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The Role of Universities in Strengthening and Institutionalizing the Nation-Building Process in Afghanistan

Alireza Ansary Kargar ¹*; Mohammad Sadeq Akbari¹; Hamidullah Basiryar¹

¹*Department of diplomacy and Administration, Faculty of Law and Political science, Jami University, Afghanistan*
*Corresponding Email: alirezaansary@yahoo.com, Phone Number: +93781325298

Abstract

Universities, as social institutions, are not only responsible for the transmission of scientific knowledge but are also directly and indirectly involved in social cohesion. All human societies regulate their behavior and relationships based on a set of specific values. Since human mentality and beliefs are largely influenced by environmental and historical factors, national values are temporally and spatially bound, indicating that each society possesses its own unique set of values. The objective of this research lies in the commitment and loyalty to the elements of nation-building in Afghanistan through the universities. The main question is that What role do universities play in strengthening and institutionalizing the nation-building process in Afghanistan? This study utilizes Barry Buzan's theoretical framework of the idea of the state and the concept of top-down nation-building. It employs a descriptive-analytical method, with library resources, articles, and journals as sources of information. The findings reveal that universities play a crucial role in the development and growth of culture, fostering patriotism, accepting political values within the framework of education, and promoting a sense of belonging and national unity, all of which are key components of nation-building.

Keywords: Educational Institutions, Idea of the State, Mentality Formation, Nation-building, Sense of Belonging.

Introduction

In the era we live in, all countries, considering their structural and geographical nature, have organized and systematized their societies based on a series of values. Accordingly, the subject of value systems in society is a critical issue that decisively affects the fate of human communities (Rasooli et al., 2021, p. 130). While nations possess their own unique cultural and value frameworks, they are also engaged in interactions and exchanges. Throughout history, humanity has been able to create a relatively independent identity through the creation and institutionalization of values.

History has shown that the scope of value-based human behavior is vast (Hassanzadeh, 2003, p. 52),
such that some values transcend time and place. As a result, nations and societies strive to protect their collective values by any means necessary and pass them on to future generations. Nation-building is closely linked to the nature of cultural structures to the extent that it is sometimes argued that the environment is of primary importance (Kohen, 2014, p. 120) and that culture is influenced by the environment. It is vital for societies that their accepted values are respected and continue over time, as the bond that unites societies depends on values that have a universal aspect and that individuals have a "sense of belonging" toward. Such a sense, in fact, forms the foundation of nation-building (Riazi et al., 2020, p. 249).

This issue arises when nation-building, due to fragmentation and lack of stability, consistently becomes a challenge. This means that the sense of belonging as the foundation for fostering patriotism faces concrete obstacles. Values, norms, and customs are deeply rooted in the history of society (Bayat, 2008, p. 123).

The problem statement of this research lies in the fact that nation-building, in addition to being a structural and formal approach, is also a psychological and value-driven matter. Thus, universities and educational institutions have sometimes overlooked their effectiveness in shaping and fostering social cohesion(Kohen, 2014, p. 231). The efficiency and effectiveness of nation-building requires the integration of values and institutions or The process of nation-building cannot be examined solely as a structural and formal approach; it also encompasses psychological and value-driven dimensions. Universities and educational institutions, as key components of society, play a significant role in shaping and promoting social cohesion.

Accordingly, based on different historical experiences, societies have adopted various values as rules governing people's public behaviors. National values, shaped by social structures and historical experiences, influence future generations. Similarly, universities, as effective institutions, play a crucial role in creating values that foster national consciousness and a sense of belonging among people The importance and necessity of this subject become evident when governments aim to cultivate national consciousness and commitment to public values among their younger generations (Duvorge, 2008, p. 210).

However, changes in societal conditions, experiencing transitional phases, moving away from past behavioral norms, and recognizing new ones have led the younger generation to view national values differently. This perspective significantly impacts the institutionalization of nation-building. Thus, shaping the mentality of the younger generation, based on national values, is crucial. It is not something that can be addressed solely through moral reasoning but rather requires a comprehensive and long-term program. It is essential that young people are aware of and committed to their national values (Morteza & Paknia, 2017, p. 110). Loyalty for these values increases patriotism and a sense of belonging to the nation.

The primary research question is: What role do universities play in strengthening and institutionalizing the nation-building process in Afghanistan? The hypothesis is predicated on the notion that universities, as institutions that generate knowledge and awareness, can significantly contribute to shaping nation-building in Afghanistan.

