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**THE CRISIS OF POLITICAL POWER IN AFGHANISTAN AND  
POSSIBILITIES FOR ITS RESOLUTION  
(SOCIOLOGICAL ASPECTS)**

Specialization 5.4.5 - Political Sociology

Dissertation Abstract  
for the Degree  
of Candidate of Sociological Sciences

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**Relevance of the research topic.** The relevance of this research topic is determined by the fact that Afghanistan plays a significant geostrategic role in the Central Asian region, particularly in its security. Currently, a detailed examination of the causes of the long-term socio-political crisis in this country is required, based on a socio-historical analysis covering the period from 1992 to the present. This approach allows us to identify the fundamental factors that have contributed to the persistence of socio-political instability in the country over the past decades<sup>1</sup>.

"This region has historically witnessed the intersection of political, ideological, economic, and military-strategic interests of various powers, such as the United States, China, and Great Britain, as well as neighboring countries in the Middle East, primarily Iran and Pakistan. Following the withdrawal of US and NATO troops from Afghanistan, terrorist groups, organized crime, and arms smuggling have become more active, while illegal migration has increased, posing a threat to security on the Eurasian continent as a whole." According to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, Afghan drug trafficking remains one of the main threats to the region, and the number of international terrorist organization fighters in Afghanistan is estimated at 20,000–23,000 people, more than half of whom are foreign fighters<sup>2</sup>.

The regional scope of this dissertation topic is enhanced by the fact that, following the withdrawal of the US and NATO forces, neighboring countries—Russia, Iran, China, and Pakistan—began to actively engage in the Afghan crisis.

The Taliban's<sup>3</sup> emergence as a political power structure began with the 2018 US-Taliban negotiations in Qatar under the Trump administration. The conclusion of the Doha Agreement between the US and the Taliban represented US interests. The Taliban's seizure of power in Afghanistan in 2021 resulted, firstly, from the former Afghan government's misunderstanding of the Taliban's demands during the Doha talks. Secondly, the former Afghan government's international allies failed to take the insurgent group seriously, which was promoting the idea of an Islamic state or Islamic Emirate, leading to a crisis of political authority in the country.

The relevance of this topic is determined by the fact that instability in Afghanistan could disturb the states of Central Asia and lead to the transformation of the Afghan crisis into a region-wide conflict. In this case, the experience of resolving the Afghan crisis and intertribal relations may be useful in developing a sound strategy for other countries. The Afghan problem currently affects the interests of Russia and the CIS countries, making research in political sociology

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<sup>1</sup> Afghanyar, M. Settlement of the Afghan Crisis / M. Afghanyar // Bulletin of the Tajik National University. Series of Socio-Economic and Social Sciences. 2023. No. 5. pp. 336-341. EDN WFABBV.

<sup>2</sup> Moscow's Afghan Dossier: Documents from the Russian State Archives / eds. A. Kalinovsky, S. Radchenko. Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, 2026. URL: <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/publication/moscows-afghan-dossier> (accessed: 05.03.2026).

<sup>3</sup> The organization is banned in the Russian Federation.

particularly relevant. In July 2025, the Russian Federation officially recognized the government of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, marking a significant turning point in international relations and highlighting the need for a thorough scientific analysis of the nature and prospects for the development of Afghan statehood. In February-March 2026, the situation in the region entered a new phase: the military conflict between Afghanistan and Pakistan, airstrikes on Kabul and Kandahar, and the Pakistani Defense Minister's announcement of the start of "open war" indicate a profound crisis in bilateral relations and require a rethinking of the role of regional actors in the Afghan settlement<sup>4</sup>.

Thus, the research problem lies in the contradiction between the crisis of political power in Afghanistan and the possibilities for its resolution under the current Taliban regime, which is not supported by many political structures, as well as the growing involvement of neighboring countries (Iran and Pakistan), which are closely linked historically and civilizational to Afghanistan and exert significant influence on the situation in the country. Russian citizens' perception of the Taliban is also linked to their continued historical perception of the region as a crisis region<sup>5</sup>, further confirmed by the involvement of the Afghan branch of ISIS<sup>6</sup> in the terrorist attack in Crocus City. Russia's expert and academic community views the Taliban's removal from the list of terrorist organizations as "a gesture not so much of successful diplomacy as of a certain desperation<sup>7</sup>." Recognizing this contradiction, in November 2025, the Taliban government's Ministry of Information and Culture launched a campaign called "Prosperous and Responsible Government" to gather public opinion on governance. Citizens, analysts, investors, and social activists participated. Citizens, analysts, investors, and public activists were involved. Acting Minister Khairullah Khairkhwa stated: *"The Islamic Emirate was created for the people. Anyone can go anywhere and explain their problem."* This demonstrates the political regime's desire to change the global perception of their country, while the scale and representativeness of this campaign are not specified, indicating their understanding that such measures are insufficient. A report from the European Asylum Agency (EUAA) categorizes the government in Afghanistan as a "theocratic police state imposing a strict interpretation of Islamic law (Sharia)" with significant restrictions on the personal rights and freedoms of citizens. The authorities have

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<sup>4</sup> About a thousand people were killed and wounded in the escalation between Afghanistan and Pakistan. March 1, 2026. URL: <https://kz.kursiv.media/2026-03-01/tsse-okolo-tysyachi-chelovek-ubity-i-raneny-pri-eskalacii-mezhdu-afganistanom-i-pakistanom/> (date of access: 05.03.2026).

