

**FAILED STATES AND TILLY'S THEORY:  
A HISTORICAL REVISION OF FUNCTIONAL FAILURE  
IN THE AFGHAN CASE**

by Michele Benazzo

*Introduction*

The term “failed state” rose to the public attention throughout the ‘90s to describe some states whose “authority, (legitimate power), law, and political order have fallen apart”<sup>1</sup>. As being potentially the breeding ground for “terrorism, narcotics trade, weapons proliferation, and other forms of organized crime”, failed states entered in Western countries’ security agendas and academic interests too<sup>2</sup>. The debate largely politicized and became massively policy-oriented as the research alternatively proposed the Weberian-style liberal democracy as a panacea to fix failed states, or refused it, considering state failure justification for “intrusive policies” in Third World countries<sup>3</sup>. However, since the threats posed by

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<sup>1</sup> I.W. ZARTMAN, *Collapsed states: the disintegration and restoration of legitimate authority*, CITY, Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1995, p.1.

<sup>2</sup> S. D. KRASNER, C. PASCUAL, *Addressing state failure*, in “Foreign Affairs”, n.84, 2005; C. PLUMMER, *Failed States and Connections to Terrorist Activity*, in “International Criminal Justice Review”, n. 22, 2012; J. A. PIAZZA, *Rooted in Poverty?: Terrorism, Poor Economic Development, and Social Cleavages*, in “Terrorism and Political Violence”, n. 18, 2006; J. A. PIAZZA, *Incubators of terror: Do failed and failing states promote transnational terrorism?*, in “International Studies Quarterly”, n. 52, 2008.

<sup>3</sup> M. BØÅS, K. M. JENNINGS, *Failed States and state failure: threats or opportunity*, in “Globalizations”, n. 4, 2007, p. 483. For an overview of the literature pro and against Western-oriented political solution see respectively F. FUKUJAMA, *State-building: Governance and World order in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, Ithaca, New York, Cornell University Press, 2004, and N. CHOMSKY, *Failed states: the abuse of power and the assault on democracy*, New York, Metropolitan Books, 2006.

failed states” turned to be less urgent and more diffuse than was originally suggested”, the overall interest about this topic continuously decreased and some argued that the term should be abandoned<sup>4</sup>.

In truth, the interest on failed states overall, rather than being motivated by security issues, nowadays is explicable with the need of understanding if and how states, in a Westernized conceptualization, are viable institutional projects in non-Western areas. To this extent, the notion of failed state is truly “new”, as pointed out by Rotberg, because today “the international system’s need for states is as great as ever” for letting local and global levels coexist<sup>5</sup>. Beyond security implications, two general elements stood up decisively in the research on failed states.

First, state failure in his functional sense – the incapacity of solving “three intertwined narratives” typical of the Western state prototype such as providing Security, Representation and Welfare – is ultimately a comparison between a designated state and the Weberian-style statehood which became the most important term of reference<sup>6</sup>. Second, since states run dynamically along a continuum, the need for assessing state failure historically has been vastly reported so to identify contextual-based possible causes of failure<sup>7</sup>.

Although the adoption of historical research with a local focus is fundamental, the number of states which have been targeted as failed, at some stage of their development since the end of the Cold War, makes the problem to be addressed more powerfully by considering general factors as well<sup>8</sup>. Consequently, the historical evolution of the general Western-style statemaking process, against which states are compared to for being defined as failed or not, might be relevant as well.

This article will try to reconcile all these elements by assessing how

<sup>4</sup> M.J. MAZARR, *The rise and fall of the failed state-paradigm*, in “Foreign Affairs”, n. 93, 2014.

<sup>5</sup> Quotations respectively from R. I. ROTBERG, *The New Nature of Nation-State Failure*, in “The Washington Quarterly”, n. 25, 2002 and from C. CLAPHAM, *The Challenge to the State in a Globalized World*, in “Development and Change”, n. 33, 2002, p.775.

<sup>6</sup> J. MILIKEN, K. KRAUSE, *State Failure, State Collapse, and State Reconstruction: Concepts, Lessons and Strategies*, in “Development and Change”, n. 33, 2002, p.756. Along with the functional failure, the literature recognizes the institutional failure that will not be part of this article as not relevant for our purpose.

<sup>7</sup> R. DORFF, *Addressing the Challenges of Failed States*, paper presented to Failed States Conference, Italy, April 2000.

<sup>8</sup> P. D. WILLIAMS, *War and Conflict in Africa*, Cambridge UK, Polity Press, 2016, ch.1.

the notion of functional failure is historically bounded to Western statemaking.

The concept of functional failure will be broken into his fundamental sub-components: Security, Representation, and Wealth and Welfare<sup>9</sup>. Although acknowledging that these narratives are deeply interconnected, considering them separately in a single work would have made the analysis bulky and too much compressed. Consequently, this article will leave the analysis of Security and Representation functions to further ad-hoc studies, and will just consider the Wealth and Welfare one. This one will be defined as the capacity “firstly, to maintain conducive conditions for economic development within their territories, and secondly to collect the rents [...] with which to meet their costs and provide welfare benefits for their citizens”<sup>10</sup>.

