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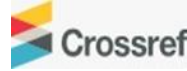
An Analysis of the Crucial Role of Religious Extremism Contributes to Afghanistan's Political Instability



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Abstract

Purpose: Political stability in Afghanistan has been hindered by religious extremism. However, several parties have grown up within the country to oppose the government. These extremist groups employ suffering as a means of gaining political power rather than simply using religion. Because Sunni, Shia, Hanafi, Wahhabi, and other religious individuals live and work to promote their religions, religious extremism has a significant effect on Afghanistan's political stability. This has led to numerous problems between the citizens and the government. Several explosions have happened in mosques targeting Shia. It is believed that non-Muslims are using this tactic to extend the ongoing conflict in Afghanistan distinctively. This paper aims to analyze the impact of religious extremism on political instability in Afghanistan. In this paper, the analysis is based on the fact that religious extremists have a great impact on the political stability of Afghanistan.

Materials and Methods: The study emphasizes analytical and descriptive approaches to gathering and analyzing data, which is more consistent with qualitative studies. The primary approaches used to gather data for qualitative

research encompass focus groups, observation, and interviews.

Findings: The results of this study are as follows: (1) The analysis of religion is considered one of the important elements in Afghanistan, five categories of participants have different opinions about this response, 51% of respondents agree that religious extremes have an impact on Afghanistan political stability, 38% of participants strongly agree that religion has an impact on political stability in Afghanistan; (2) the supporting of militant groups has an impact on Afghan political instability, 5% of participants are neutral about this response, and 3% of the participants are strongly disagree about the above response.

Implications to Theory, Practice and Policy: We recommend that the Afghan government strictly obey the rule of Islam and international partners should cooperate with Afghanistan in this field.

Keywords: *Afghanistan, Religious Extremism, Islamic Groups, Militant Groups, Political Instability*

1.0 INTRODUCTION

There has been more than a century of Islamist activity in Afghanistan before the present wave of religious extremism. It is a component of how the main streams of Islamist ideologies and groups have developed in that nation. The mid-1800s Anglo-Afghan Wars were patriotic liberation battles that were approved as "holy wars" by Afghan religious authorities to gain legitimacy and inspire combatants. During the late nineteenth century, Islamist doctrines acquired appeal beyond their initial gathering point thanks to the contributions of important intellectuals like Sayed Jamaludin al-Afghani. However, until the rise of parties influenced by the Muslim Brotherhood in the 1960s, no Islamist movement, party, or philosophy gained significant traction (Ahmadi, 2015). From the start of hostilities in the late 1970s against the Soviet-backed communist Democratic Republic of Afghanistan, and with assistance given to the mujahideen by the US, Pakistan, and the Arab nations, instances of violent extremism emerged in Afghanistan. To build religious schools for Afghans in Pakistan's tribal areas, Saudi Arabia and other nations channeled large amounts of money through Pakistan during the 1980s, and many of these seminaries began promoting extremist agendas (Moeed Yusuf, Scott Smith, Colin Cookman, 2013). These events contributed to the emergence of the Taliban movement in the middle of the 1990s.

Some of the most ideologically driven Taliban militants continue to emerge from madrassas in Pakistan's tribal areas, even after the U.S.-led war in Afghanistan overthrew the Taliban leadership in 2001. However, neither this nor Pakistan is a straightforward instance of cross-border radicalization. (nor are Gulf Arab donors) They are completely responsible for the violent extremism that exists in contemporary Afghanistan. Numerous religious groups are currently present in Afghanistan, including groups that may hold similar beliefs and support violence against the state but lack armed cadres and have not been directly connected to violent attacks against the state or its supporters, to violent extremist groups like the Taliban and the militant wing of the political party Hezb-e Islami Gulbuddin, Tehrik-e Taliban Pakistan. (Shahrani, 2017). The latter groups, such as Jamiat-e Eslah (Society for Reform) and Hizb ut-Tahrir (Party of Islamic Freedom), are not associated with acts of violence against the state.³ There are also active Wahhabist and Salafist preachers and ideologues; ⁴ the majority stay nonaligned and abstain from violence (Abdulmanan, (2016)). However, a small number have joined the insurgency in Afghanistan which is crucial to the radicalization and recruitment process. Both violent extremist and nonviolent Islamist groups should be considered in programming aimed at preventing violent extremism (CVE) so that a deeper comprehension of the peaceful groups can serve as the foundation for communication and involvement, producing a counterbalance to the violent extremists' increasing influence. Specifically, understanding the factors that influence people to join extremist organizations should be beneficial for creating CVE tactics (Akhlaq, 2015).

