

WELL-BEING AND PUBLIC ATTITUDES IN AFGHANISTAN: SOME INSIGHTS FROM THE ECONOMICS OF HAPPINESS

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Afghanistan is a context where individuals have to cope with the most adverse of circumstances. In this paper, we use the tools provided by a new approach in economics, which relies on surveys of happiness or reported well-being, to deepen our understanding of the situation there. These tools also provide a window into public attitudes, ranging from opinions about democracy and political freedom, to trust in others and in public institutions, to concerns about crime and corruption. The paper is written with the objective of bringing new insights to bear on a complex situation; neither author claims to be an expert on the economics or politics of Afghanistan. The details of the situation there have been addressed comprehensively elsewhere, including by some of our Brookings colleagues.¹

Our results in Afghanistan conform to a world-wide pattern: remarkable consistency across individuals in the determinants of happiness within countries of all different development levels—even in the midst of extreme circumstances.² Average happiness scores in Afghanistan are higher than the world average and on par for those from Latin America, for example, which is a region that is by most measures much more stable and prosperous. At the same time, relatively high average happiness scores are balanced by much lower scores on a best possible life question. The latter asks respondents to rank their life compared to the best

possible life they can imagine, which introduces a relative component. The differences in the responses on these two questions suggests that Afghans may be naturally cheerful and/or may have adapted their expectations downwards in the face of adversity, yet at the same time are more realistic—or pessimistic—when thinking about their situation in relative terms.

We also find evidence of adaptation to high levels of crime and corruption; unlike most other places where we have studied happiness, being a victim of crime or corruption in Afghanistan does not result in a decline in reported well-being, suggesting that individuals have come to expect such events as the norm. While adaptation may be a good thing—or perhaps even a survival strategy—from an individual happiness perspective, it may be bad for welfare in the aggregate, as it results in a collective tolerance for bad equilibrium, such as high levels of crime and corruption.

Satisfaction with democracy, preference for democracy, and freedom of expression were positively correlated with happiness, suggesting resilient preferences for political freedom in the most difficult of environments. It is possible that people value democracy and political freedom more when those freedoms are under threat. These preferences for political freedom coexist with high levels of skepticism about public institutions, particularly among elites. Our findings on tolerance

¹ For a comprehensive and over-time account, see Jason Campbell and Jeremy Shapiro, “Afghanistan Index: Tracking Variables of Reconstruction and Security in Post-9/11 Afghanistan”, www.brookings.edu/afghanistanindex. See also Bruce Riedel, *The Search for Al Qaeda* (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution Press, 2008).

² For a world-wide review of happiness trends, see Carol Graham, *Happiness around the World: The Paradox of Happy Peasants and Miserable Millionaires* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, forthcoming).

for tax evasion—which is higher among the more educated—and trust in the army—which is lower among the more educated—support such an interpretation.

Notably, we find differences in that happiness levels are significantly higher in areas with more Taliban presence than in the rest of our sample. The results are driven by Pashtun respondents in those areas, and the Pashtun are typically more supportive of the Taliban than are other groups. There are other unobservable differences across provinces that could explain the variance in happiness levels. One plausible explanation for the happiness differences is that crime and corruption levels are lower in those areas. Another is that people are just naturally more cheerful (and also more religious) in those southern/eastern sections of the country. The latent optimism among these respondents is difficult to explain but important to understand.

It is also important to note that our survey did not sample respondents in conflict zones or in those places completely dominated by the Taliban, and that our findings in those areas could be very different. Most opinion surveys, for example, find an overall lack of support for the Taliban.

While we cannot attribute the happiness and other differences to the Taliban per se, they are worth noting and are of relevance to policy going forward. There is something about these areas that results in people being more satisfied with their lives and with democracy, and less tolerant of crime, corruption, and tax evasion. Better understanding the dynamics underlying those differences in attitudes could be important to building up social cohesion and support for a peaceful and democratic government going forward.

Our findings on trust have implications for policy. There are generally low levels of trust in public institutions and in the average citizen. Skepticism of public institutions among the educated coexists with higher than average faith in the armed forces and international security forces among those with less education but more assets to protect, as well as lower than average citizen trust. Re-establishing more generalized social trust and trust in public institutions will be critical to the difficult challenge of sustainable democratic governance. While that is surely a difficult task, the resilient preferences for political freedom that we find are a very positive sign and a base upon which to begin to build that broader trust.

