STATE BUILDING, SECURITY, AND SOCIAL CHANGE IN AFGHANISTAN

Reflections on a Survey of the Afghan People

The Asia Foundation

STATE BUILDING, SECURITY, AND SOCIAL CHANGE IN AFGHANISTAN

Reflections on a Survey of the Afghan People

The Asia Foundation

About The Asia Foundation

The Asia Foundation is a non-profit, non-governmental organization committed to the development of a peaceful, prosperous, just and open Asia-Pacific region. The Foundation supports programs in Asia that help improve governance, law, and civil society; women's empowerment; economic reform and development; and international relations. Drawing on more than 50 years of experience in Asia, the Foundation collaborates with private and public partners to support leadership and institutional development, exchanges, and policy research.

With a network of 17 offices throughout Asia, an office in Washington D.C., and its headquarters in San Francisco, the Foundation addresses these issues on both a country and regional level. In 2007, the Foundation provided more than $68 million in program support and distributed 974,000 books and educational materials valued at $33 million throughout Asia.

The Asia Foundation is not an endowed organization, and depends solely on monetary contributions from donors to accomplish its work.

For more information, visit
www.asiafoundation.org

Editor

Ruth Rennie
The Asia Foundation
Kabul, Afghanistan

Project Design and Direction

George Varughese and Sunil Pillai
The Asia Foundation
Kabul, Afghanistan

Design and Printing

Nancy Kelly
The Asia Foundation
San Francisco, USA

AINA Afghanistan Media Organization
Kabul, Afghanistan

This survey was made possible by support provided by the U.S. Agency for International Development (Award No. 306-A-00-03-00504-00). The opinions expressed herein are those of the authors and do not reflect the views of the U.S. Agency for International Development or of The Asia Foundation.

Contents

Contributors

Najla Ayubi is a Technical Advisor with The Asia Foundation in Afghanistan. She is a former lawyer, judge, and Commissioner of the Independent Election Commission (IEC) and the Joint Electoral Management Body (JEMB) of Afghanistan. She has served as a Legal Advisor to the State Minister for Parliamentary Affairs of the Afghan government. Najla's research interests have focused on Soviet Civil Law Procedure (1989), women in the electoral process (2005), participation of Lebanese women in economic regeneration (2007) and women's political participation in the UK - lessons learned for Afghanistan (2007). Najla is one of the co-founders of Organization for Strategic Studies and Research in Afghanistan. She is also a member of the Executive Board of the Women's Political Participation Committee in Afghanistan.

Russell J. Dalton is Professor of Political Science and former director of the Center for the Study of Democracy at the University of California, Irvine. Dalton's research focuses on the role of the citizen in the democratic process. His recent publications include *The Good Citizen(2007), Democratic Challenges, Democratic Choices (2004), Citizen Politics (2006);* he is co-editor of the *Oxford Handbook of Political Behavior (2007),* and *Citizens, Democracy and Markets around the Pacific Rim (2006).*

Seth G. Jones is a Political Scientist at the RAND Corporation and an Adjunct Professor at Georgetown University's Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service. He is the author most recently of *In the Graveyard of Empires: America's War in Afghanistan* (W.W. Norton, forthcoming), as well as *The Rise of European Security Cooperation* (Cambridge University Press, 2007). He has published a range of journal articles in *International Security, The National Interest, Security Studies, Chicago Journal of International Law, Political Science Quarterly,* and *Survival.*

Harjot Kaur is a Consultant for The Asia Foundation in Afghanistan, where she recently prepared a *Step-by-step Guide for Policy Making* for the Ministry of Women's Affairs. She is a gender specialist with over 16 years experience in the Indian government, where she worked extensively on gender mainstreaming, gender budgeting, economic empowerment, rights of women workers, and human trafficking. She has been a member of the SAARC Technical Committee on Welfare of Women & Children. She is a passionate advocate against child labour and her notable work in this area includes developing a *Protocol on Rescue & Rehabilitation of Trafficked Child Labour in India.* Before joining government service she worked as an Assistant Professor of Economics at Punjab University.

William Maley is Professor and Director of the Asia-Pacific College of Diplomacy at the Australian National University. A regular visitor to Afghanistan, he is author of *Rescuing Afghanistan* (London: Hurst & Co., 2006), and *The Afghanistan Wars* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002, 2009); co-authored *Regime Change in Afghanistan: Foreign Intervention and the Politics of Legitimacy* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1991), and *Political Order in Post-Communist Afghanistan* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1992); edited *Fundamentalism Reborn? Afghanistan and the Taliban* (New York: New York University Press, 1998, 2001); and co-edited *The Soviet Withdrawal from Afghanistan* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989); *From Civil Strife to Civil Society: Civil and Military Responsibilities in Disrupted States* (Tokyo: United Nations University Press, 2003); and *Global Governance and Diplomacy: Worlds Apart?* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008).

Ruth Rennie is an Advisor on Governance with The Asia Foundation in Afghanistan. She is a specialist in participatory planning approaches and was instrumental in the design and implementation of the first nation-wide Provincial Development Planning process ever held in Afghanistan, carried out in 2007 to inform the Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS). She has also worked closely with the newly-formed Independent Directorate for Local Governance (IDLG) in Afghanistan since its inception. She was the principal author of The Asia Foundation 2008 survey report *Afghanistan in 2008: A Survey of the Afghan People*.

Sanjay Ruparelia is Assistant Professor of Political Science at the New School for Social Research in New York City. Much of his present research addresses transformations in contemporary Indian democracy: economic liberalization, militant Hindu nationalism, and the rise of lower-caste, communist, and regional parties in India's federal parliamentary democracy. In particular, it explains the origins, difficulties, and prospects of power-sharing, a question that informs his preliminary research on Afghanistan. He is currently finishing a monograph provisionally entitled, *Divided We Govern: Federal Coalition Politics in India*, and a co-edited interdisciplinary volume of essays, *A Great Transformation? Understanding India's New Political Economy*.

Pawan Kumar Sen is a Consultant-Researcher at Interdisciplinary Analysts in Kathmandu, Nepal. A statistician by training, he is the assistant principal investigator and co-author of the longitudinal opinion poll *Nepal Contemporary Political Situation* (2004-2008). He was technical assistant and co-author of *Afghanistan in 2008: A Survey of the Afghan People* and *Afghanistan in 2007: A Survey of the Afghan People*.

Sudhindra Sharma is the Executive Director of Interdisciplinary Analysts, a research and consulting organization based in Kathmandu, Nepal. A sociologist by training, his publications include *Procuring Water: Foreign Aid and Rural Water Supply in Nepal* (2001) and the co-edited book *Aid Under Stress: Water, Forests and Finnish Support in Nepal* (2004). He is the principal investigator of the longitudinal opinion poll *Nepal Contemporary Political Situation* (2004-2008). He was lead analysis consultant and co-author of *Afghanistan in 2008: A Survey of the Afghan People* and *Afghanistan in 2007: A Survey of the Afghan People*.

Acknowledgements

This companion volume to The Asia Foundation's 2008 survey of Afghan public opinion is the fifth publication of a research and capacity-building program started in 2006. Together, the 2006, 2007, 2008 survey reports and their two companion publications--State Building, Political Progress, and Human Security in Afghanistan and State Building, Security, and Social Change in Afghanistan--contribute significantly to building a coherent picture of the state of Afghan public opinion.

Like in the companion volume in 2006, the contributors to this volume provide detailed analysis and commentary on the findings of our survey of public opinion conducted earlier in the year. In doing so, they temper subjective views of the complex governance environment of Afghanistan with perspective and offer policy advice with a long-term view. We are grateful to each of these colleagues, who share our commitment to using empirical research in obtaining a sensitive understanding of the needs and interests of all stakeholders in the sustainable and durable development of Afghanistan.

This publication was produced by The Asia Foundation's office in Kabul, Afghanistan. The critical support of program officer Sunil Pillai in managing the day-to-day tasks of the publication project is gratefully acknowledged.

As editor, Ruth Rennie did a superb job of bringing coherence to each contribution and the volume, ensuring useful linkages between chapters, and coordinating comments among the authors. We are very grateful for her close and thorough attention to substance as well as production deadlines.

We are also grateful to Russ Dalton, who provided timely guidance and advice that helped to shape the volume, and to Lionel Laurens whose thoughtful re-reading greatly assisted the finalization of the text.

Manuscript review by Kim Hunter was useful in putting the final touches to the print-ready copy. As always, Nancy Kelly in The Asia Foundation's San Francisco office provided valuable design assistance. These colleagues are also gratefully acknowledged.

Financial support for this publication came from a cooperative agreement with the Afghanistan office of the U.S. Agency for International Development (Award No. 306A-00-03-00S04-00) that seeks to encourage policy-relevant data collection and analysis through a long-term program of research capacity building in Afghanistan. We are grateful to Jose Garzon and Zarif Waez for their encouragement of this publication and of the survey report that preceded it in October 2008.

George Varughese
The Asia Foundation
Kabul, Afghanistan

December 2008

Introduction

Ruth Rennie

In the summer of 2008, The Asia Foundation conducted its fourth annual nationwide survey of Afghan public opinion. The aim of the survey was to gather first-hand opinion of a large sample of Afghan citizens on a variety of contemporary governance and development-related issues, and to make this information available to policy makers and opinion shapers in government, the international community, and the broader Afghan public. The results of the 2008 survey are contained in the separate volume - *Afghanistan in 2008: A Survey of the Afghan People.*[1]

Since the publication of the initial survey in 2004, and the more comprehensive annual surveys conducted in 2006 and 2007, The Asia Foundation research has increasingly been recognized as a valid and reliable barometer of public opinion in Afghanistan. The publication of the annual survey elicits high levels of media attention, both inside Afghanistan and internationally, and provides the basis for well-informed policy debate on the issues of greatest concern to Afghans themselves. Yet, as with all public opinion research, the report on the survey findings often raises as many questions as it answers. Interpretation of survey data is a complex activity that requires both a thorough understanding of the historical, cultural, and contextual factors that shape public opinion in the Afghan context, and a critical assessment of the social and political factors that may motivate respondents to answer in certain ways.

To fill this important gap and render the data collected by the survey more relevant and useful for decision makers and development practitioners, The Asia Foundation has collaborated with a number of specialists who have in-depth knowledge of Afghanistan to produce the current volume as a companion piece to the main 2008 survey report. Each contributor offers considered interpretation of the survey findings in their relevant area of expertise by providing contextual analysis and drawing out issues of concern for public debate. This is the second such volume that The Asia Foundation has produced. In 2007, the Foundation published *State Building, Political Progress, and Human Security in Afghanistan: Reflections on a Survey of the Afghan People* as a companion volume to the 2006 survey findings.[2]

The essays in the 2008 volume provide valuable insights into the survey findings by situating them in a wider context in both time and space. While it is important to understand current perceptions and attitudes, trends over time often tell a more nuanced story: although it is a positive sign that the largest group of Afghans think that the

1 Afghanistan in 2008: A Survey of the Afghan People (Kabul and San Francisco: The Asia Foundation, 2007), also available online at: http://www.asiafoundation.org/publications/pdf/418

2 State Building, Political Progress, and Human Security in Afghanistan: Reflections on a Survey of the Afghan People (Kabul and San Francisco: The Asia Foundation, 2007)

country is moving in the right direction (38%), the fact that the proportion who say this has been falling consistently since 2006 (44%) raises legitimate cause for concern. Similar trends in satisfaction with the performance of government also offer a warning sign for the prospects of progress. Many of the essays also consider the current situation in Afghanistan in comparison with that of other countries that share similar geographic or cultural characteristics, or have similar experience in creating new democratic government and institutions in post-conflict (or some might argue continuing-conflict) environments. Thus, although support for democracy as the best form of government has fallen in recent years (from 84% in 2006 and 85% in 2007 to 78% in 2008) the fact that it still remains higher in Afghanistan, than in many of its regional neighbours, including established democracies like India or Turkey, is an important indication of the relative degree to which this might be cause for concern. Yet negative international comparisons should not be seen as reasons to write off the prospects of progress for the future; it is important to understand that Afghanistan's governance indicators are amongst the lowest in the world, not to reinforce criticism of the current situation, but to fully appreciate the scale of the challenge facing the country, and to demonstrate that improvement is possible, and indeed has been achieved in many other states where difficult conditions exist.

Many essays in this volume also address the fundamental issues raised by all public opinion research, by presenting critical reflection on the veracity of the survey responses and the extent to which stated opinions and attitudes are consistent with the actual behavior of economic, social and political actors in Afghan society. These reflections touch on issues as diverse as the high level of support for equal opportunities for women, that must be set against widespread evidence of exclusion and subjugation of women in all areas of economic social and political life, and the high levels of faith and confidence recorded in the Afghan security services, particularly the Afghan National Police (ANP), which appears contradictory with the relatively high levels of fear in encountering ANP officers, and the wealth of recent research that has identified major failings within this institution.

All the essays in the volume conclude their discussions with policy relevant recommendations. While these represent the views of individual contributors, and should not be taken as a reflection of the views or policies of The Asia Foundation, we are confident that they provide a valuable analytical contribution to the policy debate on the key issues that will be decisive for the future of Afghanistan.

This companion volume, *State Building, Security, and Social Change,* focuses on the key challenges facing Afghanistan that emerge from the 2008 survey findings. State building, which many observers perceive to be the core challenge facing the country since the fall of the Taliban in 2001, is a complex, multifaceted phenomenon. It involves at once the establishment and maintenance of security within its sovereign territory, and

the creation of stable institutions able to respond effectively to the needs of individuals and communities and ensure the equitable regulation of the interactions of all economic, social and political actors. Yet true state building goes beyond the operation of structures and institutions, requiring and provoking deep-rooted social change that supports the acceptance and internalization of a set of fundamental attitudes and values that underpin democratic governance, and translates these into social and political behavior.

In the opening chapter of this volume William Maley addresses the question of legitimacy that lies at the heart of any state-building project. He provides important insights into the theoretical and historical bases on which the current state-building initiatives in Afghanistan are founded. He observes that the transition to democratic government that began with the Bonn Agreement on 2001 sought to simultaneously weave together governance approaches based on the legal-rational legitimacy of modern state institutions, the traditional legitimacy of long-standing tribal and cultural practices, and the charismatic legitimacy associated with mass political processes. The tensions between these forces clearly shape the prospects for state building in Afghanistan, and define many of its governance challenges.

One critical aspect of the institutional challenge is picked up by Seth Jones in his chapter, which focuses on the security situation. Jones, like Maley, emphasizes that the monopoly of the use of physical force, and its use to ensure the security of its citizens and the maintenance of law and order, is a core function of the state. The identification of insecurity, and the related phenomena of crime and violence, as the biggest problem facing Afghanistan, and the prevalence of high levels of insecurity in a geographical arc that covers much of the West, South and East of the country highlights this challenge. While Afghans express high levels of confidence in state security forces such as the Afghan National Army (ANA) and Afghan National Police (ANP) it is clear that these institutions are not yet able to perform their function adequately, and substantial proportions of the Afghan population either have no contact with them or regard them with fear. In addition, as many of the authors in this volume report, security must at least accompany, if not precede, reconstruction and development processes and initiatives to foster democratic governance, if their gains are not to be swept away when control of territory is lost, or, as Russell Dalton describes in his chapter, when citizens are too afraid to access services and participate in economic, social, and political life. Thus, continued insecurity creates significant risks, both of alienating the public from government, and of opening up opportunities for anti-government elements to fill the vacuum.

Sharma and Sen examine another facet of the challenge in developing strong and effective state institutions in their discussion of the justice sector. They find that Afghans continue to have higher levels of confidence in informal traditional justice and dispute-resolution mechanisms than in modern state courts and the formal legal system. They argue that the high levels of corruption and the poor quality of judicial processes in

terms of fairness, timeliness, and cultural appropriateness, reported by survey respondents, play a key role in undermining public confidence in these institutions. However, Sharma and Sen also point out that the depth of social and cultural attitudes and values that underpin people's faith in traditional justice mechanisms means that these systems will need to coexist with formal state institutions within a spectrum of options for the delivery of justice in Afghan society.

A further example where the intersection of institutions and social attitudes is decisive, is in the consolidation of a functioning system of democratic governance. Indeed, Dalton, in his chapter, shows a shift in attitudes since 2004, which indicates that significant progress has been made towards democratization in Afghanistan. More Afghans now understand democracy in terms of fundamental political rights, feel politically efficacious, and believe that democracy is compatible with Islam. Yet these positive gains in social attitudes are mitigated by the erosion of public confidence in democracy, and falling satisfaction with the way it is working in Afghanistan, largely caused by the failure of government institutions to provide effective responses to people's needs for security and economic and social development.

On the other hand, in examining the status or women in Afghanistan, Kaur and Auybi describe a situation where the development of institutional arrangements to promote the increased participation of women in social and political decision-making, has moved far ahead of social attitudes that still restrict the choices and involvement of women in many spheres of life. This dislocation between institutional and social evolution has led to the paradox in which Afghanistan has one of the highest levels of female representation in the national parliament in the region, while Afghan women continue to be amongst the worst off in the world in terms of development outcomes, access to services, and recognition of their rights. Much progress is still needed to move beyond headcounts and achieve meaningful participation of women in Afghanistan's economic, social and political processes. Kaur and Ayubi identify the attempts to support the empowerment of women at the village level through Community Development Councils (CDCs) as a positive basis both to strengthen institutional opportunities for women's participation and to foster the longer-term change in social attitudes that currently constitutes a major barrier in this area.

In the final essay, Ruparelia and Rennie argue that both effective governance and sustainable development rely on the achievement of this fundamental synchronicity between institutions and social change. They show that the capacity of the state to ensure responsiveness in the delivery of the development needs of individuals and communities increases trust in public institutions and reduces the gap between government and citizens. Yet true sustainable development can only be achieved if people are enabled to play an active role in their own development processes. Like Kaur and Ayubi, they argue that participatory processes that serve both development and governance objectives offer the best way forward, and enable Afghanistan to build on areas in which recognized progress has already been made.

A high level of coherence emerges from the diverse essays regarding the way forward for Afghanistan. Improving security to expand the presence and effectiveness of government institutions and build confidence in the state is a critical priority. Yet this must be accompanied by the continued reinforcement of the delivery capacity of Afghan institutions across all sectors - security, justice, democratic representation, and economic and social development. Alongside this, continued investment must be made in fostering positive change in social attitudes to underpin effective state building. The essays in this volume identify two key engines for change in this respect: increased involvement in governance and development through the use of participatory processes, and education. Higher levels of education are associated not only with improved political, social, and economic participation, greater awareness of rights, and higher levels of interaction with government institutions. They are also correlated with higher levels of support for the fundamental values that underpin democratic governance, including support for equality regardless of gender or ethnicity, and women's rights. Greater participation improves the responsiveness of government in meeting the needs of individual and communities, and allows citizens to move from passive recipients to active agents of their own development. Building sustainable partnerships between government and communities therefore lies at the heart of the challenge of state building in Afghanistan.

Chapter 1

Building Legitimacy in Post-Taliban Afghanistan

William Maley

The reconstitution of a legitimate set of political arrangements has been one of the key objectives of the post-2001 political transition in Afghanistan. Legitimacy itself is a complex idea, and historically Afghanistan has experienced lengthy periods of rule based on non-legitimate forms of domination. The data from the 2008 survey present a mixed picture, with scepticism about politicians, parties, and the justice system, together with widespread perceptions of corruption, being counterbalanced to some degree by positive views of democracy, the national government, ministers, and key security sector institutions. Nonetheless, while some findings may seem encouraging, it is important to note that some respondents may have been less than candid, that the approaching elections may prompt some divisive legitimation strategies, and that the future of the state depends on capacity as well as legitimacy.

Introduction

One of the principal objectives of political transition in Afghanistan since the overthrow of the Taliban regime in 2001 has been the development of a legitimate government. In some notable respects Afghanistan has done much better than many might have hoped. The drafting of a new constitution and the holding of presidential and parliamentary elections were remarkable achievements for a country which had plumbed the depths of isolation during the period of Taliban rule.

Yet, Afghanistan seems more beset by problems now than at any time since the overthrow of the Taliban. Insecurity dogs the lives of many ordinary people. If all were well, it would take no more than ninety minutes to drive from Kabul to Ghazni along the Kabul-Kandahar highway that was re-sealed by the United States as a showcase project. Instead, it takes over three days; the road is now so dangerous that aid workers must travel to Bamiyan in the Hazarajat and make their way to Ghazni from there. It is clear that neither on its own, nor in partnership with its international supporters, is the Afghan government presently capable of guaranteeing the safety and security of ordinary Afghans. It certainly does not enjoy a monopoly on the means of legitimate coercion, of a kind that the great German social theorist Max Weber saw as central to the distinctive identity claims of the state (see also Jones' chapter in this volume).

Where, therefore, does Afghanistan stand as far as the reconstitution of legitimate government is concerned? Has it moved forward or is it sliding backwards? And what are the prospects for the foreseeable future? Answering these questions involves not just a reflection on the bases for the legitimation of power in the Afghan context, but also an appraisal of the attitudes of ordinary Afghans, both at present and over time. The data

gathered by The Asia Foundation constitute one of the most important 'windows' onto Afghan opinion that researchers can presently use. However, whenever respondents answer a survey researcher's questions, it is important to ask what they mean by their answers, and what factors might dispose them to answer in a particular way. These matters are taken up in the pages that follow.

The Concept of Legitimacy

The concept of legitimacy is of central importance in the analysis of the modern state.[1] Legitimacy in the sense in which I use the term means *generalised, normative support* – 'generalised' in the sense that it goes beyond mere support for particular stances on particular issues, and 'normative' in that it is not based simply on calculations of interest. It implies a relationship between rulers and ruled that is substantially grounded in the idea of consent rather than coercion. This insight was articulated by thinkers as diverse as Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Edmund Burke. In 1762 in *The Social Contract*, Rousseau wrote that the "strongest is never strong enough to be always master, unless he transforms strength into right, and obedience into duty".[2] Similarly, Burke in his 1775 *Speech on Moving Resolutions for Conciliation with the Colonies* argued that "the use of force alone is but *temporary*. It may subdue for a moment; but it does not remove the necessity of subduing again: and a nation is not governed, which is perpetually to be conquered".[3]

Afghanistan's historical experiences in the sphere of political legitimation have been decidedly mixed. In the 19th century, Amir Abdul Rahman Khan relied substantially on non-legitimate forms of domination of a particularly ferocious kind. Although he also sought to establish his moral standing by distributing proclamations which recounted the content of dreams that were clearly depicted as near-revelations – a somewhat daring approach, but one he clearly thought likely to be effective in a society marked by high levels of superstition.[4] The effort of King Amanullah in the 1920s to shift to a constitutional order unravelled dramatically in 1929, when the king was overthrown in an uprising fuelled by hostility to his policies on the part of social elites, and claims that what he was attempting was un-Islamic.[5] This led to a period of almost three decades in which such approaches lay fallow, with the agencies of the state largely avoiding direct confrontation with important societal groups. In the mid-to-late 1950s, Prime Minister Mohammad Daoud sought to boost his standing by presenting himself as a

---

1 For general background, see Rodney Barker, Political Legitimacy and the State (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990); David Beetham, The Legitimation of Power (London: Macmillan, 1991); M. Stephen Weatherford, 'Measuring Political Legitimacy', American Political Science Review, vol.86, no.1, 1992, pp.149-166. Legitimacy is also an important phenomenon in international relations: see Ian Clark, Legitimacy in International Society (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005). Afghanistan's widely-accepted juridical sovereignty clearly establishes its identity as a legitimate actor in this sphere.

2 Jean-Jacques Rousseau, The Social Contract and Discourses (London: J.M. Dent, 1973) p.168.

3 Select Works of Edmund Burke (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 1999) Vol.I, p.236.

4 See David B. Edwards, Heroes of the Age: Moral Fault Lines on the Afghan Frontier (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1996).

5 Leon B. Poullada, Reform and Rebellion in Afghanistan: King Amanullah's Failure to Modernize a Tribal Society (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1973).

forceful moderniser, something he reinforced by the evocation of nationalist sentiment in the context of the Pashtunistan dispute. This dispute saw Afghanistan and the new state of Pakistan at odds over the position of the Pashtun ethnic group, which had been formally separated by the drawing of a boundary between Afghanistan and British India in 1893, setting the scene for the irredentist claims that emerged from Kabul.[6] However, in pursuing these objectives, Daoud made many enemies, and this contributed to his replacement at the hands of his cousin King Zahir in 1963. The 1964 Constitution returned constitutionalist ideas to centre-stage, but the 1973 coup by Daoud highlighted the fragility of this era of so-called 'New Democracy'. Even so, by sanctioning the coup as a mechanism of regime change it ironically set the scene for Daoud's own overthrow in the communist coup of April 1978.

These early episodes in their own ways highlighted the fact that political legitimacy can have quite diverse bases. This concept was elaborated by Max Weber whose analysis of 'legitimate rule' (*legitime Herrschaft*) pointed to tradition, charisma, and legal-rational procedure as potential sources of legitimate authority. These different bases of legitimacy all deserve some elaboration. The idea of traditional legitimacy has significant value in explaining the existence of political authority in social units in which institutions are informal, or in which social learning substantially accounts for the loyalty which power holders may receive. It is tempting to follow Weber in seeing existence since time immemorial as a key constituent of traditional legitimacy. However, more recent work on tradition has emphasised its malleability, and in some cases even its 'invented' quality, with rituals being deliberately constructed to bolster the authority of those in a position of dominance. Monarchies, such as Afghanistan had from 1747 to 1973, are often seen as quintessential repositories of 'traditional' legitimacy, but the fall of many monarchies during the 20th century also points to the importance of other, non-traditional, bases.

Charisma is a somewhat different source of authority, and focuses on the personality of an authority figure and the relationship of that figure with networks of followers. The classic example is a figure such as Hitler, capable of swaying crowds with poisonous oratory, but there are many more benign examples; charisma can have a saintly as well as satanic dimension. Charismatic preachers have abounded in the remote reaches of Afghanistan and the Northwest Frontier; the Roshani movement founded by Bayazid Ansari in the 16th century provides a notable example. It is also worth noting that a regime can attempt to create an artificial charisma around a figure whose personal relationship with the mass population of a state may be remote. Here, two striking examples from the 20th century were Joseph Stalin and Mao Zedong. Stalin was an ethnic Georgian whose spoken Russian was imperfect, and he rarely addressed the public directly; nonetheless, a monstrous cult of personality was constructed around him that

6 See Rajat Ganguly, Kin State Intervention in Ethnic Conflicts: Lessons from South Asia (New Delhi: SAGE Publications, 1998) pp.162-192.

compensated for the weaknesses of institutions in the Soviet system. Mao, similarly, spoke Chinese with a strong Hunanese accent, and relied on media of communication to synthesise the charisma on which his dominant position was based, especially during the so-called 'Cultural Revolution'. The same approach was attempted by Afghan communists around the person of Nur Mohammad Taraki, but with markedly less success.

Legal-rational legitimacy is process-based. Here, the source of authority is the process by which individuals are elevated to perform particular roles. Weber saw this as the most highly-rational form of legitimacy, and associated it with modern bureaucratic systems of domination. There is no doubt that where political systems are highly institutionalised, this form of legitimacy provides a considerable degree of robustness. In the United States, for example, a number of presidents have ruled effectively after being selected by the US Electoral College even though they failed to win a majority of the popular vote; this happened most recently with the election of George W. Bush in 2000, and his authority was in no way compromised by what some might have seen as a significant deficit in substantive authority. Rather, it was the legality of the process that brought him to office that provided him with authority. The state-building enterprise in Afghanistan since 2001 has in no small measure been an attempt to put legal-rational legitimacy in a dominant position, and some might say that Afghanistan's problems are partly due to the infertility of the soil in which this delicate flower has been planted.[7]

Beyond these bases of legitimacy identified by Weber, a number of others have been put forward by subsequent analysts. One is what has been called *social-eudaemonic* legitimacy. This grounds legitimacy in the actual performance of power holders, in their ability to meet key demands of a population.[8] What these demands might actually be will vary from case to case, but their distinctive feature is their substantive rather than procedural character. Several other chapters in this volume highlight the importance of this kind of legitimacy in the current Afghan context. Jones points out that when the state is incapable of controlling its own territory and ensuring security this weakness creates opportunities for other groups to fill the vacuum. Dalton emphasises the importance of government performance in sustaining public confidence in democracy. Finally Ruparelia and Rennie highlight the importance of government performance in delivering the priority development needs identified by Afghans as one of the core issues for establishing effective governance in Afghanistan.

Another form of legitimacy is what has been called *goal-rational legitimacy*, where the authority of rulers derives from the desirability of the goals that they are pursuing. T.H. Rigby elaborated this concept in order to account for the legitimation strategies of

---

7 See Astri Suhrke, When More is Less: Aiding Statebuilding in Afghanistan (Madrid: Fundación para las Relaciones Internacionales y el Diálogo Exterior, 2006).

8 See Graeme Gill, 'Changing Patterns of Systemic Legitimation in the USSR', Coexistence, vol.23, no.3, 1986, pp.247-266.

mono-organisational Marxist-Leninist systems,[9] but it is potentially relevant also to political systems grounded in religious values, such as an 'Islamic state'. Finally, the activation of *communitarian nationalism* can be a powerful mechanism of legitimation, as Slobodan Milosevic demonstrated in the Balkans in the 1990s.

Several further points are worth emphasising. First, Weber argued that "organized domination requires control of the personal executive staff and the material implements of administration".[10] Some have argued on this basis that legitimacy is much more a matter of elite relations than of relations between rulers and subjects. However, while this may be largely true in environments where the public for whatever reason is largely disengaged from political life, it is more plausible that, in a democratic system, relations of both sorts can impact upon political authority. Second, legitimacy may exist to different degrees at different levels of a political system. The legitimacy of a particular government may come under question without the state in its entirety being at risk. Third, it is rarely the case that legitimacy is wholly grounded in just one of the bases that scholars have identified. It is entirely to be expected that in many cases, multiple strategies of legitimation might be pursued by rulers, and multiple grounds of legitimacy activated. In many cases these will effectively reinforce each other, although in some cases there may be tensions between them; a charismatic leader, for example, might appear to threaten the legal-rational foundations of the exercise of power. Fourth, interpretation of evidence relating to legitimacy may be a difficult task. When legitimacy has completely collapsed, leading to the obliteration of a regime, it will be obvious with the benefit of hindsight that legitimacy problems had built up to a crisis. The 1979 Iranian Revolution and the overthow of the Marcos regime in the Philippines in 1986 provide clear examples, as did the collapse of the Afghan communist regime in 1992. However, in many cases, the manifestations of a decline in legitimacy may be less dramatic: a regime may survive, but with constrained capacity to achieve objectives that require high levels of voluntary popular cooperation. Fifth, and importantly, a regime may survive without much legitimacy, for as every autocrat knows, there are forms of non-legitimate domination that may be quite effective for lengthy periods of time. These include direct coercion of a population (through instruments of totalitarian control), or more subtly, the securing of its compliance on the basis of prudential relations of exchange where the loyalty of key social groups is purchased by the transfer of resources to them by the state. It was largely on such bases that the Afghan communist regime survived between February 1989 and April 1992.[11]

---

9 T.H. Rigby, 'Introduction: Political Legitimacy, Weber, and Communist Mono-organisational Systems', in T.H. Rigby and Ferenc Fehér (eds), Political Legitimation in Communist States (London: Macmillan, 1982) pp.1-26.

10 Max Weber, 'Politics as a Vocation', in H.H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills (eds), From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1948) pp.77-128 at p.8

11 See William Maley, The Afghanistan Wars (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002) pp.168-193.

Crises of Legitimacy After 1978

The fourteen years between the April 1978 coup and the collapse of communist rule in April 1992 saw a number of different legitimation strategies employed in Afghanistan.[12] In the aftermath of the April coup, the new regime sought to legitimate itself by building a cult of personality around the new leader, Nur Mohammad Taraki, who was referred to as the "great and beloved leader", and the "able teacher" of the people of Afghanistan. The absurdity of this approach was revealed when Taraki was liquidated in an intra-party dispute by his fellow Marxist Hafizullah Amin in September 1979; Taraki had little of the killer instinct that marked Stalin and Mao, although Amin had it in spades. The following month, Amin set out ambitious goals for his regime, namely a "fully socialist society with collectivised agriculture and the elimination of the private retail sector".[13] But tellingly, he made extensive use of coercion, as a result of which few mourned him personally when he was killed by Soviet forces in December 1979.

While for the most part the Afghan regime put in place by the Soviet invasion relied on non-legitimate forms of domination – coercive capacity supplied by Soviet forces between December 1979 and February 1989, and thereafter the purchase of loyalty with Soviet-supplied resources until they were cut off at the end of 1991 – it also adopted various measures to try to win normative support. These included a series of political measures to make it appear more 'inclusive', such as the establishment of a "National Fatherland Front"; a 'religious affairs' policy to dispel its earlier damaging reputation for atheism;[14] and an attempt to harness national sentiment through the revival of the idea of Pashtunistan. None of these proved of much use. The regime had to carry the burden of an abominable human rights record.[15] The Afghan resistance forces (*Mujahideen*) had succeeded in coopting Islam as the basis of their own legitimation efforts, and with much greater effect given the carnage that regime coercion had brought. Furthermore, the dependence of the regime on Soviet arms and materiel militated against its being able to present itself plausibly as the defender of Afghan, as opposed to foreign, interests. It was no surprise that within four months of the cessation of assistance from the Soviet Union at the end of 1991, the regime simply collapsed. Its lack of generalised normative support had been exposed in a brutal fashion.

Thereafter, Afghanistan witnessed a lengthy period – running essentially from April 1992 to December 2001 – in which the issue of legitimacy barely figured because of the overhanging problem of state breakdown. In 1992, the Afghan Army splintered along ethnic and regional lines, and while a 'government' was established through nego-

12 For further detail, see William Maley, 'Political Legitimation in Contemporary Afghanistan', Asian Survey, vol.27, no.6, 1987, pp.705-725; and Amin Saikal and William Maley, Regime Change in Afghanistan: Foreign Intervention and the Politics of Legitimacy (Boulder: Westview Press, 1991).

13 Quoted in Anthony Arnold, Afghanistan's Two-Party Communism: Parcham and Khalq (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1983) p.62.

14 Chantal Lobato, 'Islam in Kabul: The Religious Politics of Babrak Karmal', Central Asian Survey, vol.4, no.4, 1985, pp.111-120.

15 William Maley, 'Human Rights in Afghanistan', in Shahram Akbarzadeh and Benjamin MacQueen (eds), Islam and Human Rights in Practice: Perspectives Across the Ummah (New York: Routledge, 2008) pp.89-107.

tiation between *Mujahideen* leaders based in Pakistan, it inherited only the symbols of a state (principally the capital city, Kabul), rather than functioning bureaucratic structures and a revenue-raising capacity by which to fund them. The result was a fierce struggle over Kabul, with the radical *Hezb-e Islami* of Gulbuddin Hekmatyar bombarding its suburbs in order to deny more moderate forces the opportunity to exercise peaceful rule and begin to build up a semblance of legitimacy. Beyond Kabul, a range of new actors emerged, some of them enjoying a degree of local legitimacy, but most of them disconnected from any kind of state-building project.

The emergence in 1994 of the Taliban movement, and their takeover of Kandahar in 1994, Herat in 1995, and Kabul in 1996 was seen positively by some observers,[16] but the evidence that they enjoyed generalised normative support was very thin. Contrary to what is often believed, the Taliban had to fight their way into most of the districts which they won, and they benefited from extensive Pakistani support in their military operations.[17] But most significantly, when a superior force appeared in October 2001, the regime quickly collapsed, with a clutch of towns in Northern Afghanistan falling in a cascade in early November, culminating in the re-occupation of Kabul by anti-Taliban forces in the middle of the month. This again provided a stark illustration of the benefits of legitimacy if it can be secured.

The next phase of transition in Afghanistan was inaugurated by the Bonn Agreement of December 2001.[18] One writer has claimed that actors at Bonn "sacrificed the legitimacy of their new construct to what they wrongly conceived as the higher value of sovereignty".[19] This view is wide of the mark. Rather, what Bonn witnessed was an attempt to weave together *multiple sources* of legitimacy – through the return of the former king and the use of the *Loya Jirga* (Great Assembly) process (to harness traditional legitimacy); through the promotion of an attractive and popular new leader (to harness charismatic legitimacy); and through the eventual drafting of a new constitution and the holding of free elections (to harness legal-rational legitimacy). It was hard to see what more could have been done. Yet if there is a lesson from this experience, it is that winning generalised normative support is no easy matter – and here the data collected by The Asia Foundation provide a powerful basis for some concern.

---

16 See Nancy DeWolf Smith, 'These Rebels Aren't So Scary', The Wall Street Journal, 22 February 1995; Ben R. Goldsmith, 'A Victory to Fear or a Source of Hope?', The World Today, vol.53, no.7, 1997, pp.182-184.

17 See Anthony Davis, 'How the Taliban Became a Military Force', in William Maley (ed.), Fundamentalism Reborn?: Afghanistan and the Taliban (New York: New York University Press, 1998) pp.43-71.

18 See William Maley, Rescuing Afghanistan (London: Hurst & Co., 2006); William Maley, 'Looking Back at the Bonn Process', in Geoffrey Hayes and Mark Sedra (eds), Afghanistan: Transition Under Threat (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2008) pp.3-24; William Maley, 'Democracy and Legitimation: Challenges in the Reconstitution of Political Processes in Afghanistan', in Brett Bowden, Hilary Charlesworth and Jeremy Farrall (eds), The Role of International Law in Rebuilding Societies after Conflict: Great Expectations (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

19 S. Frederick Starr, 'Sovereignty and Legitimacy in Afghan Nation-Building', in Francis Fukuyama (ed.), Nation-Building:

Implications of the 2008 Survey Findings for Legitimacy

One of the most striking statistics of the 2008 survey relates to people's sense of the direction in which things are going in Afghanistan (Q9[20]). Here, we see that only a minority (38%) believe that the country is going in the right direction, with 32 percent believing that it is going in the wrong direction. However, the fact that those with a positive view outnumber those with a negative view is not *per se* a measure of generalised normative support for either the state or the government; rather, it runs together a range of different sentiments, of which attitudes to state and government are potentially only one. Nonetheless, there is always a danger for governments when a mood of pessimism takes root, and there is little obvious joy in these figures for President Karzai. A much more direct measure of satisfaction can be found in people's attitudes as to how the national government is carrying out its responsibilities (Q62). Here the results are more positive with 51 percent responding that the national government is doing a "somewhat good job" and 16 percent a "very good job". While these figures hardly point to great enthusiasm, they suggest that the blame for Afghanistan's problems is not being apportioned to the government alone.

One reason why this might be the case emerges from the reasons given for their views by respondents who think things are moving in the wrong direction (Q11a). Fully 33 percent first mention insecurity, well ahead of the next largest factor, corruption (10%). When first and second concerns are added together (Q11a and b) the significance of insecurity becomes even starker, with 50 percent of respondents mentioning it. However, two other findings also rate a mention when one is discussing security. When asked to rate the security situation in their village or neighborhood, 41 percent of respondents rate this as "quite good" and 21 percent as "very good" (Q16e) — although as might have been expected, fairly stark regional variations also show up, with the lowest figures for "quite good" and "very good" being in the South East, (29% and 6%), South West (36% and 8%), and West (23% and 3%). These provide a stark contrast with the much higher figures recorded in the North East, North West, Central Hazarajat and Central/Kabul regions as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Views on Local Security, by Region

	Central/ Kabul	South East	East	North East	North West	West	South West	Central/ Hazarajat
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Very Good	25	6	20	31	40	8	3	38
Quite Good	49	29	47	49	42	36	23	42

Source: 2008 Asia Foundation survey

[20] For full 2008 survey questions and responses see Appendix 1: Asia Foundation 2008 Survey - Interview Questionnaire.

While these figures reflect the "arc of insecurity" across Afghanistan described by Jones in his chapter, if capital cities matter more than remote districts in reinforcing a regime's legitimacy, then these figures offer some hope. It is true of course that Kabul benefits from a concentrated International Security Assisstance Force (ISAF) presence. But beyond this, a notable optimism appears. When respondents were asked about their expectations for the security situation in their area a year from now (Q17e). Fully 45 percent of respondents expect local security to be "much better" and another 30 percent "somewhat better". Only in the South West does the proportion expecting the situation to be worse (51%) outstrip the proportion expecting the situation to be better (44%).

The striking feature of insecurity as a problem is that the blame for it can be apportioned in different ways. Some might blame the government for not *preventing* it; others might blame the perpetrators who directly produce it. Here, it is instructive to note respondents' attitudes to key security sector institutions, namely the Afghan National Army (ANA) and the Afghan National Police (ANP). The results prove strikingly positive. Asked how much confidence they have in the Afghan National Army (Q52a), 46 percent respond "a great deal", and a further 43 percent "a fair amount". Furthermore, 48 percent strongly agree that the ANA "is honest and fair with the Afghan people", and 41 percent agree "somewhat"; while 51 percent strongly agree that the ANA "helps improve security", and a further 35 percent agree "somewhat" (Q53) (See Table 2). When asked a similar question about how much confidence they have in the Afghan National Police 40 percent say "a great deal", and a further 42 percent "a fair amount" (Q52b). In addition, 40 percent strongly agree that the ANP "is honest and fair with the Afghan people", and a further 40 percent agree "somewhat", and the same proportions agree that the ANP "helps improve security" (Q54).

Table 2: Views on the ANA and ANP

	ANA %	**ANP** %
Confidence		
Great deal of confidence	46	40
Fair amount of confidence	43	42
Honest and fair with the Afghan people		
Strongly Agree	48	40
Agree somewhat	41	40
Help improve security		
Strongly Agree	51	40
Agree somewhat	35	40

Source: 2008 Asia Foundation survey

These figures are remarkable, for few agencies have been as scathingly criticised by specialist observers as the ANP.[21] Furthermore, as we shall see shortly, these perceptions are not new, but have been relatively stable over time. One possibility is that this is a matter on which respondents are unwilling to express their views candidly. But it might equally be that they blame a few bad eggs for the episodes on which critics have focussed attention, or even that they sense the difficulty of policing in an environment as hostile as is to be found in parts of Afghanistan. In addition, the ANA and ANP may benefit from a certain degree of national pride as *Afghan* institutions[22] (see also chapter by Jones in this volume).

Another area of significant concern to Afghans, revealed in the 2008 survey, is that of corruption. Of those who think that things are moving in the wrong direction, 19 percent mention corruption and 12 percent bad government amongst their concerns (Q11). Moreover a mere eight percent think that the national government is doing a "very good job" in fighting corruption, and 23 percent a "somewhat good job" (Q63f). By contrast, 30 percent think the government is doing a "somewhat bad job" and fully 36 percent a "very bad job". However, the data also reveal a curious feature of perceptions of corruption. Respondents were asked whether they think that corruption is a major problem, minor problem, or no problem at all at different levels (Q26). Some 48 percent see it as a major problem in their neighborhood, but the figure rises steadily as more remote spheres of government are mentioned – 53 percent at the level of local authorities, 63 percent at the level of provincial government, and 76 percent at the level of Afghanistan as a whole, as shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Views on Corruption as a Problem

Sphere	Major problem	Minor problem	Not a problem
	%	%	%
Daily life	51	29	18
Neighborhood	48	35	14
Local authorities	53	33	10
Provincial government	63	26	7
In Afghanistan as a whole	76	16	4

Source: 2008 Asia Foundation survey

However, responses to another question related to the incidence of corruption in specific institutions suggest that roughly half of respondents have had no contacts with agencies of the state across a range of issues (Q28). One possible explanation is that perceptions of corruption are shaped by a 'reputational cascade' or 'echo chamber' process, where perceptions become received wisdom without being grounded in per-

[21] See, for example, Andrew Wilder, Cops or Robbers?: The Struggle to Reform the Afghan National Police (Kabul: Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit, 2007).

[22] I am indebted to Professor Varun Sahni for drawing this possibility to my attention.

sonal experience.[23] While corruption is a complex phenomenon, often grounded in incentive structures that reward dysfunctional behaviour,[24] it is likely to be seen by ordinary citizens as an *individual* moral failing. Nonetheless, as Ruparelia and Rennie point out in their chapter even if perceptions of corruption are exaggerated or perceived to be due to the misconduct of isolated individuals, such widespread views should concern the Government as they reveal a profound distrust in the credibility of public institutions which is clearly damaging for state-society relations. Indeed across a range of indicators, it appears that Afghans are quite sceptical about individual political actors, although again the picture is more nuanced than an initial glance might suggest.

As far as trust is concerned, 60 percent of respondents conclude that "with most people you need to be very careful" (Q50). Furthermore, when asked whether they agree that "politicians seek power for their own benefit and don't worry about helping people" (Q79c) 41 percent strongly agree, and 35 percent agree "somewhat". Nevertheless, this does not translate fully into scepticism about ministers and public administration. Some 40 percent of respondents express a "fair amount of confidence" in government ministers, and 11 percent "a great deal of confidence" (Q52). (See Table 4). Similarly, 42 percent of respondents express a "fair amount of confidence" in the public administration and 13 percent "a great deal of confidence". In terms of institutions, the greatest scepticism is reserved for political parties where only eight percent express "a great deal of confidence" and 35 percent a "fair amount of confidence". The government justice system does scarcely better, with eight percent expressing "a great deal of confidence" and 38 percent a "fair amount of confidence".

Table 4: Confidence in Public Institutions

	A great deal of confidence %	**A fair amount of confidence %**	**Not very much confidence %**	**No confidence at all %**
Government ministers	11	40	28	16
Public administration	13	42	27	10
Political parties	8	35	33	17
Government justice system	8	38	33	16

Source: 2008 Asia Foundation survey

[23] Reputational cascades occur occur 'when people with little personal information about a particular matter base their own beliefs on the apparent beliefs of others': see Cass R. Sunstein, Risk and Reason: Safety, Law, and the Environment (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002) p.86 (passage co-authored with Timur Kuran).

[24] See Jonathan Goodhand, 'Corrupting or Consolidating the Peace?: The Drugs Economy and Post-Conflict Peacebuilding in Afghanistan', International Peacekeeping, vol.15, no.3, 2008, pp.405-423.

This last figure is perhaps the most disturbing, because a defective justice system can affect people in their day-to-day lives and leave the weak with a burning sense of grievance, as both Sharma and Sen as well as Kaur and Ayubi discuss in their respective chapters in this volume. Political parties, by contrast, have been marginalised as actors since 2001, so a low level of confidence in this area is less of a concern. It is also worth noting that many Afghans have survived for decades without any assistance from the state, so they are possibly less likely to blame the state for what has gone wrong than might have been expected.

The data also provide some encouraging reflections on democracy. Asked whether voting can lead to improvement in the future (Q76), 65 percent of respondents answer in the affirmative. This should be borne in mind by those who see postponement of Afghanistan's approaching elections as a looming necessity. Asked how satisfied or dissatisfied they are with the way democracy works in Afghanistan (Q80) 15 percent pronounce themselves "very satisfied" and 53 percent "somewhat satisfied". That said, commitment to a democratic system – in which voters have the opportunity freely to change their rulers without bloodshed – can coexist with lack of confidence in incumbent rulers. It is this that makes elections simultaneously both divisive events and exercises in democratic consolidation (see also Dalton's discussion on prospects for democratisation in this volume).

Trends Over Time: A Glass Half Empty or Half Full?

The data from the 2008 survey present a mixed picture, with scepticism about politicians, parties, and the justice system, together with widespread perceptions of corruption, counterbalanced to some degree by positive views of democracy, the national government, ministers, the ANA, and – surprisingly – the ANP. However, the mood of a population can be appraised not just in terms of a cross-section of opinion at a particular moment, but also through the tracking of opinion over time. Here, there are additional sources of concern about Afghanistan's trajectory.

Turning first to the question of the direction in which the country is moving, we witness a very dramatic shift. In 2004, fully 64 percent of respondents felt that the country was moving in the right direction. In 2006, the figure had fallen to 44 percent and by 2007 to 42 percent, reaching its all-time low of 38 percent in 2008 (Q9). The figures for the "wrong direction" have also been steadily rising since 2004, as shown in Table 5.

Table 5: Direction of the Country, 2004-2008

	2004 %	**2006** %	**2007** %	**2008** %
Right direction	64	44	42	38
Wrong direction	11	21	24	32

Source: 2004, 2006, 2007 and 2008 Asia Foundation surveys

These figures are open to diverse interpretations. On the one hand, the most dramatic shift occurred between 2004 and 2006. In 2006 the dominant factors explaining people's concerns were economic, with insecurity scarcely figuring at all.[25] This might be read as suggesting that the 64 percent figure of 2004 represented an unnatural euphoria and that much of the decline since then is explained by citizens coming to terms with the limits of what can be achieved through state action in a state that has suffered decades of disruption. On the other hand, once despondency sets in, it can be difficult to reverse; the more disappointed people there are in a locality or neighborhood, the more ubiquitous are patterns of discourse that may swing the undecided towards pessimism.

There has also been a decline over time in the proportion of respondents who answer positively the question "Do most people feel free to express their political opinions in the area where you live?" (Q30). In 2004, a strongly positive majority (52%) answered yes and only 23 percent answered no. This has shifted notably with the proportion of positive responses falling steadily between 2004 and 2007, and the proportion of negative responses rising over the same period. Between 2007 and 2008 has there been little change, as shown in Table 6.

Table 6: Freedom to Express Political Opinions, 2004-2008

	2004 %	**2006** %	**2007** %	**2008** %
Yes	52	49	40	40
No	23	36	42	39

Source: 2004, 2006, 2007, and 2008 Asia Foundation surveys

The regional variations in 2008 are striking, with only 21 percent of respondents in the South East and 20 percent in the South West responding positively. Furthermore, in the South West, some 67 percent answer no, as shown in Table 7. Here, the correlation with insecurity is obvious. Indeed, as Dalton also emphasises in his chapter in this volume, insecurity that impacts upon people's ability to exercise core democratic rights carries the potential to corrode the legitimacy claims of a political system in those people's eyes. Even in the relatively-secure Central/Kabul region, the trend over time is discouraging. In 2006, 63 percent felt free to express their opinions; this dropped to 46 percent in 2007 and has stayed the same in 2008.