Regarding the general Western statemaking process, this article will employ Tilly’s ‘warmaking-statemaking’ theory as an intellectual point of reference. This choice is grounded mainly on two factors. First, Tilly’s theorization had been employed as fundament for the major part of state failure’s historical analyses. Second, Tilly’s arguments itself resulted unaltered in its application to state failure, as theories principally explained the latter as a missed implementation of Tillean postulates due to external causes<sup>11</sup>. On the contrary, this article will try to propose an alternative interpretation of Tilly’s theory which could potentially fit better with the concept of functional failure.

To integrate a local perspective, such a historical evolution will be compared to the Afghan experience to verify differences and similarities respect to Western history. Afghanistan has been chosen, first, because since the early ‘90s it has been labelled as a prototype of failed states. Second, because unlike other states which had been labelled as failed, no formal Western colonialism ever occurred, which make Afghanistan quite a unique case.

<sup>9</sup> These terms are from J. MILIKEN, K. KRAUSE, *State Failure, State Collapse, and State Reconstruction: Concepts, Lessons and Strategies*, cit., pp. 753-774.

<sup>10</sup> C. CLAPHAM, *The Challenge to the State in a Globalized World*, cit., p. 792.

<sup>11</sup> Two major works on that are A. LEANDER, *Wars and the un-Making of States: Taking Tilly Seriously in the Contemporary World* in S. GUZZINI, D. JUNG (eds.), “Copenhagen Peace Research: Conceptual Innovations and Contemporary Security Analysis”, London and New York, Routledge, 2004 and B. D. TAYLOR, R. BOTEA, *Tilly Tally: War-Making and State-Making in the Contemporary Third World*, in “International Studies Review”, n. 10, 2008.

This article will try to answer two research questions. First, *Did Afghanistan fail in carrying on the Wealth and Welfare function-related duties? And if so, why?* Second, *how the Wealth and Welfare narrative and Western statemaking are connected?*

This article will attempt to historicize the Wealth and Welfare failure with a three-steps-approach. First, by presenting how this function is bounded to Tilly's theory; second, these theoretical assumptions will be compared to the Afghan case; third, the elements emerged in the comparison will be integrated back into Tilly's conceptualization so to assess if and how these findings might alter the nexus between functional failure and Tilly's work.

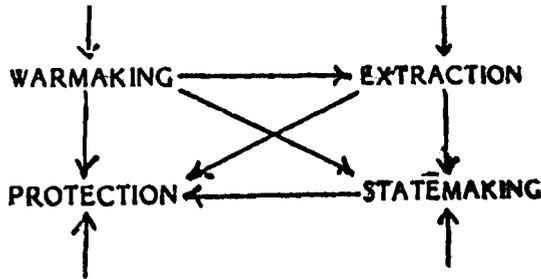
### 1. *Tilly's warmaking-statemaking mechanism*

In "*Coercion, Capital and European States*" Tilly claimed that European states emerged from a 'warmaking-statemaking' mechanism. Continuous wars imposed onto European rulers the obligation to deploy extractive means over their territories so to gain funding. The act of extraction, in turn, required bargains between the state and interest groups who were progressively coopted into a territory-wide administrative apparatus. The neutralization of rival lords led to a concentration of coercive means in the hands of unique authority and such a mechanism, generally named as statemaking, enhanced his legitimacy in the long run by providing those who ruled with protection. To sum up, European states are by-products of a 'Coercion-Capital nexus' which, broadly speaking as proposed by Tilly, run as follow (Figure 1).

Failed state notion integrated Tilly's theory by explaining failure as the impossibility of replicating successfully the Western experience. To this extent, both these concepts – Tillean mechanism and failed states – are applied monolithically. From one side, the historical distortions in the Coercive-Capital nexus have been presumed to lead to state failure as a whole and not to a failure of the state's specific dimension. Indeed it is largely acknowledged that a state can perform very well for instance in providing Security and very badly in Representation's tasks. Such a point received attention principally in order to frame quantitative clear criteria of failure, but a historical

perspective through the exploitation of Tilly’s work remained poorly integrated<sup>12</sup>.

Figure 1 - Tilly’s Coercion-Capital Nexus.



From C. TILLY, *Warmaking and Statemaking as Organized Crime*, in Working Paper n. 256, 1982, p. 18.

Regarding the monolithic application of Tillyan mechanism, the idea of state failure considered just the Coercion-Capital nexus (Figure 2), while indeed Tilly pointed out several elements more. Tilly himself estimated that, in the vast time range examined by him, the Coercion-Capital nexus operated with different intensity and produced several results. Indeed, chronologically, Tilly’s concepts can be separated into different ranges.

