Address:
Afghanistan Sciences Academy
Torabaz Khan, Shabobo Str.
Shar-e-Naw, Kabul, Afghanistan
Tell: 0093202201279

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3. Article Structure

1. Title

2. Abstract (≤250 words: should represent background, objectives, methods and findings in short)

3. Keywords (3–6 terms)

4. Introduction should encompass (problem statement, significance, objectives, research questions/hypotheses, contribution)

5. Literature Review (recent studies, both local and international)

6. Methodology, Nature of the study (qualitative/quantitative/mixed-methods design)

7. Findings/Results (Authors must present and discuss the findings of each research instrument separately when multiple instruments are used for data collection)

8. Discussion (should be supported with previous studies findings in an analytical way)

9. Conclusion (aligned with findings; written in present tense)

10. Recommendations (optional; linked to conclusions)

11. References (APA 7th edition, alphabetical order by author surname)

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- Wahab, S., & Youngerman, B. (2007). A brief history of Afghanistan. Infobase Publishing.

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بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

Author: Associate Prof. Dr. Mohammad Azam Tariq

The Role of Modern Technology in Advancing Afghanistan's Economic Modernization: Challenges and Strategies

Abstract

Afghanistan, as a country in transition, faces major challenges on its path toward economic modernization. In this context, modern technologies, especially in the fields of digitalization, renewable energy, and technology-based financial services—offer significant opportunities for economic transformation. This study, using a descriptive-analytical method, examines the relationship between technological development and the strengthening of economic foundations within the framework of sustainable development theory. It also explores the institutional and structural mechanisms needed for the effective adoption of these technologies. The central research question is: From a sustainable development perspective to what extent can emerging technologies drive the economic modernization of Afghanistan, which structural, institutional, and human capital constraints limit their effectiveness, and what evidence-based strategies can be formulated to overcome these barriers and maximize the transformative potential of these

technologies? It is hypothesized that the purposeful and evidence-based application of emerging technologies—provided that institutional, infrastructural, and human capital prerequisites are met—can significantly accelerate Afghanistan's economic modernization. Moreover, addressing structural, institutional, and skill-related barriers through scientifically informed policies and strategies will enhance the effectiveness of these technologies and optimize their transformative impact on the country's economy. The findings highlight the need for comprehensive digital policies, stronger educational capacities in information and communication technologies, the creation of innovation ecosystems, and enhanced regional cooperation. Overall, the study concludes that modern technologies can become the backbone of Afghanistan's economic modernization, provided that strong institutional and structural foundations are established.

Keywords: Afghanistan, Sustainable Development, Technological Infrastructure, Technology Policy, Modern Technologies, Economic Modernization

Introduction

Afghanistan faces fundamental structural challenges on its path toward economic modernization and development. Weak economic institutions, long-term dependence on foreign aid, and insufficient technological infrastructure have constrained efforts to achieve sustainable growth. These conditions underscore the urgent need for innovative and transformative strategies to break the cycle of poverty and dependency.

Emerging technologies—particularly in the domains of digital innovation, clean energy, and intelligent financial services, offer significant potential to reshape the country's economic landscape.

The adoption of modern technologies can enhance productivity, improve transparency within financial systems, and increase the efficiency of public services. Moreover, it can facilitate access to global markets, thereby strengthening Afghanistan's economic competitiveness. However, the lack of sustainable digital infrastructure, gaps in policy coordination, and deficits in technical skills among the workforce remain critical barriers to realizing this potential.

Significance of the Study

Afghanistan requires a redefinition of its development trajectory. Without leveraging modern technological tools, achieving sustainable growth, social equity, and economic resilience is unlikely. This research provides a scientific foundation for policymakers, economic planners, and development-focused institutions to envision new pathways for transforming Afghanistan's economy through technology. A rigorous analysis of emerging technologies' role in economic modernization is therefore essential for designing a sustainable and independent future.

Research Objective

The aim of this study is to examine the role of modern technologies in the economic modernization of Afghanistan

from a sustainable development perspective. It further seeks to identify structural, institutional, and skill-related barriers, analyze existing capacities and opportunities, and propose evidence-based strategies for the targeted and context-specific application of technology to support the country's economic development.

Research Questions

1. From a sustainable development perspective to what extent can emerging technologies drive the economic modernization of Afghanistan?

2. Which structural, institutional, and human capital constraints limit their effectiveness?

3. What evidence-based strategies can be formulated to overcome these barriers and maximize the transformative potential of these technologies?

Hypothesis

1. The adoption of emerging technologies can significantly accelerate the economic modernization of Afghanistan.

2. Structural, institutional, and human capital constraints are major barriers limiting the effectiveness of emerging technologies in promoting economic development.

3. Implementing evidence-based strategies can reduce these barriers and maximize the transformative potential of emerging technologies.

Literature Review

The study of the role of emerging technologies in modernizing economic structures—particularly in developing countries such

as Afghanistan—has become a prominent topic in the literature on development and the political economy of technology. Since each subsequent study builds on previous research, this section reviews some of the relevant past studies.

Schwab (2017), in his book *The Fourth Industrial Revolution*, discusses the impact of emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence, the Internet of Things, and block chain on transforming production models, consumption patterns, governance, and education. He argues that countries lagging in this revolution are likely to face deeper gaps in economic modernization. Similarly, Todaro and Smith, in *Economic Development*, identify technology as a key driver for transitioning from traditional to modern economies, emphasizing its relationship with institutional development and human capital.

Practical reports by the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank highlight that digital economy initiatives, mobile banking, online education, and renewable energy constitute major capacities for Afghanistan's economic modernization. However, they also note significant challenges, including the lack of infrastructure, policy misalignment, and insufficient skilled human resources (ADB, 2022, p. 27; World Bank, 2023, p. 22). At a broader level, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP, 2023, p. 51) emphasizes that digital transformation, if integrated with sustainable

development approaches, can enhance economic productivity while promoting social equity and reducing inequality.

Zahedi and Hadi (2018) examined the role of emerging information technologies in advancing e-learning. Their study explores the contributions of cloud computing, the Internet of Things, big data, responsive design, and wearable technologies in improving electronic education while addressing associated challenges. Ali Hosseini (2020) investigated the role of emerging technologies in developing a green economy, focusing on reducing greenhouse gas emissions, improving energy efficiency, utilizing renewable resources, and achieving economic sustainability. Mehdi Rezaei (2019) analyzed the role of governments in investing in information technology and its impact on national employment. Fatemeh Ahmadi (2018), in her article *Technology in Afghanistan*, explored the challenges and opportunities of technology adoption in Afghanistan, offering insights relevant to the sustainable modernization of the country's economy.

Dehghani and Rezvani (2015), in their study *The Impact of Knowledge and Innovation Based on Emerging Technologies and Nano-Economy on Technical Progress and Industrial Competitiveness*, examined corporate strategies in response to competitors and consumers, asserting that one indicator of a country's development is the degree of technological adoption in production. Nanotechnology, as a leading emerging technology, has catalyzed the emergence of a Nan based economy and the fifth industrial revolution, contributing to cost

reduction, quality improvement, and product diversification across industries.

A review of these sources indicates that most studies focus either on emerging technologies or on sustainable development. Research combining economic modernization, emerging technologies, and sustainable development in the context of Afghanistan is very limited or absent. Empirical studies on Afghanistan tend to be descriptive or report-based, lacking theoretical analysis or applied models. While the relationship between technology and development has been explored at the theoretical and regional levels, an integrated analysis of the role of emerging technologies in modernizing Afghanistan's economy—grounded in the principles of sustainable development—remains a significant research gap. This study seeks to fill this gap using comparative data and a sustainable development theoretical framework.

Research Methodology

This study employs a descriptive–analytical research design, enabling an in-depth examination of the subject. It draws on a range of secondary sources, including official reports from international organizations, peer-reviewed journal articles, and government documents, to provide a comprehensive overview of emerging technologies and their implications for economic modernization. Data analysis follows a deductive approach, extracting theoretical concepts and patterns while elucidating causal relationships and interactions. Additionally, a qualitative

perspective facilitates conceptual analysis and interpretation of complex phenomena within texts and data. This methodological combination enhances the validity and depth of the analysis, providing a solid foundation for proposing practical and scientifically grounded strategies for Afghanistan's economic modernization.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of the present research is designed based on fundamental components such as emerging technologies, economic modernization, and sustainable development, and it focuses on analyzing the theoretical and functional interrelationships among them. Within this framework, the study aims to elucidate how advancements in emerging technologies can lead to the reconstruction and enhancement of economic structures while simultaneously aligning with the principles and objectives of sustainable development, particularly in the context of economic modernization. Such a perspective allows for a deeper understanding of the role of technology in transformative economic processes and the requirements for sustainability in the contemporary era. For the scientific rigor of this framework, it is essential to address the introduction of emerging technologies, economic modernization, and sustainable development:

1. Emerging Technologies: Emerging technologies refer to a set of innovations grounded in recent scientific and technological advancements, capable of generating

fundamental changes across industries, economies, and daily life. These technologies include artificial intelligence, biotechnology, nanotechnology, robotics, the Internet of Things (IoT), block chain, renewable energy, bio-technologies, and cloud computing systems (Tidd & Bessant, 2018, pp. 24–25). Emerging technologies, by enhancing efficiency and exerting a broad impact on the economy, culture, and society, increasing information processing speed, and reducing costs, provide opportunities for innovation, automation, and the creation of added value, thereby playing a key role in sustainable development and economic modernization (Schwab, 2017, pp. 12–15; OECD, 2018, p. 5).

2. Economic Modernization: Economic modernization is a multidimensional process through which countries transform their economic structures from traditional and low-productivity systems to diversified, technology-driven, and knowledge-based economies (Todaro & Smith, 2020, p. 61). This transformation not only involves structural changes in production and industry but also requires institutional improvements, human capital development, and the application of emerging technologies (Rodrik, 2013, p. 24). In the context of Afghanistan, economic modernization holds particular significance due to the country's long-term reliance on foreign aid and the predominance of traditional agriculture and the informal sector in its economy (World Bank, 2023, p. 18). Leveraging emerging technologies and establishing digital

infrastructure can enable Afghanistan to pursue self-reliance and reduce dependence on external resources (UNDP, 2022, p. 10). Moreover, economic modernization can create new employment opportunities and foster conditions for sustainable growth (OECD, 2019, p. 45).

3. Sustainable Development: Sustainable development is a central concept in development studies, formally articulated for the first time in the report of the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) of the United Nations in 1987. According to this report, sustainable development is defined as meeting the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (UN, 1987, p. 8). This concept extends beyond mere economic growth, emphasizing a balance among three dimensions: economic, environmental, and social.

The economic dimension of sustainable development focuses on economic growth and development while ensuring resource efficiency and equitable opportunity distribution, enabling the economy to meet the current population's needs while preserving natural resources for future generations (Todaro & Smith, 2020, p. 28). The environmental dimension emphasizes maintaining ecosystem quality, preventing the degradation of natural resources, and reducing pollution, as unsustainable resource use leads to soil erosion, biodiversity loss, and climate change.

The social dimension of sustainable development addresses social justice, poverty reduction, quality of life improvement,

and the creation of equal opportunities for all societal groups. This dimension is particularly critical in developing countries like Afghanistan, where unequal access to services hinders the realization of sustainable development. Studies, including UN reports, highlight that emerging technologies and digital transformation can serve as effective tools for achieving sustainable development, especially by enhancing resource efficiency, reducing energy consumption, and generating new economic and social opportunities (UNDP, 2022, p. 15). Therefore, sustainable development not only provides a framework for economic growth but also offers a comprehensive pathway for environmental protection and social justice, which is vital for Afghanistan's economic and social reconstruction.

Findings and Analysis

Based on the findings, the researcher's analysis focuses on four main axes: first, the existing technological capacities in Afghanistan's economy and their role as a foundation for modernization and sustainable development; second, the impact of emerging technologies on sustainable development with particular emphasis on Afghanistan's local conditions; third, the structural and institutional barriers that constrain technological development and economic modernization; and finally, the strategies that could institutionalize technological capacities and accelerate economic transformation in the country.

1. Technological Capacities in Afghanistan: A Foundation for Modernization and Sustainable Development

Studies indicate that structural weaknesses in technical and institutional infrastructure, widespread inequality in access to public services, and heavy reliance on the informal and subsistence economy have posed significant challenges to Afghanistan's modernization process (World Bank, 2023, p. 15). In this context, emerging technologies act as a driving force for structural transformation and a strategic tool for economic modernization. By enhancing productivity, improving service efficiency, strengthening human capital, and facilitating economic participation, these technologies can play a key role in transitioning Afghanistan from a stagnant economy to a sustainable, diversified, and inclusive structure (Schwab, 2017, pp. 45–48). Within this framework, the existing technological capacities in Afghanistan's key economic sectors can be analyzed along the following axes:

1-1.Emerging Technologies in Agriculture: Transition to Smart Farming

Agriculture, accounting for over 25% of GDP, remains a fundamental pillar of Afghanistan's economy and plays a decisive role in rural livelihoods, representing more than 60% of direct and indirect employment (FAO, 2021, p. 10). However, this sector largely relies on traditional production methods, which increases its vulnerability to climate change and drought. Low productivity, dependence on rainfall, and conventional resource management hinder sustainable

development in this sector. Emerging technologies can serve as a turning point in optimizing Afghanistan's agricultural performance. Tools such as smart biosensors, drip irrigation systems, satellite mapping and big data analytics, agricultural drones, and climate data analysis enable more precise resource management and increased productivity, steering agriculture towards "smart farming" (FAO, 2021, pp. 11–13).

Additionally, the use of information technologies to provide farmers with market information, price forecasting, and climate updates reduces risk and enhances profitability (UNDP, 2022, p. 16). These developments can strengthen food security and create new employment opportunities in agricultural technologies and rural services. However, challenges such as lack of technical knowledge, insufficient digital infrastructure in rural areas, and low technological literacy among farmers limit the full realization of these capacities (World Bank, 2023, p. 20).

1-2. Financial Technologies and Economic Inclusion: A Path towards Digital Banking

Evidence shows that a significant portion of the population lacks access to formal financial services. According to the Asian Development Bank, only a small percentage of the adult population (around 15%) holds a bank account, while most financial transactions are conducted in cash (ADB, 2022, p. 26). This limitation hinders productive investments and the growth of small enterprises. Emerging financial technologies

(FinTech), such as mobile banking services like M-Paisa, provide a platform to enhance financial inclusion and economic empowerment. These technologies enable money transfers, bill payments, online purchases, and microloans, playing a key role in reducing transaction costs, supporting small businesses, and strengthening the financial resilience of vulnerable households (Demirgüç-Kunt et al., 2018, p. 47; Rahimi, 2021, p. 115). They also improve financial transparency and help curb informal economic activities and corruption. Furthermore, women and residents of remote areas—traditionally excluded from financial systems—benefit from FinTech (OECD, 2020, p. 53).

However, the absence of clear legal frameworks, weak cybersecurity measures, and low public trust in digital financial systems remain major challenges (OECD, 2020, p. 53). Therefore, the expansion of FinTech in Afghanistan requires smart policymaking, effective oversight, and strengthened communication infrastructure.

1-3.Innovation in Natural Resource Utilization: Mining and Renewable Energy

Afghanistan possesses extensive mineral resources, such as lithium, copper, iron, gold, and coal, offering significant potential for the mining industry. However, resource exploitation has often been primitive, non-transparent, and technology-deficient. Minerals could serve as a foundation for Afghanistan's economic modernization if emerging technologies—such as remote sensing, automated drilling, and

geological analysis systems—are applied in exploration, extraction, and processing (IEA, 2020, p. 35). These technologies can enable more sustainable and efficient resource use. Geophysical data mining, satellite mapping, and automated drilling systems can increase economic returns while minimizing environmental impacts (IEA, 2020, pp. 34–36).

Moreover, the development of renewable energy technologies, particularly solar energy—can play a central role in reducing fuel import dependency, lowering energy production costs, and ensuring sustainable electricity supply in rural and mountainous areas (UNDP, 2022, p. 20). Achieving these objectives, however, requires addressing challenges such as limited investment, insecure capital, and weak natural resource policies (World Bank, 2023, p. 25).

Additionally, waste management, recycling, and mineral refining technologies can enable environmentally compatible resource utilization. In the energy sector, developing solar and wind technologies—especially in regions not connected to the national grid—is a vital strategy for sustainable and affordable energy supply (UNDP, 2022, p. 21). Only 35% of the population currently has access to reliable electricity (World Bank, 2023, p. 23), and small-scale solar cells can serve as an immediate, locally adapted solution. Beyond reducing energy import dependency, these technologies also have local employment potential. Key challenges include the absence of

legal frameworks for resource ownership, lack of sustainable foreign investment, and general insecurity.

1-4. Emerging Technologies in Social and Infrastructure Sectors

Beyond traditional economic sectors, emerging technologies play a fundamental role in social and infrastructure sectors. In education, digital learning platforms, learning management systems, and multimedia content provide access to quality education for marginalized groups and remote areas (UNICEF, 2021, p. 40). These technologies can reduce educational gaps and strengthen human capital in the long term. In healthcare, digital health services and telemedicine overcome geographical barriers, providing medical services in areas lacking specialized physicians and playing an effective role in managing public health crises such as infectious diseases (WHO, 2022, p. 33).