[25] Afghanistan in 2006 : A Survey of the Afghan People (Kabul and San Francisco: The Asia Foundation, 2006).

Table 7: Freedom to Express Political Opinions, by Region

	Central/ Kabul	South East	East	North East	North West	West	South Western	Central/ Hazarajat
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Yes	46	21	43	46	49	41	20	53
No	30	43	34	37	31	43	67	27
Don't know	24	36	23	17	19	17	13	21

Source: 2008 Asia Foundation survey

That said, there are also areas where there has not been a disturbing decline in orientations or attitudes. The most obvious relate to the assessments of the Afghan National Army and Afghan National Police, where popular attitudes have proved remarkably steady. In 2006, 51 percent expressed a "great deal" of trust in the ANA and this figure has shifted only a little, to 45 percent in 2007 and 46 percent in 2008 (Q52). Similarly, in 2007 52 percent strongly agreed that the ANA is "honest and fair with the Afghan people", which has barely changed in 2008 (48%) (Q53a) as shown in Table 8. As far as the ANP are concerned, the proportion expressing "a great deal of confidence" has fallen from 50 percent in 2006 to 39 percent in 2007 and 40 percent in 2008 (Q52). However in 2007, 45 percent strongly agreed that the ANP is "honest and fair with the Afghan people" and this is still the case for 40 percent in 2008 (Q54a).

Table 8: Views on the ANA and ANP, 2006-2008

	ANA			ANP		
	2006 %	2007 %	2008 %	2006 %	2007 %	2008 %
Confidence						
Great deal of confidence	51	45	46	50	39	40
Fair amount of confidence	36	43	43	41	44	42
Honest and fair with the Afghan people						
Strongly Agree	-	52	48	-	45	40
Agree somewhat	-	38	41	-	41	40

Source: 2006, 2007 and 2008 Asia Foundation surveys

Lessons for the Next Phase of Afghanistan's Transition

In complex situations, data can tell a story but rarely the whole story. It is important, therefore, to conclude with some reflections that help set some of these figures in a broader context. Some of these reflections relate to the nature of opinion, while others take us back to the broader idea of legitimacy itself.

A first issue relates to what kind of conclusions it is meaningful to draw from the data in the 2008 survey. The difficulty, of course, arises from the finding that only 40 percent of respondents agree that most people feel free to express their political opinions in their local area. A pedantic observer might suggest that this figure speaks only of the respondent's, possibly erroneous, perception of the willingness of others in the locality to voice their opinions. And one could also argue that these respondents were not so intimidated that they were unwilling to admit that there might be a problem. Nonetheless, it is probably realistic to read the 40 percent figure, and its regional variants, as reflecting a genuine shrinkage in political space. Where this happens, the possibility arises that in response to more obviously 'political' questions, at least some respondents may have offered the answers that seemed to them least likely to cause them future problems if the substance of their responses were to become known to power-holders. Indeed, this might explain some of the unexpectedly positive views expressed about the Afghan National Police. The consequences of falsification of attitudes and preferences can be many and varied,[26] but one is that political leaders can develop unduly sanguine impressions as to the amount of support that they, their government, and the political system as a whole can actually claim. Ostensible normative support may actually mask a set of attitudes that are much more complex and ambivalent.

Much will also depend on the scale of this problem. Full-blown legitimacy crises are quite rare: as Lucian W. Pye has put it, in "a genuine legitimacy crisis the challenge is to the basic constitutional dimensions of the system and to the most generalized claims of leadership of those in authority".[27] However, where large-scale preference falsification has occurred, leaders may be taken by surprise, as became apparent in Eastern Europe in 1989 when ordinary people's fears of Soviet invasion eroded to the point that they were willing to challenge local communist elites. This experience highlights the value of a little-used category, namely that of 'quasi-legitimacy'. Deployed by the sociologist Jan Pakulski, it suggests a form of compliance which is less than fully normative, but somewhat more than merely prudential, based on features of a situation that may not be sustained - such as the presence of foreign forces supporting a regime or wider political system.[28] This writer recalls Afghans who at the time of the 2004 presidential election stated that they would be voting for President Karzai because his US backers would not allow anyone else to win. A victory based on this kind of 'support' is different from one grounded in genuine popularity.

---

26 See Timur Kuran, Private Truths, Public Lies: The Social Consequences of Preference Falsification (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995).

27 Lucian W. Pye, 'The Legitimacy Crisis', in Leonard Binder, James S. Coleman, Joseph LaPalombara, Lucian W. Pye, Sidney Verba and Myron Weiner, Crises and Sequences in Political Development (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971) pp.135-158 at p.136.

28 See Jan Pakulski, 'Legitimacy and Mass Compliance: Reflections on Max Weber and Soviet-Type Societies', British Journal of Political Science, vol.16, Part I, 1986, pp.35-56.

The next phase of Afghanistan's transition is likely to be dominated by the elections scheduled to be held in 2009. While, on the one hand, the very act of preparing for such elections is a further affirmation of the legitimacy of the constitutional order within which they are nested, other events associated with them might raise questions about the nature of legitimacy in the new system. Elections are not necessarily won by speaking in the same way to all the components of the electorate, and it can be tempting for power holders to mount an appeal simply to one important section. Furthermore, legitimation strategies are sometimes put in place with an even narrower focus, namely rulers themselves. This is an example of what Barker has called legitimation by rulers "for the confirmation of their own identity and authority".[29] Yet this can cut both ways. It may solidify an elite but also distance it from some parts of the masses, and that distance may at some point prove more important to systemic legitimacy than anyone had thought. After the cabinet reshuffle of October 2008, not only the President, but also the Defence, Interior, Finance, and Education ministers come from the same *ethnie*. This may create a better-integrated ruling elite and may attract the normative support of those who share this particular basis of identity, but it may also lead to a gulf between them and those Afghan citizens from other groups.

One final – and somewhat ominous – point deserves to be noted. The survival of a regime is not solely dependent on legitimacy. One sometimes hears it said that the Karzai government could not survive the withdrawal of foreign forces, which is doubtless one of the reasons why the Taliban have made this a central political demand. This may be true, but such a conclusion need not speak directly to either its legitimacy, or the legitimacy of the post-2001 order. The ability to confront challenges is not just a matter of legitimacy but also of capacity, which goes to the scope and strength of the state.[30] A regime may be overthrown not because it is illegitimate, but because it is overwhelmed by some other force with greater capacity. New state structures move from infancy to adolescence before reaching adulthood. The post-2001 Afghan state, in terms of its core capacities, is still in its early days. Boosting its legitimacy is vital, but until it reaches a certain threshold of capacity, its ability to meet the population's wishes will necessarily be limited. In this sense, carefully-planned aid to state-building that empowers the state to perform certain core tasks effectively is a key contribution that outside powers can make to state legitimacy in the long run.

---

[29] Rodney Barker, Legitimating Identities: The Self-Presentations of Rulers and Subjects (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001) p.70.

[30] See William Maley, 'Building State and Security', in Wolfgang Danspeckgruber with Robert P. Finn (ed.), Building State and Security in Afghanistan (Princeton: Liechtenstein Institute on Self-Determination at Princeton University, 2007) pp.3-18.

Chapter 2

Afghanistan's Growing Security Challenge

Seth G. Jones

This chapter examines the security situation in Afghanistan, and asks three questions. What are Afghan perceptions of the security environment? How do these perceptions vary across the country? How do Afghans feel about their security institutions, especially the Afghan National Police (ANP) and Afghan National Army (ANA)? The chapter argues that Afghans continue to believe that insecurity is the most significant problem facing their country. Indeed, insecurity currently engulfs over half the country in an arc that covers much of western, southern, and eastern portions of the country. But there are some positive trends. For example, perceptions of Afghan security forces are fairly positive. Afghans appear particularly supportive of the ANA and the ANP, and perceptions of corruption in the ANP have also improved over the past several years. Continued focus must be maintained on building the capacity of the Afghan security forces to ensure the security of the Afghan population, especially in the most insecure areas of the country.

Introduction

The current security challenge in Afghanistan is part of a troubling era of instability that has plagued Afghanistan for three decades. In December 1979, the Soviet military invaded Afghanistan, triggering a brutal war that involved Pakistani, United States, Saudi, and other states that backed Afghan mujahideen. When the Soviets finally withdrew in February 1989, the country was devastated. An estimated 1 million Afghans had been killed, more than five million fled abroad, and as many as 3 million people were internally displaced. Nearly 15,000 Soviet soldiers were dead and 35,000 wounded.[1] The Soviet period was followed by a bloody civil war among Afghan militia forces. In Kabul, Beirut-style street fighting erupted and the city was savagely bombarded with rockets, mortars, and artillery. Out of this chaos, the Taliban emerged in Southern Afghanistan and promised to establish order and justice. But their brutal tactics and extremist interpretation of Islam derived from Deobandism. In 2001, U.S. and Afghan forces overthrew the Taliban, ushering in a renewed hope among Afghans for peace and stability. As Hamid Karzai noted in January 2002, "although the Interim Administration has been in place for only one month, we have already agreed on a vision for the road ahead. Our vision is of a prosperous, secure Afghanistan."[2]

---

1 Ahmed Rashid, Taliban: Militant Islam, Oil and Fundamentalism in Central Asia (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2000), p. 13; Barnett R. Rubin, The Search for Peace in Afghanistan: From Buffer State to Failed State (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1995): p. 7; Lester Grau, The Bear Went Over the Mountain: Soviet Combat Tactics in Afghanistan (Washington, DC: National Defense University Press, 1996), p. xix; Brigadier Mohammad Yousaf and Mark Adkin, Afghanistan - The Bear Trap: The Defeat of a Superpower (Havertown, PA: Casemate, 1992), pp. 215-216.

2 Statement of H.E. Hamid Karzai Chairman of the Interim Administration of Afghanistan, "A Vision for Afghanistan", January 21, 2002.

But this hope has been fleeting. In addition to criminal activity and other localized violence, half the country is engulfed in a violent insurgency. The Taliban, Gulbuddin Hekmatyar's Hezb-i-Islami, Jalaluddin Haqqani's network, al Qa'ida, and other groups are involved in a sustained effort to overthrow the government and coerce foreign troops to leave. This chapter examines security – and insecurity – in Afghanistan using the Asia Foundation 2008 survey data. It adopts a bounded definition of security that focuses on personal safety, and asks three major questions. What are Afghan perceptions of the security environment? How do these perceptions vary across the country? And how do Afghans feel about their security institutions, especially the Afghan National Police (ANP) and Afghan National Army (ANA)?

The chapter argues that Afghans continue to believe that the security situation is the most significant problem facing their country, and that insecurity currently engulfs over half the country in an arc that covers much of the Western, Southern, and Eastern portions of the country. The chapter is divided into five sections. The first examines the concept of security and its impact on the local population. The second section examines Afghan perceptions of security: What are they? And how have they changed over time? The third assesses the security environment across Afghanistan's 34 provinces. The fourth section explores perceptions of Afghan security forces. And the final section offers brief conclusions.

Security and the Center of Gravity

Security is the cornerstone of a viable, effective state. The German sociologist Max Weber defined the state as "a human community that (successfully) claims the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force within a given territory."[3] A monopoly of force involves overcoming groups that threaten the state and its population, such as militant groups, criminal networks, and other "spoilers."[4] In addition to personal safety, some have broadened the definition of security to include "human security," which can involve a range of other issues such as political security, community security, economic security, food security, health security, and environmental security.[5] The *Human Security*

3 Max Weber, "Politics as a Vocation," in H.H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills, eds., From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology (New York: Oxford University Press, 1958), p.78.

4 Stephen Stedman, "Spoiler Problems in Peace Processes," International Security, Vol. 22, No. 2, Fall 1997, pp. 5-53; Rui de Figueiredo and Barry Weingast, "The Rationality of Fear: Political Opportunism and Ethnic Conflict," in Barbara Walter and Jack Snyder, eds., Civil Wars, Insecurity, and Intervention (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), pp. 261-302; Michael W. Doyle and Nicholas Sambanis, "International Peacebuilding: A Theoretical and Quantitative Analysis," American Political Science Review, Vol. 94, No. 4, December 2000, p. 780.

5 See, for example, United Nations Development Programme, Human Development Report 1994 (New York: United Nations, 1994); Roland Paris, "Human Security: Paradigm Shift or Hot Air?" International Security, Vol. 26, No. 2, Fall 2001, pp. 87-102; Yuen Foong Khong, "Human Security: A Shotgun Approach to Alleviating Human Misery?" Global Governance, Vol. 7, No. 3 (July-September 2001); Astri Suhrke, "Human Security and the Interests of States," Security Dialogue, Vol. 30, No. 3, September 1999, pp. 265-276; Peter Stoett, Human and Global Security: An Exploration of Terms (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999); Caroline Thomas and Peter Wilkin, eds., Globalization, Human Security, and the African Experience (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 1999); and United Nations, Human Security Now: Commission on Human Security (New York: United Nations, 2003).

Report 2005 divides human security into two types. The first focuses on "violent threats to individuals," while the second argues that the "threat agenda should be broadened to include hunger, disease, and natural disasters because these kill far more people, than war, genocide, and terrorism combined."[6]

This chapter focuses on a bounded definition of security to include issues related to personal safety rather than broader conceptualizations, for the following reasons: First, establishing a safe environment is a critical precondition for accomplishing other goals in states like Afghanistan that are engaged in state-building and counterinsurgency. As Maley, Dalton, and Ruparelia and Rennie all point out in this volume, other objectives, such as economic growth, effective democracy and state legitimacy generally require security as a precondition.[7] The absence of security makes it difficult to rebuild political, economic, and other sectors. In the health sector, for instance, a lack of security can impede progress in the construction of hospitals and health clinics, slow immunization campaigns, and affect the labor force if healthcare providers are intimidated or threatened with kidnapping. Patients can also be deterred from seeking health care because of security concerns.[8] Second, a bounded definition of security allows us to focus more deeply on aspects of safety, such as how conditions vary between geographical areas and the quality of security forces, that would be skimmed over in a broader study.

As the Nobel prize-winning economist Amartya Sen acknowledged, a range of factors that come under the rubric of "human security" are deeply interrelated in helping states develop: "Political freedoms (in the form of free speech and elections) help to promote economic security. Social opportunities (in the form of education and health facilities) facilitate economic participation. Economic facilities (in the form of opportunities for participation in trade and production) can help to generate personal abundance as well as public resources for social facilities."[9] While recognizing the importance of these factors, this chapter focuses on issues related to personal safety. Other chapters in this volume touch on some of the broader areas of human security.

A failure to establish security has tremendous costs. It can undermine the stability and strength of central government and undercut efforts to reconstruct the political, social, and economic framework necessary for future stability. It can also have ramifications far beyond Afghanistan's own borders including ultimately undermining the security of the United States and other Western nations. Indeed, failing to curb major threats may trigger the same problems that led to outside intervention in the first place. As the Afghan National Security Council's *National Threat Assessment* argues about the drug trade:

---

6 The University of British Columbia, Human Security Report: War and Peace in the 21st Century (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. viii.

7 See, for example, Daniel Byman, "Constructing a Democratic Iraq: Challenges and Opportunities," International Security, Vol. 28, No.1, Summer 2003, pp. 47-78. Also see Barbara F. Walter, Committing to Peace: The Successful Settlement of Civil Wars (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002).

8 Seth G. Jones, et al, Securing Health: Lessons from Nation-Building Missions (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2006).

9 Amartya Sen, Development as Freedom (New York: Anchor Books, 2000), p. 11.

> Continued growth of the heroin and opium-producing poppy remains a major threat to the security of Afghanistan. The corruption and crime associated with the drug trade will proliferate in and around Afghanistan, discouraging international investment and assistance in rebuilding Afghanistan. Revenue from opium growth / production will continue to make Afghanistan an attractive haven for international terrorist groups, organized crime and other extremists while also funding the continued, destabilizing presence of non-statutory armed forces.[10]

In any state-building or counterinsurgency operation, the local population is particularly important. As French scholar and soldier Roger Trinquier argued in his classic book *Modern Warfare: A French View of Counterinsurgency*, "the *sine qua non* of victory in modern warfare is the unconditional support of a population."[11] Popular support is important because each side needs money, logistics, recruits, intelligence, and other aid to achieve its objectives.[12] Support is especially critical for opposition groups, who begin from an asymmetry of power. This is why Mao Tse-tung noted: "Without question, the fountainhead of guerrilla warfare is in the masses of the people, who organize guerrilla units directly from themselves."[13] Insurgents generally cannot attack their opponents in a conventional manner. The asymmetry in power forces insurgents to carry the fight to a different ground where they have a better chance of balancing the odds against them. The population represents this ground. If insurgents manage to separate the population from the government and external forces, and acquire its active or passive support, they are more likely to win the war. In the end, the exercise of political power depends on the tacit or explicit agreement of the population – or, at worst, on its submissiveness.[14]

Local perceptions are therefore fundamental, especially trends over time: On the security front, do people feel safer? Is it easier for them to travel around the country? Do they increasingly trust their security institutions to establish law and order? If not, the government and its security forces have failed to fulfill the state's chief identity crtiteria - to establish a monopoly of physical force. When state institutions are weak, oppor-

---

10 Afghanistan National Threat Assessment (Kabul: Presidential Office of National Security, 2004), p. 3.

11 Roger Trinquier, Modern Warfare: A French View of Counterinsurgency (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2006), p. 6. Also see David Galula, Counterinsurgency Warfare (St. Petersburg: Hailer Publishing, 1964), p. 8.

12 Bruce Hoffman, Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in Iraq (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2004); U.S. Marine Corps, Small Wars Manual (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1940); Julian Pagent, Counter-Insurgency Campaigning (London: Faber and Faber, 1967); Charles Simpson, Inside the Green Berets: The First Thirty Years (Novato, CA: Presidio Press, 1982); Robert J. Wilensky, Military Medicine to Win Hearts and Minds: Aid to Civilians in the Vietnam War (Lubbock, TX: Texas Tech University Press, 2004).

13 Mao Tse-tung, On Guerrilla Warfare, translated by Samuel B. Griffith II (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1961), p. 73. The importance of the population is pervasive in Mao's writings. He notes, for example, in On Guerrilla Warfare that "a primary feature of guerrilla operations is their dependence upon the people themselves" for organization and support (p. 51). Later on, he argues that the "people must be inspired to cooperate voluntarily. We must not force them, for if we do, it will be ineffectual" (p. 82).

14 Trinquier, Modern Warfare, p. 8; Galula, Counterinsurgency Warfare, pp. 7-8.

15 World Bank, Reforming Public Institutions and Strengthening Governance (Washington DC: World Bank, 2000); Jessica Einhorn, "The World Bank's Mission Creep," Foreign Affairs, Vol. 80, No. 5, 2001, pp. 22-35.

tunistic elements in society are able to take advantage.[15] Since the state is incapable of controlling its own territory, this weakness creates opportunities for groups to fill in this vacuum. This is especially true in remote areas of the country, where insurgent groups can establish rural strongholds.[16] The more extreme the decline or absence of authority in a region, the more the population becomes "virgin territory" for those would become an alternative government.[17] Insurgents, criminal networks, and other spoilers set up new institutions and use violence against alleged spies, whose execution leads directly to their control of territory.[18] Warlords and political entrepreneurs often flourish and finance their private militias through criminal activity, including trafficking in arms and drugs. Simple banditry – fueled by military desertion, the breakdown of social structures, and demobilization of government forces – may become endemic. Ordinary crime can also escalate sharply because of a combination of economic necessity, social breakdown, the focus of forces on political and regime security, and the proliferation of weapons.[19]

Afghan Perceptions of Security

The 2008 Asia Foundation data indicate that insecurity remains the biggest problem facing the country (Q12a[20]), as Figure 1 highlights. Nearly a quarter (24%) of Afghans identify insecurity as the country's most significant problem, and another 21 percent point to factors closely linked to insecurity including the presence of the Taliban (8%), interference of foreign countries (8%), drug smuggling (2%), the presence of warlords (2%), and crime (1%). In sum, nearly 50 percent of Afghans identify factors directly or indirectly linked to insecurity as the most significant problem in the country. The number of Afghans who specifically identify insecurity as the biggest problem is slightly up from 2006 (21%) but lower than in 2007 (32%). This suggests that other factors, such as unemployment and a scarcity of electricity, have also become increasingly acute for Afghans.

16 Ann Hironaka, Neverending Wars: The International Community, Weak States, and the Perpetuation of Civil War (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005), pp. 42-46.

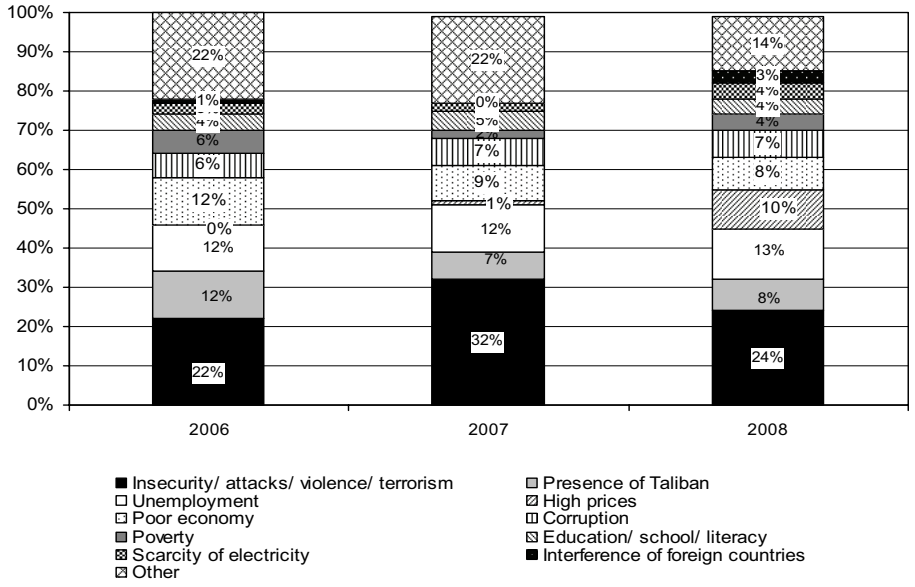
17 Stathis N. Kalyvas, The Logic of Violence in Civil War (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), p. 216; Timothy P. Wickham-Crowley, Guerrillas and Revolution in Latin America: A Comparative Study of Insurgents and Regimes Since 1956 (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992), p. 35.

18 Jon Lee Anderson, Guerrilla: Journeys in the Insurgent World (New York: Penguin, 2004), pp. 212-213.

19 Jane Stromseth, David Wippman, and Rosa Brooks, Can Might Make Rights? Building the Rule of Law after Military Interventions (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 137-140.

20 For full 2008 survey questions and responses see Appendix 1: Asia Foundation 2008 Survey - Interview Questionnaire

Figure 1: Afghanistan's Biggest Problems, 2006-2008



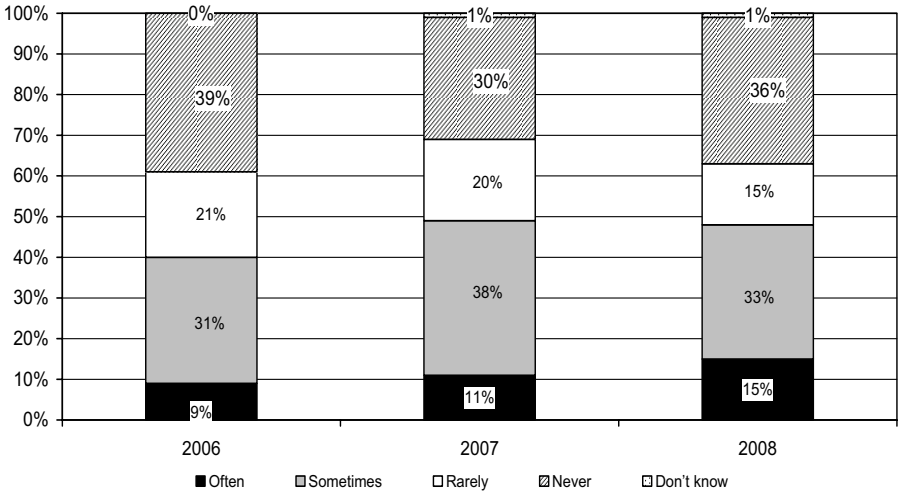
Source: 2006, 2007, and 2008 Asia Foundation surveys

Concerns about security have been echoed in a range of other quantitative and qualitative assessments. The United States Government's 2008 National Intelligence Estimate on Afghanistan, which reflected the views of its key intelligence agencies, painted a grim picture of the security environment. Britain's ambassador to Afghanistan, Sir Sherard Cowper-Coles, remarked that "the current situation is bad. The security situation is getting worse."[21] And the United Nations found that insurgent violence had increased in 2008 to the highest levels since the U.S. invasion in 2001.[22]

Perhaps more disturbingly, the Asia Foundation data indicate that nearly 50 percent of Afghans say they "often" or "sometimes" fear for their personal safety or that of their family (Q18). As Figure 2 indicates, this percentage remains largely consistent with 2007 data, although it is greater than in 2006, when only 40 percent of Afghans said they often or sometimes feared for their safety. But the number of Afghans who say they "often" fear for their safety has nearly doubled from 9 percent in 2006 to 15 percent in 2008. As discussed in the next section, perception of safety varies extensively across the country.

21 Jerome Starkey, "British Ambassador Warns Against Afghan Surge," The Independent, October 2, 2008.
22 United Nations Department of Safety and Security, Security Incidents in Afghanistan, July 2008.

Figure 2: Fear for Personal Safety, 2006-2008



Source: 2006, 2007, and 2008 Asia Foundation surveys

Afghans are also increasingly nervous about traveling. Nearly two-thirds (61%) say they have "some fear" or "a lot of fear" when traveling from one part of Afghanistan to another. It is unclear, however, why respondents feel more insecure about traveling, since the survey didn't ask what they were afraid of and why. Nonetheless, incidents of kidnapping appear to have increased over the past several years as the Taliban, other militant groups and criminal syndicates set up checkpoints along roads. In 2008, the Afghanistan International Chamber of Commerce (AICC) reported that at least 173 businessmen had been kidnapped across the country in the last three years, though this was likely only a fraction of the actual number. There were few recorded kidnappings in the first few years after the Taliban regime was overthrown.[23] Taliban and other groups frequently boarded buses and scrolled through the cell phones of passengers, searching for Afghan government or international contact information. As Taliban commander Mansour Dadullah acknowledged, "kidnapping is a very successful policy and I order all my mujahideen to kidnap foreigners of any nationality wherever they find them and then we should do the same kind of deal."[24] Responses to the Asia Foundation survey report a higher incidence of kidnapping in the Central /Kabul region than in other regions, as well as in urban rather than rural areas.

23 Martin Patience, "Afghanistan's Kidnapping Industry," BBC News, September 16, 2008.

24 Amnesty International, Amnesty International Contacts Taliban Spokesperson, Urges Release of Hostages (New York: Amnesty International, August 2, 2007).

While the insurgency receives significant media attention, it is unclear the extent to which insurgency is the cause of insecurity. When asked what kind of violence or crime respondents or their family members had experienced in the past year (Q20), 19 percent of those who have had such experience give answers tied to the insurgency: eight percent say military-insurgent actions, six percent foreign forces actions, three percent police actions, one percent army actions, and one percent suicide attacks. Another 30 percent answer physical attack or beating, and eight percent respond kidnapping, but do not specify the perpetrators.

It is clear, however, that insurgent groups have certainly conducted a wide variety of attacks against U.S., coalition, and Afghan security forces, as well as Afghan and international civilians. Suicide attacks have skyrocketed, and these have often killed Afghan civilians. The number of suicide attacks increased from one in 2002 to two in 2003, six in 2004, 21 in 2005, 139 in 2006, and 140 in 2007.[25] Al Qa'ida leaders in Pakistan, such as Ayman al-Zawahiri, have encouraged the use of suicide attacks. Zawahiri outlined in *Knights Under Prophet's Banner* the "need to concentrate on the method of martyrdom operations as the most successful way of inflicting damage against the opponent and the least costly to the Mujahideen in terms of casualties."[26] Taliban and other insurgent groups have also intimidated local villagers by distributing *Shabnamah*, or night letters, which warned villagers not to cooperate with foreign forces or the Karzai regime.[27] In addition, insurgents have conducted targeted assassinations and torched reconstruction and development projects in areas they controlled or passed through.

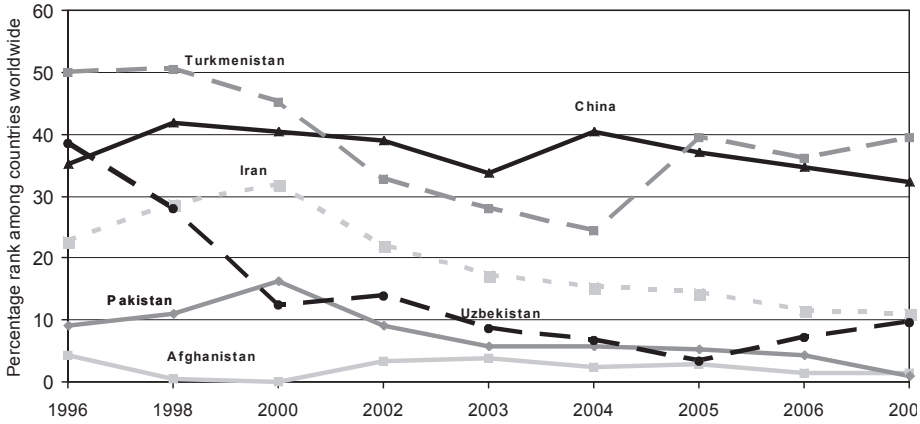
Concern about foreign forces has also slightly increased. While still low, approximately six percent of Afghans respond that they feel insecure because of the actions of foreign forces, up from three percent in 2007. These concerns are especially acute in the South West and East. Civilian casualties caused by NATO air and ground operations have caused a furor among Afghans, even though the Taliban and other groups have killed a larger number of civilians. A variety of aircraft provided close air support to NATO and Afghan ground forces, including AH-64 attack helicopters, A-10 and F-14 fighters, B-52 bombers, and AC-130 Spectre gunships. But close air support has a high cost when it leads to civilian deaths. Recent improvements in intelligence have minimized the number of civilian casualties when the U.S. military plans airstrikes in advance. Targeters are required to obey strict procedures to minimize "collateral damage". Problems sometimes emerge, however, when ground forces are ambushed in the field or come under unexpected fire. In such "troops-in-contact" situations, NATO and Afghan forces require immediate support, leaving little time to complete a formal "collateral damage assessment" and increasing the possibility of faulty intelligence and civil-

25 Seth G. Jones, In the Graveyard of Empires: America's War in Afghanistan (New York: W.W. Norton, forthcoming in 2009).
26 Ayman al-Zawahiri, Knights Under the Prophet's Banner, December 2001, part 11.
26 See, for example, Thomas H. Johnson, "The Taliban Insurgency and an Analysis of Shabnamah Night Letters," Small Wars and Insurgencies, Vol. 18, No. 3, September 2007, pp. 317-344.

ian casualties. To make matters worse, the Taliban and other insurgent groups frequently fire from homes and other buildings near civilian populations, retreat into civilian areas, and conceal themselves as civilians while firing on NATO and Afghan forces. Their goal is to goad NATO forces into killing civilians, a tactic often used during past insurgencies.[28]

To put Afghanistan's security environment into context, Figure 3 indicates that perceptions of stability in Afghanistan are among the lowest in the world – significantly lower than most countries in the region, including Pakistan, Uzbekistan, Iran, China, and Turkmenistan. In 2007, the World Bank ranked Afghanistan in the bottom one percent of most unstable countries in the world. Indeed, there has been declining stability across much of the region over the past decade, including a slight decline in Afghanistan's stability over the past several years. In Pakistan, this was likely caused by the "Talibanization" of parts of the North West Frontier Province, Federally Administered Tribal Areas, Balochistan, and even some settled areas. But in other cases, such as Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, it was likely caused by such factors as human rights abuses, high-level corruption, and socio-economic deprivation.

Figure 3: Stability among Countries in the Region, 1996-2007[29]



Source: Daniel Kaufmann, Aart Kraay, Massimo Mastruzzi, *Governance Matters VII: Governance Indicators for 1996-2007*

28 J. Alexander Thier and Azita Ranjbar, Killing Friends, Making Enemies: The Impact and Avoidance of Civilian Casualties in Afghanistan (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace, July 2008); Human Rights Watch, "Troops in Contact": Airstrikes and Civilian Deaths in Afghanistan (New York: Human Rights Watch, September 2008).

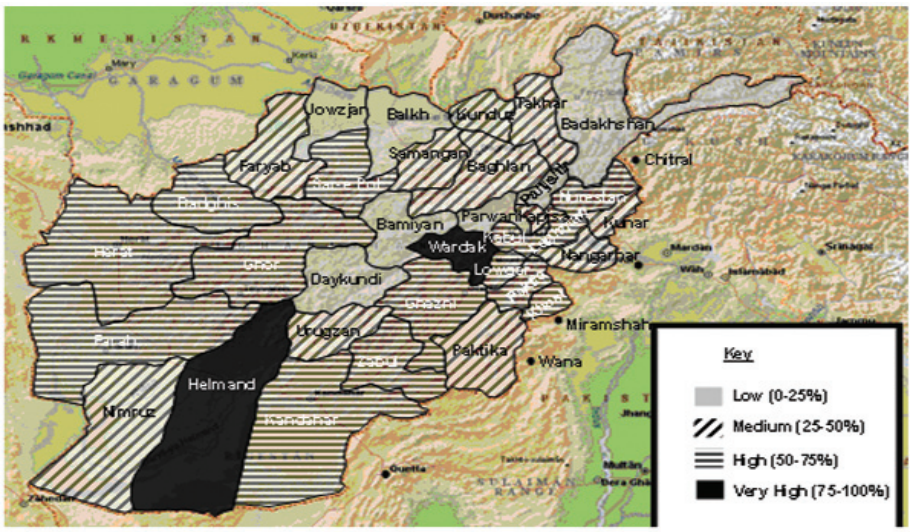
29 The data measure the variable "political stability and absence of violence," which the World Bank defines as "the likelihood that the government will be destabilized or overthrown by unconstitutional or violent means, including politically-motivated violence and terrorism." Daniel Kaufmann, Aart Kraay, Massimo Mastruzzi, Governance Matters VII: Governance Indicators for 1996-2007 (Washington, DC: World Bank, 2008).

Arc of Insecurity

While security remains the most significant concern for Afghans, the situation varies widely across the country. For several years, the United Nations and some non-governmental organizations have distributed security maps of Afghanistan. The problem with many of them, however, is they are based on vague qualitative assessments that are not transparent and often focus on security for international aid workers. The Asia Foundation data allows us to provide a much more nuanced, accurate, and transparent security map using quantitative data based on *local Afghan perceptions*.

Figure 4 highlights Afghan perceptions of security by province It divides areas of insecurity into four categories based on respondents who say they "often" or "sometimes" fear for their personal safety or for that of their family (Q18): 0–25 percent (light grey), 26–50 percent (striped), 51–75 (dark grey), 76–100 (black). The figure shows that the most insecure provinces of the country are Helmand and Wardak, followed by a swath of provinces in the West (Herat, Farah, Ghor, Badghis), North (Sar-e Pul), South (Zabul and Kandahar), and East (Khost, Ghazni, Logar, Paktia, Kabul, Laghman, and Nurestan). There are a few surprises in Figure 4. Locals appear to feel more secure in Uruzgan, Paktika, Nangarhar, and Kunar than is often recognized. Kunar, for instance, has witnessed some of the most intense fighting in such areas as the Korengal and Pech valleys, yet most of the fighting has occurred in areas that are sparsely inhabited. Dalton, in his chapter in this volume, highlights the fact that in the majority of these provinces that emerge as the most insecure and experience high levels of violence, residents express greater levels of fear about traveling, encountering the police and participating in a range of democratic processes.

Figure 4: Areas of Insecurity



Source: 2008 Asia Foundation survey

While insecurity has been prevalent in a significant portion of the country, the Asia Foundation data also indicate that the mostly commonly mentioned reason why respondents believe the country is going in the right direction is "good security" (26%) (Q10a) Another 12 percent say the country is going in the right direction because of "peace and end of the war." Those who identify good security are located in Northern and Central parts of the country, such as Parwan (37%) and Balkh (44%) Provinces. The same is true for those who identify peace and the end of the war, including such provinces as Parwan (25 %), Sar-i-Pul (29%), and Jowzjan (32%).

The geographical breakdown of the data highlights several themes. First, significant levels of insecurity have engulfed over half the country. Afghan concerns about personal safety are most significant along an arc that began in the West, creeps southward through such provinces as Helmand and Kandahar, continues northeast along the Afghanistan-Pakistan border through Paktia and Khost, and then moves into such provinces as Wardak and Kabul. When asked to rate their ability to move safely in their area and district, the percentage of those who say "quite bad" or "very bad" is highest in this arc, including in Herat (54%), Helmand (70%), Kandahar (65%), and Ghazni (63%). These areas are closest to Iran and Pakistan. Three of the four are also dominated by Pashtun tribes, sub-tribes, and clans.

Second, the type of threats that concern Afghans varies widely across the country. When asked what kind of violence or crime respondents or someone in their family experienced in the past year (Q20), concerns about the insurgency are highest in the South and East, as are concerns regarding kidnapping, suicide attacks, and the actions of foreign forces. But Afghans face high levels of physical attack and beating in most areas of the country, from Wardak (79 %) to Khost (56%) and Jowzjan (50%). Racketeering and burglary also extend throughout most of the country.

These patterns suggest that Afghans are concerned about more than just pure insurgent violence. Although the Asia Foundation data does not clearly delineate the perpetrators of insecurity across the country, in many cases it is the result of one or several of the following categories: The first are insurgent groups, who are motivated to overthrow the Afghan government and force the withdrawal of international forces. They range from the Taliban to smaller groups such as the Haqqani network, Gulbuddin Hekmatyar's Hezb-i-Islami, Tehreek-e-Nafaz-e-Shariat-e-Mohammadi (TNSM), and al Qa'ida. A second category includes criminal groups involved in a range of activities such as drug-trafficking and illicit timber and gem trading. The third includes local tribes, sub-tribes, and clans which may clash with other tribes or ally with insurgent groups. Warlord militias comprise the fourth category, many of whom have become increasingly powerful after the 2001 overthrow of the Taliban regime. A fifth category includes government forces, such as Afghan National Police.

The interaction of these elements has been dynamic and facilitated by the ease of individuals and groups to communicate with each other. For example, drug traffickers have developed close links with both insurgent groups and government officials in moving drugs along cross-border routes. Some tribes and sub-tribes have collaborated with insurgent groups in rural areas of the country, often changing sides depending on whether the Afghan government and NATO forces are able to clear and hold territory. The nature of the threat environment marks a striking contrast from the 1990s, when the Taliban insurgency was more hierarchically structured. Today, groups are able to organize into sprawling multi-organizational networks, yet still retain the ability to communicate with each other when necessary. They tend to be dispersed but allow individuals to communicate, coordinate, and conduct their activities with minimal central command. This distinguishes groups operating in complex adaptive systems from hierarchical organizations, where authority and communication are vertically structured.

Perceptions of Afghan Security Forces

In this troubled security environment, local security forces are critical. In particular, police are the primary arm of the government focused on internal security matters.[30] Unlike the military, police usually have a permanent presence in cities, towns, and villages; a better understanding of the threat environment in these areas; and better human intelligence. This is partly why the Afghan National Police has taken the brunt of insurgent attacks. Between January 2007 and July 2008, nearly two-thirds of security forces killed were Afghan police, rather than Afghan army or coalition forces.[31]

While outside actors often play an important role in state-building and counterinsurgency operations, the outcome is usually a function of the struggle between the national government and its opponents – insurgent groups, criminal networks, and other spoilers – who threaten its monopoly of force. Most domestic populations tire of their forces engaged in brutal struggles overseas, as even the Soviet population did during their campaign in Afghanistan in the 1980s. In addition, a lead outside role may be interpreted by the population as an occupation, eliciting nationalist reactions that impede success.[32] Moreover, a lead indigenous role can provide a focus for national aspirations and show the population that they – and not foreign forces – control their destiny. Competent governments that can provide services to their population in a timely manner can best fulfill Max Weber's concept of the state. And, as Maley points out in his chapter, effective government performance in the security arena is a core element in establishing its legitimacy.

Despite the country's security challenges, perceptions of Afghan security forces are

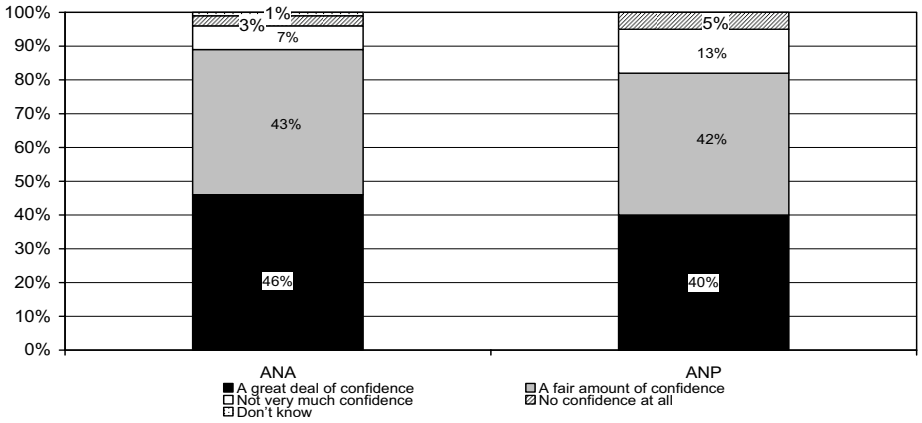
30 Trinquier, Modern Warfare, p. 43; Galula, Counterinsurgency Warfare, p. 31.

31 NATO ISAF, Afghan National Security Forces Update (Kabul: NATO ISAF, July 24, 2008), slide 5. Between January 2007 and July 2008, there were 333 coalition soldiers killed (20%), 1,015 Afghan police killed (59%), and 369 Afghan soldiers killed (21%).

32 David M. Edelstein, "Occupational Hazards: Why Military Occupations Succeed or Fail," International Security, Vol. 29, No. 1 (Summer 2004), p.51.

positive in some important respects. Afghans appear particularly supportive of the ANA, including its integrity and ability to perform its mission. Only 4 percent of Afghans say they have had to give cash or perform a favor in "all cases" or "most cases" to someone from the ANA (Q28), indicating that Afghans do not view the ANA as corrupt. These numbers are consistent across Afghanistan's provinces. In addition, Figure 5 indicates that 89 percent of Afghans say they have a "great deal of confidence" or a "fair amount of confidence" in the ANA, compared to 82 percent for the ANP (Q52). Unlike views of corruption, however, confidence in the ANA varies somewhat by province. It is lowest in such provinces as Uruzgan (34%), Paktika (60%), and Nurestan (66%). And it is highest in Zabul (100%), Nimroz (100%), Logar (98%), Takhar (98%), and Baghlan (98%). It seems intuitive that confidence in the ANA would be lowest in areas of extreme violence and highest in areas with little violence, but this is not necessarily the case. In such violent provinces as Zabul and Logar, support for the ANA is extremely high. It is not entirely clear what explains such variation in confidence, but it may be a result of local perceptions of ANA performance in specific areas.

Figure 5: Confidence in the ANA and ANP



Source: 2008 Asia Foundation survey

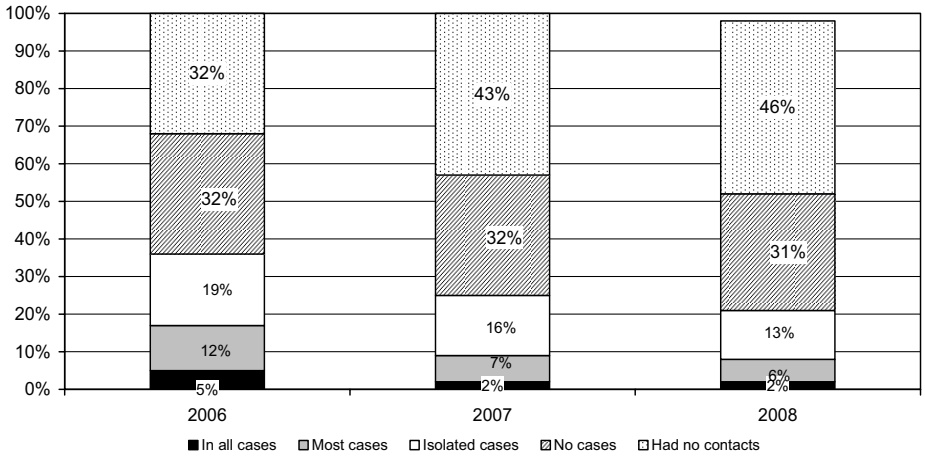
Unlike the ANA, a range of studies on the ANP have painted a negative picture of this institution. As Andrew Wilder concluded in his study of the police, Afghans "still routinely accuse the police of being corrupt, ineffective and behaving like 'robbers' rather than 'cops.'"[33] The United States Departments of State and Defense reported that the readiness of Afghan police "to carry out its internal security and conventional police responsibilities is far from adequate. The obstacles to establish a fully professional [Afghan National Police] are formidable." It concluded that that were major obstacles, such as "no effective field training officer (FTO) program, illiterate recruits, a history of low pay and pervasive corruption, and an insecure environment."[34] An Afghan govern-

33 Andrew Wilder, Cops or Robbers? The Struggle to Reform the Afghan National Police (Kabul: Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit, 2007), p. 67.

34 Offices of Inspector General of the Departments of State and Defense, Interagency Assessment of Afghanistan Police Training and Readiness (Washington, D.C.: Offices of Inspector General of the Departments of State and Defense, 2006), p. 1.

ment report was even more frank, finding that "the Ministry of Interior is rife with corruption." It claimed that "allegations of nepotism and unethical recruitment practices are commonplace" and "financial improprieties have been one of the most visible problems afflicting the Ministry and the police reform process."[35] But some of this concern is not reflected in the Asia Foundation data. As Figure 6 suggests, perceptions of corruption in the Afghan National Police appear to have improved over the past several years. Only 8 percent of Afghans in 2008 say they have had to give cash, provide a gift, or perform a favor to someone from the ANP in the past year "in most cases" or "in all cases," compared to 17 percent in 2006 (Q28). In addition, roughly 50 percent of Afghans say that when they have reported a crime, they reported it to the ANP (Q22). One quarter say they reported to their tribal leader or malik, and another 16 percent say their local shura.

Figure 6: Cash Gifts or Favors for the ANP, 2006-2008



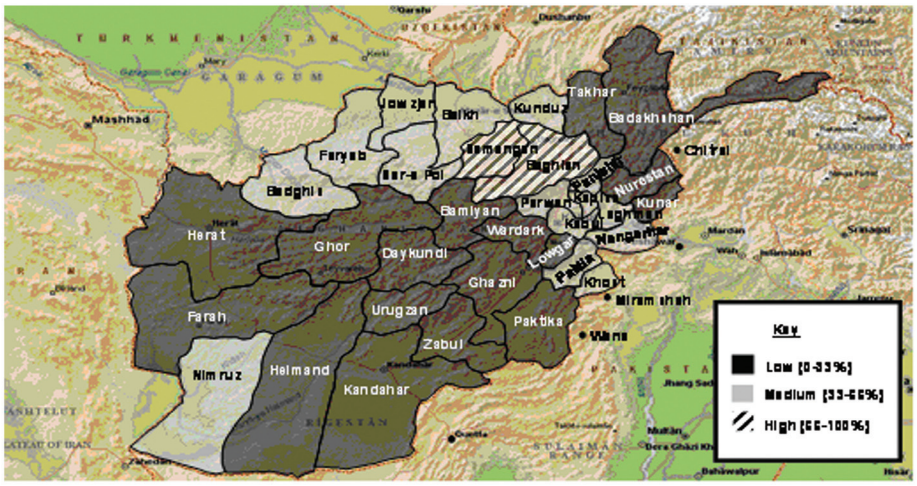
Source: 2006, 2007, and 2008 Asia Foundation surveys

Confidence in the ANP varies considerably by province. Figure 7 maps the degree to which Afghans say they have "a great deal of confidence" in the police (Q52). Provinces in black indicate that less than 33 percent of respondents in the province say they have a great deal of confidence in the ANP; light grey signifies the percentage is between 33 and 66; and striped signifies greater than 66. The map shows that confidence in the police is highest in Baghlan and Samangan. There are medium levels of confidence in Northern provinces less impacted by the insurgency, such as Faryab, Jowzjan, Balkh, and Kunduz, as well as a range of provinces where there has been fighting, including Paktia and Khost.

36 International Crisis Group, Reforming Afghanistan's Police, Asia Report No. 138 (Kabul: International Crisis Group, 2007); Afghanistan Ministry of Interior, National Internal Security Strategy (Kabul: Ministry of Interior, 2006); Wilder, Cops or Robbers?, p. 54.

It is not entirely clear what factors explain the variation in Afghan perceptions. Take, for example, the following two questions: "How often do you fear for your own personal safety or security or for that of your family these days?" (Q18) and "How much confidence do you have in the Afghan National Police?" (Q52b). Respondents' answers to the questions do not clearly overlap. Indeed, in a range of provinces, such as Badakhshan, Bamiyan, and Daykundi, Afghans were concerned about their safety *yet still had little confidence in the police*. Aside from the concerns about corruption in the police discussed above, part of the answer may hinge on views of the ANP's ethnic composition, since some studies have suggested that Afghans in Pashtun areas believe the Ministry of Interior is dominated by Tajiks.[36] Part of the answer may also be that Afghan police have sometimes been viewed as being too closely aligned with militia commanders or insurgent groups.[37] For example, in July 2008 a U.S army report suggested that Afghan police appeared to be complicit in an attack on a United States vehicle patrol base and ANA forces at Wanat Village, near the Kunar-Nurestan border. The report concluded, "both the District Police Chief and District Governor were complicit in supporting the [Anti-Afghan Forces] attack," which killed both coalition and Afghan army soldiers.[38] It is also not clear whether all Afghans know who the ANP are, including in their own villages and districts. In several provinces I have visited, locals mistakenly identified their Afghan National Police as local militia forces who were not part of the Ministry of Interior.

