



# Political Settlement and Post-Conflict Order in Afghanistan: People's Views

Yaqub Ibrahim

Afghan Institute for Strategic Studies



**Political Settlement and Post-Conflict Order in Afghanistan**  
**People's Views**



Peace Studies VI

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### Political Settlement and Post-Conflict Order in Afghanistan

#### People's Views

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CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENT ..... XI

KEY FINDINGS ..... XIII

INTRODUCTION ..... 1

RESEARCH QUESTIONS ..... 3

METHODOLOGY ..... 5

DEMOGRAPHIC DATA ..... 6

    Age and Gender ..... 6

    Province ..... 7

    Education ..... 8

    Occupation ..... 9

    Ethnicity ..... 10

    Political Affiliation ..... 11

CHALLENGES AND LIMITATIONS ..... 12

CONCENTRATION AREAS ..... 15

    1. Political Settlement ..... 15

    2. Political System ..... 19

    3. Political Legitimacy ..... 24

PEOPLE’S VIEW ON CONFLICT & POLITICAL SETTLEMENT ..... 28

    Self-Declared Level of Awareness ..... 28

    People’s View on Obstacles to Political Settlement ..... 30

    People’s View on Civilian Casualties Since 2001 ..... 32

    People’s View on Political Settlement ..... 34

PEOPLE’S VIEW ON POLITICAL SYSTEM ..... 44

    People’s Views on post-2001 Political System Compared to Taliban’s  
    Emirate ..... 44

People’s View on Electing Leaders.....	60
People’s View on Political and Civil Rights and Liberties .....	66
PEOPLE’S VIEW ON POLITICAL LEGITIMACY .....	78
CONCLUSION .....	88
Appendix A: Tables.....	92
Appendix B: Figures .....	107
Appendix C: Questionnaire .....	129
Bibliography .....	142

TABLES

Table 1: Sample size .....6

Table 2: Distribution of the sample by province.....8

Table 3: Self-declared level of awareness about the negotiation process .29

Table 4: The main obstacle to political settlement.....30

Table 5: The main obstacle to political settlement, by political affiliation  
.....31

Table 6: Who is responsible for killing the civilians since 2001? .....33

Table 7: Which of the following options is your preferred political .....35

Table 8: Support or oppose the post-2001 political system compared ....45

Table 9: Support or oppose the post-2001 political system compared to the  
Taliban’s Emirate, by province .....53

Table 10: How satisfied are you with the post-2001 government system’s  
ability in providing security? .....55

Table 11: How satisfied are you with the post-2001 government system’s  
ability in providing security? .....56

Table 12: Support or oppose a Taliban style government for Afghanistan  
.....58

Table 13: Who can become the President of Afghanistan? .....61

Table 14: Who can become the President of Afghanistan? by Political  
Affiliation.....64

Table 15: Agree or disagree with religious police controlling.....68

Table 16: Support or oppose the following statement: all citizens,  
regardless of gender, ethnic, and religious differences are equal .....69

Table 17: The most important characteristic of a political party .....73

Table 18: Support or oppose restriction of the media by government.....75

Table 19: Support or oppose women’s education .....77

Table 20: Do elections produce a legitimate government?.....78

Table 21: Do you think elections produce a legitimate government? by  
Province.....84

Table 22: Is a government comprised of individuals involved in war  
crimes legitimate? .....86

Table 23: Self-declared Level of awareness about the negotiation process  
between the Taliban and Americans, by gender .....92

Table 24: Gaining information about the peace process .....92

Table 25: The main obstacle to political settlement.....	92
Table 26: Preferred political settlement mechanism.....	93
Table 27: If the peace process leads to general elections, who do you vote for? .....	93
Table 28: If the peace process leads to an interim government, who should lead it? .....	93
Table 29: If the peace process leads to a power-sharing government, how should the power be distributed?.....	94
Table 30: If the peace process leads to decentralization of power, how should it be established?.....	94
Table 31: Since 2001, thousands of civilians have been killed in the war, who is responsible? .....	94
Table 32: How to deal with those involved in the killing of civilians? ....	95
Table 33: Feeling about the Taliban coming to power .....	95
Table 34: Support or oppose the post-2001 political system compared to the Taliban’s Emirate .....	95
Table 35: How satisfied are you with the post-2001 government system’s ability in providing services? .....	95
Table 36: How satisfied are you with the post-2001 government system’s ability in providing security? .....	96
Table 37: Support or oppose a Taliban style government for Afghanistan .....	96
Table 38: Who can become the President of Afghanistan? .....	96
Table 39: Support or oppose a government that controls your daily activities .....	96
Table 40: Agree or disagree with religious police controlling men and women’s daily behavior in the public .....	97
Table 41: Support or oppose the following statement: the government should be accountable to citizens .....	97
Table 42: Do elections produce a legitimate government?.....	97
Table 43: Support or oppose the following statement: “National sovereignty of Afghanistan shall belong to the nation, manifested directly and through its elected representatives?” .....	97
Table 44: Support or oppose the following statement: all citizens, regardless of gender, ethnic, and religious differences are equal .....	98
Table 45: The most important characteristic of a political party .....	98

Table 46: In your preferred political system, how many political parties should be active? .....	98
Table 47: Support or oppose the restriction of the media by government	98
Table 48: Support or oppose women’s performance in the media.....	99
Table 49: Support or oppose women’s education .....	99
Table 50: Support or oppose women’s work in the government .....	99
Table 51: Is a government comprised of individuals involved in war crimes legitimate? .....	99
Table 52: Level of awareness about the negotiation process between the Taliban and Americans, by gender.....	100
Table 53: Level of awareness about the negotiation process between the Taliban and Americans, by ethnicity .....	100
Table 54: Level of awareness about the negotiation process between the Taliban and Americans, by education .....	100
Table 55: Level of awareness about the negotiation process between the Taliban and Americans, by occupation .....	101
Table 56: Level of awareness about the negotiation process between the Taliban and Americans, by political affiliation.....	101
Table 57: The main obstacle to political settlement, by gender.....	102
Table 58: The main obstacle to political settlement, by ethnicity.....	102
Table 59: The main obstacle to political settlement, by education .....	102
Table 60: The main obstacle to political settlement, by political affiliation .....	103
Table 61: The Main obstacle to political settlement, by province .....	103
Table 62: Support or oppose the post-2001 political system compared to the Taliban’s Emirate, by province .....	105
Table 63: Who can become the President of Afghanistan, by Political Affiliation.....	106



FIGURES

Figure 1: Age .....7

Figure 2: Education .....9

Figure 3: Occupation .....10

Figure 4: Ethnicity .....11

Figure 5: Political affiliation .....12

Figure 6: Typology of regimes & Afghanistan .....22

Figure 7: Preferred political settlement mechanism, by ethnic affiliation 39

Figure 8: Preferred political settlement mechanism, by political affiliation  
.....40

Figure 9: Preferred political settlement mechanism, by province.....42

Figure 10: Preferred political settlement mechanism, by province.....42

Figure 11: Support or oppose the post-2001 political system compared to  
the Taliban’s Emirate, by age.....47

Figure 12: Support or oppose the post-2001 political system compared to  
Taliban’s Emirate, by ethnicity .....51

Figure 13: Support or oppose of a Taliban style government for  
Afghanistan, by ethnicity .....59

Figure 14: Who can become the President of Afghanistan? by ethnicity .62

Figure 15: Who can become the President of Afghanistan? by province .65

Figure 16: Who can become the President of Afghanistan? by province .66

Figure 17: Support or oppose the following statement: “all citizens,  
regardless of gender, ethnic, and religious, differences are equal,” by  
education .....71

Figure 18: Support or oppose restriction of the media by government, by  
gender .....75

Figure 19: Do you think elections produce a legitimate government? By  
ethnicity .....80

Figure 20: Do you think elections produce a legitimate government? By  
education .....81

Figure 21: Do you think elections produce a legitimate government? by  
political affiliation .....83

Figure 22: Preferred political settlement mechanism, by age .....107

Figure 23: Preferred political settlement mechanism, by gender.....	107
Figure 24: Preferred political settlement mechanism, by ethnicity.....	108
Figure 25: Preferred political settling mechanism, by education.....	108
Figure 26: Preferred political settlement mechanism, by political affiliation .....	109
Figure 27: Preferred political settlement mechanism, by province.....	109
Figure 28: Preferred political settlement mechanism, by province.....	110
Figure 29: Responsibility for civilian casualties after 2001, by gender	110
Figure 30: The best option for dealing with those involved in the killing of civilians, by gender .....	111
Figure 31: Support or oppose the post-2001 political system compared to the .....	111
Figure 32: Support or oppose the post-2001 political system compared to the Taliban’s Emirate, by gender .....	112
Figure 33: Support or oppose the post-2001 political system compared to the Taliban’s Emirate, by education.....	112
Figure 34: Support or oppose the post-2001 political system compared to the Taliban’s Emirate, by occupation.....	113
Figure 35: Support or oppose the post-2001 political system compared to the Taliban’s Emirate, by political affiliation .....	113
Figure 36: Support or oppose the post-2001 political system compared to the Taliban’s Emirate by ethnicity .....	114
Figure 37: Level of satisfaction with the post-2001 government’s provision of services, by age.....	114
Figure 38: Level of satisfaction with the post-2001 government’s provision of services, by gender.....	115
Figure 39: Level of satisfaction with the post-2001 government’s provision of services, by ethnicity .....	115
Figure 40: Level of satisfaction with the post-2001 government’s provision of services, by education.....	116
Figure 41: Level of satisfaction with the post-2001 government’s provision of services, by occupation.....	116
Figure 42: Level of satisfaction with the post-2001 government’s provision of services, by political affiliation.....	117

Figure 43: Level of satisfaction with the post-2001 government’s provision of services, by province .....117

Figure 44: Level of satisfaction with the post-2001 government’s provision of services, by province .....118

Figure 45: Support or oppose of a Taliban style government for Afghanistan, by gender .....118

Figure 46: Support or oppose of a Taliban style government for Afghanistan, by ethnicity .....119

Figure 47: Who can become the President of Afghanistan? by gender ..119

Figure 48: Who can become the President of Afghanistan? by ethnicity .....120

Figure 49: Who can become the President of Afghanistan? by education .....120

Figure 50: Who can become the President of Afghanistan? by province .....121

Figure 51: Who can become the President of Afghanistan? by province .....121

Figure 52: Do you think elections produce a legitimate government? by gender .....122

Figure 53: Do you think elections produce a legitimate government? by ethnicity .....122

Figure 54: Do you think elections produce a legitimate government? by education .....123

Figure 55: Do you think elections produce a legitimate government? by occupation .....123

Figure 56: Do you think election produces a legitimate government? by political affiliation .....124

Figure 57: Political Legitimacy: Does elections produce a legitimate government? by Province.....124

Figure 58: Support or oppose restriction of media by government, by gender .....125

Figure 59: Support or oppose restriction of media by government, by political affiliation .....126

Figure 60: Support or oppose restriction of media by government, by education .....126

Figure 61: Support or oppose the following statement: “all citizens, regardless of gender, ethnic, and religious, differences are equal,” by gender .....127

Figure 62: Support or oppose the following statement: “all citizens, regardless of gender, ethnic, and religious, differences are equal,” by education .....127

Figure 63: Support or oppose the following statement: “all citizens, regardless of gender, ethnic, and religious, differences are equal,” by ethnicity .....128

Figure 64: Support or oppose the following statement: “all citizens, regardless of gender, ethnic, and religious, differences are equal,” by political affiliation .....128

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Yaqub Ibrahimi

This research assesses people's views on mechanisms of political settlement and political order in Afghanistan. Political settlement is examined by questions on election, interim government, power-sharing, and decentralization of power. Political order is studied through a focus on types of political systems and mechanisms of political legitimation. The research is based on a survey of 1500 respondents in 34 provincial capitals of the country.

## **KEY FINDINGS**

- A significant majority of respondents to this research prefers elections as the best political mechanism for settling the current conflict between the government of Afghanistan and the Taliban. Other methods, such as power-sharing, decentralization of power, and interim government, are not supported by most respondents. While more than 70 percent of respondents say election is the best method of settling the conflict, only 7.7 percent prefer interim government, 9 percent of which prefer power-sharing, and 1.8 percent say decentralization of power is a better option.
- The highest level of support for election as a political settlement mechanism is demonstrated by respondents who self-identified as pro-government followed by leftists, nationalists, ethno-centrists, Mujahidin, and neutrals. By contrast, most of the pro-Taliban

respondents do not endorse election as a mechanism of political settlement. Only 6.3 percent of the pro-Taliban respondents say they prefer election, while 41 percent highlight power-sharing government as a preferred mechanism of political settlement. Unlike conventional wisdom that suggests strong support for an interim government among the Taliban, only 19 percent of the pro-Taliban respondents advocate that they think the establishment of an interim government is a good option. The decentralization of power is not strongly supported by all demographic categories. Lower than 10 percent of all categories, except for the pro-Taliban, who believe decentralization is a good mechanism. The option is supported by 20 percent of the pro-Taliban respondents.

- Despite their considerable dissatisfaction with the government's ability in providing security, most respondents prefer the post-2001 political system compared to the Taliban's Emirate. 68 percent of respondents support the post-2001 political system and 67 percent of them oppose the Taliban's Emirate. Moreover, 70 percent of respondents are against a Taliban-style government and the same number feel uncomfortable with the Taliban coming to power and religious police watching their daily life.
- On political system, almost all respondents believe an election-based regime is the best political system for Afghanistan and about 80 percent of them believe that the leadership must be directly elected by the people and remain accountable to citizens. Only the pro-Taliban respondents and those with madrasa education say an election-based regime is not their option.



- On political system, most of respondents prefer a government that guarantees and respects social equalities and political and civil rights and liberties. More than 87 percent of respondents emphasize that the government must guarantee and respect social equalities, regardless of citizens' gender, ethnic, and religious differences. Over 60 percent of respondents emphasize that the government should not restrict the media, and more than 80 percent say they support women's education, their work in the public, and their performance in the media.
- Concerning political legitimacy, a significant majority of respondents believe that a government that comes out of free and fair elections is legitimate in their view. About 75 percent of respondents believe that state legitimacy depends on elections. These respondents believe traditional systems of legitimation including Loya Jirga, and ethnic or religious methods of legitimation will not produce a legitimate government in Afghanistan.
- Most of respondents believe that the establishment of a legitimate government requires bringing justice for war crimes. More than 78 percent of respondents emphasize that a government comprising those involved in war crimes and the killing of civilians is not legitimate. Over 70 percent of them emphasize the trial of those who are accused of war crimes.
- This research finds that people's views on power and politics in Afghanistan are largely varied by province-specific variables that overlap the broader demographic units such as region and even ethnicity which are conventionally used as units of analysis for studying people's political views in Afghanistan.

## **INTRODUCTION**

The United States efforts to negotiate with the Taliban have generated a new national discourse on political settlement of the conflict in Afghanistan. The discourse is formed of two debates; one that inquires potential scenarios for conflict resolution; and the other that focuses on a post-conflict political order. Both debates are significantly influenced by the contradictive positions of the government and the Taliban on conflict resolution and a post-conflict political order. The government and the pro-government elites emphasize political settlement through general elections and the extension of the post-2001 political system in post-conflict Afghanistan. This scenario requires the Taliban's agreement with the post-2001 political system which is, theoretically, based on political participation and electoral democracy. The implementation of this vision requires the integration of the Taliban into the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan through elections and the arrangement of political order in line with guidelines of the constitution and values of electoral democracy.

However, conflict resolution and political order in the Taliban's view appear to be different. Although the Taliban's position on both issues is not entirely clear and subject to change under different circumstances, the group has neither shown any interest in a political settlement achieved through elections nor in an electoral democracy within a post-conflict order, to date. By contrast, the group has attempted to increase its political leverage by direct negotiations with the United States and consistently invested in de-legitimizing the post-2001 regime, particularly by highlighting the government's ineffectiveness in solving the problems of the country. Moreover, although the Taliban have not revealed the details

of their preferred political system, they have broadly advertised the Islamic Emirate brand as an Islamic solution to the country's problems. The Taliban's preference for direct negotiations with Americans and other Afghan parties where the government is reduced from a major party to an irrelevant player in the peace process is mainly rooted in this vision. The Taliban's approach to war, peace, and political order that contradicts the government's vision has become a major challenge to a meaningful political settlement and a post-conflict order. The United States has failed to settle the disagreements, labeling them domestic concerns.

At this juncture, the discourse on political settlement and post-conflict order is mostly confined to official statements and the elites' debates through the media and other public platforms. This leaves the people's voices unheard, thus absent in the public discourse. Drawing on the results of a national survey, this research is intended to fill this gap.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This research assesses the views and desires of the people for political settlement and political order in Afghanistan. Means of a political settlement suggested in this research are general elections, power-sharing government, decentralization of power, and interim government. Political order is examined through a focus on regime types and mechanisms of political legitimation. The choices of political order presented to respondents are democracy and autocracy.<sup>1</sup> The mechanisms of political legitimacy are investigated by a reference to the Weberian notion of traditional and rational-legal sources of legitimation.<sup>2</sup> Relevant to the three topics, this research addresses the following three questions:

1. Which mechanism of political settlement do people prefer?
2. What is the people's preferred political system in a post-conflict setting?
3. How do the people evaluate the legitimacy of government in Afghanistan?

Addressing the three questions in single research is informed by the interconnected nature of the three issues. According to empirical evidence, the past two decades' failed efforts for settling the conflict are influenced equally by the major parties' disagreement on their preferences about conflict resolution and post-conflict order. Therefore, settling the conflict

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<sup>1</sup> For regime types see Cheibub et.al. Democracy and dictatorship Revisited; Dahl, Polyarchy; Dahl, On Democracy; Geddes, Wright. & Frantz, "Authoritarian Regimes Code Book;" Luhrmann, et al., "Regimes of the World (RoW);" Wahman et al., "Authoritarian Regime Types Revisited."

<sup>2</sup> Weber, the Vocation Lectures, p. 34; Weber, the Three Types of Legitimate Rule, pp. 1-11.

in Afghanistan depends as much on an agreement on mechanisms of political settlement as on an agreement on the characteristics of a post-conflict political system. This research aims to connect the two areas.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This research draws on a face-to-face survey of 1500 individuals in 34 provincial capitals of Afghanistan. Therefore, the findings of this research are limited to the urban population and rural families settling in provincial capitals and, therefore, do not reflect the rural population's views. The target population is citizens of Afghanistan comprising the general population whose views on political settlement of the current conflict between the Taliban and the government and their preferences about political order are examined through this cross-sectional survey. The sample selection follows the probability sampling method expecting generalization from the survey. For an estimated 18.6 million adult population, aged 18 and above, a 1500 sample size was determined to ensure a strict 99 percent confidence interval with a 3.5 percent margin of error.<sup>3</sup> The fieldwork is conducted between July and September 2019.

The number of respondents for each province was assigned based on the proportional distribution of the population provided by the National Statistics and Information Authority's estimates for 2019-2020.<sup>4</sup> Provinces are divided into four population categories: provinces with lower than 1 million population, provinces with 1-2 million population, provinces with 2-3 million population, and provinces with over 3 million population. For each one million unit, 30 individuals are interviewed (Table 1).

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<sup>3</sup> Boyd, "By the Numbers"; World Population Prospects 2017, pp. 92, 240, 281.

<sup>4</sup> Afghanistan Population Estimates for the Year 2019-2020, pp. 2-3.

Table 1: Sample Size

Categories	Number of Provinces	Number of Respondents	Total
Provinces with lower than 1 Million Population	22	30/ Province	660
Provinces with 1-2 Million Population	10	60/ Province	600
Provinces with 2-3 Million Population	1 (Herat)	90	90
Provinces with Over 3 Million Population	1 (Kabul)	150	150
<b>Total</b>		<b>1500</b>	

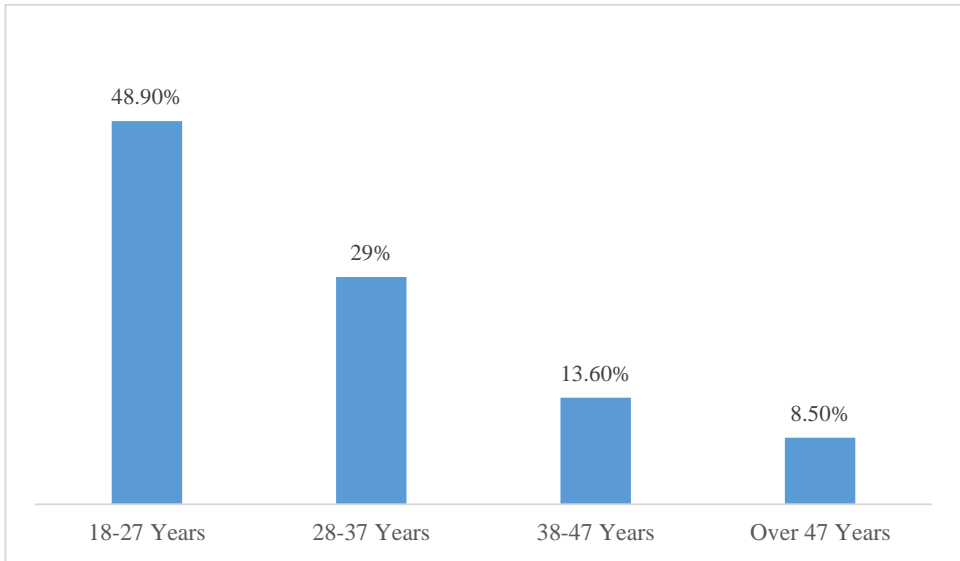
## DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

The sample size includes a heterogeneous population selected randomly and distributed on the basis of such demographic characteristics as age, gender, province, education, occupation, ethnicity, and political affiliation.

### Age and Gender

About 78 percent of respondents are between ages 18 and 37, 13.5 percent are between 38 and 47 years old, and only 8.5 percent are over 47 (Figure 1). Of the total sample population, 55.07 percent are male, and 44.93 percent are female (Figure 1, Appendix B).

Figure 1: Age



## Province

All 34 provinces of Afghanistan are covered as units of analysis. Table 2 provides a general image of the distribution of the sample by provinces based on a proportional distribution of the country's population as articulated above.



*Table 2: Distribution of the Sample by Province*

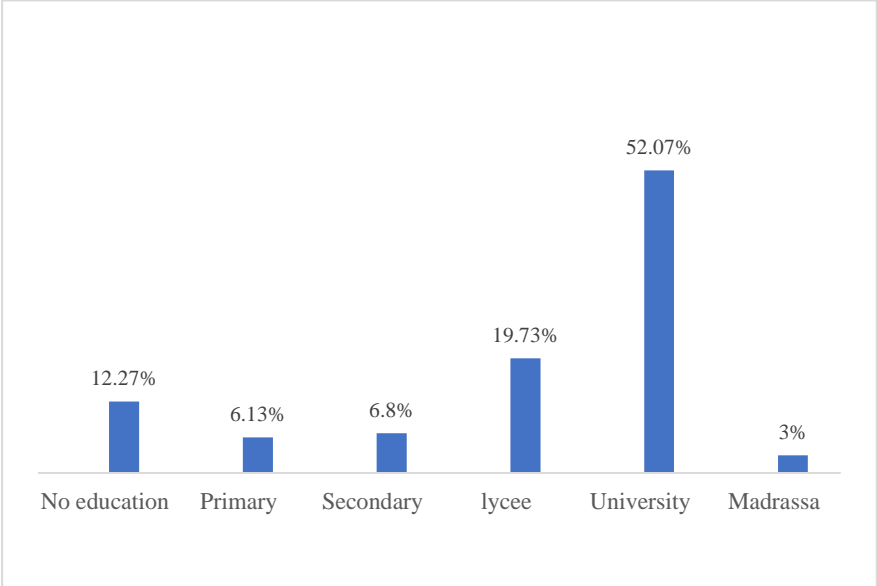
<b>Province</b>	<b>Respondents</b>	<b>Province</b>	<b>Respondents</b>
Kabul	10.00	Khost	2.00
Herat	6.00	Kunduz	4.00
Balkh	4.00	Kunar	2.00
Kandahar	4.00	Laghman	2.00
Nangarhar	4.00	Logar	2.00
Badakhshan	4.00	Wardak	2.00
Faryab	4.00	Nimruz	2.00
Ghazni	4.00	Nooristan	2.00
Helmand	4.00	Paktia	2.00
Badghis	2.00	Paktika	2.00
Baghlan	4.00	Panjshir	2.00
Bamyan	2.00	Parwan	2.00
Daikundi	2.00	Samangan	2.00
Farah	2.00	Sar-e Pul	2.00
Ghor	2.00	Takhar	4.00
Jawzjan	2.00	Uruzgan	2.00
Kapisa	2.00	Zabul	2.00
<b>Total</b>		<b>100%</b>	

## **Education**

More than 70 percent of respondents have a university or high school education. Secondary and primary education, combined, comprise the second-largest category (13 percent). A smaller percentage of respondents (12.27 percent) have no education followed by 3 percent with a background in madrassa schooling (Figure 2). Given the country’s adult literacy rate in

Afghanistan (43 percent in 2018), this sample broadly covers the educated population, mostly concentrated in urban areas.<sup>5</sup>

Figure 2: Education



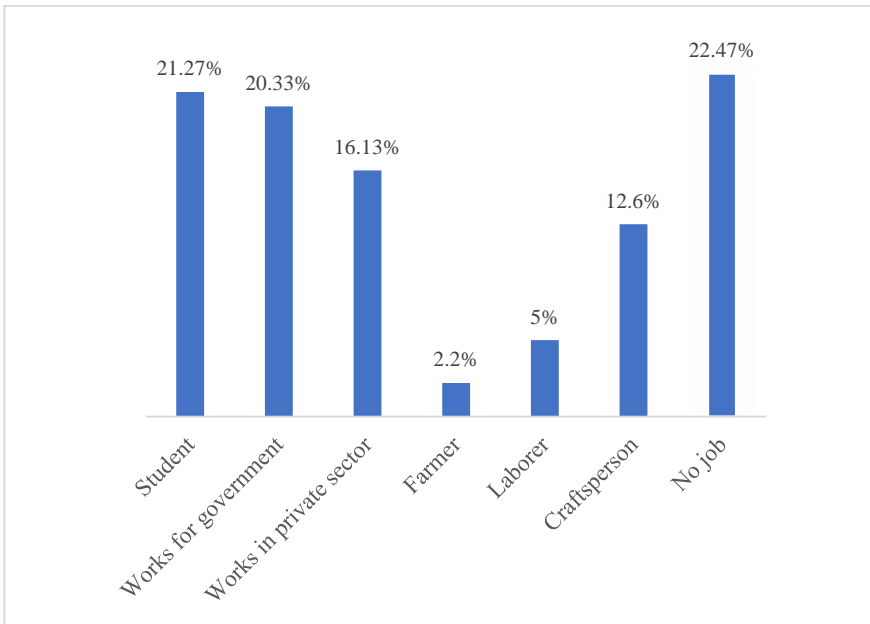
### Occupation

Most of respondents have a job with the government, the private sector, or are self-employed. The second largest group is comprised of students. Unemployment at 22.47 percent comprises the largest category (Figure 3).

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<sup>5</sup> For Afghanistan’s literacy rate see, The World Bank, “Literacy Rate – Afghanistan” 2018.

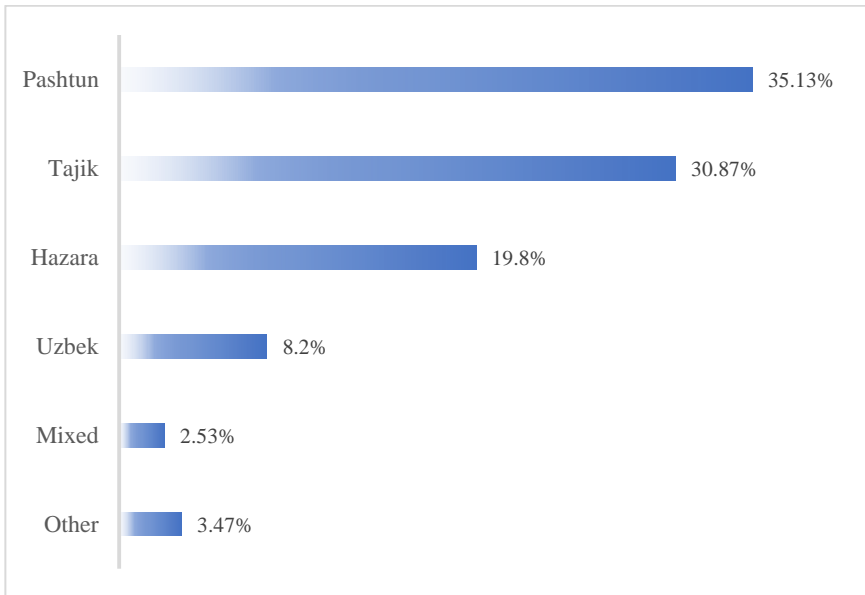
Figure 3: Occupation



## Ethnicity

The sample contains six ethnic categories including 35 percent Pashtun, 31 percent Tajik, 20 percent Hazara, 8 percent Uzbek, 2.5 percent mixed, and 3.5 percent ‘other.’ This sample selection is completely random and affected by the distribution of the general sample per province. Therefore, in the absence of a reliable census about the ethnic mosaic of the country, this sample does not necessarily reflect the real distribution of ethnic populations in the country (Figure 4).

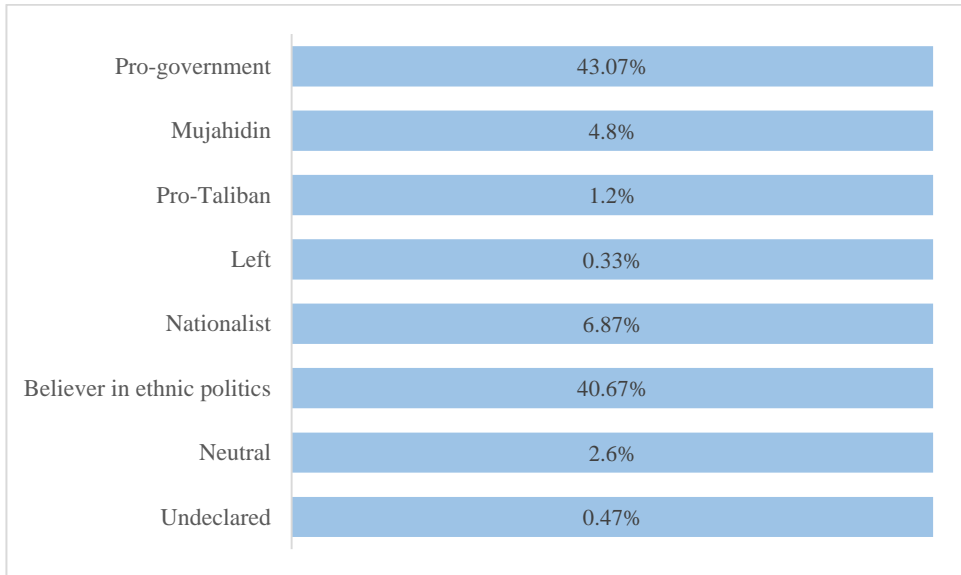
Figure 4: Ethnicity



## Political Affiliation

Respondents are divided into eight political categories, representing a wide range of political affiliations and interests from self-identified pro-government to self-identified pro-Taliban. The largest political group in this research includes the self-identified pro-government followed by those with an interest in ethnic politics. Neutrals, nationalists, and Mujahidin include some 24 percent of the sample. The very low level of the pro-Taliban and the left respondents in the sample (1.2 and 0.33 percent, respectively) do not inclusively represent the two categories and might be affected by factors which are discussed in the section of ‘Challenges and Limitations’ (Figure 5).

