mutation and dynamic institutional settings, in which actors can have multiple roles in shaping accountability. Furthermore, this simple model does not provide analytical space for undesirable norm developments. However one of the biggest weaknesses of this theoretical framework is its' unidirectional causal relationship between the life stages that describes the process without explaining the *changes* that occur in norm development. The thesis will provide some recommendations on how to expand this theoretical framework a bit later in the chapter but will now continue discussing the development of accountability in Afghanistan.

Normative Intention

The poor track record on democratic norm development raises the question as to *why* liberal statebuilding choses a more structural and technocratic approach to develop accountability in Afghanistan. Earlier in the thesis, liberal actors' preference of a top-down, problem-solving and institutional methodology was discussed. This highlighted the reliance on western knowledge

and dismissal of local experiences. In the case of accountability, it is no different. Accountability in the west has been developed since the 18th century and has been sophisticated and documented throughout the years. To the current statebuilding generation, accountability appears thus as a solid political practice that is internationally recognised and politically legit. The visualisation of what accountability *ought* to mean is therefore clear, at least from a liberal perspective. Due to accountability's clear political objective, statebuilding appears to work backwards, from goal to essence, as illustrated in the below picture.

Figure 2: Liberal Statebuilders' Trajectory

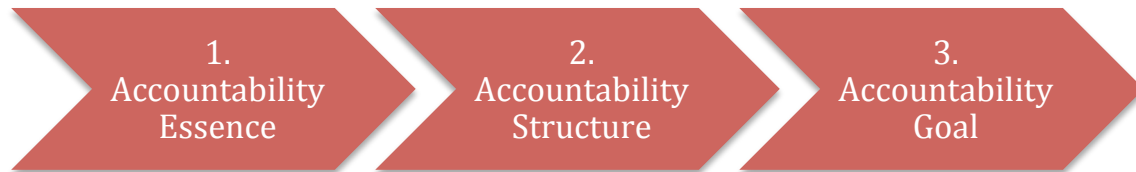


In other words, because the objective and conceptualisation of the norm is so clear, the 'construction' of accountability focuses on the means and methods required to build it, i.e. structure. The prioritisation from Goal to Essence is a top-down approach that assumes there is a systematic vacuum that can only work if the right structures are provided. This not only prioritises the destination above the process in creating democratic values but it also fails to account for the surrounding environment and puts a premature load on existing local structures. This kind of vision and logic is incapable of adjusting to social norms and practices outside of the liberal structure since they are not part of the 'targeted' area of intervention, i.e. the systematic vacuum. In the case of Afghanistan, the norms compatible with accountability have been sustained through traditional practices, passed from one generation to another primarily through oral accounts. In Afghanistan, there are no specific records that provide a social guideline for accountability, nor a cohesive and harmonised policy body; therefore the association to accountability originates primarily from validity and legitimacy rather than from objective.

Since Afghan actors do not have as clear of a picture of accountability, as part of the political sector, as liberal statebuilders, their orientation to the norm is reversed. As illustrated by the picture below, Afghans primarily interact with the meaning of accountability to clarify what it needs to achieve. If the goal had not been set, as observed earlier in the third stage of Finnemore and Sikkink's Norm Life Cycle, Afghanistan could develop accountability and create social unity based on their own standards. Liberal actors might argue that these standards are insufficient to achieve democratic status, and whilst that is a possibility, this prioritises process over outcome and alleviates external donors from being responsible for the statebuilding process of another nation. Furthermore, if liberal statebuilding were to focus on norm

conditions, as elaborated earlier in the chapter, it would have an influence over the process without determining the destination.

Figure 3: Domestic Statebuilders' Trajectory



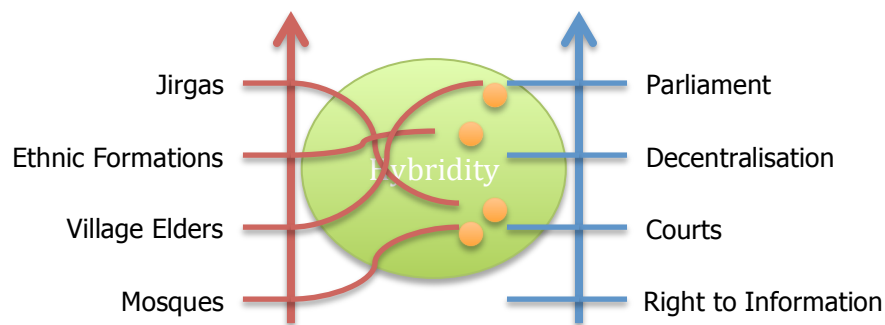
If the process is ignored and statebuilding fails to take into account social norms, values and structures, norm development cannot only be unsuccessful, but also harmful, as democratic norms might accidentally merge with local customs. On one side, since external interventions rest on domestic structures, they can put pressure on existing configurations to perform according to liberal expectations. However since these are not designed or equipped for that purpose, they can collapse and unintentionally damage the legitimacy, not only of the external element, but also of the traditional structure that supports it and, subsequently, damage the organic tissue in its demise (Kelsall, 2008; Pritchett *et al*, 2012). On the other hand, external interventions can also be used for counterproductive practices. For example, accountability structures of oversight can be used to hide patronage practices whilst superficially adhering to donor conditionality. This not only creates additional barriers to democratisation but it also delegitimises the statebuilding process. Consequently, a more delicate statebuilding approach that interacts with the process of norm development can have many advantages; this will be discussed further in the next section.

Analytical Contribution

The thesis' research has illustrated that statebuilding actors might understand and relate differently to change and norm development (Valters, 2014). Although the research clearly illustrates an inconsistent statebuilding process and a weak emergence of accountability, a more nuanced understanding of the interaction between local and external norms would be beneficial, not only for analysis, but also for implementation purposes. While accountability in Afghanistan is at such an initial stage of emergence that no hybrid versions have yet manifested, it is important to understand its potential development. In the below picture, liberal structures are illustrated on the right while Afghan social mechanisms are listed on the left. The hybrid space in-between shows different ways these two diverse systems could potentially mix and the orange circles represent the potential normative links. Although hybridity is often presented in the academic literature as neutral, field experience shows, as discussed above, that some formations might be good for democratisation whilst others might cause harm. Some scholars, like Sabaratnam (2013) and, Nadarajah and Rampton (2015), argue that hybridity in itself is framed along liberal values and uses another framework of power and knowledge to

align local practices to the liberal agenda. Arguably this carries some veracity as hybridity describes the mergence between a local context and an external component, an occurrence observable across history, but articulates it from a liberal perspective. Though it advocates for local empathy and empowerment, it nevertheless portrays a binary view of the 'external' and the 'local', thus reproducing the liberal agenda in its own way. Whether one agrees with the neutrality of hybridity or not, it is incontestable that an interaction occurs between a local population and external norm actors when exporting accountability in Afghanistan. Thus, the question is not whether interaction takes place but rather how to interpret that space. Consequently the author would argue that there is a need to understand the depth, quality, and risk of collapse, of hybrid formations, or norm development, in order to understand the space in between better.

Figure 4: Normative links in Hybrid Formations



Therefore, the author would like to suggest that a norm development analysis in statebuilding could provide a wider understanding of the actual immersion and appearance of liberal norms in domestic societies. This can be useful as it unpacks the method of norm dissemination, enforcement and manifestation, and provides a better picture of the relationship between democratic institutionalisation and political determination (Moravcsik, 1995). As its contribution to Liberal Peace studies, a norm development analysis framework based on three criteria is suggested. The first criterion explores *relationships of power* by unpacking the nature of norm engagement between external and local actors. This includes the use of persuasion, inducement, force, sanctions and co-optation to understand the exchange of power and resilience. This would provide a better understanding into the willingness or reluctance of local stakeholders to manifest and enforce external norms. The second criterion is the *exchange of knowledge*, which focuses on the type of information, knowledge and experiences external and internal actors interchange. The incorporation and collaboration, or lack thereof, to create a joint vision for norm development helps to explore the potential for norm contestation or the prioritisation gaps that prevent socialisation.

The third and last criterion suggested is *method of interaction*. This looks at the method of norm dissemination and the sectors involved. It particularly emphasises the links between

institutional structures and political action based on social roots. This helps to identify the areas of interaction between external norm requisites and internal practices, values and structures. It also helps to quickly identify the actors involved, or circumvented, in the norm development process and their level of participation. This alternative norm development analysis framework helps to create a deeper understanding of the multiple statebuilding actors and their relationship to each other as 'local' and 'external' would have to be broken down. It also helps identify the areas in which external and internal objectives intertwine or diverge from each other and how they interact, resulting in a more detail study of the formation of 'external' norms and/or hybridity. This alternative methodology contributes, hopefully, to a more nuanced statebuilding analysis that recognises the complexities of liberal missions. The policy implications of this will be elaborated in the following chapter.