The principal objective of this study is to examine the role of universities in strengthening and institutionalizing the nation-building process in Afghanistan, and to investigate the

position of universities as a social structure capable of influencing public perception through value-based approaches. In accordance with this inquiry, this research employs Barry Buzan's theoretical framework for the concept of the state and the nation-building model. A descriptive-analytical methodology has been utilized, and data have been collected through library resources, scholarly articles, and academic journals.

Regarding the research background, no specific work directly addressing the topic of "the role of universities in nation-building in Afghanistan" that elucidates the current situation was identified. However, some articles, albeit fragmented and selective, were found to be tangentially related to the research topic.

Aminian and Karimi Ghahroodi (2012) in an article titled *The American Strategy "State - Nation Building"* in Afghanistan found that the main objective of the U.S. in the state-nation building process was to change the identity of the Afghan people in line with its own interests. They also concluded that the U.S.'s failure to combat opposition groups increased its motivation for state- and nation-building in Afghanistan. However, the current reality contradicts these findings, showing that the U.S. prioritized a security approach and the fight against its opponents over state-building as its strategic priority in Afghanistan.

Hadian (2019), in an article titled Structural Weakness of Nation-State Building in Afghanistan, concluded that the structural weakness of state-nation building is influenced by geography as an independent variable, due to Afghanistan's ethnic geographical crisis. This research was conducted in 2019, while the state-nation-building project remained in place until the end of 2021 and, to some extent, has achieved more success than before.

Taheri Attar (2014), in an article titled Designing and Articulating the Model of Sustainable Nation-Building, found that nation-building functions as a model consisting of three components: a) prerequisites for initiating nation-building (general and specific national identity), b) strategies for continuing the nation-building process (social justice, government efficiency, citizenship, political socialization), and c) outcomes of sustaining the nation and nation-building process (national cohesion and unity, public trust, lasting peace, balanced and sustainable development, national and international legitimacy).

Mehri Daryaei (2008), in an article titled An Analysis of the Role of Educational and Training Institutions in the Development of National Culture and Arts, primarily examined the concept of cultural development and concluded that cultural development precedes economic development. Although certain analytical aspects of this study are related to this subject, this research emphasizes religious and national values, particularly in shaping the cognitive framework of young individuals pursuing education in academic institutions.

Furthermore, the article Relationship Between Religious Values and National Authority (2021) by authors such as Seyed Mohammad Hossein Rasooli, Yasin Pourali, and Meysam Balbasi examines the relationship between religious values and national authority in a general context. However, it does not address dependent variables such as youth mentality formation, which is more significantly influenced by religious and national values.

Additionally, the article The Role and Functions of Educational Institutions in the Transmission of Social Values by Ramazan Hassanzadeh (2003) warrants consideration. This article initially discusses the significance of values, and subsequently examines the role of educational institutions in transmitting these values within the framework of formal education.

Based on the research background, it is evident that there is a dearth of specific articles on the role of universities in strengthening and institutionalizing the nation-building process

in Afghanistan. Consequently, this article represents one of the few novel studies to elucidate this subject in the context of Afghanistan.

Material and Method

This article is a type of qualitative review article. Review articles are generally qualitative, and for qualitative research, a descriptive-analytical approach is typically employed. Library resources are used as the primary data collection tool that includes books, scientific journals, and documents.

Conceptual Framework

The discussion of nation-building inherently involves the alignment of a generation with its political, economic, and social structures. This subject is situated within the theoretical framework of the "idea of the state." Althusser posits a distinction between state power and state apparatus. The state apparatus encompasses education, the political system, media, and cultural affairs, which, in contrast to state power (army, police, courts, and prisons), primarily influence the institutionalization of legitimacy (Altuser, 2009, p. 154).

