Taliban and Afghanistan; a Systematic Literature Review

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ABSTRACT

This systematic literature review aims to enhance our understanding of the Taliban activities in Afghanistan and broaden our knowledge of the associated phenomenon. We employed a Systematic Literature Review protocol and sourced our data from the Scopus index, yielding 164 articles from which 91 were selected following a filtration process. Our analysis reveals that the resurgence of the Taliban and its organizational dynamics over the past four decades have had a significant impact on Afghanistan and its citizens. The majority of the studies in our dataset (52 articles) approached the phenomenon from a political perspective, with health issues being the second most explored topic (17 articles). The data collected in this study indicates that the majority of the literature discussing the Taliban and Afghanistan was qualitative in nature (89 articles). Our results suggest that the Taliban's current influence in Afghanistan is only weakly linked to religious motivations, contrary to the common media portrayal. Only a small number of studies in our dataset (3.29%, n=3) explored the ideological basis of the phenomenon. This paper underscores the need for further research to address the pressing political and health issues faced by the Afghan people and highlights the potential benefits of improved political stability and increased access to healthcare facilities.

Keywords: Taliban, Afghanistan, Systematic Literature Review

INTRODUCTION

The emergence of the Taliban in Afghanistan has garnered global attention, particularly within the academic community. Despite the significant impact that the rise and fall of the Taliban, US occupation of Afghanistan, and resurgence of the neo-Taliban have had, there has been a lack of scholarly attention devoted to these phenomena (Qazi, 2010). The dearth of reliable

information on Afghanistan has been largely replaced by anecdotal accounts (Macdonald, 2005), and the collection of accurate data in the country remains challenging (Bohannon, 2012). Researchers often rely on data obtained through third-party sources with close ties to the Taliban (Mohammad & Conway, 2003). The absence of pre-war data, difficulties in conducting research in a war-torn country, and limited attention paid to Afghanistan prior to September 11, 2001, have all contributed to the challenges of researching one of the least investigated countries in the world (Riphenburg, 2004).

The present study aims to deepen our understanding of the situation in Afghanistan influenced by the Taliban through a Systematic Literature Review. Conducting a systematic literature review on the issue of the Taliban in Afghanistan is crucial for gaining a comprehensive understanding of its impact on the country and its people, including politics, economy, social norms, and health. The review can synthesize existing research, identify gaps in current knowledge, provide direction for future studies, establish the state of current knowledge, and provide a platform for the consolidation of various perspectives and interpretations. This will allow policy makers, practitioners, and stakeholders to make informed decisions and take appropriate action based on a scientifically sound foundation, promoting interdisciplinary collaboration and an evidence-based approach to solving the problem. The methodology used in the study will be discussed in further detail in the following section.

RESEARCH METHOD

In this systematic literature review, we aim to provide a comprehensive overview of the existing knowledge on the phenomenon of Taliban activities in Afghanistan. By following the Systematic Literature Review protocol (Kitchenham et al., 2009), we aim to streamline the research process and efficiently synthesize the vast amount of literature available on the subject (Webster & Celik, 2014). The objective of this review is to identify, evaluate,

and understand the studies related to our research question, providing an organized and comprehensive summary of the current state of knowledge (Kitchenham, 2004). The methodology used in the study is outlined in Figure 1, with the first step being the development of clear and concise research questions, as detailed below.
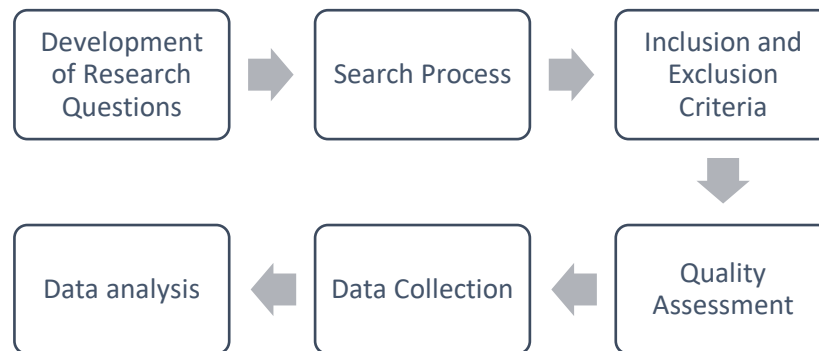
Figure 1. Systematic Literature Review Protocol (adapted from Kitchenham et al., 2009)

As suggested, the first step to performing a Systematic Literature Review is to develop research questions. To get a comprehensive answer to the situation in Afghanistan during the influence of the Taliban, we are asking the following questions:

RQ 1 : Who are the Taliban and what key individuals are associated with them?

RQ 2 : What are the ideologies of the Taliban?