This section has, thus far, argued that a structural approach to statebuilding is insufficient as it neglects to account for the human elements that impact political action and determination. The prioritisation of a democratic outcome has belittled the importance of norm development in the statebuilding process and hindered local actors from norm contestation and ownership. In the case of accountability, due to the above reasons, the norm has barely emerged in Afghanistan and primarily struggles to manifest due to the disconnection between social forces and political action and due to the absence of norm contestation. In order to better understand the emergence of democratic norms in non-liberal societies, a norm development analytical framework was suggested to further explore the power, knowledge and methods exercised by local and external actors in norm development. This would hopefully provide a more nuanced image of how norms become localised and/or form hybrid formations.

Conclusion

This chapter has tried to bring all the elements together, unpack the research findings along the conceptual framework and analyse the norm development of accountability using Finnemore and Sikkink's Norm Life Cycle. The research findings show repetitive themes and illustrate that accountability in Afghanistan was introduced through a structural approach that lacked long-term vision and a cohesive strategy. Therefore, the prioritisation of accountability is weak and has rendered very poor results due to a very uneven and disjointed statebuilding approach. According to the Norm Life Cycle, accountability is at the initial stage of emergence and has not succeeded to be accepted, despite the presence of government structures that support the norm. This highlights the artificial presence of accountability since an organic norm evolution is impossible without socialisation. Norm contestation was absent due to a disconnection between social forces and political action, prioritisation of democracy as an outcome rather than as a process and marginalisation of local practices, values and priorities.

Moreover, the chapter also answered the below research questions:

Has accountability in Afghanistan manifested per the liberal democratic definition?

None of the three accountability characteristics manifested according to the liberal democratic definition. Accountability Power Relations and legitimacy for example did not develop due to the presence of unofficial power flows, patronage networks and external influence. These redirected answerability and enforcement away from citizens to hierarchical 'elite' political actors. In the case of the relationship between the government and citizens, political negotiation and determination is absent despite the presence of answerability and enforcement structures that ought to create the norm behaviour. Though accountability methods exist to ensure participation, representation, control and regulation, these are often superficial and fail to manifest according to the liberal democratic definition.

How have the social and political realities in Afghanistan impacted the creation of accountability?

The research findings showed that the political and social realities heavily influenced the development of accountability. For example, patronage, rent seeking behaviour and weak institutionalism impact accountability's legitimacy by disabling the norm from obtaining a political nest in the Afghan government. On a positive tone, social values embedded in community governance systems, to a large extent, support accountability but citizens themselves sabotages their own political role and participation by belittling their own power. The most concerning finding of all is that these blockages and opportunities are completely neglected by the liberal statebuilding since accountability is not constructed within people but within sterile systems. Without the participation of social and political actors, accountability cannot be contested and social action cannot be used for political determination. Consequently, although heavily influenced by Afghan realities, social and political dynamics are not included in the development of accountability.

How has the presence of international donors impacted the development of accountability in Afghanistan?

International actors have both a positive and negative impact on the development of accountability. Although the international community creates an external legitimacy for accountability, donors' de facto unaccountability delegitimises the norm and confuses the conceptualisation of it. Consequently although donors are primarily responsible for promoting accountability structures, they are also hijacking political power away from citizens and redirecting accountability along financial, rather than democratic, lines. This not only damages the government-citizen relationship, but the preference of NPM reforms also weaken answerability and enforcement mechanisms since it detaches accountability from the political processes that generate its legitimacy and power base.

Therefore, the research findings were quite consistent with the critical arguments of Critical Peace Studies regarding the depreciation of local knowledge, perception of the 'local', prioritisation of external needs, and superiority of western experiences and methods. This statebuilding method has removed the human element from politics and the research suggests that doing less of the same, as argued by the Good Enough Governance debate, would not generate the normative behaviour to operationalize the democratic structures created under liberal statebuilding. It is suggested to shift the problem-solving approach from structure and technocracy to an emancipatory avenue where normative conditions would redirect statebuilding's focus from the outcome to the process and allow for local ownership and norm adaptation. This is one of the main contributions of this thesis.

From a norm development perspective, accountability was not developed in Afghanistan in a particularly insightful way. The norm was externally promoted and inserted primarily through Afghan policies without negotiation, contestation or Afghanisation. There was no attempt to interact with local values or structure, and accountability characteristics, such as the citizen-government relationship, were at times built indirectly through democratisation efforts rather than norm development. This and the international community's standardised and measurable methodology show that accountability was never treated as a norm, but rather as a solution to government inefficiency. This resulted in a very superficial and uneven 'construction' of accountability since it did not rest on any social roots.

The adaption of a norm development lens can, however, be useful both for implementation and analytical purposes. However since Finnemore and Sikkink's Norm Life Cycle poses many analytical challenges due to its unidirectional and static process, the second contribution of this thesis suggests a norm development analytical framework that examines the relationships of power, exchange of knowledge and method of interaction between local and external actors in order to understand their points of interaction in norm development. This can provide a more nuanced understanding of the insertion of liberal norms in foreign hosting environments, not only by exploring the depth and quality of the interaction, but also by breaking down the 'external' and 'local'. Ultimately, a more sophisticated norm development approach can result in better norm manifestation that allows states to develop at their own pace and prioritise process over outcome.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this thesis was to understand the kind of accountability that manifested in Afghanistan during the liberal statebuilding effort between 2001 and 2013. Though the thesis underwent an interesting journey in exploring the development and prioritisation of accountability in a post-conflict environment, the takeaway also lies in the wider implications of the research findings. As mentioned at the beginning of this thesis, the motivation for the research was based on the poor statebuilding results generated after considerable investment into unstable and potentially threatening countries. Examples of these are the continuous democratisation efforts in Iraq, Pakistan, and the Democratic Republic of Congo. Despite decades of financial, human and diplomatic investment into these countries, they are still large aid recipients and considered, at best, a little bit better than full authoritarian regimes (EIU, 2014).

Subsequently by using accountability and the thesis' findings as a baseline, this concluding chapter will slightly shift the focus from accountability to democratisation as the ideological promotion and advancement of democracy across the world has generated intensive debates, negotiations and fund transfers. This chapter will suggest that liberal statebuilding needs to let go, to a certain extent, of control and power to allow democratisation to merge with local socio-political structures through a more emancipatory process. This will be done to understand the potential applicability of the thesis' findings in other contexts. The chapter is divided into three sections. Section one will summarise the thesis. Section two will discuss the wider implication to democratisation. Section three will conclude with some recommendations.

Thesis Outcome

The previous chapter discussed the development of accountability in Afghanistan extensively so this section will only provide a brief summary. This study combined literature from peacebuilding, normative theories and accountability, and created an analytical framework to assess the norm development of accountability in Afghanistan. It applied this innovative approach to empirical data to see whether the norm had developed according to a 'liberal democratic' conceptualisation. This was done in order to identify whether liberal statebuilding in Afghanistan had been able to successfully develop a democratic norm, i.e. accountability, as intended by its own agenda. After comparing the data with the conceptual framework, the thesis concluded that accountability in Afghanistan had not been developed as designed since the statebuilding process was unable to link social forces with political action.

The liberal intervention in Afghanistan adopted a problem-solving, structural and top-down approach that relied on questionable normative assumptions. While this approach is supposed

to be ahistorical and neutral, its liberal normative assumption displays a heavy normative bias in which peace and democracy are preferred to war and conflict (PRIO, 2011). The study shows however that the mere presence of liberal structures does not necessarily generate the corresponding normative values. People in this case will not refer to peace, democracy or accountability just because they are moral goods but require instead norm embedment. The findings are therefore quite supportive of a critical perspective and suggest that accountability was constructed in a parallel space disconnected from Afghan realities. Using a norm development analytical lens, Finnemore and Sikkink's *Norm Life Cycle*, the study shows that accountability stands on a very unstable foundation in Afghanistan due to an uneven and disjointed statebuilding approach. Accountability was not strategically developed in order to redistribute power and contribute to the democratisation process of the country, but rather was used as a solution to poor government performance. Nevertheless, the norm, in its liberal democratic definition, has fragilely emerged in Afghanistan through dialogue between the Afghan elite and international donors. Although external influence and power was used to create accountability structures, the norm has not been accepted, as defined by Norm Life Cycle, since it was not socially contested or integrated with local systems.

The thesis has also debated the role of the international community in norm development and concluded that its influence can have both positive and negative effects. On one side, it introduces the concept of accountability and provides local actors with the possibility to access external knowledge, experience and 'best practices' that might benefit their democratic process; on the other hand, it also utilises unaccountable power to generate outputs as defined by external actors, rather than domestic needs. Especially in the case of accountability, this is detrimental, since it weakens norm conceptualisation and delegitimises its value in the statebuilding process by hijacking the political power away from citizens and redirecting it along hierarchical financial power lines. Moreover, consistent with the literature presented in this thesis, local customs and practices were marginalised from the statebuilding process due to an overreliance on Western knowledge. This removed 'illiberal' local practices from the equation; however, by so doing, it disabled the necessary contestation needed for political determination. This reduced democracy to a mere outcome instead of a process and resulted in a suppressive rather than an emancipatory statebuilding process (Pugh, 2005). The implications of these results will be expanded below.