Figure 5: Political Affiliation



## CHALLENGES AND LIMITATIONS

While the research attempts to reduce sampling biases by applying a random selection method, several issues were inevitable in this research. First, the survey is exclusively conducted in provincial capitals, therefore, the findings do not reflect the views of the people that live in rural areas, conflict zones, and areas under the control of the Taliban. Second, given the fact that the survey is conducted in major cities, more than 80 percent of the sample includes individuals with some level of education. Given the World Bank’s literacy rate for Afghanistan (43 percent in 2018), this sample does represent the uneducated and madrassa educated populations that mostly live in rural areas.

Moreover, while it was attempted to maintain gender balance, the number of female respondents in several provinces including Paktia, Paktika, Khost, Uruzgan, and Nuristan is lower than male, and in Zabul, no woman participated in the survey. Despite this challenge, the differentiation in gender representation was lowered at 55.7 percent men versus 44.93 percent women by ensuring women's participation in provinces where they were more openly willing to participate in the survey.

The small size of the self-identified pro-Taliban respondents is another challenge. Since the research was designed on self-identification of respondents, the very low level of the pro-Taliban participants either explains that the group has almost no support basis in provincial capitals of the country or indicates that respondents with sympathy for the Taliban did not reveal their political affiliation for security reasons, or both. In either case, the pro-Taliban's view in this research is based on a very small sample size (1.2 percent or 18 individuals). Finally, in the absence of a national census about the ethnic mosaic of Afghanistan, the ethnic sample does not necessarily reflect the real distribution of ethnic populations in the country.

The remainder of this research is organized as follows. First, political settlement, political system, and political legitimacy are conceptualized and discussed in the context of Afghanistan. Next, the findings of the survey on the three issues are reported and discussed in three separate chapters. Chapter one concentrates on elections, interim government, power-sharing government, and decentralization of power as four mechanisms of political settlement and illustrates findings on people's preferred mechanisms. Chapter two focuses on democratic and autocratic regimes and presents findings on the people's views concerning these

systems in Afghanistan. Chapter three examines people's views on political legitimacy and characteristics of a legitimate government in Afghanistan. The conclusion reports the findings and discusses their contributions.

## CONCENTRATION AREAS

### 1. Political settlement

Political settlement, in this research, refers to series of practices, processes, and agreements that help resolve disputes on ideas, interests, and the distribution and use of power.<sup>6</sup> Thus, political settlement of conflict is about settling disagreements through non-violent mechanisms of distribution and balance of power between disputants.<sup>7</sup> Since the 1990s, several approaches to settling intrastate conflicts have been discussed and suggested by practitioners and scholars. This research investigates the people's views on four mechanisms of political settlement that are recently discussed in Afghanistan. Those mechanisms include general elections, power-sharing government, decentralization of power, and interim government.<sup>8</sup>

Election as a mechanism of political settlement means an agreement on political participation as the basis for distribution and balance of power between the main parties to a conflict. In Afghanistan, this would mean that the Taliban agree with elections as the rule of the game and respect the outcomes. Of course, the systematic and repeated electoral frauds in Afghanistan, particularly the 2019 Presidential election, have severely undermined the legitimacy of election and its outcomes. The flawed elections and their problematic results provide more reasons for the Taliban to downgrade election as a political settlement mechanism and further invest in alternative means of coming to power.

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<sup>6</sup> Kelsall, "Thinking and Working with Political Settlement;" *Laws, Political Settlements*, p. 1

<sup>7</sup> Di John & Putzel, *Political Settlements*, p. 4.

<sup>8</sup> Sadr, *Political Settlement of the Afghanistan Conflict*, pp. 43-90



Power-sharing through which the conflict would be settled by distribution of power between the disputant parties in a coalition administration, and decentralization of power, which suggests a political settlement by giving autonomy to disputant parties in certain parts of the country or different levels of power, are also proposed by major parties as alternative mechanisms when an agreement on elections is out of reach. Finally, interim administration as a temporary authority, administered by internal and/or international parties, is proposed when other options do not seem feasible nor favorable for one of the parties to a conflict. The interim government would administer the country until a transitional or regular government emerges from a nationally agreed-upon political process, which in most of the cases is election.<sup>9</sup> The choice of any of the four mechanisms depends on an agreement, particularly between the major parties to a conflict, not only on the mechanism, but also on its expected outcome.

An agreement on any of these mechanisms has been out of reach in Afghanistan in the face of the major parties' contradictory approaches to settling the conflict. The National Unity Government's approach, at least since the second Kabul Process Conference in February 2018, has been a constitutional solution to the conflict that requires free and fair elections expecting the Taliban to participate as a political party.<sup>10</sup> In this proposal, the government invited the Taliban to join the post-2001 political process

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<sup>9</sup> Carcano, *End of the Occupation in 2004*; Khalilzad, *Prospects for the Afghan Interim Government*; Sadr, *Political Settlement of the Afghanistan Conflict*, pp. 43-90; Shain & Linz, *The Role of Interim Government*.

<sup>10</sup> For example, *The Afghan Government's Peace Offer during the Second Kabul Process Conference (February 2018)*; *The Roadmap for Achieving Peace (November 2018)*; *The Peace Jirga Declaration, (May 2019)*; Ghani's 7-Point Peace Plan (October 2019).

and to compete through elections instead of the battleground. The proposal was ignored by the Taliban that sabotaged elections both by political and military means. Politically, in all meetings between the Taliban, Americans, and Afghan parties from Doha to Moscow to Islamabad, the Taliban never incorporated election as an option on their agenda, nor did they allow any discussion on elections. Militarily, the group has frequently damaged elections by attacking polling stations and torturing the voters.<sup>11</sup> As a result of the continued threats and the people's increasing distrust in the electoral process because of systematic fraud in previous elections, the turnout in September 2019 Presidential election dropped to around 20 percent, the lowest level since the 2001 U.S. invasion.<sup>12</sup> The Taliban's military threats to the voters indicate that election is not a preferred political settlement mechanism for the group, particularly when they see the electoral results could neither satisfy the politicians nor the people.

Despite the government and the Taliban's contradictive positions on elections, the two parties have not officially proposed any of the three alternative options (i.e., power-sharing, decentralization, and interim government) since the beginning of direct negotiations between the Taliban and Americans in September 2018. Only in 2013, the Taliban proposed the formation of an interim administration and the option was suggested by various parties in subsequent years<sup>13</sup>— an option that the government did receive favorably. However, since the commencement of direct negotiations between the Taliban and the Americans, the Taliban have

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<sup>11</sup> Safi, Afghanistan Election; Glinski, Risking Life and Limb to Vote; Sediqi, the Taliban Cut off his Fingers for Voting.

<sup>12</sup> Safi. Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Sadr, Political Settlement of the Afghanistan Conflict, 64.

entirely excluded the mechanisms of political settlement with the government from the talks labeling it domestic issues that require intra-Afghan dialogues following a peace agreement with Americans.

Nonetheless, even if the group's political office in Doha comes to an agreement on a certain mechanism in the future, it is not clear to what extent the military and religious branches of the group will endorse the decision. Although the Taliban leadership has constantly claimed "a unified policy and command,"<sup>14</sup> the realities on the ground show some levels of division on decision-making between the political and military branches. For example, when the political branch led by Mullah Brother was trying to reach a political agreement with Americans, the military wing led by Mullah Haibatullah did not reduce the level of attacks for goodwill. The cancelation of the so-called Doha process by President Trump in September 2019 was apparently influenced by such disconformity between the political and military branches of the Taliban and the lack of Americans' trust in the former's ability in keeping its promises. Moreover, despite the political branch's efforts to reach a non-violent result, the Taliban's Supreme Council based in Quetta, Pakistan, has never revised its policy of a coercive solution. For example, the last official statement of the group's Supreme leader in June 2019 indicates a great concentration on the glorification of its Jihadi achievements and domination by violent means.<sup>15</sup> As such, while the government insists on political participation as a preferred mechanism of settling the conflict, the Taliban leadership

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<sup>14</sup> Akhundzada, Message of Felicitatation.

<sup>15</sup> Akhundzada, Message of Felicitatation

concentrates on coercion, while its political branch's vision of a political settlement remains unclear to date.

Besides the government and the Taliban's contradictory approaches to political settlement, the topic has become a source of debate among politicians, practitioners, and citizens. AISS has already researched the elites' views on the issue, through qualitative interviews which stress on elections as the preferred means of settling the conflict.<sup>16</sup> The people's views on political settlement is not assessed yet. This research is intended to fill this gap.

## **2. Political System**

Political system or regime refers to a set of rules that determine the leadership and policies of a country for governance.<sup>17</sup> Based on this logic, regimes are divided into two general categories including democratic and autocratic systems. Democracy refers to a regime in which an executive achieves power through a free and reasonably fair election and when in power, respects a set of political and civil rights and liberties defined in democratically created laws and regulations.<sup>18</sup> By contrast, autocracy refers to a regime where executive achieves power through undemocratic means or flawed elections and when in power, it more relies on coercion than consent in law enforcement and governance.<sup>19</sup> The level of political and civil rights and liberties in democracies and the characteristics and types of

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<sup>16</sup> Sadr, *Political Settlement of the Afghanistan Conflict*, pp. 48-49.

<sup>17</sup> Geddes, Wright. & Frantz, "Authoritarian Regimes Code Book" & Geddes, Wright. & Frantz, "Autocratic Breakdown."

<sup>18</sup> Dahl, *On Democracy*, p. 85; Dahl, *Polyarchy*, p. 8; Geddes, Wright. & Frantz, "Authoritarian Regimes Code Book;" Luhrmann, et al., "Regimes of the World (RoW)."

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*

coercive mechanisms in autocratic regimes differ from case to case depending on a country's history, socio-political tradition, and level of economic development.

In Afghanistan, religion, ethnocentrism, and military uprisings, on the one hand, and an inclination to extreme centralization of power by the rulers in the name of the state, on the other, have historically challenged the establishment of a democratic regime. The debate on the characteristics of political systems in Afghanistan has always been influenced by questions about these historical forces and the type of authority they would form. In the post-2001 era, however, a discussion on conditions of establishing an electoral democracy is added to this historical debate. In general, three visions form the debate on political system in the post-2001 Afghanistan: First, the government and new political forces that advocate a majoritarian democracy; second, the ethno-centrists and the former Mujahidin groups that have shown interest in a power-sharing system or consociationalism; and third, the Taliban that use religion as a veneer for their political project and advocate an Islamic Emirate. Although the second category differs from the first on aspects of the distribution of power, it does not reject elections as the mechanism of power transition. Therefore, the post-2001 debate could be categorized into two major camps including a pro-democracy camp formed of the government and political forces around it against a pro-autocracy debate supported by the Taliban.

Although the details and full characteristics of the Taliban's preferred state system is not officially disclosed yet and a few studies that have investigated the Taliban's views on regime type do not provide a

uniform image of the group's preferences,<sup>20</sup> the Taliban leadership's official statements indicate a consistency in using the term "Islamic Emirate" in defining its government in exile and a constant emphasis on further Islamization of the state and general rules.<sup>21</sup> Moreover, the group has not shown any interest in elections as the mechanism of electing the leaders and remained vague about the political and civil rights and liberties including women's rights, human rights, political pluralism, and social diversities.<sup>22</sup> Taking the Taliban's unclarity about their preferred regime for a post-conflict Afghanistan but the group's consistent reference to 'Islamic Emirate' as its imagined regime, this research measures the group's political system with elements of the Islamic Emirate that ruled from 1996 to 2001 and compare it with elements the post-2001 political system.

While the government of Afghanistan and its allies have publicly advocated for an electoral democracy as the country's political system, they have failed to establish a reliable electoral system, respect the rule of law, satisfy democratic principles, and fulfill democracy's institutional prerequisites. Therefore, according to the typology of political regimes, while the Taliban's Islamic Emirate falls into the 'closed autocracy' category, the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan can be situated somewhere between 'electoral democracy' and 'electoral autocracy' categories (Figure 6).<sup>23</sup>

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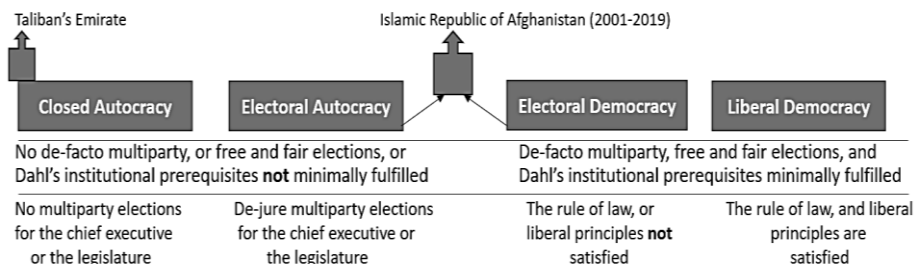
<sup>20</sup> For example, Mashal, "What Do the Taliban Want in Afghanistan?" & Osman and Gopal, "Taliban Views on a Future State."

<sup>21</sup> For example, Akhundzada, "Message of Felicitation."

<sup>22</sup> Mashal, "What Do the Taliban Want in Afghanistan?"

<sup>23</sup> Luhrmann, et al., "Regimes of the World (RoW)."

Figure 6: Typology of Regimes & Afghanistan



The categorization of the Taliban’s Emirate and the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan draws not only on both Luhrmann, et al.’s typology but also on debates that measure political regimes by continuous and dichotomous variables.<sup>24</sup> In this context, the categorization follows the logic that considers democracy and autocracy as both different regime types and institutional qualities that contain varying degrees of closeness and openness that define not only structural but also qualitative differences between them. Placing the Islamic Emirate on the edge of closed autocracies, however, might raise questions on the effectiveness of the Taliban’s government in the 1990s as a highly failed administration. The categorization recognizes this fact and, therefore, is based mostly on the idea and mechanisms of the Emirate’s coercive approaches to governance and law enforcement, its extreme rejection of political participation and diversities, and its hostility to political and civil rights and liberties, rather than measurements of statehood.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>24</sup> Colier & Adcock, “Democracy and Dichotomies;” Elkins, “Gradations of Democracy?” Munk & Verkuilen, “Conceptualizing and Measuring Democracy;” Wahman, Teorell, & Hadenius, “Authoritarian Regime Types Revisited.”

<sup>25</sup> For measurements of statehood, see Carment et al., Security, Development, and the Fragile State; Tikuisis & Carment, “Categorization of States beyond Strong and Weak.”

Closed autocracies are defined by a lack of elections and the absence of Robert Dahl's six democratic institutional guarantees including elected official, free and fair elections, freedom of expression, alternative sources of information, associational autonomy, and inclusive citizenship.<sup>26</sup> Electoral autocracies hold *de jour* elections but do not minimally fulfill the six institutional prerequisites for democracy. By contrast, electoral democracies hold elections and minimally fulfill the institutional prerequisites for democracy but fail to satisfy the rule of law and liberal principles that are guaranteed and respected in liberal democracies.

In this classification, the Taliban's Islamic Emirate entails all elements of a 'closed autocracy' in which elections are not considered as the rule of the game and civil and political rights and liberties are not guaranteed. By contrast, the post-2001 regime entails some elements of both electoral autocracy and electoral democracy and, therefore, can be categorized as a transitional or hybrid regime. A hybrid regime has the potential to evolve into a full electoral democracy or backslide into autocracy depending on the quality of elections, the rule of law, and the regime's level of accountability and respect to political and civil rights and liberties.<sup>27</sup> While in the past two decades, the government has been able to hold elections for electing the president and members of the national and provincial assemblies, the fairness of elections and the legitimacy of their outcomes were repeatedly undermined by so-called 'mistakes and irregularities' including systematic frauds, patronage politics, institutional

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<sup>26</sup> Dahl, *On Democracy*, p. 85; Dahl, *Polyarchy*, p. 8; Luhrmann, et al., "Regimes of the World (RoW)."

<sup>27</sup> Dahl, *Ibid.*; "Portents of Pluralism," & Diamond, "Thinking About Hybrid Regimes"



weakness, and ethnic power relations.<sup>28</sup> Moreover, while the government has tried to satisfy some minimal institutional prerequisites of democracy including freedom of expression, freedom of associations, and inclusive citizenship, it has failed to transparently enforce the law and respect democratic principles. Except for 2008 when Afghanistan was ranked ‘partly free’ in the Freedom House’s ranking, the country has consistently been ranked as ‘not free’ since 2001.<sup>29</sup> According to the Freedom House’s 2019 findings, the country has failed to satisfy most requirements of political freedoms and civil liberties.<sup>30</sup> Therefore, while the post-2001 political system has developed some democratic institutions, it has failed to evolve to a full electoral democracy for not satisfying many of the institutional prerequisites of such a system and generate effective outcomes. Hence, by ‘the post-2001 political system’ this research refers to such a hybrid regime comparing it with the Taliban’s Islamic Emirate as a ‘closed autocracy.’ The categorization covers a time frame between 2001 and 2019 but does not include the outcomes of the 2019 Presidential election.

### **3. Political Legitimacy**

Political legitimacy refers to the sources and mechanisms of the formation and reformation of a political system which ensures the consolidation of social and political order.<sup>31</sup> The systems of legitimation are based on norms

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<sup>28</sup> Freedom in the World 2019.

<sup>29</sup> Afghanistan, Freedom in the World (2001-2019).

<sup>30</sup> Afghanistan, Freedom in the World 2019.

<sup>31</sup> Lottholz & Lemay-Hebert, “Re-Reading Weber.”

and facts that are embodied in social and political structures.<sup>32</sup> The political authority that is generated through established systems of political legitimation is able to consolidate order and claim the monopoly of the legitimate use of violence within a given country.<sup>33</sup> According to this formulation, there are three sources of legitimation including traditional, charismatic, and rational-legal sources that are produced in particular historical and political contexts.<sup>34</sup>

The traditional and charismatic sources entail religious, customary, tribal, and personalistic mechanisms of producing a political authority and justifying its monopoly over the use of violence. By contrast, a regime that is based on rational-legal legitimacy could be only produced through political participation which requires regular and frequent elections, a majority-minority power relation, accountability, and the rule of law.<sup>35</sup> A government that is generated through the rational-legal system of legitimation develops mechanisms that enable it to rule by consent rather than coercion.

Political competition in contemporary Afghanistan is shaped around a struggle on state-building based on traditional and charismatic versus rational-legal systems of legitimation. In the past two decades, the struggle has appeared clearer than ever in the country's history. Since 2001, while the government of Afghanistan has tried to lay legitimacy basis in public

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<sup>32</sup> Thornhill, "Political Legitimacy."

<sup>33</sup> Weber, the Vocation Lectures, p. 34; Weber, the Three Types of Legitimate Rule, pp. 1-11.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid. Thornhill, "Political Legitimacy," pp. 143-159.

<sup>35</sup> Weatherford, "Measuring Political Legitimacy," 150; Rothstein, "Creating Political Legitimacy."

participation manifested in elections, the Taliban have challenged this effort by an extreme reliance on violence and Islamism.

Although the post-2001 political system has tried to claim legitimacy based on political participation through elections, it has failed to produce democratic outcomes. Following the collapse of the Taliban's Emirate, the Coalition forces and the Afghan politicians agreed upon establishing a political system grounded in modern laws and procedures, rather than building a state in which the obedience of people would be based on the capacity of a leader or an established tradition. In this system, political legitimacy would be enhanced by improving political participation which requires a majority-minority relation, frequent elections, and government accountability.<sup>36</sup> Although the constitutional structure and legal frameworks for the formation of such a regime were established, the consolidation of a political system based on rational-legal sources of legitimation was challenged by both internal and external forces. Internally, the government's lack of capacity and authority in providing essential services, security, and justice; the domination of patronage politics and nepotism; corruption and the lack of accountability; and systematic frauds in elections drastically challenged the legitimacy of the regime. This system was also challenged from outside by the growing insurgency and its lack of capability to settle the conflict. The internal shortages and external pressures, together, damaged the contract between the ruler and the ruled resulting in a remarkable decline in social trust on the system. State failure, in this regard, provoked assumptions that an electoral democracy might not be suitable for Afghanistan and, therefore, the current mechanisms of

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

legitimation should be altered with traditional systems such as Loya Jirga or an ethnic-based power-sharing administration. The call for Loya Jirga both by President Karzai and President Ghani, when constitutional mechanisms for resolving national problems failed, are a great indication of such tendencies.

By contrast, the Taliban claim to represent the Islamic Emirate, which was based on traditional sources of legitimation, particularly, a crude interpretation of Islam. However, in a country with almost 100 percent Muslim population where Islam has functioned as a source of legitimacy and jurisprudence for centuries, the Islamic Emirate's strict approach to governance and law enforcement was unwelcomed in the country. Except for individuals who joined the Taliban or believed in its way of governance, the rest of the population, even most of the civil servants and the rural conservative communities, were not interested in following the Taliban's Islamism by consent. Therefore, the Islamic Emirate entirely relied on mechanisms of coercion and suppression in governance and law enforcement. As such, in the absence of a rational-legal legitimacy, the Islamic Emirate also failed to develop a traditional legitimacy acceptable for the people which forced the Emirate to rule by coercion rather than consent. Nevertheless, the Taliban have not shown any interest in changing their traditional approach to political legitimation, to date. Taking this comparative feature of political legitimacy in Afghanistan into account, this research seeks to discover which system of legitimation the people would prefer. The three following sections investigate the people's views on political settlement, political system, and political legitimation.

## **PEOPLE’S VIEW ON CONFLICT & POLITICAL SETTLEMENT**

This section examines and compares people’s views the four mechanisms of political settlement including elections, power-sharing government, decentralization of power, and interim government. Respondents were simply asked which of the four options they choose as preferred mechanism of settling the current conflict in Afghanistan. In addition to questions on political settlement scenarios, the survey also examined people’s level of awareness on the negotiations process, their views on major obstacles to peace, and their views on civilian casualties in post-2001 Afghanistan.

### **Self-Declared Level of Awareness**

In this part, respondents are asked about their level of awareness on the ongoing negotiations process between the Taliban and Americans. The finding shows that a significant majority of respondents have “a lot of” or “some” information about the process. From Table 3, in which respondents have declared their level of awareness on the processes of negotiation between the Taliban and Americans, it can be concluded that most participants (61.86 percent) believe they have some level of information about the process. The remaining 35.21 percent believe they do not have enough information, while 2.93 percent undeclared their level of awareness about the negotiations process.

*Table 3: Self-declared level of awareness about the negotiation process*

<b>Responses</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
A lot	16.33
Somewhat	45.53
Not Much	21.73
Not at all	13.48
Undeclared	2.93

Further investigation shows that the level of awareness among men is slightly higher than women (Table 52). While there is no significant variation in people’s self-declared awareness by their ethnic affiliation (Table 53), the finding indicates a clear correlation between level of education and level of awareness (Table 54). Moreover, people who work for the government and NGOs are more aware of the negotiation process between the Taliban and Americans than other populations, with jobless respondents indicating the lowest level of awareness on the matter (Table 55).

Concerning political affiliation, 73 percent of self-identified nationalist respondents demonstrate some levels of awareness about the negotiation process. This is the highest level of awareness about the process among political categories followed by pro-government respondents (67 percent), Mujahidin (66.5 percent), and ethno-centrists (55 percent). By contrast, self-declared neutrals and leftists claim to have the lowest level of awareness about the process. Only 41 percent of neutrals and 33 percent of leftists demonstrate some level of knowledge about the negotiations (Table 56).

## People’s View on Obstacles to Political Settlement

Before discussing their preferred method of political settlement, respondents were also asked questions about obstacles to political settlement. Respondents were provided with six options that are considered as main parties to the conflict and conflict resolution including the Taliban, Pakistan, Americans, the government, the political opposition, and ‘other’ parties.<sup>37</sup> Most of respondents mark Pakistan, the Taliban, and Americans as the main obstacle to a political settlement in Afghanistan, while a small number of them highlight President Ashraf Ghani and the political opposition as sources of the problem. In general, 34 percent of respondents say Pakistan is the main obstacle to a political settlement in Afghanistan, while 24 percent highlight the Americans and 20 percent mark the Taliban as sources of the problem. Only 5 percent of respondents highlight the President, 5 percent select the political opposition of the government, and 3.27 percent highlight other parties as main obstacles to a political settlement in Afghanistan (Table 4).

*Table 4: The main obstacle to political settlement*

<b>Responses</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Taliban	20.13
Pakistan	34.8
Americans	24.67
The president (Ashraf Ghani)	5.2
Opposition politicians	5.07
Other	3.27
Don't Know/Undeclared	6.87

<sup>37</sup> Appendix C.

This finding could be explained in detail by controlling for the background of the population. Respondents’ gender, education, and ethnicity slightly affect their views on obstacles to political settlement. In comparison, responses vary more significantly, by political affiliation and province. Most of the self-identified pro-Taliban and Mujahidin respondents believe that Americans are the main obstacle to a political settlement in Afghanistan. More than 55 percent of the pro-Taliban and more than 40 percent of Mujahidin respondents highlight Americans as the main obstacle to political settlement. By contrast, while no pro-Taliban respondents believe Pakistan and the Taliban are an obstacle to peace in Afghanistan, most of other political groups believe that Pakistan is a major source of the problem. Moreover, President Ghani receives the highest score as an obstacle to peace from leftists (40 percent) followed by the pro-Taliban (29 percent) and Mujahidin (16 percent) (Table 5).

*Table 5: The main obstacle to political settlement, by political affiliation*

	Taliban	Pakistan	Americans	President Ghani	Opposition politicians	Others	Don't Know
Pro-government	22.91	34.98	23.68	3.87	4.95	3.41	6.19
Mujahidin	12.5	25	40.28	16.67	0	0	5.56
Taliban	0	0	55.56	29.78	11.11	3.56	0
Left	0	40	20	40	0	0	0
Nationalist	20.39	36.89	19.42	6.8	5.83	5.83	4.85
Ethno-Centrist	19.84	36.56	23.44	4.1	5.57	2.62	7.87
Neutral	2.56	30.77	33.33	5.13	5.13	10.26	12.82
Undeclared	14.29	42.86	14.29	0	0	14.29	14.29

**Pearson chi2 (42) =118. 9193 Sig.=0.000**



Variation in respondents' views on major obstacle to political settlement is also remarkable, by province. In 14 provinces including Kandahar, Nangarhar, Nimruz, Badghis, Kunduz, Badakhshan, Faryab, Jawzjan, Logar, Wardak, Nooristan, Paktia, Sar-e pul, and Uruzgan most respondents believe Pakistan is the main Obstacle. By contrast, the Taliban are pointed as the main obstacle in seven provinces including Kabul, Herat, Balkh, Samangan, Bamyan, Daikundi, and Panjshir. In 9 provinces including Ghazni, Helmand, Baghlan, Kapisa, Kunar Laghman, Paktia, Takhar, and Zabul, most respondents highlight 'Americans' as the main obstacle to peace (Table 61). The patterns regarding province are very complex and cannot be explained by conventional understanding of people's perception based on region or even ethnicity. This finding challenges the conventional wisdom that evaluates such results on a regional or ethnic basis. This finding indicates a significant variance in people's views based on their province that overlaps both regional and ethnic units. The variation might be influenced by province-specific factors or the nature and dimensions of the conflict in each province which requires an in-depth inquiry in the future.

### **People's View on Civilian Casualties Since 2001**

International organizations have frequently reported a remarkable growth in the number of civilian casualties in the past two decades. A UNAMA report in October 2019 documented that only from January through September 30 of the year, the number of civilian casualties reached to 8,239. The report shows steady growth in the number of civilian casualties

since the U.S. invasion in 2001.<sup>38</sup> This research tries to investigate the responsibility for those casualties from people’s view. Most of respondents believe that the Taliban and foreign troops are responsible for the killing of civilians since 2001. More than 35 percent of respondents believe that the Taliban and 22.53 percent believe foreign troops are responsible for the killing of civilians. More than 16 percent indicate Pakistan, 14.3 percent highlight international terrorist organizations, and only 3 percent highlight the government as responsible parties for civilian casualties. The remaining 6 percent choose the ‘other’ category which could be anyone other than the five main parties or reflect the uncertainty of respondents in choosing a specific group (Table 6).

*Table 6: Who is responsible for killing the civilians since 2001?*

<b>Responses</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
The Taliban	35.47
The government	3.2
The foreign troops	22.53
International terrorist organization	14.33
Pakistan	16.67
Other	6.4
Don't Know/Undeclared	1.4

Gender segregated data show that the civilian casualties are viewed differently by men and women. While most men and women believe that all parties in the list are responsible for the killing of civilians in the past two decades, the number of respondents who believe that the Taliban are responsible is higher among women. More than 30 percent of women,

<sup>38</sup> Record – High Number of Civilian Casualties in Afghanistan.

compared to 21.3 percent of men, believe that the Taliban is responsible for killing the civilians. By contrast, the number of men who believe that foreign troops and Pakistan are responsible for the killing of civilians is higher than women. Moreover, while some 9 percent of both genders say terrorist organizations are responsible for the killing of civilians, 4 percent of women, compared to 2 percent of men, also believe that the government is responsible for the matter.

Furthermore, over 80 percent of respondents emphasize that those involved in civilian casualties must be tried, while only 16 percent suggest alternative measures such as general amnesty and public apology. Of those who emphasize the trial of perpetrators, 52 percent suggest the war crime tribunals should be held by Afghanistan courts, while 28 percent emphasize international tribunals. By contrast, only 9 percent of respondents suggest a general amnesty and 7 percent suggest a public apology by perpetrators (Table 32).

### **People's View on Political Settlement**

Respondents were provided with four options as mechanisms of political settlement including elections, interim government, power-sharing government, and decentralization of power. The finding suggests respondents' remarkable inclination towards the government's preferred mechanism of settling the conflict which emphasizes the integration of the Taliban in the post-2001 political system through elections. Such a mechanism could only be implemented when the Taliban decide and/or are allowed to participate in elections. By contrast, respondents do not support power-sharing and decentralization of power, while concerning the

likelihood of the formation of an interim government most of them emphasize that it should be led by the current government. This finding and other similar patterns in this research indicate that respondents’ preference of elections as a political settlement mechanism might be linked to their familiarity with elections through the media and their adaptation to the post-2001 political environment, on the one hand, and their fear of further instability or state collapse by alternative mechanisms, on the other.

Overall, 75.3 percent of respondents highlight elections as their preferred political settlement mechanism. More than 9 percent say a power-sharing government by including the Taliban in the central government is the best method of settling the conflict and 7.73 percent highlight interim government as their preferred option. Only 1.8 percent of respondents highlight decentralization of power as their preferred political settlement mechanism (Table 7).

*Table 7: Which of the following options is your preferred political settlement?*

<b>Responses</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Elections	71.53
Interim government	7.73
Power-sharing by including the Taliban in central government	9.13
Decentralization by giving the Taliban local and political autonomy	1.8
Don't know/Undeclared	9.8

Regarding elections, respondents were asked, “if the peace process leads to general elections, who do you vote for?” They were provided with seven response options including the current government, the Taliban, a democratic party, a Mujahidin party, a neutral party, don’t vote and the other. More than 42 percent of respondents are interested in voting for the

current government, followed by a neutral party (23 percent), a democratic party (7 percent), and a Mujahidin party (5 percent). Some 12 percent say they either will not vote in the elections or vote for 'other,' and only 1.73 percent of them say they will vote for the Taliban if the peace process leads to general elections (Table 42).