Figure 7: Confidence in Afghan National Police, by Province



Source: 2008 Asia Foundation survey

37 International Crisis Group, Reforming Afghanistan's Police; Neamat Nojumi, Dyan Mazurana, Elizabeth Stites, Afghanistan's Systems of Justice: Formal, Traditional, and Customary (Medford, MA: Youth and Community Program, Tufts University, 2004).

38 Memorandum for Commander, Combined Joint Task Force - 101, Subject: AR 15-6 Investigation Findings and Recommendations - Vehicle Patrol Base (VBP) Wanat Complex Attack and Casualties on 13 July 2008, August 13, 2008. The memorandum was declassified in November 2008.

While the data show that Afghans have some confidence in the Afghan National Police and many don't believe it is corrupt, nearly 50 percent say they would encounter ANP officers with "a lot of fear" or "some fear" (Q29). This may be why approximately 40 percent of Afghans that were victims of violence or a criminal act did *not* report it to the police (Q22). Another concern is the apparent absence of police in significant parts of the country. Nearly half (46%) of Afghans say they have had no contact with the ANP in the last year (Q28), up from 32 in 2006 and 43 percent in 2007. The lack of contact is particularly acute in several provinces: Logar (67%), Nurestan (66%), Takhar (75%), and Daykundi (75%). Even in Kabul, 59 percent of Afghans say they have had no contact with the ANP. The virtual non-existence of Afghan National Police in some areas is a troubling sign, since it provides a window of opportunity for insurgent groups, criminal syndicates, and warlord militias to fill the vacuum.

Moving Forward

The 2008 Asia Foundation survey data indicate that Afghans continue to believe security is the most significant problem facing their country, and that in roughly half the country Afghans fear for their personal safety or that of their family. Other key findings include:

- Nearly 50 percent of respondents say they "often" or "sometimes" fear for their personal safety or that of their family. The percentage who say they "often" fear for their safety nearly doubled from 2006 to 2008.
- Afghans are nervous about traveling. Nearly two-thirds say they have "some fear" or "a lot of fear" when traveling from one part of Afghanistan to another
- Afghans are concerned about a range of threats, not just the insurgency, including extortion, burglary, and stolen livestock.
- Insecurity is most acute along an arc that includes western, southern, and eastern Afghanistan, representing over half the country.
- Perceptions of Afghan security forces are positive in many respects. Afghans appear particularly supportive of the ANA, including its integrity and ability to perform its mission. In addition, 89 percent say they have a great deal of confidence in the ANA and 82 percent in the ANP.
- Perceptions of corruption in the ANP have improved over the past several years. Only 8 percent say they had to give cash or other gifts to someone in the ANP in 2008, compared to 17 percent in 2006.
- But nearly 50 percent of respondents say they have "a lot of fear" or "some fear" of the police, and nearly half of Afghans say they have had no contact with the ANP in the last year.

There is much that we still do not know which would be useful for future research. For example, who do Afghans believe are the primary perpetrators of insecurity, and why? What explains variations in security across the country, as well as views of the ANP and ANA? What are local perceptions of the Taliban and other groups that fill the security vac-

uum in areas where ANP, ANA, or international forces cannot provide security? Many of the data gaps suggest that there is little systematic understanding of what causal factors explain the variation in Afghan perceptions across geographic areas. Some of these gaps can be filled in with careful qualitative research, but more quantitative work would also be helpful.

Despite these gaps, however, the data indicate that Afghanistan faces acute security challenges. This suggests several steps may be worth taking. The first is the dire need for Afghan security forces, supplemented by international forces where appropriate, *to protect the Afghan population*. This is a classic tenet of state-building and counterinsurgency operations. As even the U.S. Army's recent counterinsurgency field manual acknowledged, "[counterinsurgency] operations are similar to emergency first aid for the patient. The goal is to protect the population."[39] The Asia Foundation survey data indicates that in the last year, 16 percent of Afghans report having experienced violence and crime and these incidents related to a variety of activities (Q19-20): including physical attack (30%), extortion (15%), burglary (15%), livestock stolen (13%), kidnapping (8%), and insurgent actions (8%)[40]. While the data do not indicate who Afghans believe the perpetrators are, they are likely to include a range of criminal networks, insurgent groups, Afghan state entities such as the ANP, and international forces. As Max Weber reminds us, the job of the state is to protect the population and overcome opposition groups. The clock is ticking. "You have the watches," one Taliban detainee told his Afghan and American interrogators, "but we have the time."[41]

Protecting the Afghan population also means minimizing civilian casualties from military operations. In a struggle over the hearts and minds of Afghans, civilian casualties appear to have increasingly pushed locals toward anti-state actors such as the Taliban. While still low, the number of Afghans who report experiencing violence because of the actions of foreign forces has doubled between 2007 (3%) and 2008 (6%). Moreover, Afghans have grown increasingly angry with the number of civilian casualties caused by U.S. airstrikes, as was demonstrated by reactions to the joint US- Afghan military operation in the Shindand district of Herat Province in August 2008 which resulted in public disagreement between Afghan and international institutions about the number of civilian casualties.[42] An assessment for U.S. Central Command concluded that "it is difficult to pinpoint specifically why American credibility [in Afghanistan] has dropped so sharply. However, it appears that civilian casualties and security are strongly

---

39 U.S. Department of the Army, Counterinsurgency, Field Manual 3-24 (Washington, DC: Headquarters, Department of the Army, December 2006), p. 5-2

40 Q19: Have you or anyone in your family been a victim of violence or of some criminal act in your home or community in the last year? Q20 (Filtered if yes to Q19): What kind of violence or crime did you or someone in your family experience in the past year?

41 Author interview with Ambassador Ronald Neumann, September 7, 2007.

42 A United Nations report claimed that roughly 90 civilians had been killed, including 60 children, 15 women, and 15 men (Statement by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Afghanistan, Kai Eide, on Civilian Casualties Caused by Military Operations in Shindand District of Herat Province, August 26, 2008). The Afghan Ministry of Interior released a statement blaming the United States for the incident, announcing that "seventy-six civilians, most of them women and children, were martyred today in a coalition force operation in Herat Province."(Jon Boone, "Kabul Accuses Allies of Civilian Death in Kabul," Financial Times, August 22, 2008). A subsequent U.S. military investigation, led by U.S. Brigadier General Michael Callan of the U.S. Air Force, concluded that more than 30 civilians had been killed, not the half dozen 2007, June 15, 2007. that U.S. commanders had initially insisted.

linked to attitudes to the U.S. military."[43] Moreover, an opinion poll in 2008 found that 40 percent of Afghans who sympathized with the Taliban were at least partly motivated by resentment about civilian casualties from NATO airstrikes.[44]

The second step is to focus on protecting Afghans in the most insecure areas. The Asia Foundation data clearly shows that insecurity can be mapped along an arc that includes western, southern, and eastern Afghanistan. The geographic breakdown suggests that Afghan and international efforts need to focus on dealing with threats in these areas. This doesn't mean that security across all of Afghanistan is unimportant. Rather, the deployment, training, and mentoring of Afghan security forces should focus on insecure areas in an effort to prioritize limited resources. This includes the Focused District Development (FDD) program to train and mentor the ANP, in which police are temporarily removed from their districts and replaced with Afghanistan National Civil Order Police units. After receiving several weeks of intensive training at one of the regional training centers, the local ANP are returned to their districts under the attention of embedded mentors. The FDD program also includes a range of reforms within the Ministry of Interior, such as rank reform, pay reform, biometric identity cards, and electronic funds transfer. These types of programs should focus on areas that Afghans view as most insecure.

A third step is to place more resources in training and mentoring Afghan security forces, rather than for coalition forces to conduct unilateral operations. The Asia Foundation data indicate that Afghans have notable concerns about the ANP's capacity to operate. The majority of respondents (60%) believe that the ANP is unprofessional and poorly trained, and that it cannot operate by itself (69%) (Q54). These numbers have edged downward since 2007, when 65 percent of respondents said the ANP was unprofessional and 77 percent contended that it could not operate without assistance. But they are still high. In addition, respondents register similar concerns about the capacity of the ANA. Approximately 55 percent say that the ANA is unprofessional and poorly trained, and 69 percent argue that the ANA still needs the support of foreign troops (Q53).

These challenges place a premium on coalition forces to help build more competent Afghan security forces. By August 2008, Combined Security Transition Command–Afghanistan (CSTC-A), which has responsibility for training the ANA and ANP, estimated that it had a 67 percent shortfall for international police trainers in the field and a 22 percent shortage for international army mentors.[45] Increasing the size of the Afghan National Army to 134,000 troops, as currently envisioned, will compound this shortfall. More international forces in Afghanistan may be helpful, as the incoming Obama administration has argued, but *only* if they are used to build Afghan capacity.

Afghanistan is now entering its thirtieth consecutive year of war, which began in 1979 with the Soviet invasion. Several generations of Afghans have endured far too much violence. The average life expectancy at birth for both Afghan males and females is 44 years, which means that most people have never experienced peace and security. The centerpiece of any successful counterinsurgency strategy must be the Afghan population, especially ensuring their protection and security. Tragically, this has not been the case since 2001, but it must be a priority for the future.

43 Memorandum from the Rendon Group to J5 CENTCOM Strategic Effects, Polling Results - Afghanistan Omnibus May

44 Charney Associates, Afghanistan: Public Opinion Trends and Strategic Implications (New York: Charney Associates, 2008), slide 20.

45 Author interview with member of Combined Security Transition Command - Afghanistan, November 2008.

Chapter 3

Institutionalization of the Justice System

Sudhindra Sharma & Pawan Kumar Sen

Dispensing justice is one of the key attributes of the Afghan state just as it is for other states. However, unlike other countries which generally have one dominant or prominent justice system, Afghanistan has two systems – the formal state system and the informal traditional system. Though these have emerged and coalesced at different historical junctures and draw from various traditions, they have evolved to become a part of the same continuum. This chapter analyses the data of the 2008 Asia Foundation survey by focusing on people's perceptions of both formal and informal justice systems. The chapter argues that although state courts are increasingly becoming accessible to people, in comparison to informal justice mechanisms, fewer people perceive their verdicts to be fair and to adhere to local norms and values, or their processes to be effective in resolving cases promptly. In addition, the government justice system is seen to be corrupt, which has resulted in low public confidence. The chapter discusses the relationship between the formal and informal justice systems in providing an access point for justice, and in resolving disputes. It offers a comparative analysis with Nepal, another landlocked South Asian country with a non-colonial past and a recent history of insurgency. It concludes that the formal justice system needs to have more engagements with the informal system, to make improvements in process, and to tackle corruption in order to strengthen the institutionalisation of justice in Afghanistan.[1]

Introduction

A key function of any state is to establish a monopoly over the legitimate use of physical force and ensure the security of its citizens. In order to do this the state needs to apprehend those who use violence illegally and commit crime. This is the job of the law enforcement and security forces. Once apprehended, the state must then hold offenders to account for their actions. This is done through the justice system. Thus there is a clear link between the justice system and the core law and order functions of the state.

In Afghanistan, however, dispensing justice is complex because, unlike in other states which generally have a single justice system that is prominent or dominant, Afghanistan has two systems: the formal state system and the informal traditional system. These systems have emerged and coalesced at different historical junctures and draw on various traditions, yet they have evolved to become a part of the same continuum.

[1] The authors are grateful to Dr. Rajendra Pradhan (Chairman, Social Science Baha, Nepal) and Ms. Ruth Rennie for their comments on the draft version of the chapter.

Traditional justice mechanisms in Afghanistan operate through two key informal institutions – *jirga* and *shura*. The *jirga* is an institution unique to the Pashtun people. It is a community-based process for collective decision making and is often used as a dispute settlement mechanism, including imposing agreed sanctions and using tribal forces to enforce its decisions. Scholars who have studied jirga have pointed out its democratic principles (the caveat however being that in general it includes only men). The term *shura* refers to a group of elders or recognised leaders who make decisions on behalf of the community they represent. A quarter of a century of civil strife in Afghanistan weakened not only the central state but also its various systems such as the formal justice system, which meant that people relied more on the informal justice system to resolve their disputes. The weakness, if not virtual non-existence of state systems during this period ensured the continued salience of the informal traditional system. The use of shura to dispense justice at local levels was also endorsed by the Taliban during their period in power (1996-2001).[2]

Pre-colonial states, more often than not, had their own judicial systems. In regions that were colonized, a uniform judicial system evolved with indigenous legal systems being subsumed under the colonial state justice system. For instance, in British India, Hindu law and Muslim law were subsumed under the British model of personal law, while criminal law was applicable to all, irrespective of religious allegiance. In countries that were not formally colonized, indigenous jurisprudence – based on a combination of religion and local customs – was generally formally endorsed by the state. In Afghanistan the indigenous legal system was a combination of Islamic and tribal jurisprudence. Indeed, scholars have pointed to the rich legal traditions in Afghanistan where the laws of the land before the onset of modernization drew from various sources. What is known as "customary law" in Afghanistan was in fact, an amalgamation of historical traditions, local understandings of Islam and Sharia and the spiritual role of the Sufi leaders.[3] In Nepal, another country not formally colonized in the region, the indigenous legal system was a combination of Hindu law and local customs.

From the second half of the twentieth century onwards, as states that were not formally colonized began to modernize, (for instance in Thailand, Nepal and Iran to mention a few examples in the region) legal systems were streamlined; the process eventually leading to the refinement, revision and assimilation of the indigenous legal system under the modern state system. This process was also begun in Afghanistan. The 1964 Constitution and various modernization initiatives undertaken during the 1950s and 1960s are testimony to this. However, for various reasons such as political instability (that began with the ousting of the monarchy), the Soviet occupation and the subsequent civil war, the momentum was lost. The geographic terrain with its rugged moun-

2 See Nojumi, N. Mazurana D. & Stities, E., Afghanistan's Systems of Justice: Formal, Traditional and Customary, (Tufts University, 2004). and Wardak, A. "Building a Post-War Justice System in Afghanistan", Crime, Law and Social Change, (2004): 1-24.

3 Nojumi, N. Mazurana D. & Stities, E., (2004) op.cit.

tains and the lack of road networks that can ensure the reach of the state to remote areas, also played a role in delaying this process. Thus unlike other non-colonized states which eventually came to have a unified justice system, Afghanistan continues to have a dual system, albeit one in which the two systems have a relationship with one another and are not mutually exclusive.

Just as the traditional justice system draws from a multitude of sources, so too does Afghanistan's formal justice system reflects the various regimes that have controlled the state apparatus in different periods of Afghanistan's history and sought to introduce their own variants of state law.. The formal state system reveals influences of French legal thought, moderate Islam, Marxism and radical interpretations of Islam.[4] Various initiatives undertaken during the 1960s and which received a new lease of life after the Bonn Conference of December 2001 furthered the process of relative secularization of the formal justice system of Afghanistan. Moreover, in the post-Taliban era, attempts have been made to integrate the fundamental principles of human rights and international standards of procedures into the Afghan justice system, while simultaneously forging a stronger and more transparent relationship with traditional justice mechanisms.

The 2008 Asia Foundation survey sought to measure public perceptions and experiences of both the formal and informal justice systems. What the data broadly suggest is the association of the modern state judicial system with the urban milieu, and local shura and jirga with rural locales. This is elaborated in the following sections.

Perceptions of Justice Institutions

Perceptions of State Courts

A series of statements about the state courts were read out to survey respondents and they were asked to indicate whether they agree or disagree with the statements (Q91[5]). The responses show that the people of Afghanistan generally trust state courts. They are most positive about accessibility, but least positive about the capacity of State Courts to resolve cases in a timely fashion. Indeed this is the only aspect on which negative opinions outweigh positive views. Yet despite the overall positive assessment, the results fall well short of a strong endorsement of the formal justice system. Indeed the responses reveal that the state court system still needs to do much to evince a higher degree of confidence from the public.

4 Wardak, A., (2004) op. cit.

5 For full 2008 survey questions and responses see Appendix 1: Asia Foundation 2008 Survey - Interview Questionnaire

Table 1: Views on State Courts

	Strongly agree (%)	Somewhat agree (%)	Somewhat disagree (%)	Strongly disagree (%)
a) State Courts are accessible to me	22	46	20	9
b) State Courts are fair and trusted	10	40	33	12
c) State Courts are not corrupt compared to other options of settling a dispute	11	36	33	13
d) State Courts follow the local norms and values of our people	12	38	31	14
e) State Courts are effective at delivering justice	15	37	30	14
f) State Courts resolve cases timely and promptly	10	28	33	24

Source: 2008 Asia Foundation survey

The generally low degree of trust in the formal state court system is corroborated from other responses as well. When asked about their confidence in different institutions, under half of respondents (46%) express confidence in the government justice system (Q52d) – the second lowest response for any public institution. The justice system is also the public institution where respondents have most frequently encountered corruption with 51 percent reporting corruption-related experience in judiciary/courts (Q28) This is a concerning finding because, as Maley points out in his chapter in this volume, low levels of public trust in the justice system can alienate people from the state and undermine the legitimacy of the government.

Perceptions of Local Shura and Jirga

Just as in the case of the state court system, the survey endeavored to uncover public perceptions of local shura and jirga (i.e., traditional justice institutions). A sizable majority of the Afghan people has a positive assessment of local shura and jirga; an overwhelming majority of people agree with the statements that were read-out to them (Q92), as shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Views on Local Shura and Jirga

	Strongly agree (%)	Somewhat agree (%)	Somewhat disagree (%)	Strongly disagree (%)
a) Local jirga, shura are accessible to me	31	45	14	6
b) Local jirga, shura are fair and trusted	24	46	21	5
c) Local jirga, shura follow the local norms and values of our people	26	43	21	6
d) Local jirga, shura are effective at delivering justice	25	44	20	6
e) Local jirga, shura resolve cases timely and promptly	23	36	25	10

Source: 2008 Asia Foundation survey

For the sake of comparison, when people's perceptions of the state court system asre compared with those of the traditional shura and jirga system, it becomes evident that ordinary Afghans place a higher level of trust and confidence in traditional mediation institutions rather than in modern formal justice institutions.

Researchers have pointed to a number of possible reasons why Afghans express a greater degree of trust and confidence in the traditional justice system. First, it is focused on substance than on procedure. Second, it aims at compensation and reconciliation and not at punishment. Third, the concerned parties believe that justice is being done. Ali Wardak notes in his seminal article, "Building a Post-War Justice System in Afghanistan" that the outcome of the shura and jirga decisions resembles the spirit of 'restorative justice' where emphasis is put on the restoration of dignity and friendship between offenders and victims.[6] These principles are important for maintaining social relations and it is for this reason that informal justice is considered legitimate. In fact, the popularity of the informal justice system in Afghanistan is tied to its legitimacy. Indeed, shura and jirga enjoy high levels of what Maley refers to in his chapter as "traditional legitimacy" - people believe that they reflect local customs and traditions.[7]

Moreover, the formal justice system remains mired in administrative delays, bribery and corruption. In addition, the "war-economy" of Afghanistan that revolved around weapons, illicit drugs and exploitation of natural resources for over two decades meant that there has been an infiltration of those with guns and money into the formal justice system.[8] Therefore it does not come as a surprise that Afghan's place higher levels of trust in informal justice institutions.

However, when the statements outlined above are scrutinized in greater detail – for instance, cross-tabulating with different variables, a pattern becomes discernible: Fewer women have positive views of local shura and jirga compared to men. These findings corroborate a number of studies that have pointed to deficiencies in the informal justice system as far as women's rights are concerned.[9] Indeed a recognized weakness of the informal system is that it does not sufficiently recognize universal principles of human rights The fact that fewer women than men have positive opinions of these institutions is likely related to the marginal role that women play in these traditional systems[10]. These issues are also discussed by Kaur and Ayubi in their chapter in this volume.

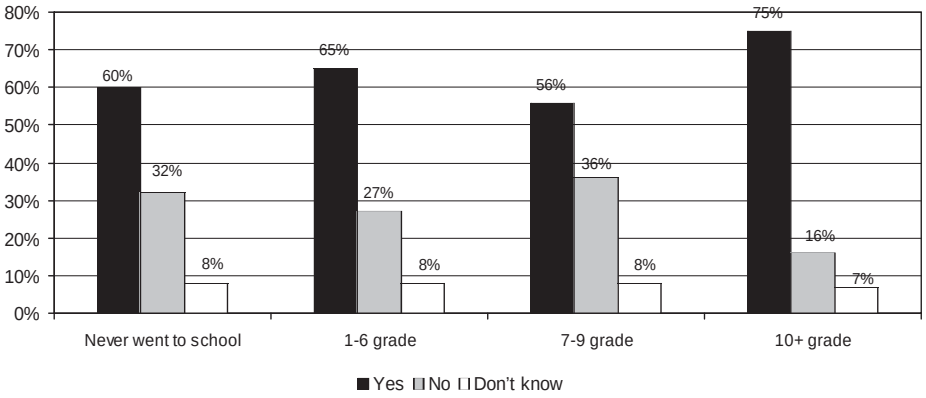
6 Wardak, A., (2004) op. cit.
7 Norwegian Refugee Council, The Relationship Between Formal and Informal Justice Systems in Afghanistan, (Norwegian Refugee Council), 2007.
8 Wardak, A., (2004) op. cit.
9 Nojumi, N. Mazurana D. & Stities, E., 2004, op. cit.
10 Norwegian Refugee Council, 2007, op. cit.

The Efficacy of the Formal and Informal Justice Systems in Dealing with Crime

Reporting of Crime

Sixteen percent of survey respondents say that they have been victims of violence or crime during the past year (Q19). These individuals were further asked if they reported this to any authority (Q21). Sixty-two percent say they reported it while another one-third (29%) say they did not. The survey found that the likelihood of reporting crime to an authority varies with level of educational attainment. At the highest end of the educational spectrum people are more likely people are to report crime or violence to an authority. This may be because greater schooling enables people to understand their rights, as a consequence of which they report the crime, or because they have greater access to authorities to whom they can report.

Figure 1: Reporting of Crime to any Authority, by Level of Education



Source: 2008 Asia Foundation survey

A follow-up question was asked to those respondents who said that they reported violence or crime to an authority (i.e., 10% of total respondents) regarding where they reported (Q22) Respondents were allowed to mention more than one authority to which they had reported. Forty-eight percent mention the Afghan National Police followed by tribal leaders or maliks (24%). Some 22 percent mention the District Governor or *Woleswal* as the institution to which they had reported the crime.

The choice of authority for reporting crime is clearly related to the way people assess various organizations and institutions. When asked about the level of confidence they have in a range of organizations and institutions in Afghanistan, people report the highest level of confidence in the Afghan National Army (ANA) (89%) followed by the Afghan National Police (ANP) (82%) (Q52). Local shura and jirga also enjoy relatively

high levels of public confidence (69%) similar to other representative bodies such as Community Development Councils (CDC) (65%) and Provincial Councils (65%). The public administration in general scores average levels of confidence (55%). However public confidence in the government justice system is low (46%), as shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Confidence in Public and Social Institutions

Institution/Organization	Confidence (Great deal + Fair amount) (%)
Afghan National Army (ANA)	89
Afghan National Police (ANP)	82
Electronic media such as radio, TV	76
Community shuras/jirgas	69
Community Development Councils	65
Provincial Councils	65
International NGOs	64
Newspapers, print media	63
National NGOs	62
Independent Election Commission	57
Public administration	55
Government ministers	51
The government justice system	46
Political parties	43
Municipality	42
Local militias	36

Source: 2008 Asia Foundation survey

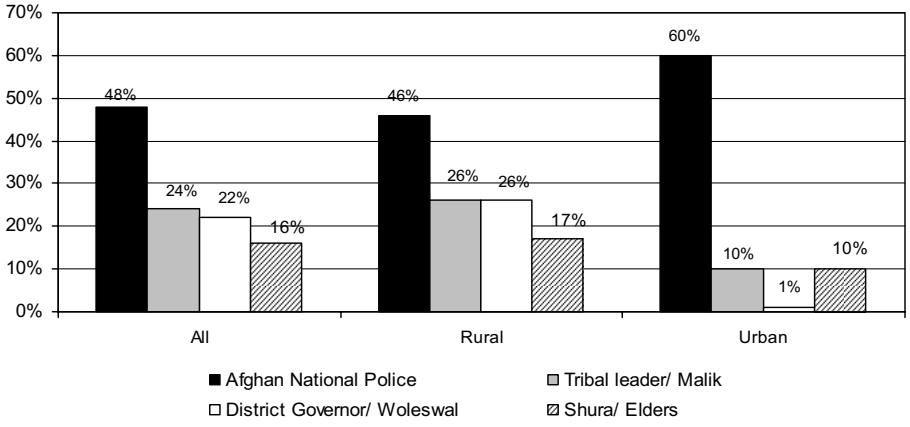
One important thing to note is that public confidence is correlated with perceptions of corruption within these institutions. Among the various state bodies listed, the Afghan National Army is perceived to be the least corrupt, while the judiciary and courts are perceived to be the most corrupt (Q28). What may be surmised from the fact that most Afghans have confidence in the state security forces, but not in the state judicial system is that people are confident that the guilty might be apprehended but due to the corruption within the courts , they are unlikely to be brought to justice.[11] What this further implies is that, for the formal justice system to be positively assessed by the people, corruption in the system needs to end.

[11] See Afghanistan in 2008: A Survey of the Afghan People (Kabul and San Francisco: The Asia Foundation, 2008).

When choosing where to report crime, people generally turn to the agencies and institutions in which they have the greatest trust. In fact, the Afghan National Police is the most commonly chosen institution for reporting crime (48%) (Q22), which is in line with both its mandate and the high level of public confidence it enjoys. After the police, people prefer to report crime to traditional community–based institutions such as tribal leaders and maliks (24%) – which is also consistent with the high levels of public confidence expressed in community shura and jirga. In general, although people may approach traditional mediation institutions more commonly for resolving disputes, as we go on to discuss, they appear to prefer modern institutions such as the police force for reporting crime

That said, although the largest group of both rural and urban residents prefer to report crime to the Afghan National Police, this is true for a higher proportion of urban residents than rural residents, as shown in Figure 2. Although confidence in the ANP is slightly lower in rural than in urban areas (39 percent of rural residents have great confidence in the ANP, compared to 43 percent in urban areas, and there is a similar gap between those who have some confidence (41% compared to 45%), as Jones points out in his chapter in this volume, this is likely to be at least partly due to the lack of police presence in rural areas.

Figure 2: Reporting of Crime to any Authority, by Settlement

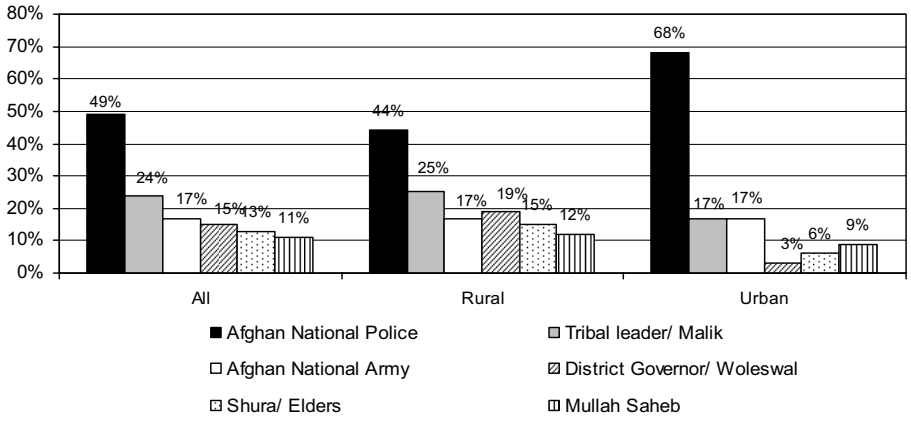


Source: 2008 Asia Foundation survey

People's actual reporting of crime is very similar to their expressed preferences to the hypothetical question: "If you were a witness to a crime, to whom would you report it?" (Q24). Almost half of respondents say that they would report to the Afghan National Police (48%), followed by tribal leader or malik (24%). A significant number of people mention that they would report to the Afghan National Army (17%). They

may say this because they think that certain types of crimes should be reported to the army or they may say this because they have greater confidence and would prefer to go to the Army but in practice they do not do so since they know that it is not the Army's mandate to deal with crime. Fifteen percent also say they would report any crime they had witnessed to the District Governor or *Woleswal*. (See Figure 3). Again, there is some difference in the opinions of rural and urban residents. As many as 68 percent of urban residents say they would report the crime to the ANP while only 44 percent of rural residents say so. Traditional mediation institutions such as tribal leaders/maliks and shura /elders are preferred in rural areas rather than urban areas.

Figure 3: Hypothetical Reporting of Crime to any Authority, by Settlement



Source: 2008 Asia Foundation survey

Figures 2 and 3 reveal a high level of coherence between peoples' actual behavior in reporting a crime and their hypothetical preferences for reporting, i.e., to whom they think they would report crime. The first choice is the Afghan National Police, followed by tribal leader / malik. As their third choice people would prefer to report crime to the Afghan National Army but in reality they don't do this. The fourth choice is the District Governor / *Woleswal* to whom they do in fact report.

What these results highlight is that the people of Afghanistan place considerable trust in the state security forces, especially the ANP, to address crime and violence. They choose to report crime to the ANP, particularly in urban areas where residents are likely to have greater access to the police. Besides this, a substantial proportion of Afghans prefer to, and in practice do, report crime to traditional community-based institutions, particularly in rural areas where police presence is often limited.

The question however remains as to what happens once a crime has been reported. What is the likelihood that perpetrators will be brought to justice? The low level of confidence respondents express in the government justice system, and the high level of corruption reported in the judiciary and state courts suggest that the real problem for institutionalizing justice in Afghanistan lies in the judicial processes for delivering judgment and redress.

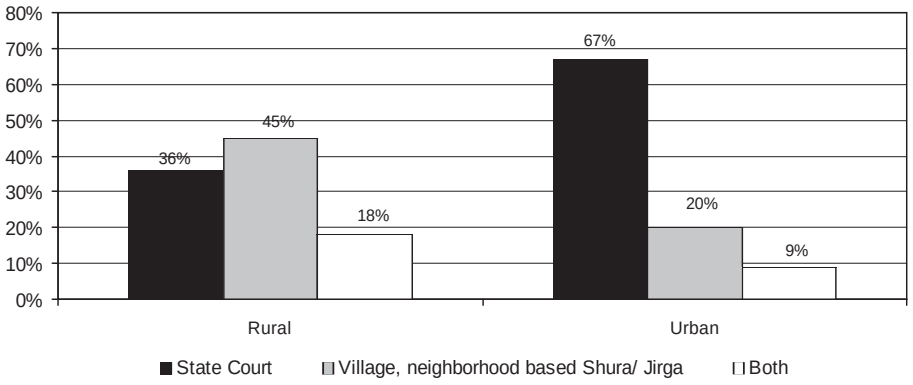
Dispute Resolution

To examine how judicial processes operate in both the formal and informal justice systems in Afghanistan, the Asia Foundation survey asked a range of questions pertaining to dispute settlement. First, respondents were asked: "In the past two years have you had a dispute or a formal case that you could not settle with the other party and had to go to a state court or village/neighborhood based shura or jirga to resolve it?" (Q93). Only 12 percent say they have taken cases to these institutions. More men than women and more rural than urban people report having had to settle a dispute in this way Those who have done this were then asked "Where have you taken this case or dispute?"(Q94). The Afghan public's choice of place for settling a dispute is divided. Forty-two percent say they have taken a case to shura or jirga while another 39 percent say a state court. Interestingly, 17 percent say that they have taken their case to both these institutions.

A higher proportion of those living in urban areas report having taken their case to state courts (67%), than those in rural areas (36%). On the other hand, a relatively high proportion of rural residents report having gone to shuras/jirgas (45%), compared to those in urban areas (20%), as shown in Figure 4. The reason why urban residents take their cases to state courts while the rural residents take theirs to the shura or jirga may be due to accessibility. Indeed as high as thirty one percent of those living in villages disagree with the statement that state courts are accessible to them, compared to 20 percent in urban areas (Q91a), and a 2004 report pointed out that in many areas there are no judges or functioning courts outside of urban areas.[12]

[12] Nojumi, N. Mazurana D. & Stities, E. 2004, op. cit. Moreover, such courts in urban areas have high case loads while some of those that exist in rural areas are under-resourced and subject to the will of local commanders

Figure 4: Place for Dispute Resolution, by Settlement



Source: 2008 Asia Foundation survey

Another reason why more people in rural areas take their cases to shura or jirga may be because in rural areas there is still a greater degree of tribal cohesion left intact. Given the association of shura and jirga with tribal solidarity it is not difficult to understand why more rural people prefer approaching these informal institutions.

It is also worth noting that women are also slightly more likely to take cases to state courts (42%) than men (38%) One reason for this may be due to the discrimination against women that prevails in many traditional institutions in Afghanistan, as Kaur and Ayubi discuss in their chapter in this volume. The role of the state courts in enforcing gender equality and redressing the shortcomings of informal justice mechanisms with respect to women's rights and human rights more generally should not be overlooked.

There could be various reasons why some people say that they approach both formal and informal justice system. First, this could be because people register their case under the state court and then proceed to settle it through shura or jirga. Second, it could be because the state courts themselves refer the cases to shura or jirga for resolution. Third, it could be because people seek to resolve their cases through shura or jirga and then have the decision registered with the state court. Fourth, people who do not receive a judgment they agree with through shura or jirga, may proceed to register their case with the courts[13]

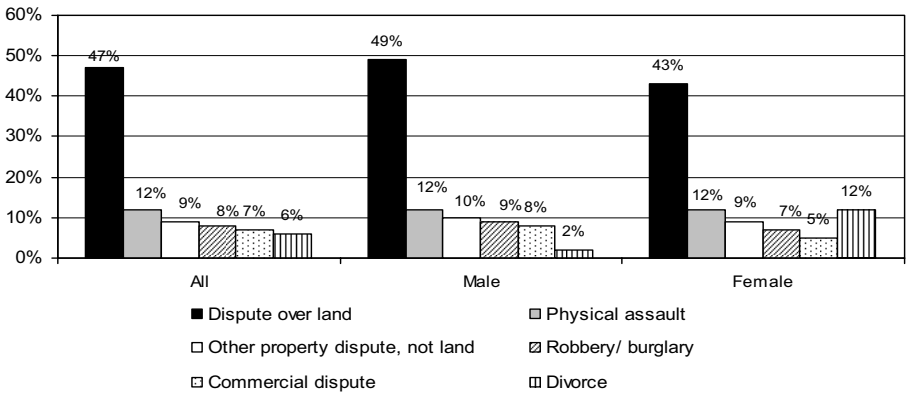
Amongst those who have taken a case to a state court (i.e., 7 percent of total respondents 66 percent mentioned that they pleaded their case alone or were helped by friends or relatives while another 22 percent say they used professional legal services (Q95). In general, the use of professional legal services is still quite low. This need not come as a surprise since studies have shown that a system of legal advocacy or inde-

[13] Norwegian Refugee Council, 2007, op. cit

pendent defense has never existed within the Afghan judiciary. *Afghanistan's Systems of Justice: Formal, Traditional and Customary* (2004) notes that under the previous legal system, legal advocates operating outside of the official justice system were available for hire, but were not provided by the courts. The report also noted that these legal advocates had varying levels of training and few were trained to present a client in a court or to act as his/her defence attorney. Though a public advocacy office has recently been established at the Supreme Court in Kabul, judges are generally not aware of the existence of this office.[14]

For both men and women, disputes over land are the most common reason cited for accessing state court or shura/jirga (47 percent of cases taken for resolution) (Q96). Next in importance for women are divorce cases (12%) and physical assault (12%). Six times more women access state court or shura jirga to resolve divorce-related cases than men (2%), as shown in Figure 5.

Figure 5: Kinds of Disputes Taken for Resolution, by Gender



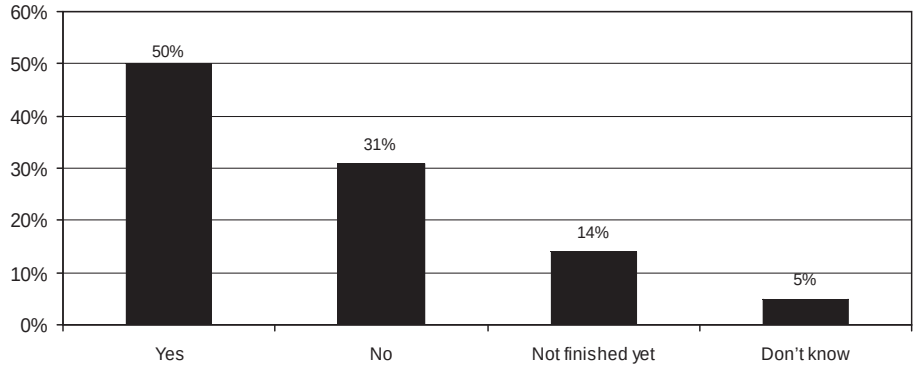
Source: 2008 Asia Foundation survey

The kinds of cases or disputes for which people approach courts and/or shura and jirga are also largely coherent with the types of crime and violence most commonly experienced by survey respondents. These include physical attack or beating followed by extortion, burglary/looting and theft of livestock (Q20).

Finally respondents were asked whether, regardless of where they took their case for resolution, they were satisfied with the outcome of the proceedings (Q97). Half of them say they were satisfied with the outcome while another 31 percent say they were not, as shown in Figure 6.

[14] Nojumi, N. Mazurana D. & Stities, E., 2004, op. cit.

Figure 6: Satisfaction with Outcome of Resolution Process



Source: 2008 Asia Foundation survey

An important finding is that the proportion of people who were satisfied with the outcome of the proceedings is significantly higher among those who had taken their cases to local shura or jirga (65%) than among those who had taken their case to the state courts (36%). The proportion of those who mention that their cases are not yet resolved is also higher amongst those who turned to state courts (17%) than those who went to shura or jirga (9%), as shown in Table 4.

Dissatisfaction with state court proceedings is higher than with the outcome of shura and jirga amongst both rural (43% compared to 19%) and urban (38% compared to 6%) residents. Moreover, although fewer urban residents take their cases to shura or jirga, a higher proportion of them report being satisfied with the outcomes (78%) than amongst rural residents (65%) who more often have recourse to these informal mechanisms (see Table 4).

Table 4: Satisfaction with Outcome of Resolution Process, by Institution and Settlement

	All		**Rural**		**Urban**	
	State Court (%)	**Shura/Jirga (%)**	**State Court (%)**	**Shura/Jirga (%)**	**State Court (%)**	**Shura/Jirga (%)**
Yes	36	65	36	65	39	78
No	42`	18	43	19	38	6
Not finished yet	17	9	17	8	20	17

Source: 2008 Asia Foundation survey

It is not possible to get the full picture from the survey data about what is functioning well and what is functioning badly in the state justice system. However, as we discussed in the first section of this chapter, the data do suggest that, although state courts are perceived to be accessible (Q91), only half of respondents agree that they are fair and trusted (50%), follow local norms and values (50%) and are effective at delivering justice (52%),. Moreover, less than half think that state courts are less corrupt than other options for dispute resolution (46%) or that they resolve cases in a timely fashion (38%). (See Table 1).

On the other hand, the fact that the majority of respondents agree that local jirga and shura are fair and trusted (70%) (Q92), follow local norms and values (69%) and are effective at delivering justice (69%) indicates a high level of confidence in these informal mechanisms which is likely to influence respondent's satisfaction with the outcomes of their proceedings. (See Table 2). Moreover, as we discussed in section one, the fact that proceedings are conducted by respected elders with established social status and a reputation for piety and fairness is likely to increase both trust and satisfaction. As is the fact that disputants know and trust local elders and that decisions are reached in accordance with accepted local traditions. The emphasis of shura and jirga proceedings on compensation and reconciliation instead of punishment adds to the sense for concerned parties that justice is being done, which bolsters the legitimacy of both the process and the outcome. Finally, the workings of informal justice mechanisms often avoid the long delays and financial costs associated with formal court proceedings[15]

Comparative Perspectives

Nepal, another landlocked mountainous country in South Asia, like Afghanistan did not go through a period of colonial rule. However, whereas Afghanistan has evolved both a formal and an informal justice system which work in parallel, in Nepal the informal justice system has been assimilated into the formal state system to a greater degree. Nepal also has faced insurgency and civil strife, although these have not weakened the state to the dramatic extent that has been seen in Afghanistan. It is therefore interesting to compare some the Asia Foundation survey with some of the pertinent findings of a nationwide survey undertaken in Nepal.[16]

In Afghanistan some 12 percent of respondents say they have taken a dispute or a case for resolution to a state court or a village based shura or jirga during the past two years (Q93). In Nepal, a similarly worded question covering a single year recorded that only 4 percent of respondents has taken a case or dispute to a court or other place to resolve

[16] The Nepal survey was undertaken by Interdisciplinary Analysts for Saferworld, a British NGO. Both the authors were involved as the main researchers in the survey, which was undertaken between 3 and 30 August 2008. The survey covered 3,025 randomly selected respondents spread over 30 of the 75 districts across the country. Sharma, Sudhindra & Sen, Pawan Kumar (2008) Nationwide Survey on People's Perception of Security and Justice Providers in Nepal (Draft Report), Interdisciplinary Analysts, Kathmandu.

it.[17] This comparison suggests that recourse to dispute resolution mechanisms in Afghanistan is higher. This is hardly surprising considering the scale of potential legal conflicts and disputes that have been caused by more than a quarter of a century of civil strife in the country. For example significant numbers of refugees and internally displaced people (IDPs), have been returning since 2001, expecting to reclaim their homes and fields. Often however, they have found these occupied by others, and with neither party able to produce official documents to prove ownership or title. Clearly the repercussions of this situation are likely to include an increase in the number of disputes, especially related to rights and entitlements of land and property - which the Asia Foundation survey shows, is the main source of cases taken for resolution in Afghanistan (Q96).[18] Nepal has not experienced dislocation of population on the same scale, which may be an important reason why the proportion of those who report taking disputes for resolution is much smaller.

However, the nature of disputes referred to authorities, (both formal and informal) is similar in the two countries. As Table 5 demonstrates, in both countries land disputes account for the largest proportion of cases for which people access courts or other bodies for resolution. The next most common type of case is physical assault, which is more often referred to the authorities for resolution in Nepal (19%) than in Afghanistan (14%). Commercial disputes, on the other hand are more often referred to authorities for resolution in Afghanistan (7%) than in Nepal (4%).

Table 5: Kinds of Disputes Referred to Authorities, Afghanistan and Nepal

	Afghanistan %	**Nepal** %
Dispute over land	47	44
Physical assault	12	19
Property other than land	9	10
Robbery/burglary	8	-
Commercial dispute	7	4
Domestic quarrels	-	7
Divorce	6	-
Murder	5	-

Source: 2008 Asia Foundation survey and 2008 Saferworld survey

17 "In the past one year have you had a dispute or a formal case that you could not settle with the other party and had to go to a court or other place to resolve?

18 The complexity of rights and entitlements in circumstances where those who had been displaced for several years but have now come back to reclaim those has been documented very well in the Norwegian Refugee Council' 2007 report, The Relationship Between Formal and Informal Justice Systems in Afghanistan. Reaching a verdict in such circumstances as the cases highlight is very complex indeed.

The organizations and institutions that people refer to in order to report crime or resolve disputes are also largely similar. Residents in both countries prefer the police followed by influential people in their local community, as shown in Tables 6 and 7.

Table 6: To what agency or institution did you report the crime? (Q22) (Afghanistan 2008)

	Percent*
ANP	48
Tribal leader/Malik	24
District Governor/Woleswal	22
Shura/Elders	16
ANA	9
Mullah Saheb	7
Provincial authority	7

** Percentage based on multiple responses*

Source: 2008 Asia Foundation survey

Table 7: Where have you taken this dispute or case?[19] (Nepal 2008)

	Percent*
Police	44
Local important person	25
Municipality / VDC	19
Court	17
District administration office	11
CPN Maoist / YCL	9

** Percentage based on multiple responses*

Source: 2008 Saferworld survey

These two sets of data are not exactly comparable since the Afghanistan question focuses on reporting crime, while the Nepal question focuses on dispute resolution. However, in both cases, the role of the police as a first port of call in addressing

[19] For the Nepal survey, reported results exclude the response category 'Nowhere' to make the responses consistent with that of the Afghanistan survey.

disharmony is highlighted. Relatively more people say they report crime (48% in Afghanistan) or take disputes (44% in Nepal) to the police than to any other body or institution. Thus formal state institutions play a key role as the entry point for justice in both countries, particularly the police as they are the most accessible formal law and order body with a local presence. In both countries also, after the police, people prefer to access justice and redress through informal leadership structures based in their community. In Afghanistan this role is taken by tribal leaders or maliks (24%) while in Nepal this is taken up by local important persons (25%) as the equivalent of the tribal leader/malik.

Looking only at dispute resolution, regardless of where disputes were referred, the levels of satisfaction with the outcome of justice processes expressed by residents in Afghanistan and Nepal are also remarkably similar. The proportion who say they are satisfied with the proceedings is 61 percent in Nepal and 58 percent in Afghanistan (Q97), while the proportion who say they are not satisfied is 36 percent in both countries, as shown in Table 8.

Table 8: Satisfaction with Outcome of Resolution Process: Afghanistan and Nepal

	Afghanistan[20] %	**Nepal** %
Yes	58	61
No	36	36
Don't Know	6	3

Source: 2008 Asia Foundation survey and 2008 Saferworld survey

However, there are significant differences in public perceptions in these two countries regarding satisfaction in the formal and informal justice systems. In Nepal, more people are satisfied with the outcome of the proceedings who have taken their cases to state courts than those who have taken them to local important persons or community leaders (84% vs. 70%). In contrast, more people in Afghanistan are satisfied with the outcome of the proceedings who have taken their cases to informal judicial system than those who have taken to state courts (72%vs. 44%) (see Table 9). This suggests that in Nepal people have a higher level of trust in the formal judicial system whereas in Afghanistan people have more confidence in the informal justice system.

[20] For the Afghanistan survey, reported results exclude the response category 'Not finished yet' to make the responses consistent with that of the Nepal survey.

Table 9: Satisfaction with Outcome of Resolution Process, Afghanistan and Nepal, by Institution

	Nepal		Afghanistan[21]	
	State Court	Local Important Person %	State Court %	Shura/ Jirga %
Yes	84	70	44	72
No	16	30	51	20

Source: 2008 Asia Foundation survey and 2008 Saferworld survey

This difference may be explained in part by the fact that, although the state in Nepal was weakened by a decade-long insurgency (1996-2005), state institutions including the formal justice system continued to function. The modernization process that began from the 1950s continued in this Himalayan state in spite of the Maoist insurgency, as a consequence of which the state system was able to streamline customary laws. This process eventually led to the refinement, revision and assimilation of the indigenous legal system under the modern state system. On the other hand, the rupture of the modernization process due to the quarter-century long civil strife in Afghanistan has meant the continued strength of the informal justice system as the main source of redress for most Afghans, and its relative lack of integration into the formal state system.

Challenges for Institutionalizing Justice in Afghanistan

The preceding analysis shows that Afghanistan faces significant challenges in the institutionalization of justice. Though the state courts are increasingly becoming accessible to people, in comparison to the informal justice system fewer people perceive their verdicts to be fair and to adhere to local norms and values, or their processes to be effective in resolving cases promptly. In addition the government justice system is seen to be corrupt which has resulted in low public confidence.

Various researchers have pointed to the relationship that exists between formal and informal justice systems in Afghanistan and show how both could gain through closer association with each other[22]. The way forward for strengthening the state court system in Afghanistan is not by by-passing or maligning traditional shura and jirga. The fact that a higher proportion of those accessing the services of the local shura and jirga

[21] For the Afghanistan survey, reported results exclude the response category 'Not finished yet' to make the responses consistent with that of the Nepal survey

[22] For example see Norwegian Refugee Council's 2007 op. cit.

report satisfaction with the outcome, underscores the continued salience of these institutions for justice in Afghanistan. In addition, most Afghans live in rural areas so the fact that a higher proportion of the rural population avail of traditional institutions for dispensing justice means that a majority of the population continue to access these mechanisms. Traditional dispute resolution mechanisms are performing relatively well and will probably continue to benefit from public trust and confidence in the future. Moreover the existence of a plurality of institutions is good as it increases the options available for people who will want to access different kinds of dispute-resolution institutions depending on their cases at hand.

Many relationships already exist between the two systems; however their relationship needs to be made even stronger. The formal justice system needs to have more engagement with the informal system to strengthen the institutionalisation of justice in Afghanistan. Greater dialogue between the two systems would make each one even more effective. In reforming the legal system, the formal state system needs to move cautiously and to understand the informal system better. [23]

The different systems – the modern state courts and traditional shura and jirga – could be likened to what legal anthropologists call "forums", that offer different options. The Asia Foundation survey data reveal that in Afghanistan (as in many other countries in the world) people access different forums depending on their case. People may also access two or more such forums simultaneously, for example 17 percent of those who referred cases for resolution accessed the services of both state courts and shura or jirga (Q94). Accessing these different forums could be likened to shopping where people shop for forums that best represent their interests, or which they feel will give them a sympathetic hearing. This process has been described by the term 'forum shopping'[24]. Indeed, people's actual practices revealed in the survey demonstrate that they are already dealing with plural institutions and making such choices. These processes will have to be formalized legally for the formal state system and the traditional informal system to be officially recognised as different nodes of dispute resolution.