It is generally accepted that ruling systems, through the utilization of their national values, endeavor to maintain unity and cultivate a generation that inherits these governing values, thereby playing a crucial role in the perpetuation of these values.
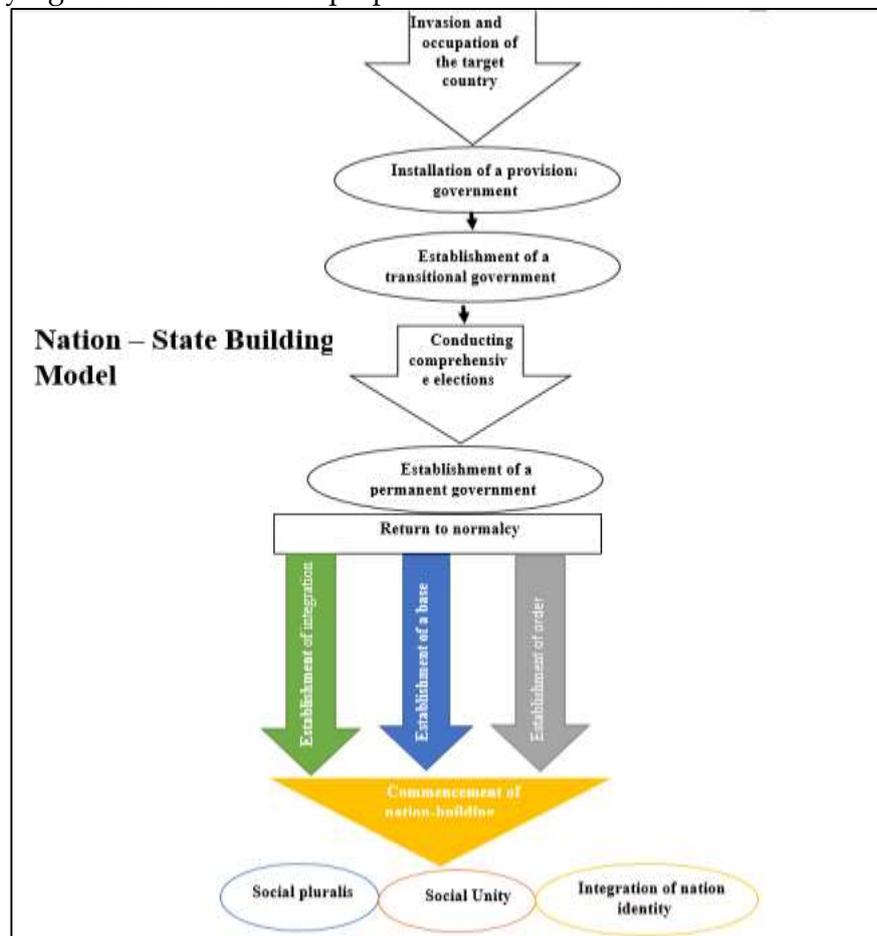

Fig 1: The Model of Nation – Build (Ansary Kargar et al., 2024, p. 24)

The Idea of the State refers to the thought and concept surrounding the purpose of the state (Buzan, 2010, p. 210). The idea of the state means that all states are, in some way, founded on a series of ideologies that outline their legitimacy. Barry Buzan posits that all states possess a series of constructive ideas that fundamentally define the nature and existence of their system. The concept of the state or organizing ideology functions as a mechanism to legitimize the nature of the government. Consequently, states endeavor to disseminate their organizing ideology among the populace by utilizing various means such as education.

 Educational institutions serve as optimal venues for inculcating the constructive values of the governing body, underscoring the significance and prominence of these institutions. According to Dyson, equating the idea of the state with its instruments is a grave mistake. For states to project their exercise of power and authority as correct(Ansary Kargar et al., 2024, p. 23), desirable, and justified, they are compelled to rely on certain tools.

  Essentially, these tools produce and reproduce the system's legitimacy. The idea of the state is essentially the ideology and values that define the nature of society's system. Every state has its own specific idea, which is composed of numerous elements (Thamari & Dozi Sarkhabi, 2020, p. 87). For instance, in Japan, the nation and values related to national culture form a significant part of the state's idea. As Barry Buzan stated, the idea of the state is a central issue in national security. Ideologies, which represent the foundation of the system's legitimacy (Aminian & Karimi Ghahroudy, 2012, p. 80), often become the primary focus of national security to be safeguarded at all costs. It should be noted that ideas, by nature, are vulnerable to influence by other beliefs. Consequently, states strive to define their national values within the framework of national security. Ideas are a crucial part of a state. Strong and inclusive ideas ensure that a state remains organized, connected, and stable.

   Therefore, the governing values that form the essence of the state must be widespread. One method by which the idea of the state (organizing ideologies) is institutionalized is through educational institutions. This is because the two institutions of education (primary/secondary) and higher education engage with two evolving generations (NoorMohamadi, 2017, p. 192). The extent to which educational institutions institutionalize and validate the idea of the state directly influences the shaping of young minds, affecting their perception of political structure and culture. *Nationhood* refers to national awareness and the sense of belonging to a specific nation that is distinguished from others by its unique characteristics (Bayat, 2008, p. 65).