Concerning the interim government, respondents were asked, "if the peace process leads to an interim government, who should lead it?" More than 37 percent said the current government should lead it, while only 1.73 percent highlighted the Taliban and 5.87 percent preferred a coalition of the government and the Taliban to lead it. Some 23 percent say a domestic neutral party should lead the interim government and 4.73 percent believe an international party would be their preferred option for leading the interim government. Additionally, about 15 percent of respondents reject the formation of an interim government as a mechanism of settling the conflict (Table 28).

By contrast, most of respondents does not demonstrate high support for power-sharing and decentralization of power as political settlement options. Despite years of investment and propaganda by multiple parties including the Taliban and other elements inside and outside the government to introduce the two mechanisms as possible options for settling the conflict, the respondents' strong opposition to these mechanisms indicates either these alternatives are not well understood by the people yet or the government's campaign in favor of elections has been more influential in the public sphere. Concerning power-sharing, respondents were asked, "If the peace process leads to a power-sharing government, how should the power be distributed?" More than 54 percent of respondents said they do

not support the option as a political settlement mechanism at all. More than 18 percent of respondents believe if the peace process leads to a power-sharing government, all major parties should gain proportional representation in parliament and government, more than 8 percent emphasize that a number of ministries should be given to the Taliban, 2 percent believe that the Taliban should be given the chance to function as an autonomous force within the state structure, and 16 percent either did not select any of these options or marked the ‘other’ option (Table 29).

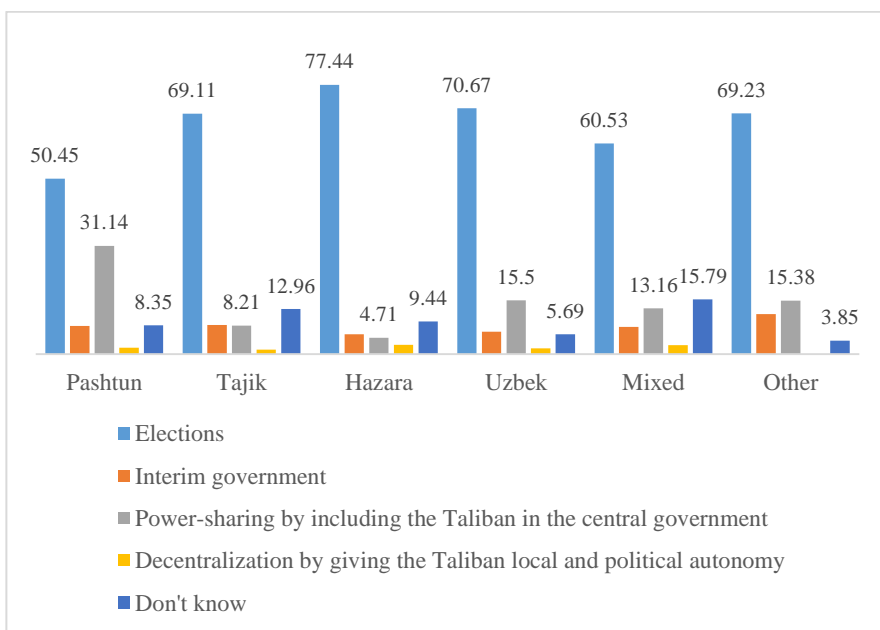
Likewise, decentralization of power is not supported by most respondents as a mechanism of political settlement in Afghanistan. In this regard, respondents were asked, “if the peace process leads to decentralization of power, how should it be established?” More than 54 percent of them say they do not support the decentralization of power at all. Some 9 percent of respondents emphasize that the Taliban should be given political autonomy until they decide to compete through elections, more than 7 percent say the state should be divided into federal regions with the Taliban formally controlling some of them, 7 percent respond that the Taliban should be given temporary autonomy in provinces and districts that are currently under their control until a sustainable peace emerges, and only 1 percent responded ‘other.’ The remaining 21 percent say they don’t know the answer (Table 30).

Respondents’ age plays a role, although not significant, in their preference of political settlement scenarios. Over 70 percent of those aged 18 – 37 highlight elections as their preferred political settlement mechanism, while some 68 percent of those aged 38 years old or above select the same option. Decentralization of power also is supported by

younger respondents while power-sharing is more supported by older respondents. For example, 11 percent of those aged 18 – 27 support decentralization of power, while some 19 percent of those who self-identified as 48 years old or above support power-sharing government. Support for these two options among other age categories varies between 5 to 10 percent. Age does not significantly affect respondents' support for interim government. Some 7 to 10 percent of all age categories support interim government. (Figure 22).

Respondents' gender, also influence, although not significantly, respondents' political settlement preference. Of the four listed political settlement options, the election is more support by women than men. 74 percent of women support elections compared to 70 percent of men. Additionally, while decentralization is more supported by women (13 percent), power-sharing is more supported by men (11 percent) (Figure 23). The results also vary by respondents' ethnic affiliation. Election, as a political settlement mechanism, is most supported by Hazaras (77 percent) and least by Pashtuns (50.45 percent). While decentralization is the least popular option among all ethnic categories, power-sharing is supported by 31 percent of Pashtuns, 15.5 percent of Uzbeks, 13 percent of mixed groups, 8 percent of Tajiks, 5 percent of Hazaras, and 15 percent of other ethnic communities (Figure 7).

Figure 7: Preferred political settlement mechanism, by ethnic affiliation



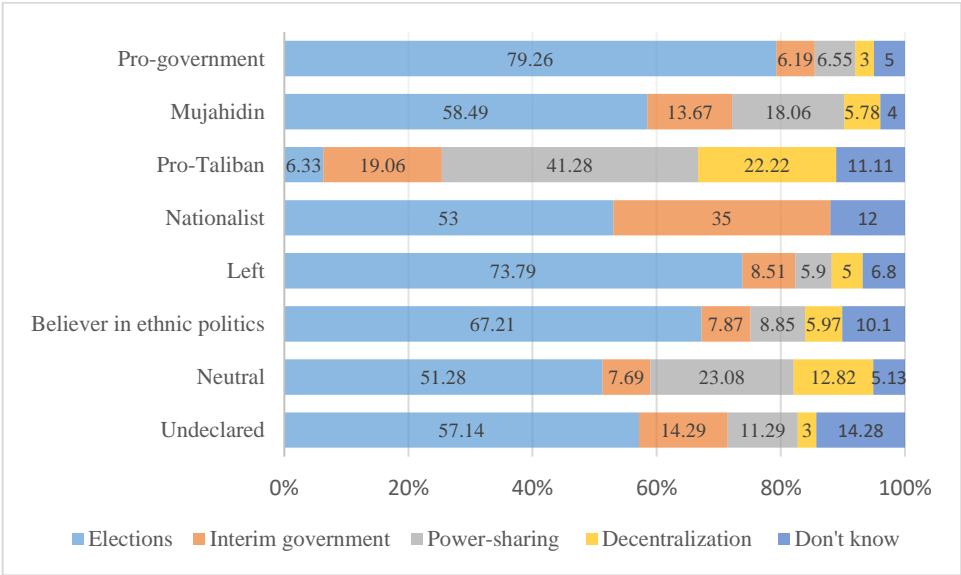
There is also a logical correlation between the level of education and support for elections as a political settlement scenario: the level of support for elections increases by the level of education from 59 percent among illiterates to 72 percent among those with university education. Support for election is lower than 50 percent only among those with madrassa education (49 percent, which is still very high for this category compared to its responses for other similar options). Meanwhile, 31 percent of respondents with madrasa education highlight power-sharing as their preferred political settlement option (Figure 25).

Political affiliation also plays a significant role in respondents' views on mechanisms of political settlement. The largest number of respondents that support elections as the best political settlement scenario pro-government (79 percent) followed by leftists (74 percent), nationalists



(53 percent), ethno-centrists (67 percent), Mujahidin (58 percent), and neutral (51 percent). The self-identified pro-Taliban respondents indicate the lowest level of support for elections as a political settlement mechanism (6.33 percent), while 41 percent of this category support power-sharing. Likewise, 23 percent of neutrals and 19 percent of the Mujahidin believe a power-sharing government is the best political settlement approach in Afghanistan. Respondents who self-identified as nationalist demonstrate the highest level of support for interim government (40 percent) followed by the pro-Taliban (19 percent). Decentralization of power receive the lowest support rate in all categories except for the pro-Taliban. Some 20 percent of this category support decentralization of power as a preferred political settlement option (Figure 8).

Figure 8: Preferred political settlement mechanism, by political affiliation



Concerning respondents' province, the largest number of respondents that support election are from Baghlan (93.33 percent) and Bamyan (90 percent). Likewise, in provinces such as Kabul, Herat, Kandahar, Daikundi, Kapisa, and Panjshir, some 80 to 90 percent of respondents say election is the best mechanism for settling the conflict. In other provinces, except for Kunar, more than 50 percent of respondents say the same. In Kunar, 40 percent of respondents believe election is their preferred political settlement mechanism, while over 35 percent of respondents in this province highlight interim government as a preferred option. As such, the highest level of support for interim government is demonstrated in Kunar. In Nimruz, Paktia, Paktika, Logar, Ghazni, Uruzgan, Samangan, Balkh, and Badakhshan, 10 to 20 percent of participants highlight interim government as their ideal option. In Kabul, Kandahar, Helmand, Baghlan, Bamyan, Farah, Jawzjan, Panjshir and Kunduz respondents either do not support interim government or support it with a very low response rate (Figure 9).

Figure 9: Preferred political settlement mechanism, by province

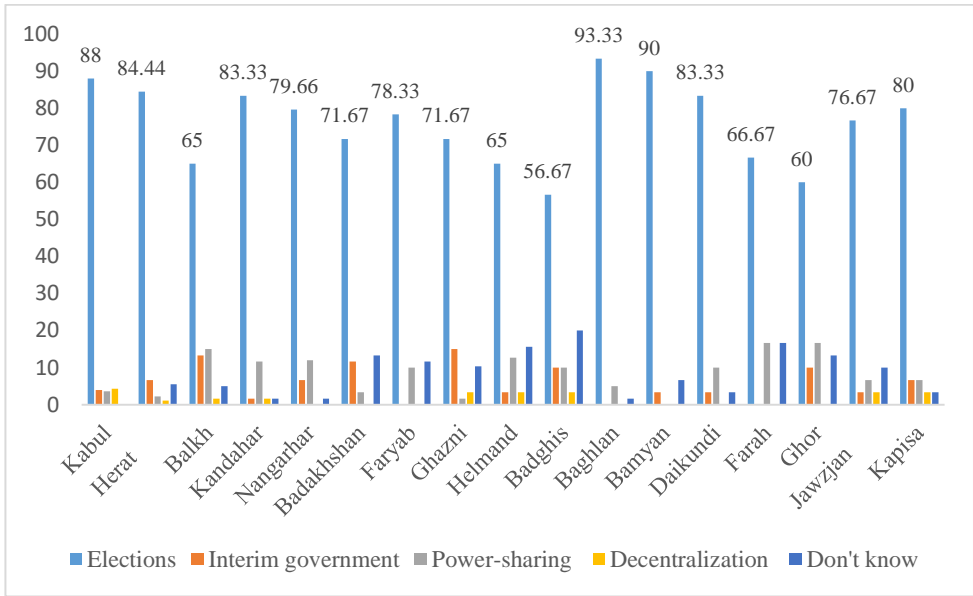
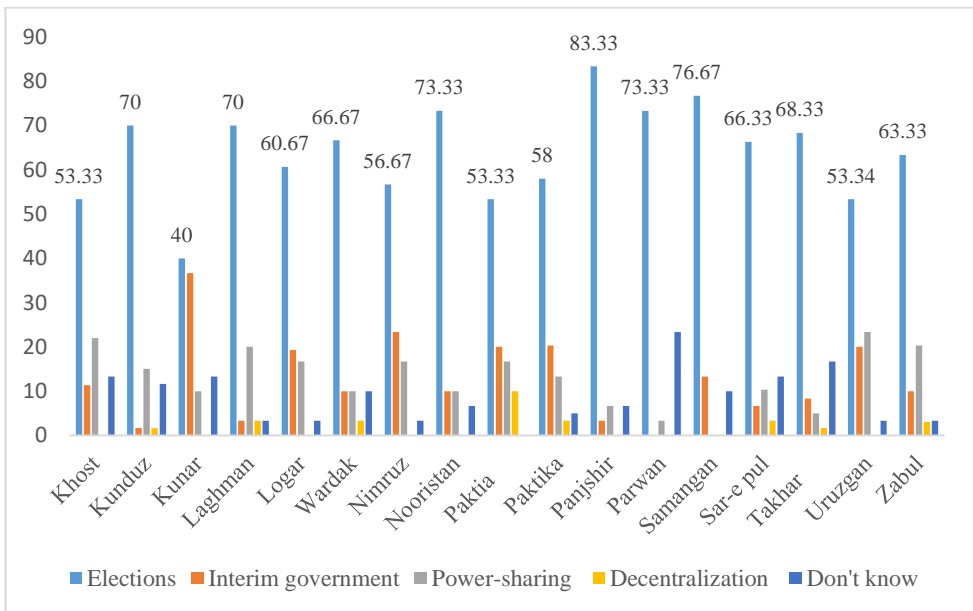


Figure 10: Preferred political settlement mechanism, by province



The province-based variation in respondents' views might be influenced by many factors including the level of development, urbanization, education; and the type of power relations in each province. Many other factors such as the type and level of provinces' relationship with the central government and the severity and dimensions of the conflict in each province might also be involved in this variation. The province-based results of this research overlaps, and thus challenges, findings based on broader demographics such as region and ethnicity which are mostly used as units of analysis for studying people's political perception and expectations in Afghanistan.

## **PEOPLE’S VIEW ON POLITICAL SYSTEM**

This section examines people’s views on the post-2001 political system compared to the Taliban’s Emirate and investigates people’s views on elements of a political system in post-conflict Afghanistan. Respondents are asked questions on the post-2001 political system compared to the Taliban’s Islamic Emirate, on elections compared to traditional mechanisms of distribution and balance of power, on party politics, and on aspects of political and civil rights and liberties.<sup>39</sup>

### **People’s Views on post-2001 Political System Compared to Taliban’s Emirate**

The collapse of the Taliban’s Islamic Emirate in 2001 and its replacement with a political system that follows, at least in theory, a democratic agenda was broadly welcomed by the people of Afghanistan. The new system created a public euphoria that did not last long because of both the government’s internal failures and external challenges particularly by the insurgency. The government’s incapability in providing justice, security, and essential services increased people’s discontent with the post-2001 political system, and the regime’s legitimacy was undermined by flawed elections and increasing corruption and nepotism in the government. Will the people still prefer the post-2001 political system to the Taliban’s Islamic Emirate? This part addresses this question by comparing people’s views on the post-2001 regime and the Taliban’s Emirate. Survey results show that the people strongly support the former.

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<sup>39</sup> Appendix C.

Respondents were asked: “How much do you support or oppose the post-2001 political system compared to the Taliban’s Emirate?”<sup>40</sup> Almost 80 percent of them said that they support the post-2001 political system. Only 20 percent of respondents say they somewhat are not happy with the post-2001 political system and only 9 percent strongly oppose it (Table 8).

*Table 8: Support or oppose the post-2001 political system Compared*

<b>Responses</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Strongly support	40.34
Somewhat support	27.6
Somewhat oppose	20.53
Strongly oppose	9
Don't know/Undeclared	2.53

Respondents’ strong support for the post-2001 political system does not necessarily mean support for the government and its capabilities. Rather, it means support for the post-2001 political system compared to the Taliban’s Islamic Emirate. The question was asked in a comparative manner and, therefore, the result does only reflect people’s views on the post-2001 regime compared to the Taliban’s Emirate. Therefore, this result cannot be translated as the level of people’s support for the government in a non-comparative manner. The findings of this research show that people’s level of support for the government compared to the Taliban’s Emirate is fundamentally different from their level of satisfaction with the government’s provision of security which is discussed later (Tables 35 & 36).

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<sup>40</sup> Appendix C

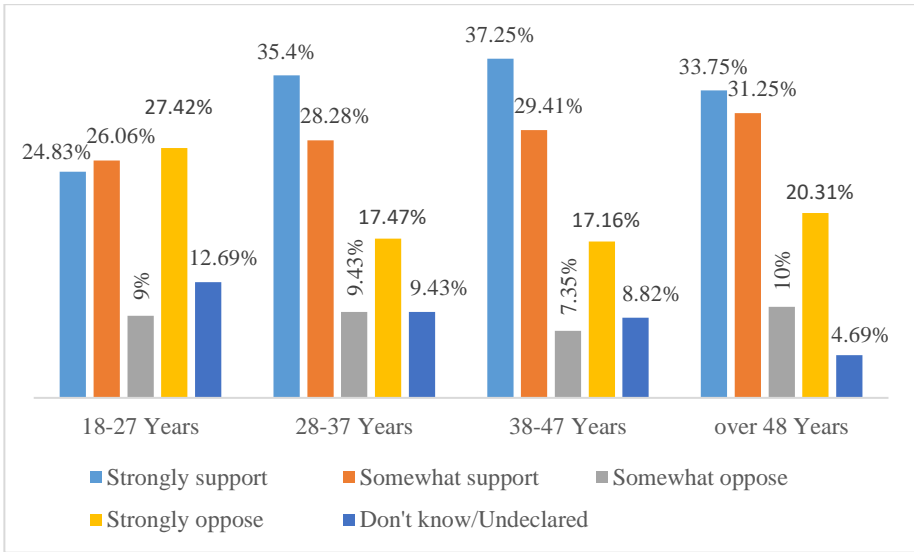
Moreover, when respondents were asked “How do you feel about the Taliban coming to power?”<sup>41</sup> More than 70 percent said they feel uncomfortable and therefore oppose it. Only 10 percent of the respondents say they are somewhat comfortable, and 7 percent say they are very comfortable with Taliban coming to power again (Table 33).

Findings on people’s strong support for the current regime and their opposition to the Taliban’s regime can also be explained by many other factors. For example, age influences respondents’ choice. Older respondents that have lived the Taliban’s regime demonstrate more support to the post-Taliban political system than the younger ones that were not born or were too young during the Taliban’s Emirate. Respondents that are 18 – 27 years old, who mostly did not live the Taliban’s Islamic Emirate demonstrate the lowest level of support for the post-2001 political system compared to other age categories. Some 51 percent of this category supports the government and 40 percent oppose it compared to the Taliban regime. Thus, support for the government increases logically by age: support for the post-2001 regime increases to over 60 percent among all age categories older than 27 years old. All of these respondents were older than 9 years old when the Taliban’s Islamic Emirate collapsed in 2001 (Figure 11).

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

Figure 11: Support or oppose the post-2001 political system compared to the Taliban's Emirate, by age



Concerning gender, men demonstrate more support for the post-2001 political system than women – 61 percent and 54 percent respectively (Figure 32). While women suffered more during the Taliban’s regime than men, their lower support for the current regime compared to the Taliban’s Emirate is surprising. There might be many factors involved in this unpredicted outcome. Among other factors, women’s discontent with the current government’s inability to end the war and violence in the country might better explain their choice. Reports from and research on war zones show that the effects of armed conflict on women are much higher than on men and, therefore, women are significant critics of parties to the conflict and governments’ that fail to create a secure environment.<sup>42</sup> In this context, the Afghan women’s level of discontent might be a reaction to the

<sup>42</sup> Gardam & Jarvis, “Women and Armed Conflict.”



government's shortcomings, particularly its inability to end the war, but not necessarily an indication of their contentment with the Taliban's Emirate.

On education, respondents with a university education demonstrate a surprisingly higher level of opposition (34 percent) to the post-2001 political system compared to the Taliban's Emirate. Only respondents with madrassa education surpass this level of opposition to the post-2001 regime (38 percent). More than 60 percent of all other education categories support and less than 30 percent of them oppose the post-2001 political system compared to the Taliban's Emirate (Figure 33). The higher opposition rate to this system among respondents with university education might reflect a higher level of critique to state fragility and the government's failure in meeting the minimal requirements of good governance among highly educated citizens.

Respondents' occupation also plays a significant role in their support for the current regime compared to the Taliban's Emirate. Laborers and craftsperson support the current regime more than other categories. About 69 percent of laborers and 65 percent of craftsperson demonstrate some level of support for the post-2001 political system compared to the Taliban's Emirate. More than 50 percent of all other categories say they support this system. Interestingly, support for government among students and pro-government respondents are the lowest (53 percent). More surprisingly, 34 percent of students and pro-government respondents say they oppose the current regime compared to the Taliban's Emirate. This outcome was even higher than the level of opposition to the current regime among people with no job (32 percent) (Figure 34). The lower level of support for the post-2001 system among students and pro-government

categories might be a by-product of their daily interaction with the government and, therefore, a reflection of their sense of frustration over government's poor service delivery. By contrast, the laborers' and craftsperson's greater support for the regime might reflect their comparative views on their enhanced economic opportunities under the new regime compared to the economic regression under the Taliban's Emirate. Research shows that the Islamic Emirate's small economy had severely affected people's living conditions particularly in the cities which provide market for the workforce.<sup>43</sup> This situation changed after the collapse of the Taliban regime and the flow of international aid.

Concerning respondents' political affiliation, all political groups, except for the pro-Taliban, the Mujahidin, and the neutrals, demonstrate over 50 percent support for the current regime compared to the Taliban's Emirate. The leftists with 70 percent support to the government mark the largest support rate and the neutrals with 44 percent demonstrate the lowest level of support for this regime. Most responses against the post-2001 political system is demonstrated by those who undeclared their political affiliation (71 percent) followed by self-identified pro-Taliban (over 50 percent) and Mujahidin (48 percent). Some 44 percent of the pro-Taliban respondents say they support the post-2001 political system (Figure 35).

The pro-Taliban respondents' higher opposition to the current regime was not unpredicted, but the Mujahidin's rejection of the system with a high percentage is surprising because the post-2001 political system has been mostly dominated by the Mujahidin groups and their leaders. Among other factors, the Mujahidin's opposition to the current government

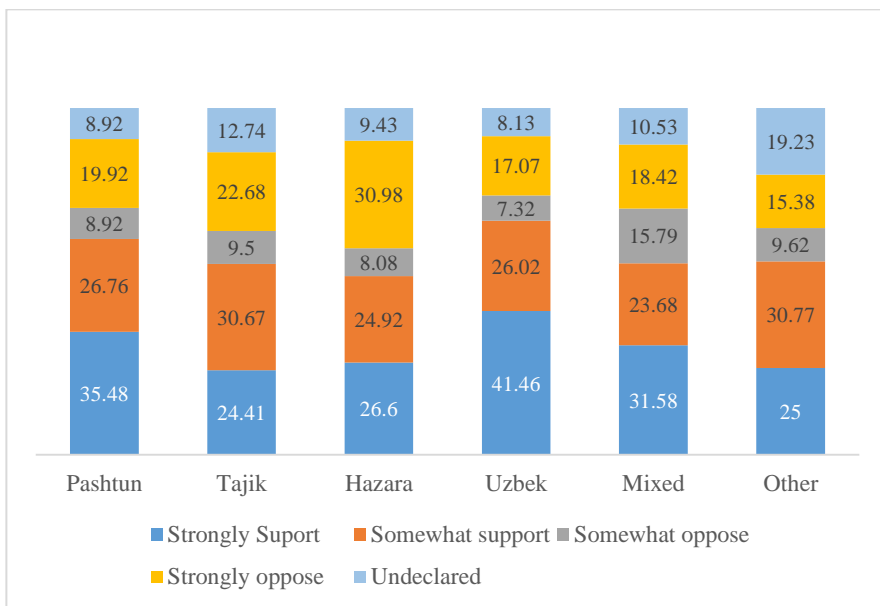
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<sup>43</sup> Ibrahim, "The Taliban's Islamic Emirate."

might indicate a significant level of discontent between ordinary Mujahidin and their leadership or reflect their discontent with the gradual marginalization of jihadi figures from power, particularly during President Ghani's tenure. The discontent of lower rank or ordinary Mujahidin with their leadership is also eminent in the media and other public platforms where the formers accuse the latter of monopolization of power and resources and forgetting their comrades.

Respondents' ethnicity also shows interesting variations in respondents' level of support and opposition to the current regime compared to the Taliban's Emirate. Some 67 percent of Uzbeks and 62 percent of Pashtuns say they support the post-2001 political system compared to the Taliban's Emirate. This is the largest support rate for the current regime among ethnic groups. Other ethnic groups support this system as following: Hazaras 56 percent, and 'others' 56 percent, Tajiks 55 percent, and mixed 55 percent. The level of opposition to the post-2001 political system compared to the Taliban's Emirate among Pashtuns is much lower than most of other ethnic groups. Only 29 percent of Pashtuns say they oppose the post-2001 regime compared to 34 percent of Hazaras and 32 percent of Tajiks. Uzbeks with 24 percent and 'others' with 25 percent demonstrate the lowest level of opposition to the post-2001 political system (Figure 12).

Figure 12: Support or oppose the post-2001 political system compared to Taliban’s Emirate, by ethnicity



The Pashtuns’ higher support for and lower opposition to the current regime compared to other categories is against the conventional wisdom that emphasizes a stronger support base for the Taliban in predominantly Pashtun provinces and stronger support base for the post-2001 regime in other areas. Nevertheless, other ethnic groups’ comparatively lower support for the post-2001 political system is not an indication of their higher support rate for the Taliban. Rather, the result might reflect their discontent only with the current government and its policies that, among other anomalies, have intensified ethnic-based reactions to the central government. Hazaras’ higher opposition to the government (34 percent), in particular, might reflect their perception of discrimination in government policies and their discontent with Presidents’ decisions.<sup>44</sup> For example, President Ghani’s

<sup>44</sup> Saeedi, “Ghani’s Missed Opportunity;” Chioyenda, “The Illumination of Marginality.”

decision to change the route for the 500-kV transmission line linking Turkmenistan to Kabul that was initially planned to pass through two provinces with large Hazara populations in 2016 further exacerbated Hazaras' grievance.<sup>45</sup> The higher level of opposition to the government could be a reflection of this grievance, but not necessarily a demonstration of higher support for the Taliban's Emirate among Hazaras.

The province of respondents also affects their views on political system. In 20 provinces of the country over 60 percent of respondents support the post-2001 political system compared to the Taliban's Emirate. In Kabul, Herat, Kunar, Parwan, and Saripool over 80 percent of respondents support the current regime. Moreover, in three provinces including Logar, Wardak, and Paktika support for the post-2001 system range from 50 to 60 percent. However, support for the post-2001 system in five provinces including Helmand, Farah, Uruzgan, Khost, and Jawzjan drops to under 50 percent. In these five provinces, 30 to 40 percent of respondents say they oppose the post-2001 regime compared to the Taliban's Emirate. However, the largest number of respondents that oppose the post-2001 regime type compared to the Taliban's Emirate are from Baghlan (72 percent) and Zabul (57 percent) (Table 9). This finding shows that despite some level of opposition to the post-2001 political system in a few provinces, the regime is highly supported by the people in all corners of the country. This finding also challenges the conventional wisdom that divides the Taliban and the government's support bases by region. In this analogy, a higher support for the Taliban is expected in the south and east compared to other regions where higher support for the government is

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<sup>45</sup> Ibid. & "Hazara People March on Kabul."

assumed. But the finding shows of this research shows an interesting variation in responses by provinces that overlaps the regional divisions. For instance, over 80 percent of respondents in Kunar (an eastern province) support the current regime against the Taliban’s Emirate while in Jawzjan (a northern province) support for the post-2001 regime is under 50 percent. These complexities can only be explained by province-specific factors. The higher support for the government in Kunar might be linked to the Taliban’s alignment with Pakistan that has steadily attacked the province by heavy weapons since 2001, and low support for the government in Jawzjan, a stronghold of Afghanistan’s first Vice President, Abdul Rashid Dostum, could be linked to his followers discontent with President Ghani who marginalized Dostum from the central government.

*Table 9: Support or oppose the post-2001 political system compared to the Taliban’s Emirate, by province*

<b>Province</b>	<b>Strongly Support</b>	<b>Somewhat Support</b>	<b>Somewhat Oppose</b>	<b>Strongly Oppose</b>	<b>Undeclared</b>
Kabul	68.67	16	8	5	2.33
Herat	67.78	18.89	10.22	2	1.11
Balkh	60	13.33	6.67	15	5
Kandahar	40	11.6	10	36.7	1.7
Nangarhar	56.33	21.67	1.67	5.66	14.67
Badakhshan	52.33	23.33	8.67	8	7.67
Faryab	75	10	7	3.5	4.5
Ghazni	57.67	15	6.98	16.65	3.7
Helmand	33	7.67	4	40.33	15
Badghis	30	46.67	3.33	16.67	3.33
Baghlan	10	11.67	11.67	60	6.67
Bamyan	79.2	4.64	9.56	4	2.6
Daikundi	71.33	10	6.67	8	4

Farah	20	26.67	16.67	20	16.67
Ghor	52	13.33	22.33	4.67	7.67
Jawzjan	26.67	20	10	26.67	16.66
Kapisa	26.64	43.33	3.3	6.53	20.2
Khost	16.67	16.67	13.33	33.33	20
Kunduz	50	14	16.67	12.66	6.67
Kunar	33.33	50.67	3.33	6	6.67
Laghman	56.67	13.33	10	3.33	16.67
Logar	21.3	34	33.2	8	3.5
Wardak	20	36.67	6.67	26.67	10
Nimruz	34	48.67	10	3.33	4
Nooristan	40	33.33	6.67	3.33	16.67
Paktia	23.33	46.67	3.33	6.67	20
Paktika	37.67	14	10.33	30	8
Panjshir	60	10	6.67	11.33	12
Parwan	55.67	33.33	10	16.67	4.33
Samangan	60	20.67	1.33	10	8
Sar-e pul	30	53.33	8	5.34	3.33
Takhar	18.66	35	10	26.67	9.67
Uruzgan	20	13.33	26.67	26.67	13.33
Zabul	10	16.67	13	43.67	16.66

In addition to respondents' views on the post-2001 political system, their views on this regime's capacity in providing security and essential services are also examined in this research. Interestingly, while respondents are highly dissatisfied with the regime's ability in providing security, they exhibit some level of satisfaction with its ability in delivering essential services. Table 10 shows that more than 54 percent of respondents are unsatisfied with the government's ability in providing security, of which 30 percent are very unsatisfied. By contrast, 44 percent of respondents express

some level of satisfaction with the government’s ability in the security sector, of whom only 6 percent is ‘very satisfied’ with it.

*Table 10: How satisfied are you with the post-2001 government system’s ability in providing security*

<b>Responses</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Very satisfied	6.33
Somewhat satisfied	37.93
Somewhat unsatisfied	23.87
Very unsatisfied	30.33
Don't know/Undeclared	1.53

This result supports previous findings on government’s ability in the security sector. Empirical observation and research findings show that insurgency, terrorist attacks, and crimes have steadily increased in Afghanistan, while the government has entirely failed to control the situation, secure the country, and protect the citizens.<sup>46</sup> Therefore, respondents’ dissatisfaction with the government’s ability in providing security could be interpreted as a popular reaction to the government’s lack of effective authority. In contrast to the people’s dissatisfaction with the post-2001 regime’s ability in providing security, respondents express a higher level of satisfaction with its ability in providing essential services. Respondents were asked, “How satisfied are you with the post-2001 government system’s ability in providing security?” About 56 percent of respondents said they are somewhat satisfied, and 13 percent said they are very satisfied (Table 11).