<sup>5</sup> Social survey data for 2021: index in the VTsIOM-2021 dissertation;

<sup>6</sup> The organization is banned in the Russian Federation.

<sup>7</sup> Andrey S. The rehabilitation of the Taliban creates intrigue with unpredictable consequences. // Expert.ru website. URL: <https://expert.ru/amp/mnenie/reabilitatsiya-talibov-v-rossii-sozdaet-intrigu-s-nepredskazuemymi-posledstviyami>.

effectively restricted civic space and have become increasingly intolerant of criticism<sup>8</sup>.

**The level of scientific development of the topic.** The presented research is based on a theoretical foundation that includes sociological, political, historical, and economic conflictological approaches.

*The first group* of works consists of general sociological theories. We highlight the works of Johan Galtung, Louis Kriesberg, and Max Weber.

*The second group* of scientific studies consists of works related to the essential understanding of the scientific category "crisis" and its component "political crisis," which is viewed as a type of organizational crisis in which "significant threats to countries or regions are threats to economic well-being, territorial integrity, core values, military power, and their very existence."<sup>9</sup> Niklas Luhmann, L. O. Comte, the organismic concept of managing social systems and processes by G. Spencer, the ideas of E. Durkheim on the role of the state as a subject of managing society by F. Taylor, the concept of human relations, the realistic approaches of T. Hobbes that the world consists of matter and that all phenomena can be explained through material processes. R. Keohane, D. Nye (the concept of "smart power"), F. Fukuyama (ideas of "liberal democracy"), S. A. Kravchenko, L. A. Vasilenko, N. Meshcheryakova.

Developments in the field of conflictology have had significant methodological significance. Scholars such as G. Simmel, L. Coser, T. Parsons, and K. Boulding worked on the theory of functional conflict, which is of great importance for modern conflictology. Prominent Russian scholars and politicians such as M.I. Tugan-Baranovsky, V.I. Lenin, P.B. Struve, and G.V. Plekhanov also addressed the problem of social conflict. Pitirim Sorokin's contribution.

The third area of scholarly research is the category of "legitimacy." The concept of "legitimacy" entered modern scholarship thanks to the German sociologist Max Weber. Building on Max Weber's<sup>10</sup> rational approaches, V. Ivlev and I.S. Melnikov, R. Koselleck, and John Rawls (in his book "A Theory of Justice"<sup>11</sup>) have also explored this concept. Works analyzing the experience of state-building in Afghanistan are also significant. As noted in the materials of the Herat Security Dialogue, Afghanistan has never had the rule of law. Over the past 40 years,

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<sup>8</sup> COI Report - Afghanistan: Country Focus. The European Union Agency for Asylum – EUAA. 23 January 2026. URL: <https://www.euaa.europa.eu/publications/coi-report-afghanistan-country-focus-2> (дата обращения: 05.03.2026).

<sup>9</sup> Schwarz Andreas, Seeger, Matthew W, Auer Claudia. // The Handbook of International Crisis Communication Research. Communication – Conclusions for an Integrative Approach to International Crisis Communication Research (Pages: 66-71)

<sup>10</sup> Weber, M. Economy and Society: Essays on Understanding Sociology. National Research University Higher School of Economics. Moscow: Publishing House of the Higher School of Economics, 2019. 542 p.

<sup>11</sup> Rawls, John. A Theory of Justice, 1971.

14 heads of state have changed, seven of whom were overthrown in coups, and nine<sup>12</sup> constitutions have been in effect. The causes of governmental failure include ethnic and religious loyalties, the influence of Islamic radicals, and dependence on external patronage.

Supreme Court Chief Justice Abdul Hakim Haqqani's work, "The Islamic Emirate and Its System,"<sup>13</sup> provides a deeper understanding of the Taliban movement's ideological platform, its official doctrine, its approach to legitimacy, state structure, and women's rights<sup>14</sup>.

Of particular relevance to this study are contemporary works devoted to the analysis of the social structure of Afghan society and the dynamics of its political development. M.I. Ibrahimy, N.D. Sazhenov, and Ashley Jackson, in their studies of "grassroots legitimacy," demonstrate the Taliban's mechanisms of power, based on their ability to ensure basic order and access to justice<sup>15</sup>.