RQ 3 : What is the cause of the Taliban insurgency?

RQ 4 : When is the milestone correlate with the escalation of the Taliban in Afghanistan?

RQ 5 : Where are the important locations highlighted by the Taliban in Afghanistan?

RQ 6 : How is the condition of Afghanistan during the occupation of the Taliban?

Secondly, we employ the search in the Scopus database using the search query {"taliban" AND "afghan*" [title]}, resulting in 164 works of literature. Scopus was chosen as the dataset because Scopus is the publisher under the auspices of Elsevier, which is included among the top 3 publishers based on journal price and APC (Kim & Park, 2020). The initial dataset was filtered and assessed with the criterion as follows table 1:

Table 1. Systematic Literature Review Protocol (adapted from Kitchenham et al., 2009)

Initial Search Result	164
Inaccessible	39
Gray Literature	21
Duplicates	10
Non-English	3
Accepted	**91**

Figure 2 presents the overview of the data collection results. The initial research on this theme comes from Dixit (1995) discussing the emergence of the Taliban in the Afghan civil war. The research trends noticeably rose in the year 2021, in conjunction with the US Military withdrawal from Afghanistan. Using the classification of derived Cresswell and Cresswell (2018) we found that the vast majority of the research (89 articles) employed qualitative methods. This highlights the importance of understanding the subjective experiences and perspectives of those involved in the Taliban phenomenon. When it comes to the topics explored in these articles, a significant portion (52 articles) took a political lens, focusing on the group's political impact and involvement in the region. Meanwhile, health issues were a close second, with 17 articles dedicated to exploring this aspect of the Taliban's impact. Contrary to popular media depictions, our findings suggest that the Taliban's current influence in Afghanistan is only weakly linked to religious motivations. In fact, only a small number of studies in our dataset (3.29%, or 3 articles) specifically explored the group's ideological basis. In terms of scope, politics was the most researched aspect, while the economy was the least studied. This information

is important to consider as it indicates potential areas for future research to explore and expand upon. In the next section of our study, we will present a synthesis of the findings, answering the main research question. These results provide valuable insights into the Taliban's motivations and actions and highlight the importance of further research in understudied areas such as the economy, in order to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon.
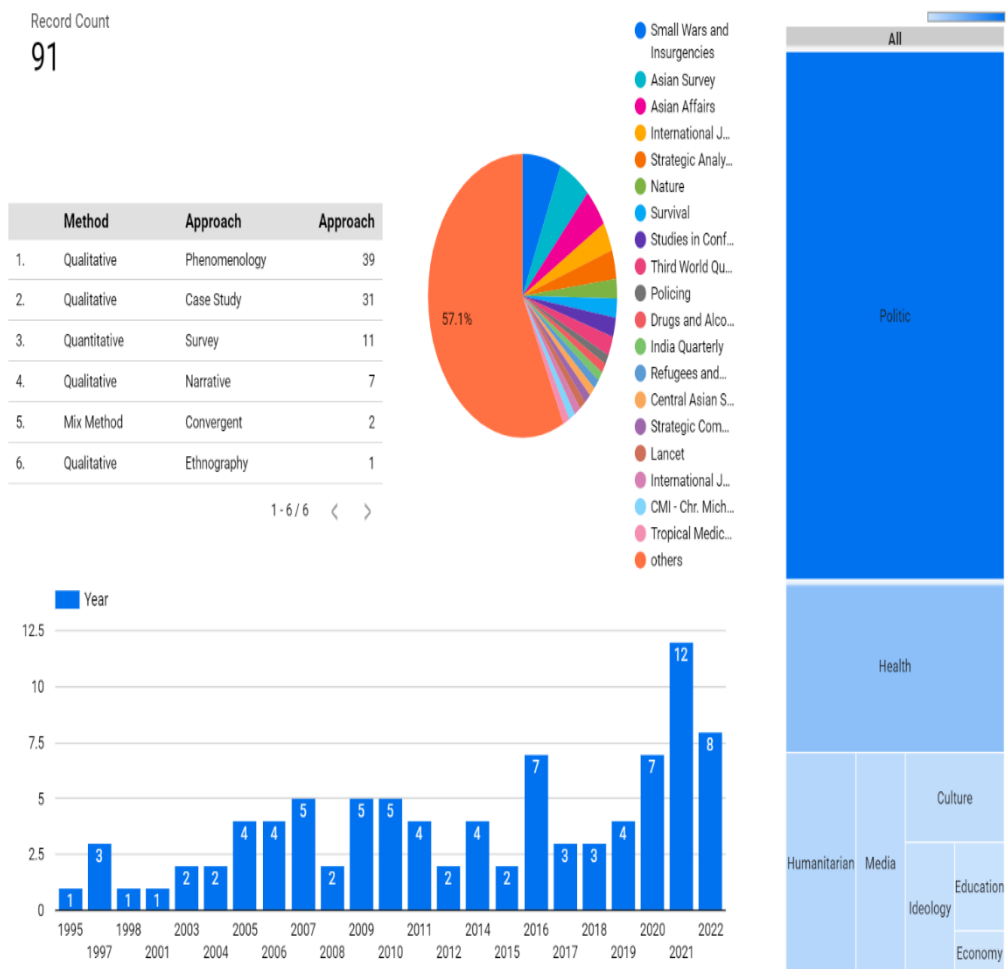
Figure 2. Visual representation of the dataset