Problem Statement

Political stability is directly related to the various domestic factors of a country. If there is religious extremism in a country, it is difficult or impossible for political development to take place there. There is plenty of research work available on political stability/instability however, due to the lack of research culture in Afghanistan and various other contextual barriers, no evidence is out there provided by the research community that offers a clear picture of the country in terms of responsible factors for the decade's long nature of political instability. Moreover, the study at hand aims to figure out those factors that play a consistent role in making Afghanistan politically unstable through various data sources. The study will also consider the pivotal role of the regional

and neighboring countries and their contribution to the political instability of Afghanistan. Hence, the current study is entitled “An Analysis of the Crucial Role of religious extremism contributes to Afghanistan’s political instability”.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

Religious extremism is another important cause of political instability in Afghanistan. Historically, there have been differences between Sunni and Shi’a and also within these religions. It often dragged Afghanistan to political instability. The story of religious extremism in Afghanistan since the time of Ghazi Amanullah Khan, the beginning of the governor rule, and also the time of the Soviet Union’s invasion of Afghanistan, in those days, there was a wave of propaganda against the government when the Arabs were among the first to start religious extremism in Afghanistan. They were equal to it. The regime of the time and all the middle classes were emphasized (Muhammad Fahim Khan, Sajid Ali , Hashmatullah Khan., 2021). During those years, the ideological seed of (Takfir) of the type seen in the Arab world supported the camps of Afghan refugees in Pakistan, which was propagated by several radical Arab figures such as Ayman al-Zawahiri in certain circles.

With the American military attack on Afghanistan, extremism increased dramatically in the new phase of fundamentalism, not only the Americans, but all those who worked with them were taken under the knife of takfir and called out of the circle of Islam, this time the ax of fundamentalism came into action much more victoriously than in the past. The most important reason for their decisive action was that some people and political movements joined hands with the Americans and destroyed the Islamic Emirate of the Taliban (ZAIF, (2011)). Therefore, they deserved to be takfired destroyed. The head of the Mujahedeen government also targeted Osama bin Laden called Burhanuddin Rabbani and his colleagues apostates and called irreligious in the first television interviews after the fall of the Taliban, which were broadcast on Al Jazeera network at that time (Abdulmanan, (2016)). As the official religion of Afghanistan, Islam has been a unifying element, but not religion, rather than the unifying nature and solidarity. It has intensified the conflicts and social divisions. Based on the religious criteria, then society is divided into followers of the Shia Sunni religion in a general classification. Political parties, groups, and forces are also included in this general criterion, regardless of the conflicts and internal conflicts of the spectrums of religious conflicts and the fractionalization of the forces (Safari, (2016)).

The basis of religion raised important issues the conflict and political conflict caused by the factor of religion with the historical background of Afghan society and the contagion of this conflict from outside by foreigners has always intensified and has affected the relationship between Sunni and Shia political groups (Farmilee, (2018)). Emphasis on the future political structure of the country based on Hanafi jurisprudence is considered the most important point of conflict between the two sides (Hashaimi, (2016)). If Islam, as the official religion of Afghanistan, has a comprehensive effect on the followers of all religions, on the contrary, the religion has the function of separation and fragmentation, which divides the Afghan society into two parts Shia and Sunni.