Moreover, in Afghan society there are some forces that perpetuate exclusive identity, while there are others that lead to greater integration. The forces behind perpetuating exclusivity stem from geographic remoteness, lack of road access, and the salience of tribal values and norms. The forces fostering integration in Afghanistan have been trade and commerce, education in colleges and universities, government institutions, cross-regional employment opportunities, and intermarriages. This process of integration also leads to strengthening citizenship and fostering a sense of belonging to the Afghan state irrespective of one's tribal or regional identity.[25] There is therefore a need to

[23] ibid

[24] For more details see Benda-Beckmann, K. von (1981) "Forum Shopping and Shopping Forums", Journal of Legal Pluralism 19:117-159. See also Benda-Beckmann, F. von (1989) "Scape-goat and Magic Charm: Law in Development Theory and Practice" Journal of Legal Pluralism 28:129-148.

[25] Wardak, A, 2004. op. cit

address these cultural cleavages. The traditional-modern cleavage between the formal and informal justice systems can also be seen as a cleavage between the rural and the urban, with rural residents preferring traditional institutions, while urban residents show a preference for modern ones. Nonetheless the data suggest that traditional institutions are perceived to be more efficacious than modern ones, though it cannot be denied that issues of access, state penetration and capacity are also likely to be key factors leading to this.

Issues of access are also central to the institutionalisation of the formal justice system. Here too, issues of security play a key role The security apparatus needs to be considerably enhanced – there is no difference of opinion on this. Only in a secure state, one in which there is law and order, will it be possible to maintain an effective and just legal system.[26] Conversely a weakened security system means that crime can thrive along with terrorist and insurgent activities. In such circumstances it would be difficult to enforce the law by punishing the guilty and thereby maintaining justice, and the very idea of a state that has a monopoly over the coercive instruments would be undermined. As Jones, in his chapter in this volume makes amply clear, there is a need to establish government authority across the country through effective security. Enhancing the security environment of Afghanistan needs to focus particularly in the South East and South West regions where it is being challenged by the armed insurgency.

Finally, modernization processes, over time, will strengthen state courts. The preceding pages have shown the linkages of the state courts with the urban milieu and with women. With better law and order and expansion in the reach of the central government through improved road networks and increasing urbanization, more and more people will be able to access state courts. However, increasing access is one thing, providing prompt services and verdicts that are perceived as just is another. It is in this context that the improvement in the efficacy of the modern state courts becomes relevant: Governance will have to be strengthened and corruption tackled so as to ensure that courts are able to deliver justice effectively and efficiently. The judiciary needs to play a more proactive role so that people's level of confidence in it increases. Corruption in the justice system must be tackled and cases need to be resolved in a timely and prompt manner so fair justice is delivered.

---

[26] The relationship between a law enforcing-government and a good judicial system is captured by a quote from a ninth-century Islamic scholar, Ibn Qutayba: "There can be no government without an army, no army without money, no money without prosperity and no prosperity without justice and good administration. (Quoted in Afghanistan National Development Strategy. Justice Sector Strategy Summary, 2007).

Chapter 4

The Road to Democracy in Afghanistan

Russell J. Dalton

This essay reports on how Afghans view democracy today, and how attitudes are evolving over time. Afghans continue to express widespread support for democracy as the best form of government. They understand democracy in terms of liberal political rights, and are feeling more politically efficacious. At the same time, there is evidence that the depth of democratic support has eroded since 2006 and levels of violence and insecurity in some provinces are undermining perception of freedom of expression, support for democracy and other democratic attitudes. Democratization requires a deepening of democratic values, so these trend in the opposite direction are a negative sign. A growing majority of Afghans see democracy and Islam as compatible which is a positive indicator of progress in bridging this divide. Another positive sign is the modest level of ethnic and religious differences in attitudes. A majority of the major ethnic groups share an endorsement of democracy, and are satisfied with the way it is working in Afghanistan, but there has been an erosion here as well. Decreasing evaluations of the performance of the government in economic and security terms appear to be the main sources of this decline. Further declines in governmental performance can further erode evaluations of the working of democracy, and potentially create doubts about democracy in broader terms. Democratic aspirations are too new to be deeply rooted in the political culture, and thus remain susceptible to change. Afghanistan therefore faces the urgent challenge of rejoining the trend toward a democratic culture and fulfilling the democratic aspirations of its citizens, before these aspirations begin to seriously erode.

Introduction

Afghanistan began its transition to democracy in the early 2000s with great expectations.[1] A member of the Afghan parliament tells the following story about constituents in his district:

> As the first presidential election approached, a homeowner was having his roof repaired. A storm was approaching, as well as the election. Nevertheless, the roofers decided to stop working for a day - and lose a valuable day's pay - in order to travel home to their village to vote. Even though the homeowner worried about his house if the rains came, he supported his workers' decision. Voting was more important than fixing his roof.

The parliamentarian tells this story because it illustrates the importance of democracy to Afghans at the beginning of the democratic transition. As Maley sets out in his chapter in this volume, over the previous three decades Afghanistan had suffered through a

[1] For extensive analysis of attitudes toward democracy in 2006 see Russell Dalton, "Afghans and Democracy", in State Building, Political Progress, and Human Security in Afghanistan: Reflections on a Survey of the Afghan People. (Kabul and San Francisco: The Asia Foundation, 2007): 13-28.

series of autocratic governments: the Zahir Shah monarchy, the Daoud autocracy, Babrak Karmal and Dr Najibullah's communist vassal state of the Soviet Union, and the effective breakdown of the state during the Mujahideen period. Then the Taliban came to power, and made things much worse. By the end of the Taliban rule, Afghanistan was one of the poorest nations in the world, ranking near the bottom on almost all measures of human development.

Most Afghans saw democracy as a way to provide the stability and human rights that were lacking under these previous regimes. Indeed, the images of long lines at the voting booths and Afghans' emotions on election day were endorsements of democracy that stood in sharp contrast to the electoral indifference in many established Western democracies.

Life and politics in Afghanistan have changed dramatically since the Taliban were forced from power in 2001 and the democratically elected Karzai government took office in 2004. There have been major improvements in living conditions, investments in national infrastructure, and new political rights for the populace. These developments are recognized by the public at large, although many severe social and economic problems remain[2].

Similarly, although international forces bolstering the Afghan National Army have provided a base of stability and security for the new government, political violence has grown in recent years, especially in the Eastern and South Western provinces, and in Kabul itself. The progress toward stability and democratization has been neither as rapid nor as extensive as many Afghans may have hoped. In 2008 the Freedom House noted a negative trend in democratic progress in Afghanistan because of the worsening security conditions and the internal political struggles of the government.[3]

This essay reports on how the Afghan public views democracy today, and how attitudes are evolving over time. It is based on the new national survey of the Afghan public conducted by The Asia Foundation in 2008.[4] We first discuss Afghan support for democracy and the content of these opinions. The next section discusses the perceived relationship between democracy and Islam. The third section examines Afghan attitudes toward various elements of citizenship, such as feelings of personal efficacy and government responsiveness. The fourth section describes public satisfaction with the democratic process. We conclude by discussing the possible policy implications of these

2 United Nations Development Program, Afghanistan Human Development Report 2007. (New York: United Nations, 2007). Although the report notes a doubling of personal income between 2002 and 2007, it also shows that Afghanistan ranks 174th out of 178 countries on the Human Development Index.

3 Freedom House, Freedom in the World, (Washington, DC:, Freedom House, 2008).

4 The 2008 survey was conducted June 2008 amongst 6592 respondents. See the full report: Afghanistan in 2008: A Survey of the Afghan People (Kabul and San Francisco: The Asia Foundation, 2008). In addition, we compare results to the 2006 and 2007 surveys: State Building, Political Progress, and Human Security in Afghanistan: Reflections on a Survey of the Afghan People (Kabul and San Francisco: The Asia Foundation, 2007); Afghanistan in 2007: A Survey of the Afghan People (Kabul and San Francisco: The Asia Foundation, 2007).

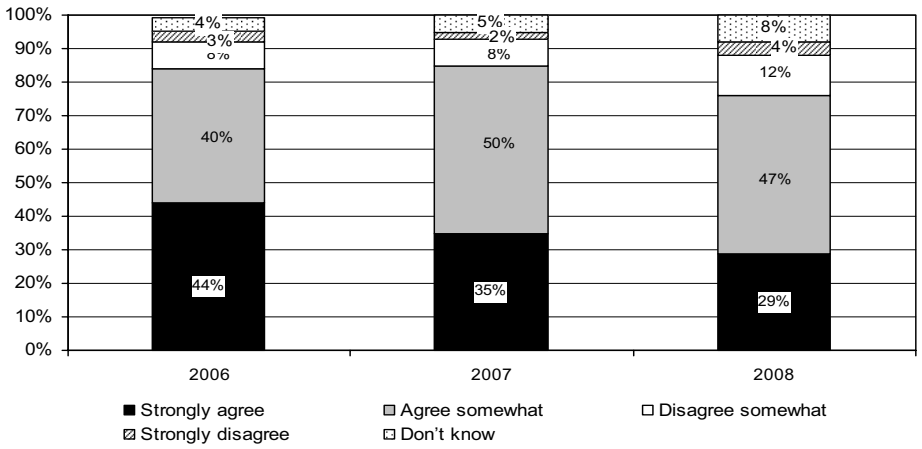
findings. This study gives voice to the Afghan public and assesses how they view the progress that has been made and the political challenges that remain.

Support for Democracy

An important long-term element in any democratic transition is the development of public support for the democratic ideal that will sustain the new political process. It is difficult for any democracy to endure if the citizenry does not value and understand the democratic process. While the Afghan state and its political systems are struggling to develop a functional system of democratyic government, this report asks how ordinary citizens view democracy, and their understanding of this concept.

The 2008 survey asked Afghans whether they agree or disagree with the Churchillian statement: "Democracy may have its problems, but it is better than any other form of government" (Q79[5]). A full 78 percent of Afghans agree with this statement, which is a positive sign of their democratic aspirations (see Figure 1). This is slightly below the 84 percent in 2006 and 85 percent in 2007 that endorsed democracy in this question. Compared to other nations in the region, however, Afghans are more positive toward democracy than many of their neighbors, even ranking well compared to democracies such as India and Turkey.[6] Given Afghanistan's modern political history, this high level of democratic support is striking.

Figure 1: Democracy is Better than Other Forms of Government, 2006-2008

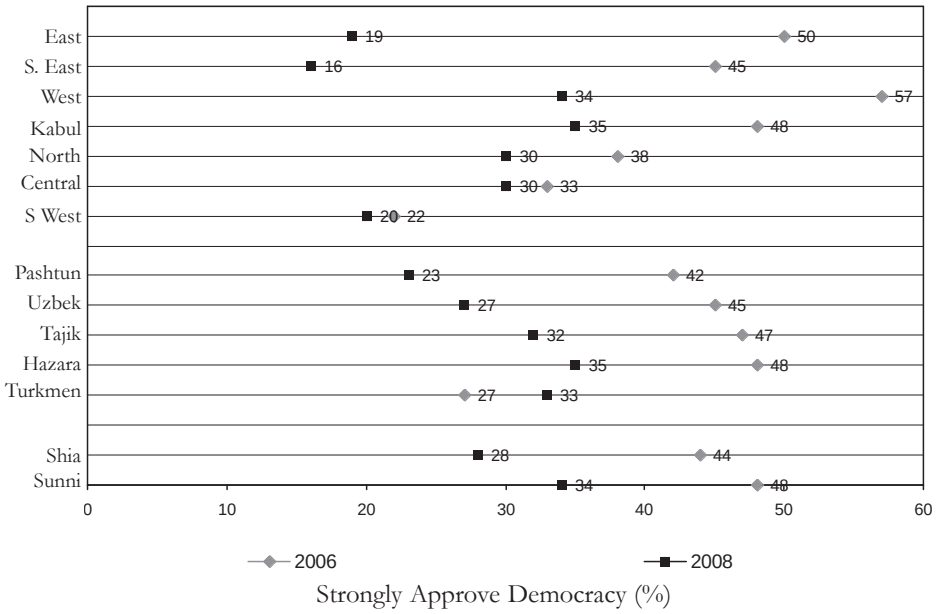


Source: 2006, 2007, and 2008 Asia Foundation surveys

5 For full 2008 survey questions and responses see Appendix 1: Asia Foundation 2008 Survey - Interview Questionnaire

6 The World Values Survey found that support for democracy was 68% in Iraq in 2004, and in 2001 it was 65% in India, 79% in Jordan, 80% in Pakistan and 79% in Turkey. See Ronald Inglehart et al., Human Beliefs and Values: A Cross-Cultural Sourcebook. (Madrid: Siglo XXI, 2004); Mark Tessler, Mansoor Moaddel and Ronald Inglehart, What do Iraqis want? Journal of Democracy, January 2006, 17: 39-50.

Figure 2: Changes in Strong Approval of Democracy, 2006-2008



Source: 2006, 2007, and 2008 Asia Foundation surveys

Successful democratization would entail a growth in support for democracy over time. However, in Afghanistan the trend is moving slightly in the opposite direction instead. Strong agreement that democracy is the best form of government dropped from 44 percent in 2006 to 30 percent in 2008. Actual disapproval of democracy has grown from 11 percent in 2006 to 16 percent in 2008. In addition, the percentage expressing no opinion has increased from 4 to 8 percent between 2006 and 2008. The downward trend is most apparent in the 2007-08 comparison.

Part of the decline probably reflects an inevitable erosion in the political euphoria that marked the end of the autocratic Taliban era and the introduction of democracy. Similar declines in democratic support occurred among many East European publics in the years immediately after their democratic transitions of 1989-90. Moreover, support for democracy in Afghanistan in 2006 was higher than might have been expected given the country's socio-economic base and its limited experience with democracy.

In addition, there is evidence (presented below) that a growing number of Afghans are concerned about the mixed progress in addressing many of the nation's enduring problems, especially violence and corruption. The downward trend in support for democra-

cy mirrors the public's decreasing belief that Afghanistan is on the right track, a general barometer of public sentiment about the nation's course.[7]

We can target the sources of opinion change by comparing how strong approval of democracy has changed among specific demographic groups (see Figure 2). The top lines in the figure display regional patterns in 2006 and 2008. The largest regional declines have come in the Eastern and South Eastern provinces bordering on Pakistan, where Taliban incursions are a continuing experience. For instance, half of those in the Eastern provinces strongly approved of democracy in 2006, and this declines to only 19 percent in 2008 (a decline of 31 percent). The Western region shows the third largest drop in strong support for democracy. Democratic support decreases in Kabul, but by less than the national average. The smallest change is in the Southwest around the Kandahar province—but this is because democratic support was already lowest in this region in 2006.

Reinforcing the regional patterns, the greatest drop off in strong democratic approval is among Pashtuns, although all ethnic groups except the Turkmen became less supportive over this period. In other words, the modest differences in democratic sentiments among the largest ethnic groups in 2006 have grown a bit wider by 2008.[8]

The last two lines in the figure show that strong support for democracy decreased by about the same percentage among Shia (-14%) and Sunni (-16%).

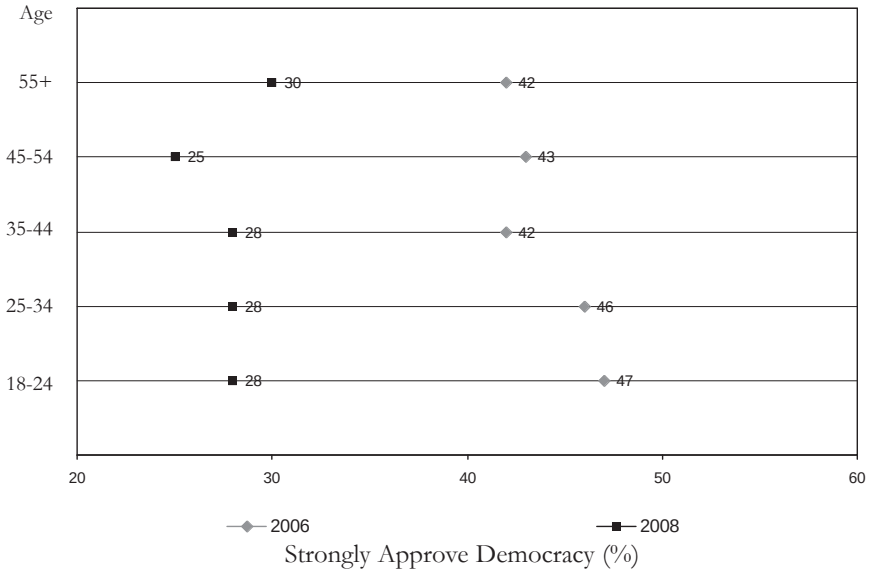
Succeeding generations of Afghans have dramatically different political experiences and this might be expected to leave a trace in their feelings about democracy. Figure 3 compares the support for democracy in 2006 and 2008 across age groups. Strong democratic support was slightly higher among the young in 2006, perhaps due to a youthful optimism for the new democratic system. By 2008, however, strong approval of democracy has dropped the most among the youngest age group (19% decline), so age differences are now negligible. In fact, the strongest approval of democracy now comes from the oldest cohort of Afghans. This is a minor shift in generational opinions between 2006 and 2008, but it runs counter to what democratic consolidation would expect. Typically, the young should more readily accept a new political system because their value systems are being formed. This was the pattern in most of the post-communist democracies of East Europe, for example. Thus, finding ways to increase democracy support among the young is important for strengthening the nation's future political prospects.

---

7 Afghanistan in 2008, op. cit. p. 15.

8 This pattern is still markedly different from Iraq, where regional and religious differences in democratic values are substantial. Tessler, Moaddel and Inglehart, 'What do Iraqis want?', pp. 46-48

Figure 3: Changes in Strong Approval of Democracy, by Age Group



Source: 2006 and 2008 Asia Foundation surveys

The Content of Democratic Aspirations

The previous description of public support for democracy makes presumptions about how Afghans understand the term 'democracy'. Given the nation's political history and socio-economic condition one might reasonably wonder about the content of these opinions. The majority of the Afghan adult public has never attended school, lives in a rural area, and has limited access to electricity or modern information sources. These are not ideal conditions for understanding the meaning of democracy. Indeed, one often hears claims that support for democracy in developing nations lacks meaning because it reflects a desire for the higher standard of living in established democracies rather than support for basic democratic rights and principles.

At the same time, in 2008 Afghanistan has already held multiple democratic elections with extensive efforts at civic education during pre-electoral periods and additional democracy-building efforts by the government and international organizations. Hundreds of international and Afghan NGOs have been active in educating the public about democratic processes and principles and developing the basis of a meaningful civil society. Furthermore, Afghans' understanding of democracy could draw upon elements of civic governance in the nation's history, such as the *jirga* tradition, representa-

tive bodies like *shura* and the legacy of the 1964 constitution. Even though these traditional institutions fall short of the democratic ideal, most notably in their traditional exclusion of women, they provide an example of deliberation and collective decision-making that can provide a basis for expanding participation and democratic practices. Indirect evidence of how the experience of traditional governance mechanisms can positively inform attitudes towards democracy is provided elsewhere in the survey which shows greater support for democracy among those who are positive toward their community jirga and shura (See also chapter by Sharma and Sen).[9]

In summary, the depth of public understanding of democracy is uncertain. The following section therefore uses questions from the 2008 and earlier surveys to understand the content of Afghan support for democracy.

The Meaning of Democracy

The most direct way to assess public understanding of democracy is to simply ask people what the term means to them (Q55). The Asia Foundation has regularly monitored public understanding of democracy, beginning with a 2004 Voter Education Survey. Comparative figures from the 2004, 2006 and 2008 surveys are shown in Table 1. In the lead-up to the 2004 elections many Afghans were still uncertain about democracy and the democratic process. For instance, many were unfamiliar with the process of free and fair elections because these were unknown to them. Yet, already in 2004, almost half of Afghans defined democracy in terms of some variant of liberal political rights, which is fairly high in comparison to other newly democratizing nations.[10]

---

9 This holds true across the full range of questions related to attitudes to community jirga and shura. These are: Q92a: Do you agree or disagree with - "Local jirga, shura are accessible to me", Q92b: "Local jirga, shura are fair and trusted", .Q92c: "Local jirga, shura follow the local norms and values of our people", Q92d: "Local jirga, shura are effective at delivering justice", Q92e: "Local jirga, shura resolve cases timely and promptly".

10 See Russell Dalton, Doh Chull Shin and Willy Jou, "Understanding Democracy: Data From Unlikely Places," Journal of Democracy (October 2007) 18: 142-156. Also see Tim Meisberg, ed., Democracy in Indonesia (San Francisco: The Asia Foundation, 2003), p. 113; Tim Meisberg, ed., Democracy in Cambodia 2003. (San Francisco: The Asia Foundation, 2003), p. 69.

Table 1: The Meaning and Personal Benefits of Democracy

	Meaning of Democracy (Q55) (%)*			Benefits of Democracy (Q56) (%)*		
	2004	**2006**	**2008**	**2004**	**2006**	**2008**
Don't Know/Nothing	36	4	9	37	4	21
Political Rights	54	84	83	50	85	67
— Freedom	39	55	53	30	37	33
— Rights and law	21	31	23	24	33	19
— Government by the people	20	33	22	14	29	19
— Women's rights	11	20	17	16	23	16
— Elections	4	14	11	5	14	9
Peace, Stability, Security	20	38	34	27	42	35
Economic Gains, Prosperity	8	17	16	16	22	16
Other Political Options	9	25	24	12	32	48
— Islamic democracy	8	23	20	11	31	19
— Communism	1	2	3	1	1	1
— Better government/ less corruption	—	—	—	—	—	34

** Percentages total to more than 100% because multiple responses were possible.*

Source: 2004, 2006, and 2008 Asia Foundation surveys

Experience with democracy and public education programs have increased the proportion expressing an opinion since 2004. Most people give multiple definitions of democracy. The primary definition of democracy includes a set of liberal political rights—freedom, rights and law, women's rights, and government by the people. Such rights are mentioned by the vast majority of respondents (83 %). Attention to liberal political rights is higher in Afghanistan than in most other transitional systems, implying that these rights have a special value to the Afghan public. This is a positive sign that citizen education efforts and experience have deepened public understanding of democracy. Moreover, as the number of political rights cited by an individual increases, so too does their belief that democracy is better than other forms of government. Among those who do not cite any political rights in defining democracy, only 18 percent strongly approve of democracy as a form of government, but this increases to 42 percent among those who cite three or more political rights.

Democracy building efforts often focus on elections, but elections are mentioned by only 11 percent of respondents. This implies that Afghans see democracy not just as a set of processes and institutions, but as a means to provide rights, liberty and freedom. The percentage of Afghans who link democracy to peace and stability (34%) is higher

than in most transitional societies, reflecting Afghanistan's violent modern history and the continuing conflict in the nation. A smaller percentage identify democracy with economic prosperity (16%). Both of these responses have actually decreased since 2006 and remain secondary meanings of democracy. This is also a positive sign, because it suggests that Afghans do not define democracy primary in terms of improving their immediate situation, but in terms of broader rights and liberties.

However, potential reasons for the decline in overall support for democracy can be seen in another survey question, shown on the right side of Table 1. It asked people what they thought they would personally gain from democracy (Q56). The belief that democracy would benefit the individual grew substantially between 2004 and 2006, but then decreases by 2008.[11] A smaller majority now believe they will personally benefit from the freedoms and rights that they identify with the democratic process. In 2008, a smaller percentage cites each of the five political rights listed in table 1 as a personal benefit they will enjoy under democracy. A smaller proportion of the public also believes that they will gain peace or prosperity because of democratization.

A new category in 2008 includes responses that democracy will lessen corruption (23%) or lead to better government services (15%), producing benefits of a different sort. Improvements in governance of this kind are societal benefits as well as offering potential benefits for individuals and emerge as central to the development priorities identified by Afghans, as Ruparelia and Rennie point out in their essay in this volume.

The overall impression is that a decreasing number of Afghans now feel that democracy will benefit their lives in any concrete way, which is a negative trend for the prospects of democratic consolidation.

Endorsing Democratic Values

Support for democracy as an ideal is important in building a democratic political culture, but such a culture should also include understanding and support for the substantive values that underlie the democratic process. Since 2004 The Asia Foundation surveys have asked about support for several basic democratic values, as shown in Table 2. Already in 2004 there was nearly universal support for the principle of equal rights regardless of gender, ethnicity or religion (Q60a). These sentiments have dipped slightly since 2006, but remain close to the 2004 levels. Similarly, there is widespread support for allowing peaceful political opposition (Q60b), which is also relatively stable over time. Other items in the survey demonstrate continued support for gender equality by most Afghans which is another strikingly positive indicator of democratic rights.

[11] The 2004-06 change may partially be due to differences in question wording. The 2004 survey did not include the 'none' category as a response option.

Table 2: Support for Democratic Values

	2004	2006	2007	2008
	(% agree)			
Everyone should have equal rights under the law, regardless of their gender, ethnicity or religion. (Q60a)	89	91	90	84
It is a good thing that the government should allow peaceful opposition. (Q60b)	78	84	82	78

Source: 2004, 2006, 2007, and 2008 Asia Foundation surveys

However, social science research repeatedly demonstrates that abstract expressions of democratic values do not always predict actual behavior. People can be 'questionnaire democrats' and not act consistently with their expressed attitudes. Perhaps the clearest example of this tension is between the broad support for women's rights found in this survey, and women's continuing struggle to gain full participation in society and politics, as discussed in this volume by Kaur and Ayubi. Recent events also illustrate the current limitations on press freedom and other rights in Afghanistan, but public opinion expressed in the survey seems more tolerant than these events suggest. That said, democratic reality typically falls short of the democratic ideal in every nation.

Nonetheless, support for democratic values does increase the predisposition for democratic behavior, so the high degree of expressed support for equality and peaceful political opposition are positive features of contemporary Afghan political culture. For instance, those who endorse equal rights are also more favorable toward women's rights in other questions in the survey. It is these groups and individuals who would be expected to naturally support reforms to promote gender quality, and to protect other democratic rights. Moreover, as we might expect, those who support these democratic values are significantly more likely to believe that democracy is the best form of government.

Certainly, one must be cautious in interpreting these findings. The majority of the public is still learning about the democratic process and is unlikely to understand the full benefits and limitations of a democratic system. The development of a deeply felt democratic political culture is a process that takes decades, not just a few years. Society must also change to reflect democratic values. Similarly, it is not realistic to think that when Afghans express support for democracy this carries the same meaning as when citizens say the same in established democracies because the latter have a long history of democratic experiences that underlie their views.

Yet, expressed support for democracy does exist among the Afghan public, and this is much better than the opposite. These newly formed aspirations can erode, however, if the democratic process does not successfully address the nation's problems and needs of communities. Some erosion is apparent since 2006-07, but changes so far have been at the margins. Most Afghans have experienced the autocratic alternatives to democracy, and believe democracy is better than these other forms of government. However, performance is not meeting their expectations, and improvements are necessary to deepen the public's commitment to democracy.

Democracy and Islam

Throughout its history, long before Taliban rule, Afghanistan has been a deeply religious nation linked to Islamic traditions and values. Islam is embedded in Afghan social and political life and is a fundamental basis of national identity. Earlier qualitative interviews with Afghans demonstrated that Islam is a core element of images of self and nation.[12] These sentiments were apparent in the framing of Afghanistan's constitution in 2004, which tried to balance a commitment to democracy with the nation's Islamic foundations.

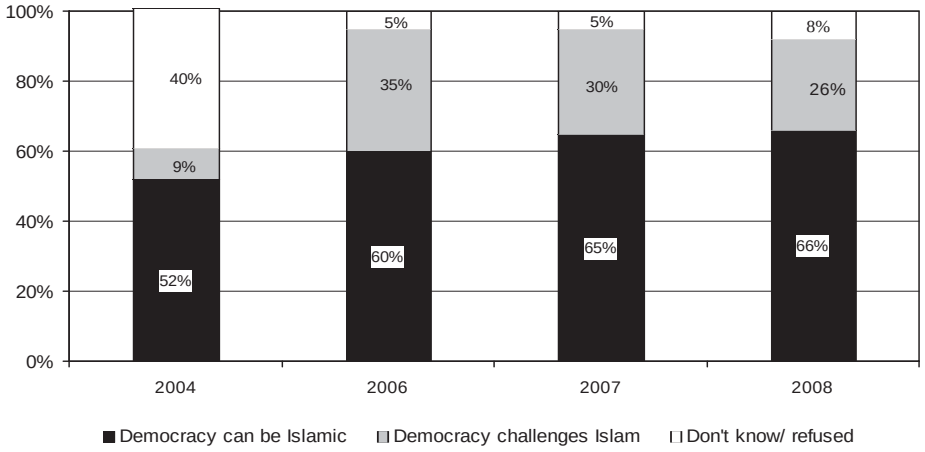
Many experts in both the Islamic and Western worlds argue that there is a clash of cultures, and that core elements of Islamic thought and practice are incompatible with democracy. At the same time there is considerable contradictory evidence, ranging from the pro-democratic opinions of other experts to the democratic experiences of many Islamic nations. Do Afghans see such a clash of values?

As a starting point, a significant number of Afghans refer to principles of Islamic democracy in defining the meaning of democracy (Q55) (see Table 1 above). In 2008 a fifth of the public (20%) define democracy in such terms, and a similar proportion (19%) think that Islamic democracy will be a personal benefit to them. This is a term with many possible interpretations depending on whether one puts the accent on "Islamic" or "democracy". This section examines the link between religion and democracy to better understand this element of Afghan political culture.

The Asia Foundation surveys include a question on the perceived compatibility of democracy and Islamic values (Q61). In 2004 a bare majority (52%) viewed democracy and Islam as compatible, and a full 40 percent were uncertain or did not express an opinion (Figure 4). Since then the percentage seeing democracy and Islam as compatible has grown. By 2008 two-thirds of the public believe these are compatible value sets, i.e., a nation can be democratic while retaining its Islamic values. Similarly, those who believe that democracy represents a challenge to Islamic values now represent only a quarter of the public.

[12] Craig Charney, Voices of Afghanistan. (San Francisco: The Asia Foundation, 2004).

Figure 4: Does Democracy Challenge Islamic Values? 2004-2008



Source: 2004, 2006, 2007, and 2008 Asia Foundation surveys

This may be one of the most significant trends in attitudes towards democracy among the Afghan public that emerges in the 2008 survey. Seven years of democratic experience has led more people to believe that one can be a good Muslim and a democrat.

There are also differences in these opinions across social groups. For instance, Eastern and South Western Afghanistan record the highest percentages who see democracy as incompatible with Islamic values, although this is still a minority opinion in these regions. In Central Afghanistan (including Kabul), the West and the North, people see democracy as compatible with Islam by roughly a three-to-one ratio. Residents in rural areas and the least educated are more likely to think democracy conflicts with Islamic values. Even among those who never attended school, however, 63 percent still see democracy and Islam as compatible. A majority of all the major ethnic groups endorses this position, although only a modest majority among Pashtuns. Sunni and Shia hold roughly comparable opinions, as do the various age cohorts.

As one might expect, those who view democracy as challenging Islamic values are less likely to endorse democracy as the best form of government. However, these differences are slight, representing approximately a 10 percent gap in support for democracy. In other words, the majority of Afghans (62%) believe democracy is the best form of government and that it is compatible with Islamic values. This is a slight increase over earlier surveys. An additional 21 percent support democracy, even though they believe it challenges Islamic values. Moreover, the number of Afghans who oppose democracy and who believe democracy is incompatible with democracy is very small—only 6 percent of the total sample.

One possible aspect of Islamic democracy is the formal or informal inclusion of religious authorities in local and national governance processes. The 2008 survey inquired about the public's views of religious involvement in politics, asking whether respondents agreed or disagreed with the statement: "Religious authorities should lead people in obeying the obligations of their faith, while political leaders should make decisions about how the government is run" (Q60c). A full three-quarters of the public (75%) agree with this implicit separation of religion and state although these sentiments are down slightly from earlier surveys (78% in 2004; 82% in 2006; and 80% in 2007).

People are much more accepting of religious participation at the community level, however. Sixty-nine percent say that local religious leaders should be consulted on matters that affect the community, while only 26 percent say that politics and religion should not mix at the local level (Q65). Furthermore, approval of religious participation in community affairs has increased slightly since this question was first asked in 2006, when 60 percent felt that local religious leaders should be consulted, while 37 percent said politics and religion should not mix.

As one might expect, support for the participation of local religious leaders is generally greater among the more traditional sectors of society: rural residents, older Afghans, the less educated, and residents in Eastern Afghanistan and the central Hazarajat. This support for local religious leaders may simply be a sign of respect for the village mullahs and their religious values, or it may reflect acceptance of the traditional role of mullahs in these communities. This overlap is also seen in the perceptions of the composition of local Community Development Councils (CDC) (Q89a). Among those survey respondents who are aware of a local CDC, 57 percent say the local mullah is a member of the council, only exceeded by elders from the local shura or jirga (78%) and the local Malik/Khan (72%). Religion and politics do overlap at the local level.

Many Afghans are in favour of involving religious authorities in the political process. Although it is possible that, rather than demonstrating support for inclusive democratic practices, such sentiments may in fact be a latent sign of opposition to democracy in the sense that religious principles and religious authorities might be seen as a higher source of authority than citizen decision making and popular sovereignty. This is a complex possibility, and the distribution of opinions on this point underlines the varied nature of regional politics in Afghanistan.

Between 2006 and 2008 support for consulting religious leaders on community issues increased across almost all Afghan regions. This went hand in hand with an increased acceptance that democracy and Islam are compatible. This pattern suggests that efforts to bridge the democratic-Islamic divide are positively viewed across most of the nation. As a consequence, by 2008 those who favor religious involvement are no longer significantly more skeptical of democracy than those who oppose it, as found in earlier surveys.

The contrasting pattern is in South Western Afghanistan. In provinces in this region almost half the public (46%) say that politics and religion should not mix at the local level, which is substantially above any other region. Only a bare majority favor regular consultation with religious leaders over community issues, compared to over two-thirds of the public in the rest of Afghanistan. The legacy of the Taliban in these provinces likely casts religious participation in a different light, and this is reflected in public doubts about religious involvement in local politics within the region. In other words, Afghans seem to be weighing the *nature* of religious involvement as well as the general principle.

In summary, Afghan opinions of the relationship between Islamic values and democracy have been following a positive trend over the past few years. The majority of Afghans approve of democracy as a form of government and support core democratic values. At the same time, many of these same individuals endorse basic Islamic values and traditions. Since 2006, an increasing majority of the public now believe that Afghanistan can be democratic while retaining its Islamic values. The young, secular and better-educated lean more in this direction, while traditional sectors of society are less likely to see this compatibility.

These trends suggest that political experiences in most parts of the nation, with the notable exception of the South West, are moderating the doubts of some Afghans who initially saw democracy and Islamic values as incompatible. This does not mean that political groups will not exploit the potential tension between these value sets, either because of their fundamentalist religious beliefs or as a tool of political opposition. We expect that this will remain a source of political division, as shown in the controversy over the apostate Abdul Rahmen in 2006 or debates on the status of women's rights. However, the survey findings argue that the Afghan public at large is becoming less susceptible to the rhetoric of cultural clash and more willing to view democracy and Islamic values as compatible.

Democratic Citizenship

Democracy is not a passive state; it expects citizens to be actively engaged in the process and believe that the government is responsive to their interests. This is a substantial challenge in Afghanistan where generations of conflict have sown doubts about politics and government. National and provincial elections, the establishment of Community Development Councils, a renewed role for local Jirga and Shura, efforts to develop civil society groups and other activities are intended to strengthen the political norms of the public and bring them into the political process. This section examines

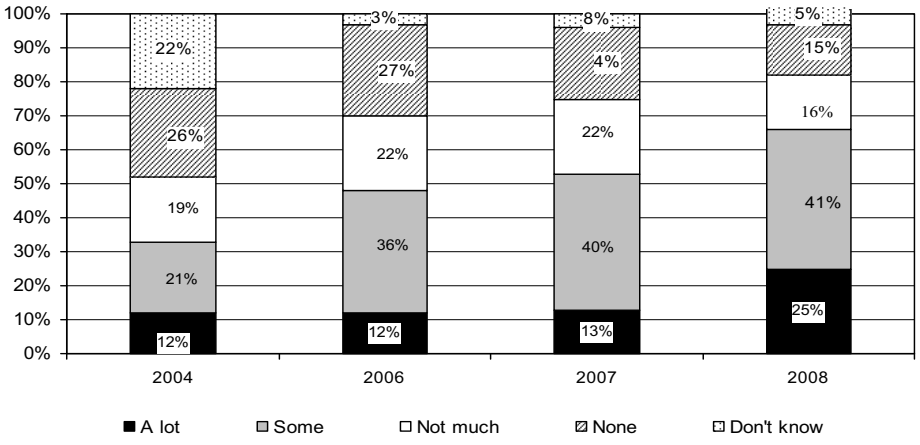
attitudes toward several specific aspects of democratic citizenship - political efficacy, perceptions of government responsiveness, and feelings of free expression - in order to more fully understand the citizenship norms of the Afghan public.

Personal Efficacy

A key factor leading to democratic engagement is a sense of personal political efficacy: a feeling that one can influence the government. In 2004 only a third of Afghans felt that they could exert some influence on the government (Q75) as shown in Figure 5. This has increased to nearly half the public today (48%). Moreover, while a substantial percentage were uncertain in 2004, the percentage of 'don't knows' has decreased, and presumably these individuals have become more positive based on the experience of the last four years. In addition, a separate question asked respondents whether "voting can lead to improvement in the future or do you believe that no matter how one votes, things never change?"(Q76). In 2008 two-thirds say that voting can lead to future improvements.

The share of the public that feels politically efficacious is typically moderate even in established democracies. In broad cross-national terms, Afghans display levels of efficacy comparable to other nations in the region.[13] This is another positive sign of Afghans' development of democratic political norms over time.

Figure 5: Feelings of Political Efficacy, 2004-2008



Source: 2004, 2006, 2007, and 2008 Asia Foundation surveys

[13] As a reference standard, Afghans feel more efficacious than Indonesians and comparable to the level in a 2003 Cambodian survey. The Asia Foundation, Democracy in Indonesia, p. 122; Democracy in Cambodia - 2003, pp 75-76. A similar question in the first wave of the East Asia Barometer found that less than half the public felt efficacious in Japan, Taiwan, or South Korea; Yun-han Chu et al. How East Asians View Democracy (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008).

As we might expect, feelings of political efficacy are stronger among the better educated and those in middle class occupations. These social characteristics identify skills and resources that enable citizens to better grapple with the world of politics. Feelings of efficacy are also slightly higher among the young. There are also significant findings in the characteristics that do not show substantial differences. A majority of the public in all regions except the South East feels efficacious, and differences between Shia and Sunni are small. The Hazara feel slightly more efficacious than other ethnic groups, but ethnic differences are very modest. Even more striking, gender differences are negligible, with women feeling slightly more efficacious than men.

Analysts often claim that those who feel efficacious are overestimating their ability to actually influence politics. Still, these feelings can shape impressions of the democratic nature of the political system, and they influence actual participation. For instance, among those who feel they have a lot of influence, 66 percent say they voted in the 2005 elections. This drops to 52 percent among those who feel they have no influence. Political efficacy and support for democracy are also strongly linked. Among those who feel most efficacious, 86 percent believe that democracy is the best form of government; this drops to 58 percent among the least efficacious. Feelings of efficacy are a state of mind that influences citizen engagement and attitudes toward the democratic process.

The Responsiveness of Government

Another aspect of citizen engagement is the perceived responsiveness of government. While political efficacy reflects citizens' beliefs about their own ability to act, responsiveness captures perceptions of how responsive the government will be to their appeals. If an individual approaches a member of parliament or the provincial council with a problem, do they believe they will get a responsive reply? Only infrequently do people actually contact the government, but their expectations shape overall images of political institutions and the political process. This issue is discussed in detail by Ruparelia and Rennie in their chapter in this volume.

Most surveys, even in established democracies, commonly uncover cynicism about the responsiveness of government, and the same applies to Afghanistan. The 2008 survey asked if respondents agree or disagree with the statement "I don't think the government cares much what people like me think" (Q15a). A full three-quarters of the public (76%) agree with this cynical view. Such sentiments are a common aspect of democratic politics: a roughly comparable number expressed cynicism in a 2004 public opinion survey in Japan, Taiwan and South Korea.[14] Furthermore, Afghans' critical views of government are essentially unchanged over time. In 2006, 77 percent gave a cynical reply, as did 79 percent in 2007.

[14] The 2004 International Social Survey Program included a comparable question, but with a neutral category between agree and disagree. Excluding this neutral question, those agreeing with the cynical response were 87% in Japan, 81% in South Korea, and 59% in Taiwan.

Similarly, another question asked about what motivates politicians. Respondents were asked if they agree or disagree that: "politicians seek power for their own benefit and don't worry about helping people" (Q79c). Again, three-quarters (76%) display their skepticism by agreeing with this statement. These sentiments have also remained essentially unchanged between 2006 (79%) and 2008 (77%).

These results illustrate the conflicting realities of democratic politics that often appear in public opinion surveys: citizens are typically positive about the process in general while being simultaneously skeptical of the responsiveness of politicians and the government. Analysts describe this as a pattern of "critical citizens" who express these contrasting opinions. This is not atypical of many democratic systems, and Afghans' views on government responsiveness have not changed in recent years, unlike some other attitudes.

However, widespread skepticism about government responsiveness should not be overlooked simply because cynicism is common in other nations. Such sentiments are of special concern in a nation trying to democratize, because they signal the public's doubts about how the current political process functions. If political crises arise, this cynicism may erode broader support for the democratic process.[15] In other words, Afghans may not be significantly more skeptical than citizens in more established Asian democracies, but their skepticism has the potential to generate a greater negative impact on political attitudes and behavior until Afghan democracy is more consolidated (see also Maley's discussion on the challenges for establishing support for the legitimacy of Government in Afghanistan, in his chapter in this volume).

Free Expression

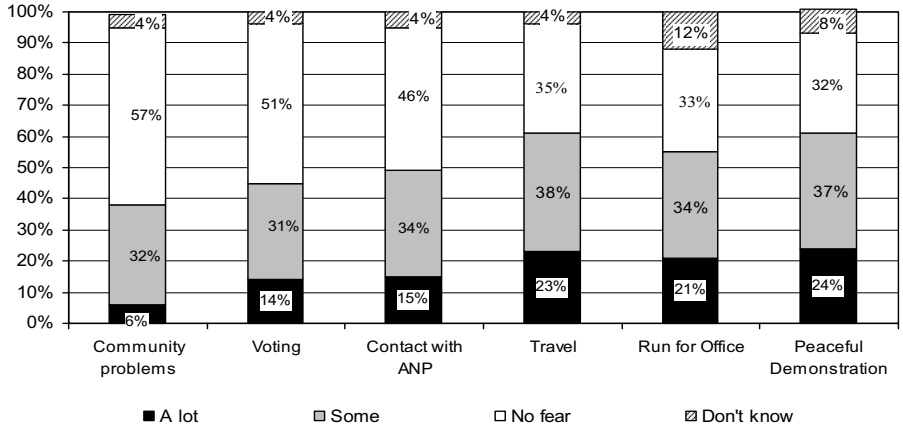
Another factor influencing support for democracy and participation is the feeling that one is free to discuss politics and participate. However, the rise in political violence and instability in the country since 2006 is likely to have influenced these perceptions in Afghanistan as insurgents target activists or government supporters.

To measure these feelings, the survey asked if the respondents believe that most people in their area feel free to express their political opinions (Q30). Today, less than half of respondents (40%) say they feel free to express their opinions; 38 percent say they are not, and 21 percent are unsure. This marks an erosion in perceptions of the freedom of expression over the past four years. Around half of respondents said they felt free to express their opinions 2004 (52 %) and 2006 (49%). This is an ominous trend: if people do not feel free to act, their democratic aspirations are less likely to produce democratic behavior, as we demonstrate later in this section.

[15] Currently, however, there is only a modest relationship between the perceived responsiveness of government and support for democracy. This relationship is much weaker than for feelings of political efficacy.

The climate of opinion also varies across different types of social and political activity. The survey asked how much fear people would feel to participate in various activities (Q29) In general, people feel most secure participating in their local community; only 7 percent feel a lot of fear in this setting, but another 32 percent feel some fear, as shown in Figure 6. Almost half the public feels some fear voting in a national election (44%) or when encountering officers of the ANP (49%). For more explicit political activities—running for office or participating in a peaceful demonstration, more than a fifth feel a lot of fear, and an additional third feel some fear. These responses do not reflect a climate where open dialogue and participation can easily occur.

Figure 6: Fear to Participate in Various Activities



Source: 2008 Asia Foundation survey

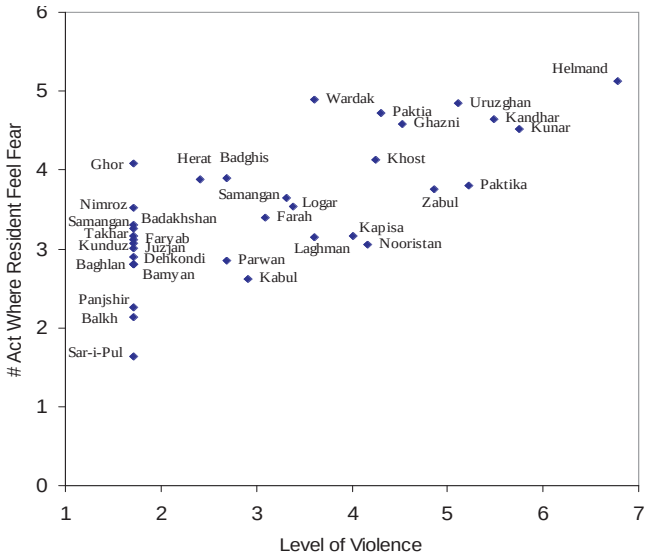
These perceptions of the climate for free expression illustrate both the advances and the current challenges of Afghan politics.[16] After the general question about whether people feel free to express their opinions, a set of additional questions asked why people hold these opinions. Among those who are positive about free expression, the creation of a democratic climate is the most important factor (Q31). A full 71 percent cite the guarantee of freedom of speech, a free press, or other democratic rights as a reason for their positive opinions. About half of these respondents also cite good security measures or the removal of local militias as a positive reason (49%). In contrast, those who see impediments to free expression overwhelmingly list security factors as the reason (80%) (Q32), generally describing a fear for their personal safety or the poor security conditions in the area. A small number cite the negative actions or indifference of the government (20%), and very few list social or community constraints, such as negative actions by community leaders, or the lack of freedom for women. Only 2 percent

[16] For instance, the 2004 survey asked the same question in terms of life under the Taliban, and only 2% of respondents said they felt free to express their opinions during this period. This illustrates how the political climate has changed.

of those feeling a lack of free expression cite the actions of coalition forces as a reason, while 19 percent mention Taliban presence in the area.

This fear to be active reflects the reality that people see in their communities. Figure 7 presents a measure of provincial conflict based on attacks against military targets of the Afghan government and coalition forces from January 2007 until March 2008.[17] We compare this to a count of the number of activities for which residents in each province express a fear to participate (the items in Figure 6). There is a very strong relationship between the levels of insurgent conflict against the military and residents' fear to participate. The U.S. Department of Defense report identified the highest level of violence in Helmand, and on average residents in this province report some fear in participating in five of the six activities listed in figure 6. In contrast, in the fourteen provinces with the lowest level of attacks, residents on average identify less than three activities where they feel some fear. Comparisons of levels of violence to perceptions of the lack of free expression generate a similar strong relationship (data not shown).

Figure 7: Level of Violence and Fear to Participate, by Province



Source: 2008 Asia Foundation survey and U.S. Department of Defense, *Report on Progress toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan*, June 2008

[17] The provincial levels of conflict are counts of kinetic activity (direct fire, indirect fire and IED explosions) between January 2007 and March 2008. This does not include violence directed at non-military targets. The source is: U.S. Department of Defense, Report on Progress toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan, June 2008, p. 11. Provinces with less than 20 attacks were not separately listed in the report, so they are given an equivalent low value. We logged the event count because of the highly skewed distribution. Since the survey was not able to conduct fieldwork in some of the most insecure areas, responses in the most violent provinces probably underestimate the negativity of public opinion in these areas.

The climate of violence in a province can do more than shape feelings of free expression and the willingness to participate. It can also affect more basic political values and images of democracy. For instance, higher levels of provincial violence strongly erode residents' approval of democracy as the best form of government and their feelings of political efficacy.[18] The social context can also shape more basic social relations. One question in the survey asked about social trust in other people, which is a standard question tapping the potential social capital in a community. The percentage of residents in each province who feel that "most people can be trusted" (Q50) is also strongly related to the provincial level of violence. Similarly, a 2007 survey conducted by a consortium of national media from coalition nations found that levels of violence in South Western provinces were related to negative evaluations of the Afghan government, the reconstruction efforts and U.S. forces.[19]

When such a relationship exists between public attitudes and the level of violence, public attitudes are typically both a consequence and a cause of the violence. This is a two-way street. When citizens are unsupportive of democracy and distrustful of government authorities, this provides a climate where insurgency can develop. When violence threatens people's lives and livelihoods, this can diminish public support for the political system. Jones draws similar conclusions about the impact of current security conditions on public governance in this volume. Indeed, previous studies of political culture and democratization predict such congruence. This is empirical evidence of the presumption that increases in violence are likely to at least partially erode the public attitudes that are essential to a democratic political culture: support for democracy, social trust, feelings of political efficacy and free expression. Consequently, if violence can be controlled and reduced, this should benefit the development of democratic values.