Democratisation and Norm Development

The question then becomes, what can the case of accountability in Afghanistan tell us about the wider liberal statebuilding process? The failures of democratisation in Afghanistan have been widely recorded, but interestingly, we can see a new generation of scholars that increasingly argue for a new liberal statebuilding method that focuses on the relationship

between the state and the population. PhD students, such as Anna Larson (2013) and Timor Sharan (2013), advocate for a statebuilding approach that recognises and addresses local practices, such as unofficial power structures, in order to incorporate them as part of the process. The key question remains however 'how?'. Whilst it has been widely acknowledged, both now and in the past that the ideal "goal of [an] outside intervention should be 'a productive marriage of external and internal efforts in which outside expert, help and experience join with internal ideas, commitment, and initiatives'", it has been difficult to set into practice (Carothers 1999:262-6 in Lemay-Hebert, 2009:37). Therefore, the method of liberal statebuilding is worth discussing since it has both a large financial and political impact on millions of people in hosting, as well as donor countries.

The utilisation of this research can hopefully contribute to this debate; however before doing so, it is worth acknowledging some of the limitations liberal statebuilding encounters. Whilst critics advocate for long-term planning and engagement, it is important to remember that this requires a heavy footprint causing, more often than not, aid dependency (Paris, 2010). Subsequently the international community is often faced with a situation where perhaps higher ethical standards are compromised for the sake of aid delivery (Dillon & Reid, 2000; Chandler, 2010a). For example, state ownership, in a post-conflict environment, can be marginalised in exchange for a given public good since donors are unable to wait for functional governmental institutions when responding to massive needs. On the other hand, a rushed problem-solving agenda to deliver many outputs in a short period of time can create an environment where donors compromise on democracy in exchange for greater authority to deliver quick results. Gilligan and Sergenti (2008) even suggest that liberal interventions are unable to deliver their set objectives since they intervene in the middle of a power and resource distribution phase of a given country. Indivertibly dragging out 'development' since the country in question is unable to reach an agreement on power contestation. Whilst this argument carries its weight, and is increasingly being discussed under the surface between expats in extreme and continuous ongoing humanitarian settings, the counterargument is the responsibility to protect and safeguard human life. Balancing human death with human suffering is a difficult dilemma where extensive action is deemed imposing and no action is deemed irresponsible. Liberal statebuilding appears, therefore, to be in a constant struggle for balance.

Nevertheless, there is a certain assumption that there is no clash of interest between the 'external' and the 'local', excluding warring parties, on liberal interventions but that it is just a matter of finding the right frequency or combination between light and heavy footprint (Chandler, 2010a). Critics have often argued for a more bottom-up approach and whilst this is widely acknowledged, the current problem-solving methods to generate a more participative, consultative and locally owned process have been insufficient to create the desired balance.

This could be attested to two reasons. On one hand, the financial resources supporting top-down projects are still considerably outnumbering bottom-up initiatives, whilst on the other hand, sensitive projects to local ownership still operate under the assumption that people cannot be trusted with power (Zakaria, 1997). As illustrated by the Critical Peace Studies literature and the research conducted in this thesis, the 'illiberal' perception of the local hampers trust between hosting governments and the international community as the latter treats culture as solid and entrenched (Krause & Jütersonke, 2005). As long as the local culture is perceived as an impediment to political and economic development the international community resorts to control since it does not trust hosting countries to make the 'right' decisions (Jahn, 2007; Heathershaw, 2008). Control is only psychologically applied when there is a fundamental insecurity of one's own abilities to manage a given situation (Kohut, 2009). Ironically this is the same critique the international community applies to authoritarian states that use force to control citizen behaviour.

Ultimately liberal interventions' methodology is influenced by lack of trust, recourse to control and inability to let go of power. Whilst these hesitations may be well grounded and justified, as liberal interventions would not be present in functioning states, their existence does sabotage the very outcomes liberal statebuilding attempts to generate. The question then becomes when to trust and let go of power and when not to. Liberal statebuilding avoids this question by applying institutional and top-down methods to promote democracy as it situates the hosting government as the key actor to render the expected results (Lemay-Herbet, 2009). Whereas it is true that each state is responsible for its own territory, to deny the international community's responsibility in liberal statebuilding is to operate in a deceptive space. Consequently it is not only the perception of the local as 'illiberal' that impacts liberal statebuilding's methodology, but also its own self-perception of being outside of the problem. This research suggests that as long as these issues remain unaddressed, the methodology discourse will continue to be debated along a top-down vs. bottom-up approach that, ultimately, does not remove the methodology from its institutional composition, regardless of consultative and participative practices. The 'critique' in this case of liberal statebuilding only reinforces these structures, rather than disrupts them. This study highlights the discrepancies concerning structure and content and fundamentally displays an argument between institutionalism vs. normative essence. The question is not which one comes first, as it is like asking whether the chicken or egg came first, but rather how these two can be merged and related to each other in a meaningful way.

The case of democratisation is very useful when contemplating this question since democratic norms, as observed by the literature and research findings, do not necessarily manifest purely with democratic structures. As part of liberal statebuilding, it is important to consider the

development of democracy and its norms. The study of accountability suggests that norm development is important to the transition from artificial structures to local ownership and legitimacy. However since norms are collectively upheld ideas, there needs to be a process that socially mobilises concepts and mind-sets. This is not only important for collective movement but also for collective identity. The negotiation of collective frames under a shared meaning is a common phenomena reported not only in politics, but also in sociology and psychology (Benford & Snow, 2000). To treat norms as fixed and non-negotiable, as liberal statebuilding does, denies politics from its dynamic nature where it can be constantly reconstructed (Benford & Snow, 2000). The study of accountability suggests, therefore, in order for democratisation to gain local legitimacy, power relations and ownership, people need to be active agents in creating the very concepts liberal statebuilding is trying to achieve. However this requires international actors to release a certain amount of power and control over the outcome to allow hosting countries to be agents of their own history. Whilst this might be perceived by the liberal agenda as threatening or a waste of resources, since disagreements of the objectives will probably arise, it will create a space for hosting countries to define and manifest democracy according to their own needs and learn from their own success and error. 'Failure' in this case, is not viewed as unsuccessful, but rather as a part of the democratisation process. From this perspective, the liberal agenda would not control the methodology to achieve a given objective, but rather it would provide a fixed environment in which norm contestation can take place, thus allowing democratisation to merge with socio-political structures instead of coexisting as two separate pulling forces. This would allow for a more emancipatory process. The below section will offer some recommendations on how this can be achieved.

Recommendations

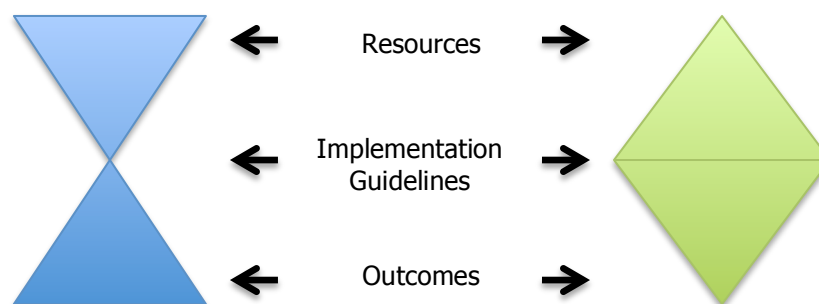
The study of accountability shows the need to put people at the centre of a political process instead of merely relying on democratic structures to influence human behaviour over time. As presented in the previous chapter, and as part of the contribution to the Good Enough Governance debate, this thesis suggests norm interfaces to create normative conditions instead of concrete outputs. This would provide the hosting country the opportunity to organically develop its own notion of democratic norms and it would demote the liberal statebuilding objective from creating a democratic state to one that is capable of getting there itself. In order to manifest such a change, the following recommendations are made to policymakers:

- Create an emancipatory process by recognising the local populations as creators of their own state. Negotiate the democratisation process by establishing a shared understanding of the problems that need to be addressed, the changes that need to take place, the actors/structures that need to be engaged, the timeframe and an alternative set of solutions should the initial engagement fail. The negotiation of these

elements will decrease the possibility of contradictory perceptions between action and expectation (Benford & Snow, 2000). An agreed rationale creates the foundation for collective action so it is important to publically communicate the negotiation outcomes to the affected population.