METHODS AND DATA

Standard economic approaches rely on revealed preferences—typically consumption choices—as indicators of individual welfare or utility. Economists shied away from survey data for years, under the assumption that you could only believe the information in revealed choices—e.g. what people do—because the information in surveys—what people say—was biased due to lack of consequence. In recent years, however, there has been a burgeoning use of well-being surveys to analyze a wide range of social science questions. Increased acceptance of survey data has been bolstered by the consistent patterns that economists have found in the determinants of happiness across large samples across countries and over time, as well as by the validation that psychologists find in the way people answer surveys (such as in the number of genuine or “Duchene” smiles).³ Advances in econometric techniques, meanwhile, increasingly allow for corrections for bias and error in survey data.

Happiness surveys are particularly well-suited for answering two kinds of questions that are not well answered by revealed preferences or choices. The first set of questions concerns the welfare effects of institutional arrangements that individuals are powerless to change, such as macroeconomic volatility and inequality. The second set is the explanation of behaviors that are not driven by optimal choices but rather by norms and low expectations among poor or discriminated groups. Happiness surveys are open-ended questions at the beginning of surveys. They typically ask respondents: “generally speaking, how

happy are you (or how satisfied are you) with your life?” with possible responses on a 4 to 10 point scale. The definition of happiness is left up to the respondent, allowing for comparisons across countries and cultures. Once the usual determinants of happiness, such as age, income, employment and marital status, and so on, are controlled for, it is possible to then examine variance in happiness levels that come from particular institutional arrangements (such as the nature of the political or macroeconomic regime), from social networks (the effects of friendships and trust in others, for example), and from phenomena such as crime and corruption.

Our survey of well-being in Afghanistan was made possible by financial support from the Norwegian government, and was carried out in collaboration with AIRConsulting in Kabul—directed by Ahmad Rahmani, a doctoral fellow at the Pardee Rand Graduate School, in collaboration with students the University of Kabul. We interviewed 2000 individuals from eight provinces in Afghanistan in January 2009. The interviews were conducted by recent graduates from the university who had received prior training in survey research through a number of international institutions. The survey was intended as a pilot, and the results are by definition preliminary.

Provinces were chosen on the basis of feasibility of conducting interviews, including the ability to reach them in difficult winter conditions and the safety of the interviewers. Thus our results come with a caveat, as we

³ For detail, see Carol Graham, “The Economics of Happiness”, in Steven Durlauf and Larry Blume, eds., *The Palgrave Dictionary of Economics*, 2nd edition, Palgrave MacMillan, 2008.

have not surveyed in the most difficult and conflict-ridden parts of the country. Still, approximately 400 of our respondents were from areas that had significantly more Taliban presence than did the rest of the sample.

Within the provinces, individuals were drawn randomly from the whole population. The distribution of samples over the provinces was in proportion to the general population of each province. For example, 1,000 sample points were drawn from the capital, Kabul; 260 from the next largest city of the north, Mazar-e-Sharif; 40 samples from Aibak (the capital of Samangan province); 100 samples from Pol-e-Khomri (the center of Baghlan province); 100 samples from Kunduz city, the capital of Kunduz province; 100 samples points from city of Charikar (the capital of Parwan province); 300 samples from the city of Jalalabad (capital of Nangarhar province); and finally, 100 sample points from Jaghuri district (one of the largest districts of Ghazni province). While sampling was stratified over province and weighted according to the distribution of population in each province, systematic random sampling was used to draw respondents from the lists of general population provided by the Afghanistan's Central Statistics Office (ACSO).

Afghan cities are divided into small districts called *Nahya*, each having its own district administrative offices, which maintain reasonably accurate residential lists for their districts. These district administrators report directly to the city municipality; the *Nahya* is considered to be the lowest unit of aggregation for demographic information. These district offices were kept operational even during the Taliban regime, although they put a religious leader in charge of day-to-day supervision of their work.

An example of the selection process comes from Kabul, where 1000 of the 2000 questionnaires were

allocated (its population equals the total population of the other seven cities that were sampled). The 1,000 were then divided into seventeen districts of Kabul, weighted by the total population of each district. A total of that number of samples was drawn from the lists of population by simple systematic random sampling method.⁴ The full survey was completed over the course of one month (January 2009).

The team encountered some difficulties in conducting the interviews. During the preliminary testing of the questionnaire, respondents were reluctant to spend the 40 to 60 minutes required to complete the questionnaire. As a result, we began to offer a modest compensation (\$15 in large cities, \$8 in small ones) in return for completing the questionnaire. The non-response rate dropped from over 70 percent to 1.6 percent. Modest payment or tokens of appreciation for the completion of surveys is not unusual in survey research in poor countries, and should not bias the results.

Other challenges reflect the Afghan context. For example, despite the interviewers' explanation of the survey's purpose, most respondents were skeptical about the interviewers' intentions. This is not surprising given the complex political situation—and trajectory—in Afghanistan. They were particularly skeptical that such a survey could ever have a positive impact on their personal lives. The interviewers noted that while Afghans are frequently exposed to similar surveys by different institutions, they remain uncomfortable expressing their personal opinions, and tend to give generic responses.