The fourth area of scholarly research on this topic concerns the Islamic factor in the Eurasian political space, including Afghanistan. Political legitimacy in Islamic thought and thinking is not a type of patriarchy, heredity, old age, race, nationalism, aristocracy, elitism, charismatic governments, and the like. Legitimacy in Islamic political thought means compliance with the standards and teachings of Islamic law. "The only source of government legitimacy is the Divine. Legitimacy originates in the divine legislative will" (Iranian Ayatollah Javadi Amoli<sup>16</sup>). In other words, government and ruler are legitimate if they have a religious basis. In this case, legitimacy is considered as "a rational justification for the exercise of power and domination by a ruler within the framework of reason and a rational and logical scheme" (Iranian political ideologist Ali Shariati)<sup>17</sup>, while the recognition of Islam as a legal basis does not contradict the foundations of democracy, since the consultative principle in Islam is based on the example of the interaction of the Prophet Muhammad with believers. According to A. Malashenko, one of the causes of the Islamic crisis of political power in the Middle East is the contradictions in

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<sup>12</sup> Asia-Plus [Dushanbe]. Pakistan declared "open war" on Taliban Afghanistan – Ministry of Defense. February 27, 2026. URL: <https://asiaplustj.info/ru/news/centralasia/20260227/paki-stan-ob-yavil-otkrituyu-voinu-talibskom-afganistanu-minoboroni> (date accessed: 05.03.2026).

<sup>13</sup> Bunzel C. The Taliban 's Political Theory: 'Abd al-Hakim al-Haqqani's Vision for the Islamic Emirate // Current Trends in Islamist Ideology. Washington, D.C.: Hudson Institute, 2024. Vol. 35. P. 5–30. URL: <https://www.hudson.org/national-security-defense/current-trends-islamist-ideology-volume-35> (дата обращения: 05.03.2026); *Ahmadi A.* The Manifesto of Darkness: An Examination of Taliban's Ideals [Электронный ресурс] // GC Human Rights Preparedness. 2022. 6 October. URL: <https://gchumanrights.org/preparedness/article-on/the-manifesto-of-darkness-an-examination-of-talibans-ideals.html> (дата обращения: 05.03.2026).

<sup>14</sup> *Haqqani A. KH.* نظامها الإسلامية الإمارة [Islamic Emirate and its system]. قندهار : الشرعية العلوم دار : قندهار. 1443 هـ [2022 م]. 312 ص.

<sup>15</sup> Jackson A. Negotiating Survival: Civilian-Insurgent Relations in Afghanistan. London: Hurst & Company ; Oxford University Press, 2021. 256 p. ISBN 978-0-19-760599-2.

<sup>16</sup> مشروعیت دینی دولت و اقتدار سیاسی دین، شجاعی زند، ص 45 - 96

<sup>17</sup> Shariati A. Marxism and Other Western Fallacies: An Islamic Critique. Barkley, 1980.

Islamic doctrines<sup>18</sup> (which determine the methods used in terrorist formats) and the lack of a unified methodology for such scientific categories as terrorism and international terrorism at the international level<sup>19</sup>. Among the works on the geopolitics of Central Asia are those of Russian philosopher and political scientist Alexander Dugin, who focused on the history of Afghanistan, which serves as a factor in the confrontation between the interests of Russia, Eurasia, England, and the United States<sup>20</sup>. Meanwhile, American diplomat and political scientist Zbigniew Brzezinski examined America's geostrategic imperatives in Eurasia while forecasting the political map of the future world<sup>21</sup>. Zalmay Khalilzad, a political scientist, author of more than 200 academic papers, former US Ambassador to Afghanistan, and former US Special Representative for the Armistice in Afghanistan, examines in his book the problems facing Asia and how the US can address these challenges and manage crises in the region<sup>22</sup>.

Afghan writer and historian Muhammad Akram Andeshmand's "The United States in Afghanistan" examines the reasons for the US invasion of Afghanistan, the US role in generating the crisis and strengthening the Taliban<sup>23</sup>, and US relations with the mujahideen government led by Burhannudin Rabbani and Ahmad Shah Massoud<sup>24</sup>. Ahmed Rashid, a prominent figure in English-language publications on Afghanistan, has published several works on the Taliban insurgency in Afghan-Pakistani relations, in which he critically assesses the actions of NATO, the US, and the Pakistani authorities regarding Afghanistan. Since the resolution of the crisis in Afghanistan<sup>25</sup> has not been resolved in either academic discourse or practical terms, there is a need for a comprehensive sociological study that takes into account both the dynamics of political processes over more than four years of Taliban rule and new regional realities (Russia's recognition of the government of the Islamic Emirate, the escalation of the Afghan-Pakistani conflict).

**The purpose of this dissertation** is to substantiate options for resolving the political crisis in Afghanistan, taking into account new regional realities and the

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<sup>18</sup> Malashenko A. Islamic alternative and Islamic project. Moscow: Ves Mir Publishing House, Reforma i madhhaby, 2006. Pp. 6-10.

<sup>19</sup> Dobaev I.P. Islamic radicalism, social, philosophical analysis. Rostov-on-Don: SKNC Publishing House, 2003. 389 p.