Figure 2 - Timeline of Tilly’s theory.



Author’s elaboration.

The period in which the Coercion-Capital nexus powerfully got momentum began “some time after 1490”, when in Europe, “the large military states began to feel the stimulus of capitalist expansion” and “set off decisively toward the creation of a system consisting almost

<sup>12</sup> For pro and cons of breaking down state failure into sub-categories see J. DI JOHN, *Conceptualising the Causes and Consequences of Failed States: A Critical Review of The Literature*, in “Crisis State Working Papers Series” n. 2, 2008, pp. 5-6.

entirely of relatively autonomous national states”<sup>13</sup>. The Napoleonic war and the French Revolution accelerated this process and “by the nineteenth century” states changed from being powerful “war machine” to be “multiple-purpose organizations”<sup>14</sup>. At that point, all states took on three additional duties: adjudication, distribution and production. These three tasks over time “grew faster” than other activities such as warmaking, statemaking, extraction and protection<sup>15</sup>. As in-charge of disputes settlement, and creation, transformation and allocation of goods and services, European states acquired economic responsibilities. According to this periodization, the ‘golden age’ of the Coercion-Capital nexus is well-delimited in truth and the economic function of the state has a very specific logic and chronology both of which occurred after the implementation of a political central power.

In theory, Tilly did not refer to a specific economic model, and therefore the three core economic activities – adjudication, distribution and production – could potentially be arranged very differently, but practically, to fulfil the Wealth and Welfare function as intended in the Western model, a state is demanded to set them up, so to guarantee a political and legal framework which might foster economic prosperity, and to implement a tax-collection system so to be self-sustained and to give assistance to its citizens. Such requirements emerged along with modern capitalism and with the movements against colonization which spread liberal values worldwide during the ‘60s and ‘70s<sup>16</sup>. The nexus between the modern state and liberal economy reinforced greatly through the post-Second World War European economic boom and with the ‘liberal interpretation of war’ too<sup>17</sup>. In a modern-days globalized economy, the economic function of a state has been more and more declined worldwide into a Washington Consensus-inspired liberal model<sup>18</sup>. Adopting economic tools, such as the abolishment of protective measures, the opening of the domestic market and currency con-

<sup>13</sup> C. TILLY, *Coercion, Capital, and European States AD 990 - 1990*, Cambridge, USA, Blackwell, 1990, p. 44.

<sup>14</sup> C. TILLY, *Coercion, Capital, and European States AD 990 - 1990*, cit., p. 53.

<sup>15</sup> C. TILLY, *Coercion, Capital, and European States AD 990 - 1990*, cit., p. 97.

<sup>16</sup> A. GIDDENS, *The Nation-State and Violence*, Cambridge, Polity Press, 1987.

<sup>17</sup> A. S. MILWARD, *The Economic Effects of the Two World Wars on Britain*, Basingstoke, Macmillan, 1972.

<sup>18</sup> The Washington Consensus is a set of measures grounded on a market-based

vertibility are indeed the minimal requirements for a state to successfully engage with the world economy<sup>19</sup>. After all, reflecting on the Wealth and Welfare function of a state into the Tillyan statemaking theory necessarily implies pondering the connection between the liberal economic model and the adjudication, distribution and production activities introduced by Tilly.

According to the analysis proposed in Figure 2, the incapacity of declining the state's economic duties into a liberal model might relate to some deviation occurred after the implementation of the Coercion-Capital nexus. The following section will try to verify such a hypothesis by focusing on the Afghan experience.

## 2. *Afghan economy: a conceptual hybrid*

Under Abdur Rahman (1880-1901) Afghanistan became a central state as, after having accepted with no hesitation the Durand line so to legally exclude foreign powers from Afghan politics, the Emir almost annihilated tribes thanks to a ruthless and bloody “internal imperialism”<sup>20</sup>. The used-to-be tribal fiefdoms got to be ruled “directly and autocratically” by an Emir who derived his legitimacy from God<sup>21</sup>. As the government “needed more revenues than any previous king” a solid bureaucratic apparatus was implemented so to oversee a meticulous and far-reaching tax-collection system<sup>22</sup>. Up until the Soviet invasion, the centralization of political power resisted and did not dissipate as occurred in previous centuries.

After having reached centralism and coherent to Tilly's historical evolution, the Afghan government took over economic activities as well. In the first of half of XX<sup>o</sup> century, Afghanistan did implement a small but effective industrial sector, based on Western capitalism model. Cotton and textile industries and national infrastructures de-

economic approach which used to be promoted by Washington-settled institutions such as the IMF and the WB for crisis-ridden developing countries.

<sup>19</sup> C. CLAPHAM, *The challenge to the state*, cit., p. 793.

<sup>20</sup> L. DUPREE, *Afghanistan*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1980, p. xix.