Gender issues were, unremarkably, also a challenge. Many of the randomly selected women in the survey would not answer the questionnaire (and this was particularly apparent in the areas with notable Taliban presence). They were typically afraid that their

⁴ Systematic sampling was based on the rule of $K = N/n$, where K = the constant number between two names on the list, N = total population of each district, and n = number of samples allocated for that district. Usually the first number was drawn randomly between 1 to 9 and then the rest of the samples were chosen according to $P2 = P1 + K$, $P3 = P2 + 2K$, $P4 = P3 + 3K$, . . . , and so on. For district number one of Kabul, for example, 65,900 people were listed by the district office; a total of 26 samples were allocated to account for the whole population and then the above formula was applied to account for the rest of the sampling. In some cases where lists were not available some individuals were chosen completely randomly on the street. However, in most cities the lists were available and systematic random sampling method was used.

husbands, fathers, brothers, and other relatives would see them talking to a group of strangers. The randomly drawn women in more open settings in Kabul were much more likely to answer the interviewers than were those interviewed in the home. This creates a selection bias in our findings, of course, as those who answered were likely much freer and more educated than the average.

Cold weather winter and snowy roads also created obstacles to the survey process and to interviews on the streets. In a few cases the team faced serious dangers on mountainous highways Afghanistan. Finally, insecurity in some areas and towns also made interviewing much more difficult than is typical for such surveys.

RESULTS

Accepting these obstacles and the margin of error that they introduce, our results show surprising consistency with those of happiness surveys in other regions. Overall, mean happiness levels in Afghanistan, as measured by a general “how happy are you with your life question”, with the answers ranging from not at all to very, (phrased and scaled exactly as in a region-wide survey for Latin America, the *Latinobarometro*) are relatively high. The mean happiness score in Afghanistan was 2.62; for Latin America in 1997-2007 (2007 is the latest year for which we have data) it was 2.8. The standard deviation in Latin America was higher (0.93 versus 0.91), though, suggesting that there is more variance across countries there than there is across provinces in Afghanistan. Meanwhile, happiness in Latin America in 1997 and 2000 was quite a bit lower than in Afghanistan today (2.35 and 2.36 respectively).⁵ The difference in happiness scores across these two contexts is surely much smaller than the difference in objective conditions.

Mean scores on the best possible life question were quite a bit lower than those for Latin America, in contrast. The question—developed decades ago by Howard Cantril, asks respondents: “what is the best possible life that you can imagine? On a 10-step ladder, how does your life compare to that best possible life?” The mean score on the best possible life question was 4.67 on a 1 to 10 scale (with a standard deviation of 2.12). The mean score on best possible life for Latin America in 2007 was 5.8 (with a standard

deviation of 2.3). The mean for the world (the 129 countries in the *Gallup World Poll*) was 5.42 (with a standard deviation of 2.18).⁶

We also included a question that asks respondents how frequently they smiled yesterday (with responses from not at all to very often), which is the least framed of our happiness questions and is often used as a gauge of positive affect. Eighty-one percent of Afghans reported smiling the day before. This is much higher than what we find for Cuba (62 percent) and almost the same as the percentage of respondents in Latin America that report smiling the day before (82 percent). Not surprisingly, smiling yesterday was more closely correlated with happiness (0.26) than it was with the ladder of life question (0.13). Another question gauges respondents’ prospects of upward mobility, and asks them if they think that it is possible for someone born poor to become wealthy. Sixty percent of Afghans answer this question affirmatively, which is strikingly high given the uncertain context in which they live. In contrast, in Latin America, which surely has more economic and political stability than Afghanistan, only 30 percent of respondents say that hard work is more important than connections are to success.

These findings suggest that Afghans might be naturally cheerful people (or have adapted their expectations downwards in the face of poor conditions), but when asked to assess their situation in relative or

⁵ Author’s calculations based on the Latinobarometro survey, 1997-2007; www.latinobarometro.org.

⁶ Author’s calculations based on the Gallup World Poll.

framed terms, they are well aware that they do not have the best possible lives. Their optimism in the face of adversity may be similar to the optimism we find among the poor in Africa—a need to maintain hope in the face of deep difficulties. At the same time, they are realistic in terms of how their situation compares to the rest of the world. In addition to being an example of downward adaptation, this also drums home the point on differences in how respondents answer well-being surveys when the frames are different.