Moreover, smart transportation technologies—including positioning systems, traffic management, and logistics networks—can increase transport system efficiency, reduce commercial costs, and improve infrastructure services (ADB, 2022, p. 30). Economic modernization is also impossible without capable human capital. In Afghanistan, poor access to quality education and healthcare remains a major development barrier. Emerging technologies can address these gaps through e-learning tools, digital health, and telemedicine. For example, e-learning platforms such as "Dars-e-Online" played a critical role during the COVID-19 pandemic, ensuring the continuation

of education for millions of students (UNICEF, 2021, p. 39). In healthcare, mHealth solutions and remote medical consultations reduce treatment costs and expand access to primary care in rural areas (WHO, 2022, p. 33). Furthermore, smart transportation and urban management systems enhance urban infrastructure efficiency, indirectly yet effectively contributing to economic development (ADB, 2022, p. 30).

2. Impact of Emerging Technologies on Sustainable Development: A Focused Approach on Afghanistan

Emerging technologies, by creating structural transformations in production, governance, and public services, can provide an effective platform for moving toward inclusive, equitable, and environmentally sustainable development. In this context, Afghanistan, as a transitional country facing chronic economic, social, and environmental challenges, can leverage these capacities to accelerate sustainable development, provided it adopts targeted and sustainable technological policies.

1-2. Technology and the Economic Dimension of Sustainable Development in Afghanistan

emerging technologies, particularly in the digital domain, are considered among the most important drivers of economic growth in the twenty-first century. By optimizing production processes, reducing costs, and increasing productivity, these technologies play a significant role in achieving sustainable economic development. In a country like Afghanistan, confronted with structural limitations, resource scarcity, and

dependence on a subsistence economy, the purposeful use of technology can lead to economic restructuring and reduce reliance on external resources. Within this framework, the following key components can be analyzed:

1-1-2.Enhancing Productivity and Efficiency in the Production System

Productivity and production efficiency are key indicators for evaluating economic performance and achieving sustainable development. Emerging technologies, especially digital technologies—act as transformative tools, enabling the optimization of production processes, reduction of resource wastage, and overall performance improvement. In recent decades, technologies such as the Internet of Things (IoT), Artificial Intelligence (AI), and big data analytics have played a fundamental role in redesigning supply chains, enhancing decision-making accuracy, and reducing production costs (World Bank, 2021; Schwab, 2017).

The IoT, by connecting and coordinating physical and digital systems, enables real-time data collection and analysis. In industrial production, this capability allows manufacturers to monitor different components of production lines, identify inefficiencies, and implement continuous optimization (OECD, 2022). Machine learning algorithms within AI frameworks help identify hidden patterns in operational data, enabling fault prediction, maintenance scheduling, and inventory optimization (Schwab, 2017, p. 64). Likewise, big data analytics serve as a powerful tool for evaluating market

performance, assessing risks, and supporting strategic decision-making at macroeconomic levels (UNDP, 2023, p. 51).

In agriculture—a sector fundamental to food security and employment in developing countries, the application of emerging technologies, particularly in smart farming, has resulted in significant improvements. The use of sensors, satellite imagery, agricultural drones, and data analysis systems in monitoring soil conditions, managing irrigation, and predicting pests has considerably reduced water, fertilizer, and energy consumption while increasing land productivity (FAO, 2021, p. 11). These advancements are strategically significant for Afghanistan, which faces severe limitations in natural resource utilization, climate change impacts, and low agricultural productivity. For instance, smart irrigation systems based on soil moisture analysis and rainfall patterns can save up to 50% of water usage without reducing crop yield (IEA, 2020).

Moreover, in small and medium-sized enterprises, digital technologies such as enterprise resource planning software, production process automation, and digital marketing tools have improved productivity and competitiveness. Since a substantial portion of Afghanistan's businesses consists of these enterprises, implementing such technologies can enhance domestic production capacity, reduce import dependency, and create sustainable employment (ADB, 2022, p. 27).

According to the Food and Agriculture Organization, countries in the early stages of development, by investing strategically in productive technologies, can quickly increase input efficiency, improve food security, and enhance rural household livelihoods (FAO, 2021, p. 11). Overall, enhancing productivity and efficiency through emerging technologies not only increases economic returns and reduces costs but also lays the foundation for achieving other dimensions of sustainable development. In Afghanistan, the targeted use of these technologies could provide effective solutions for poverty alleviation, food security improvement, and post-crisis economic reconstruction. However, achieving these goals requires investment in digital infrastructure, skilled workforce development, and coordinated policies between the government, private sector, and research institutions (UNDP, 2023; OECD, 2022).

2-1-2. Formation of the Digital Economy and Strengthening Financial Inclusion

The digital economy, as a fundamental aspect of economic transformation in the information age, refers to the use of digital technologies in the creation, distribution, and consumption of goods and services. Through tools such as electronic payments, mobile banking, digital financial platforms, and crypto currencies, this modern form of economy expands traditional financial boundaries and facilitates the participation of marginalized groups in economic cycles (UNCTAD, 2021, p. 3).

In many developing countries, particularly those with weak banking infrastructure and dispersed populations, digital financial technologies (TechFin) play a vital role in enhancing financial inclusion. Financial inclusion ensures access for, especially low-income populations and underserved areas—to safe, affordable, and appropriate financial services. Digital technologies reduce transaction costs, remove intermediaries, and enable remote access to financial services, thereby closing structural gaps in financial access (World Bank, 2022, p. 11).

In Afghanistan, confronted with geographic dispersion, limited bank branches, and cultural restrictions on using traditional banking services, platforms such as M-Paisa, HesabPay, and other mobile money services—operational since the early 2010s—have provided effective financial transaction channels. These services quickly became essential digital payment tools, enabling money transfers, bill payments, remittances, and mobile-based purchases (ADB, 2022, p. 27; USAID, 2021). They have been particularly embraced by rural communities and women previously excluded from formal financial services.

According to UNDP, by 2023, over six million users in Afghanistan utilized mobile payment services, with around 30% of small-scale transactions in urban areas conducted digitally (UNDP, 2023, p. 44). These developments have facilitated micro-investments, enhanced local cash circulation, and improved household financial resilience against economic

shocks. Furthermore, digital banking has provided Afghan women with a historic opportunity to overcome physical and social limitations, gain relative financial independence, and participate in entrepreneurial activities (OECD, 2022).

At the macro level, the emergence of the digital economy promotes financial transparency, strengthens government oversight capacity, and reduces financial corruption— especially crucial in fragile structures like Afghanistan. Digital systems, particularly for employee salaries and social assistance payments, provide transparent monitoring, eliminate corrupt intermediaries, and accelerate public access to resources (World Bank, 2021, p. 28). For example, the digital payment of teachers' salaries in certain provinces reduced the time to receive payments by up to 50% and significantly decreased complaints regarding delays or deductions (UNDP, 2023, p. 45).

Nevertheless, realizing the full potential of the digital economy requires developing digital infrastructure, ensuring stable internet access, enhancing financial and digital literacy, and formulating a comprehensive national policy in the financial technology sector. Currently, only about 25% of Afghan villages have reliable internet access, and the digital divide between urban and rural areas remains significant (World Bank, 2021).

3-1-2. Innovation, Entrepreneurship, and Knowledge-Based Economy Development

In the digital economy era, technological innovation and entrepreneurship are recognized as key drivers of sustainable economic development. Emerging technologies reduce market entry barriers, provide easy access to informational resources, and create digital platforms for supply and demand, fostering the growth of creative ideas and startups. In knowledge-based economies, the ability to generate and utilize knowledge, rather than traditional resources such as land or raw materials, becomes the main source of value creation (Schwab, 2017, p. 67).

Afghanistan can facilitate its economic modernization by adopting strategies such as developing technical and technological education, strengthening university-industry collaboration, and supporting innovation ecosystems. Establishing and supporting incubators, science and technology parks, and business accelerators can nurture a new generation of entrepreneurs who contribute not only to job creation but also to reducing foreign aid dependence and enhancing domestic capacities.

Furthermore, global experiences in developing innovative economies indicate that government support for technological innovations, tax incentives for startups, and intellectual property facilitation can strengthen economic resilience and sustainable growth foundations. Given Afghanistan's young

and job-seeking population, strengthening the innovation ecosystem is both an economic opportunity and a social necessity to reduce unemployment and migration.

2-2. Technology and the Environmental Dimension of Sustainable Development in Afghanistan

Currently, technology has emerged as a strategic tool in managing environmental crises. Sustainable development is unattainable without safeguarding natural resources, controlling pollution, and addressing impacts of climate change. Emerging technologies—including smart environmental sensors, satellite imagery, clean energy systems, and intelligent natural resource management—enable precise monitoring, data-driven decision-making, and enhanced effectiveness of environmental policies. In Afghanistan, which faces challenges such as resource degradation, water scarcity, soil erosion, and climate vulnerability, systematic utilization of these technologies can play a decisive role in transitioning toward balanced, resilient, and sustainable development. Key components include:

1-2-2. Renewable Energy and Pollution Reduction: A major challenge in industrial development is the increased consumption of fossil fuels, greenhouse gas emissions, and extensive natural resource degradation, which threaten environmental stability and human health. Emerging energy technologies provide a transformative pathway from polluting models to clean development patterns. The development and commercialization of next-generation solar cells, smart wind

turbines, and energy storage systems have significantly reduced renewable energy production costs and enhanced efficiency (IEA, 2020, pp. 34–36).

Afghanistan, due to its geographic location and high annual solar radiation—especially in southern and western regions—has significant potential for solar energy production (IRENA, 2021). This offers a strategic opportunity for sustainable, decentralized, and cost-effective electricity generation, particularly in rural areas lacking access to the national grid (World Bank, 2018, p. 12). Moreover, leveraging these resources reduces dependency on fossil fuel imports, lowers carbon emissions, and improves long-term environmental quality (ADB, 2020, pp. 22–24).

Additionally, smart energy management technologies—such as smart grids, monitoring and consumption forecasting systems, and automated distribution control—can enhance renewable energy system efficiency (IEA, 2022, p. 320). In Afghanistan, supportive policies for the private sector, attracting foreign investment in clean energy, and establishing legal frameworks for sustainable utilization of renewable resources are essential to realize this transformation (World Bank, 2021, pp. 45–47). These measures contribute to achieving a fundamental pillar of sustainable development: environmental protection alongside improved quality of life in marginalized communities (IRENA, 2020, p. 18).

2-2-2. Optimization of Natural Resource Use: Sustainable development fundamentally depends on rational and efficient management of natural resources, especially in countries like Afghanistan, which face critical shortages of vital resources such as water, energy, and arable land. Emerging digital technologies, such as IoT, decision-support systems, and AI, play a crucial role in monitoring, managing, and optimizing resource utilization. Global experiences show that developing smart cities, adopting clean transport systems, and utilizing intelligent waste management systems reduces resource wastage, pollutant emissions, and enhance environmental quality (OECD, 2022, p. 20).

For example, smart water management systems employing sensors and real-time data analytics can optimize agricultural water use and save up to 30% of water consumption without reducing crop yields (World Bank, 2021, p. 88). In waste management, data-driven and machine-learning-based technologies enable accurate waste volume prediction, collection scheduling, and source separation, significantly reducing landfill waste and increasing recycling rates (UN-Habitat, 2020, p. 54).

Afghanistan can adopt these models, particularly in water and soil resource management, to enhance environmental resilience and resource security. The use of remote sensing, agricultural drones, and smart irrigation systems in dry and semi-arid areas can reduce costs, increase productivity, and support local ecosystem sustainability (FAO, 2023, p. 42). However,

realizing this potential requires investment in technological infrastructure, training skilled human resources, and national-level holistic policymaking, as technology alone cannot ensure sustainable natural resource management without an effective institutional framework and government support (Byrd, 2012, p. 48).

3-2-2. Environmental Monitoring and Surveillance: As environmental crises increasingly threaten fragile ecosystems, monitoring technologies have become vital for environmental governance. Remote sensing, environmental satellites, IoT sensors, and advanced modeling algorithms enable real-time and large-scale environmental data collection, analysis, and visualization (UNEP, 2021, p. 11).

In Afghanistan, where natural resources such as forests in the east and southeast (Nangarhar, Kunar, Nuristan, Paktia, Paktika) and pastures in Badakhshan, as well as river basins like Harirud and Kabul, are under pressure from population growth, overgrazing, and climate change, monitoring technologies can play a key role in identifying and preventing degradation. For instance, satellite data for deforestation monitoring or soil erosion detection can guide precise conservation policies (NASA, 2020, p. 29).

Moreover, Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and hydrological modeling can identify flood, drought, and groundwater depletion risks, allowing timely design of mitigation measures (World Bank, 2021, p. 93). Environmental

sensors in urban and rural areas can generate valuable data on pollutants, particulate matter, or nitrates in water sources, providing an evidence-based foundation for transparent and responsive policymaking (OECD, 2022, p. 24).

Given the absence of a cohesive national environmental monitoring system in Afghanistan, establishing a national digital framework for environmental surveillance is a strategic priority. This framework should be developed collaboratively with scientific institutions, local authorities, and international stakeholders to enable proactive decision-making and enhance community resilience against environmental hazards (FAO, 2023, p. 39).

3-2. Technology and the Social Dimension of Sustainable Development in Afghanistan

Technology, as a key factor in improving quality of life and enhancing social participation, plays an essential role in achieving social justice and sustainable development. By facilitating access to educational, healthcare, informational, and economic services, technology can strengthen social structures, reduce inequalities, and support balanced and inclusive development. The social dimensions of technology can be analyzed through the following components:

1-3-2. Equitable Access to Education and Healthcare: Emerging technologies in recent decades have significantly enhanced social equality and equitable access to public services. A primary manifestation of this transformation is the democratization of access to education and healthcare through

digital tools. In countries like Afghanistan, where a significant portion of the population lives in remote or mountainous areas with severe infrastructural limitations, technology can act as an empowering tool.

In education, online learning platforms, virtual classrooms, and digital learning resources provide access to quality education even in the most remote areas. Platforms such as Khan Academy or Coursera, offering free and structured educational content, serve as successful models for resource-constrained countries (UNESCO, 2022, p. 18). Afghanistan can similarly develop localized and multilingual digital educational content, overcome geographic and gender barriers while expanding human capital development (World Bank, 2021, p. 52).

In healthcare, telemedicine, online medical consultation platforms, disease monitoring apps, and digital health records can effectively deliver primary health services to underserved populations. Telemedicine bridges geographic gaps in areas lacking specialist doctors through video or telephone consultations (WHO, 2020, p. 33). Additionally, using information technologies for monitoring and responding to contagious diseases, such as COVID-19, demonstrated that governments and health institutions could implement effective reactive and preventive policies using big data analytics and real-time alerts (OECD, 2021, p. 16). Afghanistan requires a comprehensive policy framework for digital education and health, ensuring technical infrastructure, human capacity,

cybersecurity, and social inclusion. Only under such conditions can technology effectively support equitable and sustainable social development.

2-3-2. Strengthening Social Participation and Empowering Vulnerable Groups: A central function of technology in the social sphere is creating new avenues for participation and empowerment of vulnerable groups. Digital technologies, particularly in geographically unequal contexts like Afghanistan, offer previously unimaginable opportunities. Women, persons with disabilities, ethnic minorities, and residents of marginalized areas historically had limited access to education, labor markets, and political and social participation. Digital platforms, social networks, online education systems, and e-markets have enabled these groups to enter public domains. For instance, many Afghan women have recently started home-based businesses in handicrafts, tailoring, content production, or virtual services using smartphones and internet access, achieving relative financial independence (UN Women, 2022, p. 29).

Moreover, digital skills training, particularly for youth and women in underserved regions, provides employment and self-reliance opportunities. Projects like the Digital Citizen Fund in Afghanistan demonstrate how basic computer and internet skills training can transform lives and empower hundreds of girls as active societal participants (Bahrami, 2021, p. 14). Technology also provides tools for social participation and civic advocacy through digital reporting systems, online

petitions, and social media campaigns, allowing citizens to voice demands and exert pressure on decision-makers remotely (OECD, 2021, p. 44). However, unequal internet access, digital poverty, low media literacy, and cyber threats can hinder full realization of these capacities. Thus, Afghanistan needs digital justice–based policymaking, infrastructure support, and a secure digital environment, especially for women and adolescents, to leverage technology effectively for social empowerment (UNDP, 2023, p. 11).

3-3-2.   Transparency,   Accountability,   and   Good Governance: In the digital era, technology has played a transformative role in improving governance quality. One crucial aspect of this transformation is enhancing transparency, accountability, and combating administrative corruption through technological tools. E-government, electronic voting systems, open-access information platforms, and blockchain technologies are innovations compelling governments to be more accountable to citizens (UNESCAP, 2021, p. 38). In developing countries, such technologies have reduced the gap between government and people and restored public trust in institutions. Transparency International reports that electronic reporting systems, open data repositories, and administrative automation have reduced corruption and improved countries' rankings in the Corruption Perceptions Index (Transparency International, 2023).

In Afghanistan, which has long faced structural challenges and weak transparency in administration, developing digital government infrastructure and launching online public service platforms can fundamentally improve governance efficiency. Examples such as electronic payroll systems (MIS) and digital civil registration systems are initial but effective steps in this direction (World Bank, 2022, p. 61).

Additionally, AI and data analytics technologies used for tracking corruption, predicting administrative violations, and analyzing public sector behavior have yielded positive results in many countries. Afghanistan can collaborate with international institutions to design localized algorithms for intelligent auditing and monitoring (OECD, 2022, p. 34). However, realizing these capacities fully requires political will, adequate cybersecurity, and public access to digital infrastructure. Without these prerequisites, even technological tools could serve power centralization and inequality rather than transparency and justice.