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The Taliban and the figures associated with them.

The Taliban is a complex phenomenon that has had a profound impact on Afghanistan and its people. The origins of the Taliban can be traced back to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 and the subsequent decade of fighting, which resulted in the destruction of much of the country's infrastructure, including the educational system. A generation of young people arose who were only educated in rural madrasas in southern Afghanistan and Pakistan (Borthakur & Kotokey, 2020; Farrell & Thorne, 2005). The Taliban originated as a group of 30 madrassa students who were responding to a local warlord who had kidnapped and repeatedly raped two adolescent girls (S. Y. Ibrahimi, 2017).

The Taliban's origins as a group of religious students, and the influence of Islamic parties in Pakistan, play a crucial role in shaping the motivations and actions of the Taliban and should be thoroughly understood when studying the impact on Afghanistan. The term "Taliban" is derived from the Arabic word Talib, which means "religious student." It is loosely translated into "student militia" (Mohammad & Conway, 2003) and reflects the religious education background of the group's members, who were primarily students in Islamic schools in Afghanistan and Pakistan (Farhoumand-Sims, 2007). These religious schools were controlled by two powerful Islamic parties in Pakistan: Jamaat Islami Pakistan (JIP), led by Qazi Hussien Ahmed; and Jamaat-e-Ulema-e-Islami Pakistan (JUIP), led by Maulana Fazl-ul-Rahman (Nojumi, 2002). The Taliban's religious background and ideology are critical components of the group's motivations and actions, making it essential to understand these elements when studying the impact of the Taliban on Afghanistan.

As the Taliban gained control of Afghanistan, Mullah Omar's leadership and strict interpretation of Sharia law had a significant impact on the country. The Taliban rapidly gained control of southern Afghanistan, starting with the

city of Kandahar in 1994 and eventually capturing the capital city of Kabul in 1996 and the last significant northern city, Mazar-e Sharif, in 1998 (Coady & Solomon, 2009). The Taliban's founder and spiritual leader, Mullah Omar, joined the JUIP and adhered to the Deobandi school of thought, which is centered in India and embraced by many Hanafi Mullahs in Afghanistan (Nojumi, 2002). Under Mullah Omar's leadership, the Taliban sought to eradicate the corruption of warlords, impose strict Sharia law through a new criminal code, and create a favorable environment for trade to flourish (Coady & Solomon, 2009). He was highly regarded in southern Afghanistan's tribal and local populations due to his status as a Mujahideen commander and revered religious figure (Nojumi, 2002).

It is a commonly held belief that the Taliban is a homogeneous group dominated by Pashtuns, however, the reality of the situation is much more complex. The Taliban is not just a Pashtun-dominated group, despite Pashtuns being the largest ethnic group in Afghanistan, comprising around 42% of the population (Adeney, 2008; Drissel, 2014). Afghanistan's population is made up of eight major ethnic groups (Pashtuns, Tajiks, Hazaras, Aimaqs, Turkmen, Uzbeks, Kirghiz, and Baluchis) and several smaller sub-ethnic minorities (Nojumi, 2002). Tajiks are the second-largest group, comprising 27% of the population, followed by Hazaras and Uzbeks with around 9% each (Drissel, 2014). Although the Taliban movement originated in Pashtun-majority areas of Afghanistan, its rise cannot be reduced to a simple Pashtun phenomenon, as the Islamic element was present from the beginning (Borthakur & Kotokey, 2020). The Pashtuns have historically played an important role in the region (Lieven, 2021), but non-Pashtuns have different perspectives on the United States and NATO (Lafraie, 2009). During the Taliban rule in Afghanistan, several non-Pashtuns, including Tajiks, Uzbeks, and Hazaras, held ministerial positions (Borthakur & Kotokey, 2020).