- Justify liberal engagement by creating credibility through an appropriate vocabulary that resonates with the local population and customs. Embrace the limitations that might exist on the ground and accept that democratisation might look different as it tackles local practices to create democratic conditions rather than outcomes. Although the dominant culture values might clash with liberal norms, their participation has a better probability of mobilising social beliefs and values (Benford & Snow, 2000). In other words, it is better to change the system from within than from outside.
- Create a 'safe' environment by reducing funding and outcome expectations by shifting donor focus from 'the bigger, the better' to 'the smaller, the smarter'. This would allow donors to manage their funding more effectively and reduce financial dependency since national budgets would be closer to future national revenue generation than the current, sizeable, discrepancies. A relaxation of implementation guidelines, but still clear negotiated outcomes, would create a political space to cultivate innovation and local ownership. This can be observed in the below figure. On the left hand side, considerable resources are given to produce grandiose outcomes through a very strict adherence to internationally-formulated liberal guidelines. On the right hand side, funding is reduced, outcomes are moderated, but an increased amount of freedom is given to the hosting country to develop its own processes. In other words, the initial negotiation establishes a firm start (funding) and end point (outcomes), in which donors still exercise considerable control, but relaxes its grip on how outcomes are achieved. This would allow the hosting country to find its own way and generate local norm contestation.

Figure 5: Funding Conditionality



- If outcomes are not delivered as agreed, to take a tougher stand by reducing funding and publically communicating these decisions to the affected population. This does not mean withdrawal from the situation, but detaining funds until conditions are delivered. The consequences of financial shortages can generate opportunities for positive political contestation if optimised by supportive bottom-up good governance programming.

This emancipatory approach is undoubtedly messier and slower than an institutional problem-solving methodology as donors would have less control over the process, but in the long run, it might be more sustainable. This does not mean that a structural approach should be abandoned, or that a romanticised view of traditional practices should be adopted, but that a more balanced approach should be taken. While some scholars might argue that control should not be compromised over international objectives, such as security or counterinsurgency, the author would argue that it is precisely the underlying assumptions that external objectives are more important than local needs that lead to unsuccessful liberal interventions. That is not to say that security concerns should be ignored but rather that the root causes of insecurity should be confronted. If liberal interventions cave to the fear of the unknown or the 'non-liberal' and attempt to control a volatile environment through liberal objectives, little sustainable security can be obtained as illustrated by the situation in Iraq and Afghanistan. Ultimately if local democracy and political emancipation is sacrificed for the sake of external objectives in an attempt to control the 'unruly', liberal statebuilding will continue to imprison itself in a golden cage where the only solution is to continue applying a linear unsuccessful model instead of going through the painful process of evolution and emancipation. Moreover the risk of imposing social conformity and reinforcing unofficial power channels should not be ignored (Paris, 2010). These can however be addressed and negotiated by strengthening the democratisation process and making them part of the political contestation process. Though the reluctance to deal with the non-liberal' and 'unruly' is understandable from a certain perspective, marginalising them from the statebuilding process denies reality as it is and focuses instead on what one would want it to be.

Additionally, outcomes can potentially be more successful in creating democratic conditions if a norm development strategy is adopted. The usage of Finnemore and Sikkink's Norm Life Cycle was useful to see *how* accountability developed in Afghanistan but was too simplistic to really deconstruct the normative process in great depth since it was unable to explain agency and why the norm manifested differently across various entities. Moreover it tackled actors and norms as static while the data clearly showed a more complex and dynamic context. The biggest limitation however was its theory of *change*. This thesis suggested therefore, as part of its contribution to the Hybridity discussion in Critical Peace Studies, to adopt a norm development analysis framework that uses the three norm life cycle stages presented by

Finnemore and Sikkink and adjusts it by looking at power relationship, exchange of knowledge, and methods of interaction. The following recommendations are for the researchers and policymakers who want to understand the potential mergences between external norms and local structure.

- Adopt a more detailed norm development analytical framework, such as the one presented in the previous chapter, in order to gain a better understanding of how institutional structures can be or are linked to social and political forces. By understanding the local populations' ability, capacity and willingness to engage with a new norm, researchers can gain a deeper understanding of how norms merge, integrate or operate parallel to each other. This can also be used for strategic purposes as it identifies areas of programming, methods of intervention and levels of engagement.
- Recognise the diversity in engagement and resilience methods between and amongst the different external and local actors in order to gain a better understanding of the mergences between liberal norms and local conditions. This helps to identify the trajectory of norm development and provides policymakers an opportunity to their areas of prioritisation.

Ultimately this research scratches the surfaces of a more emancipatory way to do liberal statebuilding by engaging norm development; however, considerably more research needs to be conducted in order to improve academic knowledge on the links between norm theory and statebuilding. Norm development will appear differently in new peacebuilding missions compared to situations that are already fraught with mistrust, tension and corruption between locals and externals. Moreover norm development research in liberal peace- and statebuilding can help to shift the conversation from a problem-solving vs. critical discussion to a transformational dialogue. This can potentially take the conversation beyond the critical perspective in which neither locals nor externals are portrayed as victims, predators and/or resilient actors of two worlds but rather as divergent transformational agents of a united reality.

To conclude, this thesis was able to use norm development theory to assess the liberal statebuilding's methodology in developing accountability in Afghanistan and deemed it insufficient. This was partly due to unaccountable donor behaviour, an institutional approach and a significant disconnection between social forces and political action. Therefore, the thesis suggests a more emancipatory statebuilding that allows for political and norm contestation in the democratisation process.

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ANNEXES

Annex 1: Accountability Perception Questionnaire

Hello, my is and we are currently conducting a study to see what people think about accountability in order to improve government policy. The questionnaire takes about 15 minutes and you have been randomly selected to participate. If you agree to participate your information will be kept completely confidential and you can withdraw from the questionnaire any time if you feel uncomfortable continuing.

I will be asking you to answer a set of questions where you will be asked to choose to an answer closest to your own view. Each time I will indicate how many options you need to choose. Some of the answers might not be your ideas exactly but they will help us compare your answers more easily with other people. Take your time when answering and if you have any questions about what is wanted, please ask me to clarify.



[IF YES, PROCEED]

1. Interview **Date:**

2. What is your **Name:** _____

3. What is your **Gender:** Female ☐ Male ☐



Please select
ONE answer

4. What is your **Age:**

15-24 ☐

25-39 ☐

40-64 ☐



Please select
ONE answer

5. What is your highest *completed* **education** level:

None ☐ Elementary ☐

Secondary ☐ High School ☐

University ☐



Please select
ONE answer

6. What is your *personal* annual **Income** in Afs:

- | | | | |
|-------------------|--------------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|
| 0 – 10 000 | <input type="checkbox"/> | 10 001 – 20 000 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 20001 – 50000 | <input type="checkbox"/> | 50 001 – 300 000 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 300 001 – 900 000 | <input type="checkbox"/> | 900 001 – 2 000 000 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2 000 000 - > | <input type="checkbox"/> | | |



Please select
ONE answer

7. What does **accountability** mean to you?

- a) To be responsible ☐
- b) To be equal in front of the law ☐
- c) To be answerable ☐
- d) To give good services ☐
- e) To improve the life of people ☐
- f) To have a good political agenda ☐

g) Other _____



Select as many
as are

8. What does **transparency** mean to you?

- a) To be open with all information ☐
- b) To be open on how decisions are made ☐
- c) To disclose only written information ☐
- d) To let other government entities have information but not citizens ☐
- e) To accept all types of request, small and big ☐

f) Other _____



Select as many
as are

9. Do you think the Afghan **Government** is **Accountable**?

Yes ☐ No ☐



Please select
ONE answer

10. Which **government institutions** are the most **accountable** in your opinion?



Please select
THREE

- a) Presidential Office ☐
- b) Parliament ☐
- c) Ministry of Finance ☐
- d) Ministry of Mines ☐
- e) IDLG ☐
- f) High Office of Anti-Corruption ☐
- g) Attorney General ☐
- h) Public Service Delivery Ministries ☐
- i) Security Ministries ☐

11. Why do you think government institutions are **promoting accountability**?



Please select
THREE

- a) To improve development projects ☐
- b) Political agenda ☐
- c) Donor demand ☐
- d) To gain support amongst the population ☐
- e) To receive more funds ☐
- f) To look good in front of the media ☐
- g) To be responsible ☐
- h) To advance the democratisation process ☐

12. Who is **demanding** the Afghan government to be **accountable**?



Please select
THREE

- a) Ministry of Finance ☐
- b) Attorney General ☐
- c) The president ☐

- d) The parliament ☐
- e) Civil Society ☐
- f) Citizens ☐
- g) Academicians ☐
- h) The executive ☐
- i) Donors ☐

13. Do **citizens** have a **role** in making the Afghan **government** more **accountable**?

Yes ☐ No ☐



Please select
ONE answer

14. In the **current** political and security **situation**, should the **government** be **accountable**?

Yes ☐ No ☐



Please select
ONE answer

[IF NO, GO TO QUESTION 10]



15. Why should the government be **more** **accountable**?



Please select
TWO answers

- a) To reduce insecurity ☐
- b) To solve conflict ☐
- c) To create jobs ☐
- d) To create trust ☐
- e) To improve public service delivery ☐
- f) Other _____

15. Why should the government **NOT** be **accountable**?



Please select
TWO answers

- a) It does not have the resources ☐
- b) It does not have the capacity ☐
- c) It needs to address the conflict first ☐
- d) It needs to deliver public services first ☐