  The elements of nation-building include shared identity, literature, culture and traditions, common history, political institutions, education, a sense of belonging, shared struggles, and a common future. The deliberate inculcation of information, values, and political practices by institutional actors who are officially tasked with this responsibility, particularly educational institutions, plays a crucial role in nation-building and fostering the acceptance of the national state (Rush, 2008, p. 98).

Elements and Foundations of Nation-Building in Afghanistan

As previously discussed, each society constructs and reconstructs its values within its specific context. Consequently, national values comprise a series of components and elements that can be considered the foundations of nation-building in Afghanistan.
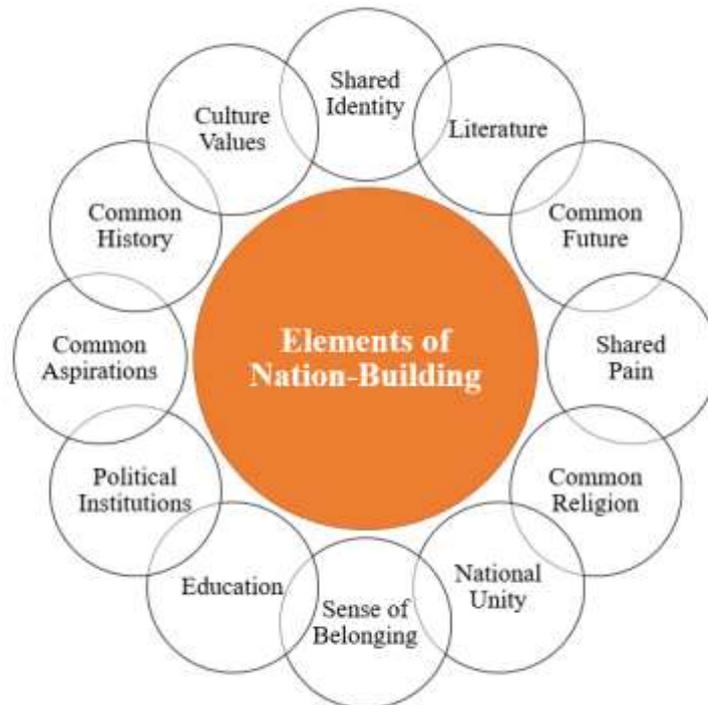
Fig 2: The Elements of Nation – Building in Afghanistan (Author)

National Unity

National unity is one of the most important elements of nation-building in the social sphere and has particular significance. The only secret to the survival of any political system depends on the nature of unity among the constituent elements of a political entity (Daraei, 2008, p. 58). As long as national unity is institutionalized as a high and valuable ideal in the minds of young people, society will remain cohesive and integrated.

The prolonged and pervasive conflicts in Afghanistan have contributed to a diminished sense of national unity. One of the adverse consequences of warfare is the emergence of social divisions among the populace of the affected region (Hadian, 2019, p. 32). Presently, Afghanistan has the potential to achieve this unity through the development of a shared strategic vision for the future, and the enhancement of social awareness will facilitate this process.

In concepts such as nation-state building, the status of a nation is highly valued. In such a structure, states emerge from the fabric of society and the nation takes precedence over the state, playing a fundamental role in its creation. In this context, the government aims to preserve and express the existence of the nation, with a profound and fundamental relationship between the two. Throughout the nation, the state possesses a powerful identity on the international stage and a solid foundation of internal legitimacy (Buzan, 2010, p. 121).

Thus, national unity as a national and religious value can foster a sense of solidarity and nationhood in the minds of young people. Given the importance of national unity, the educational curriculum should focus on topics that reflect common goals, a shared understanding, and a collective future. Furthermore, symbols that embody national pride and unity should be highlighted (Eccleshall, 2011, p. 221). Therefore, national unity serves

as a prerequisite for patriotism, and a sense of belonging to a nation can be institutionalized within educational institutions.

The significance of universities in Afghanistan in institutionalizing national unity resides in the fact that these institutions, as centers that convene the nation's intellectuals, play a pivotal role in shaping and fostering national unity. Universities have the potential to cultivate and reinforce national unity by instilling motivation for the reconstruction of Afghanistan and effectively disseminating knowledge to students.