With the emergence of the Taliban movement in 2002, the organization

became more inclusive of regional organizations while many of the "old Taliban" remained separate, only a few notable figures rejoining the movement. In 2002, the current Taliban movement emerged in Pakistan and included a variety of regional organizations. The majority of the "old Taliban" did not join the movement in 2002, with only a few notable figures from the past joining (Qazi, 2010). The original Taliban had long rejected the use of suicide bombings, as they were considered against Islam (Drissel, 2014). The Taliban's organizational structure has been categorized into three tiers by Thruelsen (2010): Tier I, the strategic leadership; Tier II, local leaders; and Tier III, less committed local supporters. The new Afghan Taliban is estimated to have between 60,000 and 70,000 active members, including both combatants and non-combatants such as informants and suppliers of necessities like lodging, food, and supplies (Drissel, 2014).

The ideology of the Taliban

The majority of Afghanistan's population is Sunni Muslim with a shared adherence to the Hanafi Fiqh, leading to a demand for national cohesion within the country. In Afghanistan, the majority of the population is Sunni Muslim, with the majority following the Hanafi Fiqh, one of the four Sunni madhhabs of jurisprudence (Riphenburg, 2004). When Islam overtook other major religions in Afghanistan, it gave rise to a new kind of demand for national cohesion (Nojumi, 2002). Although the country is primarily Muslim, it is severely divided along tribal and ethnic lines on cultural, political, and military levels (Drissel, 2014). In contrast, religious and sectarian divisions are more homogenous, with 99% of the population being Muslim, and 80% being Sunnis (Adeney, 2008).

The Taliban's origins and decision-making processes were shrouded in mystery, with the group being influenced by the strict Wahhabi interpretation of Islam taught at Saudi Arabia-funded madrassas in Pakistan. The Taliban's ideology, organizational structure, and decision-making apparatus were

initially unknown (Dixit, 1995). The fact that the Taliban are not one cohesive group adds another level of difficulty in predicting and defeating them (Coady & Solomon, 2009). The Taliban's early members were influenced by the strict Wahhabi interpretation of Islam, taught at Saudi Arabia-funded madrassas in Pakistan (T. H. Johnson & Mason, 2007). This interpretation is often labeled as "Salafism," which is used to conceal its unorthodox aspects (Mahendrarajah, 2015).

The Taliban's strict interpretation of Islam was heavily influenced by the ultra-conservative curriculum taught in Saudi Arabia-funded madrasas in Pakistan and was based on distorted interpretations of Sunni Deobandism and Pashtunwali. These madrasas taught an ultra-conservative curriculum based on Deobandi teachings and emphasized a literal understanding of the Koran (Farrell & Thorne, 2005). The Taliban aimed to establish a theocratic state based on their strict interpretation of the Qur'an (Farhoumand-Sims, 2007). However, the Darul Uloom Deoband in India stated that the Taliban's interpretation is too extreme and goes against the Deobandi movement's original goals (Borthakur & Kotokey, 2020). The Taliban's ideology was founded on distorted interpretations of Sunni Deobandism and Pashtunwali, the tribal social code of the Pashtuns in Afghanistan and Pakistan (Coady & Solomon, 2009). Some high-ranking Taliban leaders deny the influence of Wahhabism on their movement (Borthakur & Kotokey, 2020). However, after taking control of Kabul in 1996, the Taliban imposed a severe Salafist interpretation of the Quran, replacing the Hanafi tradition to forge a new pan-ethnic Afghan identity (Raqib & Barreto, 2014). As a result of the Taliban's shifting views, some traditional customs associated with the southern Pashtuns (Borthakur & Kotokey, 2020).

The cause of the Taliban insurgency
The Taliban's rise to power in Afghanistan was the result of a combination of internal support from Afghans and external backing from

regional politics, particularly Pakistan's ambitions. The rise of the Taliban in Afghanistan was influenced by both internal and external factors. Internally the Taliban was well received by many Afghans, especially fellow Pashtuns, who saw the organization as a new force for honesty, unity, and peace and stability after years of civil conflict and war (Borthakur & Kotokey, 2020; Coady & Solomon, 2009; T. H. Johnson & Mason, 2007; Qazi, 2010). Externally, regional politics, particularly Pakistan's ambitions, played a role in the foundation of the Taliban (S. Y. Ibrahimi, 2017; Sullivan, 2021). Pakistan supported the Taliban in an effort to establish a pro-Pakistan authority in Kabul (Basu, 2007; R. Johnson, 2021). To this day, the Taliban continue to receive support from Pakistan, allowing them to freely cross the border, regroup in tribal regions, and carry out organized terror campaigns in Afghanistan (Coady & Solomon, 2009; D'Souza, 2009). Despite Pakistan's commitment to the American-led War on Terror, the country continues to harbor the Taliban and conceal its actions from the United States (Bacon, 2018a; Lee et al., 2022).