Within these two religions, there are other sects and religious tendencies, each of which provides the basis for the conflict in Afghanistan Invalid source specified. However, Central Asian countries have joint horror from transnational crime and Islamic extremism and the presence of various extremist groups that exist in this area, for instance, the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU),

Islamic Jihad Union, Jamat Ansarullah and also from Central Asian ISIS militant (Amin, 2022), concerns about the worsening of the security environment and operations of Non-state actors in Northern Area of Afghanistan and transmission of border and attacks, passing drug trafficking from the territory of Afghanistan, as well as the humanitarian tragedy of numerous populations of refugees and immigrants who go to these countries and cause the crisis in this region (Shahi, 2022). After the collapse of the Soviet Union, these countries took geopolitics into account in their relations with Afghanistan, and each of them cooperated to maintain this region safely. However, according to geopolitical perspectives accessing directly the Central Asian region, the policy of strategic depth in Afghanistan vis-à-vis India, and also from the geo-economic point of view (Muhammad Fahim Khan, Sajid Ali , Hashmatullah Khan., (2021)), the opening transit route between Pakistan and central Asia, the possibility of accessing oil and gas natural sources of central Asian countries and turning Afghanistan into a consumer goods market, expansion of ideological influence in Afghanistan and so on (Sardar Mohammad Rahimi, Abbas Arify, 2020).

3.0 MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study emphasizes analytical and descriptive approaches to gathering and analyzing data, which is more consistent with qualitative studies. The primary approaches used to gather data for qualitative research encompass focus groups, observation, and interviews (Creswell, 2007). So based on the notion of Creswell and Flick (2007), this study focuses on the primary data that would be collected through expert interviews including scholars, politicians, and other relevant people. Since the issue to be addressed in this study is too much elaboration and needs a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon, therefore, unstructured interviews are intended with the experts, seminal authors, and other intellectuals. The saturation point will be determined when all the phenomenon properties are covered (Miles and Huberman, 1996) and when nothing new is expected to emerge from the data collection (Charmaz, 2006). Moreover, secondary sources for data have also been used for this study such as credible research articles from peer-reviewed journals, relevant books, and some cases internet sites have also been used. A questionnaire has been used for the collection of quantitative data to gather the most authentic information from the people living in Afghanistan. Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS) 23 version software has been used to analyze the data and find the results.

4.0 FINDINGS

This research was conducted with various professionals on this topic. Most of them agreed that religious extremism has an impact on political instability in Afghanistan.

Table 1: Religious Extremism Is Considered One of the Important Elements of Instability in Afghanistan Do You Agree?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Disagree	12	2.70	2.70	2.70
Disagree	12	2.70	2.70	5.41
Neutral	13	5.41	5.41	10.81
Agree	30	51.35	51.35	62.16
Strongly Agree	25	37.84	37.84	100.00
Total	93	100.00	100.00	