<sup>21</sup> T. BARFIELD, *Afghanistan: a cultural and political history*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2010, p. 147.

<sup>22</sup> T. ANSARY, *Games Without Rules*, New York, Public Affairs, 2012, p. 97.

veloped along with the '40s thanks to private capital and state monopolies' concessions<sup>23</sup>. Even an Afghan-American joint company, the Morrison Knudson Afghanistan, was founded to complete a vast irrigation system in the Helmand desert. Why, therefore, Afghanistan despite the political centralism and such a promising economic initiatives did not orient its Wealth and Welfare function in the Western-based liberal model?

At glance, the most intuitive explanation might be that despite the efforts, tax collection and economic development did not reach enough momentum to consolidate a liberal model as in the Western states. However, an alternative and more economic structure-related explanation, lays into long-term Afghan economic history.

As in a rentier state "leaders, by relying on unearned income, do not develop a set of reciprocal obligations with citizens via the nexus of domestic taxation", fragility – and possibly, failure – is more likely<sup>24</sup>. The rentierization of a state necessarily breaks up Tilly's essential Coercion-Capital nexus as governments, by obtaining funding from outside, could safely accumulate power without relying on internal consensus. Such distortion followed quite an unlinear evolution in Afghanistan.

Afghan rentierization has been briefly mentioned in major works on Afghan state failure which were much more focused on short-term historical analyses, notably from the Soviet invasion onwards<sup>25</sup>. Consequently, topics such as the 'War Economy', economic clientelism or illicit revenues have been massively addressed. However, these might have been rooted somehow in an economic framework which had distinguished Afghan institutions before<sup>26</sup>.

The intellectual foundation of rentier economies massively lays on the 'resource curse' argument according to which the externalization of funding depends upon mismanagement of natural resources, whose

<sup>23</sup> T. ANSARY, *Games Without Rules*, cit., p. 141.

<sup>24</sup> For a complete review on rentier state literature applied to failed states see J. DI JOHN, *Conceptualising the Causes and Consequences of Failed States: A Critical Review of The Literature*, cit., p.16.

<sup>25</sup> The most accountable long-term historical analysis on Afghan economy is M. J. FRY, *The Afghan Economy*, Leiden, A. J. Brill, 1974 which has been however undermentioned in the literature on Afghan failure.

<sup>26</sup> C. CRAMER, J. GOODHAND, *Try Again, Fail Again, Fail Better? War, The State, and the 'Post-Conflict Challenge in Afghanistan*, in "Development and Change", n. 33, 2002.

rents, notably oil-related ones, could replace at least in part tax collection. In a longer historical perspective, such a resource seems not to have played a relevant part in shaping Afghan post-Second World War economic institutions.

Referring to data collected by Barnett Rubin, one of the leading experts of Afghanistan, and reported in Appendix A, a solid understanding of the oil's role over the Afghan economy can be drawn. In terms of public funding, the sell of oil increased since the late '60s, became consistent along with the '70s and peaked between 1981 and 1982 when it accounted for 34% of national revenues. For as much as relevant, even at the very top, oil did satisfy just about one-third of national economic needs, which is fairly a low ratio for being labelled a truly rentier state. Similarly, the central role of oil during the Taliban period is well reported but pondering it more closely, it seems that such importance attained more on the geographic location of Afghanistan that allowed oil to reach Pakistan, rather than on the Afghan local production<sup>27</sup>.

Having been majorly concerned about oil economies, the rentier state literature did not focus consistently on Afghanistan, given the relatively small impact that such a resource did have on state's economic institutions. Beyond oil profits, Rubin's data show as well that, in the second part of the XX<sup>o</sup> century, half of the Afghan revenues were provided externally<sup>28</sup>. Such an element depended on the very peculiar role that Afghanistan had during the Cold War. From the '50s onwards, Afghan government maintained a rigid non-aligned policy towards USA and USSR, and was able to siphon off funds from Moscow and Washington equally. Afghanistan had been indeed the most prominent example of how a state "could be an arena for duelling aid packages"<sup>29</sup>. Through the Agency for International Development (AID), USA fuelled Afghan economy which could consequently create the Helmand Valley Authority (HVA). In 1950 Stalin signed a treaty to trade Soviet oil and gas in exchange for Afghan textiles products. Both the Superpowers *de facto* ended up financing the original project of the Ring Road, a

<sup>27</sup> A. RASHID, *Taliban. Militant Islam, Oil and Fundamentalism in Central Asia*, New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 2000.

<sup>28</sup> See Appendix A which reports data employed by B. RUBIN, *The search for peace in Afghanistan*, New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 1995, pp. 148-149.

<sup>29</sup> T. ANSARY, *Games Without Rules*, cit., p.148.

paved highway linking all Afghanistan's major cities. The USA stepped down just in providing military aids so to avoid antagonizing Pakistani government, a long-lasting Afghan rival but a crucial ally for Washington in both the Southeast Asian Treaty Organization (SEATO) and the Central Treaty Organization (CENTO) too.