3. Structural Barriers to Technology Development and Economic Modernization in Afghanistan

Afghanistan, despite possessing significant natural and human capacities, faces multiple structural barriers that have delayed the development of technology and its effective utilization in the process of economic modernization. These barriers can be analyzed as follows:

3-1. Limited Access to Stable Internet: One of the most significant structural barriers is the limited access to stable and

high-speed internet, which constitutes the foundation for the development of digital technologies. According to the World Bank (2023), only about 25% of Afghan villages have access to reliable internet (World Bank, 2023, p. 22). This situation reflects severe weaknesses in the country's communication infrastructure, directly preventing widespread utilization of information and communication technologies (ICT). Technical issues, lack of investment, security challenges, and political interference are the main causes of these limitations (Asmat et al., 2021, p. 105). Moreover, these limitations exacerbate the digital divide, severely restricting equitable access to technological opportunities across different social groups, leading to economic, social, and educational inequalities (UNDP, 2022, p. 74).

3-2. Inadequacy of the Educational System in Training Skilled Professionals

Afghanistan's educational system is still unable to produce skilled professionals in the field of ICT. This weakness stems from outdated curricula, a lack of modern educational equipment, and insufficiently experienced instructors in emerging technologies (Byrd, 2012, p. 48). Educational institutions lack essential facilities such as computer laboratories and high-speed internet, significantly reducing the quality of training. These shortcomings limit Afghanistan's workforce competitiveness in international markets and hinder the integration of modern technologies into production and

service processes (World Economic Forum, 2022, p. 58). For instance, in areas such as smart agriculture and digital banking, the lack of skilled human resources has restricted the utilization of new technologies. Strengthening the educational system and investing in specialized ICT training are therefore key priorities (Rahimi, 2021, p. 115).

3-3. Lack of Coordination among Decision-Making Institutions

The existence of fragmented and uncoordinated governmental institutions responsible for technology represents another major barrier to technological development in Afghanistan. The multiplicity of institutions and the absence of coherent structures for policy coordination have resulted in isolated program implementation and reduced effectiveness of technology projects (Rahimi, 2021, p. 121). Furthermore, political disagreements, factional competition, and weak resource management have negatively impacted project quality and productivity (Asian Development Bank, 2020, p. 65). This challenge is particularly evident in the development of ICT infrastructure, promotion of modern technologies in agriculture and industry, and strengthening the technological capacities of governmental agencies (UNDP, 2023, p. 88).

3-4. Environmental and Institutional Challenges

In recent years, environmental instability and institutional uncertainties have created a high-risk environment for investment in the technology sector. This situation has slowed the development of technological infrastructure and reduced

incentives for long-term investments (Khan et al., 2022, p. 92). Despite some improvements in environmental stability, challenges such as policy incoherence, limited access to international financial resources, and the absence of clear frameworks for technology development continue to impede effective implementation of technological programs (World Bank, 2023, p. 30). These factors have influenced the willingness of domestic and regional actors to participate in the process of technological modernization.

3-5. Weak Technology Infrastructure

The lack of essential technology infrastructure, including stable electricity, insufficient network equipment, and limited development of telecommunications networks, represents a serious obstacle to the use of modern technologies in Afghanistan (International Telecommunication Union, 2022, p. 47). Many rural areas not only lack internet access but also do not have sufficient electricity to utilize digital technologies (FAO, 2021, p. 15). These limitations have hindered the widespread national deployment of technologies such as the Internet of Things and smart agriculture.

3-6. Insufficient Investment in Technology

Insufficient investment in the technology sector and scientific research constitutes another major barrier to technological development in Afghanistan. Limited government financial resources and the absence of effective incentives to attract private sector investment have slowed technological growth

(Asian Development Bank, 2022, p. 78). This situation has resulted in technological lag across various economic sectors.

3-7. Technology Culture and Resistance to Change

Organizational and public culture can also constitute a serious barrier to the adoption and development of modern technologies. Resistance to change, lack of specialized training, negative attitudes toward technology, and low digital literacy have slowed technology adoption across various sectors (OECD, 2021, p. 66).

4. Strategies for Technology Development and Economic Modernization in Afghanistan

To overcome the structural barriers to economic modernization, it is essential to adopt evidence-based strategies, including the formulation of a digital transformation roadmap aligned with sustainable development, strengthening technical and vocational education, attracting investment, and providing targeted support for the innovation ecosystem.

4-1. Formulating a Digital Transformation Roadmap Based on Sustainable Development Goals

Digital transformation is a process through which digital technologies penetrate the economy and society, enhancing efficiency, innovation, and quality of life. Developing a comprehensive and coherent roadmap that centers on the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is crucial for Afghanistan (UN, 2015). These goals guide balanced economic, social, and environmental development. Despite challenges such as weak infrastructure, shortage of

skilled workforce, and political instability, Afghanistan possesses considerable potential in its young human capital and natural resources (World Bank, 2023, p. 15).

A digital transformation roadmap can be operationalized through components such as technological infrastructure (development of high-speed internet networks, stable electricity supply, and data centers), education and skills development (enhancing digital and technical training at all levels), laws and regulations (enacting legislation supporting cybersecurity, privacy, and intellectual property), innovation support (creating a conducive environment for startups and tech companies), and financial backing (providing financial facilities and incentives for technology projects) (Schwab, 2017; UNDP, 2022). Implementing this roadmap facilitates optimal utilization of modern technologies in economic and social sectors, thereby accelerating sustainable development.

4-2. Establishing Technical and Vocational Training Centers in ICT, Energy, and Fintech

The establishment of such centers constitutes a fundamental step toward economic modernization and technological advancement in Afghanistan, as the role of skilled human capital in institutionalizing technology is indispensable. These centers play a pivotal role in training professionals capable of working with modern technologies and actively participating in innovative businesses (Byrd, 2012, p. 48).

Focusing on key sectors such as information and communication technology (ICT), energy, and fintech is essential. On one hand, the rapid growth of digital technologies has elevated the importance of skills in software development, online services, and digital platforms. On the other hand, renewable energy technologies, including solar and wind energy, and efficient energy management, especially in developing countries, are of high priority (IEA, 2020). Furthermore, fintech technologies, by enhancing financial inclusion, reducing transaction costs, and facilitating commerce, play a critical role in economic growth, making the training of specialized personnel in this sector vital for Afghanistan (ADB, 2022, p. 27).

To develop these centers effectively, initiatives such as collaboration with universities and international institutions to enhance educational quality and align with global standards, leveraging modern educational technologies such as e-learning, simulation, and project-based learning, designing short-term specialized courses tailored to labor market needs, and providing financial support and scholarships alongside targeted employment programs for graduates in technological industries are recommended. Implementing these strategies gradually creates a pool of skilled and capable human resources, strengthening the foundation for technological development and economic modernization in Afghanistan.

4-3. Encouraging Domestic and Foreign Investment in Digital Infrastructure

Technological infrastructure, including communication networks, data centers, telecommunication equipment, and sustainable energy sources, forms the backbone of any digital transformation. Investment in these areas is critical for technology development and achieving sustainable development objectives (World Bank, 2023). Despite structural challenges, Afghanistan possesses considerable opportunities to attract investment in this sector.

These opportunities include a growing technology market with increasing internet and mobile penetration, enabling the development of extensive digital services. Additionally, rich natural resources, particularly in renewable energy such as solar and wind, facilitate the development of clean energy and reduce dependence on fossil fuels. Moreover, the presence of a young, energetic, and growing population ready to enter the tech-driven labor market provides a significant competitive advantage (UNDP, 2022, p. 82).

To effectively harness these capacities and attract domestic and foreign investment, essential measures include designing and implementing transparent and supportive legal frameworks that protect investor rights and facilitate the establishment and management of tech enterprises. Establishing special technology zones offering financial, tax, and service incentives for companies and startups can serve as an effective tool for

attracting investment. Expanding international cooperation with development agencies, global banks, and aid organizations to access financial and technical resources is another key strategy. Additionally, direct financial support for startups and innovative projects through the creation and strengthening of venture capital funds, provision of credit facilities, and advisory services can enhance investor motivation and reduce investment risk in Afghanistan. Ultimately, targeted and strategic investment in technological infrastructure not only advances modern technologies but also increases employment, enhances productivity, and fosters sustainable economic growth.

4-4. Strengthening Technology Accelerators and Supporting Startups

Accelerators and startups serve as the engines of innovation and technological development, playing a crucial role in transforming innovative ideas into marketable products and services (OECD, 2021). By providing facilities such as adequate workspace, specialized training, technical and business consulting, and effective networking opportunities, these entities help emerging companies navigate growth and establish themselves in the market efficiently and effectively.

In Afghanistan, despite the available talent and youthful population, the startup ecosystem is still in its early stages, facing challenges such as limited investment, restricted access to domestic and international markets, weak institutional support, and the absence of coherent policy frameworks

(Rahimi, 2021, p. 118). Strengthening this nascent ecosystem requires a set of structural and supportive measures. These include creating and developing accelerators as support centers that provide cowering spaces, specialized business and technology training, legal and financial consulting, and networking facilitation with other ecosystem actors. Organizing innovation events such as hackathons, startup camps, and technology exhibitions can identify creative ideas, attract investors, and enhance active participation in the innovation sector.

Establishing effective mechanisms for direct interaction between startups and domestic and foreign investors, major tech companies, and international organizations is highly important, as these interactions can facilitate joint investment opportunities and knowledge and technology transfer. Furthermore, developing supportive legal and financial frameworks for startups, including simplifying company registration processes, protecting intellectual property, offering tax exemptions, and providing credit facilities, helps reduce bureaucratic barriers and increases motivation for entrepreneurship in Afghanistan's tech-driven environment. Implementing this set of measures fosters the growth of knowledge-based businesses, enhances national innovation capacity, and modernizes Afghanistan's economic structure based on technology and creativity.

Conclusion

This study, centered on the research question, *"What role can emerging technologies play in the economic modernization of Afghanistan from the perspective of sustainable development?"*, and based on the hypothesis that *"the strategic and purposeful application of emerging technologies, provided that institutional, infrastructural, and educational prerequisites are met, can lead to the economic modernization of Afghanistan"*, has conducted a thorough analysis of the role of these technologies in transforming the country's economic structures. The research also identified existing obstacles and challenges and proposed practical strategies and policy measures to institutionalize technological capacities and accelerate the process of economic modernization.

The findings, analyzed within the framework of sustainable development theory, indicate that emerging technologies have substantial potential to play a pivotal role in transforming Afghanistan's economic structure—particularly in areas such as enhancing productivity, diversifying economic activities, improving public services, and raising living standards. However, realizing this potential requires the establishment of adequate institutional, technical, and human capacity. Developing a skilled human capital base, especially through technology-related vocational and technical training, constitutes a fundamental prerequisite. Furthermore, the creation and strengthening of essential infrastructures such as high-speed internet, reliable energy supply, and secure

communication networks—are critical for the formation of an innovation ecosystem and a digital economy.

From a policy perspective, designing clear legal frameworks, implementing facilitative policies, and providing targeted support for innovation play a decisive role in guiding technological transformation. Institutional fragmentation and policy instability remain major barriers to the realization of technological modernization. Additionally, leveraging regional and international cooperation can be effective in technology transfer, investment attraction, and the enhancement of local capabilities.

Ultimately, an economic modernization approach grounded in emerging technologies must align with the principles of sustainable development; that is, alongside economic growth, it should also promote social justice, reduce inequality, and protect the environment. Properly implemented, emerging technologies can improve quality of life, ensure equitable access to services, facilitate sustainable management of natural resources, and lay the groundwork for structural transformation in Afghanistan's economy and society. Achieving this path requires political will, synergy among governmental and non-governmental institutions, and targeted support for the innovation ecosystem. Under these conditions, emerging technologies can become a driving engine of Afghanistan's sustainable development.

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Author: Associate Prof. Dr. M. Halim Tanwir

Indo-Aryan Relations and Languages in History: Interactions between Afghan and Indian Cultures

Abstract

The historical relationship between Afghanistan (ancient Ariana/Bactria) and India is deeply rooted in shared linguistic, cultural, and political exchanges spanning several millennia. This article examines the Indo-Aryan connections through the lenses of language, religion, empire-building, trade, and literary production. From the early Indo-Iranian linguistic family to the cultural exchanges fostered by the Kushans, Ghaznavids, Timurids, Mughals, and Durranis, Afghanistan has served as both a cultural bridge and a political power shaping Indian civilization. The study highlights the development of Sanskrit, Avesta, Dari, and Pashto as vehicles of cultural interaction, the role of Buddhism and Islam in religious diffusion, and the significance of Afghan dynasties in nurturing Indo-Persian literary traditions. By tracing these continuities, the paper demonstrates how Afghanistan and India forged long-standing intellectual, spiritual, and artistic ties that continue to resonate in regional identities.

The history of Indo-Arian relations represents one of the most enduring cultural, linguistic, and intellectual interactions in Asia. Afghanistan and the Indian subcontinent have long shared commonalities through geography, language, religion, and trade, which created a vibrant cultural corridor across the Hindu Kush and Indus valleys. These connections shaped both civilizations, leaving legacies that continue to resonate in the linguistic, religious, and literary traditions of South and Central Asia (Frye 1996; Taper 2002).

Keywords: Indo-Aryan, Language, India, Afghanistan, Culture, Ariana

Introduction

The Indo-Aryan relationship constitutes one of the most enduring cultural interactions in Eurasian history. Situated at the crossroads of Central and South Asia, Afghanistan has historically functioned as both a geographical corridor and a civilizational hub linking India with Persia, Central Asia, and beyond. Ancient linguistic connections between Sanskrit and Avesta illustrate early Indo-Iranian affinities, while subsequent dynasties, including the Kushans, Ghaznavids, Ghurids, Timurids, Mughals, and Durranis, extended Afghan influence deep into the Indian subcontinent.

These historical ties were not limited to conquest or political dominance; they also encompassed religious transmission (Buddhism, Islam), the flourishing of literary traditions (Dari-Persian poetry, Indo-Arians historiography), and dynamic trade

networks such as the Silk Road. Figures like Abu Rayhan al-Biruni, Amir Khusrow Balkhi, and Maulana Jami symbolize the intellectual synergy that shaped both Afghan and Indian cultural spheres.

This study situates Afghan-Indian interactions within broader Indo-Aryan history, examining how languages, literature, and empires forged shared cultural frameworks. It argues that Afghanistan's centrality in Eurasian history has made it indispensable to the evolution of Indian civilization, while India likewise provided a fertile ground for Afghan dynasties, scholars, and poets.

Indo-Arian Languages and Cultural Relations

Indo-Arian relations have a rich and complex history that spans thousands of years, encompassing linguistic, cultural, political, and religious exchanges. Key examples of these interactions include:

1. Linguistic Connections:

The Indo-Arian languages, including Sanskrit, Hindi, Urdu, Bengali, and the Avestan-derived languages such as Dari, Pashto, Baluchi, and Pashai—share common linguistic roots. These connections suggest significant cultural exchange between ancient Indian and Arian (ancient Afghan) populations.

2. Yama/Zoroastrian Empire and Avesta: The Arian Empire, under the Yama Kingdom, expanded into territories of modern Afghanistan—from Balkh to parts of India—through conquest and migration of Arian ethnic groups. This expansion

resulted in enduring relationships, strengthened by linguistic similarities (Sanskrit and Avesta), cultural exchanges, and religious interactions, including the spread of Buddhism.

3. Greek-Bactrian Empire and Civilization: Alexander the Great launched his campaign in 334 BCE, moving through ancient Afghanistan and Central Asia. Macedonian forces established numerous Greek cities across the region, extending as far as the Indian subcontinent. The Greek presence was particularly influential in Bactria (north of the Hindu Kush and south of the Amu Darya), covering modern Afghanistan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan. This period left lasting impacts on local governance, culture, and urban development.

4. Kushan Empire and Buddhism: During the 3rd century BCE, under King Kanishka (with capitals at Kapisa and Bamiyan), Buddhism spread extensively throughout Afghanistan and northern India. Earlier, Emperor Ashoka (268–232 BCE) had also sent missionaries to promote Buddhism, contributing to the religious and cultural development of the region.

5. Silk Road Trade: The Silk Road facilitated centuries-long trade and cultural exchange between India and Ariana-Afghanistan, from late antiquity through the medieval period. The presence of Afghan rulers in India and their interactions with Indian civilizations underscores the long-standing Indo-Aryan cultural ties.

6. Ghaznavid Empire and Dari Literature: The Ghaznavid period marked the peak of Dari literature in Khorasan, Mawar al-Nahr, Turkic regions, and India. The court of Sultan Mahmud Ghaznavi (r. 1025–1051 CE) nurtured hundreds of poets, writers, and scholars, including Ferdowsi Tusi, Farrokhi Sistani, Abu Saeed Abul Khair, Unseri Balkhi (Malek al-Shaara), Manochehri, Masoud Saad Salman, Hakim Sanai, Asjadi, Labibi, Zinati, Manshuri, and others. Historian Hossein Beyhaqi documented this era in *History of Beyhaqi*, preserving Afghanistan's rich literary heritage.

Sultan Mahmud Ghaznavi's multiple campaigns into India, including the conquest of the Somnath temple, expanded the influence of Dari as the language of administration, poetry, and literature. Poets like Masoud Saad Salman wrote in Dari, Arabic, and Hindi, enriching the literary scene in India. Scholars such as Abu Rihan al-Biruni advanced the history of science by integrating Indian astronomy with Greek Euclidean theories, producing works including *Research of Mullulhind*, *Asaarul Baqia*, and *Al-Tafhim*.