At the individual level, Afghans seem to conform to most of the usual happiness patterns that hold world-wide. [See Table 1] There is a U-shaped age curve, with the turning point being approximately 48 years. This is very similar to the age turning point for Latin America, which is also in the late forties, and a bit older than for the U.S. and Europe, which is in the mid-forties. The age turning point for Russia and for Central Asia, meanwhile, is a bit older, in the early fifties. It seems to be a universal phenomenon that expectations align more closely with reality as people age, and at the same time burdens related to taking care of both children and the elderly are at their height in the middle age years. As people get beyond those years, they may be more appreciative of the years that they have left. There may also be some selection bias: happier people are healthier, in general, and more likely to survive into the older years.⁷

Respondents' self-reported health, meanwhile, is positively and significantly correlated with happiness. This correlation holds in all countries where we have studied happiness. We cannot, however, establish a direction of causality, and it is likely that it runs in both directions: good health makes people happier, and happier people are more likely to have—and to report—better health.⁸

There is no significant gender difference in Afghanistan, as is the case in Latin America. In the U.S. and Europe, women are happier than men. Given what we know about the role of women and the fragile nature of gender rights in Afghanistan, the lack of difference between women and men is likely a result of the sample selection-bias noted above. Because of women's reluctance to answer the survey, they made up only 11 percent of the total respondents in the sample, and the women who were willing to take initiative to answer the survey—many of whom were in a relatively open setting—were likely more educated and had more control over their lives than the average.

Supporting this selection-bias interpretation, women were more likely than men to report smiling yesterday. They also scored higher on the best possible life question. While these differences are likely real for the sample of women that were interviewed, it would be surprising if they held for a more generalized sample of Afghan women.

Married respondents in Afghanistan were not happier than the average. This is a domain in which the country more closely resembles Russia than the OECD (while married people are typically happier than the average in most places, they are not in Russia). Both marriage and gender findings must be taken with a grain of salt, though, given the over-representation of men in the Afghan sample. Unemployed people (roughly 10 percent of the sample) were no less happy than the average, which is distinct from findings for most other parts of the world, where the unemployed are significantly less happy. This is likely a result of blurred definitions between employment and unemployment, given the country's large informal sector, as well as subsistence agriculture and the drug trade. It could also be that after three decades of high levels of unemployment, citizens of Afghanistan have adapted to unemployment.

⁷ See Carol Graham, "Happiness and Health: Lessons— and Questions—for Policy", *Health Affairs*, January-February 2008. Psychological studies—such as the famous Notre Dame study of American nuns—confirm this relationship. For a review, see Richard Layard, *Happiness: Lessons from a New Science* (New York: Penguin Press, 2005); and Ed Diener and Robert Biswas-Diener, *Happiness: Unlocking the Mysteries of Psychological Wealth* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2008).

⁸ See Graham (2008) and Diener and Biswas-Diener (2008).

Another area where Afghans are different is in religiosity. In many other places where happiness surveys have been conducted—such as Latin America, Europe, and the U.S.—reporting to have faith or to be devout is positively correlated with happiness (not least as happy people may be more likely to have faith). In Afghanistan, reporting more faith is *not* correlated with happiness. Similar to happiness, though, there is a quadratic (U-shaped) age relationship with reporting more faith, with both younger and older people, on average, reporting more faith than those in the middle age years. The turning point on age is 31.5 years. A possible explanation for the difference from the other contexts where we have studied religion and happiness, is that in those instances faith is generally moderate, rather than the subject of extreme political and societal divisions, as it is in Afghanistan. Reporting to have confidence in your imam, meanwhile, reflects a similar demographic profile: lower levels of income, being from a rural area, and having higher trust in other people and in one's neighbors.⁹

It is interesting to note that the age and religion U-shaped curve is exactly the reverse of the upside down U curve relating age to having access to the internet. Having access to the internet is negatively correlated with being very young or very old, while middle aged users are most likely to have access. The turning point is almost exactly the same: 31.25 years! Wealthier and more educated people are, not surprisingly more likely to have internet access, while education is negatively correlated with religiosity (as is reporting trust in one's imam). While only suggestive, these findings highlight the kinds of social and political divisions related to religious extremism in the country.

The relationship between happiness and income across individuals is remarkably consistent across most countries, with wealthier people being, on average, happier than poor ones. Accurately measuring income in a context such as Afghanistan, however, is difficult if

not impossible. In addition to the size of the informal economy which makes accurately measuring incomes difficult under the best of circumstances, there are tremendous incentives for under-reporting, given both the illicit drug trade and high levels of corruption at all levels of government. Because of these constraints, we chose to rely on two kinds of indicators as proxies for income in our regressions.