Satisfaction with the Democratic Process

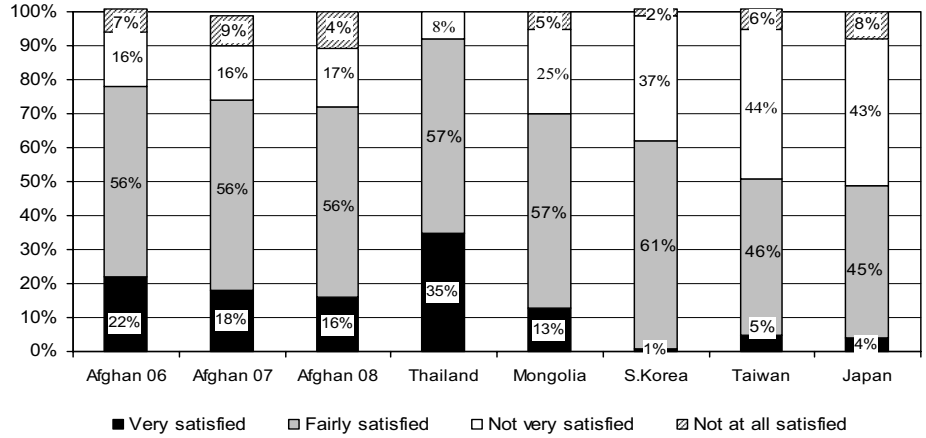
Given the experiences of the past seven years, Afghans' satisfaction with democracy might summarize their overall judgments about the performance of the entire political process. The public now has mounting experience of the Karzai government and the new political system. How do people judge the overall political process, and how have these views changed in recent years?

When asked to make judgments about how well democracy is working in Afghanistan (Q80), most people are broadly positive. Sixteen percent are very satisfied, and an additional 53 percent are fairly satisfied. To put these sentiments in context, Afghans are more positive about their political system than five of the six democracies included in the East Asia Barometer project (Figure 8). For instance, barely half of the Taiwanese or Japanese are satisfied with the way democracy works in their country, compared to three-quarters in Afghanistan.

[18] The statistical correlation (pearson r) between provincial violence and fear to act in Figure 7 is a very strong .72 and the correlation with perceptions of free expression is .64. By comparison, provincial violence is strongly correlated with approval of democracy (.50), feelings of political efficacy (.51) and social trust in others (.64).

[19] ABC News, British Broadcasting Corporation and ARD Germany, "Afghanistan - Where Things Stand," December 3, 2007.

Figure 8: Satisfaction with the Way Democracy Works



Source: 2008 Asia Foundation survey and 2001-02 *East Asian Barometer*

It is also noteworthy that despite the increasing debates about the performance of the Karzai government and the political system in general, satisfaction with the workings of the process has changed only slightly from the first reading in 2006. Those who are satisfied or very satisfied with the system have decreased by only 6 percent. However, this relatively high satisfaction level does not mean that people are uncritical of the Karzai government and its policies. We have seen other signs of growing dissatisfaction such as skepticism about the responsiveness of government or the declining belief that democratization will personally benefit respondents.

As in the companion report to the 2006 Asia Foundation survey,[20] we conducted a more extensive analysis that identified two broad correlates of satisfaction with the workings of the democratic process. First, satisfaction is higher among those who believe democracy is the best form of government and those who espouse democratic values. These are the strongest relationships we found. In other words, individuals with strong democratic aspirations are the core supporters of the democratic process in Afghanistan.

Second, satisfaction is also strongly linked to perceptions of the performance of government. Economics is one important influence. Perceptions of the family's current economic situation compared to life under the Soviet regime (Q39), the Taliban (Q38) or just in the last two years (Q41) are all modestly related to satisfaction with democracy. In addition, perceptions of security and order also have a modest relationship with the view of the performance of the democratic system. This means that poor govern-

[20] Dalton, "Afghans and Democracy" op.cit.

ment performance can reduce satisfaction with democracy overall, and good performance would increase satisfaction. Ruparelia and Rennie, in their chapter, draw a similar conclusion about the importance of government performance in promoting effective governance, and Maley, in his chapter, defines the ability of powerholders to meet key demands of a population as one of the basic forms of government legitimacy. Since 2006, however, public perceptions of economic and security conditions have become more negative, and thus satisfaction with the way democracy is working has also declined.

The major change since 2006 is the separation of satisfaction with democracy from opinions about religious involvement in politics. In 2006 those who advocated religious involvement in politics were distinctly less satisfied with the workings of the political process than those who thought the two areas should be kept separate. In 2008, there is virtually no difference in satisfaction between those who favor or oppose religious involvement. This is a further indication that experience since 2006 is diminishing the feeling that democracy and Islamic values are in conflict (see Figure 4 above). The potential clash of values between those who express democratic aspirations and favor a secular political system versus those who harbor doubts about democracy and favor a political role for religious leaders is moderating.

Conclusions and Implications

Since the benchmark survey in 2006, Afghanistan has made progress in many areas of reconstruction. At the same time, the country has experienced increasing conflict, a slowdown in economic growth, and mounting debates about the nation's course. This chapter sought to assess whether and how these trends affect public attitudes towards democracy and the political process. In doing so we have identified a number of important lessons that will be useful informing policy and initiatives to strengthen democratization:

- The vast majority of Afghans continue to express widespread support for democracy as the best form of government, they understand democracy primarily in terms of liberal political rights, and are feeling more politically efficacious. *Experience and public education programs have developed support for democracy among the Afghan public.*
- At the same time, there is evidence that the depth of democratic support has eroded slightly since 2006. The percentage of people who strongly support democracy has decreased, as has the number who feel they will personally benefit from democracy. These are modest trends, especially given the rise in violence and other political challenges facing the nation. *Democratization requires a deepening of democratic values, so even a modest trend in the opposite direction is a negative sign.*
- A low level of violence in a province is positively related to perceptions of political freedom, overall support for democracy, positive evaluations of the way

democracy is working, and other democratic attitudes. As we argued in the 2006, public support for democracy is not enough. *People must feel free and secure; a climate of violence will prompt many to withdraw from politics and lose faith in the process. The benefits of the public's democratic aspirations will be limited in the absence of a secure political context.*

- A growing majority of Afghans see democracy and Islam as compatible, and only a very small number (6%) oppose democracy *and* see it as incompatible with Islamic values. The trend since the 2006 survey indicates that more people believe one can be a good democrat and a good Muslim. *This trend is a positive indicator of the progress in bridging this divide, and participation of religious authorities in local politics—if they share these norms—should reinforce the view that these two value sets are compatible.*
- Another positive sign is the modest level of ethnic and religious differences in most of the political attitudes described in this essay. A majority of the major ethnic groups share an endorsement of democracy, and are satisfied with the way it is working in Afghanistan. This is a major accomplishment of democracy building efforts and the government. *Maintaining broad agreement across ethnic and religious groups increases the potential to develop a democratic consensus.*
- Most Afghans remain satisfied with the way democracy is working, but there has been an erosion here as well. Decreasing evaluations of the performance of the government in economic and security terms appear to be the main sources of this decline. *Further declines in governmental performance can further erode evaluations of the working of democracy, and potentially create doubts about democracy in broader terms.*

Given the nation's history, the current democratic aspirations of the Afghan public represent a dramatic change from the Afghan political culture in 2001. There is widespread support for the democratic ideal, and a spreading belief that democracy is compatible with Afghanistan's Islamic values. At the same time, the short-term trend since 2006 marks a reversal in this trajectory. Support for the democratic ideal is moderating, doubts about the personal benefits of democracy are spreading, and satisfaction with the workings of the democratic process is slipping.

In the face of increasing insurgent violence, mounting concerns over corruption, and slow reconstruction efforts, this retrenchment seems inevitable. In fact, the amount of trend reversal appears smaller than might be expected from the media discourse on the nation's situation. But democratization requires a deepening of a democratic culture, and Afghan public opinion has been moving in the opposite direction for the past two years. Democratic aspirations are too new to be deeply rooted in the political culture, and thus remain susceptible to change. Afghanistan therefore faces the urgent challenge of renewing the trend toward a democratic culture and fulfilling the democratic aspirations of its citizens, before these aspirations begin to seriously erode.

Chapter 5

Status of Women in Afghanistan

Harjot Kaur and Najla Ayubi

This essay gives a gender-based analysis of critical issues concerning women in Afghanistan. The survey findings demonstrate that illiteracy, lack of employment opportunities and lack of rights continue to be the major challenges for women's advancement in the country. The scenario is better on the political participation front, as women's representation in the National Assembly is significant, and the survey results also show that Afghans in general are in favour of greater political participation of women. However, many Afghan institutions, both formal and informal, are still failing to adequately meet the needs of women. The survey shows that women have low trust in the effectiveness of shura and jirga in redressing their problems, because of their traditional exclusion from these institutions However, they have even lower trust in state courts for getting justice. While much progress is still needed to support meaningful participation of women, their inclusion in Community Development Councils provides a positive starting point that should be built on. The essay concludes with policy relevant recommendations for more effective participation of women in local governance as a tool for their empowerment, drawing experiences from Panchayati Raj institutions in India as a catalyst.

Introduction

Historically, Afghan women have always been marginalised and accorded subordinate status. The position of women in the family and society has been shaped by many factors and there are strong cultural and historical roots of gender discrimination. Afghanistan is a multi-ethnic and traditional society that has been governed along tribal lines and by a weak central state. In addition, the long years of war and violence in the country, and the resulting unstable political and economic situation, have had a particularly severe impact on women. There were some attempts to introduce reforms in the status of women during the reign of King Habibullah, and subsequently during King Amanullah's time in early 20th century, including the abolition of polygamy, promotion of education for girls, unveiled public appearances by distinguished women and the establishment of women's rights to inherit property.[1] However, these reforms were met by strong tribal and religious opposition and resistance from conservative patriarchal forces. Thereafter, sporadic attempts at reforms were made during the communist regime in 1980s, particularly in education and employment. But these gains were undermined during the civil war in the early 1990s when Mujahideen leaders fought for control. The rights of women were even more eroded when the Taliban came into power in 1996. With such fundamentalist religious forces taking the dominant position in society, the position of

[1] A History of Women in Afghanistan: Lessons Learnt for the Future Or Yesterdays and Tomorrow: Women in Afghanistan", by Huma Ahmed-Ghosh, Journal of International Women's Studies,Vol. 4, No. 3, 2003.

women suffered a major set back and even took a retrogressive turn.
During the rule of the Taliban women were treated worse than in any other time. They were forbidden to work, leave the house without a male escort, or seek medical help from a male doctor, and they were forced to cover themselves from head to toe, even covering their eyes. Women who were doctors and teachers were forced to leave their work and sit at home, and girls were forbidden to go to school as a result of the prevalent ultraconservative policies of that period.

Since the present regime came to power in 2001, the political and cultural position of Afghan women has shown improvement to some extent. A robust policy framework has been put in place by the government for the welfare of women. Notable among the core strategic documents that make up this framework are the Afghanistan Compact, Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS), and National Action Plan for the Women of Afghanistan (NAPWA). These developments have been successful in keeping the issue of women's empowerment high on the country's development agenda.

As other commentators have noted, "Some of the most widely recognised achievements have been in the legal and policy arenas. The Afghan government has removed severe discriminatory laws against women; ratified a constitution that promotes non-discrimination; and facilitated women's unprecedented participation in national elections through civic education, voting and candidacy".[2] There have indeed been some notable improvements in the participation of women in public life, including women's participation in the Interim Administration, Emergency Loya Jirga, and national and local elections. Twenty-seven percent of seats in the National Assembly and 25 percent of seats in Provincial Councils are reserved for, and occupied by, women. Indeed, Afghanistan now has one of the highest rates of female participation in the National Parliament in the region.[3]

In addition, a dedicated Ministry for Women's Affairs has been established to lead gender equality initiatives across government. Women now constitute 26 percent of civil servants, 24 percent of employees in the government run media and 21 percent in private media companies. Of 17 Afghan ambassadors in other countries, two are women.

Achievements are also being made at the local level, largely because of the growing focus within the government and among donors on providing aid assistance directly to communities. Women, who are traditionally not consulted on community issues are now being included in forums to determine village and neighbourhood development priori-

---

2 Shawna Wakefield and Brandy Bauer, A Place At The Table: Afghan Women, Men and Decision Making Authority,. Briefing Paper, (Kabul: AREU, 2005). Available at:. http://www.areu.org.af/index.php?option=com_docman&itemid=&task=doc_download&gid=32

3 Inter-Parliamentary Union, Women in National Parliaments, World Classification, 31 October 2008, available at: http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm

ties, and to design and implement projects to address their problems. The increased presence and visibility of women, in particular through the National Solidarity Programme (NSP) which has achieved 24 percent participation of women in Community Development Councils, has been considered a positive step towards the greater participation of Afghans, and particularly Afghan women, in their own development process.

This chapter presents an analysis of the most critical problems facing women in Afghanistan and the impact of Government interventions to improve their status. We also discuss the extent of women's political participation at national and local levels. In addition the chapter assesses women's perceptions of the effectiveness of local governance institutions in addressing their issues. Our discussion is based on the findings of the Asia Foundation's 2008 survey, including comparisons with the 2006 and 2007 surveys.

Problems Faced by Women

Despite many positive developments in women's political participation, and their somewhat greater visibility in public life, major challenges remain. The poor situation of women in Afghanistan can be gauged by the extremely low gender development indices in the Afghanistan Human Development 2007 which show that Afghanistan stands almost at the bottom of the human development index, ranking 174 out of 178 countries.[4] The plight of women is even worse with the Gender Development Index placing Afghanistan second lowest in the world. These reports show that Afghan women continue to be amongst the worst off in the world, particularly in the areas of education, health, employment, violation of rights and domestic violence. Moreover, compared to men, women in Afghanistan face gross inequalities in accessing education, holding gainful employment and access to health care. They also suffer from poor access to justice, and a limited role in governance and decision making.

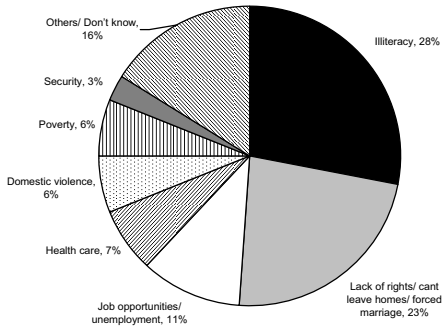
The Asia Foundation survey provides some interesting information on the perceptions of Afghan people about the problems faced by women. Respondents identify the biggest problem faced by women in Afghanistan as illiteracy (28%) (Q98a).[5] The next biggest problems are related to lack of rights for women (23%), including the fact that women can't leave their homes, and the problem of forced marriages/dowry. This is followed by other problems like lack of job opportunities (11%), general health care including pregnancy-related health care (7%), domestic violence (6%) and poverty (6%), as shown in Figure 1.

---

4 The Human Development Index is a summary measure of Human Development reflecting a country's achievement for its population in three basic dimensions: long & healthy life, knowledge and a decent standard of living. The Gender Development Index (GDI) is an adjustment of the HDI to reflect the inequalities between men & women in the three dimensions, Afghanistan Human Development Report 2007(Kabul: Center for Policy and Human Development, Kabul University, 2007)

5 For full 2008 survey questions and responses see Appendix 1: Asia Foundation 2008 Survey - Interview Questionnaire

Figure 1: Major Problems Facing Women

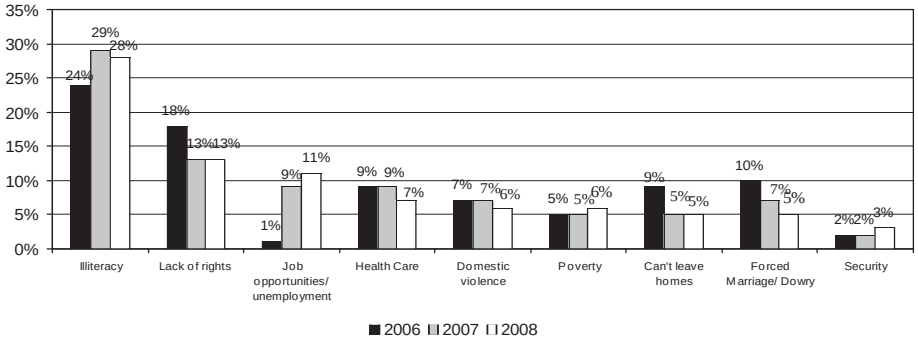


Source: 2008 Asia Foundation survey

However, it is interesting to note that the perceptions of men and women vary with regard to these problems. For example fewer men feel that the fact that women can't leave homes, forced marriages and domestic violence are very important problems facing women. This could be because of the conservative attitudes of many men and also that they are the perpetuators of many of these problems for women.

If we compare this data with the 2006 and 2007 surveys, we find that the largest percentage of respondents also cited education as the biggest problem facing women in 2006 (24%) and 2007 (29%). However, there has been a major change in perceptions about the lack of job opportunities. In 2006 only one percent of respondents identified this as a major problem for women, compared to 11 percent in 2008. This shift in emphasis could be because of the increased economic hardship reported by respondents in the 2008 survey and the fact that unemployment is seen as a major problem at both national and local levels (Q12-13).

Figure 2: Major Problems Facing Women, 2006-2008



Source: 2006, 2007, and 2008 Asia Foundation surveys

Illiteracy and Education

Afghanistan's adult literacy rate ranks among the lowest in the world, with only 23.5 percent of the population aged 15 and older able to read and write. The situation is still worse for women as only an estimated 12.6 percent of adult women are literate, compared to 32 percent of men. The female to male literacy ratio is 0.4, far lower than in neighbouring countries such as Iran (0.8) and Pakistan (0.6).[6]

In addition, the enrolment rate of girls at primary school level is 36 percent and at secondary and tertiary levels is only 24 percent.[7] The important factors that affect girls' access to education are the lack of girls' schools, lack of female teachers, insecurity, poverty and socio-cultural factors such as notions of education as 'unnecessary' or 'harmful' for girls. The World Bank notes that indicators on girl's education are much worse in Afghanistan than in other Muslim countries.[8] The gross primary enrolment rate for girls is 90.4 percent in Iran, 67 percent in Saudi Arabia and 62 percent in Pakistan, compared to 36 percent in Afghanistan. Although the figure for Afghanistan represents enormous progress compared with the five percent primary enrolment rate for girls estimated in 1999, there is still a long way to go for Afghanistan to catch up, even with the other not-so-developed Muslim countries in the region.

Nonetheless, a positive note is struck by the perceptions of respondents in the survey, which indicate that things are looking up in the education sector, particularly with respect to access to education. For example, 19 percent of those who say the country is moving in the right direction give the reason that schools for girls have opened (Q10a). Also very importantly, 44 percent of respondents cite access to schools as the greatest improvement in the last two years with slightly more women (46%) than men (42%) indicating this as an improvement (Q41). Moreover, survey respondents also judge the government's performance most positively with respect to the provision of education, with more than four-fifths of respondents (84%) saying that the government is doing a good job in providing education (Q63). Over two-thirds of respondents, including women, judge the availability of education for children to be good or very good in their local area (Q16) and this should certainly improve literacy levels for girls in future.

Health and Healthcare

Lack of healthcare is another area where Afghan women are among the worst affected in the world. The average life expectancy of 42 years for Afghan women is 20 years less than the world average. Afghanistan's estimated maternal mortality rate of 1600 deaths per 100,000 live births is one of the highest in the world. Moreover, women's fertility rate, at an average of 6.6, is the highest in the world. Early marriage coupled with fre-

6 Afghanistan Human Development Report 2007, op. cit

7 Ministry of Education, Planning Department, Government of Afghanistan, 2007as cited in Women and Men in Afghanistan: Baseline Statistics on Gender, (Kabul: Ministry of Women's Affairs, 2008)

8 National Reconstruction & Poverty Reduction - The Role of Women in Afghanistan's Future, (World Bank, March 2005)

quent pregnancies often prevent Afghan women from pursuing an education or from taking part in gainful economic opportunities. Lack of proper reproductive health care facilities results in extremely high numbers of maternal deaths among Afghan women. In addition, traditions in Afghanistan create barriers for women to access appropriate health care because they have limited mobility and their choice of doctor is restricted since treatment of women by male doctors is largely unacceptable in Afghan society.

Though the poor health of women is a matter of great concern in Afghanistan, in the 2008 survey only a small percentage of respondents (7%) cite lack of health care facilities amongst the major problems facing women (Q98a). The survey findings also indicate that 53 percent of women rate the availability of clinics and hospitals as good in their local area, (Q16b) and that 67 percent of women also feel that the Government is going a good job in terms of healthcare (Q63c).

Poverty and Lack of Employment Opportunities

Afghanistan and Afghan women fall at the bottom of global poverty indices, with a Human Development Index (HDI) value of as low as 0.345 which is fifth lowest in the world, and a Gender Development Index (GDI) of 0.310, which is second lowest.[9]

The findings of the 2008 survey suggest a significant shift in perceptions about the lack of employment opportunities for women. While only one percent of respondents cited lack of employment opportunities as a major problem facing women in 2006, 11 percent say this in 2008 (Q98a). This is certainly linked to the fact that unemployment is cited as the second biggest problem facing the country as a whole (Q12). Respondents' perceptions of the government's performance in the economic arena are also generally negative as three quarters of respondents (75%) say the government is doing a bad job in creating job opportunities (Q63c) and more than three-quarters of respondents (78%) say that the availability of jobs in their local area is bad or very bad (Q16c). However, women have particularly difficulties accessing gainful employment, including cultural attitudes that still show significant levels of objection to women working outside the home (27%), especially amongst men (37%) (Q100). Because of the lack of employment opportunities, large numbers of women are caught in a poverty trap. Women's low incomes and low living standards often translate into poor health, nutrition and education, which in turn lowers their economic opportunity and productivity.

[9] Afghanistan Human Development Report 2007 op. cit.[9]

Lack of Rights

Lack of rights has consistently been perceived as the second biggest problem facing women in the Asia Foundation surveys over the last three years. The Constitution of Afghanistan adopted in 2003 provides for equal rights for women. It prohibits any kind of discrimination among the citizens of Afghanistan and enshrines equal rights before the law. It further provides that "the state shall adopt necessary measures to ensure the physical and psychological well being of the family, especially of child and mother." However, despite having achieved Constitutional gender equality, Afghan women's lives are still influenced to a greater degree by a mixture of customary law, Islamic laws, and cultural traditions, none of which favour equal rights for women.

As the 2007 Human Development Report shows, women in Afghanistan are denied fair treatment before the law. Female victims and defendants are often denied equal and fair access to justice. Gender inequality also prevails as a feature of the judiciary, where women are greatly under-represented. This is borne out by the findings of the 2008 Asia Foundation survey which show that women feel they have less access to both state courts and traditional shura and jirga than men (Q91a and 92a), and that women have significantly less positive views of shura and jirga across all dimensions than men do (Q92), as we discuss later in the chapter.

Rural-Urban Variations in Perceptions

An interesting finding in the 2008 survey is the rural-urban divide in perceptions regarding the biggest problems faced by women. For example, looking at cumulative responses (Q98a and b), only 39 percent of urban respondents feel that illiteracy is the biggest problem, compared to 46 percent of rural respondents. This is clearly related to issues of access, as demonstrated by another finding of the survey which shows that 79 percent of the urban respondents feel that access to education is either very good or quite good in their area whereas only 68 percent of respondents in the rural areas say the same (Q16h). Similarly, survey findings also indicate that health care, including maternity care is considered to be a bigger problem in rural areas (14%) than urban areas (9%). Again, more than half of respondents in villages say that access to medical facilities is either very bad or quite bad (52%) compared to 39 percent of urban respondents (Q16f and g).

The more conservative attitudes regarding women that prevail in rural areas are reflected in the larger number of respondents indicating "lack of rights" as major problems in rural areas (25%) compared to urban areas (18%). This is also true for other rights-related issues including: women can't leave homes (12% in rural areas compared to 8% in urban areas), forced marriages (12% vs. 6%), and domestic violence (13% vs. 9%). From this, we can conclude that the lot of women in urban areas is better than that of

their counterparts in rural areas. This could be the impact of weaker influence of traditional attitudes, greater exposure to other cultures, better education, and better awareness of rights and amenities in urban areas.

Table 1: Major Problems Facing Women, by Settlement

	Average	Rural	Urban
	%	%	%
Illiteracy	45	46	39
Lack of Rights	24	25	18
Lack of Job opportunities /Unemployment	24	24	26
Health Care (incl. pregnancy related care)	13	14	9
Domestic Violence	12	13	9
Poverty	12	11	13
Can't leave homes	11	12	8
Forced Marriages/ Dowry	11	12	6
Security	5	4	7

Source: 2008 Asia Foundation survey

There are also sharp differences between the regions with respect to perceptions of the biggest problems facing women. Lack of rights, can't leave homes, forced marriages and domestic violence are identified as bigger problems in the South Eastern and Eastern regions, compared to the North West, West, and Central Kabul regions where these are not considered very important problems. This could be due to the presence of fundamentalist forces in the provinces on the eastern parts of Afghanistan. In comparison, the Central Kabul and North West regions give greater emphasis to lack of education, lack of job opportunities, and poverty as the major problems for women.

Perceptions of Equal Opportunities for Women

In the survey, respondents were asked about their perceptions about equal opportunities for women in education (Q99). The vast majority of respondents are in favour of equal opportunities for women in education, including 92 percent of women and 85 percent of men. Moreover, respondents with higher levels of education are more in favour of equal opportunities than those with lower levels. In fact, the percentage of respondents strongly in favour of equal opportunities progressively increases with education level, from 54 percent amongst those who never went to school to as high as 68 percent amongst respondents who have studied to grade 10 plus or beyond. This finding shows that education has a very positive influence on attitudes to gender equality and opportunities for women. In addition, the survey shows that in urban areas, 96 percent of respondents are in favour of equal opportunity in education, compared to the lower level of 86 percent in rural villages. This again may be attributed to lower educational levels and the greater influence of traditional culture in vil-

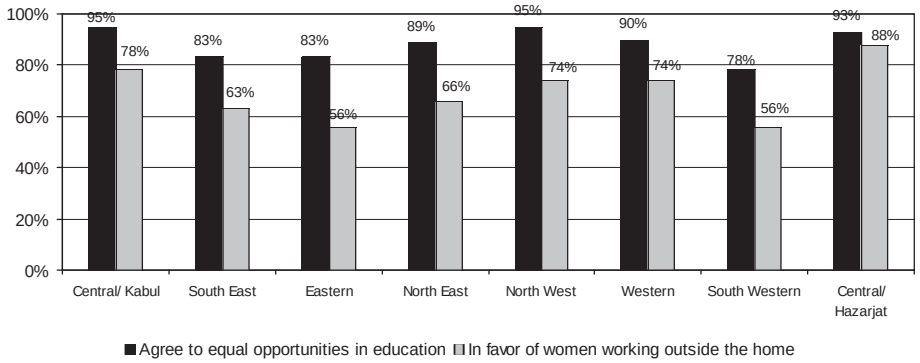
lages. Among the various ethnic groups, 83 percent of Pashtuns are in favour of equality of opportunities for women in education, whereas the figure is significantly higher among other ethnic groups like Tajik (94%), Uzbek (94%) and Hazara (93%).

Women's ability to work outside the home in Afghanistan is also severely constrained by cultural restrictions, security concerns, and limited transport. Early marriage and limited education further inhibit their ability to contribute to the country's economic growth. Again, the survey shows that the majority of respondents are in favour of women working outside home (Q100). However, this figure is much higher amongst women (79%) than men (60%). The high percentage of respondents in favour of women working outside the home could be because of the high level of unemployment and economic hardship indicated as major problems in the country (Q12-13).

However, there are sharp variations in perceptions on this issue among different population groups. For example, respondents in the younger age group (18- 24 years) are more in favour of women working outside the home (72%) compared to those aged over 55 years (63%). This could be because of higher education and awareness levels among younger people compared to older age groups with more conservative views. The changing mindset among young people in the country offers hope for improvement in the work participation rates of women in future.

From a regional perspective, there is a strong correlation between responses on equal opportunities for women in education, and those regarding women working outside the home across the regions. The regions where larger numbers of respondents agree with the principle of equal opportunities in education for women, like Central Hazarajat, Central Kabul, North West and Western regions, also register higher levels of support for women working outside the home, as shown in Figure 3.

Figure 3: Views on Equal Opportunities in Education and Women Working Outside the Home, by Region



Source: 2008 Asia Foundation survey

These differences are important because, as Dalton points out in his chapter in this volume, support for fundamental democratic values such as equal rights increases the predisposition for democratic behaviour and support for democracy as the best form of government for the country. In areas where support for women's rights is low, establishing the legitimacy of democratic government, and the potential reforms it can bring to the status of women, is likely to be a greater challenge.

Political Participation of Women

In the following section, we examine the overall political participation of women at various levels, their role and effectiveness in the political process, and the participation of women in local governance. The Bonn Conference in 2001 was the beginning of a new round of women's participation in the political history of Afghanistan. This was followed by their presence in the Emergency Loya Jirga, Constitutional Loya Jirga, Interim and Transitional Administrations, Presidential, Parliamentary and Provincial Council Elections, and a wide variety of governance and civil society institutions.

Despite their heroic actions throughout the country's history, Afghan woman have consistently faced challenges and barriers to their participation in political, economic, social and cultural life. The most severe example in recent times was the situation during the Taliban regime which exerted tyrannical control over women, in particular elite and educated women who were prevented from performing their professional or even routine activities outside their households. After the fall of the Taliban, women's participation in the Bonn Agreement process and beyond has brought huge changes to the general status of women in Afghanistan.

If we compare representation of women in National Parliaments in the region, Afghan women account for 27 percent, a higher proportion than in Iraq (25%), Pakistan (22.5%), the United Arab Emirates (22.5%), Indonesia (12%), India (9%) and Iran (3%) and well above the average for Asia (18%) and the Arab region (7%).[10] Indeed, the only country in the region with a higher level of women's representation in the National Parliament is Nepal with 33 percent of seats held by women since the elections in April 2008.[11]

[10] A Sabbagh , Julie and Karam, Azza (2005) Women in Parliament: Beyond Numbers: The Arab States: Enhancing Women's Political Participation.

[11] Inter-Parliamentary Union, Women in National Parliaments, World Classification, 31 October 2008 , http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm

Table 2: Representation of Women in National Parliaments in the Region

Country	Total seats	Held by Women	%
Nepal	594	197	33
Afghanistan	249	68	27
Iraq	275	70	25.5
Pakistan	342	37	22.5
United Arab Emirates	40	9	22.5
Indonesia	550	64	12
India	541	49	9
Iran	286	8	3
Saudi Arabia	150	0	0

Source: Inter-Parliamentary Union, Women in National Parliaments, World Classification, 31.10.2008

Overall Political Understanding

In Afghanistan, only 12.6 percent of all women over 15 years can read and write compared to 32 percent of men.[12] It is clear that such high levels of female illiteracy will impact on women's political knowledge and awareness and in turn on their participation in the political process. For example, during the 2004 elections, which were a new phenomenon for Afghans, voter registration of women was very low in Paktiya, Paktika, Uruzgan, and Ghazni provinces. However, during the 2005 elections, as a result of a widespread public information campaign in these provinces, voter registration of women was very high: Paktiya 56 percent, Paktika 59.4 percent, Uruzgan 51 percent, and Ghazni 48.8 percent. In the Ajrestan District of Ghazni province, where not even one single woman had registered to vote in 2004, 15,442 women registered to vote in the 2005 elections.[13] Education to build political awareness clearly increases women's participation in political processes.

Role and Effectiveness of Women in the Political Process

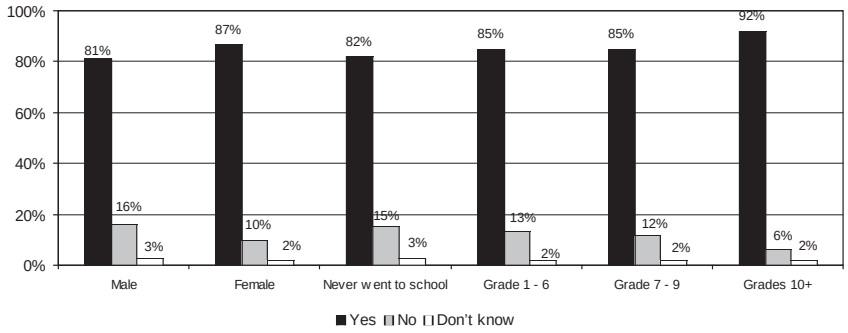
A significant factor that can help ensure peace and stability in a society is the conduct of democratic, fair, and transparent elections. Countries can only achieve a viable peace when governing bodies are democratic and represent all classes of people; majorities and minorities, women and men and vulnerable groups. Women should naturally have an equal opportunity to participate in the process of building these institutions and expressing their preferences through their participation in elections.

The 2008 survey shows that 87 percent of women and 81 percent of men give a positive response to the question "Do you think women should be allowed to vote in the elec

[12] Afghanistan Human Development Report 2007, op. cit[12]
[13] Voter Registration Update, End-Of-Period Report, (Kabul: Joint Electoral Management Body Secretariat, 2005).

tions?" (Q74). This shows a high level of support for women's participation in elections. Moreover, there is only a small difference between the support of women (87%) and men (81%) for this principle. However, again here opinions differ with level of education. Ninety two percent of those who have studied to grade 10 or beyond are in favour of women voting in elections compared to 82 percent of those who never went to school, as shown in Figure 4.

Figure 4: Women Should Be Allowed To Vote, by Gender and Educational Level

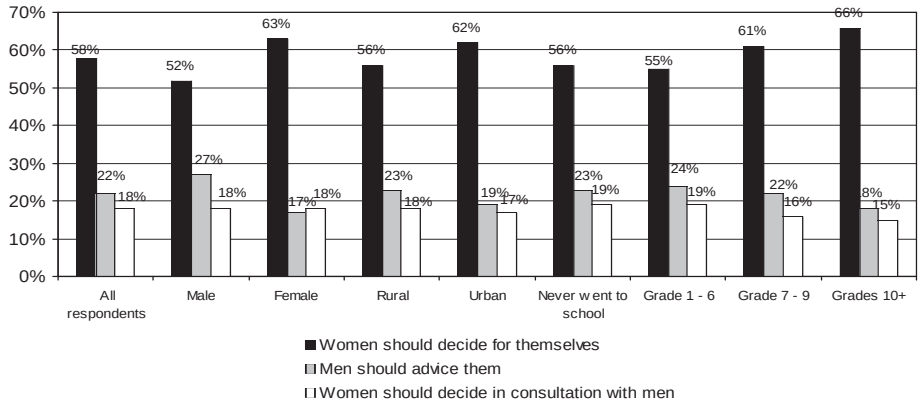


Source: 2008 Asia Foundation survey

However, the barriers to women's participation in elections in Afghanistan should not be underestimated. These range from traditional social and economic dependence on men to cultural obligations such as covering their faces in public and not having photographs taken. Efforts to target women, especially during voter education initiatives, therefore need to address the traditional and social barriers that impede their participation.

For example, the survey asked respondents if they think that women should decide for themselves how to vote or if they should they receive advice from men (Q101). Overall, 58 percent agree that women should take their own decisions, 22 percent say that they should get the advice of men and 18 percent state that the women should take their decision but in consultation with men. Here too, some interesting differences appear between different population groups. As one might expect more women (63%) than men (52%) think women should make their own decisions, as do more urban (62%) than rural (56%) residents. It is worth mentioning that 18 percent of rural residents say that women should take their own decisions in consultation with men, since even this view represents a positive change, given that traditionally women are dependent on men and suffer from a lack of rights across all social domains. Here again, agreement that women should make their own decisions rises with level of education, from 56 percent amongst those who never went to school, to 66 percent amongst those who have studied to Grade 10 or beyond, as shown in Figure 5.

Figure 5: Women Should Decide for Themselves How to Vote, by Gender, Settlement and Educational Level



Source: 2008 Asia Foundation survey

Another question asked respondents their views on whether women must vote for themselves and men cannot vote in place of women (Q102). The survey results show that 88 percent of respondents agree with this, although agreement is higher amongst women (92%) than men (84%). These figures suggest that women are keen and confident to decide on their own, but men would like to maintain their control over women. Interestingly though, there is almost no difference of views between different age groups, which suggests that these views are widely held within Afghan society.

However, as both Maley and Dalton point out in their chapters in this volume, the attitudes and opinions people express to survey researchers do not always translate into actual behaviour. This may be because respondents do not feel free to express their opinions or because they choose to give responses that seem to them least likely to be judged negatively or to cause them problems if the substance of their responses were to become known to people in power. Whatever the reason, it is clear that, despite the high levels of state support for women voting in an independent manner, in reality women still experience significant difficulties in exercising their vote because of their lack of rights, including the fact that they often need to get permission to vote from a male family member. In addition, the high rate of illiteracy among women and the social and cultural limitations that often confine them to the home means they are often not fully acquainted with political processes or actors, and this gives men another opportunity to impose their decisions on women.

In both the 2004 and 2005 elections, the participation of women in the election process was important because they were officially included in the decision-making process for their own future and the future of their country, and their votes had a significant influ-

ence in determining the political leadership of Afghanistan. The Asia Foundation survey results show that 55 percent of female respondents say they voted in the 2004 presidential elections (Q66) and 52 percent say they voted in the 2005 parliamentary elections (Q68). However, official figures show that in 2004, 41 percent of registered voters were women and on polling day they accounted for 40 percent of voters. In 2005, 44 percent of the registered voters were women, as were 43 percent of the 12 million voters on polling day.[14]

However, the evidence also shows that in both the Presidential and Parliamentary Elections, several occasions of voting by men on behalf of their families (proxy voting) were observed in southern and northern Afghanistan.[15] In addition, 41 percent of women survey respondents say that they did not vote in the 2004 elections (Q66) and 44 percent say they did not vote in 2005 (Q68). Amongst these around 13 percent say that this was because they were not permitted to vote. Moreover, 20 percent of women say that they are unlikely to vote in the coming elections (Q72), and of these 25 percent say this is because they will not be permitted to vote (Q73). On the contrary, no men report facing this problem, presumably because they do not have to secure the permission of other men in their household to participate.

Women in Political Leadership

Since the fall of the Taliban, Afghan women have made many achievements in terms of political participation. Under strong pressure from the international community, Afghan civil society and women's rights activists, the government has accepted the allocation of seats for women in governance institutions at all levels. Out of 249 seats in the Lower House, 68 seats have been allocated for women, and the same is true for 23 of the 102 seats of the Upper House and 121 of the 420 seats on Provincial Councils across the country. This has ensured the presence of women at the political leadership level, especially in the legislative arena. In addition, the new policy framework for sub-national governance stipulates that 25 percent of District Council seats, and a minimum of 25 percent of Municipal Council seats should be reserved for women.[16] Various attempts to ensure the representation of women in District Development Assemblies (DDA) and Community Development Councils (CDC) have also created opportunities for women to participate in decision-making bodies, as we discuss later. To date only a few women have taken leadership, decision making and policy making roles at national level. In this respect we can mention the only woman in the Cabinet, the Minister of Women's Affairs, and five other women who hold posts as deputy ministers. Women

[14] UNIFEM Afghanistan - Fact Sheet 2007, Progress for Women Is Progress For All. http://afghanistan.unifem.org/media/pubs/08/factsheet.html#pol

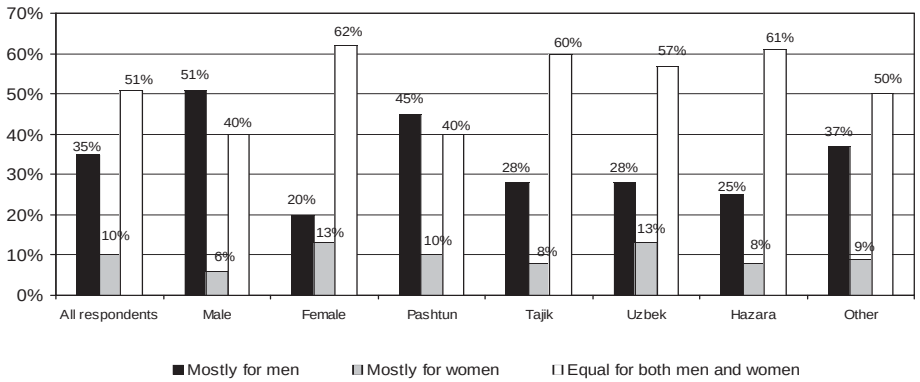
[15] See European Union Election Observation Mission, Afghanistan Parliamentary And Provincial Council Elections. Final Report (2005), and National Democratic Institute For International Affairs, Parliamentary And Provincial Council Elections In Afghanistan (2005).

[16] Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Draft Sub-National Governance Policy (September- October 2008)

still have no representation at the leadership level in the judiciary such as the High Council of Justice, which shows that there is still much progress that needs to be made to ensure that women can access leadership positions across all three branches of government.

The 2008 survey asked the question "Do you think that political leadership positions should be mostly for men, mostly for women, or do you think that both men and women should have equal representation in the political leadership?" (Q104). Responses show that 51 percent of male respondents and 20 percent of female respondents think these positions should be mostly for men. The majority of men appear to consider politics to be a skill and occupation for men only, and they would rather limit the entrance of women into politics. In fact, 62 percent of women and 40 percent of men - making 51 percent of respondents overall - agree that men and women should share leadership roles equally. But an analysis of these figures shows that the views of ethnic groups are different on this issue. Forty-five percent of Pashtuns support men only in political leadership, which is much higher than for Uzbek (28%), Tajik (28%), Hazara (25%) and other ethnic groups (37%). Support for equal sharing of political leadership between men and women is highest among Hazaras (61%), followed by Tajiks (60%), Uzbeks (57%), and other ethnic groups (50%). Only 10 percent of respondents suggest that all leadership positions should be given to women, including 13 percent of women and six of men, as shown in Figure 6.

Figure 6: Political Leadership Positions Should Be For Men, or Women or Both, by Gender and Ethnicity



Source: 2008 Asia Foundation survey

It is worth mentioning that in the 2008 survey, respondents were not asked to give a reason for their agreement or disagreement about the presence of women in political leadership positions. However, in the 2007 survey respondents did give their reasons for supporting the access of women to leadership roles. These included wanting to help with women's advancement (53%) and supporting the equality of women with men

(51%). Fifty percent of educated women stated that the presence of women is crucial to the development of the country and 24 percent believed that women are less violent and can generally build more helpful laws, especially laws that reflect women's needs.[17]

The 2008 survey also shows that the majority of all respondents (57%) say that they are not opposed to a woman representing them in the National Parliament (Q105). But a significant 40 percent do express opposition. It is also interesting to note that there is not much difference between the views of men (44%) and women (37%) on this issue, which means that more than a third of women respondents don't want to be represented by a woman in parliament. Indeed, respondents express similar levels of opposition to being represented by women in governance institutions at all levels, including District Development Assemblies (39%), Community Development Councils (38%), and Provincial Councils (39%). Respondents also express the same level of opposition to being represented by a woman in their local shura or jirga (39%). However, it should be noted that the majority of women (between 59% and 62%) do not object to being represented by a woman. This highlights the need for education and awareness raising initiatives aimed at increasing women's political participation to be integrated into broader approaches addressing cultural and social attitudes towards the status of women.

Participation of Women in Local Governance

Much of the recent focus on gender issues in Afghanistan has been concentrated on support for local-level institutions as a way of reaching women 'where they are'. At the community level, people generally recognise local shura as the most important institution, largely because it has traditionally been the only institution around which people mobilise.[18] Also, as Sharma and Sen discuss in their chapter in this volume, in view of the weak formal legal system in Afghanistan, there is heavy reliance on traditional justice mechanisms in the form of jirga, among Pashtuns and shura among other ethnic groups. Like most traditional Afghan institutions, jirga and shura mainly involve male elders or members of a village or tribal group for the purpose of resolving community problems.

These customary systems of local governance have existed for generations in Afghanistan and still settle large numbers of disputes in the country. Traditionally shura are based on social hierachies, most of which hinder the participation of community members, particularly women. As a result, women do not have an effective voice in determining the issues for consideration or the outcomes of shura decisions.[19] These institutions work on the basis of consensus, however, due to their restricted composition they are not really democratic, and some see them as concealed forms of social

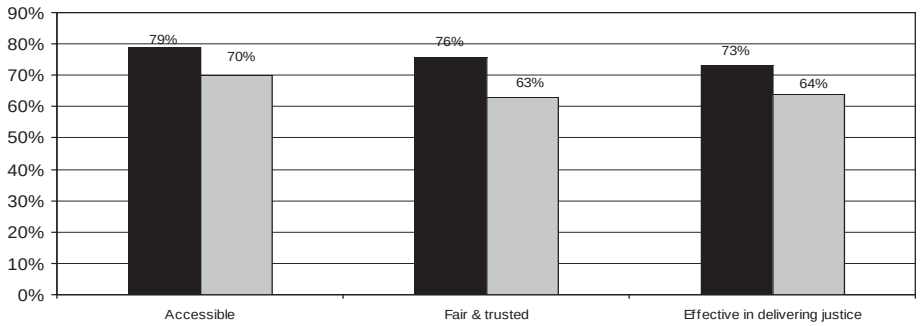
[17] Afghanistan in 2007: A Survey of the Afghan People (Kabul and San Francisco: The Asia Foundation, 2007).
[18] Shawna Wakefield and Brandy Bauer, A Place at the Table : Afghan Women, Men and Decision Making Authority, (Kabul:AREU, March 2005)
[19] Ibid,

prejudice, oppression and exploitation that are firmly rooted in local power structures. Further, the predominance of customary law in jirga and shura decisions often works to the disadvantage of women, as customary law throughout Afghanistan tends to grant women fewer rights.

In the survey conducted by UNDP for the Human Development Report 2007, over 70 percent of respondents stated that women are never represented in shura and jirga for the settlement of disputes, whereas only two percent of respondents stated that women are always represented. Furthermore, the report also brings out the startling fact that in no cases do women influence decision making in jirga and shura. This clearly shows the extent to which women are marginalised and excluded from these traditional dispute resolution institutions.

Indeed, the 2008 Asia Foundation survey shows that women have significantly less positive views of shura and jirga across all dimensions than men do (Q92). For example, 70 percent of female respondents feel that local jirga and shura are accessible to them, compared to 83 percent of men. Moreover, this figure has fallen from 79 percent in 2007. Likewise, 63 percent of women consider that local jirga and shura are fair and trusted compared to 76 percent in 2007, and 64 percent agree that they are effective in delivering justice, compared to 73 percent in 2007. Therefore, we can see that women's overall trust in shura and jirga has come down in the last year, as shown in Figure 7.

Fig 7: Women's Views of Local Shura and Jirga, 2007- 2008

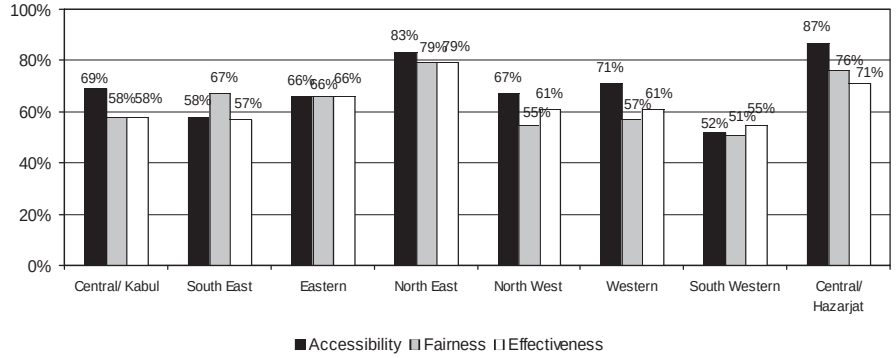


Source: 2007 and 2008 Asia Foundation surveys

In addition, the 2008 survey shows some interesting regional variations in perceptions. Women have greater faith in these institutions in the Central Hazarajat and North East regions, compared to the rest of the country. This could be due to the dominance of non-Pashtun ethnic groups in these regions, that generally express higher levels of support for gender equality, as we discussed earlier. This is further supported by the trends

in the Pashtun-dominated regions in the East, South East and South West, where women have comparatively low confidence in the fairness and effectiveness of shura and jirga, as shown in Figure 8.

Figure 8: Women's Views of Local Shura and Jirga, by Region



Source: 2008 Asia Foundation survey

Women and Community Development Councils

Community Development Councils (CDCs) have been set up under the National Solidarity Program (NSP) to promote good local governance in rural communities, and empower them to contribute to development activities that address their needs using a participatory approach. NSP, launched in 2002, is a rural development program of the Government, implemented through an extensive network of NGOs, who function as Facilitating Partners (FPs). Under NSP around 21,000 Community Development Councils (CDCs) have been elected throughout the country. The work of CDCs involves selection and implementation of community managed projects for reconstruction and development, and strengthening of community level governance. CDCs are like modern day shura, but whose members are democratically elected by all adult members of the village. Elections of CDCs are conducted by the FPs and are held on the basis of clusters, wherein one representative is elected from a cluster of up to 20 families. A CDC normally consists of 10-15 members covering a maximum of 300 families in a village or group of villages.

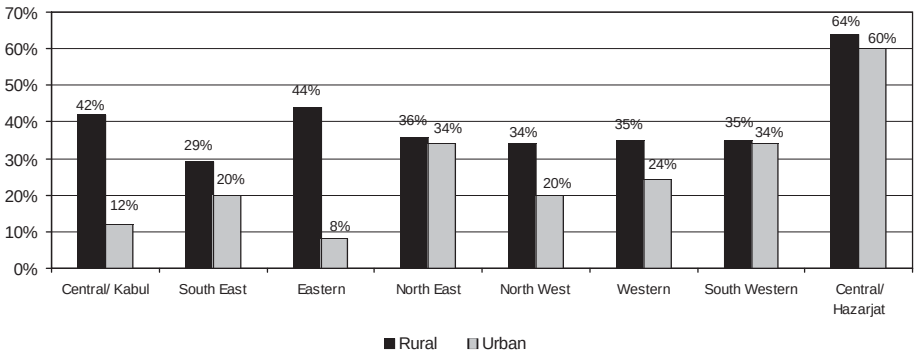
The empowerment of women has been a key concern of NSP. There is growing realization that traditional shura and jirga have severe limitations in terms of providing a critical institutional base for democratic reform at the local levels. NSP and its facilitating partners have tried to use Community Development Councils to address gender inequalities at the local level.[20] Though there is no reservation for women in CDCs,

[20] Asia Foundation, An Assessment of Sub-National Governance in Afghanistan, (Kabul: The Asia Foundation, April 2007)

facilitating partners try to achieve their representation by mobilising female members of the community as well as their families. Where it is not possible to form mixed CDCs of both men and women, separate female CDCs are formed where members are either elected by female voters or nominated by the community. In addition, under NSP 10 percent of every block grant made to a CDC is earmarked for women's projects to encourage them to take up women issues. However, in practice, since the reserved amount is not generally very large, quite often this sum remains unutilized.