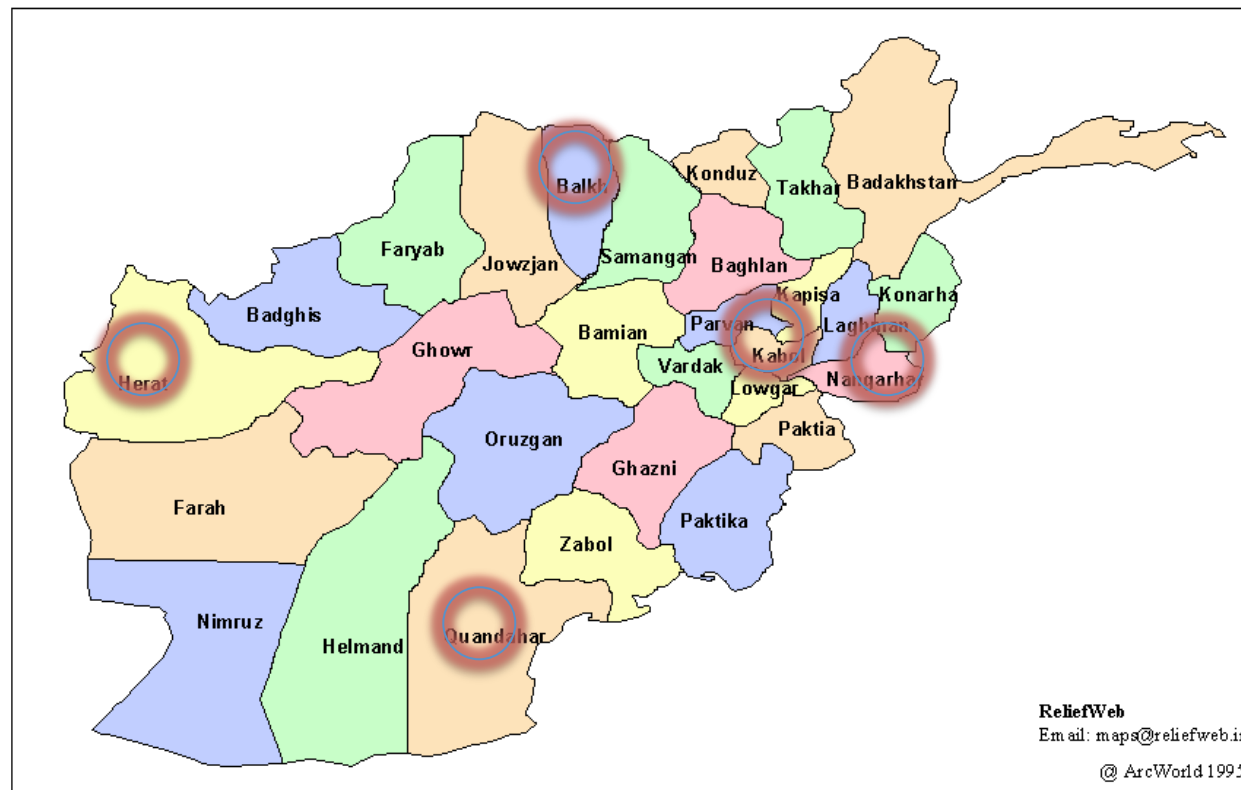
e) It needs to have stronger institutions ☐

f) Other _____

THANK YOU!

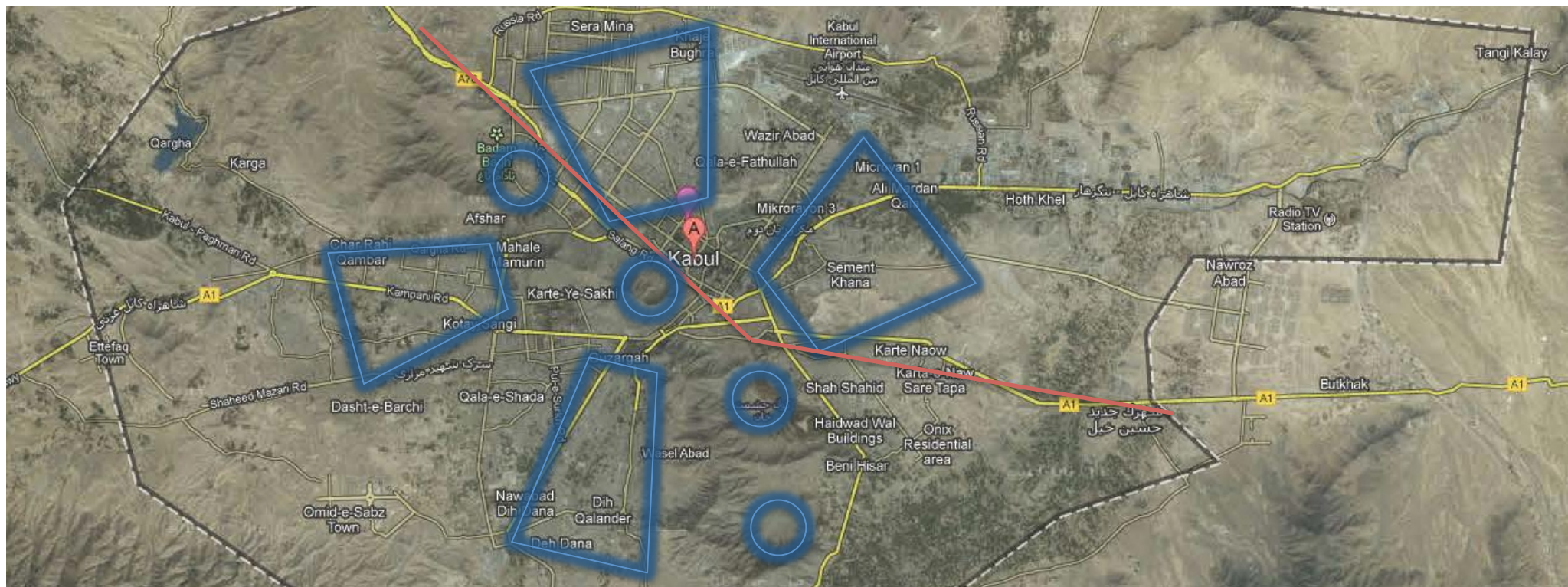
Annex 2: Afghanistan Regional Centres

Map 1: Regional Capitals in Afghanistan



Annex 3: Regional Cluster Sample Maps

Map 2: Kabul Cluster Sampling Map



Kabul Province (mountain regions and inhabited by poorer families



Kabul Capital

Map 3: Herat Cluster Sampling Map



Map 4: Mazar-e-Sharif Cluster Sampling Map



Annex 4: Afghan Ministerial Maps (non-detailed)