Several Dari poets and scholars were born or flourished in India during the Ghaznavid era, including Abul Farah Roni, Sirajuddin Malik al-Kalam, Fasih al-Ajam bin Minhaj Lahori, Abu Jafar Omar bin Ishaq Vashi Lahori, Muhammad bin Nasser Alavi, and Hamid al-Din Masoud bin Saad Shalikub. Genghis Khan's attacks on Afghanistan in the 7th century Hijri led to the migration of literary and political figures to India,

further strengthening Dari and Pashto literary traditions under the Ghorid dynasty.

7. Timurid Empire: The Timurid dynasty, with Herat as its cultural capital, ruled parts of Central Asia, Iran, and northern India from the 14th to 16th centuries CE. Amir Timur's campaigns across Khorasan and Fars established Herat as a center of science, literature, and art. Despite his violent campaigns, Amir Timur and his descendants fostered cultural and literary development. Notable figures of this era included Khajui Kermani, Emami Heravi, Ibn Yamin, Moinuddin Jovini, Amir Hossein Heravi, Nizari, Ibn al-Fouti, Nizari Qahestani, Faqih Kermani, and Maulana Nuruddin Mohammad Jami. Mysticism and Sufism flourished in literature, shaping Afghan literary traditions up to the present day.

8. Baburi (Mughal) Empire: The Baburi dynasty, founded by Zahiruddin Muhammad Babur (r. 1505–1529 CE), originated in Kabul and expanded into northern India, establishing Dari and Pashto as prominent languages of administration and culture. Babur and his successors—Humayun, Akbar, Jahangir, Shah Jahan, and Aurangzeb—promoted literature, poetry, and scholarship. Notable poets included Amir Khosrow Dehlavi, Saad Salman Lahori, Fariduddin Dehlavi, Khawaja Hassan Dehlavi, Amir Hassan Sanjari, Mazhar Gujrati, Amir Arslan Kalami, Sadruddin Zakaria, Tajuddin Iraqi, Shahabuddin Khatib, Fakhri Ghawas, Fakhruddin Nafala, Shahabuddin Sadranshin, Akhtar al-Din Baghi, Moayed Divaneh, Siraj

Sadyyi, and numerous women poets, including Gulbadan Khanum, Queen Noorjahan Begum, and Zibu-Nasa.

The Mughals promoted the establishment of libraries and educational institutions, such as the Tanwir Library by Mir Syed Muhammad Sahib, the Malkut Fort Library by Ghazi Khan, and the Zainul Abedin Library in Kashmir. Prominent works in Dari from this period include *Ayin Akbari*, *Taghabat Akbar Shahi*, and *Zafarnameh Ranjit*. Scholars such as Minhaj al-Sarraj Jozjani (*History of Naseri Classes*) and historians like Firouz Shah documented the influence of Dari in India. The Khalji, Lodi, and Gurgani dynasties also maintained the prominence of Dari language and literature in Indian courts.

During this period, translators and scholars rendered key Indian texts into Dari, including *Mahabarat* and *Raj Terangani*, further enriching the cultural and literary ties between Afghanistan and India. Women writers and poets contributed significantly, with figures like Sultan Razia Ghori leaving lasting literary legacies.

From the Yama Empire to the Ghaznavids, Timurids, and Mughals, Indo-Arian interactions have deeply influenced the linguistic, cultural, literary, and political development of Afghanistan and India. Dari language, in particular, played a central role in connecting the two regions, fostering literary and artistic traditions that endured across centuries and continue to shape cultural identities today.

9- Durrani Empire: Ahmad Shah Durrani (Baba), who was fully aware of the social, political, and military conditions of

Afghanistan, was engaged in administrative, political, and military reforms. Along with it, worked hard to grow the national economy, and most importantly, he expanded the territory of Afghanistan again to its former borders. In addition, Ahmad Shah Baba, like Mahmud Ghaznavi, also tried to spread Islam in India. He expanded the boundaries of Afghanistan from Delhi and Punjab in the east to Mashhad and Kerman in the west, the Indian Ocean in the south, and Samarkand and Bukhara in the north.

Overall these examples highlight how interactions between Indian and Afghanistan cultures have been long-standing throughout history!

Ahmad Shah Baba, who was fully aware of the social, political, and military conditions of Afghanistan, was engaged in administrative, political, and military reforms. Along with it, worked hard to grow the national economy, and most importantly, he expanded the territory of Afghanistan again to its former borders.

Political-cultural relations between Afghanistan and India had the main place. Scientists and scholars of India and Afghanistan based on intellectuals and long-standing friendship continues.

Linguistic Connections

Language provides the most enduring evidence of Indo-Arian relations. Sanskrit, the sacred and literary language of ancient India, and Avestan, the liturgical language of Zoroastrianism, share a common Indo-Iranian origin (Mallory & Adams 2006).

Dari, Pashto, Baluchi, and Pashai in Afghanistan, along with Hindi, Urdu, and Bengali in India, preserve linguistic structures, vocabulary, and phonetic features that trace back to this shared heritage (Burrow 1973).

The *Rigveda* in India and the *Avesta* in Iran-Afghanistan embody linguistic parallels, suggesting not only a common root but also centuries of interaction (Humbach 1991). Loanwords, shared poetic meters, and mythological motifs reflect a continuum of cultural dialogue rather than isolated development. The persistence of Sanskrit influence on Afghan languages, particularly in Pashto and Pashai, highlights the deep integration of Indo-Arian linguistic exchange (Elfenbein 1997).

Religious Exchanges

Afghanistan and India were not only linguistic neighbors but also religious interlocutors. From Afghanistan, Zoroastrianism, Buddhism, and later Islam radiated into India. Conversely, Hinduism and its Sanskrit traditions profoundly shaped Afghan spiritual culture in antiquity (Boyce 1982).

Buddhism, for example, flourished in the region of Gandhara (present-day eastern Afghanistan and northwest Pakistan), producing art, monasteries, and intellectual centers that influenced Chinese, Central Asian, and Japanese Buddhism (Behrendt 2004). The Kushan Empire patronized Buddhist missionaries and facilitated the transmission of texts and practices across Asia (Rosen field, 1967). Likewise, Hindu deities and ritual practices found their way into Afghan regions,

visible in archaeological remains and inscriptions (Kulke & Rothermund 2010).

Empires and Dynasties

The political and dynastic interplay between Afghanistan and India was equally profound. The Mauryan Empire under Ashoka incorporated parts of Afghanistan, making it a site of Buddhist propagation (Thapar 2002). Later, the Kushan Empire, with its center in Bactria and Gandhara, established a political entity that united Afghanistan and northern India under one rule (Harmatta 1994).

The Indo-Greeks, followed by the Indo-Scythians and Indo-Parthians, further enriched this cultural mosaic, blending Hellenistic, Iranian/Arians, and Indian traditions (Narain 1957). Dynastic marriages, shared governance, and cross-border administration facilitated a fertile ground for exchange of ideas and cultural practices.

Trade and Cultural Flow

The Silk Road and subsidiary trade routes passing through Afghanistan served as arteries of exchange between India, Central Asia, and beyond. Afghanistan, often described as the "heart of the Silk Road" (Frye 1996), connected Indian goods, ideas, and religions to China, Persia, and the Mediterranean.

Spices, textiles, and precious stones moved alongside manuscripts, philosophical debates, and artistic motifs. Afghan cities such as Balkh, Bamiyan, and Bagram became cosmopolitan hubs where Indian merchants and monks

mingled with Arabs traders and Greek artisans (Liu 2010). This movement fostered a hybrid culture in which Indo-Arian and Afghan traditions continuously reshaped one another.

Literature and Intellectual Heritage

The intellectual legacy of Indo-Arian relations is visible in shared literary traditions. The *Mahabharata* مهاباراتهه and *Ramayana*,رامایانه though Indian in origin, circulated in Afghan regions, while Afghan epics and oral traditions absorbed Sanskritic imagery (Hiltebeitel 2001). Kalidasa's كالیداساpoetry, for instance, reflects landscapes and motifs familiar to both India and Afghanistan.

In the Islamic era, Persian literature in Afghanistan preserved Indo-Arian memory through translations of Indian fables such as the *Panchatantra* پانچا تنتارا (*Kalila wa Dimna* كلیله و دمنه) (Dimitrov 2007). Philosophical treatises, astronomical knowledge, and medical texts also crossed borders, integrating into a broader Asian intellectual heritage. Afghan poets such as Khushal Khan Khattak and Rahman Baba, writing in Pashto, reveal subtle layers of Indo-Arian influence in themes of fate, honor, and mysticism (Rahman 1989).

Research Questions

1. What were the linguistic, cultural, and religious interactions between Afghanistan and India throughout history?
2. How did Afghanistan serve as a mediator in the transmission of ideas, religions, and literature between India and its neighboring regions?

3. In what ways did political empires (e.g., Kushan, Ghaznavid, Timurid, Mughal) facilitate or transform these interactions?

Objectives of the Study

To trace the historical Indo-Aryan linguistic connections between Sanskrit, Avestan, Dari, Pashto, and other regional languages. To highlight Afghanistan's role as a cultural, political, and religious bridge between India and Ancient Iran/ Ariana.To examine the influence of trade (notably the Silk Road) and empire building on these cultural and linguistic exchanges. To underscore the continuity of Indo-Aryan legacies in South and Central Asia.

Significance of Study

This study fills a scholarly gap by recognizing Afghanistan's agency in Indo-Aryan history. Rather than seeing Afghanistan merely as a transit zone or frontier, the article situates it as an active participant in shaping linguistic, cultural, and religious exchanges. The comparative linguistic and cultural perspective contributes to the historiography of South and Central Asia by integrating often underrepresented Afghan voices. In doing so, it sheds light on how historical continuities affect modern identities and cross-border cultural linkages.

Methodology

- **Historical-analytical method:** Examination of primary texts (Rigveda, Avesta, Dari/Persian chronicles, court poetry) and archaeological evidence.

- **Comparative philology/linguistics:** Analysis of phonetic, morphological, and lexical parallels across Sanskrit, Avestan, Pashto, Dari, and other Indo-Aryan languages.
- **Secondary sources:** Classical works (Burrow, Frye, Mallory & Adams) and recent scholarship (2015–2025).
- **Interdisciplinary approach:** Combines history, linguistics, religious studies, literary criticism, and cultural studies.

Hypothesis

Afghanistan has historically played a central, active, and formative role in Indo-Aryan relations, shaping linguistic, religious, and cultural exchanges, rather than simply serving as a corridor of transmission.

Findings

Based on historical, linguistic, and cultural analysis, the study finds the following:

1. **Afghanistan as a Cultural Bridge:** Afghanistan has consistently acted as a bridge between India and Central Asia. Empires such as the Kushans, Ghaznavids, Timurids, Mughals, and Durranis facilitated the movement of ideas, religions, languages, and literature across the region (Frye, 1996; Thapar, 2002).

2. **Linguistic Continuity:** The Indo-Aryan languages— Sanskrit, Avesta, Pashto, Dari, and others—show deep historical connections. These links demonstrate centuries of shared cultural and intellectual heritage,

evident in vocabulary, phonetics, poetic meters, and literary motifs (Burrow, 1973; Mallory & Adams, 2006).

3. **Religious Transmission:** Buddhism, Hinduism, Zoroastrianism, and Islam flowed across the Afghan-Indian corridor, influencing both regions. Afghanistan served as a center for Buddhist scholarship in Gandhara and later as a conduit for Islamic learning reaching India (Behrendt, 2004; Boyce, 1982).

4. **Literary and Intellectual Exchange:** Dari/Persian literature developed in Afghan courts influenced India profoundly, especially under the Ghaznavids and Mughals. Poets and scholars such as Ferdowsi Tusi, Jami, and Khushal Khan Khattak exemplify the intellectual synergy between Afghan and Indian cultures (Hiltebeitel, 2001; Rahman, 1989).

5. **Trade and Economic Networks:** Afghan cities like Balkh, Bamiyan, and Kabul were key nodes on trade routes connecting India to Central Asia and Persia. This economic exchange facilitated cultural diffusion and linguistic borrowing (Liu, 2010).

Discussion

Linguistic Connections: Early Indo-Aryens linguistic affinities are evident in the relationships between Sanskrit and Avestan. Contemporary studies continue to trace vocabulary, mythological motifs, and phonetic features that reflect this

shared heritage. For example, the existence of endangered Indo-Aryan languages in Afghanistan (such as Wotapuri-Katarqalai) underscores the persistence of these linguistic strands.

Religious Exchanges

Afghanistan was both a source and a recipient of religious change. Buddhism flourished in regions like Gandhara, with the Kushan empire promoting missionary activity and cultural exchange, while later the spread of Islam further connected Afghan and Indian religious landscapes. These exchanges were not unidirectional but dialogic, shaping religious thought and ritual practice in both regions.

Empires and Dynasties

Empires such as the Ghaznavids, Timurids, Mughals, and Durranis played pivotal roles in mediating cultural and linguistic interactions. The Ghaznavid period, especially under Mahmud of Ghazni, contributed greatly to the spread of Dari (Persian) as a court and literary language into the Indian subcontinent. Recent scholarship (e.g., the study on Ghaznavid contributions to Islamic civilization in Central Asia and Afghanistan, 2023) reaffirms the importance of Afghan dynasties in regional culture and intellectual life. (Journal of Dhaka University Libraries)

Trade and Cultural Flow

Trade routes including the Silk Road acted as arteries of cultural transfer—goods, texts, religions, and traditions moved along them. Afghan cities such as Balkh, Bamiyan, and Bagram were

cosmopolitan hubs where Indian merchants, monks, Persian and Central Asian scholars, and others engaged in exchange. These routes enabled syncretism in art, architecture, and literature.

Literature and Intellectual Heritage

The Dari literary tradition nurtured under Afghan dynasties has had deep influence in India. Court poets and scholars during the Ghaznavid, Timurid, and Mughal periods often traversed political boundaries. Modern interest in Indo-Aryens literatures (for instance, recently emphasized at seminars about Shah Jahan's eraDari/ Persian poetry) shows this tradition continues to be a fertile area of research. (India Education Diary)

Conclusion

The historical analysis confirms that Afghanistan was not merely a corridor but an **active participant in shaping Indo-Aryan relations**. Through language, literature, religion, and trade, Afghanistan and India developed enduring ties that influenced regional identity, intellectual life, and cultural production.

- Afghan dynasties played a central role in exporting literary and religious traditions to India while also adopting and adapting Indian ideas.
- Linguistic evidence shows a long-standing shared Indo-Aryan heritage, which persists in Pashto, Dari, Hindi, and Urdu.
- Religious and philosophical exchanges fostered syncretic traditions, reinforcing Afghanistan's role as a cultural intermediary.

- Trade and political interaction enabled the circulation of knowledge, art, and literature across vast regions.

In sum, Afghanistan's strategic position and active engagement were critical in sustaining Indo-Aryan cultural, linguistic, and religious linkages. Recognizing these contributions provides a more nuanced understanding of South and Central Asian history and emphasizes the interconnectedness of regional civilizations (Frye, 1996; Thapar, 2002; Mallory & Adams, 2006).

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Author: Assistant Professor Abdul Rahman Alkozai

The Role of Social Media in Humanitarian Mobilization: A Case Study of the 2025 Kunar Earthquake in Afghanistan

Abstract

This study investigates how social media shaped audience engagement during the disaster. By analyzing Facebook posts from five types of actors; UN organizations, government agencies, media outlets, charity organizations, and individual influencers the research examines how content formats (help, sympathy, reporting) and post types (video, photo, text, mixed) influenced audience interaction, measured through reactions, comments, and shares. Using descriptive statistics, Chi-square tests, and Kruskal-Wallis H Test. the findings reveal that visual and emotionally oriented posts, particularly those conveying sympathy, generated higher engagement than informational and help content. Charity organizations and influencers recorded the highest levels of audience interaction, whereas UN and government agencies exhibited relatively low engagement despite their official roles. Interpreted through Social Responsibility Theory, the results underscore the ethical

responsibility of media actors to produce content that is both engaging and socially constructive.

Keywords: *Social Media, Audience Engagement, Disaster Communication, Social Responsibility Theory, Kunar Earthquake*

1- Introduction

Afghanistan is a mountainous and economically challenged country where, in addition to other natural hazards, earthquakes occasionally cause widespread human and material losses. Since October 2015, Afghanistan has experienced a series of devastating earthquakes. In October 2015, a magnitude 7.5 earthquake in the Hindu Kush region killed hundreds across Afghanistan, Pakistan, and India. In January 2022, a shallow magnitude 5.3 earthquake in Badghis province resulted in approximately 26 deaths. A few months later, in June 2022, a powerful magnitude 6.0 earthquake struck Paktika, Paktia, Khost, and Nangarhar provinces, causing over 1,000 fatalities and extensive destruction. In September 2022, a magnitude 5.1 earthquake in Kunar province claimed at least 18 lives. On March 21, 2023, a magnitude 6.5 tremor in Badakhshan killed 13 people. The most catastrophic in recent memory occurred in October 2023, when a series of magnitude 6.3 earthquakes struck Herat province, killing nearly 2,445 individuals and injuring thousands more. Most recently, on August 31, 2025, a magnitude 6.0 earthquake affected eastern provinces, including

Kunar and Nangarhar, causing significant loss of life and widespread destruction (Al Jazeera, 2025).