<sup>46</sup> SIGAR, Quarterly Report (30 October 2019); Tanzeem, “Taliban Attacks.”



*Table 11: How satisfied are you with the post-2001 government system's ability in providing security?*

	<b>Percentage</b>
Very satisfied	13.47
Somewhat satisfied	56.2
Somewhat unsatisfied	14.27
Very unsatisfied	13.07
Don't know/Undeclared	2.93

Respondents' background, particularly their age and gender, affect this result. Younger and male respondents are more satisfied with government's ability in providing services than older and female respondents (Figures 37 & 38). Moreover, respondents' ethnicity, education, occupation, political affiliation, and province also affect the result. Concerning ethnicity, Pashtuns and the 'other' ethnic category express more satisfaction with the government's ability in providing essential services than other ethnic groups. About 80 percent of the 'other' and 74 percent of Pashtuns express some level of satisfaction with the government's ability in providing services, followed by 69 percent Hazaras, 66 percent Tajiks, 66 percent Uzbeks, and 50 percent mixed (Figure 39).

There is also a positive correlation between the level of education and level of satisfaction with government's ability in providing services. The level of satisfaction increased from 61.5 percent for illiterates to 70 percent for those with university education. By contrast, respondents with a madrassa education demonstrate the lowest level of satisfaction (24 percent) and the highest level of dissatisfaction (71 percent) with the government's ability in providing services (Figure 40).

Concerning respondent's occupation, more than 70 percent of the people who work for the government and private sector, as well as, craftsperson and laborer are satisfied with government's ability in providing services. Students with 68 percent, express the lowest level of satisfaction with the government's ability in providing services (Figure 41). Political affiliation of respondents also affects the result. About 60 to 80 percent of those who self-identified as the pro-government, nationalist, and ethno-centrists are, to some extent, satisfied with government's ability in providing services. By contrast, 80 percent of self-identified leftists, 61 percent of the pro-Taliban, and 41.5 of Mujahidin say they are unsatisfied with government's ability in delivering services. The most intense dissatisfaction is, however, demonstrated by the pro-Taliban. Some 39 percent of the pro-Taliban respondents say they are very unsatisfied with the current regime's provision of services followed by leftists (20 percent) (Figure 42).

Finally, respondents' province of residence also has some effects on their level of satisfaction with the government's provision of services. More than 90 percent of respondents in Paktika say they are satisfied with government's ability in providing essential services. In other provinces such as Nooristan, Nimruz, Logar, Zabul, Bamyán, and Daikundi more than 70 percent of respondents are satisfied with the government's ability in delivering services. In all other provinces, except for Baghlan and Ghor, more than 50 percent of respondents express some level of satisfaction in this regard (Figures 43 & 44).

This finding indicates no logical correlation between respondents' satisfaction with the government's ability in providing services and their

level of support for the post-2001 political system. For example, while 57 percent of respondents oppose the post-2001 regime in Zabul, more than 70 percent of them are satisfied with the government’s ability in providing services. Therefore, the people’s level of satisfaction with the government’s ability in delivering essential services might be influenced by province-specific factors that requires a follow-up qualitative inquiry.

Respondents’ views on an ideal political system for Afghanistan is also examined by their level of support for or opposition to ‘a Taliban-style government.’ Respondents were asked “How much do you support or oppose a Taliban style government for Afghanistan?”<sup>47</sup> More than 77 percent say they are against such a regime. Only 15 percent of respondents support a Taliban-style government for Afghanistan (Table 12).

*Table 12: Support or oppose a Taliban style government for Afghanistan*

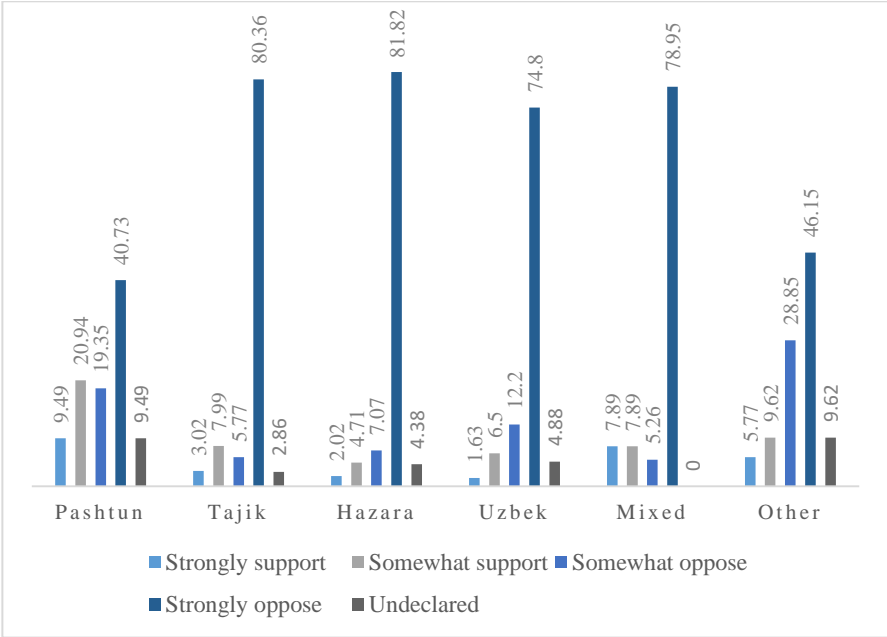
<b>Responses</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Strongly support	5.2
Somewhat support	10.07
Somewhat oppose	15.2
Strongly oppose	61.87
Don't know/Undeclared	7.67

Opposition to a Taliban-style government is higher among women (70 percent) than men (55 percent) (Figure 45). Concerning ethnic affiliations, 89 percent of Hazaras, 87 percent of Uzbeks, 86 percent of Tajiks, 84 percent of the mixed, 60 percent of Pashtuns, and 75 percent of other ethnic groups oppose a Taliban-style government in Afghanistan. On the other

<sup>47</sup> Appendix C.

hand, 7 percent of Hazaras and 8 percent of Uzbeks support such a regime, marking the smallest support rate compared to other ethnic groups. Likewise, some 11 percent of Tajiks, 15 percent of ‘other,’ 16 percent of mixed, and 30 percent of Pashtuns somewhat support a Taliban style government (Figure 13).

Figure 13: Support or oppose of a Taliban style government for Afghanistan, by ethnicity



Overall, findings on the post-2001 political system compared to the Taliban’s Emirate and people’s views on a Taliban-style government show that people prefer the current regime to a Taliban-style Islamic Emirate. Despite respondents' discontent with the government’s lack of ability in providing security, a significant majority of them say they support the extension of this political system to a post-conflict setting. The finding

indicates that the Taliban’s Emirate and a Taliban-style government system are not strongly supported by the people. Regardless of some insignificant variation in responses, support for the Taliban’s Emirate or a Taliban-style government does not exceed 15 to 30 percent while the level of support for the current regime is, in most cases, over 70 to 90 percent. This finding indicates that most of respondents emphasize that the post-2001 political system which is based on constitutional order and electoral democracy – at least in theory – should not be replaced with a Taliban-style regime.

### **People’s View on Electing Leaders**

On electing the head of the state, participants were asked “who can be the President of Afghanistan?”<sup>48</sup> Nearly 84 percent responded, “a person elected directly by the people.” Only 2.8 percent said the president should be elected in Loya Jirga, 2.6 percent said the head of the state should be appointed by ethnic leaders and 2.6 percent emphasized clerics should appoint the head of the state.

In the absence of general elections and when hereditary systems of power transition did not properly function, Loya and local Jirgas in Afghanistan appointed national and local leaders. In some cases, such as the appointment of the Taliban’s Supreme Leader, clerics’ grand assembly interfered in this traditional system. Findings of this research show that people in contemporary Afghanistan do not endorse any of these traditional mechanisms. A significant majority of respondents to this research say they do not support Loya Jirga and ethnic or religious mechanisms for appointing the head of the state. Interestingly, despite the unpleasant

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<sup>48</sup> Appendix C.

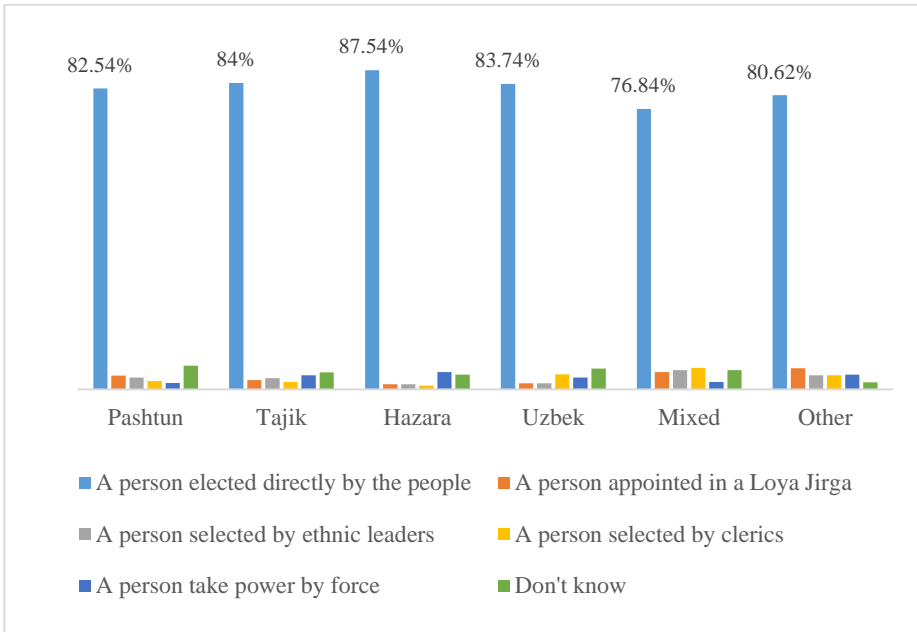
outcomes of power transition by rebellions and military coups, more than 5 percent of respondents say their preferred president is a person who would take power by force (Table 13).

*Table 13: Who can become the President of Afghanistan?*

<b>Responses</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
A person elected directly by the people	83.87
A person appointed in a Loya Jirga	2.8
A person selected by ethnic leaders	2.6
A person selected by clerics	2.6
A person takes power by force	5.13
Don't know/Undeclared	3

This result is moderately influenced by respondents’ gender. Some 86 percent of men compared to 82 percent of women say the president should be elected in general elections directly by the people (Figure 47). There is no significant variation in respondents’ views on mechanisms of electing the head of the state, by ethnic affiliation. More than 87 percent of Hazaras and 84 percent of Tajiks and Uzbeks, and 82 percent of Pashtuns emphasize that the President should be elected by the people. By contrast, support for other mechanisms of electing the head of the state does not exceed 6 percent among all ethnic groups (Figure 14).

Figure 14: Who can become the President of Afghanistan? by ethnicity



As expected, there is a significant correlation between education and methods of electing the head of the state. The level of support for elections as the mechanism of electing the head of the state increases with the level of respondents' education. Support for elections increases from 76 percent for respondents with primary education to 86 percent for respondents with university education. Some 66 percent of respondents with Madrasa education also say that the president should be elected directly by the people through a general election. Only 11 percent respondents with madrasa education say the president should be selected by clerics (Figure 49). The very low support rate for clericalism among the religious segments of the society indicates the growing popularity of elections as the mechanism of transition and distribution of power in contemporary Afghanistan.

The relationship between respondents' political affiliation and their ideal mechanism of electing the head of the state show that more than 70 percent of all political categories, except for the pro-Taliban respondents, say the president should be elected directly by the people. More specifically, 88 percent of pro-government, 86 percent of nationalist, 85 percent of undeclared, 82 percent of ethno-centrist, 71 percent of the Mujahidin, 70 percent of neutral, and 65 percent of leftist respondents say election is the best method for electing the President. Only 11 percent of pro-Taliban respondents support election and 38 percent of them say the President should be selected by clerics and 22 percent emphasize that ethnic leaders should appoint the President. Moreover, the appointment of the president by ethnic leaders is supported by 12 percent of leftists and 10 percent of Mujahidin. About 10 percent of the left also highlight Loya Jirga as their preferred mechanism for electing the president (Table 14).



Table 14: Who can become the President of Afghanistan? By Political Affiliation

	Pro-government	Mujahidin	Pro-Taliban	Left	Nationalist	Ethno-Centrist	Neutral	Undeclared
A person elected directly by the people	87.77	70.83	11.11	65	86.41	82.79	71.79	85.71
A person appointed in a Loya Jirga	2.79	4.17	5.56	10.6	1.94	2.79	2.56	0
A person selected by ethnic leaders	1.7	11.11	22.21	12	4.85	1.8	5.13	0
A person selected by clerics	1.55	4.17	38.89	5.35	5.83	2.3	2.56	14.29
A person take power by force	1.7	6.94	5.56	5	0.97	3.77	10.26	0
Don't know/Undeclared	4.49	2.78	16.67	1.6	0	6.56	7.7	0

Furthermore, respondents’ province explains some variation in their views on mechanisms of electing the head of the state. In 25 provinces of the country, a significant majority of respondents emphasize that the President should be elected directly by the people. In other provinces, except for Kunar, over 50 percent of respondents believe that the President should be elected directly by the people. In Kabul, Herat, Balkh, Bamyán, Daikundi, Badghis, Ghor, and Farah over 90 percent of respondents say election should be the only method for electing the President. In Kapisa, Paktia, Paktika, Zabul, and Uruzgan election is supported by 55 to 65 percent of respondents. Only in Kunar, 30 percent of respondents support an elected President, while 50 percent of them say they don’t know and 10 percent

highlight Loya Jirga as the preferred mechanism for appointing the President. Loya Jirga is also supported by 10 to 20 percent of respondents in Laghman, Paktika, Uruzgan, Kapisa, and Samangan. In Kandahar, Zabul, Paktia, Khost, and Sar-e pul 10 to 20 percent of respondents say the President should be selected by clerics. Only in Logar and Paktika, about 10 percent of respondents emphasize that the President should be elected by ethnic leaders (Figures 15 and 16).

Figure 15: Who can become the President of Afghanistan? By province

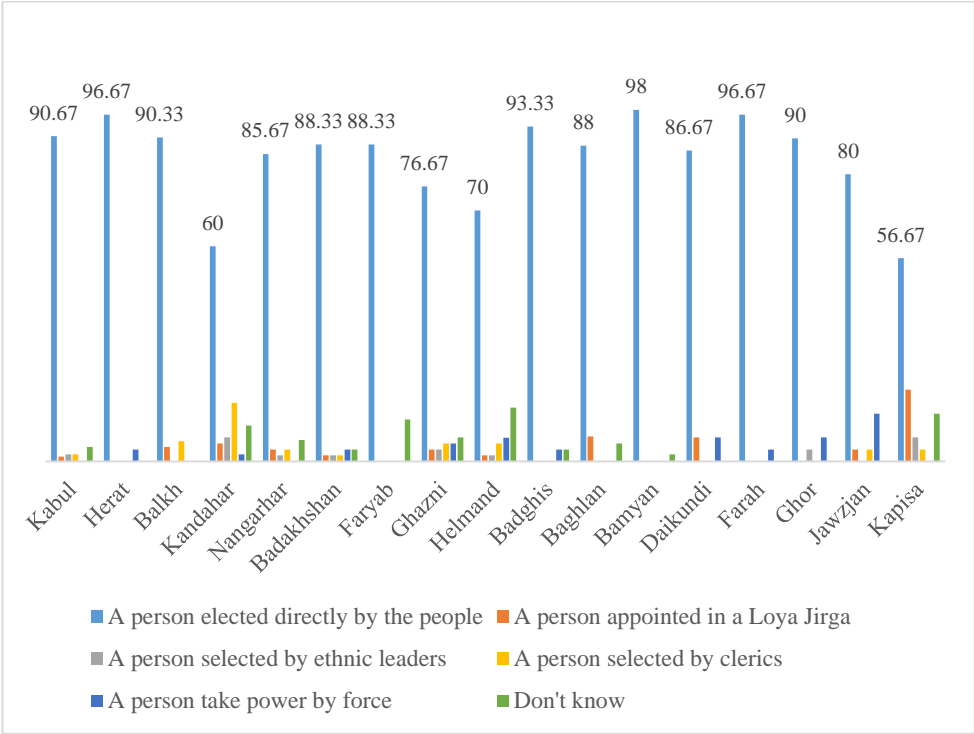
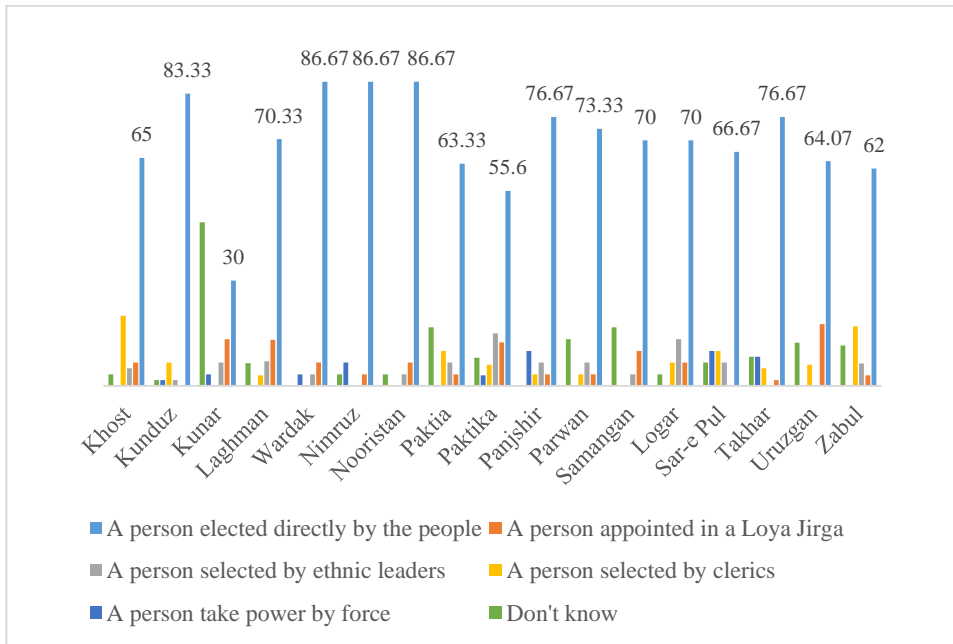


Figure 16: Who can become the President of Afghanistan? By province



## People’s View on Political and Civil Rights and Liberties

This section examines people’s views on the set of rules that define the limits of power and the citizens’ rights and freedoms in.<sup>49</sup> Respondents were questioned on state control, accountability, and social equality, freedom of expression and association, and women’s rights and freedoms.<sup>50</sup> Findings show that a significant majority of respondents support a government that guarantees and respects political and civil rights and

<sup>49</sup> Cheibub et.al. Democracy and dictatorship Revisited; Dahl, Polyarchy; Dahl, On Democracy; Geddes, Wright. & Frantz, “Authoritarian Regimes Code Book;” Luhrmann, et al., “Regimes of the World (RoW);” Wahman et al., “Authoritarian Regime Types Revisited.”

<sup>50</sup> Appendix C.

liberties, and is accountable to citizens and respects the equality of citizens before the law.

However, on question about the level of state control, most respondents say they agree if the state controls their daily activities. In this regard, respondents were asked to what extent they agree with a government that would control their daily activities. About 65 percent of respondents replied that they agree with a government that would control their daily activities, while 33 percent said they disagree with such a government (Table 39). Although this result gives the impression that most respondents might prefer an authoritarian regime in Afghanistan responses on all other aspects of political system do not confirm this assumption. Therefore, this result could be affected by the ambiguity of the term ‘control’ in the question or the respondents’ interest in having a strong government. In this regard, respondents might have perceived ‘state control’ as ‘state power,’ ‘state authority,’ or ‘the state’s ability to manage social affairs.’ In Afghanistan, as a war-torn country with its citizens having a fresh memory of statelessness and chaos, the citizens’ desire for a strong and effective state is not surprising. The desire is evident in public debates and indicated by respondents to this research. However, data on similar issues do not support the fact that people support an authoritarian regime. For example, responses to the question about ‘religious police’ produce a completely different result. In this regard, when respondents were asked whether they agree or disagree with religious police controlling their daily life, more than 72 percent said they disagree with it (Table 15).

*Table 15: Agree or disagree with religious police controlling*

<b>Responses</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Strongly agree	10.11
Somewhat agree	15.6
Somewhat disagree	15.1
Strongly disagree	57.39
Don't know/Undeclared	1.8

The existence of religious police is an indicator of authoritarian regimes that are dominated by religious institutions, particularly in Islamic countries. In contemporary Afghanistan, only the Taliban’s Islamic Emirate established religious police under the Ministry for the Propagation of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice to control the society. Most respondents to this survey lived under the Taliban’s Islamic Emirate and have a fresh memory of such a control system. Therefore, respondents’ significant disagreement with religious police is not surprising.

By contrast, a significant majority of respondents indicate a strong desire for a political regime that respects citizens’ rights and liberties such as freedom of media and women’s rights, and almost 100 percent of them say the government should be accountable to its citizens (Table 16). In the face of increasing state corruption and the government’s failure in being accountable to its citizens, a strong desire for state accountability indicates significant popular emphasis for reforms in state institutions. Previous research rank Afghanistan one of the least accountable and transparent

states of the world.<sup>51</sup> According to the U.S. Department of Defense, corruption in Afghanistan “remains the top strategic threat to the legitimacy and success of the Afghan government.”<sup>52</sup> The government is frequently criticized for the increasing corruption and its lack of accountability on policies and their outcomes. Respondents to this research emphasis on state accountability indicates that the people demand a government that is transparent in making decisions and accountable for their outcomes.

Furthermore, this research finds that social equality, regardless of the citizens’ identity boundaries, is strongly supported by the people that demand equal treatment of all before the law. More than 87 percent of respondents to this research say they support the fact that all citizens, regardless of gender, ethnic, and religious differences are equal in Afghanistan. Only 7 percent demonstrate strong and 5 percent somewhat opposition to the fact that all citizens are equal (Table 16).

*Table 16: Support or oppose the following statement: all citizens, regardless of gender, ethnic, and religious differences are equal*

	<b>Percentage</b>
Strongly support	73.33
Somewhat support	14.13
Somewhat oppose	4.87
Strongly oppose	7.6
Undeclared	0.07

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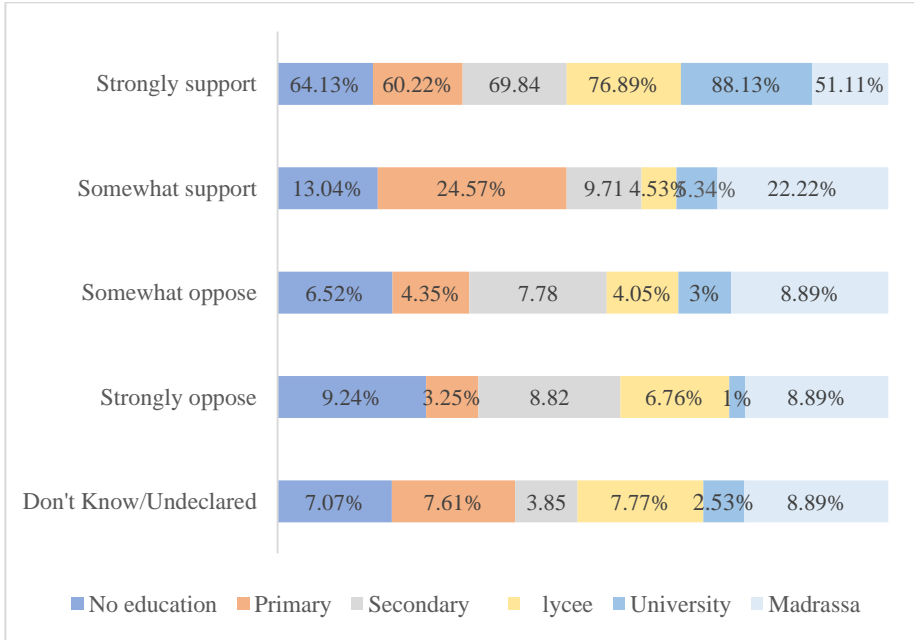
<sup>51</sup> See Afghanistan, Freedom in the World (2001-2019); Afghanistan, Freedom in the World 2019; Bak, “Corruption in Afghanistan;” Corruption Perceptions Index 2018; SIGAR, 2019 High Risk List.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

Significant support for social equality is an important aspect of a citizens' desire for stability in the severely divided society where social gaps have led to discrimination and rebellions. Identity politics has led to the domination of particular ethnic groups in the name of the state, fragile ethnic coalitions, exclusion of those who are out of the network of the center and, as a result, to further social divisions in the country. Women and religious minorities, in this situation, are victimized more intense than other identity categories. Therefore, a strong support for social equality is an indication of an emerging popular force against a social system that both privileges and discriminates citizens based on their backgrounds.

Moreover, this research provides interesting details on respondents' support for social equality, by their demographic background. The findings show a significant correlation between respondents' level of education and their level of support for social equality. More educated respondents demonstrate higher level of support for the statement that citizens, regardless of gender, ethnic, and religious differences are equal. The level of support for social equality increases from 64 percent for uneducated respondents to 88 percent for respondents with university education. Interestingly, the statement that "all citizens, regardless of gender, ethnic, and religious differences are equal" is also supported by respondents with madrassa education. Over 73 percent of this population say they support the fact that all citizens regardless of their gender, ethnic, and religious differences are equal (Figure 17).

Figure 17: Support or oppose the following statement: “all citizens, regardless of gender, ethnic, and religious, differences are equal,” by education



Concerning ethnic affiliations, more than 70 percent of respondents from all ethnic groups support that “all citizens, regardless of gender, ethnic, and religious differences are equal.” However, smaller ethnic groups indicate stronger support to social equality than larger groups which makes sense in a country where minorities have been victims of social discrimination and political exclusion. Overall, 84 percent of mixed ethnic groups, 83 percent of Hazaras, 83 percent of Uzbeks, 81 percent of others, 81 percent of Tajiks, and 77 percent of Pashtuns support the fact that citizens regardless of their gender, ethnic, and religious differences are equal (Figure 63).

Respondents’ political affiliations also have some effects on their belief in social equality. Of all political groups, nationalists demonstrate the highest and ethno-centrists the lowest level of support, even lower than the



pro-Taliban respondents, for social equality. Specifically, 79 percent of self-identified Afghan nationalists, 78.5 percent of pro-government respondents, 74 percent of Mujahidin, 70 percent of neutrals, 57 percent of pro-Taliban respondents, and 47 percent of ethno-centrists and who undeclared their political affiliation support the statement on social equality. By contrast, 38 percent of ethno-centrists and 35 percent of the pro-Taliban respondents say they do not support the fact that citizens, regardless of gender, ethnic, and religious differences are equal (Figure 64). Lowest support for social equality among ethno-centrists might be affected by the belief that portrays the country's social mosaic in a hierarchical ethnic system in which 'us' is situated in a higher stage than 'others.' Likewise, the pro-Taliban's low level of support for social equality might be affected by the belief on ethnic hierarchy and the religious assumption that does not recognize non-Muslims and women as equal citizens. Regardless of the two political groups' meager support for social equality, the data indicates that social equality is strongly supported by all other political groups in Afghanistan.

On associational rights and freedoms, the respondents were asked two questions about the characteristics and role of political parties in Afghanistan. Although political parties are engines of democratic systems, party politics and multiparty elections have not become key elements of politics in the post-2001 Afghanistan.<sup>53</sup> In both parliamentary and presidential elections, most politicians have run as independent candidates and many have tried to not reveal their party affiliation during campaigns because of people's fresh memory of unpleasant politics by dominant

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<sup>53</sup> See Freedom in the World (2001-2019); Afghanistan, Freedom in the World 2019.

extreme right and extreme left parties during the 1980s and 1990s. Nevertheless, when respondents were asked about characteristics of the political parties in Afghanistan, 84 percent of them said that political parties should represent people’s will. By contrast, 4 percent said parties should represent ethnic will, and 3 percent emphasized that parties should represent religious will (Table 17).

*Table 17: The most important characteristic of a political party*

<b>Responses</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Representing people's will	84
Representing ethnic group's will	3.8
Representing clerics' will	3.07
Other	1.13
Don't know	7.93

The categorization of parties as organizations that represent the people’s will, compared to ethnic and religious wills in this research, is informed by types of dominant parties in Afghanistan that claimed to represent one or all the three interests. Unlike the conventional wisdom that suggests no political party in contemporary Afghanistan could attract people without having strong ethnic or religious basis, the findings of this survey show that people do not support political parties only for their ethnic and religious affiliations.

Respondents’ views on party politics are also examined by their preferred number of parties in the country. The number of parties and their level of freedom are indicators of political systems. Democratic systems are defined by multiparty elections in which more than one party compete for

the leadership of the polity.<sup>54</sup> Respondents were asked, “In your preferred political system, how many political parties should be active?”<sup>55</sup> Some 37 percent responded that there should be more than one party. By contrast, 25 percent of respondents prefer one party and 25 prefer no political party in their preferred political system (Table 46). This dispersed result indicates a clear deviation for western notions of party institutions and politics in Afghan people’s views. While ‘more than one party’ responses might be used as an indicator of popular support for a multi-party system, the ‘no party’ responses may indicate people’s desire for an authoritarian regime. The ‘no party’ responses might be also affected by people’s memory of extreme left and extreme right party politics in the 1980s and 1990s, and the failed post-2001 experiences that did not give rise to effective parties. By contrast, the ‘one party’ responses are quite complicated and could be explained by many factors including tendencies for a strong government led by the single party or a political system that entails a party as the opposition. In all, the result on people’s views about party politics in Afghanistan are complex requiring a follow-up qualitative inquiry.

People’s views on political and civil rights and liberties are also examined by their views on freedom of the media and women’s rights and freedoms. When respondents were asked about freedom of the media, more than 67 percent responded that they oppose any governmental restriction on the media and 31 percent said they support if the government impose restriction on the media (Table 18).

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<sup>54</sup> Luhrmann, et al., “Regimes of the World (RoW).”

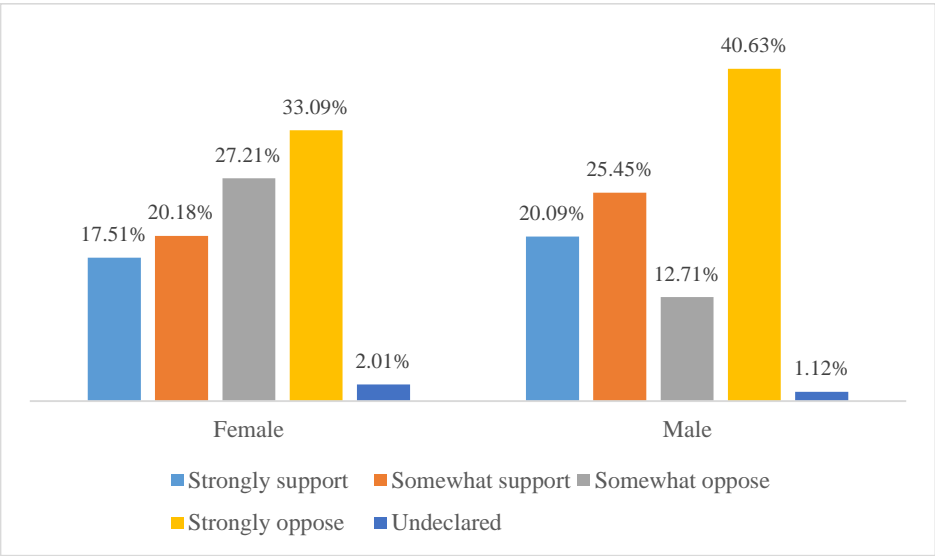
<sup>55</sup> Appendix C.