The first is an asset index based on reported ownership of 18 assets listed in the survey, with possible answers being yes/no. These assets ranged from sewage, running water, and electricity, to fixed phone lines and computers, to washing machines and vacation homes. Trying to simplify based on asset ownership yielded its own challenges in the Afghan context. For example, only 913 people have electricity, yet a high percentage of those—787—possess a computer. Even more puzzling, while only 279 people possess running water, 737 of them say they have washing machines. And a very high proportion of the sample—1787—report to have fixed phones. Part of this is explained by the availability of cheap Chinese generators—which substitute for electric service—and by water pumps (411 respondents owned them) substituting for running water.

As in other poor parts of the world, assets can be owned and not utilized. People may have bought electric goods when electricity or a generator was available in a town, but the goods become useless when the generator no longer works. Alternatively, such assets may be possessed but no longer operational, as repairs are unavailable or unaffordable.¹⁰ Meanwhile, a large number of people own cell phones and tap into areas where there is coverage, even if they do not have phone plans. It may also be that because cell phones are so commonly owned by Afghans in cities, in many cases respondents might have reported yes to phone ownership, assuming they were being asked for a cell phone, despite the emphasis of surveyors on land lines.

⁹ Detailed regression results available from the authors.

¹⁰ I thank Vanda Felbab-Brown for pointing this out in this instance. I describe this phenomenon more generally across a number of countries in *Safety Nets, Politics, and the Poor: Transitions to Market Economies* (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution Press, 1994).

Despite these conundrums, the distribution of asset ownership is quite normal in comparison to those for other developing countries: for example, only 7 percent of respondents have vacation homes while 34 percent have either water pumps or running water; 91 percent have radios and 87 percent have televisions. The distribution of assets across the sample, meanwhile, displays a fairly normal curve.

Our second proxy for income is the respondent's own assessment of his/her economic situation and prospects. The first is the economic ladder question which has been used in many surveys and asks the respondent to place themselves on a 10-step economic ladder representing his/her society. Another question which we use asks the respondent whether the economy is going forward, stalling, or going backwards. As these are perceptions based measure and responses are influenced by individual character traits (such as happiness), there is likely a wide margin of error.

Our asset index results are as expected: respondents with a higher score on the asset index are also happier.¹¹ [See Table 1, column 1, row 6] We also find that respondents with higher levels of self assessed economic status—via the ladder question—are happier than the average, as are respondents with a positive economic outlook for the future. It is quite likely some of this is driven by perceptions being auto-correlated as much as it is by real economic differences: happier people are more likely to be optimistic about the economic future, as well as to place themselves higher on the economic ladder. The role of perceptions may be particularly important in the Afghan context, where normal measures of economic activity and progress, such as reported income, have less significance due to the extra-legal or informal nature of much economic activity. Indeed, when we include our economic ladder question in the same regression with the asset index, the latter becomes insignificant, suggesting that the correlation between perceived

economic status and happiness is much stronger than that between objective economic indicators and happiness. [Table 1, column 2]

Another variable that is very closely correlated with happiness, and almost mirrors its correlates, is our prospects of upward mobility (POUM) variable, which asks respondents if they think that it is possible for someone who is born poor in their country to become wealthy or not. Prospects of upward mobility (which is a proxy for optimism) and happiness are very closely correlated in many other places we have studied happiness, including the U.S. and Latin America. It is notable, though, that the relationship holds in Afghanistan, where it is far more difficult to have confidence in a stable future. As in other places, in Afghanistan POUM and happiness are closely correlated, and share a similar relationship with many variables, such as health. There is also a U-shaped age curve, with the turning point for POUM slightly older than for happy (age 54). Income, meanwhile, is positively correlated with happiness but not with POUM, suggesting that the rich have no more faith in the fairness of the system than the poor (indeed, many of our findings on trust suggest that the rich are more skeptical of the system than are the poor).

In contrast, the best possible life question—which introduces relativity into respondents' assessments of their lives—is less closely correlated with happiness. There is no age curve at all, and unemployment, which has no correlation with happiness or POUM, has *negative* effects on responses to the best possible life question. While the happiness and POUM variables capture innate optimism, answers to the best possible life question seem to be more grounded in objective conditions—such as employment status. Again, this demonstrates the extent to which Afghans score differently when their natural cheerfulness or optimism is assessed in an open-ended manner and when they are asked to compare their lives in relative terms.

¹¹ Respondents that received a higher socio-economic assessment from the interviewers were also happier than the average, although when we include this assessment and our asset index in the same regression, the latter becomes insignificant. It is likely that the interviewers' assessments were based on asset ownership.

High levels of optimism coincide with resilient preferences for political freedom. Respondents who are satisfied with democracy as a system of government are happier (and wealthier but not more educated) than the average. Those respondents that believe that they can speak out freely and without repression, are also significantly happier than others. It is notable that respondents who prefer democracy to any form of government are also happier, wealthier, *and* more educated than the average. Despite the challenging political and economic environment—or perhaps because of it—64 percent of respondents support democracy over any other system of government. Only 29 percent are satisfied with how it is performing, in contrast, suggesting that Afghans are able to distinguish between the system, *per se*, and the performance of a particular government.