The Taliban's association with al-Qaeda and the 9/11 attacks caused significant repercussions for the organization both domestically and internationally. The Taliban's decision to allow al-Qaida to establish a base in Afghanistan and carry out the 9/11 attacks on the United States was a strategic mistake that ultimately led to increased pressure from the international community (R. Johnson, 2021). The Taliban's refusal to turn over Osama bin Laden, the leader of al-Qaeda, further soured their relations with Saudi Arabia and Pakistan, despite their legitimacy in Afghanistan and international recognition (Bacon, 2018a; Coady & Solomon, 2009; Öztürk, 2019)

The Taliban's adherence to Pashtunwali, which requires protection of guests against non-Muslim outsiders in the term of *melmastia*, served as justification for providing asylum to bin Laden (Drissel, 2014; Qian, 2020).

The milestones of the Taliban in Afghanistan

The Soviet Union's occupation of Afghanistan in the 1980s disrupted the traditional tribal system of government and paved the way for the rise of the anti-Communist Mujahedin resistance movement. In the 1980s, the traditional tribal system of government in Afghanistan was disrupted by the Soviet Union's occupation, which resulted in the dispersion of the traditional elites (Baczko, 2016). This led to the rise of a robust and ardent resistance movement known as the Mujahedin, who sought to maintain power and resist Soviet rule (1979–91) (Farhoumand-Sims, 2007). The Soviet Union eventually withdrew from Afghanistan in 1989 due to intense pressure from the anti-Communist Mujahedin insurgents (Coady & Solomon, 2009). However, this withdrawal was followed by a civil war between the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan and rebel Mujahedin militants (Schricker, 2017).

The rise and fall of Taliban may be observed amidst the new millennium. In March 1994, the Taliban, a group of 30 Talibs, responded to the kidnapping and rape of local teenage girls by raiding the warlord's camp and liberating the girls. They also hanged the commander from the tank's gun barrel (S. Y. Ibrahimi, 2017). The Taliban later chose Mullah Omar as their leader, following an assembly of 1200 Islamic scholars in 1996 (N. Ibrahimi & Akbarzadeh, 2020; S. Y. Ibrahimi, 2017). By 1996, the Taliban had seized control of the nation's capital and driven the warlords into the country's north (Farhoumand-Sims, 2007). On October 13, 1997, Mullah Omar renamed Afghanistan as the "Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan" (S. Y. Ibrahimi, 2017). Despite the Taliban's defeat in 2001, the US continued to use this phrase to describe their exiled operations as a means of promoting peace (Qian, 2020).

Following the Taliban's defeat in 2001, Afghanistan's newly emerging political elites were faced with the challenge of creating a diverse and stable state. Afghanistan's newly emerging political elites had the opportunity to create an ethnically diverse state (Adeney, 2008). The Bonn Agreement, which came into effect in late 2001, served as a roadmap for the development of the

Afghan political landscape (T. H. Johnson, 2006). amid Karzai was chosen to lead Afghanistan, and he aimed to establish a hybrid legal system based on Islamic and western principles (Goodson, 2004; Mohammad & Conway, 2003). Hamid Karzai is universally considered pure, uncorrupt, and has no involvement in any crimes (Rashid, 2006). Despite that, Karzai was not well-known in Afghanistan and faced criticism for being perceived as an "impotent figurehead" by some ethnic groups (Lafraie, 2009; Qazi, 2010; Rashid, 2007). The Karzai government's failure to exercise authority beyond urban centers has allowed the Taliban to regroup in the southern parts of the country, with the intention of reasserting their power and control throughout Afghanistan (Coady & Solomon, 2009; Goodson, 2004).

Despite being thought of as "vanquished," the Taliban maintained a shadowy presence in Afghanistan during the early stages of the country's reconstruction after the fall of the Taliban regime. After being "completely vanquished," the Taliban were believed to have lost their constituency in Afghanistan, which was a key factor in excluding them from the Bonn Process (D'Souza, 2009). However, it was later revealed that the Taliban were functioning as a shadow government during this time(Drissel, 2014; Qian, 2020; Terpstra, 2020; Thruelsen, 2010). The current insurgency in Afghanistan erupted in 2003 when Taliban fighters returned from the Pakistani borderlands (Cole, 2009; Drissel, 2014). The inability of US-led forces to control the situation in Afghanistan and end the insurgency has been attributed to a lack of personnel and insufficient nation-building efforts(Qazi, 2010).