<sup>20</sup> Dugin, Aleksandr Gelyevich. Geopolitics as an Effective Method of Contemporary Russian Political Theory and Practice. Scientific Thought of the Caucasus. 2008. No. 3 (55). URL: <https://cyberleninka.ru/article/n/geopolitika-kak-effektivnyy-metod-sovremennoy-rossiyskoy-politicheskoy-teorii-i-praktiki> (accessed on 22.09.2025).

<sup>21</sup> Brzezinski Z. The Grand Chessboard (American Dominance and Its Geostrategic Imperatives) Moscow: International Relations, 1998. Translated by O. Yu. Uralskaya. 139 p.

<sup>22</sup> Exclusive Interview with Zalmay Khalilzad, 1TV Kabul, September 9, 2020 // Youtube. URL: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Pdf\\_X06L1Lc](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Pdf_X06L1Lc) (дата обращения: 02.25.2023).

<sup>23</sup> An organization banned in the Russian Federation.

<sup>24</sup> 35-20. محمد اکرم اندیشمند. تاریخ چاپ 1386 هجری خورشیدی. America in Afghanistan. Muhammad Akram.A., pp. 20-35. Auth. trans.

<sup>25</sup> Rashid A. Descent Into Chaos: The United States and The Failure of Nation Building in Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Central Asia. Viking, 2008; The Rise of Militant Islam in Central Asia, Jale University Press, 2002.

dynamics of the situation in 2021–2026, based on an evolutionary political and sociological analysis of the country's political landscape.

**Research Objectives:**

1. To examine the crisis of political power in contemporary Afghanistan as an object of study, using a synthesis of social conflict theory, the concept of hybrid political orders, and an ethnosociological approach.

2. To analyze the essence of the scientific concept of "possibilities for resolving a crisis of political power," introducing an analytical distinction between normative and empirical legitimacy.

3. To develop a sociological measurement of the possibilities for resolving a crisis of political power, including a two-tier system of indicators and data collection methods that compensate for sample limitations.

4. To substantiate a crisis resolution scenario involving the Council of Elders (Loya Jirga), taking into account the position of the Taliban and analyzing the effectiveness of this institution in historical perspective.

5. Conduct an analysis of political actors and identify their capabilities in resolving the political power crisis.

6. Justify a scenario for resolving the crisis through the collective participation of international organizations and foreign countries, taking into account Russia's recognition of the government of the Islamic Emirate and the escalation of the conflict with Pakistan.

7. Justify a scenario for resolving the political crisis through the creation of new states, differentially assessing the risks in Afghanistan.

**Research Object:** The political power crisis in contemporary Afghanistan.

**Research Subject:** Possibilities for resolving the political power crisis.

The chronological framework of the study covers the period from 1992 (the beginning of the current phase of political instability) to March 2026, with a focus on the Taliban period of rule (2021–2026). This approach allows us to identify the fundamental factors underlying the ongoing socio-political instability and trace the dynamics of the political situation over more than four years of Taliban rule.

The theoretical and methodological basis of the dissertation research is interdisciplinary and is based on the synthesis of several theoretical approaches: the theory of social conflict (J. Galtung, L. Coser), which allows us to diagnose the multilayered nature of the Afghan crisis; the concept of hybrid political orders (V. Boege, K. Menkhaus), which describes the coexistence of formal and informal institutions of power; the ethnosociological approach (N.D. Sazhenov), which is

necessary for the analysis of the social basis of political processes; the theory of "grassroots legitimacy" (A. Jackson), which reveals the mechanisms of everyday acceptance of power at the local level. The fundamental ideas for the dissertation research were M. Weber's ideas on the theoretical substantiation of legitimacy as an essential characteristic of state power; R. Syukiyainen's ideas on the constitutionality of Sharia as a source of legislation and the authority of moral political and legal norms of behavior in the eyes of Muslims, which "themselves act as an instrument of legitimation in relation to positive law"<sup>26</sup>; R. Ivanov's integrative approach to legitimacy, according to which stability, degree (scale), type, etc. depend on both the ruling subject and the subject."<sup>27</sup>

The operationalization of the basic concepts was also based on Kinnett's balance of power theory by Neil Waltz, the theoretical ideas of Michael W. Doyle and Joseph S. Nye regarding wars and conflicts as a result of the imperfection of social institutions and the role of international institutions in the processes of peaceful crisis resolution, and the theoretical foundations of Alexander Wendt's constructivism in terms of the obligatory recognition of laws and agreements without destroying borders and not interfering in the internal affairs of other states.