Table 18: Support or oppose restriction of the media by government

Responses	Percentage
Strongly support	14.14
Somewhat support	16.53
Somewhat oppose	21.73
Strongly oppose	45.73
Don't know/Undeclared	1.87

Women oppose restriction of the media more than men. Over 60 percent of female respondents say they oppose any restriction on the media compared to 53 percent of male respondents who say the same. By contrast, 38 percent of women and 46 percent of men say they support some level of government restriction. Men oppose restriction on the media stronger than women (Figure 18).

Figure 18: Support or oppose restriction of the media by government, by gender



Concerning political affiliation, pro-government respondents oppose restriction on the media by government more than all other categories, while the pro-Taliban participants support it the most. In general, 69 percent of the pro-government respondents, 60 percent of leftists, 57 percent of those with undeclared political affiliation, and 48 percent of ethno-centrists say they oppose restriction on the media. By contrast, 76 percent of self-identified pro-Taliban and 56 percent of Mujahidin say they support restriction on the media by government. Because the pro-Taliban and Mujahidin groups have publicly and frequently criticized the media for releasing ‘non-Islamic’ or ‘anti-Islamic’ programs, mostly TV shows, this result is not surprising (Figure 59). Furthermore, there is a strong correlation between the level of education and the level of opposition to restriction of the media by government. Opposition to restriction of the media increases from 47 percent for uneducated to 60 percent for university-educated respondents. By contrast, 53 percent of madrasa educated respondents support restriction of the media, while 38 percent of these respondents oppose it (Figure 60).

Concerning women’s rights and liberties, this research examines people’s views on women’s education, work in the government, and performance in the media. Respondents strongly and broadly support all three aspects of women’s rights and freedoms. On education, more than 85 percent of respondents say they support it, compared to only 14 percent who say they are against women’s education (Table 19).

*Table 19: Support or oppose women's education*

<b>Responses</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Strongly support	70.3
Somewhat support	15
Somewhat oppose	12.6
Strongly oppose	1.6
Undeclared	0.50

Likewise, 86 percent of respondents support women's work in the government, and more than 76 percent support women's performance in the media (Tables 48 & 50). This finding indicates a broad and strong popular support for women's rights and liberties in Afghanistan. This result is particularly important when women's rights and freedoms have been a significant source of discussions on political settlement and state-building in Afghanistan. The finding indicates that people expect a political regime that guarantees and respects women's rights and liberties and provides a proper public sphere for their activities.

## PEOPLE’S VIEW ON POLITICAL LEGITIMACY

Democratic institutions in post-2001 Afghanistan were established with an assumption that they will attract social trust as the basis for political legitimization. The failure of those institutions in producing an electoral democracy and an effective state, however, challenged this assumption. It is believed that the failure of democratic institutions in producing effective outcomes is the result of lack of social trust on these institutions because of their contradiction with local, tribal, and religious norms of political legitimacy. However, findings of this research show strong popular support for democratic institutions and democratic legitimization in the country.

When respondents were asked whether elections produce a legitimate government in Afghanistan, over 75 percent said “yes.” This means that 75 percent of the respondents believe political participation manifested in elections can produce a legitimate government in Afghanistan. Only 19 percent of these respondents believe elections cannot produce a legitimate government and 5 percent undeclare their views (Table 20). Therefore, the reason behind the failure of the post-2001 electoral system in producing a legitimate government is linked to the political management of this system than people’s lack of support for it.

*Table 20: Do elections produce a legitimate government?*

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<b>Responses</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Yes	75.6
No	18.87
Don’t know/Undeclared	5.53

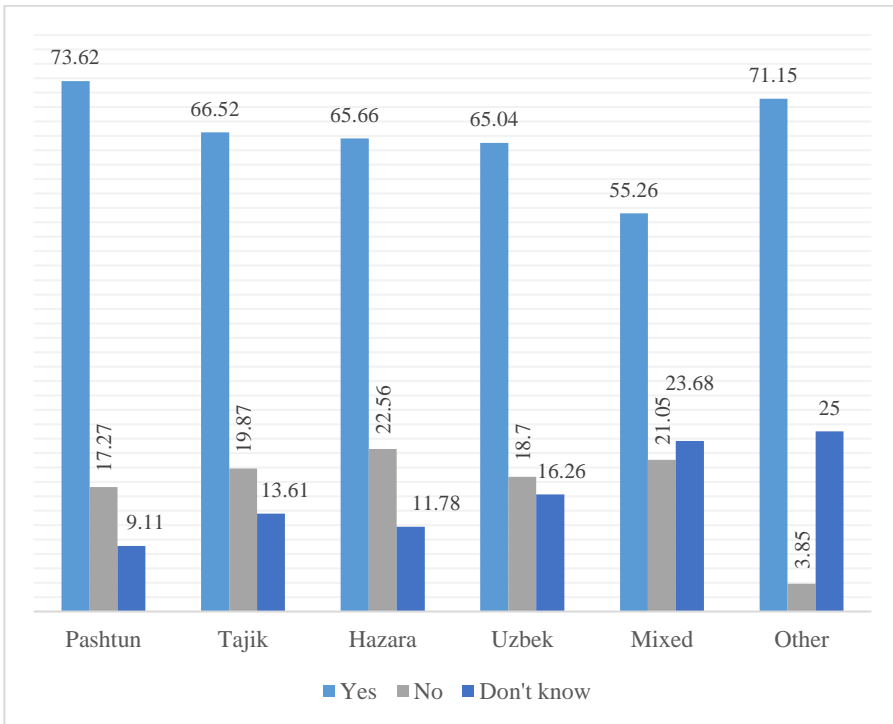
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This finding is further explained by respondents' gender, ethnicity, education, occupation, political affiliation, and province. Concerning gender, more than 70 percent men compared to 66.47 percent women say elections produce a legitimate government. This result might be influenced by women's less access to sources of information about legitimization processes in the country, because, a higher number of women (16 percent) declare that they 'don't know' about sources of political legitimacy, compared to 9 percent of men who say the same (Figure 52).

Ethnicity provides a more interesting picture of the dispersion of support for election as a mechanism of political legitimization in Afghanistan. Unlike the conventional wisdom that suggests lower support for elections among Pashtuns, the finding of this research indicates the opposite: support rate for elections among Pashtun respondents is higher than other ethnic groups. More than 73 percent of Pashtuns followed by 71 percent of 'other,' 66.5 percent of Tajiks, 65.66 percent of Hazaras, 65 percent of Uzbeks, and 55.5 percent of 'mixed' ethnic groups say elections produce a legitimate government in Afghanistan. By contrast, 22.5 percent of Hazaras and 20 percent of mixed groups do not believe elections produce a legitimate. The 'other' and the Pashtun categories' level of opposition to the statement that "elections produce a legitimate government" is lower than all other ethnic groups. Only 4 percent of 'other' and 17 percent of Pashtuns say elections do not produce a legitimate government (Figure 19).



Figure 19: Do you think elections produce a legitimate government? By ethnicity

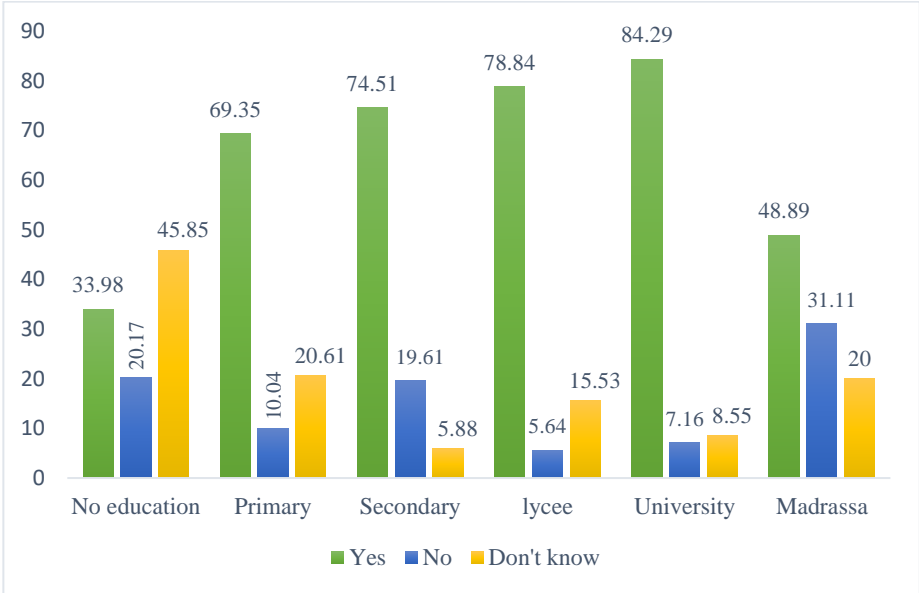


This finding indicates that, regardless of a quite small number of respondents that say elections do not produce a legitimate government, a significant majority of all ethnic categories believe in elections as a source of political legitimation in Afghanistan.

Moreover, there is a clear correlation between the level of education and elections as the source of legitimacy. Support for elections increases from 34 percent for uneducated respondents to 84 percent for respondents with university education. Likewise, 70 to 79 percent of other education categories believe elections produce a legitimate government in Afghanistan. The smallest number of respondents who say elections produce a legitimate government are those with madrassa education (31

percent). Moreover, some 49 percent of respondents with madrasa education believe election does not produce a legitimate government (Figure 20).

*Figure 20: Do you think elections produce a legitimate government? By education*

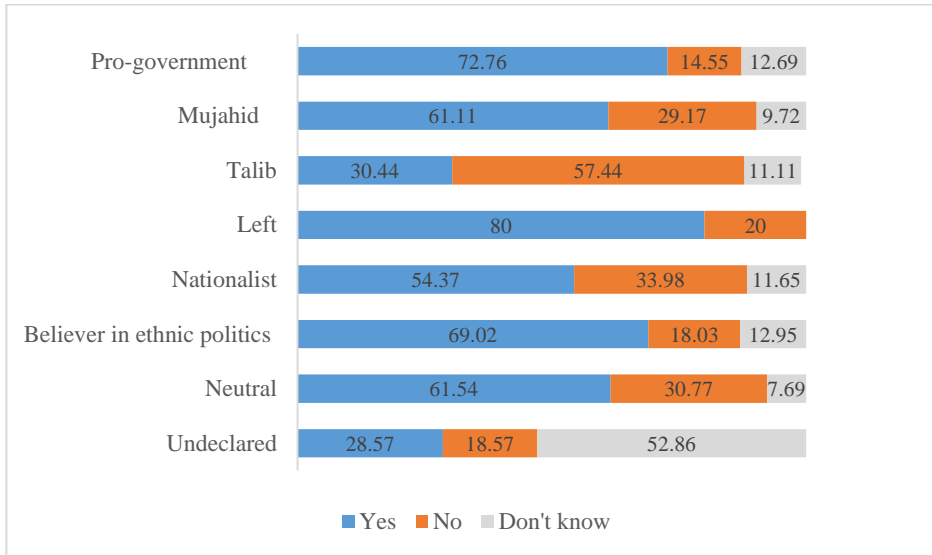


Occupation of respondents also affects their belief in elections as a source of political legitimation. Some 76 percent of pro-government respondents and 72.5 percent of craftsperson believe elections produce a legitimate government. By contrast, some 64 percent of students and 51.5 percent of farmers – the lowest rate of belief in election as a source of political legitimation – believe elections produce a legitimate government. Farmers’ lower sympathy for elections might be influenced by their lower level of access to sources of information about elections, while students’ lower support might reflect their critic of fraudulent elections and their ineffective

outcomes. Observations and media coverage of electoral processes show that students are significantly involved in those processes by taking part in campaigns and voting. Nevertheless, regardless of the two categories' slightly lower level of support for elections, over 65 percent of all other occupation categories believe elections produce a legitimate government in Afghanistan (Figure 55).

Political affiliation also has some impact on respondents' belief in election as a source of political legitimation in Afghanistan. In general, 80 percent of respondents who self-identified as left, 73 percent of the pro-government respondents, 69 percent of ethno-centrists, 62 percent of self-identified neutrals, 62 percent of Mujahidin, 54.5 percent of nationalists, and 30 percent of pro-Taliban respondents say elections produce a legitimate government in Afghanistan. By contrast, 57 percent of pro-Taliban and 34 percent of nationalist respondents say elections do not produce a legitimate government (Figure 21).

Figure 21: Do you think elections produce a legitimate government, by political affiliation



Respondents' province of residence also plays a significant, although complex, role in their perception of political legitimacy. The highest level of supports for election as the source of political legitimation is expressed by respondents in Herat, Laghman, Faryab, and Kabul where over 80 percent of respondents say election produces a legitimate government. In other provinces, support for elections as the source of political legitimation range from 50 to 78 percent. Only in two provinces, Logar and Kunduz, lower than 50 percent of respondents say election produces a legitimate government (Table 21).

*Table 21: Do you think elections produce a legitimate government, by Province*

Province	Yes	No	Don't know	Province	Yes	No	Don't know
Kabul	80.67	15.33	4	Khost	50	33.33	16.67
Herat	91.11	0	8.89	Kunduz	38.33	51.67	10
Balkh	78.33	16.67	5	Kunar	73.33	10	16.67
Kandahar	70	21.33	8.67	Laghman	86.67	0	13.33
Nangarhar	65.33	25	9.67	Logar	40	60	0
Badakhshan	77.67	14.73	7.60	Wardak	53.33	40	6.67
Faryab	83.33	0	16.67	Nemruz	50	46.67	3.33
Ghazni	53.33	30	16.67	Nooristan	66.67	3.33	30
Helmand	61.67	21.66	16.67	Paktia	80	10	10
Badghis	70	20	10	Paktika	70	5	25
Baghlan	61.67	3.33	35	Panjshir	63.33	26.67	10
Bamyan	70	16.67	13.33	Parwan	43.33	40	16.67
Daikundi	73.33	13.33	13.33	Samangan	53.33	26.67	20
Farah	73.33	20	6.67	Sar-e pul	53.33	36.67	10
Ghor	66.67	16.67	16.67	Takhar	61.67	16.67	21.67
Jawzjan	63.33	26.67	10	Uruzgan	60.67	16.66	22.67
Kapisa	56.67	26.67	16.67	Zabul	57.33	13.33	29.34

The complex variation of responses based on province, which might be influenced by province-specific variables, overlaps broader units of analysis such as region and even ethnicity. This finding challenges the conventional wisdom that assesses people's political perception mostly by regions such as the north, south, east, west, center, Kabul and their subsets. For example, the variation of responses in four provinces that are conventionally categorized as 'the south indicates the overlap: In Paktia, 80 percent of respondents say they believe elections produce a legitimate

government, while in Paktika 70 percent, in Khost 50 percent, and in Logar 40 percent of respondents say the same. This finding also challenges the conventional wisdom that suggests that people in the south and the east believe in traditional and tribal sources of legitimation more than elections. Findings of this research does not confirm this assumption. For example, in five provinces in south and east, election as a source of political legitimacy is supported by lower than 60 percent of respondents, which is comparable with the same number of provinces in the north where election as the source of political legitimacy is also supported by lower than 60 percent of respondents. More interestingly, the lowest level of support for election in the whole sample (38 percent) is demonstrated by respondents in a northern province, Kunduz (Figure 57).

The people's perception of election as a source of government legitimacy, in this research, is also compared with mechanisms of traditional legitimation such as Loya Jirga and ethnic and religious methods of legitimation. These mechanisms are supported by a very small number of respondents. Only 8 percent of respondents to this research believe a person who is selected through any of the three traditional methods can be a legitimate leader for the country. More specifically, Loya Jirga is highlighted by 2.8 percent, ethnic politics is highlighted by 2.6 percent, and religious mechanisms of legitimation are highlighted by 2.6 percent of respondents as ideal mechanisms of political legitimation (Table 35).

People's perception of political legitimacy is also examined by respondents' views on politicians' involvement in war crimes. Respondents were asked "is a government comprising of individuals involved in war crimes legitimate?" over 78 percent responded "No." Only 9 percent said

“Yes” while 12 percent undeclared their views (Table 51). This result is critical because there are serious accusations of war crimes on the leadership and members of all leading parties in Afghanistan including the former Mujahidin parties, the Taliban, and the current and previous governments. In addition to the pre-2001 war crimes which was partly documented but not released by the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission, international organizations have frequently reported civilian casualties by parties to the post-2001 conflict including the pro-government forces and anti-government elements. In a most recent instance, a UNAMA report indicates that these parties are involved in killing and injuring thousands of civilians in past years.<sup>56</sup> Concerning war crimes and political legitimacy, respondents were asked “is a government comprised of individuals involved in war crimes legitimate? 78.74 percent responded “no” compared to 9 percent who said “yes” (Table 22).

*Table 22: Is a government comprised of individuals involved in war crimes legitimate?*

<b>Responses</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Yes	9.13
No	78.74
Don't know	12.13

This finding, once again, raises questions about the nexus between justice and peace which has become a controversial puzzle, particularly since the commencement of debates on transitional justice in the post-2001 Afghanistan. The question of dealing with war crimes is mostly asked by human rights and civil society activists that emphasize the implementation

<sup>56</sup> UNAMA, “Quarterly Report,” October 2019.

of transitional justice on war crimes committed in the past four decades, on the one hand, and is sabotaged by parties that are allegedly involved in those crimes. The finding of this research shows that a significant majority of respondents throughout Afghanistan believe a government comprised of individuals involved in war crimes is not legitimate.



## CONCLUSION

This research presents findings on people's views about political settlement of the conflict and the post-conflict political order in Afghanistan. Previous research and inquiries have focused on conflict resolution and regime type mostly from the elite and scholars' perspective with no special concentration on people's views. This research is intended to fill this gap and its findings present the level of popular support for certain political settlement and state-building mechanisms.

Concerning the four methods of political settlement including elections, interim government, power-sharing, and decentralization of power, respondents to this survey strongly support a free and fair election as the best mechanism for settling the conflict between the government and the Taliban. According to this finding, people suggest that the Taliban should leave insurgency and compete with other political forces through general elections. This means that the people do not support other political settlement mechanisms including the formation of an interim government, power-sharing government, and decentralization of power. The popularity of election compared to the three alternative mechanisms might be rooted in respondents' familiarity with the former. Election has been discussed broadly and in detail through the media and other public platforms and people have practiced it in a variety of ways since 2001, while there has been no significant discussion on alternative mechanisms in the public sphere. This result also indicates respondents' adaptation to the post-2001 political atmosphere and, in the meanwhile, their uncertainty about other mechanisms of political settlement.

Concerning a post-conflict political system, most of respondents support a representative government that comes out of free and fair elections. In other words, most respondents believe in an electoral democracy as their ideal political regime in which leaders are elected directly by the people in free and fair elections. Respondents believe that the government that emerges from elections should be accountable to citizens and guarantee and respect civil and political rights and liberties including women's rights and freedoms, freedom of the media, and social equality. These respondents do not support a political regime in which rulers come to power through Loya Jirga, and ethnic or religious methods of appointing leaders.

Although both elections and Loya Jirgas have been used as mechanisms of distribution of power in the past two decades, the two mechanisms have failed to produce an effective and accountable government. As a result, Afghanistan's political regimes an 'electoral autocracy' which, given the past few years' flawed parliamentary and Presidential elections is more intended to further authoritarianization than democratization. Given the flawed elections and their ineffective outcomes in the country, the people's preference of election as the method of distribution of power is interesting and could be rooted in their bitter experiences of other mechanisms of power transition in the history and, as well as, influenced by extensive discussions in favor of election in the public sphere. The finding on people's preference of elections is especially important at a time when the Taliban try to dominate through military and political means. This research finds that the Taliban's model is not supported by respondents throughout Afghanistan.

Moreover, this research finds that people believe political participation through elections produces a legitimate government in Afghanistan. Other traditional and religious methods of political legitimation are not remarkably support by respondents of this research. This finding is particularly important when the government's political oppositions and its international allies still consider Loya jirga, Islamic assemblies, and power-sharing methods as possible mechanisms of legitimation when elections are not possible. This research finds that popular support for such systems of legitimation in Afghanistan is very low, if not absent.

These findings also challenge the conventional wisdom on people's background and their perception of peace and governance in Afghanistan. Conventional wisdom suggests that people in southern and eastern provinces are more in favor of traditional and tribal mechanisms of conflict resolution and governance, compared to those in the central, northern, and western provinces that support democratic mechanisms. Contrary to this perception, this research shows that there is no significant variation in people's views on peace and governance based on region. For example, over 70 percent of respondents in a number of southern and eastern provinces such as Kandahar, Nangarhar, Laghman, Nooristan, and Ghazni believe that election is the best mechanism for settling the conflict. The same support rate for elections is demonstrated in major provinces of other regions including Kabul, Herat, Badakhshan, and Bamyan. Interestingly, support for election as a preferred political settlement mechanism in some northern and western provinces such as Balkh, Saripool, Takhar, and Badghis is lower than 70 percent.

This province-based variation in people's views might be influenced by many factors including the level of development, urbanization, education, and the type of power relations in each province. Many other factors such as the type and level of each province's relationship to the central government and the severity and dimensions of the conflict in each province might also affect this outcome. This province-based variation overlaps the broader demographics such as region and even ethnicity which are conventionally used as units of analysis for studying people's views and expectations in Afghanistan. Therefore, without taking the province-specific variables into consideration, the study of people's views in Afghanistan might not reflect the realities of the country. Therefore, the validity of future research in Afghanistan would largely depend on the recognition and inclusion of such dispersions and overlaps.

All findings of this research are limited to provincial capitals. A survey in rural Afghanistan and conflict zones are required to provide more generalizable results on political settlement and political order in the country. This is particularly important because the urban-rural divide in the country have been a major source of instabilities and conflicts in the country. Most insurgencies and rebellions in the country including the Taliban have enjoyed support bases beyond provincial centers. Although the dynamics of the urban-rural divide, due to internal migrations and the growth of transportation and communication in the past decades, have been changing a comparative study of rural populations' political views remains critical to the understanding of politics in the country for the coming decades.

## Appendix A: Tables

*Table 23: Self-declared Level of awareness about the negotiation process between the Taliban and Americans, by gender*

	<b>Percentage</b>
A lot	16.33
Somewhat	45.53
Not Much	21.73
Not at all	13.48
Undeclared	2.93

*Table 24: Gaining information about the peace process*

	<b>Percentage</b>
Through the media	80
In the Mosque	4.2
In the workplace	4.13
In school	3.27
In the market	4.07
Other	0.87
Undeclared	3.67

*Table 25: The main obstacle to political settlement*

	<b>Percentage</b>
Taliban	20.13
Pakistan	34.8
Americans	24.67
The president (Ashraf Ghani)	5.2
Opposition politicians	5.07
Other	3.27
Don't Know/Undeclared	6.87

*Table 26: Preferred political settlement mechanism*

	<b>Percentage</b>
Elections	71.53
Interim government	7.73
Power-sharing by including the Taliban in central government	9.13
Decentralization by giving the Taliban local and political autonomy	1.8
Don't know/Undeclared	9.8

*Table 27: If the peace process leads to general elections, who do you vote for?*

	<b>Percentage</b>
Current government	42.33
Taliban	1.73
A democratic party	7.2
A Mujahidin party	4.73
A neutral party	23.13
Don't vote in elections	11.47
Other	1.33
Don't know/Undeclared	8.07

*Table 28: If the peace process leads to an interim government, who should lead it?*

	<b>Percentage</b>
Current government	37.6
Taliban	1.73
A coalition of the Taliban and government	5.87
A domestic neutral party	28.8
An international party	4.73
I don't support an interim government at all and the current government should not be dissolved	15.13
Other	0.93
Don't know	6.13

*Table 29: If the peace process leads to a power-sharing government, how should the power be distributed?*

	<b>Percentage</b>
A number of ministries should be given to the Taliban	8.67
Taliban become an autonomous force within the formal state structure	2.87
All major parties gaining proportional representation in parliament and government	18.6
I don't support a power-sharing government at all	54.13
Other	1.47
Don't know	14.27

*Table 30: If the peace process leads to decentralization of power, how should it be established?*

	<b>Percentage</b>
The state should be divided into federal regions, the Taliban controlling some of them	7.53
The Taliban should be given a temporary autonomy in some provinces until peace is sustained	3.73
The Taliban should be given a temporary autonomy in some districts until peace is sustained	3.6
The Taliban should be given political autonomy until they decide to join the elections	8.8
I don't support decentralization of power at all	54.4
Other	1.07
Don't know	20.87

*Table 31: Since 2001, thousands of civilians have been killed in the war, who is responsible?*

	<b>Percentage</b>
The Taliban	35.47
The government	3.2
The foreign troops	22.53
International terrorist organization	14.33
Pakistan	16.67
Other	6.4
Don't Know/Undeclared	1.4

*Table 32: How to deal with those involved in the killing of civilians?*

	<b>Percentage</b>
They should be tried in Afghanistan's courts	51.87
They should be tried in international courts	27.73
They should apologize publicly	7.33
They should be given a general amnesty	9.07
Other	3.67
Don't know/Undeclared	0.33

*Table 33: Feeling about the Taliban coming to power*

	<b>Percentage</b>
Very comfortable	7
Somewhat comfortable	10.53
Somewhat uncomfortable	15.6
Very uncomfortable	58.8
Undeclared	9

*Table 34: Support or oppose the post-2001 political system compared to the Taliban's Emirate*

	<b>Percentage</b>
Strongly support	40.34
Somewhat support	27.6
Somewhat oppose	20.53
Strongly oppose	9
Don't know/Undeclared	2.53

*Table 35: How satisfied are you with the post-2001 government system's ability in providing services?*

	<b>Percentage</b>
Very satisfied	13.47
Somewhat satisfied	56.2
Somewhat unsatisfied	14.27
Very unsatisfied	13.07
Don't know/Undeclared	2.93



*Table 36: How satisfied are you with the post-2001 government system's ability in providing security?*

	<b>Percentage</b>
Very satisfied	6.33
Somewhat satisfied	37.93
Somewhat unsatisfied	23.87
Very unsatisfied	30.33
Don't know/Undeclared	1.53

*Table 37: Support or oppose a Taliban style government for Afghanistan*

	<b>Percentage</b>
Strongly support	5.2
Somewhat support	10.07
Somewhat oppose	15.2
Strongly oppose	61.87
Don't know/Undeclared	7.67

*Table 38: Who can become the President of Afghanistan?*

	<b>Percentage</b>
A person elected directly by the people	83.87
A person appointed in a Loya Jirga	2.8
A person selected by ethnic leaders	2.6
A person selected by clerics	2.6
A person takes power by force	5.13
Don't know/Undeclared	3

*Table 39: Support or oppose a government that controls your daily activities*

	<b>Percentage</b>
Strongly support	40.73
Somewhat support	24.27
Somewhat oppose	9.73
Strongly oppose	23.8
Don't know/Undeclared	1.47

*Table 40: Agree or disagree with religious police controlling men and women's daily behavior in the public*

	<b>Percentage</b>
Strongly agree	10.11
Somewhat agree	15.6
Somewhat disagree	15.1
Strongly disagree	57.39
Don't know/Undeclared	1.8

*Table 41: Support or oppose the following statement: the government should be accountable to citizens*

	<b>Percentage</b>
Strongly support	86.2
Somewhat support	8.8
Somewhat oppose	0.67
Strongly oppose	1
Don't know/Undeclared	3.33

*Table 42: Do elections produce a legitimate government?*

	<b>Percentage</b>
Yes	75.6
No	18.87
Don't know/Undeclared	5.53

*Table 43: Support or oppose the following statement: "National sovereignty of Afghanistan shall belong to the nation, manifested directly and through its elected representatives?"*

	<b>Percentage</b>
Strongly agree	54.93
Somewhat agree	25.33
Somewhat disagree	6
Strongly disagree	2.87
Don't know/Undeclared	10.67

*Table 44: Support or oppose the following statement: all citizens, regardless of gender, ethnic, and religious differences are equal*

	<b>Percentage</b>
Strongly support	73.33
Somewhat support	14.13
Somewhat oppose	4.87
Strongly oppose	7.6
Undeclared	.07

*Table 45: The most important characteristic of a political party*

	<b>Percentage</b>
Representing people's will	84
Representing ethnic group's will	3.8
Representing clerics' will	3.07
Other	1.13
Don't know	7.93

*Table 46: In your preferred political system, how many political parties should be active?*

	<b>Percentage</b>
One party	25.13
Two party	23.33
More than two parties	13.47
No party	25.27
Don't know	12.8

*Table 47: Support or oppose the restriction of the media by government*

	<b>Percentage</b>
Strongly support	14.14
Somewhat support	16.53
Somewhat oppose	21.73
Strongly oppose	45.73
Don't know/Undeclared	1.87

*Table 48: Support or oppose women's performance in the media*

	<b>Percentage</b>
Strongly support	50.73
Somewhat support	25.73
Somewhat oppose	10.73
Strongly oppose	12
Undeclared	0.67

*Table 49: Support or oppose women's education*

	<b>Percentage</b>
Strongly support	70.3
Somewhat support	15
Somewhat oppose	12.6
Strongly oppose	1.6
Undeclared	0.50

*Table 50: Support or oppose women's work in the government*

	<b>Percentage</b>
Strongly support	61.73
Somewhat support	24.4
Somewhat oppose	7.13
Strongly oppose	5.87
Undeclared	0.87

*Table 51: Is a government comprised of individuals involved in war crimes legitimate?*

	<b>Percentage</b>
Yes	9.13
No	78.74
Don't know	12.13

Table 52: Level of awareness about the negotiation process between the Taliban and Americans, by gender

	Female	Male
A lot	13.35	18.77
Somewhat	44.07	46.73
Not Much	23	20.7
Not at all	16.62	10.9
Don't know	2.97	2.91

**Pearson chi2(4)= 17.1608 Sig.=0.002**

Table 53: Level of awareness about the negotiation process between the Taliban and Americans, by ethnicity

	A lot	Somewhat	Not Much	Not at all	Undeclared
Pashtun	21.25	42.69	24.1	9.68	2.28
Tajik	14.47	47.08	19.01	17.06	2.38
Hazara	12.79	46.46	21.89	15.15	3.7
Uzbek	8.13	48.78	20.33	17.07	5.69
Mixed	18.42	34.21	31.58	7.89	7.89
Other	21.15	55.77	17.31	5.77	0

**Pearson chi2(20) = 50.7925 Sig= 0.000**

Table 54: Level of awareness about the negotiation process between the Taliban and Americans, by education