As the rentier state concept originated from the academic interest on Third World countries' management of natural resources, Afghan historical rentierization has been overall underestimated as being firmly bounded instead to its condition of buffer state<sup>30</sup>.

This trend appears relevant even before the XX<sup>o</sup> century too. Rubin himself mentioned "the weapons and cash" that London provided Abdur Rahman with, despite the Whig-based Gladstone government's reluctant position. Goodhand and Cramer quantified the entire amount of the grant that, in 1882, worthed about "1.2 million Indian rupees"<sup>31</sup>. The weight of such external funding was more evident even when Amanullah Khan unilaterally declared Afghan independence from Britain in 1919, and the incapacity of being self-sustained financially, left the government "defenceless when tribes and religious movement mobilized" leading to the 1928 Civil War<sup>32</sup>. Back in time, Kabul seemed incapable of being economically autonomous. The election of Benjamin Disraeli gave to British imperialism a strong impulse and Afghanistan received much more attention respect to prior administrations. In 1876, during his journey to Bombay, Lord Lytton, the newly appointed Viceroy of India, was given a secret dispatch in which "annual subsidies" were included as a first possible option to properly manage Afghan issues<sup>33</sup>. Not surprisingly therefore, later on the Disraeli government officially included in the Gandamak treaty (1879) financial aids to Afghan Emir Yaqub Khan<sup>34</sup>. Overall, through the

<sup>30</sup> Rubin himself in his *The Search for Peace in Afghanistan*, a milestone for the study of the country, chose 'from buffer to failed states' as subtitle, overshadowing the rentiering nature, which is briefly sketched in a couple of pages.

<sup>31</sup> C. CRAMER, J. GOODHAND, *Try Again, Fail Again, Fail Better? War, The State, and the 'Post-Conflict Challenge in Afghanistan'*, cit., p. 894.

<sup>32</sup> B. RUBIN, *The search for peace in Afghanistan*, cit., p. 21.

<sup>33</sup> Archival sources mentioned in J. L. DUTHIE, *Pragmatic Diplomacy or Imperial Encroachment?*, in "The International History Review", n. 5, 1983, p. 477.

<sup>34</sup> P. HOPKIRK, *The Great Game: On Secret Service in High Asia*, London, John Murray/Kodansha International, 1990.

decades, British cabinets supported Afghan rulers with “occasional grant of several lakhs or rupees”<sup>35</sup>.

Given its geopolitical location, during the Cold War and the Great Game, the Afghan economy got into a progressive and continuous rentierization process, whether it was due to oil or through international aids and grants, that impeded Tilly’s Coercion-Capital mechanism to be enforced properly since the beginning<sup>36</sup>. The hypothesis of Afghanistan as a rentier state in a longer historical perspective remains somehow speculative since statistics on XIX<sup>o</sup> century Afghan economy are not accessible to us integrally. Nevertheless, qualitative sources disseminated through the whole literature on Afghan history, reasonably proved how being a buffer state, Afghanistan did follow a very peculiar developmental pattern. In a long-term historical perspective, since the external funding derived in part by oil but principally in the form of international aid due to strategic evaluations, Afghan experience seems more a conceptual hybrid between a rentier and a client state.

Nevertheless, as stands out from Appendix A, despite the major external funding, half of the Afghan revenues did derive from domestic sources along with the Cold War. Additionally, Abdur Rahman has acknowledged the central role of a tax-collection apparatus whose core resisted up to the Soviet invasion. At least to a certain extent, therefore, the Coercion-Capital nexus did implement and Afghanistan did follow Tillean logic.

The Afghan experience is similar to numerous non-Western states that, despite their centralism, could not shape their Wealth and Welfare-related duties as in the Western countries. Many of them did not have an oil-intensive economy nor they developed a rentier economy modelled on instead on Neo-Patrimonialist or clientelist systems, which are undoubtedly far from the Western experience too<sup>37</sup>. The variability of the non-liberal economic model adopted by non-Western states can be understood as local and contextual-related causes as for Afghanistan

<sup>35</sup> J. L. DUTHIE, *Pragmatic Diplomacy or Imperial Encroachment?*, cit., p. 481.

<sup>36</sup> The Great Game is a political and diplomatic confrontation between the Russian and the British empires which lasted conventionally from 1830 to 1895. Overall, the period deeply affected Central Asian political history.

<sup>37</sup> See J. DI JOHN, *Conceptualising the Causes and Consequences of Failed States: A Critical Review of The Literature*, cit., pp. 12-18.

but part of the answer probably lays in the liberal Western model itself. The right question might be why did so many non-Western states follow Tillyan mechanism up to a point for then diverging in shaping economic activities?