**The empirical base** consists of the following studies, personally developed and conducted by the author of the dissertation:

1.- "Resolution of the Afghan Crisis in the Mirror of the Legitimacy of Political Authority." Research method: in-depth narrative interviews with experts. The interviews contained possible questions for different groups of respondents, depending on their knowledge and experience. Three groups of respondents were invited as experts (N = 25 experts), each group has specific knowledge about the nature and characteristics of the political crisis in Afghanistan: Type 1. Experts with knowledge of Afghanistan's history, culture, and social relations within society, most of whom have witnessed several regime changes, are familiar with the national specifics of Afghanistan and the Loya Jirga (N = 9 people); Type 2. Political figures, analysts, scientists, and professors of higher education institutions of Afghanistan (N = 9 people); Type 3: Experts from foreign countries (Russia, Tajikistan, Iran), with direct or indirect ties to Afghanistan, with experience in academic research in Eurasia, and participants in the war in the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan (N=7). The interview instrument is attached (Appendix 2). The dissertation index is UAKPV-2024. The sample primarily represents the views of the politicized and opposition intelligentsia in exile, which creates a risk of "diaspora bias." This limitation is compensated for by triangulating methods and incorporating other sources.

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<sup>26</sup> Syukiyainen L.R. Sharia and Muslim legal culture. M., 1997.

<sup>27</sup> Ivanov R.L. Legitimacy of state power // Bulletin of Omsk University. Series "Law". 2012. No. 1 (30), 2012, pp. 6-17.

2. "Evolutionary and Historical Analysis of the Political Crisis in Afghanistan". Research method: document analysis. The set of documents includes: historical documents on the Loya Jirga, the Constitution of Afghanistan for different historical periods, laws, charters, interstate agreements, treaties, as well as materials of specialized historical research (Appendix 1, 72 documents). Based on the comparative historical and systems approaches, the following was conducted: a) an evolutionary historical analysis of the forms of government in Afghanistan through the prism of the indicators of the legitimacy and democratic nature of power; b) a systemic and structural analysis to identify the attitude of the government of the Islamic Emirates to the crisis and the foundations of the international and regional security system and the government's ability to cooperate with political opponents in the country; c) a systemic and functional analysis to identify the functional elements of the foreign political system in terms of their potential for participation in the processes of overcoming the crisis; d) an analysis of documents reflecting the ideological platform of the Taliban movement. Dissertation index EIPKA-2024-2025.

3. In preparing this dissertation, the following secondary empirical data was used:

– Gender Alert: Four years after the Taliban takeover, Afghans overwhelmingly back girls' education. The study was conducted by UN Women. Date: August 2025. The sample included over 2,000 Afghans from all regions of Afghanistan, including both urban and rural areas across the country. **Survey type:** nationwide door-to-door survey; the sample is representative of gender and age. The dissertation index is GA-2025.

– Poll: Taliban-Germany Agreement; Step for Benefit of Nation or Legitimizing Taliban?. The study was conducted by DID Press Agency, an independent Afghan news agency. Date: July 2025. Research method: online survey. Respondents: Afghan diaspora with internet access and an interest in political affairs, readers of DID Press Agency. Index in the TGA-2025 dissertation.

– "Public Opinion Survey on the First Anniversary of the Withdrawal of American Troops." The study was conducted in August 2022 by the China Media Corporation Analysis Center and the Institute of National Public Opinion Governance and Measurement at Renmin University. A large-scale survey of respondents in 24 countries, including Afghanistan. URL: <https://russian.cgtn.com/n/BIJIA-CAA-IHEA/FBdbAA/index.html>. Dissertation index: CGTN-2022.

– "Power Change in Afghanistan and Russia's Position," All-Russian Poll "VTsIOM-Sputnik." The study was conducted on August 19, 2021 (N = 1,600 respondents aged 18 and older). The maximum margin of error with a 95%

probability does not exceed 2.5%. URL: <https://wciom.ru/analytical-reviews/analiticheskii-obzor/smena-vlasti-v-afganistane-i-pozicija-rossii> Dissertation index: VTsIOM-2021.

– “Taliban Movement”. The study was conducted by inFOM LLC within the framework of the order of the Public Opinion Foundation (FOM-OM project) on October 29–31, 2021. Research method: door-to-door survey. 53 constituent entities of the Russian Federation, 104 settlements, N = 1,500 respondents. The margin of error does not exceed 3.6%. URL: <https://fom.ru/Mir/14642?ysclid=madhlej35659356691>.

**The scientific novelty of this study** lies in its comprehensive sociological analysis of the political power crisis in Afghanistan, taking into account new regional realities (Russia's recognition of the government of the Islamic Emirate, the escalation of the Afghan-Pakistani conflict) and the dynamics of the situation in 2021–2026.

1. Based on a synthesis of Neil Waltz's Kinnett balance of power theory, the theoretical ideas of Michael W. Doyle and Joseph S. Nye regarding wars and conflicts as a result of imperfect social institutions and the role of international institutions in peaceful conflict resolution processes, the theoretical foundations of Alexander Wendt's constructivism, the concept of hybrid political orders, and an ethnosociological approach, a theoretical model for analyzing the political power crisis in Afghanistan has been developed. This model takes into account the coexistence of formal and informal institutions, the role of ethnic factors, and the mechanisms of "grassroots legitimacy." Ten factors determining the specific features of the crisis have been identified, with their characteristics being specified using up-to-date data for 2025–2026 (including internal disagreements between Taliban factions and the dynamics of Afghan-Pakistani relations), including: 1. Rapid transformation and/or destruction of political and social institutions, political instability; 2. Inability to coordinate actions between political forces; 3. Lack of time for the previous government to react, lack of time for the new government to restructure; 4. A threat to fundamental values; 5. A threat to territorial integrity, military force, and the very existence of the state; 6. A sharp exacerbation of socio-political contradictions, disruption of the normal functioning of society; 7. Weakening of the economy; 8. Discontent among a large number of citizens, exacerbation of conflicts, increase in protest activity; 9. Weakening trust in the government, loss of authority in power; 10. Contradictions in political ideology and crisis.