The 2008 survey found that general awareness about the existence of Community Development Councils is quite low. Only 48 percent of men and 35 percent of women are aware of a CDC in their neighbourhood. Women's awareness of CDCs has remained more or less the same since 2006, with a dip in 2007. These low awareness levels would seem to indicate low involvement and expectations of women in CDCs. Awareness of CDCs is higher in rural areas as CDCs are primarily a rural phenomenon. Across the regions, the largest percentage of women aware of CDCs is in Central Hazarajat (64%), followed by the East (41%) and South-West (34%). Among the regions with the lowest women awareness are Central Kabul (23.6%) and South-Eastern Region (28.6%), as shown in Figure 9. The low level of awareness about CDCs in Kabul region is due to its predominant urban settlement having fewer numbers of CDCs in the region.

Figure 9: Women's Awareness of CDCs, by Region



Source: 2008 Asia Foundation survey

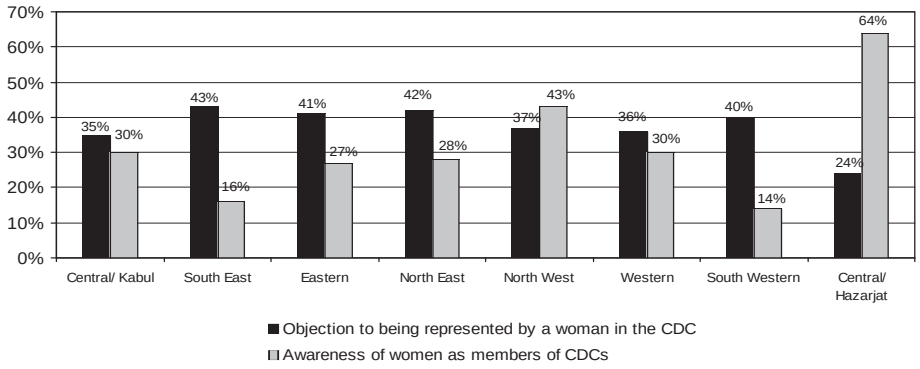
Women as Members of Community Development Councils

Although CDCs were intended to some degree to provide an alternative local governance mechanism to traditional shura and jirga, the Asia Foundation survey shows that a large proportion of respondents observe that local maliks (72%) and elders of shura and jirga (78%) are also often members of their local CDC (Q89a). Responses vary

across the regions with as many as 94 percent of respondents in the Eastern region observing that elders of the local shura are CDC members compared to only 54 percent in the North East and 69 percent in the Central Hazarajat region. These observations indicate a strong presence of traditional elites in the CDCs which could adversely influence women's participation in these institutions. This fact is also substantiated by a study conducted by the AREU which showed that in many provinces, elected CDC members are predominantly local elites, although the AREU research also indicates that interference in CDC affairs by local power-holders appears to be decreasing gradually over time.[21]

Although under the NSP facilitating partners were meant to mobilize women for greater participation in CDCs, their efforts have had a limited impact in getting many women elected to these Councils. The actual participation of women as members of CDCs varies greatly between provinces. It is around 45 percent in Herat, 39 percent in Kabul and 25 percent in Nangarhar and Paktia, but less than one percent in Khandahar, Helmand and Uruzgan.[22] The survey shows that, on average, 30 percent of respondents say that women are members of their local CDC (Q89a/e). However, again perceptions of women's participation in CDCs varies widely across the regions, from 64 percent in the Central Hazarajat region to just 14 percent in the South West, and 16 percent in the South East as shown in Figure 10. It is interesting to note that in the regions where respondents express the highest levels of objection to being represented by a woman on the CDC (Q105c), female membership of CDCs is generally lower than in those regions where there is less opposition, although clearly other factors also influence the participation of women in CDCs.

Figure 10 : Women as Members of CDCs, by Region



Source: 2008 Asia Foundation survey

[21] Inger W. Boesen, From Subjects to Citizens : Local participation in the NSP (Kabul :AREU, 2004

[22] National Solidarity Programme, Ministry of Rural Reconstruction and Development, Afghanistan, 2007, cited in Women and Men in Afghanistan: Baseline Statistics on Gender, (Kabul: Ministry of Women's Affairs, 2008)

Despite the levels of female membership of CDCs revealed in the 2008 survey, the real involvement of women in decision-making is still very limited, particularly in mixed CDCs in which women are often isolated. There are also problems of communication between men and women's shuras.[23] In an AREU study carried out in 30 communities, only three women participated as full members of a joint male-female CDC. In other communities, even if women were officially elected to the CDC, they were not permitted to attend mixed gender meetings and discussions. Therefore, while CDCs were designed to be more inclusive of under represented groups, increasing the numbers of women on the councils does not necessarily ensure their substantive participation.[24]

Despite the limitations of the numbers and quality of women's inclusion, CDCs have allowed Afghan women their first opportunity to be involved in local governance and community development issues. However, the real challenge lies in making women's participation more meaningful, rather than symbolic. This will involve tackling strong resistance from men to involving women in decision-making on substantial issues in public affairs. More effective and substantive participation by women requires constitutional backing including the reservation of at least one third of the seats in CDCs for women, along the lines of the reservation of seats for women in the Parliament and Provincial Councils.

Effectiveness of CDCs in Handling Issues Relating to Women's Issues

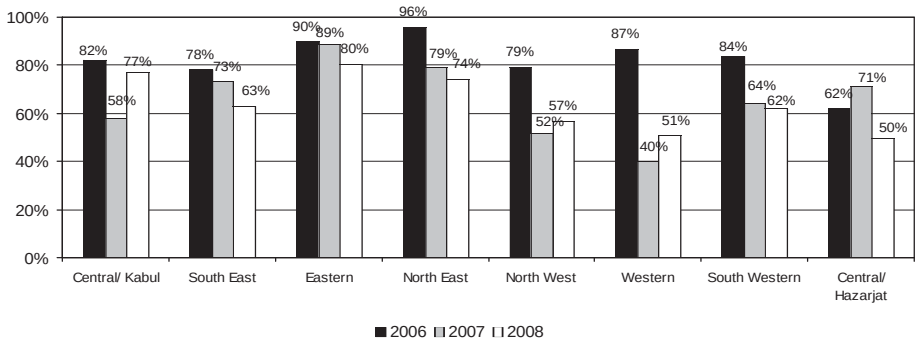
When asked how satisfied they are with the job their Community Development Council (CDC) is doing (Q89b), 83 percent of female respondents say they are satisfied with the functioning of their local CDC. However, accross the regions satisfaction ranges from 96 percent in the West to 62 percent in the South East. Moreover, when asked about the capacity of the local CDC to represent their interests before the Provincial authorities, 27 percent of female respondents say the CDC is "very capable" and 54 percent say "somewhat capable". Only three percent say the CDC is not capable at all to do this. Again there is significant regional variation, with 91 percent of women respondents in the North-West region saying that CDCs are capable of representing their interests, compared to only 71 percent in the South East. Women with higher level of education are more positive about the capability of CDCs to represent their interests before the Provincial Government. Among the different ethnic groups, confidence is highest amongst Hazara women and lowest amongst Pashtun women.

In general, the perception of women about the effectiveness of CDCs in representing their interests before the government of Afghanistan is slightly less positive than for their representative role before the provincial authorities. Twenty-five percent of female

[23] Hamish Nixon, Sub-National State Building in Afghanistan (Kabul: AREU, April 2008),
[24] Shawna Wakefield and Brandy Bauer, A place at the table : Afghan Women, Men and Decision Making Authority, (Kabul: AREU March 2005)

respondents say the CDC is "very capable" and 39 percent say "somewhat capable" of representing their interests at this level. Moreover, confidence appears to have declined in the last three years in all regions, although in the West, North West and Central Kabul regions there has been some improvement since 2007, as shown in Figure 11.

Figure11: Women's Perceptions of CDC Capacity to Represent their Interests before the Government of Afghanistan, 2006 - 2008



Source: 2006, 2007, and 2008 Asia Foundation surveys

Although CDCs, with their apparent democratic complexion, initially looked like a promising means for empowering women it seems they have fallen short of the expectations of women as a means for addressing the issues that concern them.

The Way Forward for Women's Participation in Local Governance

Despite their limited success so far, CDCs do provide the grain for future participation of women in local governance. To make women's participation more meaningful and effective, CDCs could be made permanent institutions with Constitutional support. We can draw from the experience of Panchayati Raj institutions in India, where participation of women in local self government has been ensured with the help of reservation of seats. Like Afghanistan, broad-based political participation of women in India was severely limited due to traditional factors like caste, religion, social restrictions, and illiteracy. However, the 73rd Amendment to the Indian Constitution adopted in 1993 made a 30 percent reservation for women mandatory in all local self government institutions in the country. Thanks to this reservation, there are now 1.2 million elected women representatives in India's Panchayats.

A recent study of elected women representatives in Panchayati Raj Institutions in India shows that reservation has played a significant role, as four-fifths of women representatives have been elected to reserved seats.[25] Reservation has also facilitated the first entry into politics for these elected women. The Indian report concludes that if women are adequately empowered through the political process they will have enhanced capabilities for decision making, which in turn will be reflected in quality of participation, making a positive impacting on the performance of local governance institutions as well as on their own development. Women in Panchayats are actively addressing such crucial issues as women's health, education, income generation and social evils like dowry, child marriage, and domestic violence. The Indian example shows the huge potential for increasing women's representation right to the village level through the introduction of a specific reservation of seats for women in CDCs. As can be seen in case of India, reservation has given a strong thrust to the participation of women in Panchayats and the same strategy may also work in Afghanistan. To give further impetus to women's empowerment through CDCs the allocation of 10 percent of block grant funding for women's projects could be increased to at least 30 percent with clear monitoring of its utilization.

[25] Ministry of Panchayati Raj, Assessment of Elected Representatives in Panchayati Raj Institutions in India, (New Delhi: Ministry of Panchayati Raj, Government of India, 2007

Chapter 6

Governance and Development in Afghanistan

Sanjay Ruparelia and Ruth Rennie

After three decades of violent conflict, Afghanistan is faced with the dual imperatives to promote sustainable human development and build effective governance. An analysis of the development priorities identified by ordinary Afghans reveals the crucial importance of governance in all facets of the development agenda. The ability of government to ensure security, its effectiveness in delivering essential public goods and services, and the quality of administrative processes, specifically the control of corruption in public administration, is clearly linked to citizen's perceptions of the performance of government, and their confidence in public institutions. Moreover, local political representatives are seen to advocate more effectively for the interests of their constituents than national level representatives. This suggests that empowering governance institutions at the local level to a greater extent is likely to improve the responsiveness of the state and its institutions to effectively meeting local needs and supporting sustainable human development. In addition, participatory processes, such as Community Development Councils (CDCs), have shown themselves to be effective in supporting both development and governance objectives by allowing communities to play an active role in their own development process. Such approaches offer the best opportunity for Afghanistan to improve both development and governance outcomes by building on the progress already achieved in this field.

Introduction

As one of the poorest countries in the world, Afghanistan is facing the urgent need to promote sustainable human development. At the same time, after three decades of violent conflict the country is faced with the imperative of building a modern state in the context of the multiple power centers that exist in this historically decentralized society.[1] The pursuit of these two objectives, common to all late-developing countries in the post-colonial world, is inherently difficult,[2] but it is a far more arduous task in contemporary Afghanistan. The challenge of building a state which possesses sovereignty over its territory, sufficient administrative capacity to implement coherent policies, and wide political legitimacy in such a context is immense. Yet it throws into sharp relief the fundamental relationship between governance and development that is crucial for the future of the country.

In simple terms, development refers to a transformation in the capabilities of individuals and the societies in which they live to expand the range of choices available to pursue lives they value. In general development entails three core dimensions. The first is rising personal income and economic growth - classic measures of modern economic

1 For a historical overview of the Afghans state, see Barnett R. Rubin, The Fragmentation of Afghanistan: state formation and collapse in the international system, 2nd edition (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002).

2 See Geoffrey Hawthorn, "'Waiting for a text?'" in James Manor (ed.), Rethinking Third World Politics (London and New York: Longman, 1991), pp. 24-51

development. Revenue generation and employment opportunities provide individuals with the resources that expand human choices and access to basic social goods such as food, clothing and shelter, necessary for a decent standard of living.[3] In addition those engaged in productive work contribute to the expansion of the economy as a whole and aggregate economic growth helps to lower income poverty and provide opportunities for better public services.[4]

However, individuals may be poor despite an ostensibly adequate income due to other factors such as age, gender and location.[5] For these reasons, the second key dimension of development involves expanding social opportunities such as access to education and healthcare and basic infrastructure such as electricity, water and sanitation. Indeed, the ability to lead a healthy life and enjoy literacy and a decent standard of living are the core of sustainable human development.[6]

Yet sustainable human development involves more than a notion of individual material well-being. As Amartya Sen in particular has argued, "agency" - that is the ability of individuals and communities to define what well-being means to them and to secure the conditions necessary to achieve it - is the third critical dimension of development. In other words, the opportunity and capacity of individuals and communities to be agents of change and direct their own lives, rather than being recipients of the benefits of development made on their behalf, is a constitutive aspect of development in its own right.

The preceding discussion highlights the inherently political character of developmental processes. Development is not a passive transformation. By definition, it involves the struggle over power, wealth and status by competing social interests. This is the governance challenge that lies at the heart of development. Indeed, the success or failure of many development initiatives depends on whether decision-makers possess the necessary political resources - such as state legitimacy, autonomy, capacity and room for maneuver - necessary to secure their desired objectives within the grouping of social interests, institutional configurations and historical circumstances in which they operate.[7]

For these reasons in recent years scholars and practitioners in the international develop-

---

3 Fierce debate continues to exist over whether economic growth is necessary for improvements in human development. There is growing recognition, however, that such improvements may occur despite economic stagnation. See Amartya Sen,

4 Development as Freedom (New York: Anchor Books, 1999), pp. 35-54.
Sudhir Anand and Martin Ravallion, "Human development in poor countries: on the role of private incomes and public sources," Journal of Economic Perspectives 7 (1) 1993; reported in Santosh Mehrotra, "Social development in high-achieving countries: common elements and diversities," in Santosh Mehrotra and Richard Jolly (eds.), Development with a Human Face: experiences in social development and economic growth (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), p. 23.

5 Sen, Development as Freedom, pp. 88-89.

6 Sen, Development as Freedom, p. 11. This is not to say that citizens do not value government entitlements to basic social goods, or foreign development assistance that contributes to these entitlements - they surely do. But a richer understanding of human development requires a notion of agency.

7 Merilee S. Grindle and John W. Thomas, Public Choices and Policy Change: the political economy of reform in developing countries (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991), Chapter 6.

ment community have increasingly focused on the quality of government as a key determinant of prospects for development. Proponents of the 'good government' agenda have sought to identify the set of characteristics necessary to ensure the proper rule-bound functioning of a specific political system that it is presumed will deliver the best possible development outcomes .[8] Many of the criteria associated with this agenda now inform Afghan government policy. In particular, the Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS) defines the principles of good governance to include openness, participation, accountability, effectiveness and efficiency, coherence, consensus, equity and inclusiveness, rule of law and gender justice. It also sets out the Afghan Government's commitment to establish and strengthen government institutions at the central and sub-national levels to ensure that they operate according to these principles.[9]

In addition to the 'good government' agenda, scholars and practitioners have recently incorporated into their analyses a wider range of political, social and economic actors involved in the structures and processes of decision-making that shape development outcomes.[10] This broader paradigm of 'governance' encompasses but transcends the state. It includes actors ranging from traditional authority structures and sub-national government agencies to bi- and multilateral development agencies, private sector firms, civil society organizations at the domestic, regional and international level, private militias, national armies and international military forces. This wider perspective on governance is also crucial to understanding the prospects for development in Afghanistan.

Nevertheless, the principal agent of development in late developing countries remains the modern state. There are several reasons for this. First, the state remains the single most important political institution within these wider governance networks. It must establish internal order and external defense to ensure a secure environment in which other actors work. Second, it must create regulatory frameworks and communication infrastructures that facilitate economic activity and organize social life. Third, the state must provide basic public services, ranging from education and health to water, sanitation and electricity, that form the foundation of any modern economy and society. Finally, it must oversee the various structures and processes that regulate interactions between the various political, social and economic actors that comprise larger governance networks. Despite its eroding political authority in an era of globalization, the state remains the only political actor with the power, legitimacy and mandate to pursue these tasks, even if it fails to achieve them. This does not mean that governance and government are synonymous. However it does indicate that ultimately it is the legiti-

8 The good government agenda is not without its critics. The most prominent criticisms include the Western cultural bias of the agenda, its technocratic nature and the failure of its proponents to consider the wider politics that underpin good political decision-making. These are important critiques to bear in mind in the development of initiatives for improving governance.

9 Government of Afghanistan, Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS), Governance and Public Administrative Reform and Human Rights Sector Strategy 2008 - 2013, (Kabul: Government of Afghanistan, 2008)

10 For a comprehensive overview of the criteria, definitions and measures of governance developed by a range of organizations over the last decade, see Kaufmann, Daniel, Aart Kraay, Massimo Mastruzzi, Governance Matters VII: Aggregate and Individual Governance Indicators 1996-2007. Policy Research Working Paper 4654, (World Bank, June 2008)

mate political responsibility of the state to define, regulate and enforce the rules that govern the behavior of other actors in wider governance networks.[11]

In this chapter we first examine the development priorities identified by Afghans in the 2008 Asia Foundation survey to distinguish the significance they attach to basic governance issues including the maintenance of security, the provision of employment opportunities and basic public services, and addressing corruption in public administration. We then analyze the perceived responsiveness, accountability and effectiveness of various governance institutions at the local, provincial and national levels in addressing development challenges. We look specifically at the importance of participatory processes that support both development and governance objectives by allowing communities to play an active role in their own development process. In the final part we summarize the key findings and identify policy implications that emerge from the analysis.

Development Priorities: The Core Role of Governance

The 2008 survey asked a series of questions that examine Afghans' perceptions of development priorities. The issues identified reveal the crucial importance of governance in all facets of the development agenda. The priorities identified can be grouped into three broad categories which are each associated with widely used measures of the quality of governance: the ability of government to ensure stability, security and rule of law, its effectiveness in delivering essential public goods and services, and the quality of administrative processes - specifically the control of corruption in public administration.[12] We now discuss the findings in each of these areas.

---

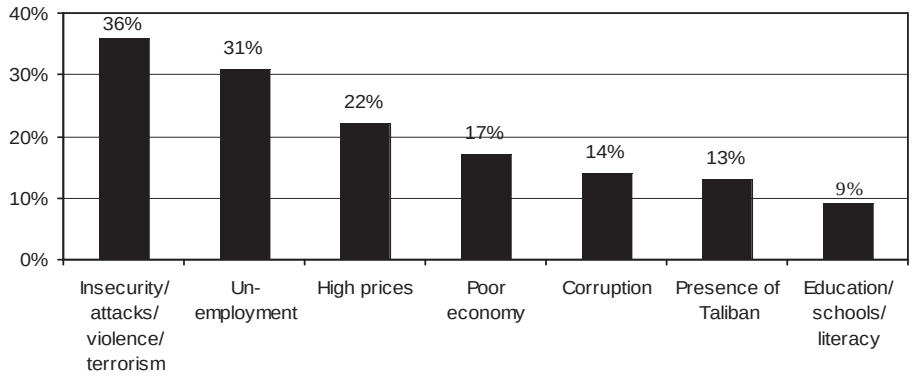
[11] See Hyden, G., Court, J. and Mease, K (2004). Making sense of Governance: Empirical Evidence from Sixteen Developing Countries, Boulder Colorado and Court, Julius (2006) Governance, Development and Aid Effectiveness: A Quick Guide to Complex Relationships. Overseas Development Institute, March

[12] The development priorities raised by the 2008 survey discussed in this section fit within four of the six measures of good governance proposed by the World Bank, although the aggregate measures they use cover a much broader range of elements than those discussed here. These core areas include two measures in the security domain: Political Stability and Absence of Violence (PV) - measuring perceptions of the likelihood that the government will be destabilized or overthrown by unconstitutional or violent means, including politically-motivated violence and terrorism and Rule of Law (RL) - measuring perceptions of the extent to which agents have confidence in and abide by the rules of society, and in particular the quality of contract enforcement, property rights, the police, and the courts, as well as the likelihood of crime and violence, both of which have an important security dimension. They also include Government Effectiveness (GE) - measuring perceptions of the quality of public services, the quality of the civil service and the degree of its independence from political pressures, the quality of policy formulation and implementation, and the credibility of the government's commitment to such policies, and Control of Corruption (CC) - measuring perceptions of the extent to which public power is exercised for private gain, including both petty and grand forms of corruption, as well as "capture" of the state by elites and private interests. The other three measures of the quality of governance relate to Voice and Accountability (VA) which will be addressed in the second part of the chapter and Regulatory Quality (RQ) which we do not address. See Kaufmann, Daniel, Aart Kraay, Massimo Mastruzzi,, Governance Matters VII, op. cit.

Security and Rule of Law

Insecurity emerges from the 2008 survey as the major concern for Afghans. Half of those who say that the country is moving in the wrong direction (32% of all respondents) cite the lack of security as the most important reason for pessimism (Q10-11). Insecurity, including attacks, violence and terrorism, is also identified as the biggest problem facing Afghanistan as a whole by more than a third of respondents (36%), as shown in Figure 1, placing it at the top of the list for the third year running (Q12).

Figure 1: Biggest Problem Facing Afghanistan as a Whole



Source: 2008 Asia Foundation survey

Although identified as a major problem in its own right, insecurity is intrinsically bound up with issues of both governance and development. Firstly, as both Jones and Maley point out in this volume, if people do not feel safe then the government and its security forces are failing to fulfill one of the core governance functions: to hold a monopoly on the means of legitimate coercion, and use this capacity to enforce the rule of law. Secondly, high levels of insecurity clearly impede effective development. In areas where the government is unable to ensure the security of its staff, it will not be able to implement development initiatives or deliver public services, and NGOs, facilitating partners and private sector organizations are also less likely to be willing to work in these areas. In addition, in areas where security is poor, even where services exist, citizens - particularly women - are often not able to travel to access them. Finally, as Dalton demonstrates in his chapter, insecurity and violence diminish the willingness of individuals and communities to participate in a range of social and political activities, and therefore limits their opportunities to be agents of their own development. In all of these ways insecurity can seriously undermine both development and governance prospects, ultimately diminishing confidence in democracy and undermining the legitimacy of the state. The British Defense Secretary John Hutton recently summed up the view that is driving

much of the international community's attention in Afghanistan, saying; "There is still much to do and we remain understandably focused on providing the security conditions to allow reconstruction and governance to take place."[13]

These links become clear when we examine perceptions of security alongside governance issues at the regional level. Although insecurity is seen as a major local problem by only 14% of respondents nationwide (Q13a and b), it is identified as the most significant local problem in the South West (44%) and South East (25%) regions. In addition, over half of respondents in the West, nearly two-thirds in the South East and around three-quarters in the South West say security conditions in their local area are quite bad or very bad (Q16), and these proportions have been rising consistently since 2006.

The inability of the state to guarantee basic security clearly impacts on perceptions of government in these regions, and on trust in public institutions. For example, although more respondents in the South West, South East and East report having been victims of violence or crime in the last year than in other regions (Q19) they are amongst the least likely to have reported these events to any authority (Q21).[14] When they do report crime they are less likely to report to the Afghan National Police than respondents in other regions (Q22). They are also more likely to cite "lack of trust in government officials" or the sense that "it makes no difference" as their reasons for not reporting (Q23). Respondents in regions with poor security also record the lowest levels of confidence in the ability of government law-enforcement organizations and the judicial system to punish the guilty party (Q25). Around half of respondents in the South East, South West and West of the country say that they would have little confidence in the ability of these bodies to enforce the rule of law effectively.

Equally concerning is the fact that respondents in these regions are also the least likely to express any level of optimism that the situation will improve in the future. Around half of respondents in the South West (51%) say that they expect the security situation to get worse in the next year, and the same is true in the South East (41%), East, (23%) and West (21%) (Q17e). As Figure 2 demonstrates, in regions where the majority of respondents say that local security conditions are good (Q16e) a similarly high proportion also have a positive opinion of government performance in this area (Q63q), and

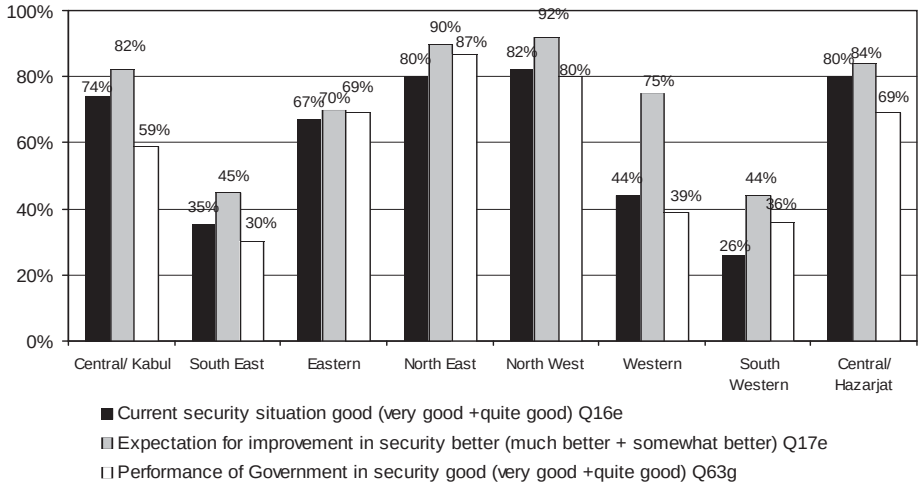
---

13 Reuters Oct 21, 2008. In an earlier interview Hutton expanded on this theme, explaining; "You've got to deal with the insurgency first and foremost. Unless there's security, not just in Kabul but the rest of the country, you can put in all the social investment and economic development you like - it's not going to work. If the Taliban turn up a month later and bulldoze the school you've built, then you're back to square one." The Sunday Times, October 26, 2008

14 Twenty two percent of respondents in the South West, 21% in the South East, 19% in the East reported having been victims of crime of violence in the last year, compared to a national average of 16%. Of these 41 % in the Eastern region said that they did not report it to any authority, and this is true for 38% in the South West and 33% in the South East, compared to the national average of 29%. However it is worth noting that a relatively high level of reporting to District authorities is recorded in the East (33%) and South East (29%) regions which points to a certain level of trust in some government institutions.

expect to see further improvements in the future (Q17e). However, in those regions that report poor security conditions, expectations of improvement are generally lower and a clear minority of respondents give a positive assessment of the government's performance.

Figure 2: Perceptions of Current Security Situation, Expectations for Improvement and Assessment of Government Performance, by Region



Source: 2008 Asia Foundation survey

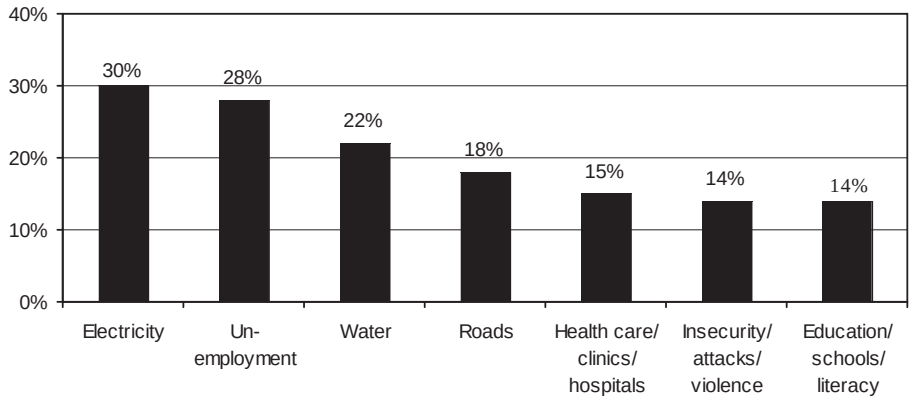
Basic Infrastructure and Essential Public Service Delivery

Essential infrastructure such as clean drinking water and electricity, basic public services such as health care and primary education and income generation opportunities in the form of jobs and production facilities are considered critical developmental goods throughout the world. Given their inherently public character, the provision of such goods is the responsibility of the state, which can either supply them directly - as is the case with education services in Afghanistan, or ensure their delivery through sub-contracting or public-private-partnerships - which is the model the Afghan government has adopted for the delivery of basic health services.

Economic and social development issues are also amongst the biggest problems facing the country identified by survey respondents. Indeed, at the national level Afghans collectively identify economic issues including unemployment (31%), high prices (22%) and a poor economy (17%) in far greater numbers than those who cite insecurity as the major national problem (Q12a ad b) (see Fig. 1). Moreover, these factors have gained greater priority in 2008, probably due to global economic conditions, as shown by the tenfold increase in the proportion of respondents mentioning high prices as a major national problem since 2007.

Unemployment is also identified as a priority problem at both national (31%) and local (28%) levels (Q12 -13a and b) as shown in Figure 3. A similar proportion (24%) also identify the lack of job opportunities as the one of the biggest problems facing women in Afghanistan (Q98a and b). This comes behind illiteracy and education and alongside the lack of women's rights; both issues, as Kaur and Ayubi point out in their chapter, that have a significant impact on the potential for employment for women.

Figure 3: Biggest Problem at the Local Level



Source: 2008 Asia Foundation survey

The salience of unemployment in the 2008 survey is entirely coherent with the emphasis given to the lack of job opportunities identified as a development priority in 33 of the 35 Provincial Development Plans (PDP) formulated as part of the Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS) in late 2007.[15] In the PDPs, the provision of employment opportunities for vulnerable groups such as returnees and refugees, disabled people, young people and widows is especially emphasized as the most important means of reducing poverty and ensuring economic self sufficiency. Indeed, fourteen PDPs (40%) specifically identify the need for appropriate employment opportunities for women.[16]

It is no surprise therefore that respondents, when asked about the quality of local services and amenities, are most negative about employment opportunities (Q16). More than three quarters (78%) say that the availability of jobs in their local area is bad or very bad, as shown in Table 1.

[15] Provincial Development Plans were formulated in all 34 provinces of Afghanistan in 2007 through a consultative process involving community representatives, government line ministries and their provincial departments, United Nations Agencies, National and International NGOs and other relevant stakeholders. Given the size and concentration of population in Kabul two separate development plans were formulated for Kabul province, one for the urban area and one covering rural districts.

[16] Rapid Analysis of Key Issues, Needs and Priorities for the Afghanistan National Development Strategy identified in Provincial Development Plans, Analysis provided by National Area Based Development Programme (NABDP), Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development Requested by UNDP and ANDS, December 2007.

Table 1: Quality of Essential Public Services

	Very good	Quite good	Quite bad	Very bad
	%	%	%	%
Schooling	26	44	20	9
Clean drinking water	20	42	26	12
Health care[17]	12	39	35	14
Irrigation	11	36	32	17
Electricity	6	19	30	44
Jobs	4	17	42	36

Source: 2008 Asia Foundation survey

It is also clear that the Afghan public wants responsive action from the government in this area. Only 7 percent of respondents say the employment opportunities for their household have got better in the last two years (Q41) as shown in Table 2. Similarly, only 10 PDPs (29%) report having seen any progress in the creation of employment opportunities since 2005; however no progress is reported for provinces in the South, the North East or the West.

Table 2: Improvements in Essential Public Services

	Better	The same	Worse
	%	%	%
Schooling/Access to schools	39	44	15
Health wellbeing [18]	29	50	20
Electricity	13	37	49
Jobs/Employment opportunities	7	33	59

Source: 2008 Asia Foundation survey

It is therefore not surprising that 75 percent of respondents say the Government is doing a bad job in creating job opportunities and 64 percent say the same about government performance in developing the economy (Q63), making these the areas where government performance is judged most negatively, as shown in Table 3.

[17] Combination of "Availability of health clinics / hospitals" and "Availability of medicines"

[18] The survey question asked "Compared to two years ago, would you say that situation for your household has gotten better, remained the same or gotten worse with respect to - Health well-being of your family members?" While this question does not report on improvements in health services directly, these are likely to constitute a significant contributing factor to improvements in health status, which is why we have taken this as the closest available proxy measure for comparative purposes.

Table 3: Government Performance in Essential Public Services

	Very good job	Somewhat good job	Somewhat bad job	Very bad job
	%	%	%	%
Education	36	48	11	4
Healthcare system	18	48	25	8
Developing the economy	6	27	34	30
Creating job opportunities	4	20	37	38

Source: 2008 Asia Foundation survey

Yet it is equally clear that Afghans do not have much confidence in the government to deliver. Only 62 percent of respondents expect to see improvements in job opportunities in the next year, and a full 33 percent actually expect the situation to get worse (Q17).

Table 4: Expectations for Change in Essential Public Services

	Much better	Somewhat better	Somewhat worse	Much worse
	%	%	%	%
Schooling	49	33	11	5
Clean drinking water	46	37	11	4
Health care [19]	41	35	14	6
Irrigation	36	38	14	6
Electricity	36	26	16	17
Jobs	35	27	20	13

Source: 2008 Asia Foundation survey

A similar situation exists with respect to basic infrastructure, such as electricity supply. Amongst development priorities at the local level the availability of electricity is judged to be the highest priority overall (Q13a and b). (See Figure 3). Unsurprisingly it is also judged to be the least accessible infrastructure, with almost three quarters of respondents saying the supply of electricity in their local area is bad (Q16d). The availability of electricity is considered to be bad or very bad by over 80 percent of respondents in the North East, East and South West, which are also the regions where the majority of respondents report having no access to electricity (Q40). The availability of electricity, both for domestic use and productive purposes such as factories and businesses, is also mentioned in 28 PDPs (80%).[20] Yet again, alongside employment opportunities, respondents report the least progress in this area the last two year (Q41). PDPs in just 8 provinces (23%), principally in the Centre, South and South East report improvements

[19] Combination of "Availability of health clinics / hospitals" and "Availability of medicines".

[20] Rapid Analysis, op. cit. However, in the PDPs, electricity supply emerges as a lower priority than drinking water,

in access to electricity.[21] Expectations of improvement are also correspondingly low with under two thirds of respondents (62%) expecting to see improvements in the next year, and the remaining third (33%) expecting things to get worse (Q17d).

Other basic infrastructure such as water supply and road construction also feature amongst Afghan's development priorities. (See Figure 3). Access to clean drinking water is identified as a priority issue in all PDPs, including six that highlight the need for access to safe drinking water in public institutions such as schools. Nonetheless, 62 percent of survey respondents say the availability of clean drinking water is good in their local area, although only 47 percent say the same about water for irrigation (Q16), and more than three quarters expect to see improvements in water supply in the next year (Q17). Reconstruction of roads is also identified as a major local problem by 18% of survey respondents and in all PDPs, including 29 plans (83%) that refer specifically to the need for better tertiary roads to improve communication between villages and from villages to district and provincial centers. A good quality road network is seen as essential not only for economic development - by providing access for products to markets - but also to improve access to basic services such as schools, clinics and hospitals.[22]

Access to basic health care (15%) and education (14%) also feature amongst the most important problems at the local level identified by survey respondents. Even so, on average 70 percent of respondents report that the availability of education for children is good in the area where they live (Q16h), and around half (51%) say the same about health care services (Q16f). The poorest assessments of access to education are in the South West, West and South East where this is probably influenced by a range of infrastructure, insecurity and cultural issues. The Central Hazarajat region also reports acute problems of access to health and education services largely due to the remoteness of many villages in this region. Access to basic services, including the establishment of schools and clinics, is also signaled as a priority in nearly all of the Provincial Development Plans (33 or 94%), including 16 (41%) that specifically identify the need for more girls schools, 23 (66%) that highlight the need for more health clinics for women and children, including maternity services, and 13 (37%) that single out the need for more health services to serve the nomadic Kuchi population.[23]

However, more than four-fifths of respondents (84%) say the Government is doing a good job in education, and a smaller, though still significant percentage (66%), say the same about the provision of healthcare (Q63). Moreover, the largest proportion of respondents report improvements in the last two years in education (39%) and healthcare (29%) (Q41). This is also consistent with the fact that 22 Provincial Development Plans (63%) reported improvements in access to schools, most notably in the Southern provinces. In addition, 28 PDPs (80%) reported improvement in access to health serv-

[21] Rapid Analysis , op. cit.
[22] Rapid Analysis , op. cit
[23] Rapid Analysis , op. cit.

ices since 2005, especially in the West and the North East.[24] Yet despite the fact that the availability of education is already seen as the best of any basic amenity, respondents expect to see the greatest improvements in this area in the coming year (See Table 4). It is relevant therefore that the highest proportion of respondents are also aware of current development projects in this area; as these provide a tangible basis for expectations of progress (see Table 5).

Table 5: Awareness of Development Projects or Programs

Type of project	Know of/ heard of
	%
Education	59
Reconstruction/building of roads, bridges	58
Water supply for drinking	43
Healthcare	42
Electricity supply	22
Water supply for irrigation	21
Programs in agriculture	19
Programs in industry	11

Source: 2008 Asia Foundation survey

Table 5 also shows that relatively few respondents are aware of programs targeted at those issues identified as the highest priorities, including electricity supply (22%) and job creation through the development of major productive sectors such as agriculture (19%) and industry (11%). From a development perspective, these findings provide an important corrective signal that all development actors should heed when formulating their priorities going forward. Some might argue that creating sustainable employment is more difficult than supplying basic services, as job creation is influenced by market conditions that government cannot control. Nonetheless, the fact that most Afghans cite the lack of jobs as the most severe problem in their local area, and that unemployment and local economic distress compels various communities to grow poppy in order to survive (Q43), point to the need for a comprehensive strategic policy to develop the economy and generate employment opportunities as an urgent political imperative which Afghans are looking to their government to address.

More generally, the fndings clearly demonstrate that the identification of basic public goods as development priorities is a core governance issue. Progress in addressing social and economic development relies to a large extent on the capacity of government institutions to respond to the needs of citizens and communities. Moreover, the perception of the Afghan Government's capacity to promote development, despite the fact that most development projects in Afghanistan are funded either directly or indirectly

[24] Rapid Analysis, op. cit.

by foreign assistance, is instrumental in bolstering both its credibility and legitimacy. As Maley points out in his chapter in this volume, the ability of a government to meet the population's wishes and to perform its core tasks effectively can be a fundamental basis for defining state legitimacy. When asked who they believe is responsible for the development initiatives taking place in supplying basic infrastructure and essential public services, the majority of respondents identify the Government as a key actor (Q34) as shown in Table 6.

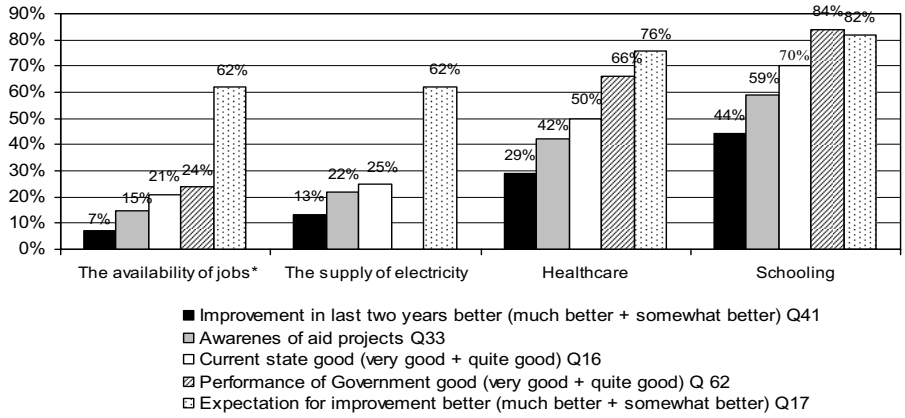
Table 6: Source of Aid for Development Projects

	Sponsored by Government	**Sponsored by Foreigners**	**Both**
	%	%	%
Electricity	51	22	27
Education	49	21	29
Irrigation	49	23	26
Agriculture	48	41	22
Industry	42	28	27
Healthcare	39	29	31
Drinking water	37	34	28
Roads and bridges	26	37	36

Source: 2008 Asia Foundation survey

It is therefore relevant from a governance perspective to consider respondent's perceptions of the responsiveness and performance of Government in addressing the priority development issues they identified. Collectively, these findings point to a clear pattern. The more positive the assessment of current essential services and amenities, the more likely respondents are to report improvements in the last two years and to be aware of current development projects. Because the state is seen to be the key actor in promoting development, public assessments of government performance in these sectors are higher as a result of having seen effective delivery in responding to their priority problems. And as experience of good performance increases, so too do expectations of further improvements in the future. This pattern can be seen in Figure 3 below which clearly demonstrates the fundamental relationship between these elements.

Figure 4: Development Delivery and Impact on Governance



* Awareness of aid projects is a combination of "programmes in agriculture" and "programmes in industry"

Source: 2008 Asia Foundation survey

From a governance perspective, these findings suggest that the Government's ability to respond effectively to local needs and priorities is a core factor influencing public confidence in the direction and progress of the country. Moreover, as Dalton points out in his chapter in this volume, experience of effective government delivery ultimately influences Afghan's trust in Government and their faith in the democratic system. For this reason, the widespread belief that public service delivery in every field will improve in the next year represents both an opportunity and a risk for the Afghan government. If conditions improve, the Government will enjoy greater credibility and support. If they deteriorate, however, a popular backlash is likely to occur, with potentially serious consequences in a democratic state as fragile as Afghanistan.

Combating Corruption and Supporting Good Government

Alongside the capacity of the State to ensure the security of citizens and deliver effective public services, the third major dimension of governance that influences patterns of development relates to the quality of its administrative processes, specifically their impartiality, transparency and accountability. This is why a focus on eradicating corrupt practices in public administration is a core concern. The ways in which corruption hinders development are well rehearsed: The subversion of resources by public officials for their private ends diminishes the equity of government service provision. In addition, the diversion of scarce public funds reduces the willingness of donor agencies to increase development assistance or to channel aid through government rather than through their own parallel delivery mechanisms. Ultimately, corruption destroys the credibility of formal political

institutions, undermining the principle of impartiality upon which their legitimacy rests. Hence the call in recent years by various development actors for greater accountability within the state, between the state and its various donors, and vis-à-vis its recipients.[25]

Respondents to the 2008 Asia Foundation survey identify corruption as one of the biggest problems facing Afghanistan (Q12) (see Fig 1). Moreover, amongst those who feel that Afghanistan is going in the wrong direction, nearly one fifth of respondents (19%) cite corruption as the reason, and a further 9 percent specify administrative corruption (Q11a and b). Collectively this makes corruption the second most important factor, after insecurity, that is undermining Afghans' confidence in the country's progress. The reduction of corruption in public administration also emerged as a significant priority in four out of five Provincial Development Plans (28 or 80%). A third of PDPs (12 or 34%) emphasized the problem of corruption in the security services, while a quarter (9 or 26%) singled out the need to establish anticorruption departments at the provincial level.[26]

As Table 7 shows, an astonishingly large majority of Afghans believe corruption to be a problem at all levels of government, ranging from 80 percent who say corruption is a problem in their daily lives, including 51% who say it is a major problem, to 92 percent who say corruption is a problem for Afghanistan as a whole, including 76 percent who say it is a major problem at this level (Q26).

Table 7: Perceptions of Corruption

	Major problem	**Minor problem**	**Not a problem**
	%	%	%
Daily life	51	29	18
Neighborhood	48	35	14
Local authorities	53	33	10
Provincial government	63	26	7
Nationally	76	16	4

Source: 2008 Asia Foundation survey

Moreover, a similar majority of Afghans also believe that levels of corruption have either remained the same or increased from previous year, ranging from 74 percent in daily affairs to 85 percent at the national level (Q27) (see Table 8). Again, these perceptions worsen progressively at higher levels of government. These findings also corroborate the picture that emerges from the Provincial Development Plans. Although four provinces reported progress in the establishment of anticorruption departments since 2005, none of the PDPs report any decrease in corruption in the last two years.[27]

[25] Anne Marie Goetz and Rob Jenkins, "Held to account: governance and human development," Background Paper for Human Development Report 2002 (November 2001).
[26] Rapid Analysis, op. cit.
[27] Rapid Analysis , op. cit.

Table 8: Perceptions of Change in Corruption

	Increased	Stayed the Same	Decreased
	%	%	%
Daily life	24	49	23
Neighborhood	25	50	21
Local authorities	33	45	15
Provincial government	45	37	11
Nationally	57	28	9

Source: 2008 Asia Foundation survey

As Maley points out in his chapter, the rise in the perception of the prevalence of corruption at higher levels of government is likely to be based on reputation rather than personal experience, since up to two thirds of respondents report having had no contact with government agencies, even for local services (see Table 9), and fewer are likely to have had any contact with government agencies at higher levels. Indeed, when asked about their actual experience of corruption, at most around one in four respondents report having paid cash or providing a gift or favor to a government official in the past year in any particular public institution or service, as Table 9 demonstrates.

Table 9: Incidence of Corruption in Public Institutions

Institution	In all cases	In most cases	In isolated cases	SOME CASES: TOTAL	No Cases	No contact
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Public healthcare	2	8	16	26	35	37
Applying for work	4	9	12	25	25	47
Receiving official documents	5	8	11	24	25	49
Courts	3	8	12	23	22	52
ANP	2	6	13	21	31	46
Municipality	3	5	9	17	23	58
State electricity board	2	6	9	17	26	55
Admission to school	2	5	9	16	34	46
Customs office	3	5	6	14	23	62
ANA	1	3	6	10	34	53

Source: 2008 Asia Foundation survey

The apparent gap between the perceptions of the high prevalence of corruption and the relatively low reports of personal experience of it may also be due to the fact that

corruption takes various forms: graft, patronage, nepotism, embezzlement, kickbacks and so on. The survey asks whether respondents paid a bribe in the past year, but bribery is simply one form of corruption. When added to these many other forms the true incidence of corruption in Afghan government institutions is no doubt much higher.

Nonetheless, even if perceptions of corruption are exaggerated, such widespread views should concern the Afghan Government as they reveal a profound distrust of the impartiality, transparency, accountability, and ultimately the credibility, of many public institutions - which is clearly damaging for state-society relations. It is certainly no coincidence that the Afghan National Army (ANA) which is the public institution in which respondents express the highest levels of confidence (Q52) (see Table 10), is also the one in which they report the lowest incidence of corruption (Q28) (see Table 9). There is equally little doubt, as Sharma and Sen point out in their chapter, that the relatively high incidence of corruption reported in dealings with state courts is at least partly responsible for the particularly low levels of public trust expressed in the government justice system (see also the chapter by Sharma and Sen). Indeed, the prevalence of corruption across a wide range of administrative procedures is certainly a contributing factor to the low levels of confidence in the public administration generally, compared to other service providers such as national and international NGOs, and community-based institutions such as Community Development Councils (CDCs), shura and jirga.

Table 10: Levels of Confidence in State and Non-State Institutions

	Some Confidence (Great deal + Fair amount)	**No Confidence (Not very much + None at all)**
	%	%
Afghan National Army	89	10
Afghan National Police	82	18
Community Shuras/Jirgas	69	24
Community Development Councils	65	28
Provincial Councils	65	30
International NGOs	64	29
National NGOs	62	32
Independent Election Commission	57	35
Public administration	55	37
Government ministers	51	44
The government justice system	46	49
Political parties	43	50
Municipality	42	49

Source: 2008 Asia Foundation survey

Moreover, the evident inability of government to effectively address corruption within the public administration contributes significantly to negative public views on its overall performance. Two thirds of respondents (66%) rate the Government's performance in combating corruption negatively (Q63f), particularly in the Central /Hazarajat, Central/Kabul, South East and West where more than 40 percent of respondents say that the Government is doing a very bad job in this regard.

The Effectiveness of Governance Institutions in Supporting Development

The preceding analysis has shown the extent to which governance-related issues - security, the provision of basic public services and tackling corruption - are central to the development priorities of ordinary Afghan citizens. This provides a concrete demonstration of how governance is integral to development. We therefore now examine the effectiveness of different governance institutions, including government bodies and local community-level institutions, in promoting sustainable human development. We consider the extent to which various political representatives are seen to advocate effectively for the interests of their constituents. We also look at the level of participation of ordinary Afghan citizens in local developmental processes and the opportunities these present for improving development outcomes. All of these issues relate to another of the core dimensions of governance - the opportunity for citizens to participate in their own development and the accountability of those who represent their interests.[28]

Representative Political Institutions and Their Role in Promoting Development

There are many different actors involved in the process of state building, reconstruction and development in Afghanistan. These include government bodies, international donor agencies, national and international NGOs, private sector firms, international military forces and civil society organizations. The presence of so many actors with their own mandates, resources and interests creates a number of challenges that again highlight the governance dimension that lies at the heart of effective development.

First, the Afghan Government has frequently requested the international donor community to channel more of its assistance through the state in order to buttress its capacity and legitimacy in determining development priorities and targeting resources to address them. Donors have responded with legitimate demands for higher levels of

[28] The governance indicator in this domain defined by the World Bank is Voice and Accountability (VA) - measuring perceptions of the extent to which a country's citizens are able to participate in selecting their government, as well as freedom of expression, freedom of association, and a free media. See Kaufmann, Daniel, Aart Kraay, Massimo Mastruzzi, (2008) Governance Matters VII: Aggregate and Individual Governance Indicators 1996-2007. Policy Research Working Paper 4654, World Bank, June.

transparency, responsiveness and accountability in the Government to ensure the effective management of resources to achieve the desired development outcomes.