These political preferences are particularly notable given that they co-exist with Afghans' very low levels of trust in most public institutions—and even less in each other. Less than 10 percent of respondents answered that they could trust their neighbors a fair amount or a great deal; 20 percent said they trusted the government a fair amount or a great deal; 21 percent trusted the police; and 17 percent the international security forces. In contrast, 69 percent said that they trusted the army a fair amount or a great deal.

Trusting the government is positively correlated with trusting politicians, the army, the international security forces, and confidence in public administration, and with being more optimistic in general. It is not, however, significantly correlated with income or education, nor was it correlated with confidence in local government, suggesting that the factors that determine trust in the government more generally are distinct from local conditions. The lack of correlation with socioeconomic variables or local conditions combined with the strong correlation with trust in other institutions in such an uncertain context, where institutions are so

weak, suggest that our trust in government variable is capturing latent optimism rather than any realistic assessment of the state of institutions.

We looked at our trust variables in greater detail. Education is negatively correlated with trusting the army, while income is positively correlated with trusting the army. One can imagine that the most educated people are skeptical of the armed forces (and possibly any other institutions). Trust in the army is positively correlated with being indifferent about democracy, rather than with supporting it over any other system.

This is supported by another finding: the more educated are more accepting of tax evasion, which again supports an interpretation of skepticism of public institutions among elites. In contrast, those who have at least some income rather than being in destitute poverty see the army as a way to protect those means. Supporting this, trust in the international security forces is also positively correlated with income, and income is *negatively* correlated with trusting other people (as opposed to the armed forces). Those that trust other people, meanwhile, like those that trust the government, exhibit “pollyanna”-like traits: they have less income than the average, but score higher than the average on outlook for the future and perceived economic status.¹² Income is positively correlated with trusting one's neighbors, meanwhile, likely because wealthier people select to live near each other and/or in wealthier neighborhoods. They trust people like themselves but not the population more generally. [Table 2]

Low levels of trust coexist with significant adaptation to high levels of crime and corruption. Twenty-five percent of our respondents reported having been a victim of corruption in the past 12 months, while 11 percent reported having been a victim of crime.¹³ In most other contexts, respondents who had been a victim of either crime or corruption in the last twelve

¹² In our analysis of trust in others and in institutions we attempted, to the extent it is possible, to control for differences in individual personality traits/optimism by including a control in the regression for each respondent's reported happiness level. Detailed regression results are available from the authors.

¹³ Crime in this instance does not include poppy cultivation, which most Afghans do not consider a crime and which was queried in a separate question.

months are less happy than the average. But crime and corruption victims in Afghanistan were no less happy than the average.¹⁴

As crime and corruption have become the norm, adaptation seems to have mediated the usual effects of these phenomena on well-being. Supporting this interpretation, other variables that proxy safety and freedom from crime, such as being able to walk safely in your neighborhood, also had no significant effects on happiness. This is a very marked departure from most other places in the world, where being a crime or corruption victim is clearly diminishes happiness, and being able to walk safely enhances happiness.

The findings run in the same direction, though, as some of our findings on adaptation to crime and corruption in Latin America where high levels of these phenomena are the norm, and adaptation also mediates their well-being effects. The average crime victimization rate for Latin America as a whole, for

1997 to 2007 was 39 percent, while corruption victimization was 23 percent. The higher crime rate in Latin America is likely explained by higher overall wealth levels there (and crime victims are wealthier than the average) and possibly by the strict *Sharia* laws in Afghanistan. When we compare across countries in Latin America, we find that the well-being costs of being a crime or corruption victim are lower in places where the crime and corruption norms are higher.¹⁵

In discussing our findings on crime and corruption, it is important to note both the urban and non-conflict zone bias of our sample. It could well be that in the conflict zones, where these phenomena are worse, there is a tipping point at which people can no longer adapt to these phenomenon and they become intolerable. Unfortunately, in the absence of data for those places, we can not determine if that is the case and at the levels of crime and corruption for such tipping points in the Afghan context.

¹⁴ With some equation specifications, being a corruption victim is negative and significant, but the effect is not robust to changes in the specification.

¹⁵ We measured higher crime and corruption norms as a higher “unexplained” probability of being a crime or corruption victim; e.g. the probability that was not explained by the usual correlates of victimization, such as higher income levels, gender (male), urban area, etc. See Chapter 7 in Graham (forthcoming).

TALIBAN INFLUENCE?