Figure 6: Ministry of Finance Organisational Map

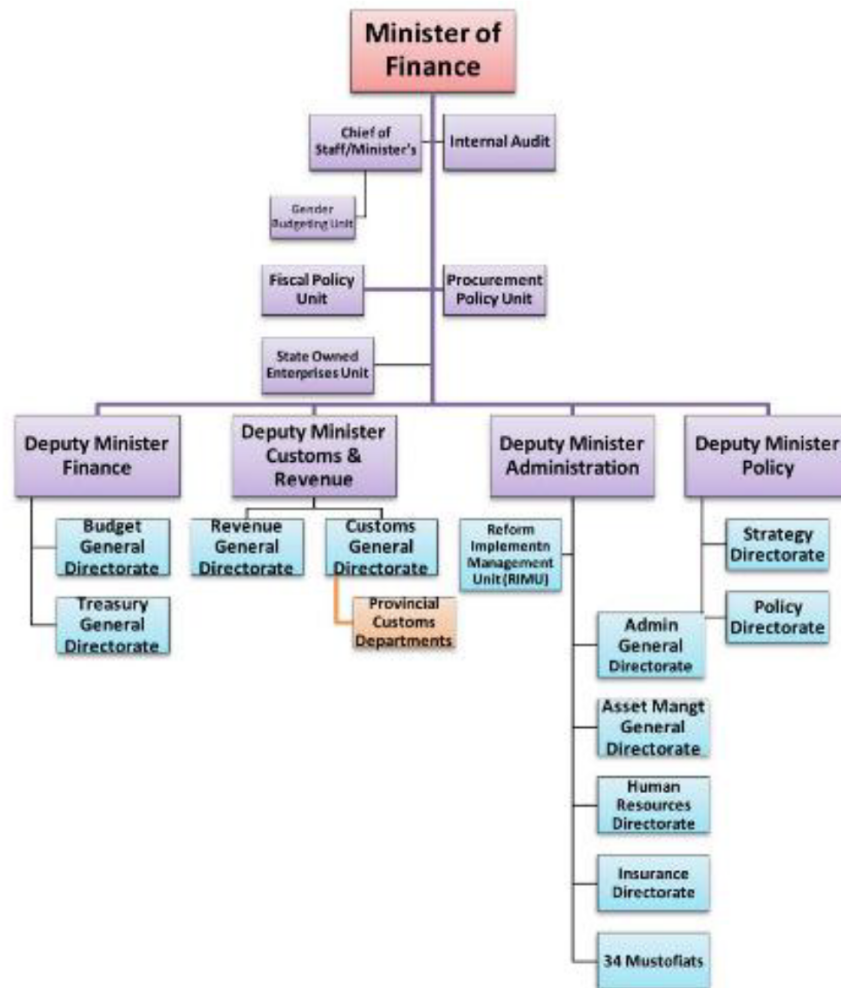


Figure 7: Monitoring and Evaluation Committee Organisational Map

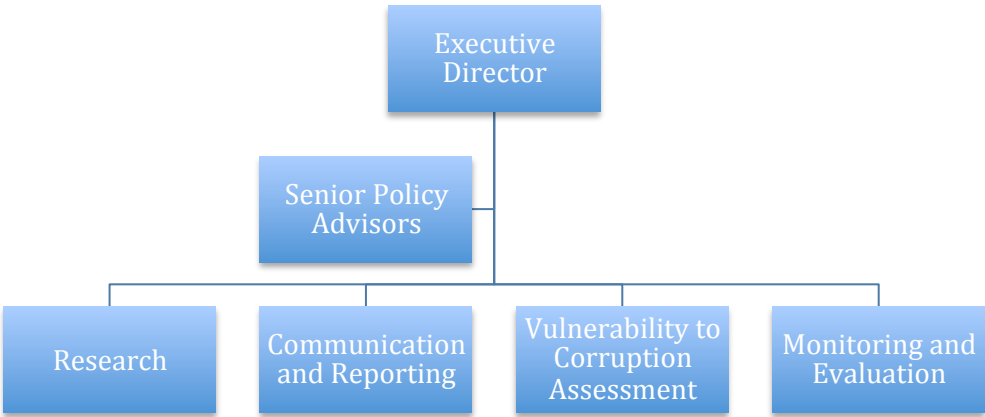


Figure 8: High Office of Oversight Organisational Map

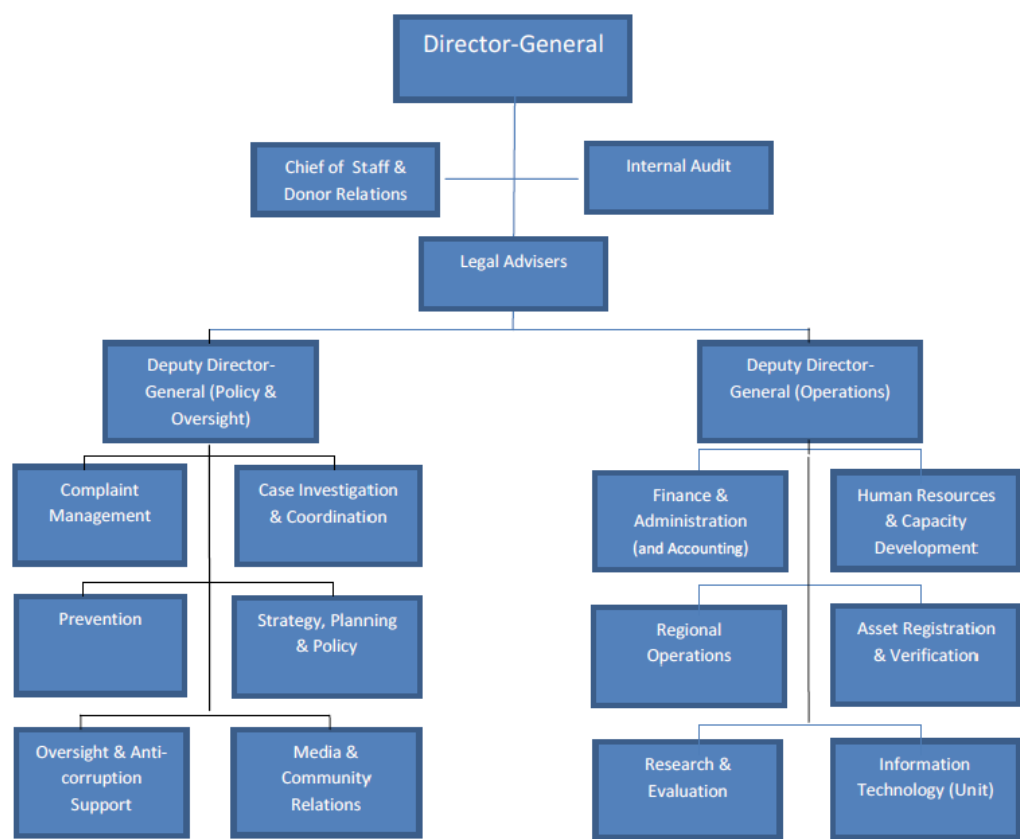
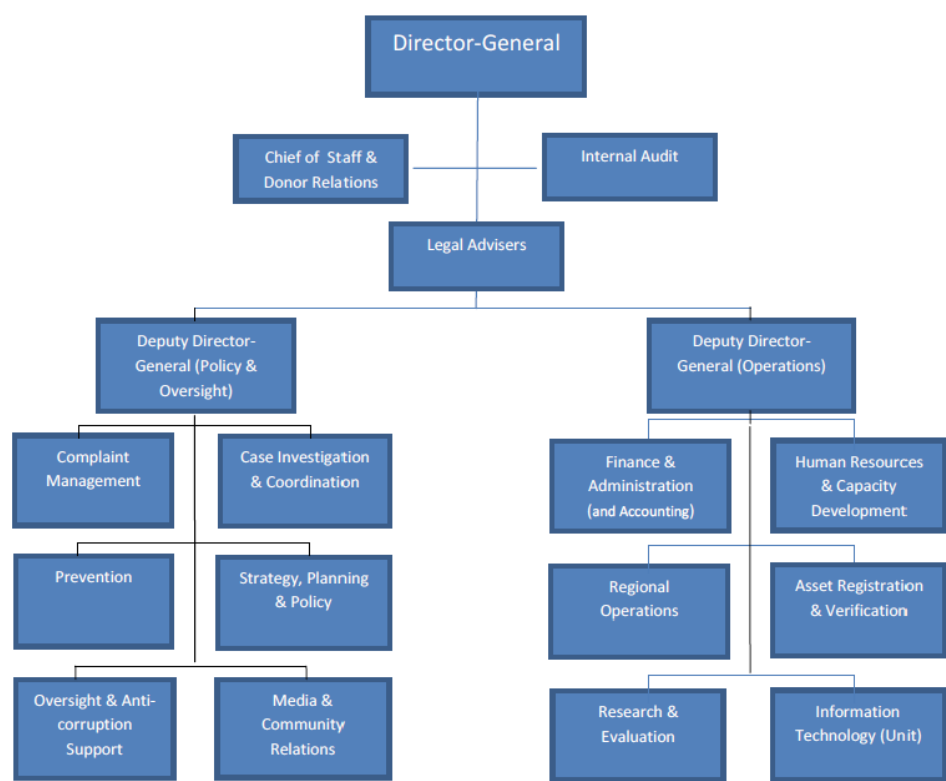


Figure 9: Independent Directorate of Local Governance Organisational Map



Annex 5: List of Interview Participants

Please note that in order to protect the identity of those participants that wished to remain confidential, the date and location might have been removed in order to avoid pattern identification and subsequently participant identification.

Table 6: List of Interview Participants

Location	Entity	Institution	Title	Name	Date
National	NGO	Agency Coordination Body for Afghan Relief and Development - ACBAR	Executive Director	Wael Ibrahim	13/05/2012
National	NGO	Afghan Women's Network - AWN	Executive Director	Samira Hamidi	15/05/2012
National	NGO	Afghanistan Civil Society Forum - ACSF	Executive Director	Aziz Rafee	14/05/2012
National	NGO	Equality for Peace and Democracy - EPD	Executive Director	Nargis Nehan	22/05/2012
National	NGO	Human Rights Research and Advocacy Consortium - HRRAC	Deputy Director	Naweed Kawusi	14/05/2012
National	NGO	Afghanistan Analysts Network - AAN	Executive Director	Sari Kuovo	14/05/2012
National	NGO	Afghanistan Analysts Network - AAN	Senior Researcher	Grant Hewat	14/05/2012
National	NGO	Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit - AREU	Deputy Director for Communications and Advocacy	Mir Ahmad Joyenda	13/05/2012
National	NGO	Open Society Afghanistan - OSA	Executive Director	Najla Ayubi	30/05/2012
National	Media	Killid	Executive Director	Najiba Ayubi	14/05/2012
National	Media	Channel 7	Managing Director of	Barry Salaam	13/05/2012