With the reemergence of the Taliban and Al-Qaida fighters, Afghanistan once again faced a wave of insurgency and terrorism aimed at destabilizing the country. In 2006, a coalition of Taliban and Al-Qaida fighters reemerged and began a campaign of insurgency and terrorist attacks aimed at destabilizing Afghanistan (R. Johnson, 2021). According to reports, the Taliban have taken

advantage of this opportunity to reclaim control of the country(Coady & Solomon, 2009). he modern jihadist movement, which has its roots in religious conflict, is a relatively recent phenomenon, although violence has been a part of daily life in Afghanistan for a long time (Baczko, 2016; N. Ibrahimi & Akbarzadeh, 2020). Despite the societal taboo against physical aggression, many Afghans see it as appropriate in certain circumstances (Li et al., 2018).

The Taliban's leadership structure experienced a shift and changes in the group's hierarchy. The Taliban's leadership structure has undergone recent changes, with Mullah Omar no longer serving as the group's Supreme Leader (Qazi, 2010). Omar took charge of a nearby madrasah to resume his religious pursuits and was critical of the former Mujahideen leaders who engaged in power struggles that resulted in widespread killing and destruction, worse than the effects of the Soviet invasion (Nojumi, 2002). In July 2015, it was revealed that Mullah Omar had passed away from tuberculosis in 2013 (Sullivan, 2021), and his death was kept secret by the Taliban's inner circle for two years (N. Ibrahimi & Akbarzadeh, 2020; Terpstra, 2022). His successor, Mullah Muhammad Akhtar Mansour, was assassinated by a US drone in Pakistan in May 2016, and Mullah Hibatullah Akhundzada has been leading the movement since then (N. Ibrahimi & Akbarzadeh, 2020).

Amid the ongoing conflict in Afghanistan, the relationship between the Taliban and its international allies has been a dynamic one, with recent reports suggesting a shift in the dynamics. The relationship between the Taliban and its international supporters may change. In 2020, reports surfaced that Iran and Russia had offered rewards to Afghan militants for killing American and coalition personnel (Sullivan, 2021). These nations saw the rise of the Islamic State-Khorasan Province (IS-K) as a threat and believed that the Taliban could help counter it, further solidifying their relationship with the Taliban (Bacon, 2018a). The IS-K has maintained a complex relationship with the Taliban since its establishment in 2015 (N. Ibrahimi & Akbarzadeh, 2020). In 2019, Moscow

facilitated peace talks between the Taliban and its Afghan rivals, but the then-president, Ashraf Ghani, declined to participate (Öztürk, 2019). Subsequently, another round of peace talks took place in Qatar (Behuria et al., 2019).

Despite years of US and international efforts to neutralize the Taliban, the group's current takeover marked their resurgence as a proto-state. The Taliban's resurgence, which culminated in the takeover of Kabul in 2021, was predicted years before it happened, where the group spent time and resources establishing a proto-state organization with official protocols, documents, and regulations, while battling the US Army (Baczko, 2016). In urban areas, the Taliban is aware of the significance of flying white flags with the Shahada, which represent their claim to be a governing body (Sullivan, 2021). The US and the Taliban signed a deal in Doha in 2020, leading to the Taliban's takeover of Kabul in 2021 (Maley & Jamal, 2022). This marks the human cost of the "War on Terror," as the US and its allies have tried to neutralize the Afghan Taliban for nearly two decades without success (Ruchel, 2021; Sullivan, 2021).

The strategic locations of the Taliban

Afghanistan's regional background, with a legacy shaped by the historical struggles has contributed to its reputation as a place of dissent and isolation since the rise of the Taliban as a theocratic power. The legacy of the Russian and British Empires' prolonged struggle during the 19th century has shaped the current borders of Afghanistan (Basu, 2007; Maletta, 2007). Historically, the region has been known as "Yaghistan," meaning "the place of anarchy, insurrection, or dissent," by local inhabitants rather than Western observers (Lieven, 2021). Afghanistan is located in the "Greater Ariana," a vast territory stretching from Tajikistan to the Maldives in the north and from Burma to Iran in the east (Barzegar, 2014). The country has been isolated from the rest of the world since the Taliban's rise to power as a theocracy (Modebadze, 2022).

In previous and subsequent chapters, we have explored the significance

of the Taliban and Afghanistan. However, we now turn our attention to another crucial location for the Taliban: Pakistan. Although Pakistan's government has acknowledged contact with the Taliban, it lacks any actual control over them (Bacon, 2018b). The Taliban have been exporting their ideology through DVDs produced in Quetta, Pakistan (Drissel, 2014). Despite Pakistan's denial of involvement in Afghanistan during the IEA's leadership, the majority of international papers and scholarly works available to the public support Pakistan's establishment, sponsorship, and mobilization of the Taliban (S. Y. Ibrahimi, 2017). As Schricker (2017) shows, the Afghan Taliban can influence the behavior of the Pakistani Taliban, but not vice versa. Despite being a significant backer of the Taliban, the relationship between Pakistan and the Taliban remains fraught (Bacon, 2018b). Although the Pakistani Tehrik-e Taliban Pakistan shares a similar ideology with the Afghan Taliban, they have only ever attempted to sabotage elections (Giustozzi, 2016).