It was impossible for our survey team to interview in conflict areas or in those heavily dominated by the Taliban, for obvious reasons. As a result, our survey over-samples safe, non-Taliban areas. Still, a few of the areas where the team worked were more likely to have at least some Taliban influence or presence than were the rest of the sample. These were Ghazni province (the Jaghori district, 100 interviews) and Nangarhar (Jalalabad city, 300 interviews). It is important to note that these are not areas under direct Taliban control, but rather have elements of insurgents who are out in remote places most of the time, but occasionally come and visit major cities and district centers. They pass their messages through the mosques, post letters on public posts, and have a subtle presence.

These two particular districts are also known to be bastions of “progressive” thinking and for valuing education more than the average (although there is no education difference between our respondents in these districts and the rest). Jalalabad, for example, is a prosperous and cosmopolitan city by Afghan standards, and a major trading hub in both legal and illegal goods. There is likely more Taliban influence in rural parts of Nangarhar than in Jalalabad, for example. Ghazni, meanwhile, is a province in turmoil, which approximately one year ago went from being a safe and prosperous area to being the focus of an effective Taliban campaign that intimidated much of the population. While Jaghori has seen some Taliban violence it has seen relatively small levels of violence compared to the rest of Ghazni. Jaghori also has a high percentage of university students.

While there are elements of Taliban influence in these two areas, they are surely not Taliban controlled. Thus what we find could be explained by other unobservable characteristics of these areas, having nothing to do with the Taliban. That said, our findings for this sub-set of respondents are distinct and merit attention, not least because the Taliban is more present in these areas than in the others that we sampled. We have coded this sub-sample of respondents as living in “Taliban-present” areas, in order to make a clear distinction from being Taliban controlled.

Respondents who live in Jaghori and Jalalabad are happier than the average for Afghanistan. Their mean happiness score was 2.82 while for the non-Taliban present region it was 2.58 (as measured on a four point scale; the difference is statistically significant). To give a sense of orders of magnitude, the positive coefficient on living in a Taliban region is stronger than any variable *other* than our asset index, including health. [Table 1, column 1]

Respondents in these districts also smiled more often, and are more devout (as measured by a question that asks how devout respondents are, with possible answers on a four point scale ranging from not at all to very; mean scores were 3.6 versus 3.4). Residents in the south and the east are typically more religious than in the rest of the country, and these are the two districts in the survey that represent the east.

Respondents in Jaghori and Jalalabad were also more likely to be satisfied with democracy and to say that they had freedom of expression. Mean scores on satisfaction for democracy were higher (a statistically

significant difference) in the Taliban-present regions than in non-Taliban regions (2.2 versus 2.0 on a 4 point scale). These respondents were also more likely to report that they trusted the government. Yet they were less likely to say that they had freedom of choice to do what they wanted with their lives. And, as opposed to the rest of the sample, freedom of expression and freedom of choice were not significantly correlated with happiness in these areas.

One possible explanation for the higher happiness levels in these areas is that crime and corruption levels are lower. Reported victimization is lower in these areas than it is for the rest of our sample: 10 percent of those in Taliban areas reported being crime victims, while 11 percent of the rest of the sample did. The difference is greater for corruption: 19 percent of those in the Taliban present areas reported being victims of corruption, while 25 percent of those the rest of the sample did. And, in contrast to our findings for the sample as a whole, those that reported being corruption victims in the Taliban present areas suffered significant and negative happiness effects, perhaps because there is less tolerance for corruption there. [See Table 1, columns 3 and 4]

Supporting these findings, respondents in these regions are less accepting of tax evasion (a question which asks respondents how acceptable it is to avoid taxes), and more likely to report that they feel safe walking in their neighborhoods. There seem to be different norms related to law and safety, which may result from generally lower levels in these regions. These, in turn, may have nothing at all to do with the Taliban.

We also compared the reasons why these respondents believe that people support the Taliban with those of the overall sample. The respondents that live in Taliban-influenced regions are more likely to say that

people support the Taliban because of corruption in the Karzai government and because of resentment of foreign forces, and less likely to say that it is due to Taliban influence than are those in the full sample. [See Table 3] It is important to note that most opinion surveys find an overall lack of support for the Taliban.

There are surely other traits that we have not clearly identified that distinguish these areas from the rest of the country. While the Taliban is more visible in these areas than in others we have surveyed, we cannot establish that the difference in norms is due to the Taliban. That said, understanding why respondents in these areas have higher life satisfaction, lower levels of tolerance for crime, corruption, and tax evasion, and are more satisfied with democracy is surely important to policies that can better the complex situation in that country.