			Channel 7		
National	Media	8-Times	Owner	Sanjar Said	28/05/2012
National	Media	NAI	Executive Director	Abdul Mujeeb Khalvatgar	17/05/2012
National	Media	Watendar	Editor in Chief	Mirwais Sohial	27/05/2012
National	Media	BBC	Reporter	Bilal Sarwary	22/05/2012
National	Donor	CIDA	Senior Programme Officer - Health Team	Nasir Ebrahimkhalil	14/05/2012
National	Academicians	Kabul University - Law	Lecturer	Zarqa Yaftaq	21/05/2012
National	Academicians	American University of Kabul	President	Michael Smith	26/06/2012
National	Public Institution	MoF	Fiscal Policy Unit Manager	Niaz Qasim	20/05/2012
National	Public Institution	MoF	DG Operational Policies	Fardeen Sediqi	03/06/2012
National	Public Institution	MoF	Director of Aid Management	Hamid Jalil	20/05/2012
National	Public Institution	MoF	Aid Effectiveness and Policy Manager	Salwa Dasgeer	29/05/2012
National	Public Institution	MoF	DG for Strategic Policy Implementation	Ameen Habibi	23/95/2012
National	Public Institution	MoF	Budget Reform Unit Manager	Naveed Ahamad Niaz	29/05/2012
National	Public Institution	MoF	Director of Public Awareness - Customs Directorate	Sayed Hamid Azizi	03/06/2012
National	Public Institution	MoF	DG Revenue Planning	Rasool Qarizada	29/05/2012
National	Public Institution	Oversight	Director of Prevention	Qazi Ehsan	04/06/2012
National	Public Institution	Oversight	Head of Case Monitoring, Tracking & Review Department	Sayed Moh Stanikzai Saaapand	05/06/2012

National	Public Institution	Oversight	Director of Strategy, Policy & Planning	Amini Mohsede	28/05/2012
National	Public Institution	Oversight	Project Manager	Henrik Lindroth	22/05/2012
National	Public Institution	Oversight	Executive Director for MEC	Seema Ghani	28/05/2012
National	Public Institution	IDLG	Advisor	Greg Wilson	29/05/2012
National	Public Institution	IDLG	Local Councils Monitoring and Evaluation Manager	Mohammed Danishyar	25/06/2012
National	Public Institution	IDLG	DG of of Local Councils Affairs	Saeed Khamoosh	06/06/2012
National	Public Institution	IDLG	Municipal Governance Advisor	Nora Roehner	23/05/2012
National	Public Institution	IDLG	Director of Distric Delivery Program	Sibghat Ullah	05/06/2012
National	Public Institution	IDLG	Director of Strategy and Programmes	Nader Yama	27/05/2012
National	Public Institution	IDLG	DG of Policy and Planning	Basir Saber	12/06/2012
Herat	NGO	IWA	Head of Field Office	Pajhwok Ghouri	11/06/2012
Herat	Media	Fixer - Washington Post	Fixer	Basir Begzad	09/06/2012
Herat	NGO	Western Afghan Women's Network (WAWN)	Director	Hassina Neekzad	10/06/2012
Herat	NGO	Afghanistan Islamic Civil Participation Assembly (AICPA)	Director	Gholam Hazraf Raufi	10/06/2012
Herat	NGO	Power and Education	Board Member	Abdul Razaq Puyan	09/06/2012
Herat	Public Institution	Economy Department	Head of the Economy Department	Eng. Abdul Naser Aswadi	09/06/2012
Herat	Public Institution	HoO	Acting Head of HoO	Hamid Karimi	10/06/2012

Herat	Public Institution	Provincial District Council	Head of PDC	Abdul Zaher Faiz Zada	09/06/2012
Mazar	NGO	Cooperation Center for Afghanistan(CCA)	Regional Manager	Sayed Abdul Hamid Safwat	16/06/2012
Mazar	Media	Services Org. for Unity and Development	Executive	Dr. Najib Paikan	16/06/2012
Mazar	Public Institution	Radio Nehad	Editor in Chief	Sewa Nazary	17/06/2012
Mazar	Public Institution	Arzu Radio TV	General Manager	M. Ishaq Sarwary	17/06/2012
Kabul	Public Institution	Governor	Governor	Ahmadullah Alizai	25/06/2012
Kabul	Public Institution	Governor's Governance Adviser	Governor's Governance Adviser	Haroon Hassan	26/06/2012
Kabul	CSO	Youth Leadership Forum	Founder	Faraidoon Shariq	13/06/2012
Kabul	CSO	Foundation for culture and civil society	Director	Timor Hakimyar	13/06/2012
Kabul	CSO	Roya Film House	Vice President	Alka Sadat	27/06/2012
National	NGO	x	x	CN100	05/06/2012
National	NGO	x	x	CN101	13/05/2012
National	NGO	x	x	CN103	13/05/2012
National	Media	x	x	CN400	21/05/2012
National	Media	x	x	CN401	27/05/2012
National	Donor	x	x	CN305	21/05/2012
National	Donor	x	x	CN303	23/05/2012
National	Donor	x	x	CN300	15/05/2012
National	Donor	x	x	CN203	23/05/2012
National	Donor	x	x	CN102	27/06/2012
National	Academic	x	x	CN402	21/05/2012

National	Academic	x	x	CN403	23/05/2012
National	Academic	x	x	CN404	06/06/2012
National	Academic	x	x	CN405	06/06/2012
National	Public Institution	x	x	SN304	17/05/2012
National	Public Institution	x	x	SN200	12/06/2012
National	Public Institution	x	x	SN300	25/06/2012
National	Public Institution	x	x	SN102	27/06/2012
National	Public Institution	x	x	SN211	04/06/2012
National	Public Institution	x	x	SN301	06/06/2012
National	Public Institution	x	x	SN103	25/05/2012
National	Public Institution	x	x	SN201	29/05/2012
National	Public Institution	x	x	SN302	03/06/2012
National	Public Institution	x	x	SN202	06/05/2012
National	Public Institution	x	x	SN303	30/06/2012
National	Public Institution	x	x	SN203	04/06/2012
Sub-National	NGO	x	x	CN301	x
Sub-National	Donor	x	x	CN406	x
Sub-National	Donor	x	x	CN407	x
Sub-National	Donor	x	x	CN411	x
Sub-National	Donor	x	x	CN412	x
Sub-	NGO	x	x	CN302	x

National					
Sub-National	Public Institution	x	x	SN100	x
Sub-National	Public Institution	x	x	SN204	x
Sub-National	Public Institution	x	x	SN205	x
Sub-National	Donor	x	x	CN304	x
Sub-National	NGO	x	x	CN200	x
Sub-National	Donor	x	x	CN410	x
Sub-National	Donor	x	x	CN408	x
Sub-National	NGO	x	x	CN104	x
Sub-National	Media	x	x	CN409	x
Sub-National	Public Institution	x	x	SN206	x
Sub-National	Public Institution	x	x	SN207	x
Sub-National	Public Institution	x	x	SN208	x
Sub-National	Public Institution	x	x	SN209	x
Sub-	Public Institution	x	x	SN101	x

National					
Sub-National	Public Institution	x	x	SN210	x
Sub-National	CSO	x	x	CN201	x

Annex 6: Risk Assessment

Table 7: Risk Assessment

Area	Risk	Person(s) at risk	Mitigation Measures	Rating ¹⁸
Accommodation	Unsafe location	Researcher	Follow UNDSS recommendation and do not take an accommodation that is located on a main road, poorly constructed, has windows that face towards dangerous areas and that does not offer an escape route. Chose an accommodation that is in a safe and low risk neighbourhood and attach oneself to a warden zone.	5
	Inadequate structure	Researcher	Make sure that all windows are shielded and do not have furniture that can harm if they fall in case of natural or human made disaster. Make sure that no loose or rusty metals are sticking out of the building or garden that can provide danger to the researcher in case of evacuation.	5
Living	Seasonal Changes	Researcher	Make sure to have clothes for adequate weather, whether extreme heat or cold and that the accommodation is equipped accordingly.	5
	Food Poisoning	Researcher	Make sure to adjust slowly to local cuisine and have medication with oneself in case of digestive problems. Register oneself with a recommended health facility, both civil and military. Always have plenty of water and spare dry food in the house in case of a lock-down.	3
	Health	Researcher	Make sure to take a field physical before 1 month before estimated departure and take the most common medicine with oneself. Register with recommended clinics and communicate these choices with your local insurance and person of	2

¹⁸ 1 Being very risky and 5 being very little risk.