### 3. *Back to Tilly*

The implementation of the Western economic model requires indeed an additional feature with reference to the Tillyan Coercion-Capital nexus, that is a radical political pluralism allowing private economic actors to actively join the decision-making process. Acemoglu and Robinson referred to such a combination of factors as ‘inclusive institutions’<sup>38</sup>. Historically, this specific politico-legal institutional matrix emerged in England through the XVIII<sup>o</sup> century. Although the model proved to be successful and expanded globally with Colonialism, in a long term historical perspective it represents an exception.

Tilly himself considered England quite a unique experience. Introducing his core theory, he distinguished three paths to state formation: coercion-intensive, capital-intensive and capitalized coercion. While the first two categories included pretty much all European states, in the last one just two of them were placed in, France and England, which ultimately “produced full-fledged national states earlier”<sup>39</sup>. However, even compared to France, the British case is historically exceptional.

England started his march toward ‘inclusive institutions’ in 1215 with the Magna Charta which, although potentially a trigger for a civil war, promoted instead a diffused redistribution of power<sup>40</sup>. The first attempt to reduce monarchy’s power in France, the Fronde (1648-1653), occurred about four centuries later and, contrary to England, was essentially managed by the nobles while the lower classes participated just marginally. Also, between 1455 and 1485, the Two Roses War wiped out aristocracy in England, and the integration of the Star Cham-

<sup>38</sup> D. ACEMOGLU, J. A. ROBINSON, *Why Nations Fail? The origins of Power, Prosperity and Poverty*, New York, Crown Publishers, 2012.

<sup>39</sup> C. TILLY, *Coercion, Capital, and European States*, cit., p. 30.

<sup>40</sup> W. WARREN, *King John*, Yale University Press; see as well R. TURNER, *King John: England Evil King?*, Stroud, History Press, 2009.

ber as a legal institution in charge of legally pursuing nobles reinforced such a social system. In France, on the contrary, limits to the aristocracy were implemented into the Revolutionary period about three centuries later, and through a ruthless imposition.

The weakening of the aristocracy in England, in turn, permitted a vast redistribution of land through the Enclosures Act along the XVIII<sup>o</sup> century. Such a socioeconomic radical change, however, was possible because it matched with a very peculiar legal background too. In England, the legal doctrine on private property already benefitted from the British Enlightenment and land was already part of the Natural Law<sup>41</sup>. On the contrary, if the private property was as well part of the Roman juridical system on which France was rooted on, the divine right of the king which expanded in continental Europe since the Middle Age out-balanced the expansion of this legal term, *de facto* denying the population to physically own rural resources. After all, in Europe divine political legitimacy from the top halted the implementation of private property from below<sup>42</sup>.

Finally, in England the reduced political power of the nobles elevated the middle class or *gentry*, predominantly represented by merchants, to be a privileged economic actor in the rush for the oceanic trade. To this extent, England benefitted as well from the destruction of the Spanish *Invincible Armada* in 1555, the only potential contender in Europe in terms of naval power. Indeed this favourable shift did not occur purposefully for American colonies-related issues but turned nonetheless to be fundamental.

The enhanced economic role combined with the wider political distribution permitted the *gentry* to limit the Crown Monopolies since 1623 which, in turn, allowed intellectual property and technological enhancement to grow up<sup>43</sup>. In France, Crown Monopolies were abolished in 1791, more than one century later. In the rest of Europe, things

<sup>41</sup> Natural Law is the legal doctrine which saw the law conceptually antecedent to any juridical framework established by men. From XVII<sup>o</sup> century onwards, Natural Law turned to be fundamental to limit the divine right of the Monarchy.

<sup>42</sup> P. ANDERSON, *Lineages of the absolutist state*, London and New York, Verso, 1979, Ch.1.

<sup>43</sup> For a complete overview of English economic take-off see D. ACEMOGLU, J. A. ROBINSON, *Why Nations Fail: The origins of Power, Prosperity and Poverty*, cit., ch.7.

run even slower and inevitably put England in the natural predisposition of reinforcing his ‘inclusive institutions’<sup>44</sup>.

Drawing from Ricardo’s economic theory, England benefitted from a comparative advantage in framing his institutions. Historically, a series of events occurred, on a local and international levels, purposefully or by chance, and permitted British economic takeoff and, in a longer perspective, the rise of the liberal model.

In light of these factors, the graph of Figure 2 can be slightly reformulated (Figure 3).

Figure 3.