	A lot	Somewhat	Not Much	Not at all	Undeclared
No education	9.24	33.7	27.17	28.26	1.63
Primary	14.13	43.48	18.48	21.74	2.17
Secondary	16.67	42.16	23.53	14.71	2.94
Lycee	14.53	47.97	23.99	10.47	3.04
University	18.82	48.27	19.72	9.99	3.2
Madrasa	17.78	42.22	22.22	13.33	4.44

**Pearson chi2(20) = 68.0927 Sig= 0.000**

*Table 55: Level of awareness about the negotiation process between the Taliban and Americans, by occupation*

	<b>A lot</b>	<b>Somewhat</b>	<b>Not Much</b>	<b>Not at all</b>	<b>Undeclared</b>
Student	10.97	46.39	24.14	13.17	5.33
Works for government	23.28	49.84	17.05	8.52	1.31
Works in private sector	23.14	45.45	18.6	9.5	3.31
Farmer	9.09	48.48	30.3	12.12	0
Laborer	12	52	22.67	12	1.33
Craftsperson	15.87	48.15	18.52	15.34	2.12
No job	12.17	37.69	26.71	20.47	2.97
<b><i>Pearson chi2(24) = 77.2762= 0.000</i></b>					

*Table 56: Level of awareness about the negotiation process between the Taliban and Americans, by political affiliation*

	<b>A lot</b>	<b>Somewhat</b>	<b>Not Much</b>	<b>Not at all</b>	<b>Undeclared</b>
Pro-government	19.81	47.52	20.43	10.84	1.39
Mujahidin	18.06	48.61	16.67	16.67	0
Taliban	33.33	27.78	11.11	27.78	0
Left	15	18	42	25	0
Nationalist	21.36	51.46	19.42	6.8	0.97
Ethno-centrist	11.31	43.44	24.26	16.07	4.92
Neutral	10.26	30.77	30.77	17.95	10.26
Don't know	14.29	42.86	0	42.86	0
<b><i>Pearson chi2(28) = 79.2908 Sig=0.000</i></b>					

Table 57: The main obstacle to political settlement, by gender

	Female	Male
Taliban	28.49	13.32
Pakistan	30.42	38.38
Americans	22.7	26.27
The president (Ashraf Ghani)	4.6	5.69
Opposition politicians	3.26	6.54
Other	2.23	4.12
Don't Know/Undeclared	8.31	5.69

*Pearson chi2(6)=67.5664 Sig.=0.000*

Table 58: The main obstacle to political settlement, by ethnicity

	Pashtun	Tajik	Hazara	Uzbek	Mixed	Others
Taliban	15.56	20.73	26.94	23.58	21.05	13.46
Pakistan	39.28	31.75	31.65	33.33	28.95	42.31
Americans	28.08	24.84	17.17	24.39	36.84	23.08
The president (Ashraf Ghani)	3.98	5.18	8.42	3.25	5.26	3.85
Opposition politicians	5.69	5.18	5.05	1.63	0	9.62
Other	3.04	3.02	4.04	2.44	5.26	3.85
Don't Know/Undeclared	4.36	9.29	6.73	11.38	2.63	3.85

*Pearson chi2(30) =63.7168 Sig.= 0.000*

Table 59: The main obstacle to political settlement, by education

	Illiterate	Primary	Secondary	lycée	University	Madrassa
Taliban	18.48	18.48	24.51	18.92	21.25	8.89
Pakistan	32.07	34.78	31.37	39.86	34.06	33.33
Americans	27.17	30.43	22.55	21.28	23.82	44.44
The president (Ashraf Ghani)	9.78	7.61	10.78	3.72	3.97	0
Opposition politicians	3.26	1.09	5.88	5.07	5.89	4.44
Other	2.17	1.09	1.96	4.05	3.84	0
Don't Know/Undeclared	7.07	6.52	2.94	7.09	7.17	8.89

*Pearson chi2(30) = 52.3738 Sig.= 0.007*

Table 60: The main obstacle to political settlement, by political affiliation

	Taliban	Pakistan	Americans	President Ghani	Opposition politicians	Other	Don't Know
Pro-government	22.91	34.98	23.68	3.87	4.95	3.41	6.19
Mujahid	12.5	25	40.28	16.67	0	0	5.56
Pro-Taliban	0	0	55.56	29.78	11.11	3.56	0
Left	0	40	20	40	0	0	0
Nationalist	20.39	36.89	19.42	6.8	5.83	5.83	4.85
Ethno-Centrist	19.84	36.56	23.44	4.1	5.57	2.62	7.87
Neutral	2.56	30.77	33.33	5.13	5.13	10.26	12.82
Undeclared	14.29	42.86	14.29	0	0	14.29	14.29

**Pearson chi2 (42) =118. 9193 Sig.=0.000**

Table 61: The Main obstacle to political settlement, by province

Province	Taliban	Pakistan	Americans	The president (Ghani)	Opposition politician	Other	Don't Know
Kabul	33.33	26	20.67	4.67	4.66	2.67	8
Herat	43.56	37.78	13.33	2.11	3.22	0.00	0
Balkh	40	10	11.33	6.67	8.67	18.33	5
Kandahar	6.67	55	28.33	5	3.33	1.67	0
Nangarhar	43.33	46.67	3.33	1.67	5	33.3	0
Badakhshan	25	35	21.67	1.67	1.67	3.33	11.67
Faryab	20	46.33	15.67	4	7	5	2
Ghazni	15	30	38.33	10	0	0	6.67
Helmand	15	26.67	38.33	5	5	3.33	6.67
Badghis	13.33	36.67	16.67	3.33	0	3.33	26.67
Baghlan	25	26.67	43.33	3.33	1.67	0	0
Bamyan	43.33	26.67	3.33	6.67	6.67	0	13.33



Daikundi	51.33	11.33	8.67	10	5	7	6.67
Farah	6.67	60	6.67	3.33	13.3	0	10
Ghor	13.33	30	20	30	0	0	6.67
Jawzjan	13.33	33.33	23.33	10	16.6	0	3.33
Kapisa	6.67	20	36.67	20	0	0	16.67
Khost	13.33	30	30	0	13.3	3.33	10
Kuduz	26.67	35	23.33	1.67	3.33	0	10
Kunar	13.33	26.67	33.33	13.3	6.67	0	6.67
Laghman	3.33	33.33	53.33	3.33	3.33	3.33	0
Logar	10	56.67	13.33	0	16.6	0	3.33
Wardak	30	40	16.67	0	10	0	3.33
Nemruz	13.33	46.22	20	3.33	6.67	3.25	7.2
Nooristan	13.33	46.67	30	0%	3.33	0	6.67
Paktia	3.33	16.67	33.33	26.6	20	0	0
Paktika	10	70	20	0	0	0	0
Panjshir	36.67	33.33	13.33	0	0	0	16.67
Parwan	6.67	6.67	23.33	10	6.67	33.33	13.33
Samangan	40	23.33	16.67	0	20	0	0
Sar-e pul	23.33	56.67	16.67	3.33	0	0	0
Takhar	16.67	28.33	31.67	5	1.67	0	16.67
Uruzgan	26.67	46.67	13.33	6.67	3.33	0	3.33
Zabul	6.67	40	40	3.33	0	10	0

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*Table 62: Support or oppose the post-2001 political system compared to the Taliban's Emirate, by province*

<b>Province</b>	<b>Strongly Support</b>	<b>Somewhat Support</b>	<b>Somewhat Oppose</b>	<b>Strongly Oppose</b>	<b>Undeclared</b>
Kabul	68.67	16	8	5	2.33
Herat	67.78	18.89	10.22	2	1.11
Balkh	60	13.33	6.67	15	5
Kandahar	40	11.6	10	36.7	1.7
Nangarhar	56.33	21.67	1.67	5.66	14.67
Badakhshan	52.33	23.33	8.67	8	7.67
Faryab	75	10	7	3.5	4.5
Ghazni	57.67	15	6.98	16.65	3.7
Helmand	33	7.67	4	40.33	15
Badghis	30	46.67	3.33	16.67	3.33
Baghlan	10	11.67	11.67	60	6.67
Bamyan	79.2	4.64	9.56	4	2.6
Daikundi	71.33	10	6.67	8	4
Farah	20	26.67	16.67	20	16.67
Ghor	52	13.33	22.33	4.67	7.67
Jawzjan	26.67	20	10	26.67	16.66
Kapisa	26.64	43.33	3.3	6.53	20.2
Khost	16.67	16.67	13.33	33.33	20
Kunduz	50	14	16.67	12.66	6.67
Kunar	33.33	50.67	3.33	6	6.67
Laghman	56.67	13.33	10	3.33	16.67
Logar	21.3	34	33.2	8	3.5
Wardak	20	36.67	6.67	26.67	10
Nemruz	34	48.67	10%	3.33	4
Nooristan	40	33.33	6.67	3.33	16.67
Paktia	23.33	46.67	3.33	6.67	20
Paktika	37.67	14	10.33	30	8
Panjshir	60	10	6.67	11.33	12
Parwan	55.67	33.33	10	16.67	4.33

Samangan	60	20.67	1.33	10	8
Sar-e pul	30	53.33	8	5.34	3.33
Takhar	18.66	35	10	26.67	9.67
Uruzgan	20	13.33	26.67	26.67	13.33
Zabul	10	16.67	13	43.67	16.66

*Table 63: Who can become the President of Afghanistan? By Political Affiliation*

	<b>Pro-government</b>	<b>Mujahidin</b>	<b>Taliban</b>	<b>Left</b>	<b>Nationalist</b>	<b>Ethno-Centrist</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Undeclared</b>
A person elected directly by the people	87.77	70.83	11.11	65	86.41	82.79	71.79	85.71
A person appointed in a Loya Jirga	2.79	4.17	5.56	10.6	1.94	2.79	2.56	0%
A person selected by ethnic leaders	1.7	11.11	22.21	12	4.85	1.8	5.13	0
A person selected by clerics	1.55	4.17	38.89	5.35	5.83	2.3	2.56	14.29
A person take power by force	1.7	6.94	5.56	5	0.97	3.77	10.26	0
Don't know	4.49	2.78	16.67	1.6	0	6.56	7.7	0

# Appendix B: Figures

Figure 22: Preferred political settlement mechanism, by age

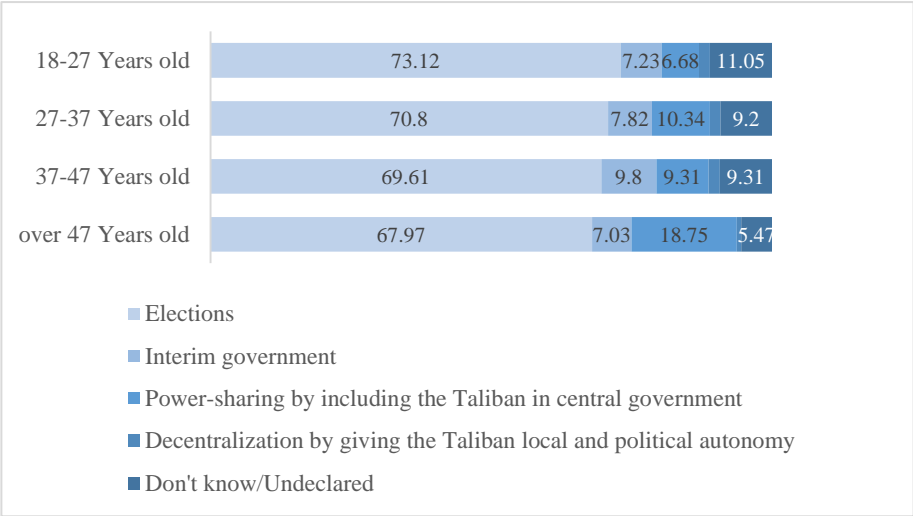


Figure 23: Preferred political settlement mechanism, by gender

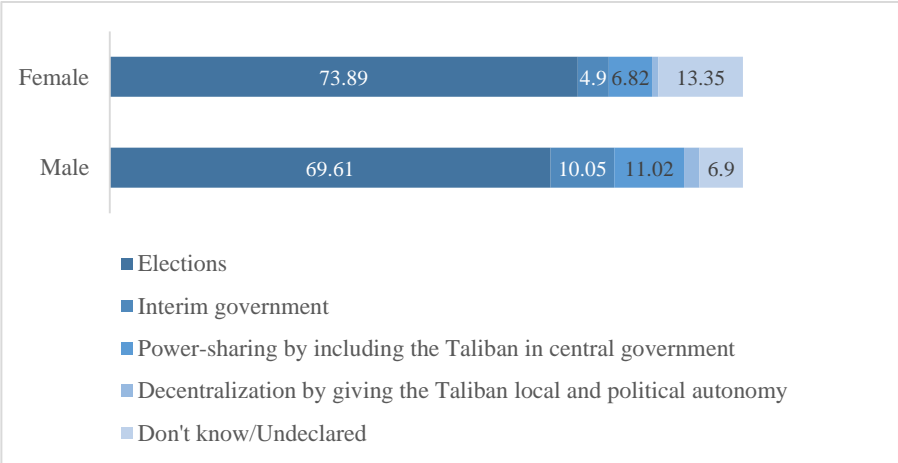


Figure 24: Preferred political settlement mechanism, by ethnicity

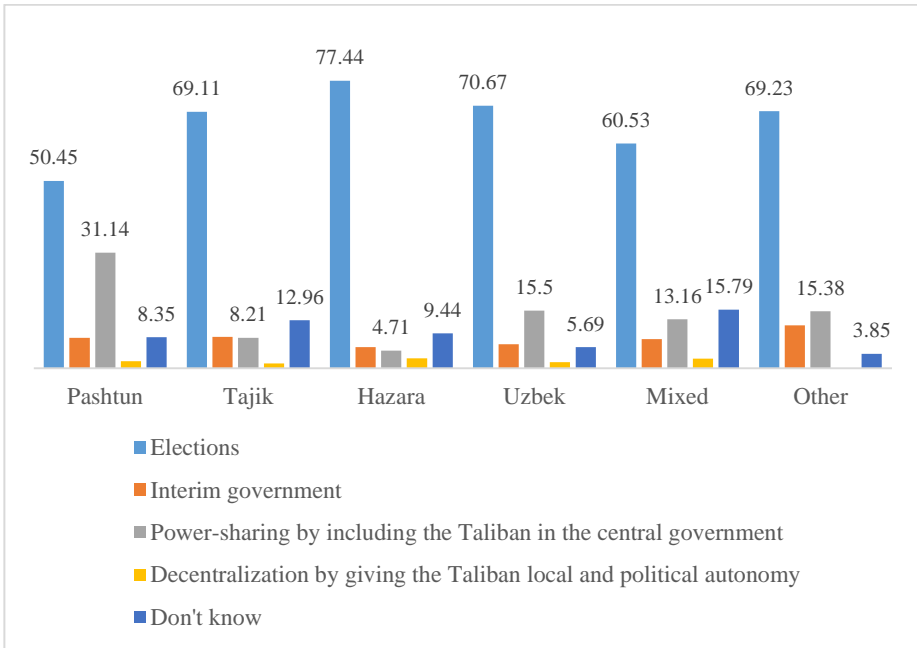


Figure 25: Preferred political settling mechanism, by education

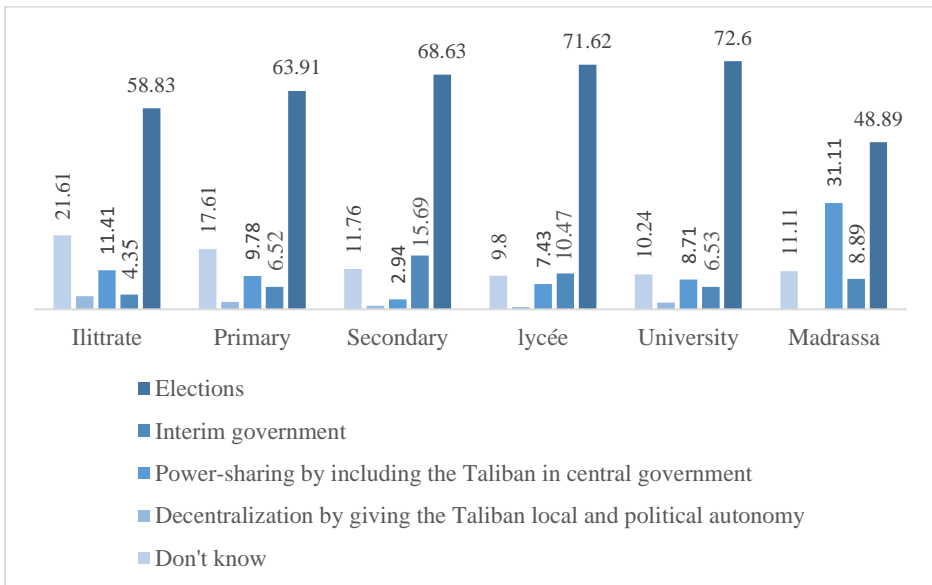


Figure 26: Preferred political settlement mechanism, by political affiliation

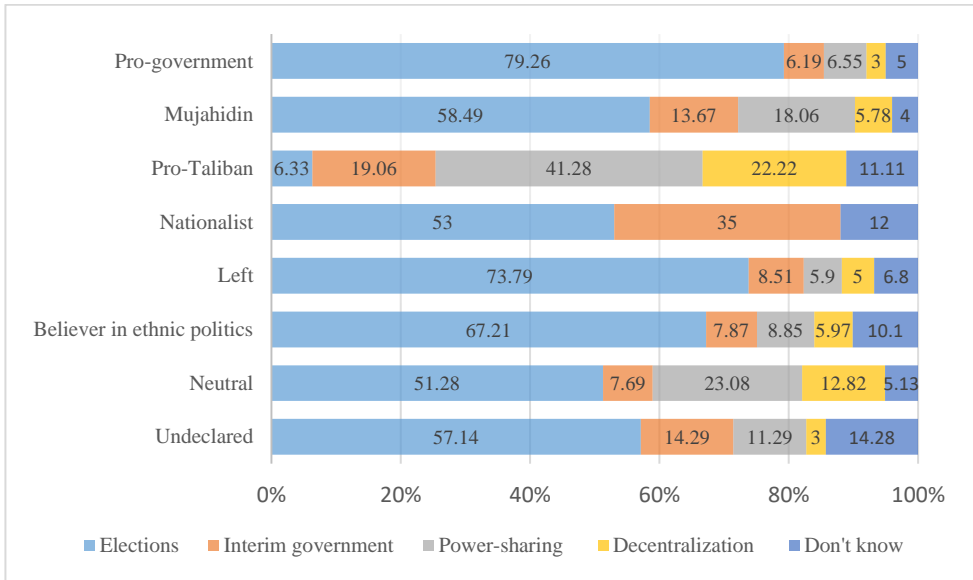


Figure 27: Preferred political settlement mechanism, by province

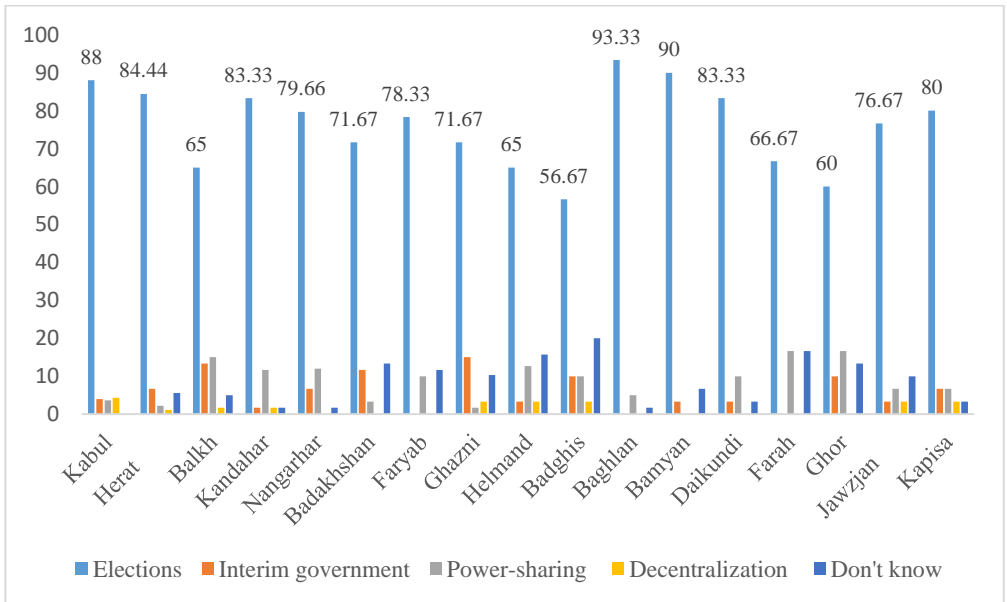


Figure 28: Preferred political settlement mechanism, by province

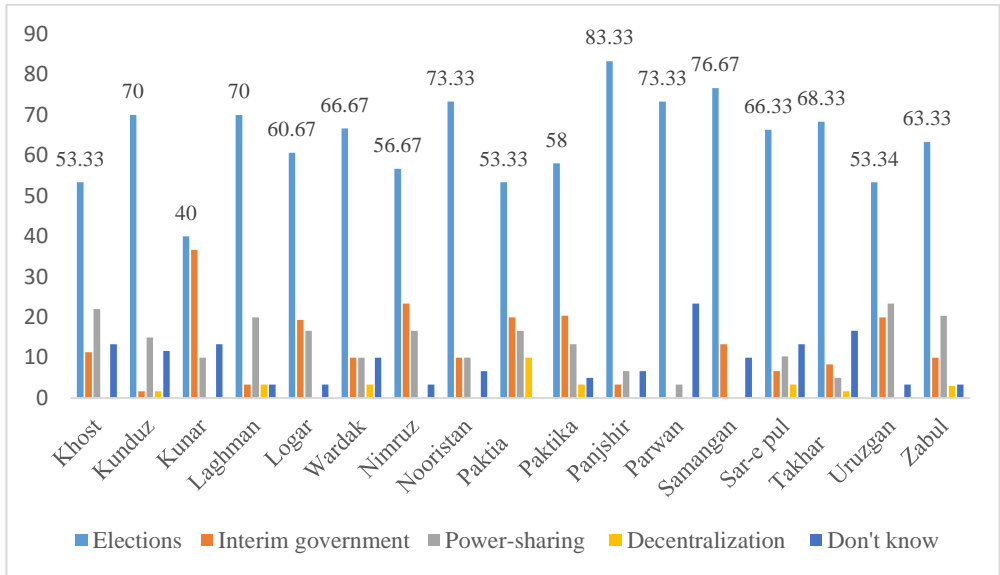


Figure 29: Responsibility for civilian casualties after 2001, by gender

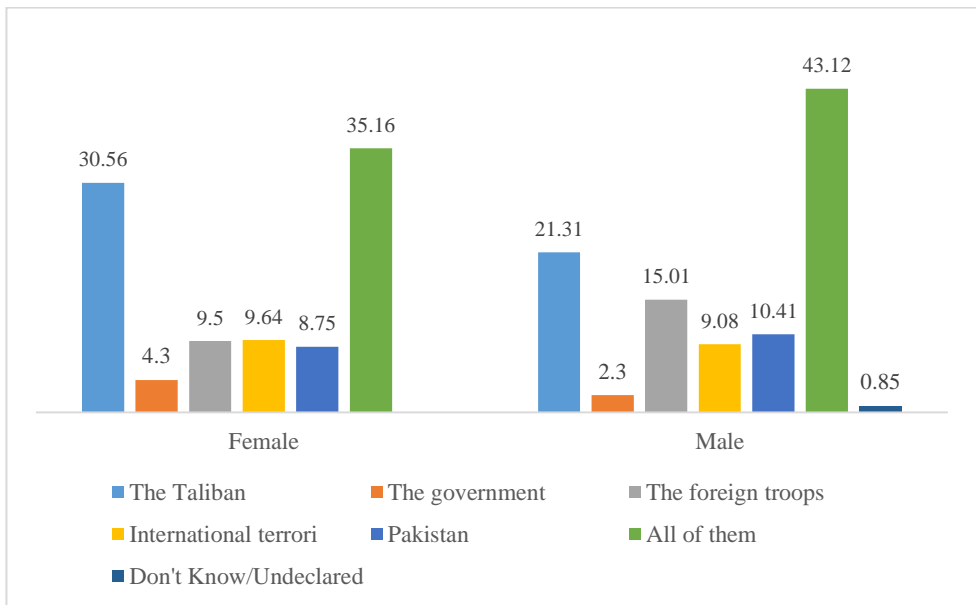


Figure 30: The best option for dealing with those involved in the killing of civilians, by gender

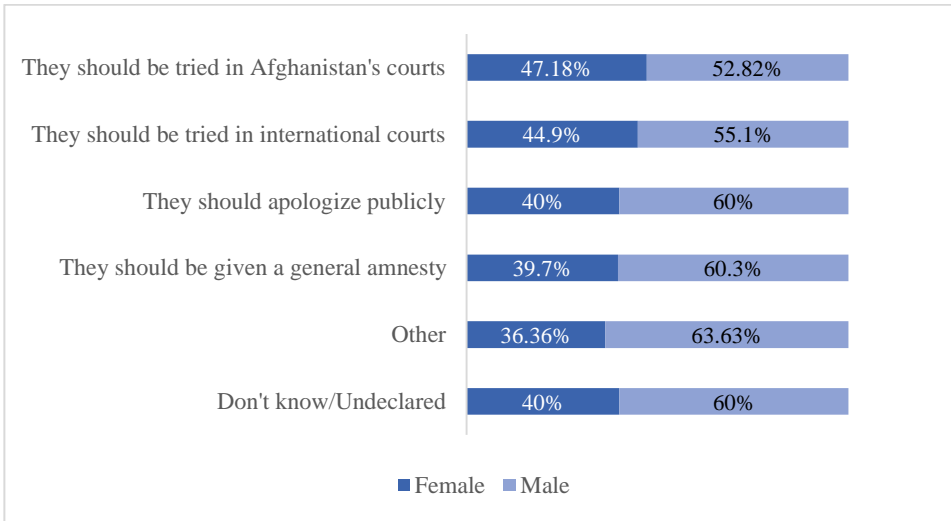


Figure 31: Support or oppose the post-2001 political system compared to the Taliban's Emirate, by age

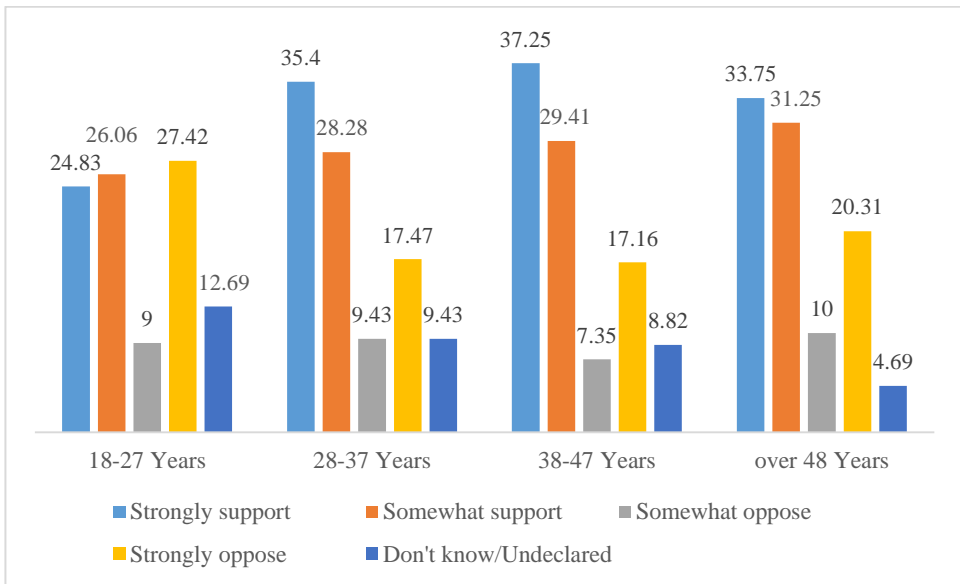




Figure 32: Support or oppose the post-2001 political system compared to the Taliban's Emirate, by gender

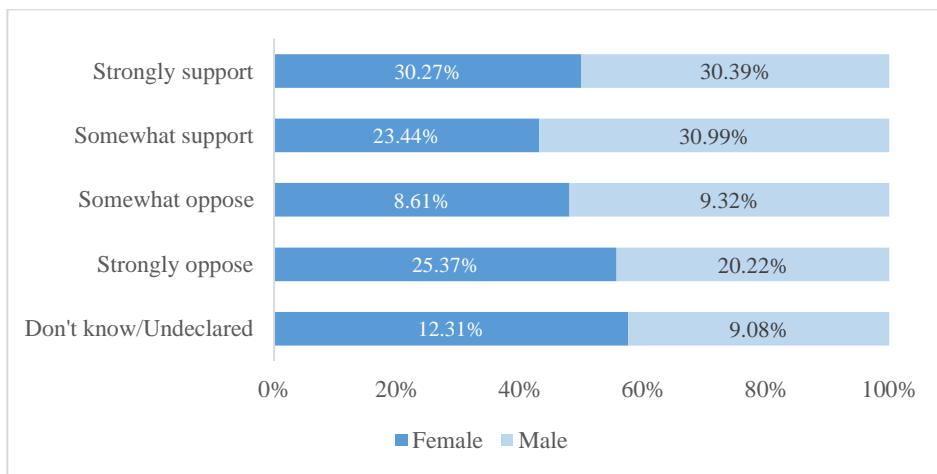


Figure 33: Support or oppose the post-2001 political system compared to the Taliban's Emirate, by education

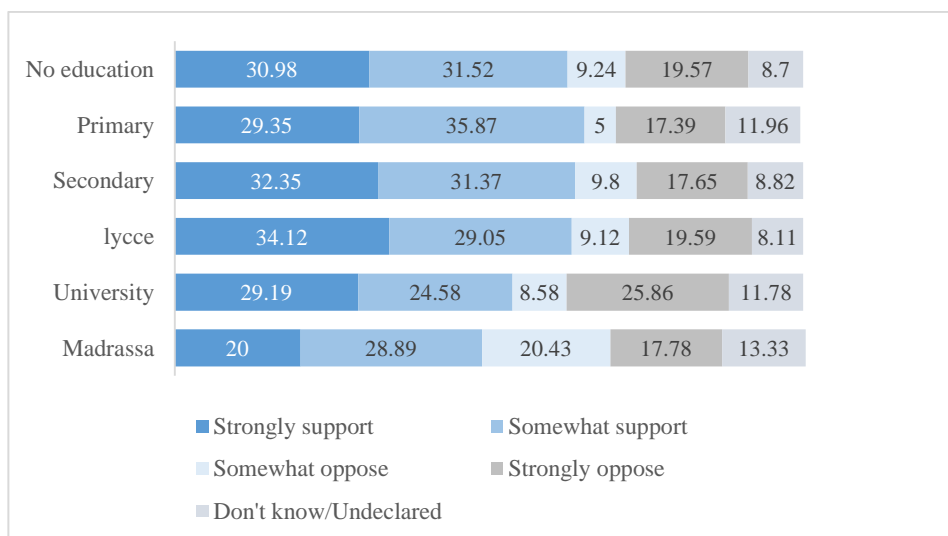


Figure 34: Support or oppose the post-2001 political system compared to the Taliban's Emirate, by occupation