			emergency. Select alternative medical evacuation roots with alternative organisation and embassy.	
	Harassment	Researcher	Female researchers can be particularly vulnerable for harassment in certain environments. Make sure to never walk alone if avoidable, travel accompanied and have a local emergency contact person. Do not engage with harassers but walk away and stay in crowded areas but avoid markets, bus stations and other public zones where public uproar can manifest.	2
Research	Personal threat	Participants, Colleagues and Research	Every person participating in the research, whether as an organiser, facilitator, researcher or participant risks to be seen as a 'Westerniser'. Depending on the environment this can put the individuals at harm as insurgents have a strong agenda against those associated with the west. Mitigation process: Clear transparent research process that clearly highlights the purpose of the research and its non-political nature. Meet colleagues and participants in work environments where they feel safe and comfortable. Do not meet anyone one hour before the nightfall.	3
	Access	Researcher	Wait until the situation clears, reassess the security situation and try again. If the security threat does not decrease, abort action and go for plan B in the case study protocol.	2
	Lack of collaboration	Researcher	Civil servants might be reluctant to collaborate with strangers. Work with the informal governance network, approach the interviewers from a top-down approach and get established recommendations. The participation of superiors and known experts relaxes lower civil servants.	1
Security	Kidnapping	Researcher	Avoid exposing oneself to the risk by not walking	2

			alone, let people know when one is leaving, where one is going and when you are expected to be back. Use known and trustworthy drivers, cars and translators.	
	Suicide Attacks	Researcher	Participate in the weekly security meetings, get security intelligence from external sources, read security reports and establish good relationship with security experts. Avoid high-risk areas, days and celebrations. Daily radio check within a security roster or external assigned personnel.	1
	Military Attacks	Researcher	Do not go conduct research or enter active military zones.	1
Travel	Inter-regional	Researcher and translator	Do not use cars, assess road conditions for security and natural reasons (such as dangerous land slides and snow falls). Use flights from recommended airlines when necessary and have someone at the departure and the arrival airports for pick-up.	3
	Intra-regional	Researcher and translator	Use safe cards and conduct road assessments on the morning of travel with people from the area. Never leave before 7 am and always return by 4 pm. Communication and safety check every two hours with an assigned person in the urban area.	3
	Urban	Researcher and translator	Traffic accidents are quite common but due to urban congestion, the cars are seldom going more than 10km an hour when they occur. As a pedestrian, always watch the roads before crossing, as traffic rules are not necessarily followed to the book in Afghanistan and Iraq. As a passenger, always have seatbelt and use a good and reliant driver. Do not drive on your own as traffic mobs and accidents can easily occur to foreigners.	2

Annex 7: Qualitative Codebook

Table 8: Qualitative Codebook

Areas of Research/Crossing Themes	Power	Representation	Communication	Cooperation
Legitimacy	P1: Patronage Networks	R1: National Identity	C1: Shuras	O1: Leaders to Leaders
	P2: Tribal Power	R2: Ethnic Identity	C2: Official	O2: Leaders to Donors
	P3: Democratic Power	R3: Urban Identity	C3: Civil Society	O3: Leaders to Citizens
	P4: Donor Power	R4: Rural Identity	C4: Media	O4: Citizens to Citizens
			C5: Religious Figures	O5: Citizens to Leaders
			C6: Donors	O6: Citizens to Donors
Government-Citizen Relationship	P10: Soft Power	R10: Tribal	C10: Elders	O10: Democratic Participation
	P11: Coercive Power	R11: Political Parties	C11: Community Elders	O11: Patronage
	P12: Force	R12: Parliament	C12: CSOs	O12: International Relations
	P13: Financial Power	R13: Subnational Representation	C13: Political Party Leaders	
	P14: Political Power (Political Parties and Agendas)	R14: Unofficial	C14: International Actors	
	P15: Authority		C15: Patronage Leaders	
Accountability Mechanisms	P20: Administrative Power	R20: Nepotism	C20: Executive Institutions	O20: Bureaucrats
	P21: Political Power (Elections and Representation)	R21: Bureaucracy	C21: Parliament	O21: Elected Representatives
	P22: Social Power	R22: Democratic Constituencies	C22: Subnational Offices	O22: Political Leaders
	P23: Civic Power	R23: CSOs	C23: Media	O23: Donors
	P24: Media Power	R24: Coordinated Media	C24: CSOs	O24: Technical Advisers
	P25: Military Power	R25: Commanders and Military Leaders	C25: Donors	

Annex 8: Quantitative Codebook

Table 9: Quantitative Codebook

Question	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7
Question Name	Interview Date	What is your name?	What is your gender?	What is your highest <u>completed</u> education level?	What is your personal annual income in Afs?	What does <u>accountability</u> mean to you?	What does <u>transparency</u> mean to you?
Variable name	Date	Interviewee ID	Gender	Education	Income	Accountability	Transparency
Column	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Data Type	Date	Numerical	Numerical	Nominal	Numerical	Nominal	Nominal
Valid Codes	1 - May	1 - Kabul City	1 - 15-24	1 - None	1 - 0- 10 000	1 - To be responsible	1 - To be open with all information
	2 - June	2 - Kabul Province	2 - 25-39	2 - Elementary	2 - 10 001 - 20 000	2 - To be equal in front of the law	2 - To be open on how decisions are made
		3 - Heart	3 - 40-64	3 - Secondary	3 - 20 001 - 50 000	3 - To be answerable	3 - To disclose only written government information
		4 - Mazar		4 - High School	4 - 50 001 - 300 000	4 - To give good services	4 - To let other government entities have information but not citizens
				5 - University	5 - 300 001 - 900 000	5 - To improve the life of people	5 - To accept all types of requests, small and big
					6 - 900 001 - 2 000 000	6 - To have a good political agenda	6 - Other
					7 - Above 2 000 001	7 - Other	
Missing Values	0 - Refused	0 - Refused	0 - Refused	0 - Refused	0 - Refused	0 - Refused	0 - Refused
	9 - Not Ascertained	9 - Not Ascertained	9 - Not Ascertained	9 - Not Ascertained	9 - Not Ascertained	9 - Not Ascertained	9 - Not Ascertained
Coding Instructions	Indicate the date the interview was carried out	Indicates the ID code that each interviewee got based on their location, date and gender	Gives the age parameter of the interviewee	The educational level that the interviewee completed and graduated	Gives the income parameters of the personal income of the interviewee	The interviewee is asked to define what accountability means for them.	The interviewee is asked to define what transparency means for them.

Q8	Q9	Q10	Q11	Q12	Q13	Q14	Q15
Do you think the Afghan government is accountable?	Which government institutions are the most accountable in your opinion?	Why do you think government institutions are promoting accountability?	Who is demanding the Afghan government to be accountable?	Do citizens have a role in making the Afghan government more accountable?	In the current political and security situation, should the government be accountable?	Why should the government be more accountable?	Why should the government NOT be accountable?
Gov. Accountability	Inst. Accountability	Prom. Accountability	Dem. Accountability	Citz. Accountability	Situ. Accountability	Situ. Yes. Accountability	Situ. No. Accountability
8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
Dichotomous	Nominal	Nominal	Nominal	Dichotomous	Dichotomous	Contingency Nominal	Contingency Nominal
1 - Yes	1 - Presidential Office	1 - To improve development projects	1 - Ministry of Finance	1 - Yes	1 - Yes	1 - To reduce insecurity	1 - It does not have the resources
2 - No	2 - Parliament	2 - Political agenda	2 - Attorney General	2 - No	2 - No	2 - To solve conflict	2 - It does not have the capacity
	3 - Ministry of Finance	3 - Donor demand	3 - The President			3 - To create jobs	3 - It needs to address the conflict first
	4 - Ministry of Mines	4 - To gain support amongst the population	4 - The Parliament			4 - To create trust	4 - It needs to deliver public services first
	5 - IDLG	5 - To receive more foreign funds	5 - Civil Society			5 - To improve public service delivery	5 - It needs to have stronger institutions
	6 - High Office of Anti-Corruption	6 - To look in front of the media	6 - Citizens			6 - Other	7 - Other
	7 - Attorney General	7 - To be responsible	7 - Academicians				
	8 - Service Delivery Ministries	8 - To advance the democratisation process	8 - The executive				
	10 - Security Ministries		10 - Donors				
0 - Refused	0 - Refused	0 - Refused	0 - Refused	0 - Refused	0 - Refused	0 - Refused	0 - Refused
9 - Not Ascertained	9 - Not Ascertained	9 - Not Ascertained	9 - Not Ascertained	9 - Not Ascertained	9 - Not Ascertained	9 - Not Ascertained	9 - Not Ascertained
The interviewee is asked whether they think the Afghan government is accountable.	The interviewee is asked which of the institutions in the list are being most accountable.	The interviewee is asked why accountability has been promoted by government institutions.	Interviewees are asked who they think is demanding the Afghan government to be more accountable	The interviewees are asked whether they think citizens can make the Afghan government more accountable.	The interviewees are asked whether the government should be accountable in the current political and security situation.	If the interviewee answered 'yes' to Q13, the interviewee is asked why the government should be accountable.	If the interviewee answered 'no' to Q13, the interviewee is asked why the government should NOT be accountable.

Annex 9: Ethnic Composition of Afghanistan

Figure 10: Ethnic Composition of Afghanistan (Ali, 2012)



Annex 10: Pictures from the Field Research

Picture 1: Conducting an interview in Balkh



Picture 2: Kabul City



Picture 3: Researcher and Haji, a friend and one of my drivers



Picture 4: Female Shura