Tilly is quite neutral in proposing the economic duties of the state (mainline in the graph above) limiting himself to name very broad terms such as adjudication, distribution and production. Historically, the orientation of the state’s Wealth and Welfare function into a liberal model implies the obligation to add a logical step to the Coercion-Capital nexus, that is political pluralism. Such a developmental pattern (‘Inclusive Institutions’ line in the graph) separated from the main trend in 1688, with the British Glorious Revolution, and diverged consistently from the rest of European states’ experience. Modern-days global economy certainly weights over non-Western states’ difficulties in enforcing Tillean mechanism, and local causes played a consistent role in shaping each state’s economy, alternatively favouring Neo-Patrimonialism, clientelism or rentier economies. However, the numerous economic distortions affecting Third World countries might all be considered manifestations of a general incapacity of framing the post-Coercion-Capital nexus phase following the ‘inclusive institutions’ pattern. This path, however, was truly an exception and therefore, conceptually, the

<sup>44</sup> For a more detailed analysis on British Exceptionalism see L. PRADOS DE LA ESCOSURA (ed.), *Exceptionalism and Industrialisation: Britain and its European Rivals, 1688-1815*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2004.

evaluation of a state's success in fulfilling the Wealth and Welfare function through a comparison against Western liberal model is a paradox since it necessarily implies to employ an exception as a general term of reference.

### *Conclusions*

Gauging the arguments proposed so far, the article will try now to answer the research questions expressed in the introduction.

*Did the idea of functional failure apply to Afghanistan with reference to the Wealth and Welfare function?*

Indeed Afghanistan did fail in fulfilling Wealth and Welfare function-related duties because the buffer-rentier nexus impeded the Afghan state to develop inclusive institutions as in the Western model.

*How the Wealth and Welfare narrative and Western statemaking are connected?*

A realistic answer should probably bifurcate. Analyzing the Wealth and Welfare function according to the Western model requires the implementation of 'inclusive institutions' for which political pluralism is necessary. This is an additional element of the Coercion-Capital nexus and overall this combination resulted from a historical exception. Theoretically, therefore, evaluating the failure of a state in performing the Wealth and Welfare function is unsuitable since it means employing an exception as a general term of reference.

Practically, however, the implementation of a Western-oriented liberal model seems the *conditio sine qua no* to successfully engaging into the contemporary global economy. Following linearly the British track is not sustainable, but this does not mean that some of his peculiar elements could not be re-elaborated in the light of contemporary international and local features. After all, the keys to British development were a comparative advantage and a lucky shift in international commerce.

Regarding Afghanistan, his comparative advantage today can be his geographic position, and the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) his window of opportunity. Afghanistan is indeed the shortest way for the China to get the Middle East and, most importantly, Africa, and the

quickest for Russia and the European Union to reach South Asia. The BRI for Afghanistan could be what the oceanic trade represented for the British takeoff. Moreover, given the pivotal role digital data will have in the near and long-term international system, the evolution of the Digital Silk Road (DSR), which aims to create submarine and terrestrial optic cable crossing Asia and the Indian Ocean, would be even more relevant. Afghan territory would be potentially crucial to allow physical goods and internet data to pass both from Europe and Africa to South East Asia<sup>45</sup>.

The regional focus seems to reinforce such a perception. Pakistan demography is extremely favourable since in about twenty years the population had a 58% increase peaking 207.7 million<sup>46</sup>. Consequently, Pakistani needs for goods, electric energy and an improved digital data's access might be relevant elements to make Afghanistan and Pakistan cooperative toward the BRI<sup>47</sup>.

Translating these local elements into the general statemaking conceptualization can make the Wealth and Welfare function to be, to a certain extent, successful. In Tilly's words, a state is enforceable when "other services outbalance the costs of acceding to its monopoly of violence"<sup>48</sup>. This in Afghanistan translates into a complex but fundamental question. What can the state give to the tribes? For as much as hard, the access to BRI might be a good starting point in Afghan state-building.

<sup>45</sup> Regional Economic Cooperation Conference in Afghanistan (RECCA) Annual Review, 2017.

<sup>46</sup> Data from Pakistan Bureau of Statistics accessible at <http://www.pbs.gov.pk/content/population-census>.

<sup>47</sup> This article is not meant to be a policy report: for any further details on Afghanistan and BRI see M. SAFI, B. ALIZADA, *Integrating Afghanistan into the Belt and Road Initiative*, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, August 2018.

<sup>48</sup> C. TILLY, *Warmaking and Statemaking as Organized Crime*, cit., p. 2.

## Appendix A

Year	Expenditure		Sources Of Financing						
	Total (Millions of Afghanis)	Ordinary (%)	Development (%)	Domestic Revenue, Excluding Gas (%)	Sales of Natural Gas (%)	Foreign Aid (%)	(Rentier Income) (%)	Domestic Borrowing (%)	
1952	830	80	21	74	0	18	18	8	
1953	838	80	21	93	0	7	7	0	
1954	1,03	80	20	94	0	6	6	1	
1955	1,26	74	26	102	0	9	9	-11	
1956	1,291	71	30	89	0	8	8	3	
1957a	740	71	29	113	0	30	30	-43	
1958b	2,627	38	62	51	0	52	52	-4	
1959b	3,228	39	61	48	0	53	53	0	
1960b	4,177	33	67	38	0	53	53	9	
1961b	5,805	27	73	36	0	50	50	14	
1962c	3,221	27	73	22	0	60	60	18	
1962	6,44	29	71	33	0	51	51	17	
1963	7,079	34	66	38	0	49	49	14	
1964	7,348	35	65	42	0	49	49	10	
1965	8,107	36	64	49	0	52	52	-1	
1966	8,504	40	60	50	0	50	50	-1	
1967	8,109	45	55	51	1	41	42	7	
1968	8,333	51	49	49	5	39	45	7	
1969	8,642	55	45	54	5	29	34	13	
1970	8,13	63	37	61	9	23	32	7	
1971	8,964	61	39	59	7	28	34	8	

To be continued on next page

Appendix 2 - . Continued from previous page.