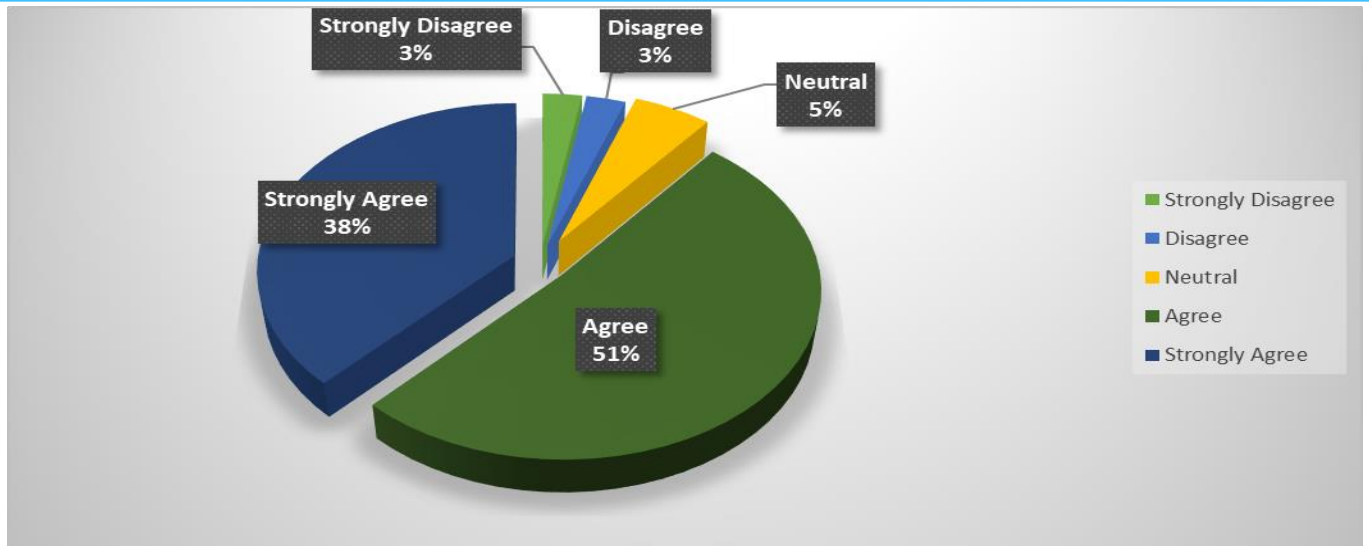


Figure 1: Religious Extremism Is Considered One of the Important Elements of Instability in Afghanistan Do You Agree?

According to the analysis of religious extremism is considered as one of the important elements of instability in Afghanistan, five categories of participants have different opinions about this response, 51% of respondents agree that religious extremism has an impact on Afghanistan's political stability, 38% of participants strongly agree that religious extremism have on impact on political stability in Afghanistan, 5% have neutral opinion about this respond, 3% of the participants are disagree and 3% of the participants are strongly disagree about the impact of religious extremism on Afghanistan political stability.

Table 2: Does the Support of Religious Militant Groups Have an Impact on Political Instability in Afghanistan?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Disagree	0	0.00	0.00	0.00
Disagree	16	2.70	2.70	2.70
Neutral	22	5.41	5.41	8.11
Agree	27	45.95	45.95	54.05
Strongly Agree	27	45.95	45.95	100.00
Total	93	100.00	100.00	