Common Objective

There exists a general principle that each nation possesses a distinct mode of thinking, and the cognitive processes of any nation have significant implications for its political, economic, and cultural trajectory, ultimately influencing its position in the international community (Hadian, 2019, p. 41).

Some nations exhibit a particular sensitivity towards the future, while others are immersed in their past; some demonstrate an intensely competitive nature, certain groups are content with satisfying various instincts, while others invest considerable time in their glory; some reach consensus quickly, some are perpetually in conflict, and a few possess strong propensities for building, transforming, and innovating. Nations have a distinct essence (substratum) that has been shaped over years, decades, and even centuries, and can be modified and transformed through education, training, awareness, and political management (Sari' al-Qalam, 2013, p. 106).

An examination of Afghanistan's history over the past century reveals that it has not yielded significant achievements for the current generation. Particularly in the late twentieth century, the experience of civil wars impeded and even regressed nation-building efforts (Ansary Kargar & Hasin, 2024, p. 38). It must be acknowledged that fewer national figures have emerged in Afghanistan, indicating that the nation's difficulty in understanding its history surpasses its actual comprehension.

As history reflects the accumulated behaviors of a population, the gaps may widen accordingly. Therefore, countries that are consistently embroiled in internal conflict and violence should focus on a common objective rather than adhering to their history, in order to foster a sense of collective historical forgiveness and build a spirit of cooperation for the future. The people of Afghanistan, from the grassroots to the leadership, share a common sentiment regarding the future of this country: Afghanistan can overcome its internal challenges and progress towards sustainable stability(Tonzai, 2022, p. 28). If this aspiration transforms into a common goal and the desire for power yields to the desire for service(Taheri Attar, 2014, p. 39), over time, the common objective can evolve into a national aim. Consequently, the common objective can be established as an accepted value within educational institutions, transforming into a beneficial mindset for youth.

Preservation and Valuation of National Days (Sense of Belonging)

All nations designate specific days as their national days—occasions that evoke a sense of belonging among citizens who perceive them as the result of collective effort (Aminian & Karimi Ghahroudy, 2012, p. 83). If the preservation of national days is regarded as a national value, the populace will develop allegiance to it. From a sociological perspective, social values refer to the factors and elements that the majority of a community recognizes as significant and valid, becoming realities that fulfill the material and spiritual needs of its

members. In essence, anything deemed necessary, respected, sacred, desired, and valuable by a social system is considered part of that community's values (Hassanzadeh, 2003, p. 54).

National days embody national pride; on such occasions, significant events may have occurred, ranging from the death of a notable individual to the achievement of independence or territorial unity. Through the acceptance of such values, young people find themselves aligned and empathetic towards their history and national achievements, and this acceptance fosters loyalty to the nation and its collective accomplishments (Daraei, 2008, p. 56). Consequently, days that genuinely institutionalize shared experiences should be selected as national days. One of the primary objectives of educational institutions, as highlighted in the conceptual framework, is to function as carriers and transmitters of this valued heritage.

Common Religion

Regardless of the discussions surrounding the meaning and concept of religion, which hold particular significance in their own right, sociology suggests that religion typically plays a fundamental role in social life in traditional societies (Rush, 2008, p. 81). Religious symbols and rituals are often intertwined with the material and artistic cultures of the community.

This is attributed to the fact that the need for religion is a fundamental aspect of human existence; substantial evidence indicates that humans are inherently religious. Religion holds a significant position as a fundamental value for the people of Afghanistan and has thus become a social norm. Consequently, accepted values can manifest as social norms (Mohammadi, 2015, p. 54), creating a sense of unity in the mindset of the youth.

The religious nature of individuals may be predicated on the principle of ascribing meaning to life. In essence, in their quest for meaning, humans turn to religion and prioritize religious symbols and rituals. This commitment to rituals and practices brings members of the community together at various times, fostering empathy and alignment among them. According to Durkheim, all religions comprise a series of organized ceremonies and rituals that bring believers together (Hantington, 2017, p. 210).

In collective ceremonial events, a sense of group solidarity is affirmed and reinforced. Religious rituals, regardless of any distinctions or differences, unite all believers and focus their attention on common origins and destinations. When believers gather for prayer or during pilgrimages, they appear as a single entity, performing unified actions with synchronized movements, all pursuing the same ultimate goal (Ansary Kargar et al., 2024, p. 28).