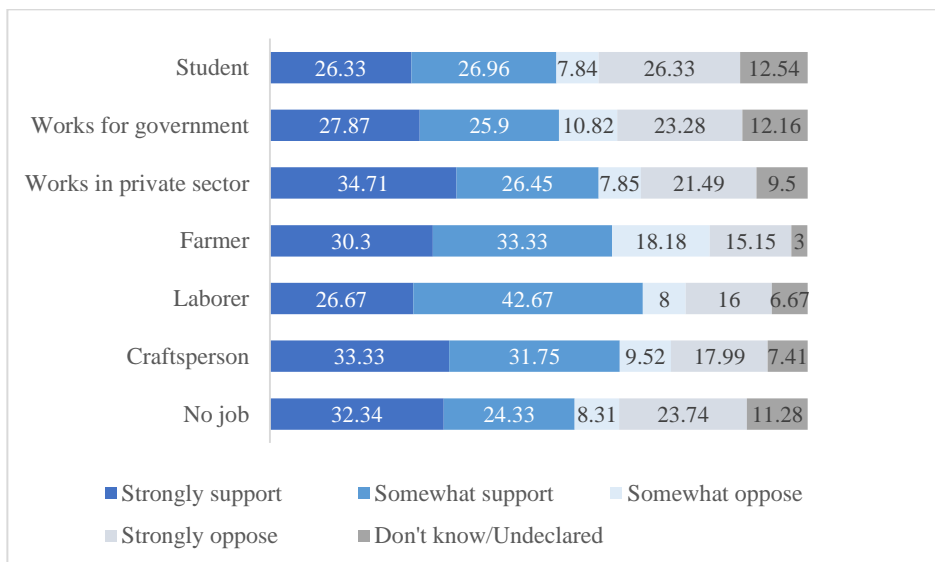


Figure 35: Support or oppose the post-2001 political system compared to the Taliban's Emirate, by political affiliation

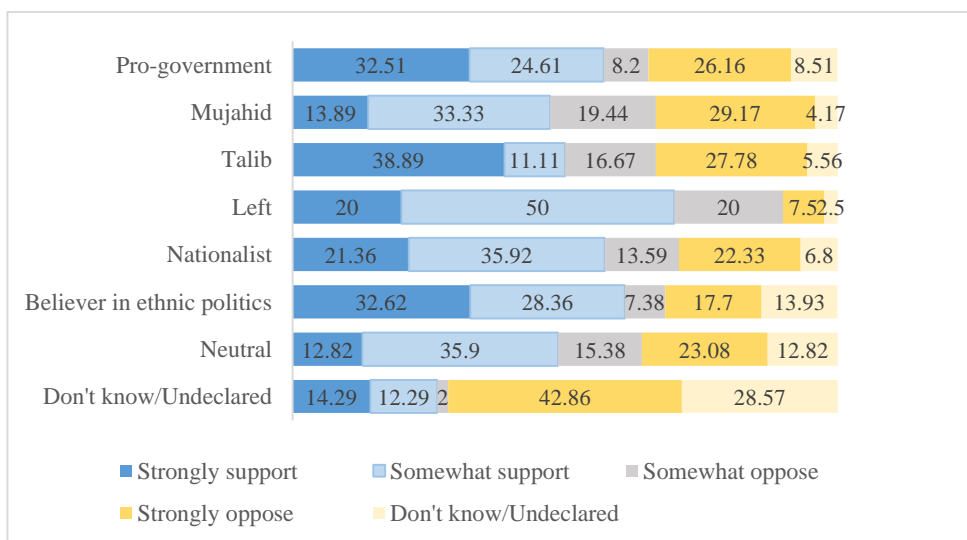


Figure 36: Support or oppose the post-2001 political system compared to the Taliban's Emirate by ethnicity

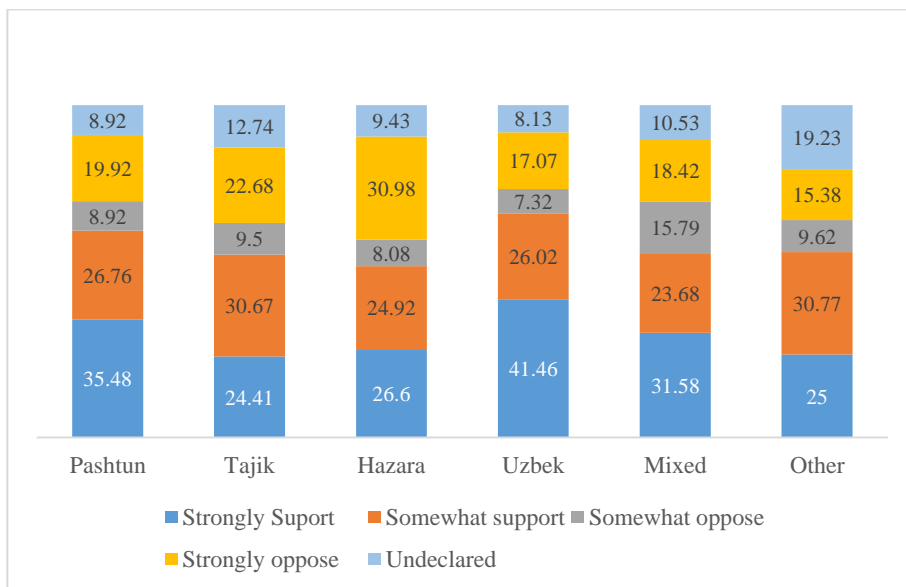


Figure 37: Level of satisfaction with the post-2001 government's provision of services, by age

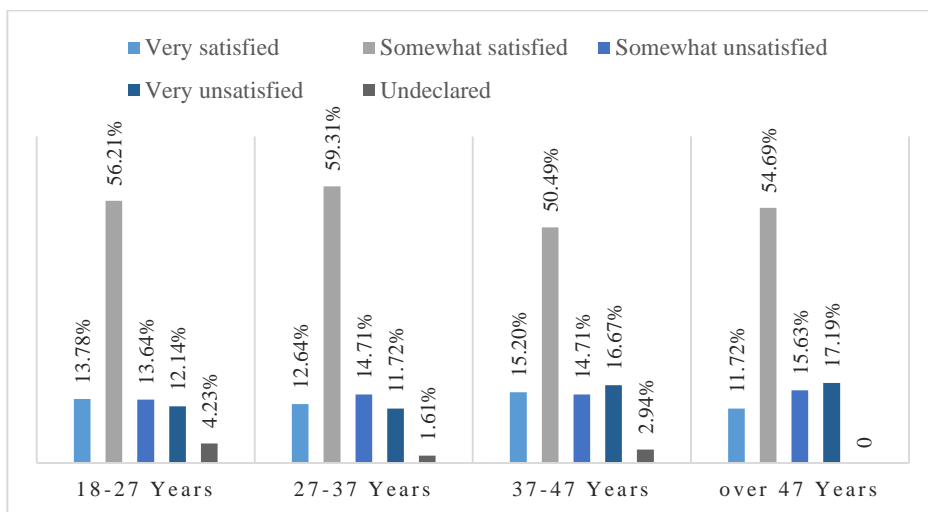


Figure 38: Level of satisfaction with the post-2001 government's provision of services, by gender

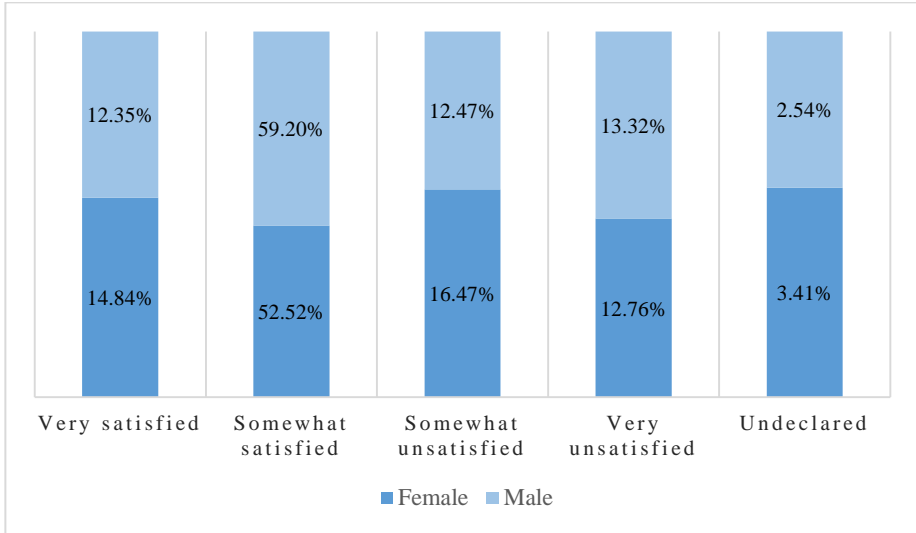


Figure 39: Level of satisfaction with the post-2001 government's provision of services, by ethnicity

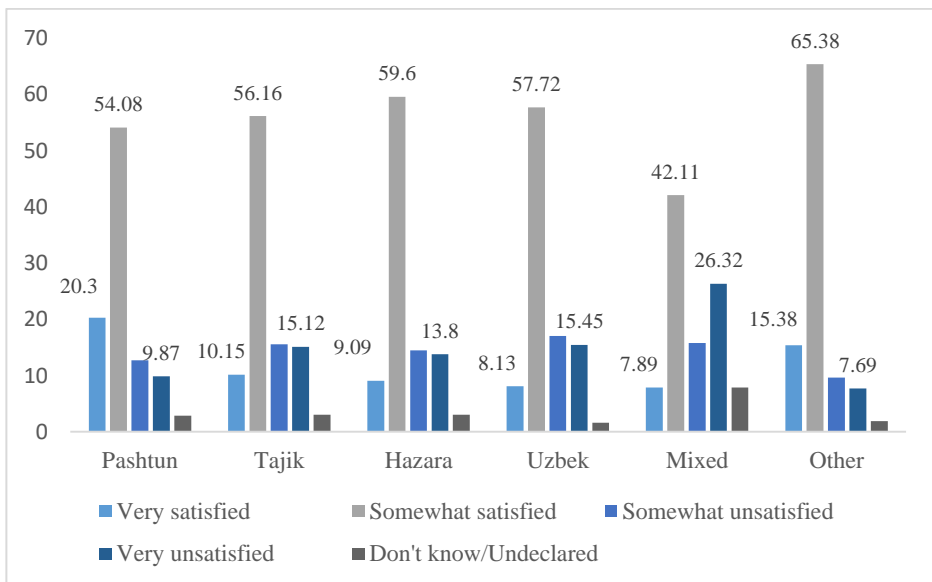


Figure 40: Level of satisfaction with the post-2001 government's provision of services, by education

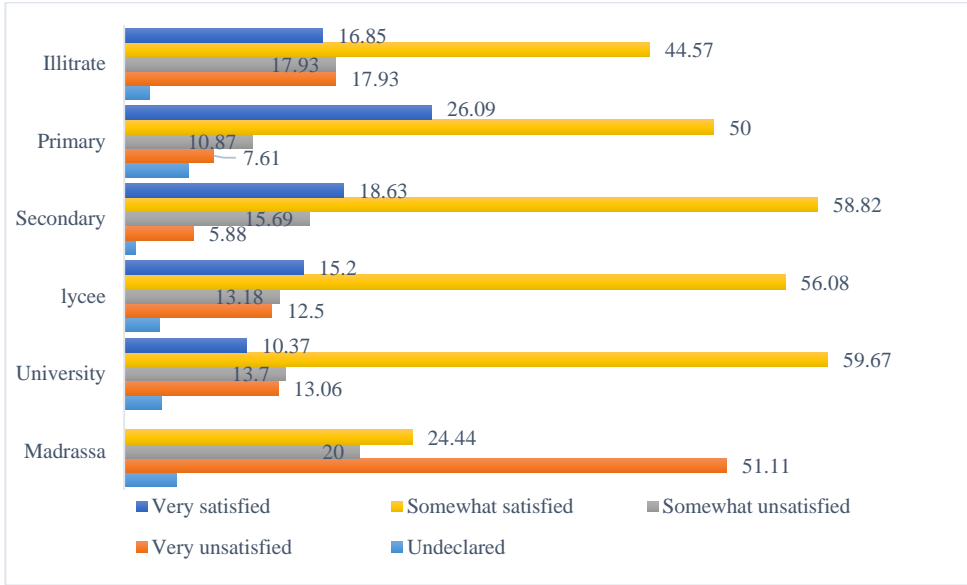


Figure 41: Level of satisfaction with the post-2001 government's provision of services, by occupation

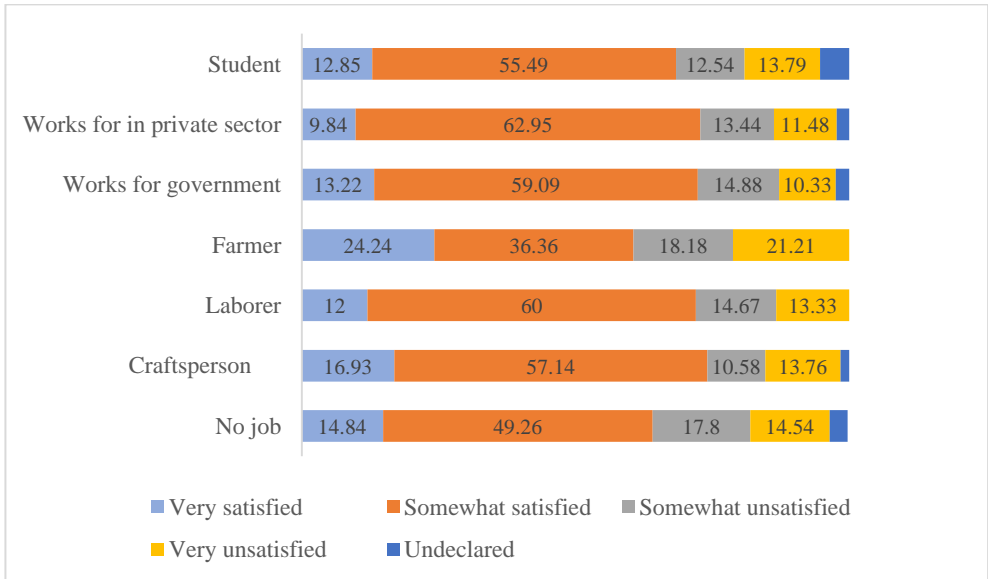


Figure 42: Level of satisfaction with the post-2001 government's provision of services, by political affiliation

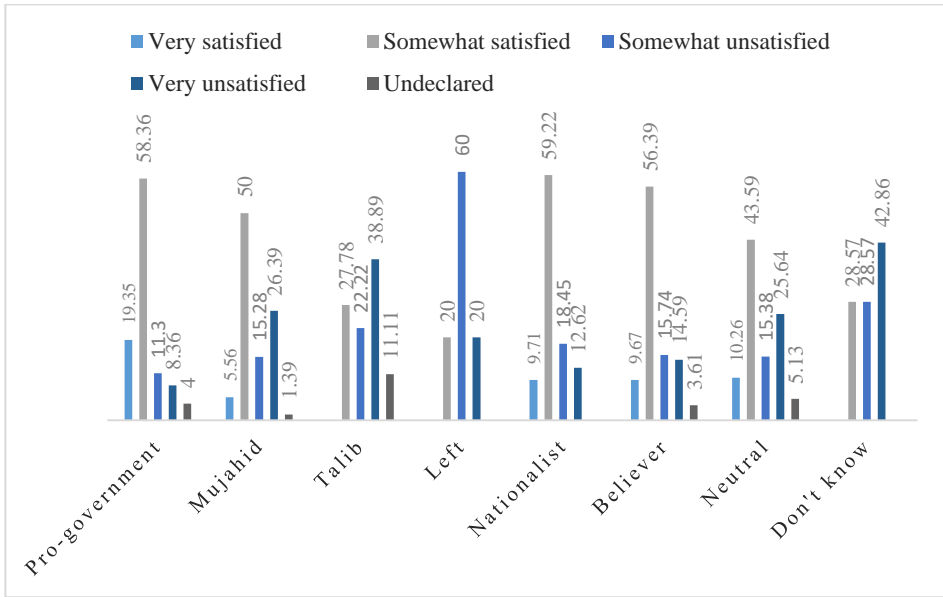


Figure 43: Level of satisfaction with the post-2001 government's provision of services, by province

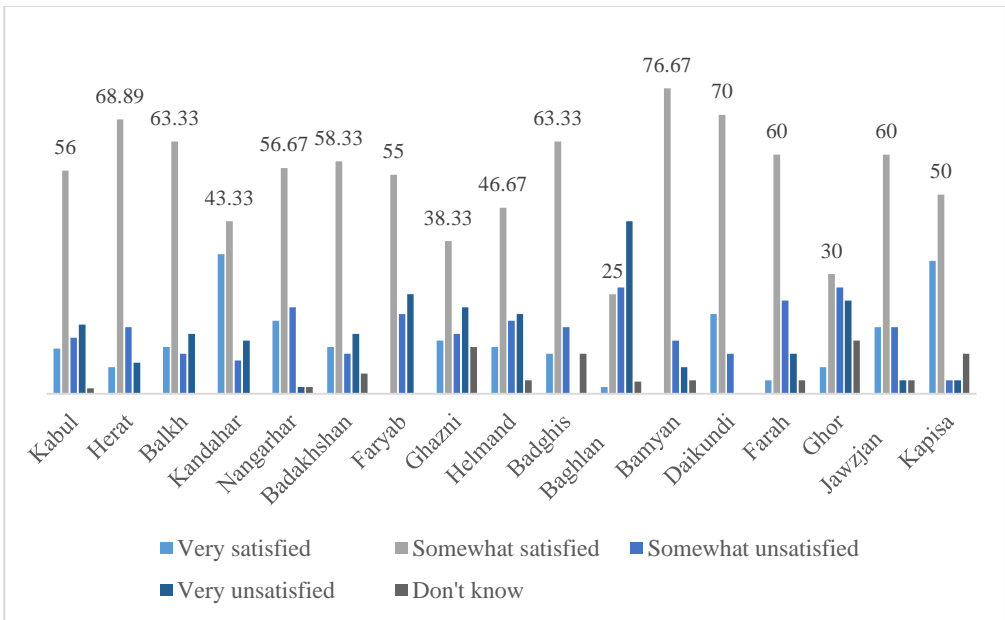


Figure 44: Level of satisfaction with the post-2001 government's provision of services, by province

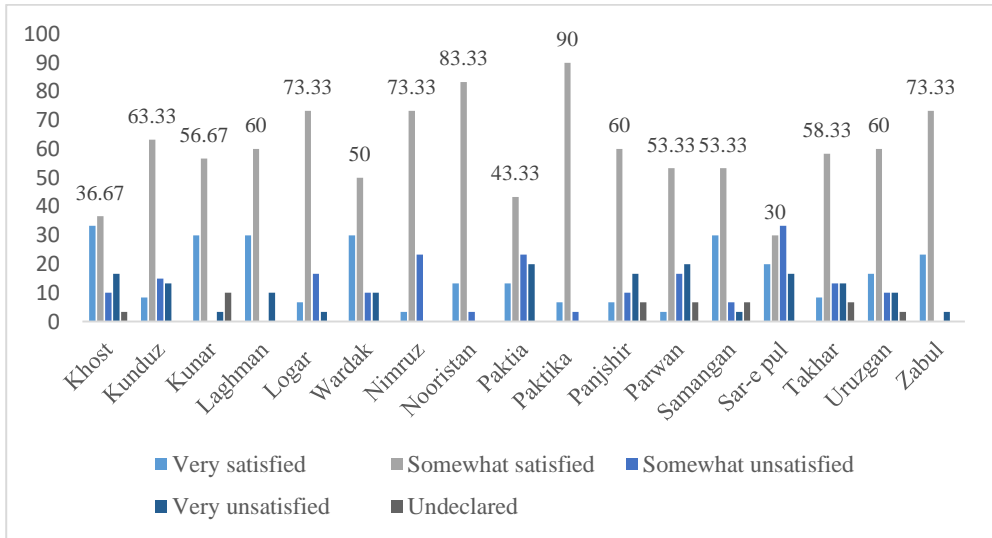


Figure 45: Support or oppose of a Taliban style government for Afghanistan, by gender

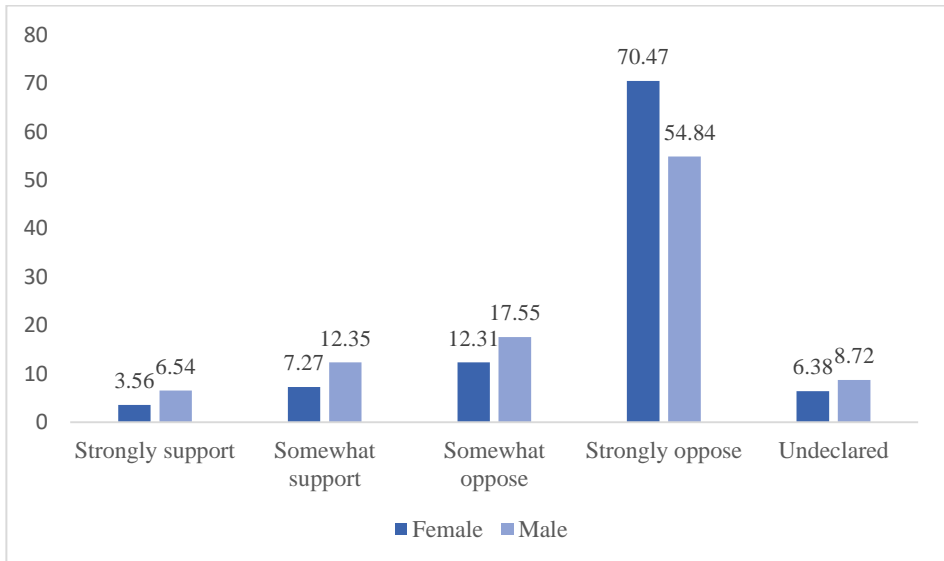


Figure 46: Support or oppose of a Taliban style government for Afghanistan, by ethnicity