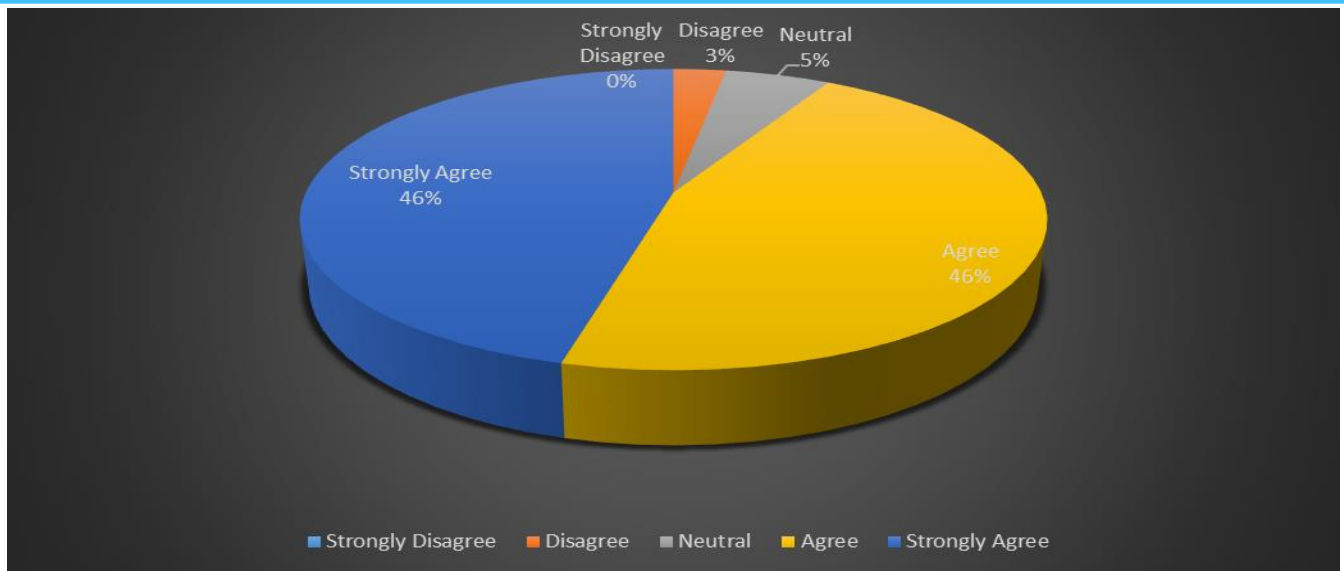


Figure 2: Does the Support of Religious Militant Groups Have an Impact on Political Instability in Afghanistan?

To analyze the supporting of religious militant groups on political instability in Afghanistan, from the participants of 46% strongly agree about supporting militant groups' impact on political instability in Afghanistan, 46% of participants agree with this response, 5% of respondents are neutral about the impact of supporting religious militant groups on Afghanistan political instability, and 3% of the participants are disagree about the above response.

Discussion

Religious extremism is the major obstacle to political stability, however, there are many groups inside Afghanistan against timely government, some extremist groups use hardship instead of easily implementing religion, which paves the way for their political instability. Unfortunately, for five decades the modernization of the people has been considered against stable government, which impacts political instability, however, regional countries used and support for their interest, even if they caused to overthrow the government it is not acceptable for them to democratically elect the head of the government, Afghanistan is still suffering from religious extremism, different interpretation from Islam is the only reason for religious assassination, in the history of Afghanistan several governments have been accused and destroyed by Islamic extremists accused of blasphemy and infidelity. On the other hand, misuse of religion by some religious groups has caused political instability in Afghanistan. Since 2001 in Afghanistan some terrorist networks that are considered religious extremists have carried out massive explosions in crowded areas which killed thousands of people.

According to political analysts, civil activists and journalists said that about the impact of religious extremism on political instability in Afghanistan “religious extremism has a great impact on Afghanistan’s political stability because the Wahhabi, Hanafi, panipuri, Sunni, Shia, and other religious people live and each strives to advance their religion. Similarly, some political leaders use religious extremist groups for their purposes, and it has created many problems between the government and the public, many explosions occurred in the mosques on Shia and some of them on sunny so this is the policy of Non-Muslims to prolong the current war in Afghanistan from a

different way. Religious groups do not pay attention to national interests when achieving their goals, and other religious groups are students who go to other countries, they then work for the benefit of others and choose to separate from their country and use the intelligence services as a tool.

5.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

religious extremism has a great impact on Afghanistan's political stability, because the Wahhabi, Hanafi, panjperi, Sunni, Shia, and other religious people live and each strive to advance their religion. Similarly, some political leaders use religious extremist groups for their purposes, and it has created many problems between the government and the public, many explosions occurred in the mosques on Shia and some of them on sunny so this is the policy of Non-Muslims to prolong the current war in Afghanistan from a different way. Religious groups do not pay attention to national interests when achieving their goals, and other religious groups are students who go to other countries, they then work for the benefit of others and choose to separate from their country and use the intelligence services as a tool. According to the analysis of religious extremism is considered as one of the important elements of instability in Afghanistan, five categories of participants have different opinions about this response, 51% of respondents agree that religious extremism has an impact on Afghanistan's political stability, 38% of participants strongly agree that religious extremism have on impact on political stability in Afghanistan, 5% have neutral opinion about this respond, 3% of the participants are disagree and 3% of the participants are strongly disagree about the impact of religious extremism on Afghanistan political stability.

Recommendations

We recommend that the people of Afghanistan should obey the directions of Islam in their life wherever they live. We recommend that the current government should maintain the balance of relations with Islamic groups. We suggest that the Islamic emirate of Afghanistan advance the awareness of Islamic soldiers about the right direction of Islam. We request for the neighboring countries that do not support opposite Islamic groups across the Afghanistan government. We request that the United Nations and other global partners that attention to the religion & culture of the Afghan people.

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