Year	Expenditure		Sources of Financing						
	Total (Millions of Afghanis)	Ordinary (%)	Development (%)	Domestic Revenue, Excluding Gas (%)	Sales of Natural Gas (%)	Foreign Aid (%)	(Rentier Income) (%)	Domestic Borrowing (%)	
1972	10,298	55	45	53	7	37	44	4	
1973 <sup>d</sup>	11,318	58	42	55	8	31	38	7	
1975	16,187	60	40	63	12	31	42	4	
1976	19,594	57	43	62	10	29	39	-1	
1977	24,326	49	51	53	8	34	42	4	
1978	26,397	47	53	54	9	34	43	4	
1979	30,173	56	44	40	13	36	48	12	
1980	31,692	62	38	50	33	28	61	-11	
1981	40,751	66	34	40	34	26	59	1	
1982	42,112	69	31	37	34	28	62	0	
1986	88.7	74	26	31	17	29	46	23	
1988	129.9	84	16	24	6	26	32	44	

\*Sources: Data from Maxwell J.Fry, *The Afghan Economy: Money Finance and The Critical Constraints to Economic Development* (Leiden: E.J.Brill, 1974), 158-59, 170-171; Democratic Republic of Afghanistan (DRA), *Statistical Information of Afghanistan, 1975-1978* (Kabul: Central Statistics Office-March 1979; DRA, Statistical Year Book (SYB) 1358: (March 1979 - March 1980) (Kabul: Central Statistics Office, 1981); DRA, SYB 1359: *March 1980 - March 1981* (Kabul: Central Statistics Office, 1982); DRA, SYB 1360: *March 1981 - March 1982* (Kabul: Central Statistics Office, 1983); DRA, SYB 1361: *March 1982 - March 1983* (Kabul Central Statistics Office, 1986); Republic of Afghanistan, "Afghanistan 1990", Country Presentation at the Second United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries (Geneva: mimeo, April 1990).

Note: Government expenditure equals ordinary plus development expenditure. Foreign aid includes both commodity assistance and project aid, loans, and grants. Rentier income is the sum of foreign aid and sales of natural gas. Domestic borrowing is a residual which does not correspond to figures in monetary surveys. Except as noted, years are Afghan (Islamic solar) years beginning in the given Common Era year. No data available for some years.

<sup>a</sup> First Half of 1336; <sup>b</sup> Common Era years; <sup>c</sup> Second Half of 1340; <sup>d</sup> Estimate; Final Figures not available.

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**Riassunto** - Con il declinare delle necessità di sicurezza internazionale, il concetto di 'Stato Fallito' è lentamente uscito dall'interesse generale della politica internazionale e della ricerca accademica. Ciononostante, questa nozione può essere ancora rilevante se intesa come espressione delle difficoltà nell'applicare la categoria dello stato occidentale in contesti non-Europei. A tal proposito, l'approccio storico ha giocato un ruolo chiave nel integrare un'analisi locale ad un'idea generale quale è lo 'Stato Fallito'. Questo articolo cerca di riunire in un'analisi storica la dimensione generale e quella locale di tale nozione ed in particolare della cosiddetta 'functional failure' - l'incapacità di uno stato di soddisfare le funzioni di Sicurezza, Rappresentanza e Welfare. L'articolo romperà il termine functional failure nelle sue tre componenti principali e si concentrerà sulla fun-

zione di Welfare la quale verrà integrata con la teoria del 'warmaking-statmaking' di Tilly. Quest'ultima verrà rielaborata in modo alternativo e successivamente paragonata con il processo di formazione dello stato afgano. Gli elementi emersi verranno infine reintegrati nella teoria di Tilly per verificarne l'applicabilità generale in un contesto non Occidentale. Il lavoro cercherà di dimostrare come e perchè in Afghanistan la funzione economica dello stato, al contrario del percorso occidentale, si sia declinata in un realizzazione ibrida del modello di 'rentier state'. In secondo luogo, verrà considerato come e perchè il modello economico europeo sia concettualmente inadatto a diventare termine di paragone generale per determinare il fallimento o il successo di uno stato. Infine verranno espresse alcune conclusioni sulla ricostruzione dell'economia afgana.