2. A set of sociological indicators of the political crisis in Afghanistan has been developed (political stability; government effectiveness; level of corruption; respect for human rights; freedom of the press; elected government; presence of the institution of law and order; development of social security and services; freedom of activity of political parties). A set of tools for sociological measurement of the state of the political crisis in Afghanistan has been developed using document analysis

methods (Appendix 1) and narrative in-depth interviews with experts (Appendix 2). These tools are based on Max Weber's theoretical justification of legitimacy as an essential characteristic of state power, on the results of the author's evolutionary and historical analysis of forms of government, and on the factors of the crisis developed through the criteria of legitimacy and democratic nature of power.

3. Based on the evolutionary and historical analysis of forms of government through the prism of legitimacy and democratic nature of power and the conducted document analysis, the historical stages and characteristics of political power in Afghanistan from 1992 to the present have been substantiated, which made it possible to identify the fundamental factors maintaining political instability in the government. The concept of traditions to which the Taliban movement appeals has been clarified: it refers to the Pashtunwali complex (the traditional Pashtun code of honor) in its conservative interpretation, mixed with Deobandi religious doctrine.

4. Based on the conducted research, it is concluded that the Loya Jirga is a legitimizing institution that should be involved in the process of resolving political crises of power. However, its effectiveness directly depends on compliance with constitutional norms and the willingness of key players to recognize its authority. In the modern context, the convening of a Loya Jirga will mean not so much democratic legitimization as the restoration of a traditional mechanism for the legitimization of power, where traditions hold a special place in local communities.

5. Based on an analysis of the historical experience of resolving political crises in various countries (Syria, Libya, Yemen, Tajikistan, Bosnia), a scenario for the application of resolution models is developed, taking into account new regional realities. It has been proven that the twenty-year experience of the presence of international forces in Afghanistan demonstrates that international institutions are unable to play a decisive role if the opposing parties are not prepared to compromise. The most acceptable model is "Coordination, Mediation, and Humanism" (using Tajikistan as an example), with the active participation of regional powers (Russia, China, Iran), taking into account Russia's recognition of the government of the Islamic Emirate.

**The theoretical and practical significance** of the proposed approaches to resolving the political crisis in Afghanistan lies in the fact that they expand the subject area of political sociology and develop crisis management methodology. The author's approach to resolving the political crisis, taking into account the identified factors, generates new knowledge about the mechanisms, resources, possibilities, and limits of political crisis resolution. The findings and results of this dissertation can be used in developing curricula, lectures, and specialized courses on conflict resolution and the study of regional politics in Central Asia, as well as in academic research, enriching the theoretical and methodological arsenal of political sociology. This work is of particular practical significance in light of Russia's recognition of

the government of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan and the need to build full-fledged bilateral relations.

Thesis submitted for defense:

1. The term "crisis" refers to an excessive degree of escalation of conflicts between the constancy of a system's elements and its model, whereby the model becomes a brake on the system's development, while simultaneously creating the possibility of a sharp transition to a new and improved state through the restoration of the model. For the analysis of the crisis in Afghanistan, a productive synthesis of social conflict theory (J. Galtung), the concept of hybrid political orders (V. Boege), and the ethnosociological approach (N.D. Sazhenov) is useful. This approach takes into account the multilayered nature of the conflict, the coexistence of formal and informal institutions, and the social basis of political processes. The author proceeds from the premise that a crisis of political power can signify and represent different meanings for different people and groups, whose views and interests may diverge significantly. Furthermore, some believe that a crisis cannot simply be a threat; it can actually offer an opportunity or choice. A crisis can be caused by an emergency, an event, or a condition that disrupts the normal order and functioning of society.

2. Based on the evolutionary and historical analysis of forms of government through the prism of the legitimacy and democracy of power and the analysis of documents (Appendix 1), the historical stages and features of political power in Afghanistan are substantiated: 1) The reign of Zahir Shah (1933-1973); 2) The PDPA regime with the support of the USSR (1979-1989); 3) The Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (2004-2021); 4) The rule of the Taliban since (2021 to the present); 5) Power under Sharia law; 6) Partially democratic rule (1973-1978), which made it possible to identify the fundamental factors of maintaining political instability: the absence of the rule of law, ethnic and religious loyalty, dependence on external patronage, and increased centralization of power. This approach allowed the sociological study to more specifically substantiate the narrative interview questions within the framework of the selected indicators and to develop a typology of experts and their qualifications.