Second, the highly centralized nature of the Afghan state concentrates political, administrative and fiscal powers with central government in Kabul. However the creation of a number of new governance structures at the sub national level in recent years, including Provincial Councils (PCs) and Community Development Councils (CDCs), has increased the number of actors with a mandate to play a key role in identifying development needs and empowering local communities to participate actively alongside government in driving forward the development agenda. The effectiveness of development initiatives in Afghanistan is strongly influenced by both these governance dimensions. It is therefore important to understand how Afghan citizens perceive the role of governance bodies and assess their efforts.

When asked whether they feel their Member of Parliament (MP) is addressing the major problems of their constituency in the national legislature, a small majority of Afghans (56%) say they do (Q87b). However this figure has been falling steadily since 2006 when nearly four fifths (79%) of respondents agreed with this statement - indicating increasing disenchantment with the responsiveness of central government in addressing local problems which are important to people. When survey respondents were asked whether they have ever contacted their MP to actively request help in resolving a local problem, less than one in ten (9%) say they have done so (Q81). A slightly higher percentage (11%) say have contacted a member of their Provincial Council for this purpose (Q84).

Significantly, those who have sought the assistance of their elected representatives have done so largely to address problems of local development including lack of water and electricity, poor roads and bridges, inadequate security and unemployment, as shown in Table 11 (Q82 and Q85).

Table 11: Reasons for Contacting Elected Representatives

	Member of Parliament	**Provincial Council member**
	%	%
Water and electricity	24	18
Roads and bridges	16	15
Local security	11	9
Land dispute	9	9
Building schools	9	3
Unemployment	4	8

Source: 2008 Asia Foundation survey

However, only half of those who contacted their MP report that he or she tried to solve these issues (Q83a). These responses seem to corroborate the sense of ambivalence towards the responsiveness of national level political representatives in addressing the major problems of the constituency outlined above. They also highlight the fact that the Afghan public is not yet very clear about the appropriate roles elected representatives can and should play. For example two thirds of respondents who took problems to their MPs in the South West (67%), find them unresponsive, which is likely to be a reflection of the high proportion of security and dispute related issues, given that MPs are generally unlikely to be able to exert any significant level of influence over issues of this kind. Similarly, 58 percent of respondents in the Central Hazarajat report getting no help from MPs, which is again likely to reflect the fact that half of the problems raised related to the lack of roads and bridges.

Respondents are more positive about the willingness of Provincial Council members to assist in addressing local problems. Nearly two thirds of respondents (63%) say their PC representative tried to help (Q86a). This may explain the slightly higher proportion of issues resolved in these cases (43%) than amongst those taken to MPs (33%) (Q86b), as shown in Table 12.

Table 12: Responsiveness and Effectiveness of Elected Political Representatives

	Member of Parliament	**Provincial Council Representative**
	%	%
Approached to address local problems	12	11
Willingness to address local problems	51	63
Problems resolved	33	43

Source: 2008 Asia Foundation survey

Two key lessons emerge from this. First, it is largely local development issues that motivate Afghans to contact their political representatives at various levels - showing the central role that governance institutions are expected to play in the delivery of sustainable development. Second, Provincial Council representatives are seen to be more responsive and effective at assisting in the resolution of local problems. The closer proximity of PC representatives to their constituents - in both physical and social terms - may explain the more positive assessment given to these institutions. If so, empowering them to a greater extent is likely to improve the responsiveness of the state and its institutions to effectively meeting local needs.

Participation and Community Involvement

The issue of how to increase the responsiveness of elected representatives raises a crucial related issue: to what extent can Afghan citizens directly participate in Afghanistan's development processes? Participation is a powerful leitmotif in contemporary development thinking. Examples of the failure of top-down programmatic interventions by state bureaucracies or donor agencies is unfortunately all too common.[29] Participatory development processes, on the other hand, are seen to generate consensus over the goals and strategies of local human development[30] and increase the possibility that projects and programs will be relevant and adaptable to their targeted recipients.[31] They also enable disadvantaged groups to monitor interventions made in their name and give key stakeholders an incentive to contribute to the success and sustainability of such initiatives.[32] Perhaps most importantly, participatory development initiatives allow the 'objects' of development to become its agents.[33]

Of course, participatory development has its limits. In practice, many participatory exercises are one-sided and temporary affairs. Their timing and duration are mostly at the discretion of traditional decision-makers, not poor groups, leading to the creation of ad hoc associations rather than developing strong networks capable of generating social capital.[34] Most importantly, there are generally few mechanisms in place to ensure that government bureaucrats and external actors respect the wishes of participants, or to impose any form of sanction to hold them to account.[35] Nonetheless, participatory development structures provide a real opportunity to enhance the relevance and quality of development processes and to expand the powers and capacities of local communities and ordinary citizens.

The major examples of the use of participatory development principles on a national scale in Afghanistan include the establishment of Community Development Councils (CDCs) at village level through the National Solidarity Program (NSP) begun in 2003,

---

29 For a wide-ranging explanation of why modernist social blueprints often cause large-scale developmental failures, see James C. Scott, Seeing like a State: how certain schemes to improve the human condition have failed (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998).

30 For instance, see Robert Chambers, Whose Reality Counts: putting the last first (Rugby: Intermediate Technology Development Group, 1997); and Norman Uphoff, Local Institutional Development: an analytical sourcebook with cases (West Hartford, CT: Kumarian Press, 1986).

31 See Ravi Kanbur and Lyn Squire, "The evolution of thinking about poverty: exploring the interactions," in Meier and Stiglitz, Frontiers of Development Economics, pp. 183-226; and J. Isham, D. Narayan and L. Pritchett, "Does participation improve performance? establishing causality with subjective data," World Bank Economic Review 9 (2) 1995.

32 Stiglitz, "Participation and development," p. 10.

33 See Jean Drèze and Amartya Sen, India: development and participation (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2002).

34 The following set of criticisms are made by Anne Marie Goetz and Rob Jenkins, "Held to account: governance and human development," Background Paper for Human Development Report 2002 (UNDP: November 2001).

35 Responsiveness refers to whether decision-makers react to signals of preferences, which can take the form of opinion polls or active protests of various kinds. It thereby is distinct from accountability, which involves answerability and enforceability, and representation, which reflects the satisfaction of interests. See Jose Antonio Cheibub and Adam Przeworski, "Democracy, elections and accountability in election outcomes," and Susan C. Stokes, "What do policy switches tell us about democracy?" in Democracy, Accountability and Representation, Chapters 7 and 3, respectively

the creation of District Development Assemblies (DDAs) through the National Area Based Development Programme (NABDP) that provide an interface between CDCs and government agencies at the District Level, and the nationwide Provincial Development Planning (PDP) process linked to the formulation of the Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS) undertaken in 2007. Perceptions of CDCs and PDPs reported in the survey are therefore significant in illuminating the effectiveness of participatory approaches in promoting sustainable development in the Afghan context.

The survey shows that less than half of respondents nationally (42%) are aware that a CDC exists in their locality (Q88). This is a potentially disheartening figure given that more than 21,000 councils have been set up, as it suggests that CDCs are not yet providing widespread opportunities for citizens to participate in the development process at the local level as was intended However, this may simply reflect the fact that the establishment of these local institutions is still incomplete or still very recent in some areas, due to the progressive roll-out strategy of the NSP. Indeed, awareness varies widely between provinces, from the vast majority of respondents in Panshir (98%), Kapisa (85%), Wardak (85%), Badakhshan (74%), Laghman (74%), Bamyan (73%), Zabul (72%) and Badghis (71%), to only a small percentage in Uruzgan (15%) and Kabul (13%).

The survey also shows that a majority of respondents report that influential local leaders such as elders of the local shura/jirga (78%) and local malik or khan (72%) are members of the CDC (Q89a). More than half of respondents say mullah (57%) and local teachers (54%) and just under a third say doctors (30%) and local commanders (29%) are members. This is cause for concern for proponents who argued that CDCs would help to empower historically subordinate groups. However, a significant proportion of respondents also indicate that their local CDC includes representation of less powerful social groups such as ordinary farmers (52%) and landless agricultural workers (40%). Thirty percent of respondents say that women are represented on their local CDC. (See also the chapter by Kaur and Ayubi who examine in detail the effectiveness of CDCs in empowering women as active participants in the local governance and development). In reality it is unsurprising that local figures of authority would be overrepresented in these new structures. It is extremely hard for any community to overturn the asymmetries of power that govern it in the short run without massive external intervention that seeks to reorder social relations. The Government has neither attempted such a task, nor could it, given its limited presence in most rural areas of the country. Moreover, it is understandable that Afghans would turn to their traditional authority figures in times of severe duress. The presence of local shura elders, maliks and mullahs in most CDCs might well endow these structures with greater legitimacy and capacity to act in the name of their constituents, at least in the short term.

Indeed, this is suggested by the high level of satisfaction in the performance of CDCs reported by survey respondents, with 82 percent of those who are aware of their local

CDC saying they are satisfied with its performance. Furthermore, a similarly high percentage believes that CDCs can effectively represent their interests before Provincial Council (81%) and the National Government (82%). These findings clearly show that many Afghans deem their CDCs, in spite or because of the presence of traditional social authorities within these structures, as legitimate and effective institutions capable of addressing development issues at the local level and representing the concerns of local communities before higher level governance institutions. These finding support those who argue for giving legal recognition to CDCs as formal representatives governance bodies of local communities.

Beyond the creation of community-based structures, an attempt at broad scale participation of local community representatives in development decision-making was attempted in 2007 through the first ever nationwide sub national consultation on the Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS). This was linked to a participatory Provincial Development Planning process undertaken in all provinces. A relatively small proportion of respondents at the national level (21%) report awareness of the development plan for their province, however these results vary significantly between provinces (Q37a and b).

There is widely diffused knowledge of the Provincial Development Plan in 11 provinces. More than three quarters of respondents claim to know about the provincial development plan in Zabul (77%); around half in Laghman (53%), Ghor (49%) and Wardak (48%) provinces; and at least a quarter in Nangahar (32%), Khandahar (29%), Dai Kundi (28%), Balkh (26%), Baghlan (26%), Kapisa (25%) and Saripul (25%). Moreover, in all but one of these provinces, the majority of those who know of the plans also have some knowledge of their content. This demonstrates that significant efforts have been made to ensure local people are informed and involved in development planning in these provinces - which is a core component of effective governance. In addition, in 15 provinces although less than a quarter of respondents are aware of the development plan, more than half of these have some knowledge of its content. This suggests that in these provinces sufficient information is available to ensure some public understanding of the development agenda, despite limited attempts to foster awareness and participation. On the other hand, in 8 provinces less than a quarter of respondents are aware of the development plan for their province, and less than half have any knowledge of its content. This lack of awareness points to poor accountability and low responsiveness amongst governance bodies in these provinces (see Figure 4).

Figure 5: Awareness of Provincial Development Plans and their Content, by Province

Awareness of content	Awareness of plan: LOW	Awareness of plan: HIGH (>25%)
LOW	8 Ghazni, Paktika, Paktia, Takhar, Farah, Nimroz, Uruzgan, Bamyan	1 Zabul
HIGH (>50%)	15 Kabul, Parwan, Logar, Khost, Kunar, Nooristan, Badakhshan, Kunduz, Samangan, Jowzjan, Faryab, Badghis, Herat, Helmand, Panjshir,	10 Kapisa, Wardak, Nangarhar, Laghman, Baghlan, Balkh, Saripul, Khandahar, Ghor, Dai Kundi

Source: 2008 Asia Foundation survey

These findings reveal significant variation amongst governance bodies at the local level in promoting knowledge and participation of the development agenda amongst their constituents through the PDP process. What is unclear is whether such variation is due to conscious governance strategies, inadequate local capacity or some combination of these and other factors.

Conclusions and Policy Lessons

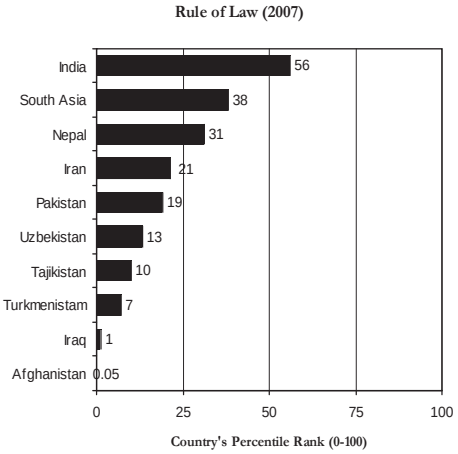
Responsive Delivery - the Core of the Governance Challenge

The preceding analysis demonstrates that the ability to deliver on the core development priorities that impact on the daily lives of Afghans - ensuring their security, providing essential public goods and services, combating corruption in public administration, and empowering communities and their representatives to play an active role in driving local development - lies at the heart of the governance role of the Afghan Government and its institutions. These findings resonate with those of a number of other studies that assess the state of governance in Afghanistan, and suggest that the scope of the challenge facing Afghan governance institutions should not be underestimated.

The 2008 World Bank report on the quality of governance in 212 countries shows that Afghanistan has some of the poorest governance outcomes in the world.[36] Even by comparison with its neighbors in South and Central Asia, Afghanistan scores worst with respect to government's ability to maintain security and enforce the rule of law (See Figure 5), and to control corruption (See Figure 6).

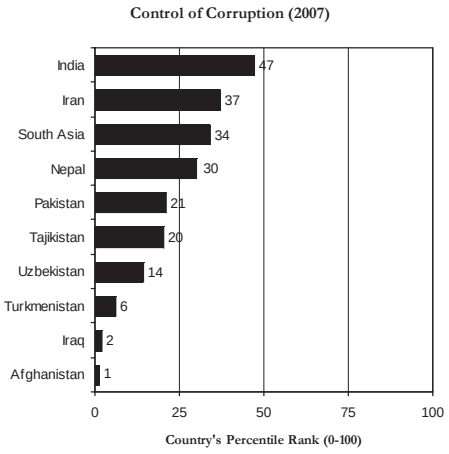
[36] Kaufmann, Daniel, Aart Kraay, Massimo Mastruzzi, Governance Matters VII: Aggregate and Individual Governance Indicators 1996-2007, Policy Research Working Paper 4654 (World Bank, June 2008).

Figure 6: Governance Indicator 2007, Rule of Law



Source: Daniel Kaufmann, Aart Kraay, Massimo Mastruzzi, *Governance Matters VII: Governance Indicators for 1996-2007*

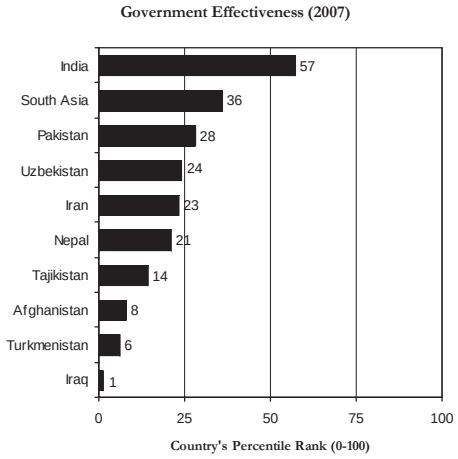
Figure 7: Governance Indicator 2007, Control of Corruption



Source: Daniel Kaufmann, Aart Kraay, Massimo Mastruzzi, *Governance Matters VII: Governance Indicators for 1996-2007*

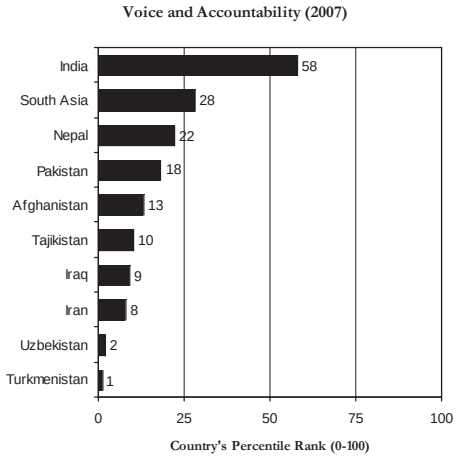
The country scores slightly better in terms of government effectiveness, which resonates with the high levels of satisfaction with government performance in some core areas of service delivery such as education expressed by survey respondents (See Figure 7). Afghanistan achieves its best score amongst the World Bank's governance indicators in the area of voice and accountability (See Figure 8), placing it ahead of Iraq, Iran and its immediate neighbors in the states of the former Soviet Union. This result is also consistent with the positive results of community involvement through CDCs, demonstrated by the high levels of public satisfaction with these bodies. Above all this indicator points to opportunities for improving governance by building on successful approaches that have already made some headway in the country.

Figure 8: Governance Indicator 2007, Government Effectiveness



Source: Daniel Kaufmann, Aart Kraay, Massimo Mastruzzi, *Governance Matters VII: Governance Indicators for 1996-2007*

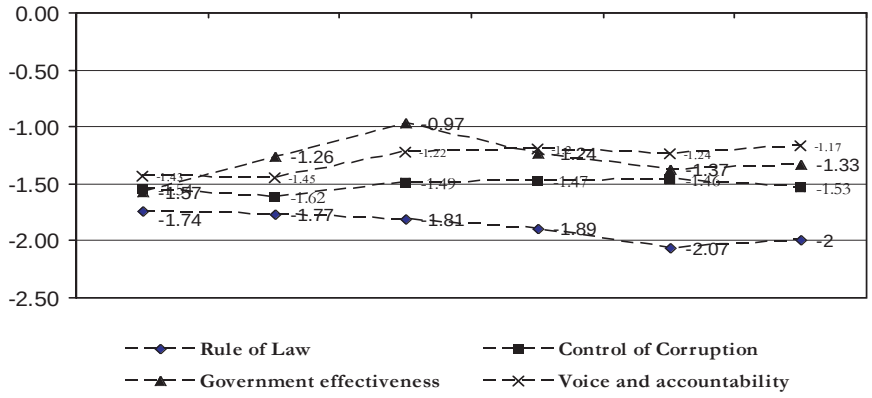
Figure 9: Governance Indicator 2007, Voice and Accountability



Source: Daniel Kaufmann, Aart Kraay, Massimo Mastruzzi, *Governance Matters VII: Governance Indicators for 1996-2007*

The World Bank governance indicators also confirm the indications in the survey, that little progress has been made in most of the core domains since 2002. As Fig 9 shows, the situation with respect to ensuring the rule of law has been steadily deteriorating since 2002, with only a slight upturn between 2006 and 2007. Moreover, there has been almost no progress in the control of corruption in the last 5 years and the situation is seen to have got worse since 2006. Measures of the effectiveness of government on the other hand have shown significant progress, particularly between 2002 and 2004, which is consistent with the perceptions of improvements in a number of core public services such as education and health reported in the survey. However, again, the most consistent progress is recorded in the area of voice and accountability, much as the impact of CDCs and the participatory PDP process reported in the Survey suggest.

Fig 10: World Bank Governance Score for Afghanistan 2000 - 2007 [37]



Source: Daniel Kaufmann, Aart Kraay, Massimo Mastruzzi, *Governance Matters VII: Governance Indicators for 1996-2007*

Policy Recommendations - Strengthening Governance for Improved Development

The most important lesson that emerges from the present analysis is that governance-related issues - the maintenance of security, creation of employment opportunities, provision of basic public services and elimination of corruption in public administration - are central to the basic development priorities of Afghan citizens. Progress in addressing social and economic development relies to a large extent on the capacity of government institutions to respond to the needs of citizens and communities. By the same token, the effectiveness of government at performing these core tasks strengthens public confidence in governance institutions and bolsters the legitimacy of the state. Investing in building the capacity of governance institutions at both the national and local levels must therefore continue to be a core element of initiatives designed to promote sustainable development in Afghanistan.

The second key lesson is that it is largely local development issues that motivate Afghans to contact their political representatives at various levels, showing the central role that governance institutions are expected to play in the delivery of sustainable development. Moreover citizens generally are more positive about the willingness and effectiveness of elected representatives at the local level in addressing local problems. This means that empowering local governance bodies to a greater extent is likely to improve the responsiveness of the state and its institutions to effectively meeting local needs.

[37] Governance scores are recorded on a scale of -2.5 to +2.5. ibid.

Finally, our analysis suggests a clear link between active citizen participation and improvements in both governance and development effectiveness. The survey offers clear evidence of the participation of less powerful social groups alongside local elites as members of Community Development Councils. In addition the survey shows high levels of satisfaction and confidence in CDCs as legitimate and effective institutions capable of addressing development issues at the local level and representing the concerns of local communities before higher level governance institutions. These finding support those who argue for giving legal recognition to CDCs as representative governance bodies of local communities.

More broadly, the survey demonstrates that the progress already made in implementing participatory development structures and processes provide a solid basis for improving both governance and development outcomes in Afghanistan. Further expansion of participatory approaches clearly offer the best opportunity for the Afghan government to enhance the relevance and quality of development processes, and to expand the powers and capacities of local communities and ordinary citizens to sustainably govern their own development.

Appendix 1: The Asia Foundation 2008 Survey - Interview Questionnaire

Region	Respondents
Central/Kabul	23%
South East	11%
Eastern	10%
North East	15%
North West	14%
Western	14%
South Western	11%
Central/Hazarjat	4%

Geographic Code	Respondents
Villages	78%
Towns	4%
City	6%
Metro (Kabul)	11%

Province	Respondents	Province	Respondents
Kabul	14%	Balkh	5%
Kapisa	2%	Samangan	2%
Parwan	3%	Jawzjan	2%
Wardak	2%	Sari-Pul	2%
Logar	2%	Faryab	4%
Ghazni	5%	Badghis	2%
Paktya	2%	Herat	7%
Paktika	2%	Farah	2%
Khost	2%	Nimroz	1%
Nangarhar	6%	Helmand	4%
Laghman	2%	Kandahar	5%
Kunar	2%	Zabul	1%
Nooristan	1%	Uruzghan	1%
Badakhshan	4%	Ghor	3%
Takhar	4%	Bamyan	2%
Baghlan	4%	Panjshir	1%
Kunduz	4%	Dehkondi	2%

NOTE TO INTERVIEWERS:

REMEMBER THAT THIS IS A CONVERSATION. MAKE THE RESPONDENT COMFORTABLE. MAKE EYE CONTACT.

DO NOT TRY TO LEAD THE RESPONDENT DURING THE INTERVIEW OR GET THE "DESIRED" ANSWERS FROM THEM. MAKE SURE YOU TELL THEM THAT THERE ARE NO RIGHT OR WRONG ANSWERS, YOU JUST WANT THEIR OPINIONS.

DURING THE INTERVIEW, BE POLITE BUT INQUISITIVE. DO NOT ACCEPT ONE-WORD ANSWERS. DRAW OUT RESPONDENTS TO GIVE DETAILED RESPONSES BY FURTHER PROBING - SAY: "WHY DO YOU SAY THAT?" "ANYTHING ELSE?" "TELL ME MORE."

Asalaam Valeikum, I am from ACSOR-Surveys, an independent research organization. We regularly conduct surveys among people like you to find out what you feel about issues of public interest. ACSOR-Surveys has no relation to the government. I just want to ask you some questions about "matters of interest to Afghans". I am interested in your opinion. Your answers will be kept confidential and your name will not be given to anyone and your views will be analyzed along with those of thousands of others.

Q-1 Do you own any of the following here in your household in functioning order?

	Yes	No	Refused	Don't Know
a) Radio	84%	16%	0	0
b) TV set	38%	62%	0	0
c) Fixed phone line	2%	98%	0	0
d) Mobile phone	40%	60%	0	0
e) Bicycle	51%	49%	0	0
f) Motorcycle	25%	75%	0	0
g) Computer	5%	94%	0	1%
h) Car	14%	85%	0	0

Q-2. I'll ask you some questions about your listener-ship of the radio. How many days a week do you listen to the radio, if any?

Every day or almost every day	44%
Three or four days a week	22%
One or two days a week	10%
Less than once a week	5%
Never	16%
Refused	0
Don't know	2%

Q-3. **(Filtered. Ask all those who listen to radio, answers '1' to '4' in Q-2)** You said that you listen to the radio _____**mention response in Q-2)**. How many hours do you listen to it on an average day every time when you listen to the radio?

Less than 30 minutes	20%
31 min to 1 hour	38%
1 hour to 2 hrs	24%
More than 2 hours a day	16%
Refused	0
Don't Know	1%

Q-4. **(ASK ALL)** Now I'll ask you some questions about your viewership of the television. How many days a week do you watch TV, if any?

Every day or almost every day	21%
Three or four days a week	11%
One or two days a week	5%
Less than once a week	3%
Never	55%
Refused	1%
Don't know	5%

Q-5. **(Filtered. Ask those who watch TV, answers '1' to '4' in Q-4)** You said that you watch television _____ **(mention response in Q-4)**. How many hours do you watch it on an average day every time when you watch television?

Less than 30 minutes	10%
31 minutes to 1 hour	26%
1 hour to 2 hrs	32%
More than 2 hours a day	29%
Refused	0
Don't Know	3%

Q-6. **(ASK ALL)** Which is the main source from where you normally get information about what is happening in the country? **[Do Not Read Out Answers]**

TV	21%
Radio	51%
Newspapers	1%
Village chief /community leaders	5%
School teacher	1%
Religious leader	2%
Friends and family and neighbors	18%
Other	0
Refused	0
Don't know	0

Q-7. If you wanted to find out about something important happening in your community, who, outside your family, would you want to tell you? **[Do Not Read Out Answers]**

Mullah	10%
Village chief/ Community leader	14%
Worker at community centers (school, health center, etc.)	3%
Friend	26%
Co-workers	3%
Shopkeepers	3%
Neighbors/ villagers	25%
Local Afghan Radio stations	5%
International radio stations (such as BBC, Azadi, or Ashna)	8%
Other	0
Refused	0
Don't know	2%

Q-8. People get information about news and current events from many different sources. For each one of the sources I mention, please tell me how often you use that source to get news and information about current events: daily /most days a week, 3 or 4 days a week, 1 or 2 days a week, less than once per week, or never?

SHOW CARD. rotate STARTING POINT.	**Every day or almost every day**	**Three or four days a week**	**One or two days a week**	**Less than once per week**	**Never**	**Refused**	**Don't Know**
a) Newspapers	2%	3%	5%	9%	82%	0	1%
b) Magazines	1%	2%	4%	8%	83%	0	1%
c) The Internet	0	0	0	2%	96%	0	2%
d) SMS (text messaging on a mobile phone)	1%	2%	3%	4%	88%	0	2%
e) Meetings in your community	3%	10%	16%	19%	51%	0	1%
f) Meetings or sermons at your mosque	15%	15%	13%	12%	44%	0	1%

Q-9. Generally speaking, do you think things in Afghanistan today are going in the right direction, or do you think they are going in the wrong direction?

Right direction	38%
Wrong direction	32%
Some in right, some in wrong direction	23%
Refused	1%
Don't know	6%

Q-10a. (Filtered. If '1' in Q-9): Why do you say that things are moving in the right direction? **(Do NOT read codes. Write down answer)**

Q-10b. (Filtered. If '1' in Q-9): Why else? **(Do NOT read codes. Write down answer)**

	Q-10a.	Q-10a&b.
	1st mentioned	1st & 2nd mentioned
Peace / end of the war	12%	21%
Disarmament	2%	5%
Good security	26%	39%
Reconstruction / rebuilding	18%	32%
Free movement / travel possible	1%	2%
Economic revival	2%	5%
Freedom / free speech	3%	9%
Democracy / elections	4%	7%
Schools for girls have opened	9%	19%
Women can now work	1%	1%
Women have more freedom	0	1%
Refugees return	1%	1%
Good government	4%	9%
International assistance	3%	6%
Reduction in level of administrative corruption	1%	2%
Reduction in poppy cultivation	1%	3%
Having active ANA and ANP	3%	7%
Removing the terrorism	2%	4%
Having a legal constitution	1%	2%
More resection to human rights	1%	3%
Road reconstruction	2%	4%
Clinics have been built	1%	3%
Development in agriculture system	0	0
More job opportunities available	2%	4%
Development in healthcare system in general	0	0
Having Parliament	0	0
More electricity supply now than before	0	1%
Don't know (volunteered only)	1%	9%

Q-11a. (Filtered. If "Wrong direction" in Q-9): Why do you say that things are mov ing in the wrong direction? **(Do NOT read codes. Write down answer)**

Q-11b. (Filtered. If "Wrong direction" in Q-9): Why else? **(Do NOT read codes. Write down answer)**

	Q-11a.	Q-11a&b.
	1st mentioned	1st & 2nd mentioned
No reconstruction has happened	4%	7%
There is no progress	1%	1%
Lack of aid / no development assistance	1%	2%
Bad economy	7%	17%
Poor education system	2%	4%
Too many foreigners are getting involved	3%	5%
Foreign aid causes problems	0	1%
Western influence is too great	1%	1%
There is danger to Islam	1%	2%
Neighboring countries cause problems	1%	3%
Bad government	6%	12%
Corruption	10%	19%
Poor leadership	1%	2%
There is unemployment	6%	15%
Presence of Taliban	3%	8%
Lack of coordination between ISAF/ Coalition forces and ANP/ANA during fights with AGE	1%	2%
Administrative corruption	5%	9%
Insecurity	33%	50%
Disarmament didn't take place	1%	2%
Presence of Warlords	2%	3%
People disenchanted with the government	2%	5%
Increase in level of drug trade	1%	3%
High price	4%	10%
Innocent people being killed	3%	5%
Kidnapping children	0	1%
Ethnic problems	0	1%
Lack of shelter	0	0
Water and power problems	0	1%
Too much luxury	1%	1%
Refused (volunteered only)	0	0
Don't know (volunteered only)	0	8%

Q-12a. **(ASK ALL)** In your view, what is the biggest problem facing Afghanistan as a whole? **(Do NOT read codes. Write down answer)**

Q-12b. And after that, what is the next biggest problem? **(Do NOT read codes. Write down answer**

	Q-12a.	Q-12a&b.
	First problem	First & Next problem
Insecurity / attacks / violence/ terrorism	24%	36%
Presence of warlords	2%	3%
Presence of Taliban	8%	13%
Poor Economy	8%	17%
Poverty	4%	8%
Unemployment	13%	31%
Reconstruction / rebuilding	1%	2%
Education / schools / literacy	4%	9%
Government / weak government / central authority	1%	3%
Corruption	7%	14%
Scarcity of electricity	4%	7%
Roads	1%	2%
Health care / clinics / hospitals	1%	2%
Drinking water	1%	2%
Water for irrigation	1%	2%
High prices	10%	22%
Lack of (proper) shelter	0	1%
Drugs smuggling	2%	5%
Crime	1%	2%
Interference of foreign countries	3%	7%
Lack of production companies	1%	1%
Tribe/ Partisanship	0	1%
Agricultural problems	0	1%
Transportation problems	0	0
Lack foreign assistances	0	0
Lack efficient ANA and ANP	0	1%
Returnees problems	0	0
Disrespect to our culture	0	0
Kidnapping children	0	1%
Innocent people being killed	1%	2%
Irresponsible armed people	0	1%
No attention to women rights	0	0
Don't know (volunteered only)	1%	3%

Q-13a. What is the biggest problem in your local area? **(Do NOT Read codes. Write down answer)**

Q-13b. And what is the next biggest problem in your local area? **(Do NOT Read codes. Write down answer and then code in the second column below)**

	Q-13a.	Q-13a&b.
	First problem in the area	First & Next problem in the area
Insecurity / attacks / violence	9%	14%
Presence of warlords	1%	2%
Taliban	1%	2%
Poor Economy	4%	8%
Poverty	3%	6%
Unemployment	16%	28%
Reconstruction / rebuilding	2%	5%
Education / schools / literacy	6%	6%
Government / weak government / central authority	0	2%
Corruption	1%	3%
Electricity	15%	30%
Roads	9%	18%
Health care / clinics / hospitals	6%	15%
Water	12%	22%
High prices	6%	13%
Lack of (proper) shelter	1%	1%
Drugs smuggling	1%	1%
Crime	1%	1%
Transportation problems	1%	2%
Lack of agricultural tools /equipment	1%	1%
No problems	0	0
Presence of foreigners	0	0
Natural disasters	0	0
Lack of foreign assistance	0	0
Kidnapping children	0	0
Innocent people being killed	0	1%
Ethnic problems	0	1%
Water for irrigation	2%	3%
Returnees' problems	0	0
Women rights	1%	1%
Don't know	0	6%

Q-14. Which one of following issues is more critical or important to your needs at present? Please, rank in order of priority, whereby the most important rank as '1', the next important rank as '2' and so on, up to the least important as '5'. **(Show Card and read responses)**

	RANK
Average importance of Roads	2.9
Average importance of Power	2.7
Average importance of Water	2.8
Average importance of Health care	3.2
Average importance of Education	3.4
Don't know	0

Q-15. Turning to another subject, tell me, do you strongly agree, agree somewhat, disagree somewhat or strongly disagree with the following statements?

	SA	**AS**	**DS**	**SD**	**Ref. (vol.)**	**DK (vol.)**
a) I don't think that the government cares much about what people like me think	30%	46%	15%	5%	0	4%
b) It is generally not acceptable to talk negatively about the Government in public	23%	39%	25%	9%	0	4%

Q-16. I would like to ask you about today's conditions in the village/neighborhood where you live. Would you rate ***(insert item here)*** as very good, quite good, quite bad, or very bad in your area?

Check Starting Item, Rotate Starting Item Between A to G only	**VG**	**QG**	**QB**	**VB**	**DK (vol.)**
a) The availability of clean drinking water	20%	42%	26%	12%	0
b) The availability of water for irrigation	11%	36%	32%	17%	4%
c) The availability of jobs	4%	17%	42%	36%	1%
d) The supply of electricity	6%	19%	30%	44%	1%
e.) The security situation	21%	41%	22%	15%	1%
f) The availability of clinics and hospitals	12%	39%	35%	14%	0
g) The availability of medicine	11%	38%	36%	14%	0
h) The availability of education for children	26%	44%	20%	9%	0
i) Your freedom of movement—the ability to move safely in your area or district	26%	41%	22%	10%	0

Q-17. What is your expectation for ***(insert item here)*** in your area a year from now? Do you expect it to be much better, somewhat better, somewhat worse, or much worse? **[INTERVIEWER: Start with same item used to start in Q-16]**

	MB	SwB	SwW	MW	Ref. (vol.)	DK (vol.)
a) The availability of clean drinking water	46%	37%	11%	4%	0	3%
b) The availability of water for irrigation	36%	38%	14%	6%	1%	5%
c) The availability of jobs	35%	27%	20%	13%	0	5%
d) The supply of electricity	36%	26%	16%	17%	0	5%
e.) The security situation	45%	30%	12%	9%	0	5%
f) The availability of clinics and hospitals	41%	35%	14%	6%	0	3%
g) The availability of medicine	40%	36%	15%	5%	0	3%
h.) The availability of education for children	49%	33%	11%	5%	0	3%
i) Your freedom of movement—the ability to move safely in your area or district	44%	34%	12%	6%	0	5%

Q-18. How often do you fear for your own personal safety or security or for that of your family these days? Often, sometimes, rarely, or never?

Often	15%
Sometimes	33%
Rarely	15%
Never	36%
Don't know	1%

Q-19. Have you or has anyone in your family been a victim of violence or of some criminal act in your home or community in the past year?

Yes	16%
No	82%
Don't know	2%

Q-20. **(Filtered. Ask if answered '1' in Q-19)** What kind of violence or crime did you or someone in your family experience in the past year? **READ LIST (Multiple Response)**

Physical attack or beating	30%
Racketeering / extortion	15%
Burglary/looting	15%
Pick-pocketing	7%
Motor vehicle theft / Property taken from your vehicle or parts of the vehicle stolen	7%
Kidnapping	8%
Livestock stolen	13%
Militants/Insurgent actions	8%
Police actions	3%
Army actions	1%
Foreign forces actions	6%
Murder	2%
Suicide attack	1%
Refused	0
Don't Know	2%

Q-21. **(Filtered. Ask if answered '1' in Q-19)** You said that you've been a victim of violence or some criminal act in the past year. Did you report it to any authority?

Yes	62%
No	29%
Refused	0
Don't know	8%

Q-22. **(Filtered. Ask if answered "Yes" in Q-21)** To what agency or institution did you report the crime? **(Multiple Response) [Do Not Read Responses, Record All That Respondent Mentions, Specify If Other Mentioned] Write Down All Mentioned By Respondent, Code**

Afghan National Army	9%
Afghan National Police	48%
Shura/ Elders	16%
Local militia (police)	3%
Tribal leader / Malik	24%
Local Commander or Warlord	5%
Mullah Saheb	7%
Local PRT	0
Office of UN organization(s)	0
Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission	2%
District Governor/ Woleswal	22%
Provincial authority	7%
Central Government	2%
Public prosecutor	5%
Courts	2%
Don't know	0

Q-23. **(Ask if answered "No" in Q-21)** Why didn't you report the crime?
(Multiple Response)
[Do Not Read Responses, Record All That Respondent Mentions, Specify If Other Mentioned]
Write Down All Mentioned By Respondent, Code

It makes no difference	21%
Danger or fear of retaliation	18%
Lack of evidence	12%
It wasn't serious	24%
Didn't know where to report it	14%
Lack of trust on government officials	17%
Lack of legal counsel	6%
Refused	1%
Don't know	6%

Q-24. **(ASK ALL)** If you were a witness to a crime, to whom would you report it?
(Multiple Response)
[Do Not Read Responses, Record All That Respondent Mentions, Specify If Other Mentioned]
Write Down All Mentioned By Respondent, Code

Afghan National Army	17%
Afghan National Police	49%
Shura/ Elders	13%
Local militia (police)	3%
Tribal leader / Malik	24%
Local Commander or Warlord	4%
Mullah Saheb	11%
Local PRT	0
Office of UN organization(s)	0
Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission	1%
District Governor/ Woleswal	15%
Provincial authority	6%
Central Government	2%
Public prosecutor	2%
Courts	1%
Press or other media	0
Other	0
No one	3%
Refused	0
Don't know	3%

Q-25. If you were a victim of violence or any criminal act, how much confidence would you have that the governmental law-enforcing organizations and judicial systems would punish the guilty party? **(Read Out Answers)**

A lot of confidence	14%
Some confidence	42%
A little confidence	23%
No confidence at all	15%
Refused	1%
Don't know	4%

Q-26. Please tell me whether you think that corruption is a major problem, a minor problem, or no problem at all in the following areas. **(Circle '8' for Refused or '9' for Don't Know, if volunteered.)**

	Major Problem	Minor Problem	Not a Problem	Refused (volunteered only)	Don't know (volunteered only)
a) In your daily life	51%	29%	18%	0	2%
b) In your neighborhood	48%	35%	14%	0	2%
c) In your local authorities	53%	33%	10%	1%	4%
d) In your provincial government	63%	26%	7%	1%	3%
e) In Afghanistan as a whole	76%	16%	4%	0	4%

Q-27. Compared to a year ago, do you think the amount of corruption overall in … **(Read out options below one by one)** has increased, stayed the same or decreased in the following areas?

	Increased	Stayed the same	Decreased	Refused (volunteered only)	Don't know (volunteered only)
a) In your daily life	24%	49%	23%	1%	3%
b) In your neighborhood	25%	50%	21%	0	3%
c) In your local authorities	33%	45%	15%	1%	6%
d) In your provincial government	45%	37%	11%	1%	6%
e) In Afghanistan as a whole	57%	28%	9%	1%	6%

Q-28. Whenever you have contacted government officials, how often in the past year have you had to give cash, a gift or perform a favor for an official? If you had contacts with such officials in the past year. Was it in all cases, most of the cases, in isolated or in no cases? How about your contacts with…. **(Rotate items on the list)**

	In all cases	Most cases	Isolated cases	No cases	Had no contacts	Ref.	DK
a) Officials in the Municipality	3%	5%	9%	23%	58%	0	1%
b) Customs office	3%	5%	6%	23%	62%	0	1%
c) Afghan National Police	2%	6%	6%	31%	46%	0	1%
d) Afghan National Army	1%	3%	6%	34%	53%	0	2%
e) Judiciary / courts	3%	8%	12%	22%	52%	1%	2%
f) State electricity supply	2%	6%	9%	26%	55%	1%	2%
g) Public healthcare service	2%	8%	16%	35%	37%	1%	1%
h) When applying for a job	4%	9%	12%	25%	47%	1%	2%
i) Admissions to schools /university	2%	5%	9%	34%	46%	1%	2%
j) To receive official documents	5%	8%	11%	25%	49%	1%	2%

Q-29. Now I will read you six different activities that you could participate in. Please, tell me, whether you would participate in the following activities with 'no fear', 'some fear' or a 'lot of fear'?

	No fear	Some fear	A lot of fear	Refused (vol.)	Don't know (vol.)
a) When participating in resolving problems in your community	57%	32%	7%	0	4%
b) Voting in a national election	51%	31%	14%	0	4%
c) Participating in a peaceful demonstration	32%	37%	24%	0	8%
d) To run for a public office	33%	34%	21%	0	12%
e) When encountering ANP officers	46%	34%	15%	0	5%
f) When traveling from one part of Afghanistan to another part of the country	35%	38%	23%	0	4%

Q-30. Do most people feel free to express their political opinions in the area where you live?

Yes	40%
No	39%
Don't know	21%

Q-31. **(Filtered. Ask if answered '1' in Q-30)** What changes compared with the past, or reasons, do you think have made most people to feel free to express their political opinions in the area where you live? **(Pre-coded. Do NOT read out. Write down up to two answers and code to the list)**

	Q-31a	Q-31a&b
The removal of local militias	5%	8%
Freedom of speech is guaranteed	41%	60%
The security conditions are good (in our area)	28%	42%
Having (working) parliament and local shuras	2%	4%
Peace and democracy	7%	14%
Presence of ISAF / Coalition forces	1%	1%
Presence of CDC	1%	1%
Presence of PC	0	1%
(Respect for) Human rights	2%	3%
Disarmament	0	1%
Reconstruction	2%	3%
Freedom of press is guaranteed	3%	11%
Having a legal constitution	2%	3%
Corruption has decreased	0	1%
More attention to Women rights	2%	4%
Good Government	2%	3%
Better education	0	0
Don't Know	3%	36%

Q-32. **(If answered "No" in Q-30)** Why don't people in your area have the freedom to express their political opinions? (**Pre-coded. Do NOT read out. Write down up to two answers and code to the list)**

	Q-32a	Q-32a&b
Fear for their safety	29%	41%
Women are under the control of men	6%	10%
Security conditions are bad in this area	26%	38%
Presence of Taliban in the area	10%	18%
Presence of warlords	4%	8%
The Government doesn't allow freedom of political opinions	7%	15%
No real democracy	1%	3%
No disarmament	1%	2%
Fear from Coalition/foreign forces	1%	2%
Ethnic discrimination	1%	1%
Elders / Mullahs don't allow freedom of opinions	1%	2%
Lack of awareness of legal rights	1%	4%
Not interested in/Lack of information about politics	1%	3%
The Government doesn't care about people's opinion	3%	7%
Existence of smugglers	0	0
Lack of education	2%	2%
Refused	0	0
Don't Know	5%	40%

Q-33. **(ASK ALL)** Various projects and programs have been implemented or are being implemented in some places of our country. Speaking of the past 12 months, do you know of, heard of any project or program in this area, district, implemented in the following fields?

Reconstruction/ building of roads, bridges	58%
Water supply for drinking	43%
Water supply for irrigation	21%
Electricity supply	22%
Healthcare (primary health center, regular visits of doctors, etc.)	42%
Education (reconstruction/opening of school, more teachers etc.)	59%
De-mining	38%
Demilitarization / disarmament	35%
Reconstruction/programs in agriculture	19%
Reconstruction/programs in industry	11%
Building new mosques	26%
Humanitarian programs – help in food, medicines, shelter, production materials etc.	22%
Other	0

Q34. (IF YES Code 1 in Q33, ASK) Has the Afghan Government or Foreign sponsors been primarily responsible for providing most of the aid for the projects?

Q33. Aware of project	Yes	No	Ref/ DK	Q34. Who has provided the most aid for the project?	Afghan Gov't	Foreign Sponsor	Both	Ref/ DK
a)Reconstruction/ building of roads, bridges	58%	41%	1%	a)Reconstruction / building of roads, bridges	26%	37%	36%	1%
b) Water supply for drinking	43%	56%	1%	b) Water supply for drinking	37%	34%	28%	1%
c) Water supply for irrigation	21%	76%	3%	c) Water supply for irrigation	49%	23%	26%	1%
d) Electricity supply	22%	76%	2%	d) Electricity supply	51%	22%	27%	1%
e) Healthcare (primary health center, regular visits of doctors, etc.)	42%	56%	2%	e) Healthcare (primary health center, regular visits of doctors, etc.)	39%	29%	31%	1%
f) Education (reconstruction/opening of school, more teachers etc.)	59%	39%	1%	f) Education (reconstruction/ opening of school, more teachers etc.)	49%	21%	29%	1%
g) De-mining	38%	60%	2%	g) De-mining	23%	45%	30%	1%
h) Demilitarization / disarmament	35%	61%	3%	h)Demilitarizatio n / disarmament	36%	28%	35%	1%
i) Reconstruction/ programs in agriculture	19%	78%	3%	i)Reconstruction /programs in agriculture	48%	24%	26%	1%
j) Reconstruction/ programs in industry	11%	85%	4%	j)Reconstruction /programs in industry	42%	28%	27%	3%
k) Building new mosques	26%	71%	2%	k) Building new mosques	73%	12%	12%	2%
l) Humanitarian programs - help in food, medicines, shelter, production materials etc.	22%	76%	3%	l) Humanitarian programs - help in food, medicines, shelter, production materials etc.	23%	45%	30%	1%

(Ask if respondent is aware of any project-answered Code 2 or 3 in Q34; Otherwise skip to Q37a)

Q-35. Which country do you think has provided the most aid for the projects you mentioned to have been implemented in this area, district? **(Single response) [Do Not Read List]**

USA	46%
United Kingdom (Britain)	3%
Germany	10%
Japan	8%
India	4%
Pakistan	1%
China	2%
Iran	2%
Saudi Arabia	1%
Turkey	2%
Italy	1%
Korea	1%
Canada	2%
France	2%
Sweden	1%
Spain	0
Africa	0
Australia	0
Norway	1%
Bangladesh	0
Holland	1%
Denmark	0
Hungary	0
Tajikistan	0
Belgium	0
Turkmenistan	0
Russia	0
Switzerland	0
Finland	0
PRT	1%
Other	0
Refused	0
Don't know	9%

Q-36. Which other countries have provided aid for the projects in your area, district? **PROBE:** Any other? **(Multiple response) [Do Not Read List]**

USA	20%
United Kingdom (Britain)	8%
Germany	17%
Japan	19%
India	16%
Pakistan	4%
China	9%
Iran	7%
Saudi Arabia	4%
Turkey	4%
Italy	3%
Korea	2%
Canada	4%
France	5%
Sweden	2%
Spain	1%
Africa	0
Australia	1%
Norway	1%
Bangladesh	1%
Holland	2%
Denmark	0
Hungary	0
Uzbekistan	0
Tajikistan	1%
Belgium	0
Turkmenistan	1%
Russia	1%
Switzerland	0
Finland	0
PRT	0

Q-37a. Are you aware of your provincial government's set of priorities or plans that were agreed for the development of this district or province?

Yes	21%
No	72%
Refused	0
Don't know	7%

Q-37b. (ASK IF YES CODE 1 in Q37a) Do you know the details of the plan what is supposed to be done?

Yes	65%
No	32%
Refused	0
Don't know	3%

ECONOMY

Q-38. Now I would like to ask you a few questions about the economy of Afghanistan. If you think about your family, would you say that today your family is more prosperous, less prosperous, or about as prosperous as under the Taliban government?

More prosperous	39%
Less prosperous	36%
About as prosperous	16%
Absent during Taliban rule	7%
Refused	0
Don't know	2%

Q39. Now, going even farther back to the period of the Soviet occupation, if you think about your family then and now, would you say that today your family is more prosperous, less prosperous, or about as prosperous as under the *Soviet occupation* government?

More prosperous	39%
Less prosperous	31%
About as prosperous	12%
Absent during Soviet rule/ occupation	11%
Refused	0
Don't know	7%

Q-40. At this house where you live, which of the following kinds of electricity supply do you have? **(Read out options. Code each that apply. Multiple response)**

Personal Generator	20%
Public / Shared Use Generator	13%
Government electricity provider	21%
Large batteries/ invertors (such as for running TV, lights, etc.)	6%
Solar power	5%
No electricity	43%
Refused	0
Don't know	0

Q-41. Compared to two years ago, would you say that situation for your household has gotten better, remained the same or gotten worse with respect to the following?

	Better	**The same**	**Worse**	**Ref.**	**DK**
a) Financial well-being of your household	24%	48%	28%	0	0
b) Employment opportunities	7%	33%	59%	0	1%
c) Availability of products in the market	13%	43%	41%	0	3%
d) Quality of your food diet	13%	39%	46%	0	2%
e) Physical conditions of your house/dwelling	18%	52%	27%	0	3%
f) Health well-being of your family members	29%	50%	20%	0	1%
g) Electric supply	13%	37%	49%	0	0
h) Access to schools	44%	39%	15%	0	2%

Q-42. Some people say that poppy cultivation is okay, and that the government should not worry too much about it, while others say that it is wrong, and that the government should do more to stop it. Which is closer to your view?