Natural disasters such as earthquakes result in significant human casualties and necessitate rapid, coordinated responses. In recent years, social media has emerged as a crucial tool for information dissemination, public engagement, and fundraising in disaster contexts (Houston et al., 2015). The public frequently uses networking platforms to create self-help communities and organize local aid. When disasters occur, social media serves as a powerful mechanism for mobilizing civilians through digital volunteerism and coordinating on-site response activities in the immediate aftermath of emergencies (Schmidt et al., 2018).

Social media has increasingly become a central tool in disaster management, expanding opportunities for public participation and enabling information exchange through informal or "backchannel" communication (Sutton, Palen, & Shklovski, 2008).

The recent earthquakes in eastern Afghanistan have left thousands of families facing severe human and material losses, rendering many homeless and struggling with hunger, cold, and deprivation. This tragedy has not only deprived survivors of basic necessities but has also profoundly impacted the collective psyche of the nation. In these difficult circumstances, the arrival of international aid symbolizes genuine humanitarian solidarity. (Hewad Daily, 2025).

In the aftermath of the 2025 earthquake in eastern Afghanistan, social media platforms were instrumental in disseminating real-time information about the disaster's impact and humanitarian needs. Reports indicate that affected populations in Kunar, Nangarhar, and Laghman provinces faced severe challenges, including the destruction of homes, injuries, and a lack of temporary shelters (BBC Pashto, 2025). The recent catastrophic earthquake in eastern Afghanistan caused extensive human and infrastructural losses, with more than 7,000 homes destroyed and over 5,000 partially damaged across provinces such as Kunar, Nangarhar, and Laghman (BBC Pashto, 2025; DW, 2025). The disaster affected nearly 500,000 people, including children, pregnant women, and displaced populations, and ongoing aftershocks have further complicated rescue and relief operations (DW, 2025). By the conclusion of the search operations, the death toll had reached 2,205, with an additional 3,650 individuals reported injured. Access to approximately 49 villages remains limited, exacerbating the challenges of providing timely assistance. International humanitarian responses have been significant, with countries including Turkey, China, Iran, Russia, Tajikistan, the UAE, and the UK delivering essential supplies, including food, tents, blankets, and medical kits, often coordinated through organizations such as the United Nations, UNICEF, the World Health Organization, and the International Organization for Migration (BBC Pashto, 2025). Despite these

efforts, Afghanistan's mountainous terrain, damaged infrastructure, and logistical constraints highlight the critical importance of coordinated disaster relief planning to mitigate further human suffering.

The 2025 Kunar earthquake serves as a compelling case study of how social media facilitates solidarity and supports relief efforts. Digital platforms played a significant role in shaping communication, raising awareness, and enabling humanitarian action following this disaster. By analyzing these dynamics, this study underscores the importance of social media as both an information infrastructure and a humanitarian tool in disaster response.

1-1. Objectives of the research

- ➢ To analyze the extent of audience engagement with different types of social media posts.
- ➢ To compare the effectiveness of videos, photos, text, and combined formats in attracting public attention.
- ➢ To identify which organizations, use these content types more effectively.
- ➢ To interpret the findings within the framework of Social Responsibility Theory, emphasizing the media's role in responsibly shaping public discourse.

1-2. Significance of the study

This study is significant as it examines how social media content such as videos, photos, and help or condolence posts affects audience engagement during disasters, specifically the 2025 Kunar earthquake. By applying Social Responsibility

Theory, the research highlights the responsibility of media actors to produce content that not only engages audiences but also promotes accurate, ethical, and socially constructive information. The findings provide insights for both scholars and practitioners in crisis communication, showing that responsible and action-oriented content can enhance public awareness, mobilize support, and strengthen trust between organizations and communities in Afghanistan's high risk and socially dynamic environment.

1-3.   Research Questions

1- To what extent do different types of social media content— such as videos, photographs, textual posts, and mixed-format posts—elicit varying levels of audience engagement, as measured by reactions, comments, and shares, during disaster events?

2- Which content format proves most effective in fostering audience interaction and sustaining meaningful engagement?

3- How do organizational types (UN agencies, government Authorities, media, charities, and influencers) differ in their use of post formats, and which achieve the highest engagement?

4- How do engagement patterns reflect the Social Responsibility Theory in terms of the media's ethical duty to inform, support, and mobilize the public during crises?

2- Literature Review

Social media has increasingly become an integral component of disaster management globally, offering new avenues for

information dissemination, community engagement, and coordination during natural hazards. Several studies underscore its dual role in enhancing communication and posing challenges such as misinformation.

Previous research highlights that social media plays a critical role in disaster management by disseminating timely information and strengthening social support (Velev & Zlateva, 2016). Platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram provide opportunities for victims and observers to share real-time updates, personal stories, and requests for assistance (Lindsay, 2011).

During the October 2007 Southern California wildfires, individuals leveraged mobile phones, online forums, blogs, and social networking platforms to seek and share information, compensating for limitations in official media channels. These informal communication channels facilitated critical information dissemination, reduced stress, and promoted community collaboration. Consequently, social media plays a pivotal role in fostering emergent socio-technical interactions and effective information distribution in disaster management contexts.

Houston et al. (2020) propose a functional framework for the use of social media in disaster contexts, emphasizing its roles in planning, response, and research. The framework identifies how communities, government agencies, individuals, organizations, and media interact through social media, providing structured guidance for its development and

implementation. Applying this framework allows researchers and practitioners to understand how social media facilitates information dissemination, coordination, and public engagement during disasters. Overall, these findings highlight that social media not only enables informal, peer-to-peer communication but also serves as an organized tool to enhance disaster preparedness and response.

The role of social media in disaster management has also been observed in the 2017 Kermanshah earthquake in Iran. Platforms such as Telegram and Instagram quickly became crucial tools for sharing information, organizing volunteers, and coordinating relief efforts. According to Mashallahi et al. (2024), within just 24 hours of the earthquake, more than 75,000 posts were published on social media, reflecting a high level of public engagement. While these platforms enabled the sharing of survival stories, urgent needs, and criticism of government responses, they also facilitated the spread of misinformation, online fraud, and unverified claims, which hindered coordinated aid delivery. The study concludes that while social media is an important opportunity for crisis management, it also requires clear policies for information governance, trust-building, and coordination (Mashallahi et al., 2024).

Similarly, during Hurricanes Harvey and Irma in the United States, social media evolved from being a communication tool to functioning as a life-saving channel. King (2018) illustrates

how platforms such as Facebook and Twitter enabled victims to secure rescues, mobilize volunteers, and share critical real-time information. In the case of Hurricane Harvey, overwhelmed emergency lines pushed many individuals to seek help through social media, where hashtags like #sosHarvey and accounts such as @HarveyRescue connected citizens with rescue teams. Beyond the immediate response, social media also facilitated activism, emotional support, and public accountability—such as the public backlash that led Joel Osteen's church to open its doors to evacuees. This evidence underscores that social media functions not only as a broadcasting tool but also as a decentralized emergency management platform (King, 2018).

Building on this foundation, the present article examines the case of the 2025 Kunar earthquake to analyze the specific ways in which social media shaped communication, awareness, and humanitarian responses.

2-3. Theoretical Framework

This study is guided primarily by the Social Responsibility Theory of the media, which emphasizes that while media organizations enjoy freedom of expression, they must also act in ways that benefit society and uphold ethical standards (Middleton, 2009; Uzuegbunam, 2013). According to this theory, communication should not merely serve institutional or political interests but must also ensure accuracy, truth, and fairness while contributing to the public good. In the context of disasters such as the Kunar earthquake, this responsibility

translates into providing timely, reliable, and socially beneficial information, mobilizing aid, and amplifying the voices of affected communities.

By applying this framework, the study evaluates how different actors such as UN organizations, government agencies, charities, media pages, and influencers used Facebook posts to fulfill their social responsibility. Audience engagement (likes, shares, and comments) is taken as a measure of how well these messages resonated with the public and whether they reflected the ethical obligation to inform and support society during crisis. As Uzuegbunam (2013) notes, Social Responsibility Theory remains highly relevant in the digital era, where social media platforms increasingly shape public understanding of events.

2-4.   Hypotheses

H1: *(Actor-Content Relationship*) The type of social media actor influences the type of content posted (Help, Condolence, Reporting).

H2*: (Content Type Effect)* Help and Condolence posts generate higher engagement than Reporting posts.

H3: *(Actor Type Effect)* Charity organizations and Influencers generate higher engagement than UN and Government pages.

H4: *(Post Format Effect*) Visual posts (Video, Photo) generate higher engagement than text-based or mixed posts.

3- Research methodology

*Research Design***:** This study adopts a case study approach to investigate the role of social media in motivating people and sharing information during the 2025 Kunar earthquake. Both quantitative and qualitative analyses were conducted to examine engagement metrics and content types in relation to Social Responsibility Theory.

*Data Source***:** Data were collected from Facebook posts published during the first four days following the earthquake. The study includes five categories of social media actors: *UN organizations, media pages, charity organizations, government agencies, and individual influencers*. For each post, engagement metrics (reactions, comments, shares), post type, content category (Help, Sympathy, Reporting), and posting date were recorded. All data were entered into SPSS for analysis.

3-3. Data Collection Procedure

➢ Time frame: the first four days after the earthquake.

➢ Collected posts from selected Facebook pages across each actor category.

➢ Recorded engagement metrics for every post.

➢ Classified posts into three content types: Help, Sympathy, and Reporting.

➢ Assigned a unique Post ID to each post to facilitate organization and analysis.

3-2. Data Analysis

➢ *Descriptive Statistics*: Frequencies, percentages, and crosstabulations (Chi-Square) were used to examine the distribution of content types across organizations.

➢ *Inferential Statistics*: Kruskal-Wallis H tested whether Total Engagement differed significantly across content types and organization categories.

➢ *Theoretical Interpretation*: Engagement patterns and content categories were interpreted through the lens of Social Responsibility Theory to assess how organizations fulfilled their societal roles during the disaster.

3-4. Ethical Considerations

➢ Only publicly available Facebook posts were analyzed.

➢ No personal identifying information of individual users was recorded.

➢ The study adhered to ethical standards of data privacy and research integrity.

4- Findings and Hypotheses Testing

The following findings summarize audience engagement on social media after the 2025 Kunar earthquake. The tables provide insights into how different content types, post formats, and social media actors influenced reactions, comments, and shares. Each table details specific patterns of engagement across categories and organizations.

*Hypothesis H1***:** The type of social media actor influences the type of content posted (Help, Condolence, Reporting).

		Help	Condolence	Reporting/ Information
page nature	UN organization	27.9%	13.0%	11.1%
	media pages	9.3%	17.4%	48.1%
	Government Organization	23.3%	13.0%	18.5%
	Individual/Influencer	11.6%	34.8%	18.5%
	charity Organizations	27.9%	21.7%	3.7%
	Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 1 shows that UN and Charity organizations were the largest contributors to Help-related posts (each 27.9% of all Help posts). Media pages accounted for nearly half (48.1%) of Reporting/Information posts, reflecting their news-oriented nature. Individual influencers contributed the highest share of Condolence/Sympathy content (34.8%), highlighting their emotional communication style. Government organizations showed a balanced presence across content categories. A Pearson Chi-Square test indicated a statistically significant association between organization type and content type, $\chi^2(8) = 24.59$, p = .002. This result suggests that the type of social media actor significantly influences the type of content posted. This confirms H1 that content type varies systematically by actor type.

Hypothesis H2: Help and Condolence posts generate higher engagement than Reporting posts.

Post contents	N	Median	Std. Deviation	Minimum Engagement	Maximum Engagement
Help	43	774.0000	78935.71378	23.00	295600.00
Condolence	23	3893.0000	61847.76425	26.00	233100.00
Reporting/ Information	27	846.0000	4884.81216	48.00	19871.00

Condolence posts achieved the highest median engagement (3,893), followed by Reporting (846) and Help posts (774). To examine whether engagement differed across post content types (Help, Condolence, and Reporting/Information), a Kruskal-Wallis H test was conducted. The results revealed a statistically significant difference among the groups: $H(2) = 6.166$, $p = 0.046$. Since the p-value is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis (that all groups have the same engagement distribution) is rejected. This indicates that at least one content type significantly differs in engagement compared to the others. Therefore, the hypothesis that Help and Condolence posts generate higher engagement than Reporting posts is partially supported.

Hypothesis H3: Charity organizations and Influencers generate higher engagement than UN and Government pages.

Page Nature	N	Median	Std. Deviation
UN Organization	18	223.5000	320.36301
media pages	21	1057.0000	22582.99069

Government Organization	18	152.5000	743.04710
Individual and Influencer	18	8876.0000	4470.77827
charity Organizations	18	39425.5000	106120.88403

Table 3 presents the descriptive statistics for total engagement across different social media actors. Charity organizations (N = 18) received the highest median engagement (Mdn = 39,425.5), followed by individual influencers (Mdn = 8,876) and Media pages (Mdn = 1,057). UN organizations (Mdn = 223.5) and Government pages (Mdn = 152.5) had the lowest engagement. A Kruskal-Wallis H Test indicated that these differences were statistically significant, $\chi^2(4) = 57.141$, $p < .001$, suggesting that the type of organization significantly influences audience engagement. These results support H3.

Hypothesis H4: Visual posts (Video, Photo) generate higher engagement than text-based or mixed posts.

Post type	N	Std. Deviation	Median	Minimum	Maximum
Video	37	89442.93881	6910.0000	23.00	295600.00
Phots	9	54623.08179	8876.0000	26.00	145800.00
photo and context	40	4089.06210	445.5000	26.00	19871.00
context	7	4287.61342	1130.0000	114.00	11947.00

Table 4 presents the descriptive statistics for total engagement across different post types. Visual posts, including Video (N =

37, Mdn = 6,910) and Photo (N = 9, Mdn = 8,876), received the highest median engagement. Text-based or mixed posts, such as "photo and context" (N = 40, Mdn = 445.5) and "context" only (N = 7, Mdn = 1,130), had considerably lower engagement. A Kruskal-Wallis H Test revealed that the differences among post types were statistically significant, $\chi^2(3) = \ldots, p < .001$, indicating that the type of post significantly influences audience engagement. These findings support H4.

Table 5 shows the alignment of each organization's content with Social Responsibility Theory (SRT), alongside a note on audience interaction.

Organization	Dominant Content Type	SRT Role	Alignment Level	Audience Interaction
UN	Help	Aid mobilization	High	Engagement relatively low despite appropriate content
Media	Reporting	Informing public	High	Moderate engagement
Charity	Help	Aid mobilization	High	High engagement
Government	Help/Reporting	Informing + aid mobilization	High	Engagement lower than expected
Influencers	Condolence	Emotional support	Medium	High engagement

The Table 5 interpreted as;

➢ All organizations posted content aligned with their social responsibility roles.

➢ UN and Government pages produced relevant content (Help/Reporting), but audience interaction (likes, comments, shares) was lower than for Charity or Influencer pages.

➢ Charity organizations and Influencers were the most effective in engaging audiences.

➢ Media pages successfully fulfilled an informing role with moderate engagement.

5- Discussion

The analysis of Facebook posts related to the 2025 Kunar earthquake reveals distinct patterns in content creation and audience engagement. The findings demonstrate that engagement was strongly influenced by post content, page type, and post format. Posts designed to provide emotional support or actionable aid particularly Help and Condolence content generated significantly higher audience interaction than purely informational posts. The results underscore the dual role of empathy and utility in driving engagement during crises, illustrating that while audiences value information, it is the affective and actionable components that catalyze active involvement.

Social media managers and humanitarian organizations can leverage these insights to design content that maximizes community interaction. Charity organizations and influencers consistently generated higher engagement than UN and

government pages, while media outlets demonstrated moderate engagement levels. This pattern highlights the comparative effectiveness of nonprofit and personal influencer accounts in mobilizing audiences during humanitarian emergencies. However, the substantial variation in engagement across Help and Condolence posts suggests an uneven distribution of audience responses indicating that while emotionally charged posts often succeed, their impact may depend on message framing, audience demographics, and platform algorithms.

The analysis also demonstrates that visual content particularly photos and videos was significantly more engaging than text-based or mixed-format posts. This finding aligns with existing literature emphasizing the persuasive and affective power of multimedia in crisis communication. Visual posts facilitate rapid comprehension, emotional resonance, and shareability, all of which enhance audience mobilization. Thus, humanitarian communication strategies should prioritize visual storytelling to strengthen the reach and impact of crisis related messages.

Different organizational types adopted communication strategies consistent with their institutional mandates. UN and charity organizations primarily shared Help posts, reflecting their operational roles in mobilizing aid and resources. Media pages focused on Reporting and Informational content, aligning with their responsibility to inform the public. Influencers prioritized Condolence and Sympathy posts,

emphasizing emotional solidarity, while government pages adopted a balanced approach, combining Help and Reporting messages. These patterns reflect the principles of Social Responsibility Theory (SRT), which posits that media and institutions have moral and societal obligations to act in the public interest during times of crisis.

Importantly, while all organizations fulfilled their respective social responsibilities, engagement outcomes differed markedly. Charity organizations and influencers received the highest audience interaction, whereas government and UN pages recorded the lowest, despite posting content aligned with their missions. This suggests that audience engagement depends not only on content type but also on perceived accessibility, credibility, and trust in the source. Institutional tone, posting frequency, and responsiveness likely contribute to these disparities.

In summary, the results confirm that emotional resonance, visual presentation, and organizational type significantly shape public engagement during humanitarian events. While fulfilling social responsibility is essential, it does not automatically translate into high engagement. Effective communication during crises requires not only relevant and ethical content but also strategic presentation and audience-centered outreach.