3. Based on the distinction between normative and empirical legitimacy and sociological data (expert interviews, document analysis, Afghan media materials, and reports from international organizations), the differentiated nature of the gap between society and the government was revealed. Entrepreneurs and residents of rural areas, who have benefited from stabilization, demonstrate loyalty; the urban intelligentsia, women, have suffered the greatest loss of opportunities for self-realization and express critical attitudes.

4. The article focuses on the institution of the Loya Jirga as a national tradition of crisis resolution, possessing cultural and historical significance. A chronology of

the Jirga's conduct is presented (Appendix 4). Drawing on an analysis of the Taliban's position (the work of A.H. Haqqani?) and expert interviews, the author substantiates the conclusion that the Loya Jirga is a legitimizing institution that should be used during the transition of power. However, its effectiveness requires legitimization processes to restore the traditional mechanism for legitimizing power in Afghanistan, where traditions hold a special place in local communities.

5. Based on an analysis of the historical experience of resolving political crises in various countries, a scenario for the application of resolution models is developed. The positive and negative roles of international organizations in overcoming conflicts and political crises worldwide, as well as in providing humanitarian aid to countries and in post-war and post-crisis recovery, are presented. The application of various models in resolving political conflicts in Syria, Egypt and Tunisia (during the Arab Spring), Libya, Yemen, and Tajikistan is considered. The potential, limitations, and challenges of applying these models to resolve the political power crisis in Afghanistan with the participation of international and regional organizations are identified. It is demonstrated that international institutions are unable to play a decisive role if the opposing parties are not prepared to compromise. The "Coordination, Mediation, and Humanitarianism" model (using Tajikistan as an example) with the active participation of regional powers (Russia, China, and Iran) is recognized as the most suitable.

6. Based on an analysis of documents, publications, and current events (including the escalation of the Afghan-Pakistani conflict in February-March 2026), the likelihood of a crisis resolution scenario involving the creation of a new state is examined. According to the majority of respondents to the expert narrative interview, this could lead to a high probability of exacerbating political instability both within Afghanistan and throughout the region. The author substantiates the conclusion that, at present, there is no serious threat of secession of any part of Afghanistan due to demographic factors (the Baloch constitute only 1.5-3% of the population), the position of the central government, and the interest of neighboring states in maintaining territorial integrity. In the current conflict, the Baloch National Movement expresses solidarity with Afghanistan against Pakistan, which also reduces the likelihood of this scenario. At the same time, the need to create conditions for the cultural development of part of the ethnic groups currently oppressed (the Baloch) is demonstrated.

7. Crisis resolution is a process of coordinating interests and socio-political contradictions. The main problem is ideologization and conflicting values. The most effective political actors are identified and their status, position, and potential for influencing the process of overcoming the political crisis in Afghanistan are assessed. The high probability of continued instability of the country's political system under the sole rule of the Taliban is demonstrated, as the Taliban: a) adheres

to an ultra-conservative position of Sunni Islam, close to "Deobandism" with elements of "Pashtunwali" (the traditional Pashtun code of honor), b) imposes strict Sharia laws (e.g., restrictions for women, corporal punishment, ban on music), c) restricts women's rights to education, work, travel without a mahram, and participation in public life. Opposition political parties: a) criticize the Taliban for their brutal, intolerant, and archaic interpretation of Islam, and support a more moderate, pluralistic, inclusive, and democratic approach to religion; b) advocate for equal rights for women, access to education, and employment. However, they are not located in Afghanistan and have little ability to exert effective influence. Internal disagreements have been identified between the movement's factions (Kandahar and Kabul, the moderate wing, and the Haqqani Network (an organization banned in Russia)), creating potential room for compromise. Prospects for a settlement are linked to the internal evolution of the regime under the influence of economic needs, international pressure, and interaction with regional powers. A stable Afghan state can be based on self-governing ethno-religious communities (jamaats) and Sharia judicial institutions that enjoy the trust of the population.

8. The reliability of the research results. The reliability of the dissertation research results is ensured by two sociological studies developed and conducted by the author personally and secondary research data, the use of triangulation of methods (expert interviews, document analysis, secondary data analysis), the involvement of a wide range of sources (including the work of A.H. Haqqani, the Law on the Promotion of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice (Amr bil-Ma'ruf), materials from the Afghan media, and reports of international organizations), as well as taking into account the dynamics of the situation in 2021-2026 and new regional realities (Russia's recognition of the government of the Islamic Emirate, the escalation of the Afghan-Pakistani conflict). The author personally witnessed the Taliban's rule and the ongoing crisis in the country, the infringement of the rights of large sections of the population, including women, as well as the Taliban's hypocritical demonstrations to prove their democratic credentials and attempts by foreign countries to intervene to resolve the political crisis in the country, which can partly be interpreted as a form of participant observation.