From this perspective, shared religious experiences function as powerful, unifying forces. These experiences are often driven by motivations that connect generations and communities; motivations, such as self-preservation or the transmission of beliefs to new generations, play a crucial role in fostering a sense of unity that ultimately leads to solidarity(Mohammadi, 2015, p. 122).

Unfortunately, internal conflicts lasting over three decades have allowed this unifying element to fall into the hands of opportunists who have used religion to incite discord. There is a close relationship between religion and culture, and the effectiveness of religion in society becomes evident when its role and application are addressed scientifically(Ansary Kargar & Hasin, 2024, p. 38). By its very nature, Islam is considered a moderate and unifying religion. As a result of internal wars, the people of Afghanistan were mobilized against each other by some in the name of religion, leading to social divisions.

Universities in Afghanistan can emphasize the role of religion in social unity and highlight the position of this faith in relation to national cohesion by recalling historical Islamic achievements. They can also recognize religion as a spiritual and intellectual advantage.

Shared Cultural Heritage

Cultural heritage, both intangible and tangible, serves as a foundation for a sense of belonging and solidarity and is regarded as a national value. It can be posited that historical and civilizational artifacts function as a form of "lineage" for a nation (Rashidi, 2010, p. 32). Cultural heritage encompasses art, literature, inventions, archaeological sites, and other cultural manifestations.

In Afghanistan, numerous cultural symbols exist that are the collective property of its populace, ranging from the Minaret of Jam in Ghor to the minarets of Herat and the Islamic cultural city of Ghazni, as well as the Citadel of Ikhtiyar al-Din and the Bala Hissar of Kabul. Historical figures such as Khwaja Abdullah Ansari, Mawlana Balkhi, Ibn Sina Balkhi, and Rabia Balkhi represent invaluable cultural legacies for Afghanistan.

Cultural heritage is considered a national value because individuals within a territory experience a sense of belonging and are disinclined to relinquish their heritage to others (Yadollahi Dehcheshmeh et al., 2021, p. 20). Based on these values, younger generations can acquire knowledge about them within an educational framework and transmit their significance to future generations, as the legacies of the past constitute the inheritance of those yet to come. As previously stated, there are numerous components involved in nation building, and this discussion has highlighted only a few examples.

Political and Economical Independence

Political independence is considered one of the most important factors and foundations for nation-building. As long as nations do not possess political independence, they cannot institutionalize their nation-building processes in an authentic and localized manner. With such independence, governments can more easily and extensively utilize the elements and tools of nation building without external interference. Governments have interests, which govern their behavior (Brown & Ainley, 2012, p. 164). In essence, political independence enables a government to exercise greater autonomy in controlling the components of nation building, aligning its actions with national interests.

Economic independence facilitates governments' ability to better utilize national interests within an economic framework (Momeni & Tonzai, 2020, p. 552). The primary objective of the Islamic Emirate was to reduce its dependency on foreign aid. Governments aim to achieve economic independence by leveraging domestic resources and investing in diverse economic sectors (Ansari, 2021, p. 45). This approach shifted Afghanistan's focus from reliance on international aid to concentrating on its internal capabilities, thereby fostering a sustainable economy.

Cultural independence also influences the empowerment and expansion of nation-building. One dimension of nation building is the consideration of indigenous values, which are shaped by historical processes and social formations (Ansary Kargar & Hasin, 2024, p. 40). Nations invest substantially in preserving their cultural values. In Afghanistan, universities not only disseminate knowledge, but also play a crucial role in establishing the foundation for institutionalizing cultural values.

The Role of Universities in Shaping National Values

The question frequently arises regarding the motivations behind governmental efforts to shape the mindsets of young individuals through religious and national values, and why this process of mindset formation occurs within educational institutions. Specifically, what outcomes does this mindset shaping intend to achieve for the system, considering that youth are perceived as potential forces of the future? Through mindset shaping, systems aim to achieve specific objectives that can ultimately lead to the perpetuation of national values and their transmission to subsequent generations.

In contemporary times, educational institutions, particularly universities, have become increasingly inclusive and comprehensive. In the second half of the twentieth century, access to university shifted from a privilege to a necessity, and subsequently to a right (Morteza & Paknia, 2017, p. 111). This transition has further emphasized the role of educational institutions in shaping the mindsets of young people.