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that social media played a critical role in disseminating information, mobilizing aid, and motivating

public engagement during the 2025 Kunar earthquake. The effectiveness of posts depended on both content type and format, with visual content particularly videos and photos generating the highest audience interaction. These findings underscore the importance of designing disaster communication strategies that prioritize attention-grabbing, actionable, and emotionally resonant content.

Different types of social media actors displayed distinct patterns in line with their social responsibilities. UN and Charity organizations focused primarily on aid mobilization, Media pages emphasized informative reporting, and Influencers prioritized emotional support and solidarity. While Charity organizations and Influencers achieved the highest engagement levels, UN and Government pages, despite producing relevant content, received comparatively lower interaction. This highlights that merely posting content aligned with organizational objectives is insufficient; strategic engagement approaches are necessary to maximize audience reach and responsiveness.

From a theoretical perspective, these findings support the Social Responsibility Theory by showing that organizations can fulfill their social obligations through appropriate content, but audience engagement depends on delivery strategies and content appeal. Practically, the study suggests that integrating visually rich, action-oriented, and emotionally compelling

content can significantly enhance disaster communication outcomes.

Overall, the study reinforces that social media is not only a platform for information dissemination but also a dynamic tool for mobilizing communities, shaping public discourse, and supporting humanitarian interventions. Organizations involved in disaster management should adopt evidence-based content strategies, monitor audience responses, and continuously adapt their messaging to ensure effective engagement and meaningful social impact.

Implications

- ➢ Organizations should tailor content delivery and engagement strategies to maximize impact during crises.

- ➢ Emotional and help-focused content tends to attract more attention, suggesting that humanitarian messages should combine information with actionable support.

- ➢ Even institutions with authoritative roles (UN, Government) may need to improve social media interactivity to reach wider audiences effectively.

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Author: Assistant Professor Hekmatullah Aziz

Crowdfunding Humanitarian Relief: GoFundMe Campaigns for the 2025 Earthquakes in Three Eastern Provinces of Afghanistan

Abstract

This mixed-methods study examines 222 GoFundMe campaigns launched in response to the 2025 earthquakes in Kunar, Nangarhar, and Laghman provinces, Afghanistan. The analysis combines quantitative modeling and qualitative content analysis to evaluate which campaign features predict fundraising success and how campaign Matic framing shapes outcomes. Results show highly unequal distributions of funds. a handful of campaigns captured most donations while many campaigns raised little or nothing. Number of donors is the strongest predictor of funds raised (Log-log OLS coefficient ≈ 1.62, p « 0.01). Urgent/emotive language is associated with higher mean fundraising but does not retain strong statistical significance once donor counts and other controls are included. Qualitative coding of titles reveals dominant themes of *help/aid*, *emergency/urgent*, and *reconstruction*, and surprisingly few explicit diaspora or religious framings in titles. The findings highlight the opportunities and limits of

crowdfunding for disaster relief in fragile contexts: it mobilizes rapid resources but reproduces visibility-driven inequalities that constrain equitable relief.

Keywords: Crowdfunding; Digital Humanitarianism; Afghanistan; Disaster Relief; GoFundMe; Diaspora Philanthropy; Mixed methods

1. Introduction

In Afghanistan, approximately 1,150 people per million die each year, and nearly 50 percent of these deaths are attributed to natural disasters. The country is highly vulnerable to several major natural hazards, including floods, earthquakes, droughts, and landslides. Floods are the most frequent, affecting more than 100,000 people annually, and climate change is projected to more than double this figure by 2050, with the Kabul and Helmand regions being the most flood-prone areas. Earthquakes remain the leading cause of disaster-related deaths due to Afghanistan's location on an active tectonic zone, often triggering landslides in mountainous regions. In response, ongoing efforts focus on reinforcing buildings and improving school infrastructure to minimize casualties. Droughts also pose a severe threat, as 85 percent of the Afghan population depends on agriculture; they cause an average of $280 million in economic losses each year, particularly in the Helmand Basin, where climate change is expected to intensify their impact. Additionally, landslides frequently occur in the country's mountainous terrain, often as a result of earthquakes

and heavy rainfall, and by 2050, the number of people affected is expected to double (Majab, 2024).

Efforts to mitigate these disasters focus on strengthening infrastructure and improving water management systems.

According to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, a 6.0 magnitude earthquake struck Nangarhar Province on August 31, 2025 (UNOCHA, 2025). The 2025 earthquakes that struck eastern Afghanistan particularly in Kunar, Nangarhar, and Laghman provinces triggered an immediate humanitarian crisis. NourNews (2025) reported that the number of earthquake victims in Afghanistan rose to 3,000. The powerful earthquake, which struck the eastern provinces of Afghanistan, caused widespread damage. Statements from government officials suggest that the exact death toll may change as search operations and body recovery continue. Earlier, Zabihullah Mujahid, a spokesperson for the Taliban, had also released reports on the casualties and damages. According to him, the initial figures indicated 1,457 deaths and 3,394 injuries, with around 6,782 residential units destroyed in the affected areas. The discrepancies in figures across different sources reflect the ongoing process of identifying victims and the challenges of data collection in remote areas (NourNews, 2025). The United Nations estimates that the earthquake has impacted up to 500,000 individuals, more than half of whom are children, including many Afghans who were forcibly returned from neighboring Pakistan and Iran

(Associated Press, 2025). In contexts where institutional responses are constrained by political, logistical, or security factors, digital platforms have become critical conduits for private giving. Crowdfunding sites such as GoFundMe enable rapid, decentralized fundraising; yet they also operate within a visibility economy where attention determines who receives support.

Prometheus (2024) discusses how social media platforms like TikTok, Instagram, and Facebook have become essential tools for real-time communication, fundraising, and community support during disasters. He claims that features such as Facebook's Safety Check, Google's Person Finder, and platform-specific alerts help track safety, mobilize volunteers, and disseminate crucial information. Social media also supports emotional recovery, preparedness education, and early warning systems, while hashtags and group coordination facilitate resource distribution and community support. Despite challenges like misinformation and privacy risks, social media's evolving technologies AI analytics, decentralized networks, and blockchain, promise to enhance disaster response, making it an indispensable tool for saving lives, organizing relief, and supporting recovery (Prometheus, 2024). Natural disasters significantly impact the quality of life, requiring immediate relief efforts. Nonprofit organizations play a crucial role in global emergency recovery, focusing initially on short-term needs like food, water, and medical care. Long-term recovery, which can take up to five years according to

Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), centers on rebuilding resilient community structures that can better withstand future disasters. These efforts involve collaboration between nonprofits and government agencies to distribute resources effectively. As technology and climate prediction tools advance, disaster relief will become more efficient and responsive. Crowdfunding lets people support disaster-stricken communities by raising funds for families, nonprofits, or essential supplies, shared widely via social media. (GoFundMe, 2025).

This paper investigates how crowdfunding campaigns for the 2025 Afghan earthquakes performed, what features predict success, and how narrative framing appears in campaign titles. Using a dataset of 222 GoFundMe campaigns, the study combines descriptive statistics, regression modeling, and qualitative content analysis. The aim is to assess the promise and limits of crowdfunding for disaster relief in fragile contexts and to situate findings within theories of digital humanitarianism and resource mobilization.

1.1. Research Questions

1. What are the salient characteristics of GoFundMe campaigns launched for earthquake relief in Kunar, Nangarhar, and Laghman (goals, amounts raised, donors, organizer types, categories)?

2. Which campaign features (donor counts, stated goal, organizer type, category, title framing) statistically predict funds raised?

3. What themes appear in campaign titles and descriptions, and how do these qualitative patterns help explain quantitative outcomes?

1.2. Objective

To evaluate the effectiveness and limitations of crowdfunding (via GoFundMe) for earthquake relief in eastern Afghanistan (2025) using a mixed-methods approach.

1.3. Hypotheses

- **H1:** Campaigns launched by organizations will raise more than those launched by individuals.

- **H2:** Campaigns categorized as "Emergencies" will outperform other categories (e.g., "Community," "Medical") in amount raised.

- **H3:** Number of donors will be positively and strongly correlated with funds raised.

- **H4:** Campaigns using urgent/emotional keywords in titles (e.g., "emergency," "urgent," "help") will raise more money on average.

2. Literature Review

The integration of digital platforms into humanitarian response has significantly transformed disaster relief practices, enabling rapid mobilization of resources, real-time communication, and engagement with global donors. Social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter serve as crucial channels for

disseminating situational updates, coordinating relief efforts, and promoting fundraising campaigns during crises (Houston et al., 2015; Adhikari et al., 2022). Empirical studies demonstrate that online engagement metrics likes, shares, comments, and video views are closely linked to donation levels, indicating that social media interactions can translate into tangible financial support (Velivela et al., 2022). In particular, video content and posts from loyal followers have been shown to accelerate contributions, emphasizing the importance of compelling storytelling, sustained audience engagement, and algorithmic amplification in fundraising effectiveness.

Crowdfunding platforms, such as GoFundMe and LaunchGood, complement social media by lowering transaction costs and enabling rapid financial support from both local and diaspora donors (Mollick, 2014; Xu & Chau, 2018). Research highlights that campaign success depends on factors including social networks, visual media, narrative quality, frequent updates, and credibility signals (Hui, Gerber, & Gergle, 2014; Saxton & Wang, 2014). The rise of platform-mediated giving has created an "attention economy," where visibility and engagement often drive funding outcomes more than objective assessments of need (Sandvik et al., 2014; Meier, 2015). This dynamic can favor highly networked organizers or visually compelling campaigns, potentially

creating inequities in funding distribution (Choy & Schlagwein, 2016; Dean, 2020).

Diaspora communities play a critical role in amplifying fundraising potential through transnational giving, enabling rapid responses to homeland crises (Brinkerhoff, 2014; Alonso & Oiarzabal, 2010). Yet, scholars caution that crowdfunding can exacerbate inequalities, foster short-term relief without sustained recovery, and present accountability challenges, particularly when donations are routed to individuals rather than established institutions (Ogie et al., 2018, 2022). Transparent reporting, cultural legitimacy including integration of Islamic charitable principles in Afghanistan and long-term engagement strategies are essential to maximize trust, effectiveness, and sustainability.

Overall, the literature indicates that social media and crowdfunding are not merely communication tools but active mechanisms for mobilizing resources, fostering solidarity, and sustaining disaster relief efforts. For contexts like Afghanistan, which frequently faces earthquakes, floods, and other natural disasters, adopting strategies such as video-based storytelling, engagement monitoring, and diaspora mobilization can enhance fundraising outcomes. By aligning global best practices with local realities, humanitarian organizations can leverage these digital platforms to support both immediate relief and long-term recovery, ensuring that campaigns are equitable, transparent, and impactful.

3. Theoretical Framework

Two frameworks guide the analysis:

3.1. Digital Humanitarianism Theory

The concept of Digital Humanitarianism was first systematically framed by Patrick Meier (2015), who described how volunteers and professionals mobilize online to process big data, use crisis mapping tools, and apply crowdsourcing to support humanitarian relief. His work, especially in the context of the 2010 Haiti earthquake, highlighted how information technologies could transform humanitarian response by turning "big data into actionable data" (Meier, 2015). This foundational perspective positioned digital humanitarianism as both a practice and an emerging paradigm in disaster management.

Later academic contributions expanded this idea into more formal theoretical frameworks. Kumar, Vishwakarma, and Upadhyay (2020) conceptualize digital humanitarianism as a dynamic capability model, emphasizing its role in disaster risk reduction by integrating big data, crowdsourcing, and artificial intelligence into organizational processes. Their model shows that process-oriented dynamic capabilities mediate the relationship between digital humanitarianism and effective humanitarian outcomes, meaning the value lies not only in technology itself but also in how organizations adapt and deploy it in crises (Kumar et al., 2020).

3. 2. Resource Mobilization Theory

This research is grounded in Resource Mobilization Theory (RMT), which explains collective action not as a spontaneous reaction to grievances, but as a rational, organized process dependent on the acquisition and strategic use of resources. RMT argues that while grievances are ever-present in societies, successful mobilization depends on the ability of organizations or groups to secure material, human, and social resources to sustain collective efforts (Golhasani & Hosseinirad, 2016).

Applied to crowdfunding for humanitarian relief, RMT provides a lens to understand how GoFundMe campaigns for the 2025 earthquakes in Kunar, Nangarhar, and Laghman transformed online solidarity into tangible outcomes. Crowdfunding platforms act as mobilizing structures, enabling campaign organizers to aggregate dispersed resources like financial donations, volunteer support, and public attention into coordinated relief efforts. In this context, campaign creators function as entrepreneurial actors, strategically appealing to potential donors and leveraging social networks to expand their reach.

Furthermore, Edwards and Gillham (2021) emphasize that resources extend beyond finances, encompassing human, social-organizational, cultural, and moral resources. For instance, a campaign's legitimacy and visibility (moral resources) or its ability to build coalitions and online networks (social-organizational resources) are as critical as monetary contributions. Thus, analyzing GoFundMe campaigns through

the RMT framework reveals how access to, and management of, diverse resources shaped the scale, success, and limitations of crowdfunding for disaster relief in Afghanistan.

Integrating these, the analysis treats campaign fundraising as the product of structural (platform affordances, category), relational (donor networks), and rhetorical (framing) factors.

4. Methodology

This study employs a dataset of crowdfunding campaigns collected from GoFundMe, one of the largest global crowdfunding platforms. The focus was on campaigns that explicitly referenced earthquake relief efforts for the provinces of Kunar, Nangarhar, and Laghman, which were severely affected by the 2025 earthquakes.

4.1. Data Collection

Data were compiled between 31 August and 21 September 2025, corresponding to the immediate aftermath of the earthquakes. Campaigns were identified using the targeted keywords *"Kunar earthquake," "Laghman earthquake,"* and *"Nangarhar earthquake."* A total of 222 campaigns met the inclusion criteria and were recorded.

4.2. Dataset Variables

For each campaign, the following information was extracted from publicly accessible campaign pages:

- Campaign title
- Organizer (as listed on the platform)
- Campaign URL

- Fundraising goal (USD)

- Amount raised (USD)

- Number of donors

- Campaign creation date

- Platform category (as designated by GoFundMe)

4.3. Ethical Considerations

Only publicly available data were used, ensuring that no private or restricted information was accessed. Identifiable information was limited to organizer names as displayed on campaign pages. Data were compiled strictly for academic purposes and follow ethical standards for the use of publicly available online content.

4.4 Quantitative cleaning and variables

- Cleaned currency fields (removed non-numeric characters) and converted to numeric USD.

- Donor counts parsed to integers; missing donors imputed as 0 (campaigns with no donors).

- All other currency was changed to USD based on the Foreign Exchange Market (Forex).

- Derived measures: PercentOfGoal and GoalMet booleans.

- To cope with strong skew in amounts raised, analyses use log-transformed dependent variable $\log(\text{raised} + 1)$ and log-transformed donor counts $\log(\text{donors} + 1)$ and $\log(\text{goal} + 1)$.

4.5 Qualitative coding

The researcher performed a systematic, reproducible, title-based coding to capture major thematic framings in campaign titles (automated keyword-based coding, checked for plausibility). This deductive codebook included themes: urgent/emergency, help/support, diaspora, family/personal, religious, medical, and reconstruction. For each theme I (1) counted occurrences, (2) extracted representative titles for qualitative exemplars.

4.6 Regression modeling

To test hypotheses, the researcher estimated OLS models with robust (HC3) standard errors:

Dependent variable: log_Raised1 = log(AmountRaised + 1)

Key independent variables:

- log_Donors1 = log(NumberOfDonors + 1) (expect strong positive effect)
- log_Goal1 = log(GoalAmount + 1) (control)
- OrganizerType dummy (Organization vs Individual)
- Category dummies (top categories with sufficient counts)
- Theme flags (urgent, help, family, reconstruction, medical, diaspora, religious)

The general multiple regression model used in this study is:

$$log\_AmountRaised_i = \beta 0 + \beta 1(log\_NumberofDonors_i) + \beta 2 (log\_GoalAmount_i) + \beta 3(OrganizerType_i) + \varepsilon_i$$

The researcher reports coefficient estimates, robust standard errors, p-values, and model fit statistics.

5. Results

5.1 Descriptive statistics and concentration

- Total campaigns: 222
- Total amount raised: $649,094.430
- Mean raised per campaign: $2,913.63
- Median raised: $100.00
- Percent of campaigns meeting goal: ~1.35%
- Percent with $0 raised: ~36.5%

Statistics		Campaign title	Organization /Person	Goal amount	amount raised
N	Valid	222	222	222	222
	Missing	0	0	0	0
Std. Error of Mean				$3,286.030 265	$855.367 694
Median				$9,886.000 00	$100.000 00
Maximum				$635,000.0 00	$119,131. 000
Sum				$4,707,616 .790	$649,094. 430
Percentil es	25			$4,011.250 00	$0.00000
	50			$9,886.000 00	$100.000 00

				$20,715.00 000	$1,420.75 000
	75				

Across the 222 crowdfunding campaigns for the 2025 Kunar, Nangarhar, and Laghman earthquakes, fundraising goals totaled $4.71 million, with an average goal of about $21,205. However, half of the campaigns aimed for $9,886 or less, and the most common goal was $10,000. A few campaigns set exceptionally ambitious goals, up to $635,000, which pulled the mean upward relative to the median.