The condition of Afghanistan during the Taliban times

The Taliban's rule in Afghanistan was marked by widespread poverty, gender disparity, and underdevelopment, with the country's economy relying heavily on opium production. During the Taliban times in Afghanistan, the nation was characterized by poverty, gender inequality, and limited human resource development (Blum et al., 2019). The Karzai administration was plagued by corruption, and the country's economy was based on opium production (Coady & Solomon, 2009). Only a small fraction of Afghanistan's land, less than 4% of its 655,000 square kilometers, was suitable for agriculture and even less was irrigated (Emadi, 2011). Opium, the Taliban's primary source of income, was largely produced in the southern province of Helmand (Thruelsen, 2010).

The Taliban's rule in Afghanistan saw the country become heavily reliant on the opium trade as a source of revenue. The Taliban imposed an *ushr* tax of up to 25% on agricultural products, including opium, which became a

significant source of revenue for their fight to take over the country in the mid-1990s (S. Y. Ibrahimi, 2017; Macdonald, 2005). The Afghans perceived opium as more profitable than wheat and did not view it as haram as the proceeds from the drug trade were used to combat the kafir (Macdonald, 2005; Modebadze, 2022). In 2000, Afghanistan was estimated to produce 3.276 tons of opium from 82,171 hectares of poppy cultivation, accounting for approximately 75% of the global supply (S. Y. Ibrahimi, 2017). he Taliban and populations in southern Afghanistan, Iran, and Baluchistan in Pakistan were involved in opium trafficking (Thruelsen, 2010). However, the elimination of opium trade and poppy farming began to take place between 1998 and 2000 due to increasing internal and international pressure (Farrell & Thorne, 2005). Despite this, the opium trade and poppy farming increased throughout the Karzai presidency (Trace, 2005). his may be due to the Taliban's activities during their exile period when they provided financial support to individuals in exchange for allegiance to the rebels fighting the government (R. Johnson, 2021).

The Taliban's control over Afghanistan was maintained through a complex network of financial sources, including and support from international jihadists. In addition to opium production, Afghanistan also emerged as a significant producer of crystal methamphetamine due to the growth of naturally occurring ephedra plants in the country's mountainous regions (Modebadze, 2022). In addition, the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan received logistical and military support from Pakistan worth $5 million, as well as financial support from Arab jihadists, including Osama bin Laden, worth between $10 million and $20 million annually (S. Y. Ibrahimi, 2017). The Taliban also created stable funding streams through extortion, abduction, and smuggling of gems and lumber (Bacon, 2018a; Modebadze, 2022).

Under the Taliban regime, Afghanistan was known for its strict laws and regulations that controlled people's daily lives and cultural expression.

The Taliban regime was known for imposing strict laws and regulations, including the banning of music and the repression of women (Weigand, 2017). During their rule, people were not allowed to listen to music and news and information was strictly controlled (Coady & Solomon, 2009; Riphenburg, 2004). The Taliban government seizes and burns musical instruments as well as recreational equipment including a television, cassette player, and recordings (Shorthose, 2003), deeming it as the tool of *Shaytan* (Satan), except for drums, which were thought to be a component of Islamic culture (T. H. Johnson & Waheed, 2011). The Taliban leadership allegedly instructed 10 men armed with hammers to destroy the Bamiyan Buddha statue in February 2001 (Shorthose, 2003). However, a global effort coordinated by UNESCO was made to restore the historic site after its destruction (Margottini, 2009).

Despite efforts to improve the status of women in Afghanistan, the Taliban's conservative interpretation of Islam resulted in the repression of women's rights and opportunities during their rule. Islam was interpreted in a conservative and traditional manner during the Taliban rule, which placed women in a lower status than men (Riphenburg, 2004). Despite the rhetoric surrounding the war on terror, it did not immediately result in improvements in the status, rights, or opportunities of Afghan women (Farhoumand-Sims, 2007). While some NGOs and government agencies worked to improve the school system, particularly for girls who suffered the most under the Taliban, there were flaws in their plans, initiatives, and financial support (Alvi-Aziz, 2008).