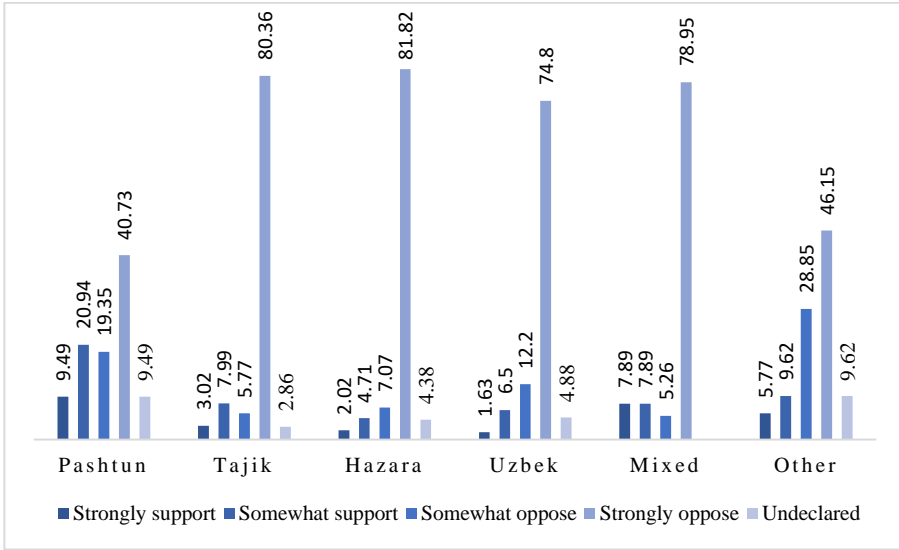


Figure 47: Who can become the President of Afghanistan, by gender

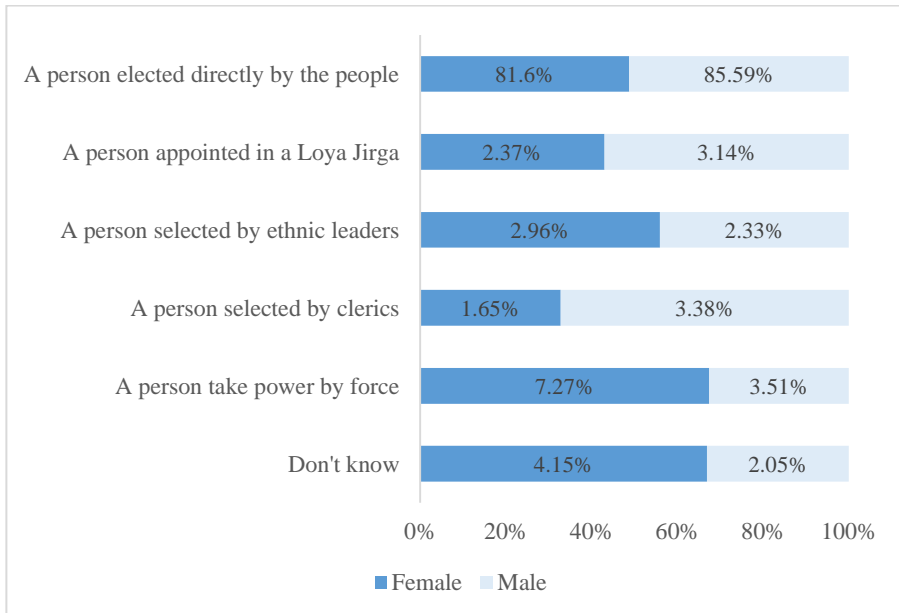




Figure 48: Who can become the President of Afghanistan? by ethnicity

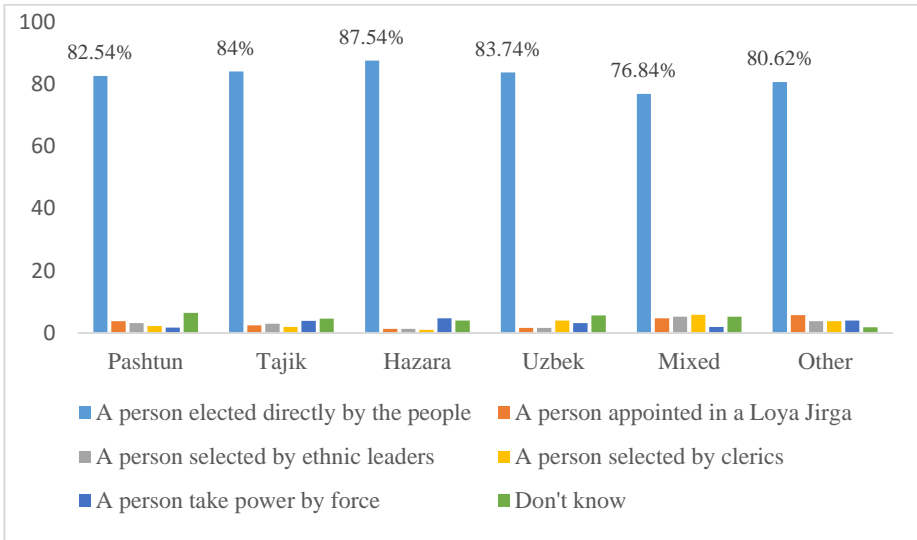


Figure 49: Who can become the President of Afghanistan? by education

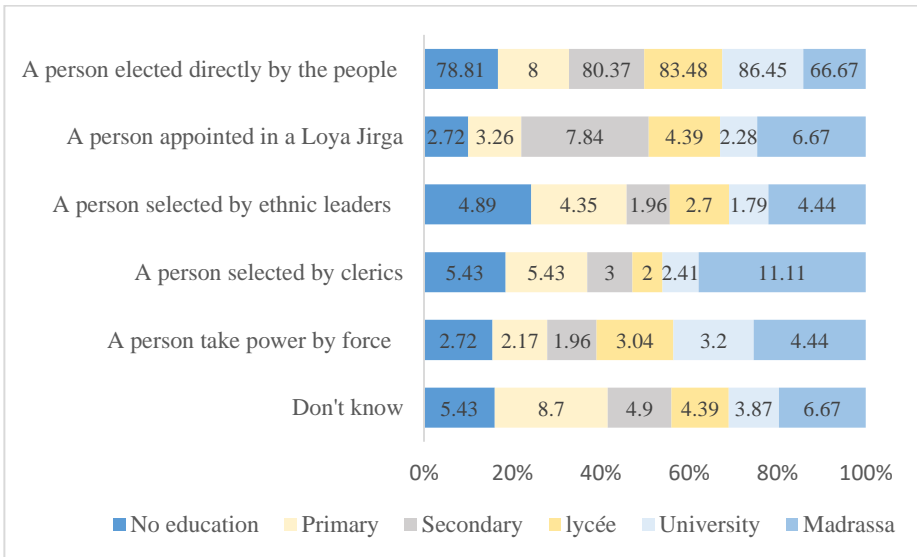


Figure 50: Who can become the President of Afghanistan? by province

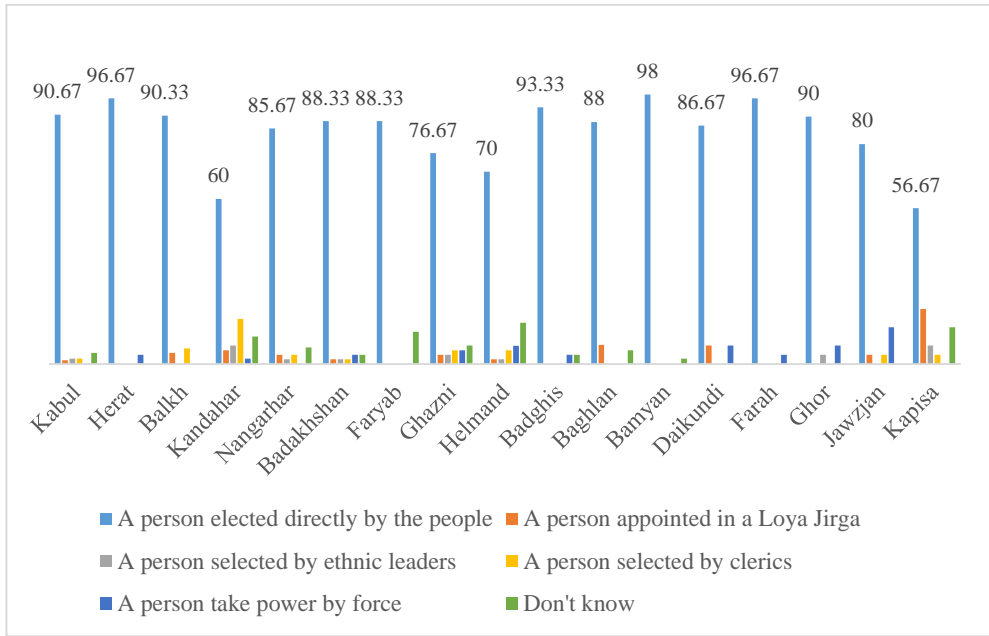


Figure 51: Who can become the President of Afghanistan? by province

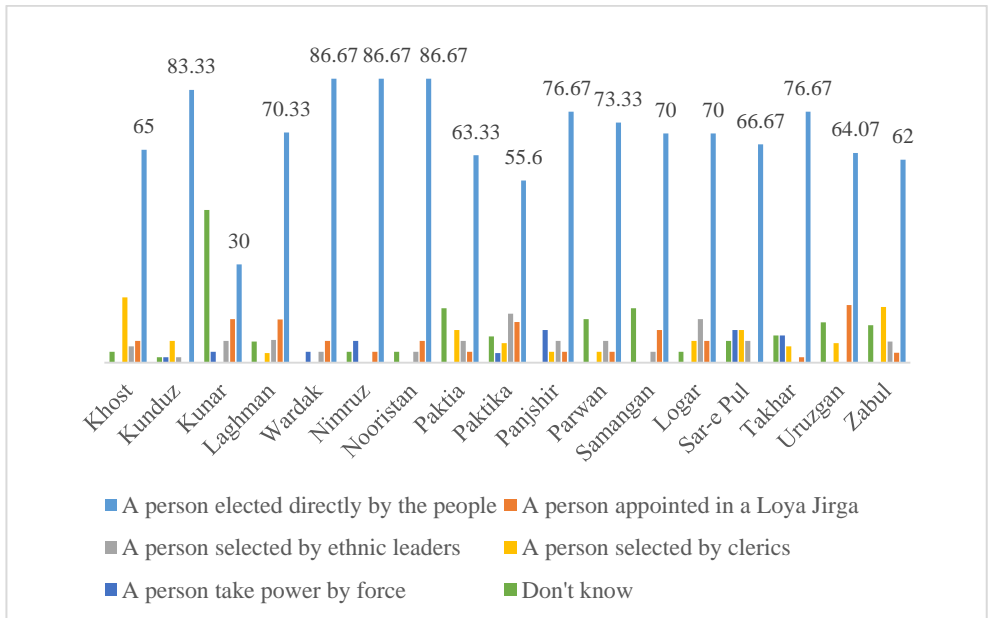


Figure 52: Do you think elections produce a legitimate government? by gender

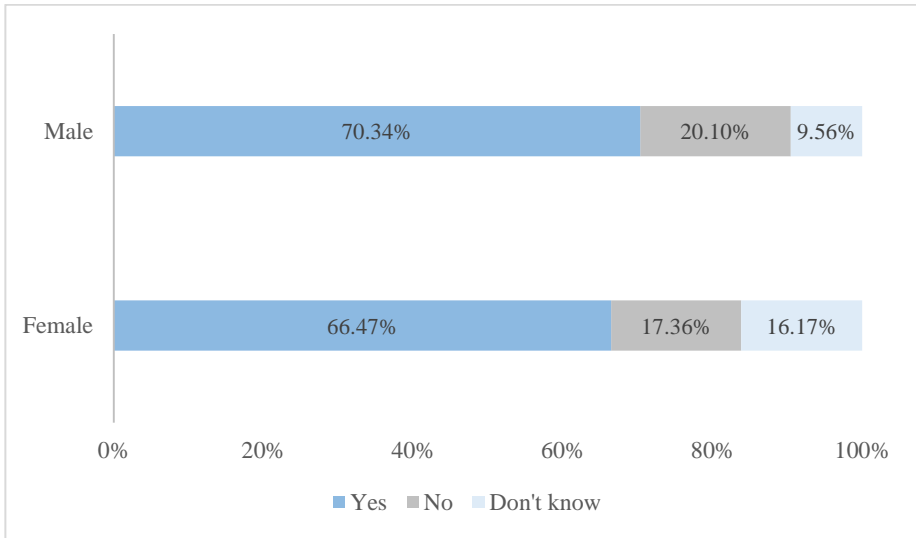


Figure 53: Do you think elections produce a legitimate government? by ethnicity

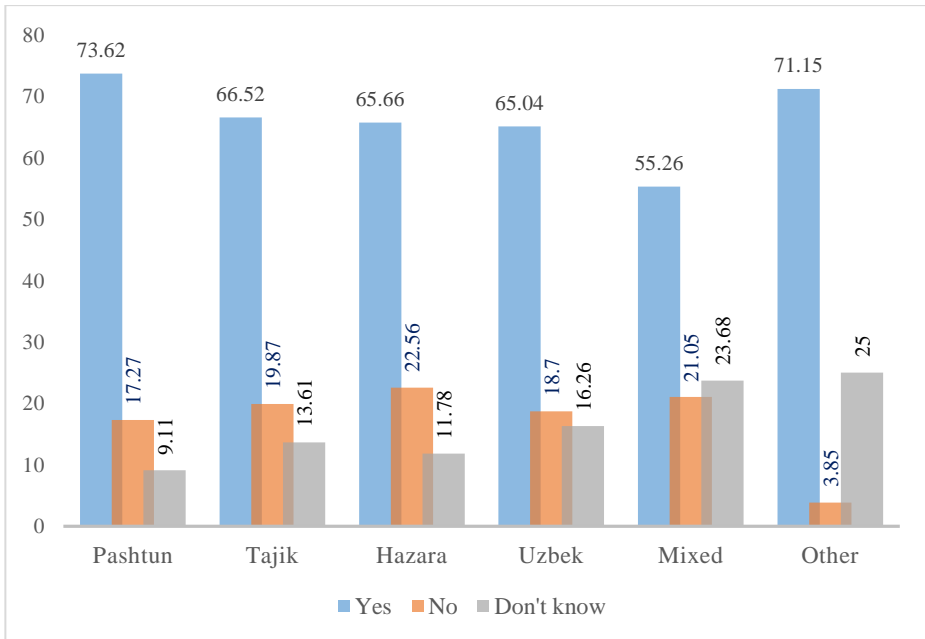


Figure 54: Do you think elections produce a legitimate government? by education

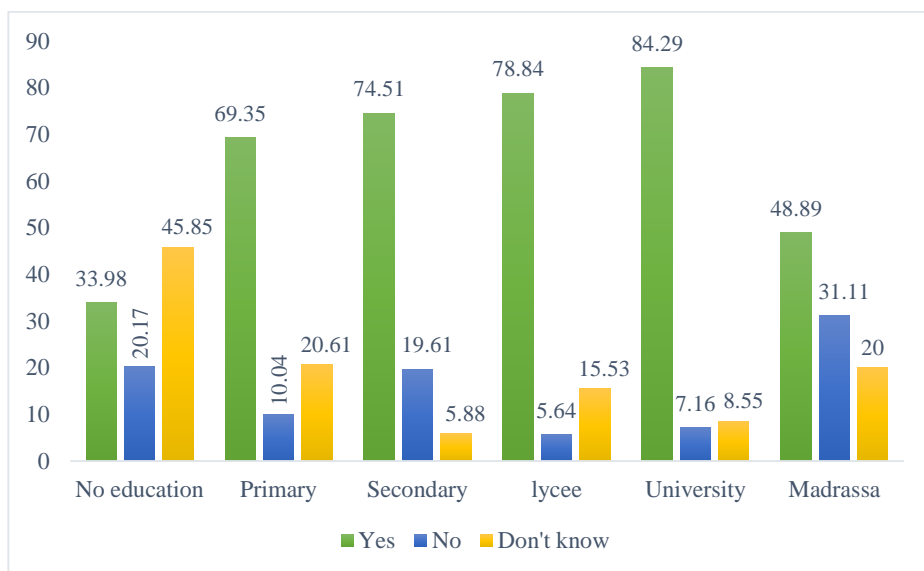


Figure 55: Do you think elections produce a legitimate government? by occupation

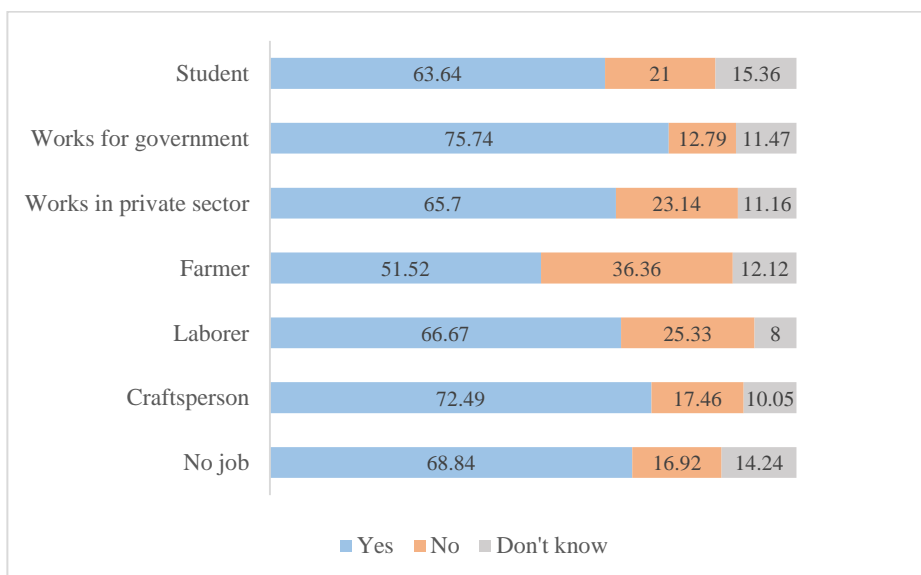


Figure 56: Do you think election produces a legitimate government? by political affiliation

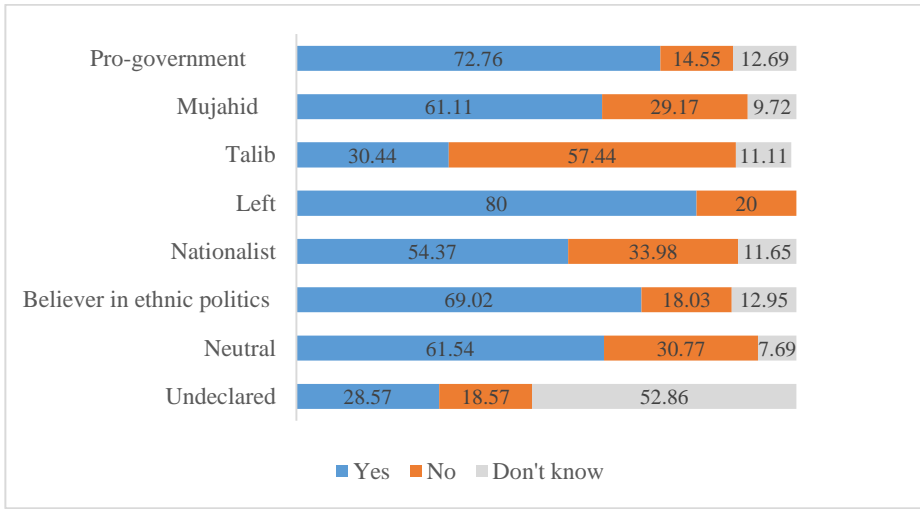


Figure 57: Political Legitimacy: Do elections produce a legitimate government, by Province

Province	Yes	No	Don't know	Province	Yes	No	Don't know
Kabul	80.67	15.33	4	Khost	50	33.33	16.67
Herat	91.11	0	8.89	Kunduz	38.33	51.67	10
Balkh	78.33	16.67	5	Kunar	73.33	10	16.67
Kandahar	70	21.33	8.67	Laghman	86.67	0	13.33
Nangarhar	65.33	25	9.67	Logar	40	60	0
Badakhshan	77.67	14.73	7.60	Wardak	53.33	40	6.67
Faryab	83.33	0	16.67	Nemruz	50	46.67	3.33
Ghazni	53.33	30	16.67	Nooristan	66.67	3.33	30
Helmand	61.67	21.67	16.67	Paktia	80	10	10
Badghis	70	20	10	Paktika	70	5	25
Baghlan	61.67	3.33	35	Panjshir	63.33	26.67	10
Bamyan	70	16.67	13.33	Parwan	43.33	40	16.67
Daikundi	73.33	13.33	13.33	Samangan	53.33	26.67	20

Farah	73.33	20	6.67	Sar-e pul	53.33	36.67	10
Ghor	66.67	16.67	16.67	Takhar	61.67	16.67	21.67
Jawzjan	63.33	26.67	10	Uruzgan	60.67	16.66	22.67
Kapisa	56.67	26.67	16.67	Zabul	57.33	13.33	29.34

Figure 58: Support or oppose restriction of media by government, by gender

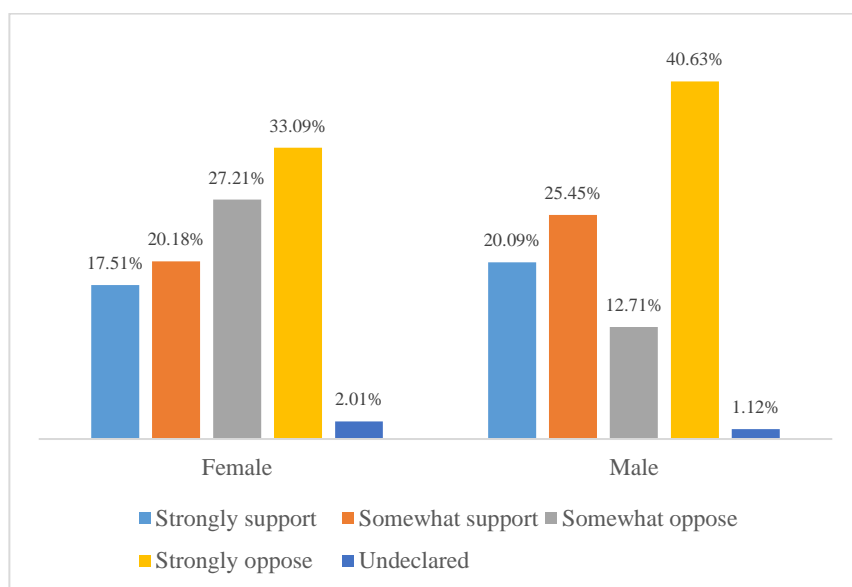


Figure 59: Support or oppose restriction of media by government, by political affiliation

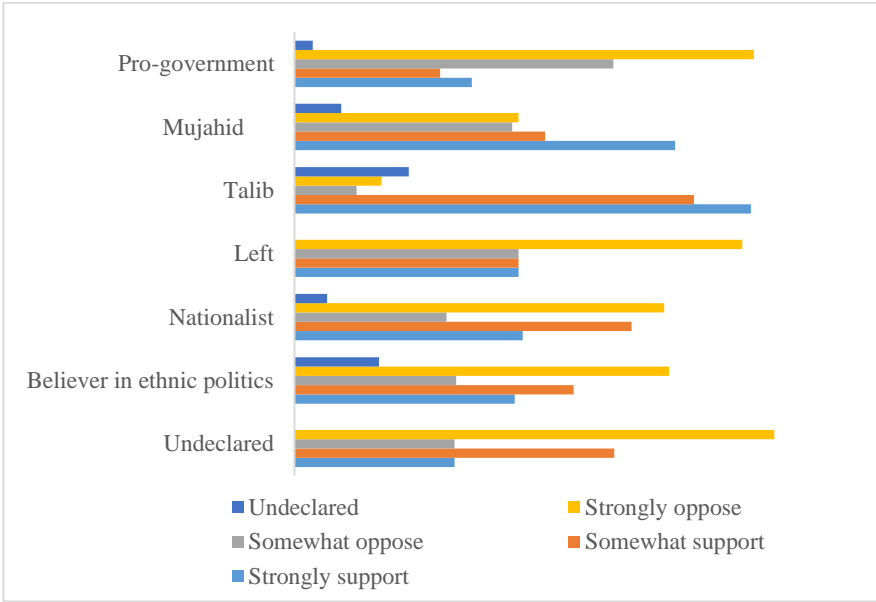


Figure 60: Support or oppose restriction of media by government, by education

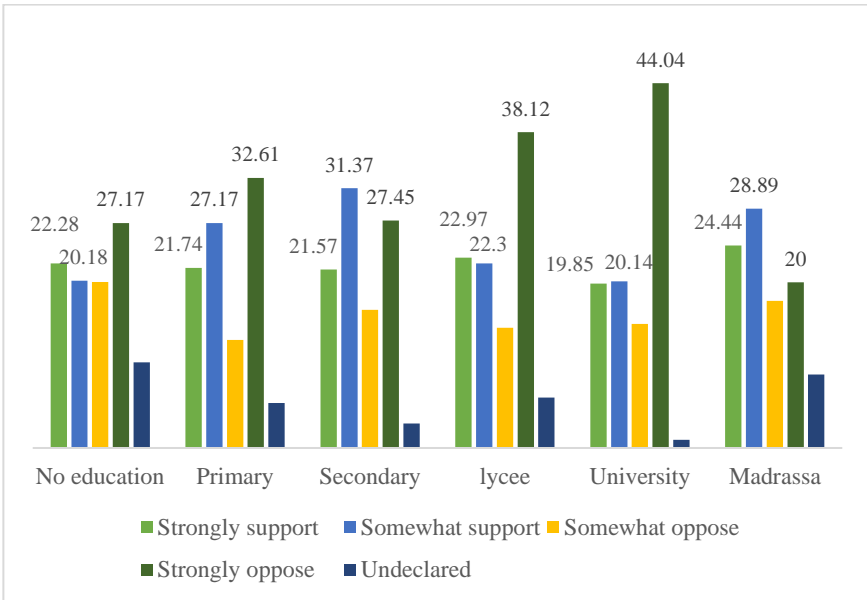


Figure 61: Support or oppose the following statement: “all citizens, regardless of gender, ethnic, and religious, differences are equal,” by gender

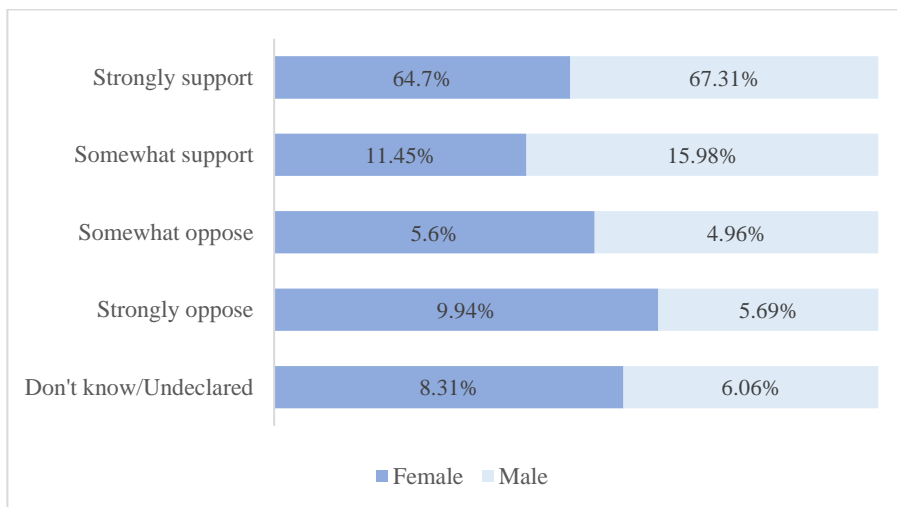


Figure 62: Support or oppose the following statement: “all citizens, regardless of gender, ethnic, and religious, differences are equal,” by education

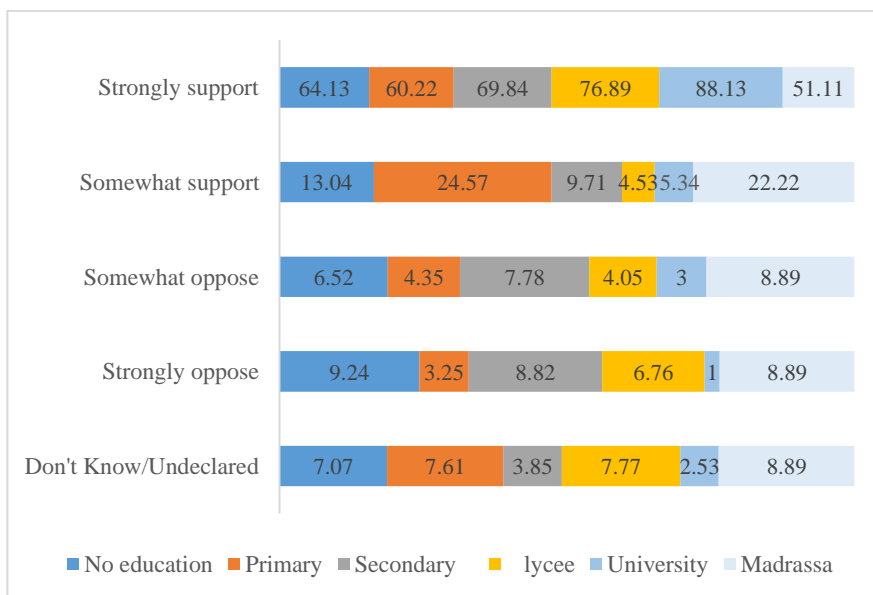




Figure 63: Support or oppose the following statement: “all citizens, regardless of gender, ethnic, and religious, differences are equal,” by ethnicity

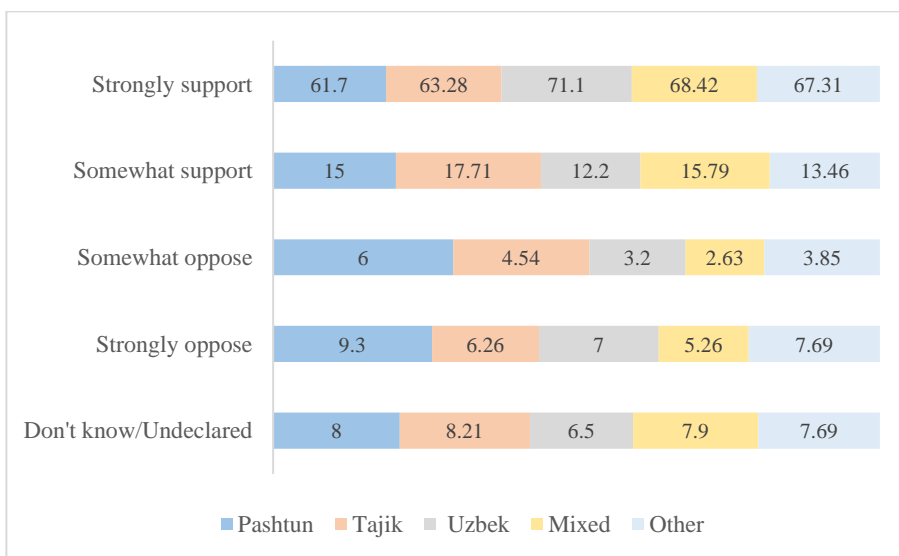
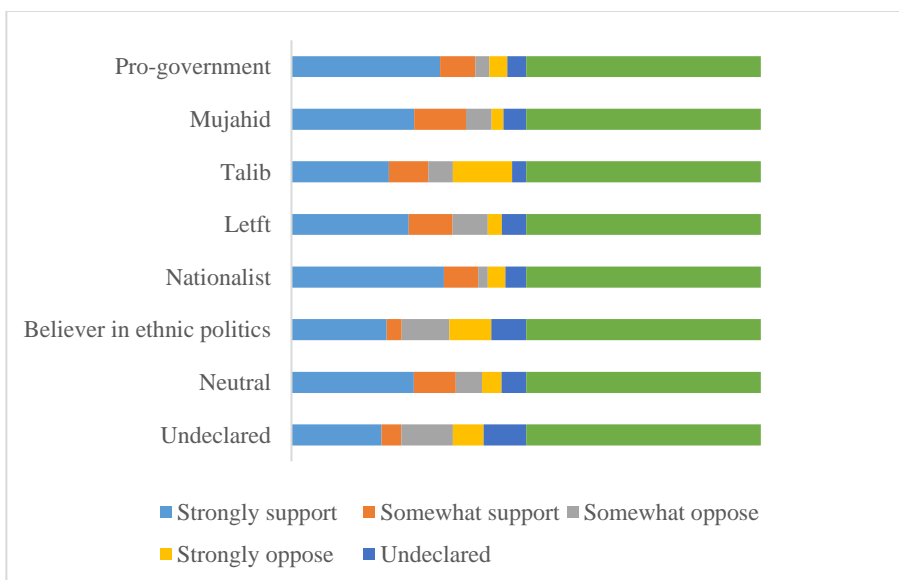


Figure 64: Support or oppose the following statement: “all citizens, regardless of gender, ethnic, and religious, differences are equal,” by political affiliation



## Appendix C: Questionnaire

Number:

Interviewer's Name:

Province:

Date:

Dear citizen,

The current questionnaire is prepared by the Afghan Institute for Strategic Studies. It aims to collect information on people's perceptions and expectations of a political settlement of the conflict and a post-conflict political order. Your responses are valuable to us. The survey is anonymous, and your identity will remain secret. By checking the following cell, you will indicate your consent for participation in this survey:

I give my consent for answering this questionnaire

How much do you know about the negotiation process between the Taliban and Americans?

1. A lot
2. Somewhat
3. Not much
4. Not at all
8. Undeclared

How do you gain information about the peace process?

1. Through the media
2. In the Mosque
3. In the workplace
4. In school
5. In the market
6. Other (specify):
8. Don't Know/Undeclared

What force poses the main obstacle for a political settlement of the conflict?

1. Taliban
2. Pakistan
3. Americans
4. The president (Mohammad Ashraf Ghani)
5. Opposition politicians
6. Other (specify):
8. Don't Know/Undeclared

Which of the following would be the best political settlement mechanism in Afghanistan?

1. Elections
2. Interim government
3. Power-sharing by including the Taliban in central government
4. Decentralization by giving the Taliban local and political autonomy
8. Don't know/Undeclared

If the peace process leads to general elections, who do you vote for?

1. Current government
2. Taliban
3. A democratic party
4. A Mujahidin party
5. A neural party
6. I don't vote in elections
7. Other (specify):
8. Don't know/Undeclared

If the peace process leads to an interim government, who should lead it

1. Current government
2. Taliban
3. A coalition of the Taliban and government
4. A domestic neutral party
5. An international party
6. I don't support an interim government at all and the current government should not be dissolved
7. Other (Specify):
8. Don't know/Undeclared

If the peace process leads to a power-sharing government, how should the power be distributed?

1. A number of ministries should be given to the Taliban
2. Taliban become an autonomous force within the formal state structure
3. All major parties gaining proportional representation in parliament and government
4. I don't support a power-sharing government at all
5. Other (Specify):
8. Don't know/Undeclared

If the peace process leads to decentralization of power, how should it be established?

1. The state should be divided into federal regions, the Taliban controlling some of them
2. The Taliban should be given a temporary autonomy in some provinces until peace is sustained
3. The Taliban should be given a temporary autonomy in some districts until peace is sustained
4. The Taliban should be given political autonomy until they decide to join the elections
5. I don't support decentralization of power at all
6. Other (Specify):
8. Don't know/Undeclared

Since 2001, thousands of civilians have been killed in the war. Who do you think is responsible?

1. The Taliban
2. The government
3. The foreign troops
4. International terrorist organization
5. Pakistan
6. Other (specify):
8. Don't Know/Undeclared

What is the best option for dealing with those involved in the killing of civilians?

1. They should be tried in Afghanistan's courts
2. They should be tried in international courts
3. They should apologize publicly
4. They should be given a general amnesty
5. Other (specify):
8. Don't know/Undeclared

How do you feel about the Taliban coming to power?

1. Very comfortable
2. Somewhat comfortable
3. Somewhat uncomfortable
4. Very uncomfortable
8. Don't know/Undeclared

How much do you support or oppose the post-2001 political system compared to the Taliban's Emirate?

1. Strongly support
2. Somewhat support
3. Somewhat oppose
4. Strongly oppose
8. Don't know/Undeclared

How satisfied are you with the post-2001 government system's ability in providing services?

1. Very satisfied
2. Somewhat satisfied
3. Somewhat unsatisfied
4. Very unsatisfied
8. Don't know/Undeclared

How satisfied are you with the post-2001 government system's ability in providing security?

- 1 Very satisfied
2. Somewhat satisfied
3. Somewhat unsatisfied
4. Very unsatisfied
8. Don't know/Undeclared

How much do you support or oppose a Taliban style government for Afghanistan?

1. Strongly support
2. Somewhat support
3. Somewhat oppose
4. Strongly oppose
8. Don't know/Undeclared

In your view, who can become a president in Afghanistan?

1. A person elected directly by the people
2. A person appointed in a Loya Jirga
3. A person selected by ethnic leaders
4. A person selected by clerics
5. A person who takes power by force
6. Other (specify):
8. Don't know/Undeclared

How much do you support or oppose a government that controls your daily activities?

1. Strongly support
2. Somewhat support
3. Somewhat oppose
4. Strongly oppose
8. Don't know/Undeclared

How much do you agree or disagree with religious police controlling men and women's daily behavior in the public?



1. Strongly agree
2. Somewhat agree
3. Somewhat disagree
4. Strongly disagree
8. Don't know/Undeclared

How much do you support or oppose the following statement: the government should be accountable to citizens?

1. Strongly support
2. Somewhat support
3. Somewhat oppose
4. Strongly oppose
8. Don't know/Undeclared

Do you think a general election produces a legitimate government?

1. Yes
3. No
8. Don't know/Undeclared

How much do you support or oppose the following statement: “National sovereignty in Afghanistan shall belong to the nation, manifested directly and through its elected representatives?”

1. Strongly agree
2. Somewhat agree
3. Somewhat disagree
4. Strongly disagree
8. Don't know/Undeclared

How much do you support or oppose the following statement: all citizens, regardless of gender, ethnic, and religious differences, are equal?

1. Strongly support
2. Somewhat support
3. Somewhat oppose
4. Strongly oppose
8. Don't know/Undeclared

In your view, what is the most important characteristic of a political party?

1. Representing people's will
2. Representing ethnic group's will
3. Representing clerics' will
4. Other (Specify)
8. Don't know/Undeclared

In your preferred political system, how many political parties should be active?

1. One party
2. Two party
3. More than two parties
4. No party
8. Don't know/Undeclared

How much do you support or oppose if the government restricts the media?

1. Strongly support
2. Somewhat support
3. Somewhat oppose
4. Strongly oppose
8. Don't know/Undeclared

How much do you support or oppose women's performance in the media?

1. Strongly support
2. Somewhat support
3. Somewhat suppose
4. Strongly oppose
8. Don't know/Undeclared

How much do you support or oppose women's education?

1. Strongly support
2. Somewhat support
3. Somewhat oppose
4. Strongly oppose
8. Don't know/Undeclared

How much do you support or oppose women's work in the government?

1. Strongly support
2. Somewhat support
3. Somewhat oppose
4. Strongly oppose
8. Don't know/Undeclared

Is a government comprising individuals involved in war crimes legitimate in your view?

1. Yes
2. No
8. Don't know/Undeclared

Age

1. 18 – 27
2. 28 – 37
3. 38 – 47
4. 48 – above

Sex

1. Female
2. Male

Ethnicity

1. Pashtun
2. Tajik
3. Hazara
4. Uzbek
5. Mixed
8. Other (specify):

Education

1. No education
2. Primary (grades 1-6)
3. Secondary (grades 7-9)
4. lycée (grades 10-12)
5. University
6. Madrassa
7. Other (specify):

Occupation

1. Student
2. Works for government
3. Works in the private sector or NGO
4. Farmer
5. Laborer
6. Craftsperson

7. No job

8. Other (specify):

Political Affiliation

1. Pro-government

2. Mujahid

3. Talib

4. Left

5. Nationalist

5. Believer in ethnic politics

6. Neutral

7. Other (specify):

8. Don't know/Undeclared

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Yaqub Ibrahimi is a research fellow at AISS and a lecturer in the Department of Political Science at Carleton University in Ottawa. Ibrahimi's current research interests include international relations theory, international security, fragile states, and conflict analysis with a special concentration on the Middle East and Afghanistan. His work has appeared in prominent journals including *Terrorism and Political Violence*, *Small Wars and Insurgencies*, *Journal of South Asia Development*, and elsewhere.



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