Consequently, influencing behavior and shaping individual personalities are the primary aims and functions of educational institutions. Within these institutions, time and space are constant, programs are pre-designed, and methods and tools are clearly defined. They adhere to specific disciplinary programs overseen by trained personnel (Rashidi, 2010, p. 23). This process is pursued and planned within the formal education system to achieve deeper objectives such as cultural development, fostering patriotism, and embracing political values within the framework of formal education.

Cultural Development and Growth

Academic institutions are among the most effective tools for cultural development and growth at all levels. Those who enter educational institutions gradually become acquainted with the public and disciplined cultures. For example, they learn to be punctual, responsible, organized, and distinguish between different personalities (NoorMohamadi, 2017, p. 202). They understand that violating rules leads to consequences. Over time, these behaviors become normalized, forming a culture that is accepted as a value. Until a few decades ago, the vast majority of experts believed that development was solely an economic concept and countries designed programs to strengthen their economic foundations. However, this one-dimensional understanding of development has faded, and policymakers now recognize that the future will be a battleground for cultural competition.

Any nation wishing to succeed must focus on cultural development. It is now widely accepted that the foundation of all development and the basis for genuine and sustainable growth lies in cultural development (Daraei, 2008, p. 59). Given this perspective, formal education plays a significant role in society's development. This type of education fosters social, moral, and intellectual growth among the learners. Thus, the role of education in development is to meet the fundamental needs of the other sectors.

In this sense, educational planning aims to achieve the objectives of other social sectors (Sardarnia & Hooseini, 2014, p. 42). Educational institutions are responsible for the social and cultural upbringing of individuals within a community, and play a crucial role among institutions tasked with individual development. Cultural acceptance and social integration are two fundamental functions of educational and training institutions. Culture is not inherent; therefore, familiarizing the new generation with the culture of their community is essential (Ansary Kargar & Hasin, 2024, p. 45). Individuals in any society become culturally aware of learning and internalizing the collective value system.

Fostering a Sense of Patriotism

Patriotism, a sense of belonging to a nation, loyalty to national values, and historical indebtedness can be inculcated in an individual's character. Educational institutions provide the foundation for such beliefs to be instilled in the minds of the youth. Significant changes occur during adolescence that transform an individual's personality (Rashidi, 2010, p. 31). This stage can be considered the gateway to adulthood, when physical, sexual, and cognitive development reaches a level that can facilitate further growth.

Patriotism, sometimes referred to as nationalism, is a highly valued sentiment that governments seek to cultivate and revive. In contemporary political discourse, nationalism or nationhood refers to national awareness and a sense of belonging to a specific nation, distinguished by unique characteristics (Bayat, 2008, p. 72). As individuals desire a sense of belonging to a territory or nation, this sentiment must be nurtured within them through educational methods and the reconstruction of national symbols.

For instance, in Nazi Germany, children were indoctrinated to be primarily loyal to the state, as embodied by Führer Adolf Hitler. All textbooks were required to align with Nazi ideology, even incorporating suitable examples in mathematics textbooks. In a 1937 speech, Hitler stated: "We have made it our duty to inject the spirit of this community into our youth from a very early age, and this new Reich will not give its youth to anyone; rather, it will turn to the youth itself and instill its education and upbringing in them" (Rush, 2008, p. 132).Thus, instilling a sense of patriotism through education is a crucial mechanism for shaping the mindset of the youth to respect and understand national values.

2 – 3. Acceptance of Political Values within the Framework of Formal Education

Every government and society is predicated on a set of political values, as these values define the nature of political systems. Political values are frequently referred to as organizing ideologies (the idea of the state) (Kohen, 2014, p. 412). Of critical importance is that the process and product of these organizing ideologies ultimately lead to political socialization. In essence, political socialization is an educational process that aims to instill values, norms, and orientations in individuals' minds, enabling them to trust their political systems (Altuser, 2009, p. 91).

Trust and acceptance of political values are educational processes grounded in modeling, and educational institutions serve as the optimal means to stabilize these values. Definitions of political socialization reveal its intertwining with building trust in the political system through both formal and informal educational processes. Political socialization facilitates the transfer of acceptable norms and behaviors of the established political system from one generation to the next. Although governments often prioritize obedience over loyalty(Buzan, 2010, p. 312), loyalty may take precedence in the process of political socialization.