The Taliban insurgency in Afghanistan has undergone a transformation in recent years, evolving into a loosely connected collection of functional groups operating under the Taliban banner, referred to as the "Neo-Taliban" or "Taliban 4.0". The Taliban insurgency in Afghanistan today is not a unified structure, but rather a collection of loosely connected functional groups that operate under the Taliban banner (D'Souza, 2009; Qazi, 2010; Wani, 2021;

Weigand, 2017). The insurgency is consistent with the advancement of technology and has evolved into the "Taliban 4.0" or "Neo-Taliban" (Drissel, 2014; Mahendrarajah, 2014; Wani, 2021). One of the recent communication strategies employed by the Neo-Taliban is the creation of radical-Islamist message-heavy songs on cassette tapes and CDs that adhere to ultraconservative Islamic tradition (Drissel, 2014). Music was crucial in preserving the unity of Afghanistan's ethnically diverse population (Shorthose, 2003). The researcher Johnson & Waheed (2011). discovered that people are passing around Taliban chants via Bluetooth. The Taliban have efficient media representatives who can get their story into international media within 60 minutes of a major incident (Öztürk, 2019; Thruelsen, 2010). The Taliban's spokesperson, Zabihullah Mujahid, claimed that the Taliban would free Afghanistan from foreign occupation with the "blessings of Allah" (Behuria et al., 2019). The Taliban has reorganized and has been using information and communication technology (ICTs) effectively in their fresh revolutionary insurgency (Bahar, 2020; Drissel, 2014). Twitter response to the Taliban's reoccupation in 2021 showed a neutral posture toward the event, with positive sentiment outpacing negative sentiment (Lee et al., 2022).

The Taliban's takeover of Afghanistan resulted in major disruptions to the country's healthcare system and put the health of the population, especially women, at risk. The takeover of Afghanistan by the Taliban had significant impacts on the country's healthcare system. According to Das (2021), the Taliban's control of Afghanistan resulted in issues within the healthcare system being highlighted by international groups. Jain et al. (2021) report that many healthcare workers were forced to leave and some were not being paid for months, which had similar effects on the academic world (Mallapaty, 2022). The Taliban was known to publicly ridicule and humiliate doctors, as reported by Maley (1997, p. 743). Afghanistan's legacy of war, including landmines, has led to high rates of locomotor disabilities among the

population, particularly in the Kandahar Province (François et al., 1998). The situation is even worse for women, who often receive less attention and medical care than other patients (Riphenburg, 2004). he strict segregation of medical personnel only exacerbates these problems, putting the health of pregnant women and newborns at risk (Sharma et al., 2022). Under the Taliban, one physician, the sole gynecologist with training in southern Afghanistan, was permitted to practice, in part because the Taliban's officials brought their wives to him (Qaderi et al., 2021; Riphenburg, 2004). The takeover of Afghanistan by the Taliban occurred as the country was grappling with the third wave of COVID-19, which had 155,132 confirmed cases and 7,128 fatalities (Martellucci et al., 2021). The long-running political conflict and COVID-19 pandemic have combined to create a complex humanitarian crisis that has further added to Afghanistan's growing mental health burden (Mohd Saleem et al., 2021; Razjouyan et al., 2022).

CONCLUSION

The Taliban is a complex and multi-layered phenomenon that has its roots in the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and the emergence of a group of young madrasa students in southern Afghanistan and Pakistan. The Taliban's religious and ideological background, based on a strict interpretation of Sunni Deobandism and Pashtunwali, has been critical in shaping the group's motivations and actions. The Taliban's rise was a result of a combination of internal and external factors, including the support of Pakistan, the appeal of their message of peace and stability, and their decision to provide asylum to Osama bin Laden. However, the Taliban's alliance with al-Qaeda led to increased pressure from the international community, and their strict laws and regulations resulted in poverty, gender inequality, and limited human resource development during their rule in Afghanistan. The Taliban insurgency has evolved into the "Neo-Taliban", and their ideology has been exported to Pakistan where it has influenced the Tehrik-e Taliban Pakistan.

The Taliban takeover of Afghanistan had significant impacts on the healthcare system, including the reduction of health services and widespread poverty. It is important to understand the complex and nuanced history of the Taliban and their ideology to better address the ongoing conflict in Afghanistan.

In light of the above findings, it is suggested that to improve the situation in Afghanistan, a comprehensive approach should be taken that addresses not only the security issues, but also the underlying social, economic, and political factors that have contributed to the rise of the Taliban. This could include investing in education, healthcare, and economic development, as well as promoting gender equality and human rights. Additionally, promoting regional stability and cooperation between neighboring countries, especially Pakistan, would be critical in addressing the ongoing conflict.

Future researchers could benefit from exploring the role of regional actors in the Taliban insurgency, as well as the potential for reconciliation and peace-building efforts. Moreover, further investigation into the social and economic impacts of the Taliban's rule in Afghanistan would provide valuable insights into the challenges faced by the Afghan people and the potential for sustainable development. In conclusion, the Taliban remains a significant challenge for Afghanistan, but with a better understanding of their origins, ideology, and impacts, future efforts to address the conflict and promote stability can be guided by evidence-based approaches.

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