Poppy cultivation is okay	12%
Poppy cultivation is wrong	82%
Refused	1%
Don't know	4%

Q-43. (Filtered. Ask if '1' in Q-42): Why do you say that poppy cultivation is okay? **(Do NOT read options. Open ended. Write down up to two responses)**

	Q-43a	Q-43a&b
Growing poppy is more profitable than growing other crops	29%	38%
Working on poppy farm is more profitable than other jobs	6%	12%
To make medicines from poppy	17%	27%
Needs less water	14%	28%
The Government doesn't pay attention to farmers	12%	22%
Instead of wine, we produce poppy	4%	8%
People get employed	15%	44%
Other	1%	1%
Don't Know	2%	16%

Q-44. (Filtered. Ask if answered "poppy cultivation is wrong" in Q-42): Why do you say that poppy cultivation is wrong? **(Do NOT read options. Open ended. Write down up to two responses)**

	Q-44a	Q-44a&b
Poppy makes some people rich, but keeps most Afghans poor	6%	7%
In Islam poppy cultivation is a sin (haram)	38%	50%
According to the laws, poppy cultivation is a crime	8%	14%
People become addicted to opium	13%	29%
It misguides the youth / hurts education or job prospects	12%	25%
It causes high prices	7%	20%
It's detrimental to Afghanistan's reputation	6%	15%
It's a source of income for terrorists	3%	8%
It creates corruption among government officials	2%	5%
It's deterring international assistance	1%	3%
Poppy cultivation causes insecurity in our country	3%	9%
Poppy cultivation hurts other farmers	1%	5%
Other	0	0
Don't Know (vol.)	1%	8%

Q-45. **(ASK ALL)** Now, to change the subject. Sometimes people and communities have problems, related to an issue that concerns everybody in their area, that they can't resolve on their own and so they have to ask for the help of a government official or a government agency. In the past 5 years, has your community had such a problem in your area that you had to ask for help or cooperation to resolve it?

Yes	19%
No	75%
Refused	0
Don't know	6%

Q-46. **(Filtered. Ask if answered 'Yes' in Q-45).** What kind of problem was/is that? **(Open-ended. Write down first mentioned answer)**

Lack of water and electricity	15%
Dispute over land	23%
Building mosque	1%
Reconstruction of roads and bridges	9%
Building clinics	2%
Building schools and kindergartens	3%
Robbery and burglary	6%
Poor transportation system	0
Economic problems	4%
Unemployment	2%
Tribal problems	7%
Presence of Taliban	1%
Security problems	12%
Agricultural problems	4%
Murder	1%
Disarmament	0
Refused	1%
Don't Know	8%

Q-47. **(Filtered. Ask if answered 'Yes' in Q-45):** Who did you approach/ask to solve the problem? **(Multiple response. Code each mentioned) [Do Not Read List, Write Answer Then Code Response]**

Elders of the local shura/jirga	33%
A Member of Parliament	5%
Government agency/office	11%
Afghan National Army	5%
Afghan National Police	17%
Malik / Khan	13%
Provincial governor/ authorities	14%
Community Development Council	5%
District authorities	21%
PRT	3%
NGO	4%
Human Rights CommissionForeign force	1%
Foreign forces	1%
Mullah	5%
Courts	1%
Directors in Ministry of electricity and water supply	0
Public health office	1%
Refused	0
Don't know	1%

Q-48. **(Filtered. Ask if contacted Government agency/office, answer '3' in Q-47).** You said you contacted a government agency/office to resolve your problem. Which government agency/office is that? **(Open-ended. Write down first mentioned answer)**

District Governor	59%
Directors in MRRD	21%
Don't Know	20%

Q-49. **(Filtered. Ask if answered 'Yes' to Q-45)** Has this problem been resolved or it's still pending resolution?

Resolved	48%
Pending resolution	46%
Refused	0
Don't Know	5%

Q-50. **(ASK ALL)** Generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted or that you need to be very careful in dealing with people?

Most people can be trusted	34%
With most people you need to be very careful	60%
Refused	0
Don't know	5%

Q-51. Do you believe that in most instances people are only thinking about themselves or do you believe that in the most instances people try to help others?

They think about themselves	65%
They try to help others	31%
Refused	0
Don't know	4%

Q-52. I would like to ask you about some officials, institutions and organizations in our country. I will read these out to you. As I read out each, please tell me how much confidence you have in each of the institutions and organizations and officials to perform their jobs. Do you have a great deal of confidence, a fair amount of confidence, not very much confidence, or no confidence at all in…

	A great deal of confidence	A fair amount of confidence	Not very much confidence	No confidence at all	Refused (volunteered only)	Don't Know (vol.)
a) Afghan National Army	46%	43%	7%	3%	0	1%
b) Afghan National Police	40%	42%	13%	5%	0	1%
c) Political parties	8%	35%	33%	17%	0	7%
d) The Government Justice system	8%	38%	33%	16%	0	5%
e) Government Ministers	11%	40%	28%	16%	0	5%
f) Independent Election commission	16%	41%	24%	11%	0	8%
g) Public administration	13%	42%	27%	10%	0	8%
h) the Municipality	10%	32%	30%	19%	0	10%
i) Local militias	10%	26%	25%	31%	0	9%
j) Community Development Councils	19%	46%	19%	9%	0	7%
k) Provincial Councils	19%	46%	22%	8%	0	6%
l) Community Shuras/ Jirgas	24%	45%	18%	6%	0	6%
m) National NGOs	16%	46%	23%	9%	0	7%
n) International NGOs	24%	40%	20%	9%	0	6%
o) Electronic media such as radio, TV	38%	38%	13%	7%	0	6%
p) Newspapers, print media	26%	37%	14%	8%	0	15%

Q-53. I'm going to read some statements to you about ANA. Please tell me if you agree with each. **(Read out statement, wait for response and then ask):** Strongly or somewhat?

	Strongly agree	Agree somewhat	Disagree somewhat	Strongly disagree	Refused (vol.)	DK (vol.)
a) ANA is honest and fair with the Afghan people.	48%	41%	8%	2%	0	2%
b) ANA is unprofessional and poorly trained.	18%	37%	28%	13%	0	4%
c) ANA needs the support of foreign troops and cannot operate by itself.	32%	37%	18%	9%	0	4%
d) ANA helps improve the security	51%	35%	9%	3%	0	2%

Q-54. I'm going to read some statements to you about ANP. Please tell me if you agree with each. **(Read out statement, wait for response and then ask):** Strongly or somewhat?

	Strongly agree	Agree somewhat	Disagree somewhat	Strongly disagree	Refused (vol.)	DK (vol.)
a) ANP is honest and fair with the Afghan people.	40%	40%	13%	5%	0	1%
b) ANP is unprofessional and poorly trained.	22%	38%	25%	12%	0	3%
c) ANP needs the support of foreign troops and cannot operate by itself.	32%	37%	19%	8%	0	3%
d) ANP helps improve the security	40%	40%	12%	5%	0	2%
e) ANP is efficient at arresting those who have committed crimes so that they can be brought to justice	34%	39%	16%	8%	0	4%

DEMOCRACY

Q-55. Now I'd like to ask about something else. A lot of people in Afghanistan today are talking about democracy. If a country is called a democracy, what does that mean to you? **(Probe)**: Anything else? **(Open ended. Multiple response. Do Not Read Code List. Write down and then code each mentioned)**

Freedom	53%
Rights and law	23%
Government of the people	22%
Peace	34%
Prosperity	15%
Women's rights	17%
Communism	3%
Islamic democracy	20%
Participation in decision making	8%
Nothing	0
Democracy promotes cheap values and bad habits	0
Good security	0
I don't want democracy	0
Access to more schools	0
Good relations with other countries	1%
More job opportunities	1%
Refused	0
Don't know	9%

Q-56. What, if anything, is the most important thing that democracy in Afghanistan will bring you personally? **(Probe)**: Anything else? **(Open ended. Multiple response. Do Not Read Code List Write down and then code each mentioned)**

Freedom	33%
Rights and law	19%
Government of the people	19%
Peace	35%
Prosperity	16%
Women's rights	16%
Communism	1%
Islamic democracy	19%
Less corruption	23%
Better Government services	15%
Democracy promotes cheap values and bad habits	0
Good security	0
I don't want democracy	0
Access to more schools	0

Good relations with other countries	0
More job opportunities	2%
Nothing	3%
Refused	0
Don't know	7%

Q-57. Do you think that political parties should be allowed to hold meetings in your area?

Yes	44%
No	43%
Refused	1%
Don't know	12%

Q-58. Do you think that all political parties, even the ones most people do not like, should be allowed to hold meetings in your area?

Yes	29%
No	62%
Refused	1%
Don't know	9%

Q-59. Suppose a friend of yours supported a party you do not like. Would you accept that, or would it end your friendship?

Would accept it	42%
Would end friendship	44%
Refused	0
Don't know	13%

Q-60. I'm going to read some ideas. Please tell me if you agree with each. **(Read out statement, wait for response and then ask):** Strongly or somewhat?

	Strongly agree	Agree somewhat	Disagree somewhat	Strongly disagree	Refused (vol.)	DK (vol.)
a) It is a good thing that the government should allow peaceful opposition	39%	39%	10%	6%	1%	5%
b) Everyone should have equal rights under the law, regardless of their gender, ethnicity or religion	58%	26%	11%	3%	0	2%
c) Religious authorities should lead people in obeying the obligations of their faith while political leaders should make decisions about how the government is run	37%	38%	16%	6%	0	3%
d) A person should vote the way his or her community votes, not how they feel individually	30%	35%	18%	13%	0	5%

Q-61. Some people say: "Democracy will bring Westernization and too much freedom and challenge Islamic values." Other people say: "An Islamic country can be democratic without becoming too Western. It can still keep its Islamic values". Which is closer to your view?

Democracy challenges Islamic values	26%
Democracy can be Islamic also	66%
Refused	1%
Don't know	7%

Q-62. Thinking of the National Government, how do you feel about the way it is carrying out its responsibilities? Is it doing a very good job, somewhat good job, somewhat bad job or a very bad job?

Very good job	16%
Somewhat good job	51%
Somewhat bad job	22%
Very bad job	8%
Refused	1%
Don't know	2%

Q-63. And speaking of particular aspects of its work, do you think the National Government is doing a very good job, somewhat good job, somewhat bad job or a very bad job in the following fields? **(Ask for each on the list)**

	Very Good Job	Somewhat good job	Somewhat bad job	Very bad job	Refused	Don't Know
a) Education	36%	48%	11%	4%	0	1%
b) Healthcare system	18%	48%	25%	8%	0	1%
c) Creating job opportunities	4%	20%	37%	38%	0	1%
d) Maintaining relations with neighboring countries	17%	45%	22%	12%	0	5%
e)Reviving/Developing the economy	6%	27%	34%	30%	0	2%
f) Fighting corruption	8%	23%	30%	36%	0	2%
g) Security	23%	36%	22%	17%	0	1%

Q-64a. Turning to your Provincial Government, do you think that overall it is doing a very good job, somewhat good job, somewhat bad job or a very bad job?

Q-64b. [URBAN RESIDENTS ONLY] And what do you think about the job done by your municipal authorities, do you think that overall it is doing a very good job, somewhat good job, somewhat bad job or a very bad job?

Q-64c. [RURAL RESIDENTS ONLY] And what do you think about the job done by your local authorities, do you think that overall it is doing a very good job, somewhat good job, somewhat bad job or a very bad job?

	Very Good Job	Somewhat good job	Somewhat bad job	Very bad job	Refused	Don't Know
a)Provincial Government	23%	51%	16%	6%	0	4%
b) Municipal authorities	13%	37%	26%	17%	0	7%
c) Local authorities	22%	45%	20%	8%	0	5%

Q-65. Now switching to local government, some people say that local religious leaders should be regularly consulted on the problems facing an area while others think that politics and religion should not mix. Which is closer to your view?

Religious leaders should be consulted	69%
Politics and religion should not mix	26%
Don't know	5%

Q- 66. Now I would like to ask you some questions about the past elections. Did you vote in the 2004 Presidential elections?

Yes	63%
No	34%
Refused	0
Don't know	3%

Q-67. **(Filtered. Ask if answered "No" in Q-66)** You said you did not vote in the 2004 Presidential elections. Why didn't you vote? **(Single Response only. Ask for most important reason. Do NOT read options) [RECORD ANSWER: CODE POST FIELDWORK]**

Didn't support any candidate	5%
Not interested	12%
Personal reasons: too old, sick, etc.	7%
Was not able to register	4%
Was prohibited/stopped from registering	3%
Ballot too long / confusing	0
Elections wouldn't make difference / disillusioned	1%
Lack of ID document	5%
Fear of intimidation	3%
Insecurity	6%
Didn't understand politics	2%
Was scared of voting	2%
Was not permitted to vote / women not allowed to vote	8%
Did not fulfill the age criteria	39%
Other	0
Don't know	5%

Q- 68. **(ASK ALL)** Did you vote in the 2005 Parliamentary elections?

Yes	61%
No	36%
Refused	1%
Don't know	2%

Q-69. **(Filtered. Ask if answered "No" in Q-68)** You said you did not vote in the 2005 Parliamentary elections. Why didn't you vote? **(Single Response only. Ask for most important reason. Do NOT read options) [RECORD ANSWER: CODE POST FIELDWORK]**

Didn't support any candidate	5%
Not interested	16%
Personal reasons: too old, sick, etc.	5%
Was not able to register	3%
Was prohibited/stopped from registering	3%
Ballot too long / confusing	1%
Elections wouldn't make difference / disillusioned	1%
Lack of ID document	6%
Fear of intimidation	3%
Insecurity	6%
Didn't understand politics	2%
Was scared of voting	2%
Was not permitted to vote / women not allowed to vote	9%
Was abroad (emigrant)	2%
Did not fulfill the age criteria	33%
Other	0
Don't know	5%

Q-70. **(ASK ALL)** Are you aware that there will be elections in Afghanistan in the coming year?

Yes	53%
No	42%
Refused	0
Don't know	4%

Q-71. Do you know how to register to vote?

Yes	48%
No	48%
Refused	0
Don't know	4%

Q-72. How likely are you to vote in the coming elections?

Very likely	43%
Somewhat likely	34%
Somewhat unlikely	6%
Very unlikely	10%
Refused	0
Don't know	6%

Q-73. **(Filtered. Ask if answered Somewhat Unlikely or Very Unlikely, answers "3 or 4" in Q-72)** You said it is somewhat or very unlikely that you would vote in the upcoming elections. Why do you say that? **(Single Response only. Ask for most important reason. Do NOT read options) [RECORD ANSWER: CODE POST FIELDWORK]**

Don't support any candidate / party	5%
Not interested	18%
Personal reasons: too old, sick, etc.	5%
Elections wouldn't make difference / disillusioned	15%
Fear of intimidation	8%
Insecurity	25%
Do not understand politics	6%
Will not be permitted to vote / women not allowed to vote	15%
Other	0
Refused	2%
Don't know	3%

Q-74. **(ASK ALL)** Do you think women should be allowed to vote in the elections?

Yes	84%
No	13%
Refused	0
Don't know	2%

Q-75. How much influence do you think someone like you can have over government decisions – a lot, some, very little, or none at all?

A lot	25%
Some	41%
Very little	15%
None at all	15%
Refused	0
Don't know	5%

Q-76. Do you think that voting can lead to improvement in the future or do you believe that no matter how one votes, things never change?

Voting can change things	65%
Things are not going to get better	24%
Don't know	10%

Q-77. In the past, elections were managed jointly by International donors and the Afghanistan Government, but future elections will be managed entirely by the Afghanistan Government. How confident are you that the Afghan Government on its own will be able to conduct free and fair elections? Are you…

Very confident	23%
Somewhat confident	49%
Somewhat not confident	8%
Not confident at all	10%
Refused	0
Don't know	9%

Q-78. **(Filtered. Ask if answered '3' or '4' to Q-77)** You said you are not confident the Government to be able to conduct free and fair elections on its own. What makes you think so? **(Open-ended. Write down the answer)**

Lack of security	38%
Everybody is pursuing his/her own interest	6%
Corruption	11%
Weak Government	28%
Weak economy	8%
Tribal problems	1%
Lack of shelter	0
Lack of education0	0
Interference of foreign countries	3%
Refused	1%
Don't know	5%

Q-79. **(ASK ALL)** Now I will read a series of statements about democracy. For each statement, tell me if you agree or disagree. **(Read out statement, wait for response and then ask):** Strongly or somewhat?

	Strongly agree	Agree somewhat	Disagree somewhat	Strongly disagree	Refused (vol.)	DK (vol.)
a) Democracy may have its problems, but it is better than any other form of government.	28%	48%	12%	4%	0	8%
c) Politicians seek power for their own benefit and don't worry about helping people.	41%	35%	14%	5%	0	5%

Q-80. On the whole, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the way democracy works in Afghanistan. Are you …

Very satisfied	15%
Somewhat satisfied	53%
Somewhat dissatisfied	16%
Very dissatisfied	11%
Refused	0
Don't know	5%

Q-81. Have you ever contacted your Member of Parliament (MP) for help in solving any of your personal or local problems?

Yes	9%
No	88%
Refused	0
Don't know	2%

Q-82. **(Filtered. Ask if answered 'Yes' in Q-81)** For what kind of a problem did you contact the MP? **(Open ended. Write down answer)**

Lack of water and electricity	24%
Problems related to trade	4%
Lack of roads and bridges	16%
Lack of security	11%
Lack of teachers at school	9%
Lack of hospitals	5%
Unemployment	4%
Problems at workplace	3%
Land dispute	9%
Lack of women rights	2%
Tribal problems	4%
Murder	2%
Refused	1%
Don't know	7%

Q-83a. **(Filtered. Ask if answered 'Yes' in Q-81)** Did the Member of Parliament (MP) try to help to resolve the problem?

Yes, the MP tried to help	51%
No, not MP did not try to help	47%
Refused	0
Don't know	2%

Q-83b. **(Filtered. Ask if answered 'Yes' in Q-81)** In the end, regardless of who helped, was the problem resolved or not?

Yes, resolved	33%
No, not resolved	64%
Don't know	3%

Q-84. **(ASK ALL)** Now let's talk about Provincial Councils. Have you ever contacted a representative on the Provincial Council for help in solving any of your personal or local problems?

Yes	11%
No	87%
Refused	0
Don't know	2%

Q-85. (Filtered. Ask if answered 'Yes' in Q-84) What kind of problem was it? **(Open ended. Write down answer)**

Problems related to electricity and water	18%
Lack of assistance to teachers	5%
Roads and bridges	15%
Land dispute	9%
Lack of reconstruction	4%
Bombardment by foreign troops	0
Building schools	3%
Building clinics	4%
Transportation problems	1%
Security problems	9%
Unemployment	8%
Tribal problems	7%
Murder	1%
Agricultural problems	5%
Construction of mosque	1%
Corruption	2%
Refused	1%
Don't know	5%

Q-86a. (Filtered. Ask if answered 'Yes' in Q-84) Did the Provincial Council try to help to resolve the problem?

Yes, the council tried to help	63%
No, council did not try to help	36%
Don't know	1%

Q-86b. (Filtered. Ask if answered 'Yes' in Q-84) In the end, regardless of who helped, was the problem resolved or not?

Yes, resolved	43%
No, not resolved	55%
Don't know)	2%

Q-87. **(ASK ALL)** Now I will read some statements about our elected representatives. For each statement, tell me if you agree or disagree **(Read out statement, wait for response and then ask):** Strongly or somewhat?

	Strongly agree	Agree somewhat	Disagree somewhat	Strongly disagree	Refused (vol.)	DK (vol.)
a) The Parliament is addressing the major problems of people in our country	21%	44%	21%	12%	0	2%
b) My MP is addressing the major problems of my constituency in Parliament	18%	38%	23%	17%	0	4%

Q-88. Community Development Councils have been established as part of the National Solidarity Program and members of the Council are representatives of various groups in your community. Tell me, are you aware of such an institution formed in your neighborhood/settlement?

Yes, aware of CDC in the neighborhood/settlement	42%
No, not aware of CDC in the neighborhood/settlement	53%
Refused	1%
Don't know	4%

Q-89a. **(Filter. Ask if answered 'Yes' in Q-88)** Which of the following groups are members of the Community Development Council in your neighborhood/settlement? **Ask for each and code**

	Yes	No	Refused (vol.)	DK (vol.)
a) Local Malik / Khan	72%	26%	0	2%
b) Elders of the local shura/jirga	78%	17%	0	5%
c) Mullah	57%	37%	0	6%
d) Local commanders	29%	63%	0	8%
e) Women	30%	62%	0	8%
f) Local teacher	54%	39%	0	7%
g) Doctor	30%	60%	0	9%
h) Officials from municipal/district administration	23%	67%	0	9%
i) Ordinary farmers	52%	41%	0	7%
j) Landless agricultural workers	40%	52%	0	8%
k) Shopkeepers	40%	51%	0	9%

Q-89b. **(Filtered. Ask if '1` in Q-88)** How satisfied are you with the job this Community Development Council is doing? Are you…

Very satisfied	26%
Somewhat satisfied	56%
Somewhat dissatisfied	7%
Very dissatisfied	6%
Refused	0
Don't know	4%

Q-90. **(Filtered. Ask if answered 'Yes` in Q-88)** Still speaking of the same Community Development Council, to what extent do you think this Council is capable to represent your interests before the Provincial authorities. Do you think that it is very capable, somewhat capable, not so capable or not capable at all to represent your interests before the Provincial authorities? **(Code in the first row below and ask)** And how capable is this Council to represent your interests before the Government of Afghanistan? **(Code in the second row below)**

	Very Capable	Somewhat capable	Not so much capable	Not capable at all	Refused (volunteered only)	DK (vol.)
a) Before provincial authorities	30%	51%	10%	4%	0	5%
b) Before the Government of Afghanistan	26%	56%	7%	6%	0	4%

Q-91. **(ASK ALL)** Tell me, do you strongly agree, agree somewhat, disagree somewhat, or strongly disagree with the following statements about State Courts?

	StA	ASw	DSw	StD	Ref.	DK
a) State Courts are accessible to me.	22%	46%	20%	9%	0	3%
b) State Courts are fair and trusted.	10%	40%	33%	12%	0	4%
c) State Courts are not corrupt compared to other options of settling a dispute (informal systems such as local jirgas & shuras)	11%	36%	33%	13%	0	6%
d) State Courts follow the local norms and values of our people.	12%	38%	31%	14%	0	5%
e) State Courts are effective at delivering justice.	15%	37%	30%	14%	0	5%
f) State Courts resolve cases timely and promptly.	10%	28%	33%	24%	0	5%

Q-92. And now let's turn to village/neighborhood based Jirgas/ Shura, Tell me do you strongly agree, agree somewhat, disagree somewhat, or strongly disagree with the following statements about the village/neighborhood based Jirgas/ Shuras?

	StA	ASw	DSw	StD	Ref.	DK
a) Local jirgas, shuras are accessible to me.	31%	45%	14%	6%	0	4%
b) Local jirgas, shuras are fair and trusted.	24%	46%	21%	5%	0	4%
c) Local jirgas, shuras follow the local norms and values of our people.	26%	43%	21%	6%	0	4%
d) Local jirgas, shuras are effective at delivering justice.	25%	44%	20%	6%	0	5%
e) Local jirgas, shuras resolve cases timely and promptly	23%	36%	25%	10%	0	5%

Q-93. In the past two years have you had a dispute or a formal case that you couldn't settle with the other party and had to go to a State Court or village/neighborhood based Shura/Jirga to resolve it?

Yes	12%
No	86%
Don't know)	2%

Q-94. **(Filtered. If answered 'Yes' to Q-93)** Where have you taken this case or dispute?

State Court	39%
Village, neighborhood based Shura/Jirga	42%
Both	17%
Other	0
Refused	0
Don't know	1%

Q-95. **(Filtered. If answered 'State Court', code 1, or 'Both', code '6' in Q-94)** When taking a case to a State Court or being a party in settling case in a State Court, have you used any professional legal services (from a lawyer) or you pleaded your case alone or helped by friends/relatives?

Professional legal services	22%
Alone/ helped by friends, relatives	62%
Both	13%
Refused	0
Don't know	2%

Q-96. **(Filtered. Ask all with case or dispute, answer '1' in Q-93)** What kind of a case or dispute was it? **(If More Than One Case Or Dispute, Ask For The Most Recent One)**

Dispute over land	47%
Other property dispute, not land	9%
Commercial dispute	7%
Divorce	6%
Pick-pocketing	1%
Robbery / burglary	8%
Physical assault	12%
Murder	5%
Other	1%
Don't Know	4%

Q-97. **(Filtered. Ask all with case or dispute, answer '1' in Q-93)** Were you satisfied with the outcome of the proceedings?

Yes	50%
No	31%
Not finished yet	14%
Refused	0
Don't know	5%

WOMEN ISSUES

Q-98a. **(ASK ALL)** Now let's talk specifically about women related issues. What are the biggest problem facing women in this area today? **(Code in the first column of the table below) [Do Not Read Code List]**

Q-98b. And the next biggest? **(Code in the second column below) [Do Not Read Code List]**

	Q-98a. Biggest	Q-98a&b. Biggest & Next
Lack of rights / women's rights	13%	24%
can't leave homes	5%	11%
Under control of men / men have power	1%	2%
Education / illiteracy	28%	45%
General health care	5%	9%
Pregnancy related health care	2%	4%
Forced marriages/ dowry	5%	11%
Domestic violence	6%	12%
Poverty	6%	12%
Security	3%	5%
Representation in Shura/ Jirga	0	0
Lack of job opportunities for women	11%	24%
Lack of professional courses	1%	4%
Lack of electricity and water	1%	2%
Suicide	0	0
Transportation problems	0	1%
Lack of Bakery for women	0	1%
Murder of literate women	0	0
Lack of shelter	0	0
Drug addiction	0	0
Presence of Taliban	0	1%
Women have no problems	0	0
Don't know	11%	23%

Q-99. Some people say that women should have equal opportunities like men in education. Do you agree or disagree with this opinion? **(Wait for response and then ask):** Strongly or somewhat?

Strongly agree	57%
Agree somewhat	32%
Disagree somewhat	6%
Strongly disagree	3%
Refused	0
Don't know	1%

Q-100. Some people say that women should be allowed to work outside the home. What is your opinion about this?

Women should be allowed to work outside the home	69%
Women should not be allowed to work outside the home	27%
Don't know	4%

Q-101. If women vote, do you think that women should decide for themselves or should they receive advice from men?

Women should decide for themselves	58%
Men should advise them	22%
Women should decide for themselves but in consultation with men	18%
Don't know	2%

Q-102. In the election, everyone must vote for themselves. Men cannot vote in place of women. Women must vote for themselves. What do you think about this statement? Do you agree or disagree? **(Wait for response and then ask):** Strongly or somewhat?

Strongly agree	59%
Agree somewhat	29%
Disagree somewhat	7%
Strongly disagree	4%
Don't know	2%

Q-103a. Are you aware of the government ministry known as the Ministry of Women's Affairs?

Yes	59%
No	38%
Don't know	3%

Q-103b. (Filtered. Ask if answered 'Yes' in Q-104a) Are there any local offices of the Ministry of Women's Affairs in the district or province where you live?

Yes	56%
No	39%
Don't know	5%

Q-104. **(ASK ALL)** Do you think that political leadership positions should be mostly for men, mostly for women, or do you think that both men and women should have equal representation in the political leadership?

Mostly for men	35%
Mostly for women	10%
Equal for both men and women	51%
Other	0
Don't know	4%

Q-105. Are you opposed to a woman representing you in the following organizations?

	Yes	No	Ref.	DK
a) In National Parliament	40%	57%	0	2%
b) In your Provincial Council	38%	59%	0	3%
c) In your Community Development Councils	38%	58%	0	4%
d) In your District Development Assembly	39%	57%	0	4%
e) In your local Shura or Jirga	39%	58%	0	4%

DEMOGRAPHICS

D-1. Gender

Male	51%
Female	49%

D-2. **(Ask All)** How old were you on your last birthday? **(Record actual age; if respondent refuses, please estimate)**

18-24 y.o.	26%
25-34 y.o.	28%
35-44 y.o.	22%
45-54 y.o.	15%
55-64 y.o.	6%
over 65 y.o.	2%

D-3. Are you now working, a housewife **(ask only women)** , retired, a student, or looking for work?

Working	39%
Retired	1%
Housewife	41%
Student	8%
Unemployed	10%
Other	0
Refused	0
Don't know	0

D-4. **(Filtered. Ask if working or retired)**: What is your main occupation? **(Write down and then code. If retired, ask for previous occupation and then code)**

Farmer (own land / tenant farmer)	30%
Farm laborer (other's land)	12%
Laborer, domestic, or unskilled worker	8%
Informal sales/ business	13%
Skilled worker/artisan	12%
Government Office - Clerical worker	3%
Private Office - Clerical worker	1%
Government Office – Executive/ Manager	1%
Private Office – Executive/ Manager	1%
Self employed Professional	7%
Small business owner	4%
School Teacher	7%
University Teacher	0
Military/ Police	2%
Other	0
Refused	0
Don't know	0

D-5. **(Filtered. Ask if "Farmer", code '1' in D-4)** How much land do you farm?

Less than 1 Jerib	11%
1 - 2 Jerib	25%
2.1- 3 Jerib	27%
More than 3 Jerib	37%
Refused	0
Don't know	1%

D-6. **(ASK ALL) ***What is the highest level of school you completed? **(Write down response and code)**

Never went to school	55%
Primary School, incomplete (classes 1 to 5)	13%
Primary School, complete (finished class 6)	6%
Secondary education, incomplete (classes 7 to 8)	6%
Secondary education, complete (finished class 9)	5%
High School (classes 10 to 12)	12%
University education or above	2%
Refused	0
Don't know	0

D-7. Which languages can you read? **(Multiple response. Code each mentioned)**

Pashto	32%
Dari	37%
Uzbeki	2%
Turki	0
Urdu	2%
Hindi	0
English	6%
Arabic	3%
Cannot Read	49%
Refused	0

D-9. Are you married or single?

Single	20%
Married	77%
Widower/ Widow	3%
Refused	0
Don't know	0

D-11. **(Ask All)** How many people live here at this address? **(Record Number Below)**

1-5 pers	11%
6-7 pers.	20%
8-9 pers.	27%
10-11 pers.	20%
over 12 pers	22%

.

D-13. For statistical purposes only, we need to know your average monthly household income. Will you please tell me which of the following categories best represents your average total family monthly income? **(Show Card and read out)**

Less than 2,000 Afs	12%
2,001 – 3,000 Afs	24%
3,001 – 5,000 Afs	24%
5,001 – 10,000 Afs	23%
10,001 – 15,000 Afs	8%
15,001 – 20,000 Afs	4%
20,001 – 25,000 Afs	1%
25,001 – 40,000 Afs	1%
More then 40,000 Afs	0
Refused	0
Don't know	3%

Appendix 2: The Asia Foundation 2008 Survey - Methodology

1. Distribution of Sampling Points by Region and Urban/Rural Strata

The survey was conducted among 6593 respondents in a single wave. Fieldwork for the survey was conducted by the Afghan Center for Socio-economic and Opinion Research (ACSOR-Surveys), Kabul, between June 12 and July 2, 2008 by a team of 543 trained interviewers (267 women and 276 men). The survey consisted of a random, representative sample of 6593 in-person interviews with Afghan citizens 18 years of age and above who were residents in Afghanistan. The survey sample was divided first according to urban and rural characteristics of Afghanistan. The Sheharwali (municipal administration in Afghanistan) defines the urban population as those living within municipal limits. By default, the rural population comprises of those who are living outside the municipal limits. The margin of sampling error is 2.4 percent at 95 percent confidence interval.

The universe is divided into eight geographical regions consisting of 34 provinces. All of the provinces were covered in the survey. The eight regions and the provinces under them are:

Central-Kabul (Kabul, Kapisa, Parwan, Panjshir); **Eastern** (Nangarhar, Kunar, Laghman, Nuristan); **South Eastern** (Ghazni, Paktia, Paktika, Khost); **South Western** (Helmand, Kandahar, Zabul, Urozgan); **Western** (Badghis, Herat, Farah, Nimroz); **North West** (Balkh, Samangan, Jawzjan, Sar-i-Pul, Faryab); **Central-Hazarajat** (Wardak, Logar, Ghor, Bamyan, Day Kundi); **North East** (Badakhshan, Takhar, Baghlan, Kunduz).

A multi-stage random sampling procedure was followed in selecting the sample. The sample was distributed proportional to geographical and residential (urban-rural settlement) characteristics of population per province.

Due to the local cultural traditions, the universe at the outset was divided into male and female sub-samples. Each region, province and further strata was allocated an equal number of male and female respondents per sampling points.

The interviews among the male and female respondents were conducted by surveyors of the same sex i.e. only women enumerators interviewed woman respondents.

2. Selection of Districts/Replacement of Sampling Points

Within each province, the districts were selected by the PPS systematic random sampling procedure. The districts were first listed in the descending order of population and then the required number of districts was selected from this list of districts in each province based on population size intervals.

The instability and security problems in some provinces at the time of the fieldwork caused a few sampling points to be adjusted or replaced to keep interviewers out of areas with active violence. The places where there were changes in sampling points are as follows:

- Day Kundi (Watak settlement was replaced with Chenar due to security reasons)
- Bamyan (Khalaf Shir settlement was replaced with Dehan Kank due to inability to locate the village)
- Urozgan (Female respondents in Shaheed-i-Hasas, Khas Urozgan and Chorah districts were replaced with male respondents due to security reasons)
- Faryab (Qanjag settlement was replaced with Sar Asiab due to inability to find transportation to the remote location; Haji Yahqub settlement was replaced with Kocha Wolaswali, Chatar Gha was replaced with Jar Qalha and Haji Qeshlaq was replaced with Khwaja Qanori due to inability to locate the villages)
- Balkh (Arab Mazari Bay settlement was replaced with Asiab Sharaf and Mashak Baba Charki was replaced with Boria Baft due to inability to locate the villages)
- Kunduz (Warta Gan Tipa settlement was replaced with Char Sangi due to low number of inhabited dwellings; Deh kalan settlement was replaced with Dara Sofi due to inability to locate the village)
- Baghlan (Bagh Qazi settlement was replaced with Bagh Mula Shah due to inability to locate the village)
- Badakhshan (Darwaz-Paying district was replaced with Eshkashim due to inability to find transportation to the remote location; Do Ghalat Safla settlement was replaced with Jata to security reasons)
- Farah (Lir Yaki settlement was replaced with Siaho due to security reasons)
- Herat (Koh Shast settlement was replaced with Qalha Shab due to low number of inhabited dwellings; Qenat Khalil settlement was replaced with Jaghaza due to security reasons; Dehan Kamar Kalah settlement was replaced with Deh Shaikh and Gashin Cha was replaced with Nishan due inability to locate the villages)

- Nimroz (Ferozi settlement was replaced with Sala Narenj and Ghajar was replaced with Mula Jan Mohammad due to security reasons)

- Badghis (Murghab district was replaced with Ab-Kamari and Ghormach was replaced with muqur due to security reasons)

- Zabol (Matarzai Sar Tizi settlement was replaced with Ashozai due to inability to locate the village)

- Helmand (Female respondents in Mohammad Khan Kalai in Nahr-i-Saraj were replaced with male respondents and Reig-i-Khan Sheen district was replaced with Garm Seir due to security reasons)

- Khost (Sabari district was replaced with Lakan and Arian Kott settlement was replaced with Nawi Kott due to security reasons)

- Paktia (Zurmat and Waza Zadram districts were replaced with Ahmad Aba and respectively Laja Ahmad Khil due to security reasons)

- Ghazni (Rashidan district was substituted by Jaghato due to security reasons; Shado settlement was replaced with Sardar Qalha due to security reasons)

- Logar (Gul Hamed and Sar Lar settlements were replaced with Kodgai and respectively Sar Sang due to inability to locate the villages)

- Laghman (Gardi Kas settlement was replaced with Kanda Baghban due to security reasons)

- Kunar (Ata Lalchak settlement was replaced with Andar Lajak and tabila Now was replaced with Sawoona due to inability to locate the villages)

- Nangarhar (Hajian settlement was replaced with Dago, Khaki Ya Naqelen settlement and Kama Daka were replaced with Basol, Tarili settlement was replaced with Matra Kalai and Shaikhan settlement was replaced with Tarnab due to inability to find transportation to the remote locations; Markaz Wolaswali settlement was replaced with Nawi Uba due to security reasons; Jalozi settlement was replaced with Haysha khil due to low number of inhabited dwellings; Baro kala was replaced with Zakhil, Khair Abad was replaced with Khan, Koz Kashkot was replaced with Shalwari Kalai, Mari Kala was replaced with Pas Sabar, Nadaba yan was replaced with Landi Sabar, Babala Matak was replaced with Borialai due to inability to locate the villages)

- Parwan (Dandor settlement was replaced with Burj Guljan due to low number of inhabited dwellings; Ranga was replaced with Korkan and Doaab was replaced with Rang Aab due to inability to locate the villages)

The sampling design followed to select the settlements (and starting points), households and finally the respondent is presented in the following sections.

3. Selection of Settlements and Starting Points

The settlements within districts were selected randomly by the field director based on the lists of the existing settlements within each district.

Each sampling point was assigned a starting point and given direction. The starting points were recognizable locations-such as mosques, schools, bazaars etc., within each of the selected settlements for the survey. The locations were verified by supervisors during the back-checking procedures.

4. Household Selection

In urban areas, from the given starting point, the interviewer headed in the assigned direction and stopped at the first street/lane on the right-hand side of his/her route. From there on, the first contacted household was the fourth house on the right from the beginning of the street. Further on the selected household was each third inhabitable house on the right side of the interviewer route. In blocks of flats, the selection routine was each fifth apartment.

In rural areas, the interviewer started from the center of the village or the bazaar, mosque, etc., and went to the right selecting each third inhabited house on his/her route. Compounds containing two or more houses behind a common wall were treated like detached houses counting them counter-clock-wise from the gate to the compound.

5. Respondent Selection and Substitution

In the selected household, the information about all the household members was first collected. From the list, all the members aged 18 years and above were arranged in descending order of age. One respondent was randomly selected using the KISH grid. In case the selected respondent refused to be interviewed or was not available after call backs, no replacement in the household was done. Instead the interviewer moved on to the next household according to the random walk procedures.

6. Call-backs (rate, method, and results)

Typically interviewers were required to make two call-backs before replacing the designated respondent. Due to security-related fears in previous projects the field force has had difficulty meeting the requirement of two call-backs prior to substitution. In this survey, while the field force was able to complete some call-backs, the majority of the interviews were completed on the first attempt (96.8 percent), 3 per-

cent of the interviews were completed on the second attempt, and 10 interviews were completed on the third attempt. Due to the high rate of unemployment and correct choice of the appropriate time of day for interviewing, completion on the first attempt is the norm in Afghanistan.

7. Training of Interviewers

While the fieldwork supervisors were given a briefing/training in Kabul, the training for interviewers was conducted by fieldwork supervisors in their respective provinces. The briefing on the main questions was conducted by ACSOR project managers and field managers with Asia Foundation oversight. The following issues were emphasized during briefing(s):

- Proper household and respondent selection.
- Review of the questionnaire content.
- Appropriate interviewing techniques.
- Conducting mock-call interviews to get a better understanding of the logic and concept of the questions.

8. Refusals/Non-Contacts/Completed Interviews

Result Category	Number	% of Category
Non-Contact		
No one at home after three visits	223	
Respondent long -term absence (for the field work period)	356	
No adults (18+)after three visits	307	
Sub-Total	886	11.2 %
Refusals		
Not feeling informed to answer the questions	204	
Prefers head of the house to be interviewed	126	
In a hurry/ No time	149	
Respondent got angry because of a question and aborted interview		
Sub-Total	479	6 %
Completed Interviews	**6593**	**82.8 %**
Total Contact Attempts	**7958**	100%

9. Quality Control Methods

After the delivery of the questionnaires from the field, most of the completed questionnaires were subject to logical control for the proper administration.

Actual interviewing was monitored directly by a supervisor in 4.4 percent of the sample. Another 15.1 percent of the completed interviews were back-checked by a supervisor in person. 1.2 percent of the completed interviews were back-checked from the central office. The issues verified during in-person back-checks were proper household and respondent selection as well as correct recording of answers to five randomly selected questions from the main body of the questionnaire. During direct monitoring of interviews, 5 sampling points were found of poor quality and were re-done by other interviewer. Another interviewer was given additional training and did the interviews in his sampling point once again.

As an additional quality control measure this year, The Asia Foundation also conducted some back-checks to verify the authenticity of the interviews conducted. The Asia Foundation staff conducted back checks in the provinces of Bamiyan, Balkh, Badakhshan, Kabul, Panjshir and Kapisa. A total of 110 respondents were randomly picked up from those interviewed and back-checks were conducted. The back-checks verified the household and respondent selection procedure along with the correct recording of responses. The back-check exercise was also an effort to get a sense of the field situation and understand the difficulties that interviewers face at work.

10. Weighting

The data set includes a weight to adjust for the over-sampling that was conducted in several provinces. A minimum of 100 interviews was targeted for each province, when many would not have received that number. As a result, over-samples were implemented for many provinces. The data was weighted to adjust these over-samples to be representative of the national distribution of the population according to the population statistics available from the Afghan Central Statistics office. Below is the entire list of provinces sampled and the weights they were assigned.

Province	Weighting Factor	
	Rural	Urban
Kabul	1.03106677	1.04576853
Kapisa	1.06743787	-
Parwan	1.06240960	1.07755827
Wardak	1.04578598	-
Logar	.92425214	-
Ghazni	1.03561689	1.05038352
Paktya	1.00224690	1.01653772
Paktika	1.06743787	-
Khost	1.11512671	1.13102706
Nangarhar	1.04182837	1.05668357
Laghman	1.02826583	-
Kunar	1.01891796	-
Nuristan	.35961810	-
Badakhshan	1.03587348	1.05064377
Takhar	1.01461235	1.02907949
Baghlan	1.07043938	1.08570255
Kunduz	1.04049173	1.05532788
Balkh	1.05747965	1.07255802
Samangan	.89846299	.91127397
Jawzjan	1.01153397	.91127397
Sari-Pul	1.02449556	1.03910362
Faryab	1.04203431	1.05689245
Badghis	1.05266364	-
Herat	1.04995017	1.06492119
Farah	1.08792921	1.10344175
Nimroz	.35915259	.36427366
Helmand	1.04820682	1.06315297
Kandahar	1.07002586	1.08528312
Zabul	.72536030	.73570306
Uruzgan	.77917256	-
Ghor	1.07885431	-
Bamyan	1.01825805	1.03277717
Panjsher	.35961810	-
Day kundi	1.07885431	-

Appendix 3: The Asia Foundation 2008 Survey - Target Demographics

A total of 6593 respondents were surveyed in the study, out of which 5176 (79%) were from the rural areas and 1417 (21%) were from the urban areas. Almost equal percentages of male (51%) and females (49%) were interviewed. The following tables provide demographic and socio-economic details of the respondents with gender classification. They also provide the educational status, religion, and ethnicity of the respondents.

Characteristics	All	Rural	Urban
	6593	5175	1417
Gender	%	%	%
Male	51	51	50
Female	49	49	50
Region	%	%	%
Central/Kabul	23	14	54
Eastern	11	13	2
South Central	10	11	4
North East	15	16	10
North West	14	15	13
Western	14	15	9
South Western	11	12	8
Central/Hazarjat	4	4	0

Employment Status and Age Group

Characteristics	All	Rural	Urban
	6593	5175	1417
Employment	**%**	%	%
Working	39	40	36
Retired	1	1	2
Housewife	41	42	40
Student	8	7	9
Unemployed	10	9	13
Age Group	%	%	%
18 - 24	26	26	25
25 - 34	28	28	29
35 - 44	22	22	23
45 - 54	15	15	14
55 - 64	6	6	7
65 +	2	2	3

Main Occupation

Main Occupation	All	Rural	Urban
Number	**2682**	**2141**	**540**
Farmer (own land / tenant farmer)	30	35	9
Farm labourer (other's land)	12	15	3
Labourer, domestic, or unskilled worker	8	6	13
Informal sales/ business	13	11	19
Skilled worker/artisan	12	12	12
Government Office - Clerical worker	3	2	6
Private Office - Clerical worker	1	1	2
Government Office - Executive/ Manager	1	1	3
Private Office - Executive/ Manager	1	0	2
Self employed Professional	7	5	13
Small business owner	4	4	4
School Teacher	7	6	11
University Teacher	0	0	0
Military/ Police	2	2	3
Other	0	0	0

Base: Currently working and retired respondents

Farming Land

Farming Land	All	Rural	Urban
Number	**793**	**747**	**46**
Less than 1 Jerib	11	11	14
1 - 2 Jerib	25	25	16
2.1- 3 Jerib	27	28	24
More than 3 Jerib	37	36	46

* Base: Farmers who own land or tenant farmers
* Jerib: One Jerib is equal to one fifth of a hectare

Average Household Income

Average Household Income	All	Rural	Urban
Number	6593	5175	1417
Less than 2,000 Afs	12	13	8
2,001 - 3,000 Afs	24	24	23
3,001 - 5,000 Afs	24	24	26
5,001 - 10,000 Afs	23	33	25
10,001 - 15,000 Afs	8	8	8
15,001 - 20,000 Afs	4	4	5
20,001 - 25,000 Afs	1	1	1
25,001 - 40,000 Afs	1	0	1
More then 40,000 Afs	0	0	1

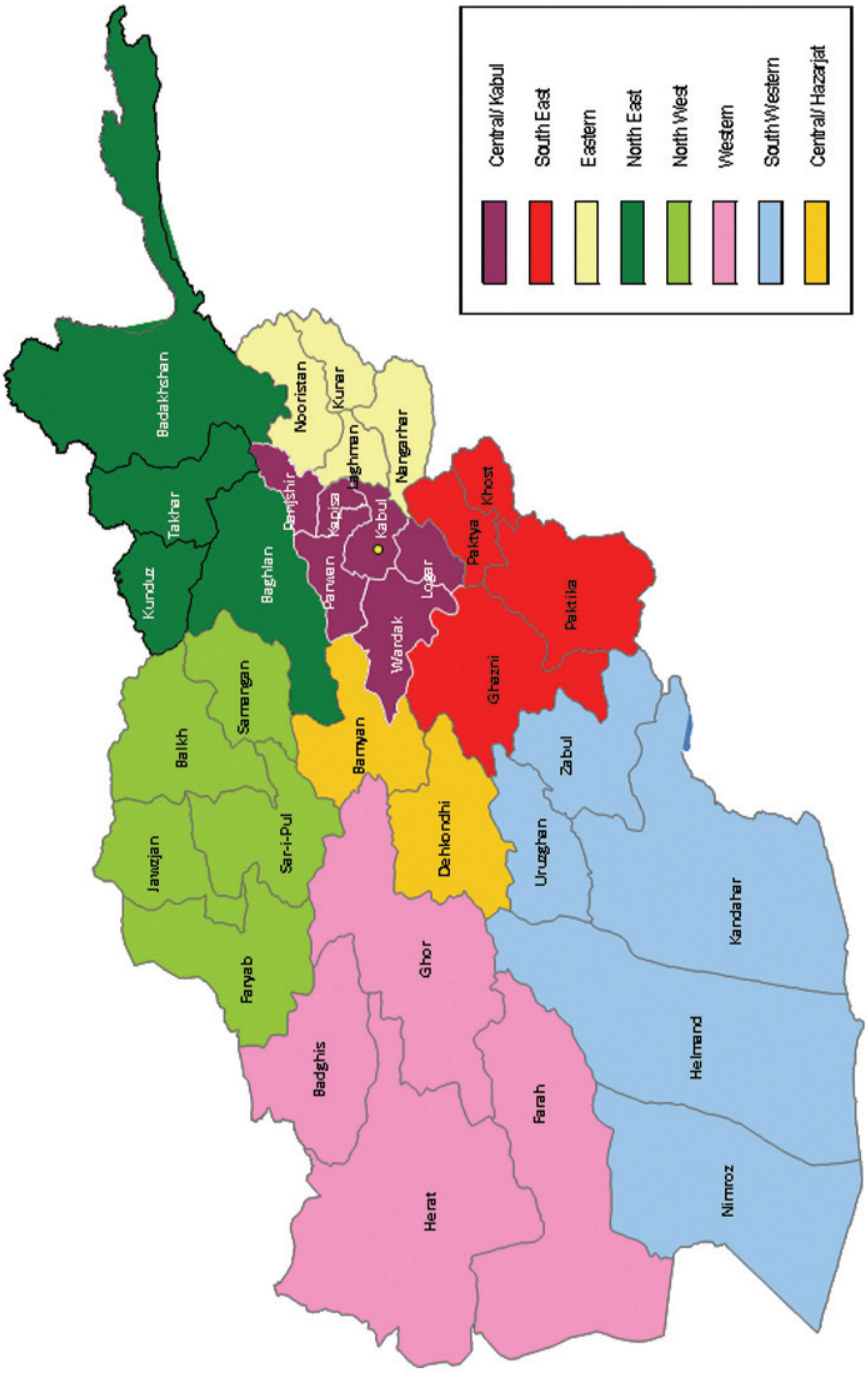
Marital Status

Marital Status	All	Rural	Urban
Number	6593	5175	1417
Single	20	20	22
Married	77	77	75
Widower/ Widow	3	3	3

Academic Qualification

Academic Qualification	All	Rural	Urban
Number	6593	5175	1417
Never went to school	55	59	339
Primary School, incomplete	13	13	13
Primary School, complete	6	6	7
Secondary education, incomplete	6	6	8
Secondary education, complete	5	4	6
High School	12	10	21
University education or above	2	1	6

Appendix 4: Afghanistan Provincial and Regional map



The Asia Foundation

AFGHANISTAN
P.O. Box 175
House No. 55, Street 1
Jawzjan Wat, Shahr-e-Naw
Kabul, Afghanistan

www.asiafoundation.org

STATE BUILDING, SECURITY, AND SOCIAL CHANGE IN AFGHANISTAN: Reflections on a Survey of the Afghan People is the companion volume to The Asia Foundation's recently released fourth annual public-opinion survey, "Afghanistan in 2008: A Survey of the Afghan People," which covers the largest population sample ever surveyed at one time in all 34 of Afghanistan's provinces. The Asia Foundation surveys collectively establish an accurate, long-term barometer of public opinion across the country to help assess the direction in which Afghanistan is moving in the post-Taliban era. This volume offers considered interpretation and contextual analysis of the survey findings by experts on political progress and legitimacy, democratic development and aspirations, critical security and developmental considerations, and societal values and change. The essays present a critical reflection on the veracity of the survey responses and the extent to which stated opinions and attitudes are consistent with the actual behavior of economic, social and political actors in Afghan society.