**Practical Significance of the Study.** The results of this study provide a theoretical and methodological basis for flexible, effective crisis management. Research on this topic has potential not only for theoretical understanding but also for practical application. The program and tools of this sociological research can be further used to study crisis management, particularly in light of the specifics of traditional Afghan society; develop recommendations, provide scientific and methodological support, and consult politicians, Taliban representatives, and opponents on improving governance through peace processes; develop crisis management plans for creating an inclusive government; and provide them with analytical tools for effective decision-making. The results of this dissertation can be

used in university educational practices in various courses: sociology, political science, political sociology, history, conflict studies, and management. This work is particularly significant for the practical work of Russian diplomats and regional security specialists in light of Russia's recognition of the government of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan.

**Compliance of the dissertation topic with the provisions of the Passport of the scientific specialty of the Higher Attestation Commission.** The study was carried out within the framework of specialty 5.4.5. Political Sociology and corresponds to the following research areas: Item 7. Specifics of the sociological approach to the study of power. The structure of power relations; Item 8. The concept of legitimacy and methods of legitimization of political power; Item 40. The essence of a political crisis. External and internal conditions for the development of political crises.

**The research was tested** in the form of reports at seven conferences and seminars, including four international ones: "The role of Afghan women in peace and security" (London, 2025), "Scientific results of Sociology-2023" (Moscow, 2024), "Personality in management systems" (Moscow, 2024), "The Caspian region: the potential of scientific communication" (Moscow, 2020), "Central Asia in modern international relations: new approaches to the analysis of global trends" (Moscow, 2024), "Digital community: the sociological dimension of the present and the future" (Moscow, 2023), "Sociology in a changing world: theory, practice, education" (Moscow, 2024), "Eurasian integration in new conditions: features and prospects" (Bishkek, 2023). The author defended his master's thesis "The Role of the United States and the Russian Federation in the Process of Peace Negotiations between the Religious and Political Movement of the Taliban and the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan" at the Russian Presidential Academy of National Economy and Public Administration (RANEPA), specializing in "Public and Municipal Administration" and Foreign Regional Studies (Moscow, 2021).

The author has published six articles on the topic of her dissertation research, totaling 2.75 pp:

A) Articles in publications included in the List of Publications Recommended by the Higher Attestation Commission of Russia for the Publication of the Main Scientific Results of a Candidate of Sciences Dissertation.

1. Afghanyar M. "Traditions of Power Legitimacy vs. Democracy: Problems and Opportunities (within the Context of Modern Afghanistan)" // Gosudarstvennaja sluzhba-Public service. 2024. Vol. 26. No. 4. pp. 19-24. DOI: 10.22394/2070-8378-2024-26-4-19-24 (0.5 pp).

2. Stepnova L.A., Afghanyar M., Educational Migration Among Muslim Women in Afghanistan: Political and Sociological Aspects of the Problem // Mission of Confessions. 2025. No. 5. (0.9 pp, author's contribution 0.45 pp).

3. Afghanyar M., Polyakov A.K. The Role of Political Power in Integration Processes // Public Service, 2025, No. 1 (27). pp. 6–13. DOI: 10.22394/2070–8378-2024-26-1-6-13. (0.9 pp, author's contribution 0.45 pp).

4. Afghanyar M., Stepnova L.A. Socialization of Muslim women in Russian regions / M. Afghanyar // Theory and practice of social development. 2025. No. 7. (0.8 p.p., author's contribution 0.4 p.p.).

B) Articles in publications recommended by the Academic Council of RANEPА (for dissertations for the degree of Candidate of Sciences)

1. Afghanyar M. Traditions of power legitimacy vs. democracy: problems and opportunities (within the context of modern Afghanistan) // Gosudarstvennaja sluzhba-Public service. 2024. Vol. 26. No. 4. pp. 19-24. DOI: 10.22394/2070-8378-2024-26-4-19-24 (0.5 printer's sheet).

3. Afghanyar M., Polyakov A.K. The role of political power in integration processes // Gosudarstvennaya sluzhba, 2025, No. 1 (27). pp. 6-13. DOI:10.22394/2070–8378-2024-26-1-6-13. (0.9 p.s., author's contribution 0.45 p.s.).

C) Other works by the author.

1. Vasilenko L.A., Afghanyar M. Crisis of political power in the context of social changes: concept and essence. In the collection: Public administration and development of Russia: civilizational challenges and national interests. Collection of articles from the Conference session of the Institute of Public Administration and Social Sciences of the Russian Presidential Academy of National Economy and Public Administration. Moscow, 2024. pp. 177–181. (0.6 p.s., author's contribution 0.3 p.s.)

2. Afghanyar M. Settlement of the Afghan crisis. // Bulletin of the Tajik National University. Series: Social, economic and social sciences. 2023–№5. – pp. 336–340. (0.6 p.p.)

**The dissertation's structure** is determined by the overall goal and objectives of the study. It consists of an introduction, three chapters, seven main body paragraphs, a conclusion, appendices, and 183 references and literature, including seven dissertation studies, 82 monographs, and 102 international studies. This dissertation utilizes 36 scholarly sources published over the past five years, beginning in 2021.