The content and framework defined in educational curricula by the ruling system establish the foundation for individuals' political perspectives. As previously noted, governments endeavor to create a "narrative" or "image" to profoundly prepare members of society to accept the political structure(Eccleshall, 2011, p. 30). Those who study in schools and universities eventually enter the political community, learning through education that the political structure must be sustained. While there may be differing views on the methods of continuity, there tends to be a consensus on fundamental values and the legitimacy of the regime. For instance, individuals nurtured with a specific mindset regarding the prevailing

ideology are often reluctant to challenge the foundational values of that ideology, although they may have varying opinions on its implementation (Hadian, 2019, p. 8).

The acceptance of political values within the framework of formal education is one of the most prevalent strategies employed by governments in the educational process. All governments and political regimes have sought to instill certain behavioral patterns and political attitudes in their citizens. For example, they strive to promote patriotism and adherence to the law to the greatest extent possible.

Some governments, particularly those in democratic systems, encourage participation in elections and other forms of political engagement. Others maintain that political matters are best left to a select few who possess the necessary qualifications for governance. Political systems such as the People's Republic of China seek to strengthen citizens' loyalty to the political structure, compliance with the directives of the ruling authority, and support for leadership policies through comprehensive education(Ansary Kargar et al., 2024, p. 30).

Thus, one of the most significant functions of educational systems is to shape the mindset of the youth based on the components of national and religious values to embrace political values. This approach is prevalent and should not be viewed negatively; rather, it is essential for all political systems.

Table 1: Functions of Universities in the Nation-Building Process

Function	Description
Cultural Development	Universities promote cultural awareness and values, fostering a sense of identity and belonging among students
Political Socialization	They facilitate the transmission of political values and norms, enabling students to understand and engage with the political system
Knowledge Creation	They contribute to the advancement of knowledge and research, which is essential for the socio-economic development of the nation
Civic Engagement	They encourage students to engage in civic activities and community service, promoting social responsibility
Global Competitiveness	They prepare students to compete on a global scale, enhancing the nation's position in the international arena.

Discussion

The Basis and Purposefulness of Shaping the Mindset of the Youth Based on Religious and National Values. The primary function of universities and other educational institutions is to shape the mindset of the younger generation, with an emphasis on religious and national values. This process is prevalent and essential across all governing systems. Governments aim to foster cohesion and unity among their generations through national values by designating the promotion of these values as a fundamental objective within educational frameworks.

Consequently, governments have endeavored to design educational systems that embody these values in a tangible and comprehensive manner. The adoption of national values

signifies the acceptance of the dominant social values upheld by power structures, which can be realized by evolving and educated generations. Given that Afghan universities engage with an evolving audience and an informed generation, they can more effectively collaborate with power structures to facilitate nation building.

As previously noted, the elements of nation-building encompass the value content that interacts with individuals in society. This study focuses on one of the most significant structures—universities—that play a crucial role in the current generation's education. The greater the emphasis on these values, the more pronounced the socialization of politics, reflecting the acceptance of the legitimacy of prevailing values.

In conclusion, the educational system and institutions are the most effective mechanisms for fostering a sense of belonging to the nation, state, history, political values, and a shared future. In essence, universities function as independent variables that significantly influence the dependent variable of nation-building elements, either by promoting or diminishing the sense of belonging. Therefore, universities are not merely educational institutions; they are also transmitters of formal and informal values.

Unfortunately, over the past century, Afghanistan has encountered challenges in this process due to political instability and ongoing conflicts, which not only hindered the development of a robust educational system but also nearly dismantled it. However, current conditions provide new opportunities for universities to play a vital role in fostering social stability.

Conclusion

Universities function as critical institutions for raising awareness in the nation-building process of Afghanistan. Through the emphasis on nation-building components and the inculcation of such concepts in the emerging generations, these institutions can establish an environment conducive to sustaining nationalism. The most fundamental and robust mechanism for the persistence of beliefs and the production of values resides within educational institutions. Reliance on national values, including unity, shared religion, nationalism, patriotism, and cultural heritage, can significantly enhance individuals' sense of belonging.

Nation-building, in addition to being a structural and objective function shaped by governments, is primarily a value-driven and subjective approach that is realized within society. This phenomenon suggests that universities, as institutions engaged in the cultivation of intellect and ideas, are better positioned to foster a sense of national identity and adherence to societal values. The institutionalization of value-driven and subjective elements pertaining to national unity and the internalization of societal values enable universities to play a crucial role in shaping the conceptualization of the state or the ideology that underpins governance structures.

Acknowledgment

Data Availability Statement

The data that support the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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