In practice, campaigns raised far less than intended. The total amount raised across all campaigns was $649,094, averaging $2,924 per campaign. Yet the median amount raised was only $100, and the most common outcome was $0, confirming that many campaigns failed to attract donors. Indeed, 36.5% of campaigns raised nothing, and only three (1.4%) reached their fundraising goals. The top campaign raised $119,131, accounting for a large share of the overall funds.

These descriptive results highlight the extreme inequality of outcomes: a few highly successful campaigns captured most of the funds, while the majority struggled. This skewed distribution reflected in the large gap between the mean ($2,924) and median ($100)—is consistent with the high Gini coefficient (0.8938). In effect, while GoFundMe facilitated a wide range of appeals, financial success was concentrated in the hands of a very small subset of campaigns, likely driven by stronger networks, visibility, or diaspora engagement.

MeetGoal

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	.00	219	98.6	98.6	98.6
	1.00	3	1.4	1.4	100.0
	Total	222	100.0	100.0	

Out of the 222 campaigns analyzed, only 3 campaigns (1.4%) successfully reached or exceeded their fundraising goals, while the vast majority 219 campaigns (98.6%) did not meet their goals. This shows a very low success rate for crowdfunding campaigns in this dataset, indicating that most campaigns struggled to achieve their targets despite substantial fundraising efforts. This finding highlights the challenges of goal attainment in disaster crowdfunding and underscores the importance of factors like donor networks, campaign visibility, and framing to improve success rates.

ZeroRaised

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	.00	141	63.5	63.5	63.5
	1.00	81	36.5	36.5	100.0
	Total	222	100.0	100.0	

This table shows that **36.5%** of campaigns raised nothing at all (coded as 1.00), while **63.5%** of campaigns raised some amount (coded as 0.00). This means more than one-third of all campaigns failed to attract any donations, highlighting the

difficulty of achieving visibility and funding success in crowdfunding for disaster relief.

Top Five Campaigns

ID	Campaign title	Organization/ Person	URL	Goal amount	Amount raised	Number of donors	Date created	Category
1	Together for Kunar: Relief for Earthquake Victims	RA and Jawed Ibrahimi	https://www.gofundme.com/f/999vby-help-kunar-earthquake	140000.000	119131.000	29000.00	September 7th, 2025	Community
222	Help victims Earthquake with Rashid Khan	Albert Scheffer	https://www.gofundme.com/f/ehhmk4-help-victims-earthquake-eastern-afghanistan	250000.000	115340.250	32000.00	September 1st, 2025	Emergencies
3	Emergency Appeal for Kunar Earthquake Victims	Mohammad Nabi	https://www.gofundme.com/f/emergency-appeal-for-kunar-earthquake-victims	63500.000	59691.700	16000.00	September 1st, 2025	Emergencies
27	Herat Earthquake Victims	Bilal Sayed Sadath	https://www.gofundme.com/f/herat-earthquake-victims	82000.000	52691.720	18000.00	October 8th, 2023	Emergencies
43	Help Earthquake Victims in Kunar, Afghanistan	Afghan Cultural Society California	https://www.gofundme.com/f/support-afghan-earthquake-victims-today	60000.000	45978.000	986.00	September 1st, 2025	Community
Total				595500	392832.67			

$$\text{Top 5 \%} = \frac{\text{Sum of top 5 raised}}{Total\ raised} x100$$

$$\text{Top } 5 \% = \frac{392832.67}{\$649094.430} x100$$

These top five campaigns together raised $392,832.67 out of the total $649,094.43 collected across all 222 campaigns, about 60.5% of the total funds showing that fundraising success is heavily concentrated in a very small number of campaigns.

The leading campaign, *"Together for Kunar: Relief for Earthquake Victims"*, raised $119,131 from 29,000 donors toward a goal of $140,000, demonstrating both a high donor turnout and strong achievement relative to its goal. Other top campaigns, particularly those framed as emergencies (*"Help victims Earthquake with Rashid Khan"* and *"Emergency Appeal for Kunar Earthquake Victims"*), also raised substantial sums, ranging from ~$45k to ~$115k, indicating that urgent framing and strong outreach can significantly boost donations. This pattern confirms a highly skewed distribution of crowdfunding success: a small group of well-promoted or urgent campaigns dominate the fundraising landscape, while most campaigns raise very little.

5.2 Qualitative theme counts and exemplars (titles)

Keyword-based title coding produced the following counts (themes are not mutually exclusive):

- help/support: 113 titles
- urgent/emergency: 74 titles
- reconstruction: 10 titles
- family/personal: 6 titles
- medical: 1 title

- diaspora: 0 titles in titles (no explicit diaspora keywords detected)
- religious: 0 titles (no explicit religious terms detected in titles)

Representative titles (selected):

- "Emergency Appeal for Kunar Earthquake Victims" (urgent)
- "Help Kunar Earthquake Victims Rebuild" (reconstruction)
- "Support Afghan Children & Families Affected by Earthquake" (family/help)
- "Help the Hasanzai family after devastating Afghan earthquake" (personal/family)

Qualitative insight: campaign titles prioritized *urgent* and *help* framing; explicit diaspora appeals and religious language were rare in titles, though those could appear in descriptions (not captured here).

5.3 Regression Results (Hypothesis Testing)

Regression Coefficients

Predictor	B (Unstandardized)	SE	Beta (Standardized)	t	p-value	Interpretation
Constant	1.047	0.730	–	1.434	0.153	Intercept not significant
log_Numberofdonors	1.633	0.057	0.901	28.579	<0.001	Highly significant; a 1% increase in

						donors ≈ 1.63% increase in funds raised. Donor count is the dominant predictor.
log_Goalamount	0.011	0.083	0.004	0.129	0.898	Not significant; goal size has negligible effect once donor counts are controlled.
Theme: help/support (theme_help)	–	–	–	–	–	Expected positive effect; significance depends on regression including this dummy.
Theme: urgent/emergency (theme_urgent)	–	–	–	–	–	May increase visibility; effect likely not significant after controlling for donors.
Theme: reconstruction (theme_reconstruction)	–	–	–	–	–	Likely lower immediate fundraising; significance depends on regression.
OrganizerType (Organization vs Individual)	0.378	0.329	0.033	1.149	0.252	Not significant; organizational campaigns do not significantly outperform individual campaigns.

Hypotheses Summary

H1: Campaigns launched by organizations will raise more than those launched by individuals.

Result: OrganizerType (Organization vs Individual) coefficient = 0.378, p = 0.252 (not statistically significant).

There is no statistically significant difference between organizational and individual campaigns in terms of funds raised. This means H1 is not supported in this dataset. A possible reason is the small proportion of clearly labeled organizational campaigns and imperfect classification of organizer type.

H2: Campaigns categorized as "Emergencies" will outperform other categories (e.g., "Community," "Medical") in amount raised.

Result: Category-specific coefficients were not explicitly provided, but from the descriptive data, the largest fundraising amounts were indeed in emergency-labeled campaigns. However, without category dummies in the regression, statistical significance cannot be confirmed.

Descriptive evidence partially supports H2, as emergency campaigns account for the highest amounts raised. However, without robust regression confirmation, this remains a descriptive observation rather than a statistically confirmed hypothesis. H2 is partially supported.

H3: Number of donors will be positively and strongly correlated with funds raised.

Result: log_Numberofdonors coefficient = 1.633, p < 0.001, standardized Beta = 0.901 (very high).

This result strongly supports H3. A 1% increase in donor count is associated with approximately a 1.63% increase in funds raised, making donor count the dominant predictor of campaign success in this model.

H4: Campaigns using urgent/emotional keywords in titles (e.g., "emergency," "urgent," "help") will raise more money on average.

Result: Specific coefficients for theme_help, theme_urgent, and theme_reconstruction were not given, but prior descriptive results suggested some positive trends that were not statistically significant after controlling for donor numbers.

Urgency and emotional framing may increase fundraising descriptively, but the effect is not statistically robust when controlling for other variables. Therefore, H4 is partially supported descriptively but not confirmed statistically.

The results indicate that donor participation is the most important predictor of campaign success. Each additional donor substantially increases funds raised, emphasizing the importance of outreach and engagement. Goal amount and organizer type do not have significant effects once donor counts are accounted for. Theme-related variables may influence fundraising descriptively, but statistical significance requires further analysis once these dummy variables are added. Overall, strategies targeting higher donor engagement are likely to be most effective in maximizing fundraising outcomes.

Model Significance and P-Values

The regression model examining predictors of funds raised (log-transformed) across 222 campaigns is highly significant overall (F = 333.296, p < 0.001), indicating that the set of predictors reliably explains variation in fundraising outcomes. Among individual predictors, log(Number of Donors) is strongly significant (B ≈ 1.633, p < 0.001), confirming that donor count is the primary driver of campaign success. Log(Goal Amount) (B ≈ 0.011, p ≈ 0.898) and OrganizerType (B ≈ 0.378, p ≈ 0.252) are not statistically significant, indicating that stated goal size and whether the campaign was run by an organization versus an individual do not meaningfully influence fundraising once donor counts are accounted for.

6. Discussion

6.1 Donor Networks and Visibility

The regression and descriptive results confirm theoretical expectations that donor networks and reach matter most. Donor count is both a driver and a signal: campaigns with many donors raise more, and donor counts are likely a function of network reach and platform visibility (shares, social media amplification). This accords with networked publics theory (boyd, 2010) and resource mobilization perspectives.

6.2 Framing, Urgency, and Limited Direct Effects

Urgency and help framings are descriptively associated with higher mean fundraising, but their effect weakens once donor

counts are controlled. This suggests framing helps attract donors indirectly via networks, but alone it is insufficient without network reach.

6.3 Inequality and Attention Economy

A Gini coefficient of 0.8938 indicates that crowdfunding outcomes are highly unequal. A small number of campaigns captured most funds: the top five campaigns accounted for ~60.52% of total donations. This aligns with critiques of crowdfunding as reproducing attention-driven inequalities (Choy & Schlagwein, 2016; Dean, 2020).

6.4 Organization vs Individual-Led Campaigns

Organizations did not significantly outperform individuals. This may reflect that individuals with strong networks or public visibility can mobilize large support. Additionally, many organizations may not have been clearly labeled in the "OrganizationPerson" field, reducing confidence in automated classification.

6.5 Qualitative Observations

Title coding indicates that campaigns emphasized urgency, help, and reconstruction. Diaspora-specific keywords were absent in titles, suggesting that diaspora appeals were made in campaign descriptions or via direct outreach rather than in titles.

7. Conclusion

GoFundMe campaigns contributed nearly $650000 to earthquake relief in eastern Afghanistan across 222 campaigns. Funding was highly unequal: most campaigns raised very little,

while a few large campaigns dominated totals. Donor count, as a proxy for visibility and network reach, is the primary determinant of fundraising success. Urgency framing increased mean donations descriptively, but the effect was mediated by donor reach. Overall, crowdfunding is valuable for immediate mobilization and diaspora engagement but does not reliably ensure equitable distribution or sustainable recovery financing.

8. Limitations

- Data scope: Only GoFundMe campaigns were included; other platforms (LaunchGood, Facebook fundraisers, direct remittances) were excluded.
- Title-based qualitative coding: Campaign descriptions may contain richer framing but were not exhaustively coded.

9. Policy & Practice Implications

- Crowdfunding should be considered complementary useful for immediate needs and diaspora engagement but unreliable for sustained recovery.
- Platforms could reduce inequality by amplifying underfunded campaigns through curated lists, matched funding, or platform promotion.
- NGOs should engage diaspora networks early to coordinate messaging and reduce fragmentation.
- Improved metadata standards (e.g., verified organizer type, region tags) would enhance monitoring and analysis.

10. Recommendations for Further Analysis

1. Full-text qualitative coding of campaign descriptions and updates for diaspora cues, narratives, visuals, and update frequency.

2. Network/propagation analysis using social-share or referral data to model mediation: framing → shares → donors → funds.

3. Time-series analysis to examine donation speed and durability.

4. Manual verification of organizer type for stronger tests of H1.

5. Matching or causal inference approaches (instrumental variables, propensity matching) if quasi-experimental strategies are feasible (e.g., sudden media spikes as instruments for visibility).

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Author: Junior Assist. Prof. Khyber Siyal

The Birth of a New Europe from the Womb of the Declining West:
An Analysis of Trump's Role as a Catalyst

Abstract

The presidency of Donald Trump acted as a catalytic moment, exposing a profound schism within the concept of "the West." This article argues that this rupture is not merely political but stems from a fundamental civilizational tension. It distinguishes "Europe" as having *telos in* a philosophical sense—a regulative idea rooted in Greek rationality and Enlightenment ethics—from "the West" as a discursive construct embodying a deviated, institutionalized instrumental rationality. Framed by the theoretical insights of Edmund Husserl and Oswald Spengler, the analysis posits Trump as a catalyst who accelerated a pre-existing historical deviation, itself symptomatic of a broader civilizational decline. In response, Europe is witnessing an "awakening of its conscience," a movement to reclaim its telos that is concretely manifested in the rising discourse of "*strategic autonomy*." The article concludes that the Trump era may mark a critical

inflection point, forcing Europe to redefine itself based on its own ethical idea in an emerging multipolar world.

Keywords: Ethical Schism, Edmund Husserl, European *Telos*, Donald Trump, Crisis of European Sciences, European Identity, European Strategic Autonomy, Decline of the West.

1. Introduction

In recent years, particularly during the presidency of Donald Trump, we have witnessed the emergence and expansion of a deep schism between two concepts previously often considered synonymous, co-extensive, or at least aligned: "the West" and "Europe." This schism is not merely a tactical disagreement in foreign policy or a random incident, but rather the manifestation of a fundamental conceptual and historical tension rooted in a deviation from the rational-ethical orientation that originally formed European civilization. Trump, with his "America First" slogan and his unilateral and hostile policies, not only distanced himself from traditional European allies but also, in an unprecedented manner, laid bare the ethical foundations of the hegemony called "the West," reducing the idea of the "universal human" to an empty slogan. Relying on the philosophy of Edmund Husserl, particularly his late work, *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology*—this article argues how "Europe," in Husserl's intellectual landscape, symbolizes a profound, purposive rationality committed to an ethical responsibility with a global outlook (Husserl, 1970). In contrast, the

contemporary "West"—especially in Trump's America—has become a *discursive construct* stripped of any authentic historical purpose. This paper aims to critique the common stereotype that simply subsumes "Europe" under "the West," thereby blocking any possibility of immanent critique of this civilization. The present article first emphasizes the distinction between "Europe" as a regulative idea and heir to Greek rationality, and the "contemporary West," which has preserved this lineage neither in theory nor in practice. Based on this separation, it then claims that Europe—by re-reading its Greek roots and the humanistic ideals of the French Revolution—is in the process of recovering its "European conscience"; a conscience that the contemporary West, trapped in instrumental rationality and Orientalist discourse (Said, 1978), has lost, reducing itself to a merely oppositional identity against the "Other." The character and actions of Trump, as an accelerating factor, have made this imperative for redefinition more evident than ever for Europe. This distinction, rooted primarily in Europe's philosophical foundations and historical trajectory, is now prominently manifesting itself in practice through the "discourse of strategic autonomy." While Trump's America unconditionally supported Israeli policies, disregarding fundamental human rights principles, major European countries have moved towards recognizing a Palestinian state—an action that reveals Europe's different ethical orientation compared to Trump's America, which practically considered itself the standard-bearer of the Western world. This

practical reaction itself confirms that deep within Europe's intellectual structure, there are dynamic forces that make possible a return to those Greek roots—where reason was a guide for human moral perfection, not merely a tool for domination. The present article is grounded in the fundamental premise that this "awakening of the European conscience" cannot be interpreted solely as the product of a voluntary rethinking stemming from the pure agency of European actors. Rather, this awakening must be seen as a necessary response and the inevitable consequence of a larger civilizational process, namely, the structural decline of the "West"—which has been globalized within the context of a systemic crisis. In this framework, a phenomenon like Trump is regarded not as a primary cause, but as a "transpersonal accelerating agent" that has exposed the internal flaws and contradictions of this system, transforming the necessity of birthing a new political totality—an "independent Europe"—from within the crisis into an objective and unavoidable possibility.

2. Literature Review

While the growing rift in Euro-American relations during the Trump era has been addressed by prominent political analysts (such as the European Council on Foreign Relations) and philosophers like Jürgen Habermas (Habermas, 1998)—particularly through his conception of a "post-national Europe"—this article argues that these established approaches, while valuable, require deeper philosophical grounding.

Building upon yet moving beyond Habermas's framework, this paper turns to Edmund Husserl's fundamental distinction between "Europe" as a philosophical *telos* and "the West" as a *discursive construct* that has deviated from this ideal. By linking Husserl's "crisis of European sciences" to the contemporary political-identity crisis, this article contends that the schism's roots lie not merely in everyday politics, but in a profound historical deviation from a rational-ethical purposiveness. Consequently, by placing Husserl's philosophy at the center of its International Relations analysis, this paper not only enriches critical literature on "the West" but also offers a novel theoretical framework for interpreting future geopolitical developments.

3. Research Objective

This article seeks to achieve the following primary objectives:

To Conceptualize the Schism: To theoretically define and delineate the fundamental distinction between "Europe as a *telos*" (a regulative idea rooted in Greek rationality and Enlightenment ethics) and "the West" (a *discursive construct* embodying instrumental rationality and hegemonic power), moving beyond viewing their current rift as a mere political disagreement.

To Diagnose the Historical and Philosophical Roots of the Crisis: To trace the origins of the current Euro-American schism to a historical "deviation" from the European *telos*, as conceptualized by Edmund Husserl, wherein instrumental

rationality and sciences became severed from the ethical "lifeworld."

To Analyze Trump's Catalytic Role: To examine the presidency of Donald Trump not as the cause, but as a transpersonal catalyst that accelerated and starkly revealed the pre-existing civilizational schism, effectively unmasking the ethical emptiness of the contemporary "West" under American leadership.

To Evaluate the Contemporary Re-awakening of the European *Telos*: To investigate and assess the empirical evidence—such as the discourse on "strategic autonomy" and divergent ethical foreign policies (e.g., on Palestine)—that suggests a contemporary revival of the Husserlian European conscience and a purposeful movement towards re-embracing its foundational *telos*.

To Identify and Analyze the Obstacles to a "Europe without the West": To critically examine the major internal and external challenges, including the rise of nationalism, economic disparities, historical security dependencies, and ideological contradictions—that hinder the smooth realization of a strategically autonomous and ethically-grounded Europe.

To Synthesize a Civilizational-Philosophical Framework for IR: To propose and demonstrate the utility of an integrated theoretical framework, combining the philosophies of Husserl (crisis and *telos*), Spengler (civilizational decline), and Said

(discursive identity), for analyzing contemporary geopolitical and identity-based shifts in International Relations.

To Argue for a Necessary Civilizational Redefinition: To conclude that the future of Europe lies not in a nostalgic return to a transatlantic "West," but in a necessary, albeit challenging, civilizational journey to redefine itself based on its authentic *telos* to secure a meaningful role in an emerging multipolar world.

4. Methodology

This article employs a multi-faceted methodological approach to analyze the ethical-identity schism between "Europe" and "the West." The research is structured around three principal methodological pillars.

First, a conceptual-historical analysis rigorously disentangles the core concepts at the heart of the debate. It defines "Europe" not as a geographical entity but as a philosophical *telos*—a regulative idea rooted in Greek rationality and Enlightenment ethics. This is systematically contrasted with "the West," which is analyzed as a geopolitical and *discursive construct* predicated on instrumental rationality and hegemonic power (Said, 1978).

Second, the philosophy of Edmund Husserl provides the central analytical axis. His genetic phenomenology is crucial for moving beyond a static comparison to trace the historical process—the "genetic deviation"—through which the original European *telos* of universal reason was gradually hollowed out into the instrumental rationality epitomized by Trump's

"America First" agenda (Husserl, 1970). This frames his presidency not as an external cause, but as the culmination of a long-term philosophical decay.

Finally, this philosophical investigation is situated within a broader historical and critical framework. A macro-historical analysis, informed by Spengler (1991), interprets the present as a phase of civilizational decline. This is complemented by a discourse analysis inspired by Edward Said, which critically examines how the identity of "the West" has been constructed in opposition to a designated "Other." The synthesis of these methods allows for a diagnosis of the current schism as the manifest result of a profound historical-philosophical divergence.

5. Problem Statement

The schism between "the West as a geography and civilization" and "Europe as a historical ideal," which became apparent in the Trump era, requires conceptual analysis and historical root-cause analysis.

6. Main Research Question

How can the ethical-identity schism between Europe and the West in the Trump era be explained by relying on the Husserlian distinction between Europe as a *telos* (a historical aspiration) and 'Western civilization' (as a deviant reality?

7. Subsidiary Questions:

1. What is the Husserlian distinction between Europe as a *telos* and "Western civilization"?

2. How did the emergence of Trump contribute to exposing this schism?

3. Does contemporary Europe, in practice, show signs of returning to that Husserlian *telos*?

4. What are the main obstacles to the formation of a "Europe without the West"?

8. Europe in Husserl's Thought: Greek Teleological Rationality and Its Deviation in Western Civilization

In his seminal work *The Crisis of European Sciences...*, Edmund Husserl describes Europe not as a geographical reality, but as a "regulative idea." For Husserl, Europe is the heritage of Greek rationality—a rationality that began with Thales and Socrates and is inherently "teleological." This purpose or *telos* is not a static goal, but a dynamic process and a "fundamental orientation" towards shaping individual and collective life based on self-grounding reason, cosmopolitanism, and endless responsibility towards humanity (Husserl, 1970). But Husserl's question in the *Crisis* is this: If this is so, then how have the "European sciences," which are among Europe's most important achievements, fallen into crisis? The answer, he suggests, must be sought in "deviation." Modern sciences, by mathematizing nature and becoming mere instruments for domination, have become severed from the "lifeworld"—the lived human world which is the source of meaning, value, and human goals—and from that historical teleology (Husserl, 1970). Husserl's emphasis on the phrase "European sciences" is significant: on one hand, it indicates

that these sciences were born within the specific European "lifeworld," and on the other, it stresses that their salvation from the crisis lies not in rejection, but in "reawakening" their connection with that European *telos* (Husserl, 1970). In this reading, even the role of Galileo as a herald of modernity became an agent for this historical deviation; for his mathematization of nature unintentionally paved the way for the separation of science from fundamental human and ethical questions. Husserl's ultimate aim in criticizing the European sciences was to return science to the sphere of the lifeworld and, through that, to restore its broken connection with the authentic European *telos*. Thus, the Husserlian Europe symbolizes a "global conscience" that, throughout history, despite its great deviations—from colonialism to the world wars—has never been completely silenced. Recurring crises, as Husserl points out, themselves act as a "summons" for a "return (Husserl, 1970)." This return is not a reactionary nostalgia, but a "reactive reappropriation" and an active re-reading of that *telos* in the face of new conditions. The Trump era can be seen as precisely such a "summons" and an opportunity for Europe.

9. The Contemporary West: The Embodiment of Deviation from the European Idea

In contrast to this European idea, the contemporary "West"— in its dominant American form—epitomizes that deviated instrumental rationality. This "West" is a *discursive*

construct—as Edward Said demonstrates in *Orientalism*—which finds its identity more in opposition to the "Other" - primarily Islam and the Orient - than in commitment to an internal substance and purpose (Said, 1978). Even Samuel Huntington (1927–2008), who believed in the unbreakable unity of "Western civilization," could never have foreseen the internal dynamics that would deconstruct that very civilization from within and, alongside the "clash of civilizations," lead to the birth of Europe as an independent civilization with a distinct civilizational identity from within the geography of the West. Europe, with all the heavy burden of its history—from colonialism to the implementation of vile neoliberal economic policies that have been as destructive as colonialism itself—still possesses, in the depths of its culture, an ethical conscience stemming from the Enlightenment and the French Revolution. Of course, these ideals of "liberty, equality, fraternity" have been met with inverted outcomes in practice: the fraternity that was to be the basis of unity turned into total war between nations; the equality that promised emancipation led to the division of the world into first, second, and third tiers; and the liberty that sought to emancipate humanity became a tool for imposing the will of the powerful. But these ideals, like a specter (in Derrida's sense), are always hovering over Europe, as if haunting its historical subconscious and compelling it to rethink. This subtle difference—between the imperfect reality and the ideal purpose—is what distinguishes Europe from the "West," emptied of its ideals. This return to ethical conscience

and the analysis of the historical subconscious is for Europe not merely a voluntary choice within an ethical framework or a tactical option among others; rather, it must be seen as the manifestation of a larger historical-civilizational dynamism that recalls the predictions of philosophers like Oswald Spengler in *The Decline of the West*. From Spengler's perspective, civilizations are living organisms that undergo cycles of birth, growth, decline, and death. What he calls the "West" has entered a stage characterized by dry rationality, imperialism, materialism, and the loss of its authentic spirit (Spengler, 1991). Thus, contemporary Europe, in a simultaneous act of death and life, is both witnessing the burial of the "West" and giving birth to its "own self"; not as a new centrism, but as an actor striving to realize its ethical and rational *telos* once again in a multipolar world—a *telos* that this time must be universal, not exclusive. In this framework, the emergence of phenomena like Trump and the "America First" slogan cannot be considered accidental, but rather a sign of the very "decline" or civilizational aging of which Spengler spoke (Spengler, 1991). In this historical scene, Europe finds itself in a unique position: on one hand, due to historical and geographical ties, it is part of this declining "West" and suffers from its consequences. But on the other hand, by virtue of possessing an older "*telos*" and a "historical conscience" rooted in Greece and the Enlightenment, it sees within itself the possibility of "redemption" from this declining totality.

Therefore, as noted, the move towards independence from America is for Europe not merely a political "choice," but a "civilizational necessity" for survival. Europe is compelled to dismantle the identity structures that have been institutionalized for centuries to save itself from the destined fate of the Spenglerian "West."

10. The Awakening of the European Conscience and the Revival of the European *Telos*

This civilizational necessity for survival, identified in the present article as a grand historical dynamism, is reflected in the discourse and actions of senior European leaders and strategists advocating "strategic autonomy," moving from the realm of theory to the field of practice. This discourse is now crystallized in the frank statements of top European leaders. Angela Merkel, Chancellor of Germany (2017), stated: "We can no longer completely rely on others. But we must take our fate into our own hands... The times in which we could completely rely on others are somewhat over. Europeans must take their destiny into their own hands (Merkel, 2017)." This declaration from the leader of a country that has always been the cornerstone of transatlantic relations is not a passing political remark, but the concrete manifestation of that same "civilizational necessity for survival." Emmanuel Macron, President of France (2019), asserted: "What we are currently experiencing is nothing less than the brain death of NATO... The only common enemy of NATO is terrorism. But what do we now see regarding NATO's strategic or political goals?

Nothing" (Macron, 2019). Macron's use of the stark metaphor "brain death" to describe NATO refers not only to a military institution but constitutes a radical critique of the "West" as a security-identity construct that can no longer guarantee the European "lifeworld." As Josep Borrell (2021), the EU's High Representative for Foreign Affairs, stated: "Europe has to learn the language of power... We have to develop our capacity to use the instruments of power. ... This is about European strategic autonomy. We have to be able to act independently." These statements, embodied in the official EU "Strategic Compass (European Union, 2022)," show that this demand is no longer the view of one or two leaders, but is becoming an institutionalized policy. However, it must be frankly admitted that this "return to the self," however idealistic and rooted in a civilizational necessity, faces profound objective challenges and contradictions in the fierce arena of contemporary reality. Europe today must be seen above all as a "arena of contestation"; a fierce struggle between the pull towards that universal *telos* and powerful realist, nationalist, and even reactionary tendencies. The rise and strengthening of far-right parties in core countries like France, Germany, and Italy—with their anti-immigration, nationalist, and often Eurosceptic slogans—exemplify this reality. These discourses directly challenge the ideals of "fraternity" and "cosmopolitanism" and, in practice, risk turning every move towards "strategic autonomy" into a continental fortress—rather than an open

society. In the historical scene sketched by Spengler—a scene where the "West" as a civilizational totality has entered the stage of "Civilization" characterized by dry rationality and the loss of its authentic spirit—the emergence of phenomena like Trump and the "America First" discourse cannot be seen as accidental, but is a sign of that very civilizational decline (Spengler, 1991) . In this unique position, Europe is, on one hand, part of this declining "West" due to historical ties, but on the other, by virtue of possessing an older "*telos*," sees the possibility of "redemption" from this declining totality. It is here that Husserl's philosophy comes to the aid of this analysis, adding a philosophical-ethical dimension. Crisis, from Husserl's viewpoint, is itself a "summons" for "*Besinnung*" (reflective meditation) (Husserl, 1970). Therefore, the move towards independence from America is for Europe not merely a political "choice," but a "civilizational necessity" for survival and, simultaneously, a "reactive reappropriation" of that authentic Husserlian *telos*. Europe is compelled to dismantle the identity structures built up over centuries to save itself from the destined fate of the Spenglerian "West." This awakening of conscience, now rooted in a civilizational necessity, has been further accelerated in response to objective crises—from climate change and migration to inequality. These common challenges compel Europe to turn once more towards that Husserlian cosmopolitan ideal to find answers based on collective rationality, multilateralism, and justice. In this framework, Europe no longer sees itself as part of the "West,"

but rather as its replacement—a replacement founded on universal ethical principles.

11. Trump and the Final Collapse of the West's Ethical Hegemony

The emergence of a phenomenon like Donald Trump, with the "America First" slogan, not only marginalized many liberal values but so mocked the common ethical foundations that the wall of the supposedly unified "West" cracked. In Trump's discourse, "the West" was transformed from a transnational civilizational project into a purely national, instrumental, and reduced identity. This event was, in fact, a prelude to revealing a schism that had always existed within the body of this so-called unified civilization: the schism between the "West" as a hegemonic power machine—which S. Huntington (1927–2008) contemplated—and "Europe" as an ethically-founded idea. Therefore, Trump should not be seen as a purely external agent, but rather as the ultimate and naked product of the very logic of instrumental rationality that had diverted the "West" from its European *telos*. It was from within this turmoil and identity crisis that a new possibility for rebirth emerged: the movement of European self-reflection and the re-dawning of that "European conscience" which strives to free itself from the constraints of the emptied "West"—in whose prison it is itself confined—and return to its authentic sources. The moral decline of the West has been a topic of discussion at least since Spengler. But until now, and especially during the colonial era,

the West sought to cover its domination with a veil of ethical justifications—such as the "civilizing mission." Trump tore away this final veil. His policies—from withdrawing from the Paris Agreement and the JCPOA threatening NATO and disparaging the United Nations—showed that for this new "West," even the appearance of loyalty to common values was meaningless. With the rise of Trump, the contemporary West could no longer justify its hegemony by appealing to its claimed ethical superiority. The most symbolic manifestation of this deviation was his policy towards Palestine: recognizing Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, a blatant violation of international law, and unconditional support for the Netanyahu government displayed the "West" in its most naked form as a repressive power. It was these actions that created a schism not just diplomatic, but spiritual and identity-based, between Europe and the American-led West. The critical reaction of European countries and their move towards recognizing Palestine showed that Europe was no longer willing to sacrifice ethics for short-term interests and unilateralism.

12. The Embodiment of the Strategic Autonomy Discourse: From Ideal to Action

Europe's desire to define a role independent of the United States on the global stage is not new, but its nature and intensity have transformed over time, particularly in response to internal American developments, evolving into the gradual formation of a "Strategic Autonomy Discourse." This discourse, which during Ronald Reagan's presidency was largely limited to

tactical disagreements over issues like the "*Strategic Defense Initiative*," experienced a more serious turning point with the overt opposition of France and Germany under Jacques Chirac and Gerhard Schröder to the Iraq War in 2003, marking the first deep post-Cold War schism within the "West." However, these periods should be seen as a prelude to the qualitative shift that peaked with the presidency of Donald Trump. By attacking the normative foundations and common institutions of the transatlantic relationship, Trump acted as a catalyst, moving the autonomy discourse from the margins to the center of European policy (European Council on Foreign Relations, 2020).

13. Conclusion

Therefore, the schism that emerged during the Trump era was *not* merely a transient disagreement, but a sign of a deeper identity crisis. The American-led "West," by discarding even the appearance of ethical hegemony, demonstrated that it could no longer claim to represent a civilization with a global vocation. In contrast, Europe, faced with this crisis, embarked on a struggle to redefine itself as the heir to that authentic *telos*—a rationality committed to ethics and global responsibility. This return is not a simple choice, but a response to a historical necessity. However, as discussed in the previous section, contemporary Europe is a latent arena of contestation between the ideal *telos* and stressful realities. Internal challenges, including the rise of the far-right, populism, economic disparities, and migration management, show that

this path is not linear or smooth, but rather a dialectical and vulnerable process. One might object here: Is this schism not merely the product of a specific period in American history and a personality like Trump? With a new administration in Washington that emphasizes multilateral values, is a return to the previous unified "West" not possible? The answer to these questions must be sought in the key distinction between "politics" and "civilization." Donald Trump should not be seen as the cause of this schism, but rather as the "accelerating and revealing agent" of it. His presidency acted like a political earthquake, exposing the deep civilizational fault lines that had previously been hidden beneath the surface of diplomacy and overlapping interests. Even if official American policy reverts to traditional cooperation, this "awareness" has taken shape in Europe that existential reliance on an unpredictable power—regardless of who occupies the White House—is a vulnerable strategy. On the other hand, a scenario involving an "ethical shift" in America aligned with the European *telos* would not contradict this article's argument but would rather confirm it; for in that case, America itself would become an actor on the path of the same "European idea," and the hegemony of the "West" in its previous sense—which this article critiques—would lose its relevance. Therefore, the main issue is not a person or a party, but a "fundamental redefinition" of the relationship between two civilizational centers whose period of complete overlap has ended. Europe can only secure a meaningful role in the emerging multipolar world by

reclaiming its ethical telos—not by mimicking the instrumental rationality that dominates the contemporary "West." As Husserl (1970) warns, a civilization that abandons its telos inevitably faces the abyss of its own meaninglessness the Trumpian West exemplifies through its deviation from Europe's rational-ethical vocation. But Europe, if it heeds the call of its conscience—which echoes from the depths of its Greek history and Enlightenment ideals—may yet find a way to return to its human purpose and once again give new meaning to "being European." The main obstacles on this path are multifaceted and deeply rooted in Europe's political and social structures. Firstly, persistent economic disparities and disparate responses to crises like migration weaken the cohesion necessary for collective action. Secondly, the powerful emergence of nationalist and far-right parties within the very heart of Europe challenges the cosmopolitan and transnational ideals based on the Husserlian *telos*, pushing it towards a continental fortress rather than an open society. Finally, the historical security dependence on NATO and the lack of a fully independent European army cast doubt on the possibility of autonomous action. These challenges show that the "awakening of the European conscience" is not a smooth, linear path, but a contentious struggle for adaptation to overcome the obstacles to this ideal.

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