As a robustness check, we created an additional “Taliban-influenced” variable. This was based on the assumption that what we might be labeling Taliban influence was largely related to being of Pashtun origin in eastern/southern regions where the Taliban is more active. Again, it is important to note that we did not survey where there is Taliban control (and therefore where there is more likely to be intervention and conflict). Our second Taliban-influenced variable separated those respondents (278 of them) who were Pashtun in Nangarhar and Parwan provinces.¹⁶ When we include this variable in our original regressions, we get essentially identical results. The same results did not hold for being Pashtun in general, meanwhile, suggesting that the difference is associated with being Pashtun in these particular areas. We also checked to make sure that the results were not driven by Jalalabad by including a control for living in a big city; that control had no effects on our results.¹⁷

¹⁶ As an additional robustness check, we also examined the scores of respondents from Kunduz province in the north, the one northern province that had slightly more Taliban presence than did the other northern provinces, to see if they scored similarly to our Taliban-influenced southern provinces. They did not, however. While there were some similarities, they did not score the same on key variables. They were not happier than the average, they were not made unhappy by being victims of crime or corruption, and they were not more critical of tax evasion, among other things. Regression results are available from the authors.

¹⁷ These additional regression results are available from the authors on request.

It is worth noting that any way that we specify our “Taliban-influence” variable, whether it is being from Jaghori and Jalalabad, or being a Pashtun in Nangahar and Parwan, we get consistent results in terms of higher levels of happiness and higher levels of trust in other people, in one’s neighbors, and in the government. This suggests that there is a latent optimism among these respondents that is difficult to explain but important to understand.¹⁸

All of this suggests, again, that there is something distinct about these areas—and being Pashtun in them—that results in higher happiness levels, satisfaction with democracy, and different norms of crime, corruption, and tax evasion. While we cannot definitely identify the causal factors, understanding these differences are surely relevant to any effort that is attempting to reduce conflict and build sustainable democracy in Afghanistan.

¹⁸ Detailed regression results available from the authors.

CONCLUSIONS

What is most notable about our findings is the extent to which there is consistency across the most basic variables (age, income, health, and perceived economic status) even in the tumultuous economic and political context that the Afghan people are living in, as well as the fact that they are relatively happy compared to world averages. The latter is gauged by an open-ended happiness question and by an affect question based on the number of smiles reported for the previous day. At the same time, when asked to assess their situation in relative terms via a best possible life question, Afghans score much lower than those respondents who live in more prosperous and stable contexts.

We also find evidence of adaptation to high levels of crime and corruption in Afghanistan; unlike most other places where we have studied happiness, being a victim of crime or corruption does not result in a decline in reported well-being, suggesting that individuals have come to expect such events as the norm. While adaptation may be a good thing—or perhaps even a survival strategy—from an individual well-being or happiness perspective, it may be bad for welfare in the aggregate, as it results in a collective tolerance for bad equilibrium, such as high levels of crime and corruption.

Satisfaction with democracy, preference for democracy, and freedom of expression were positively correlated with happiness. Indeed, a remarkably high percent of our respondents—64 percent—prefer democracy to any other system of government. These resilient preferences for political freedom coincide with extremely low levels of citizen trust—in fellow

citizens and in public institutions in general. Skepticism of public institutions is highest among the most educated respondents. Our findings on tolerance for tax evasion and trust in the army, among others, support an interpretation of skepticism among the elites.

Finally, we find higher levels of happiness for those respondents that live in areas with more Taliban presence than in the rest of the sample—and Pashtuns in particular, in these areas. One plausible explanation is that crime and corruption levels are lower in those areas. Another is that people are just naturally more cheerful (and also more religious) in that part (south/east) of the country. There are other plausible, although unobservable, differences across provinces that could explain the variance in happiness levels. We surely cannot attribute the happiness and other differences to the Taliban *per se*. Yet they are worth noting and could be of relevance to policy going forward, as there is something about these areas that results in people being more satisfied with their lives and with democracy, and less tolerant of crime, corruption, and tax evasion. And it is important to note, again, in closing, that our survey has not sampled respondents in conflict zones or in those completely dominated by the Taliban, and that our findings in those areas could be very different. That, if at all possible, is for the latter stage of research.

Finally, we are hoping to repeat the survey in January 2010, so that we can monitor well-being and other trends over time. At least some of that sample will entail the same respondents, so that we can take advantage of longitudinal data to tease out effects that are driven by individual personality traits rather than by context or environment.

Our findings are intended to provide a window into a very complex situation where the international community has a major stake yet little clarity on its resolution. What do they imply for policy? The international community must find ways to support the hope and resilient preferences for political freedom that we find in Afghanistan, as they are an important counter-force in a generalized climate of violence, fear, and mistrust. Equally important is establishing trust in public institutions. Unfortunately, this is one of the objectives in foreign assistance that we know least about, and it is even murkier in a complex situation such as Afghanistan.

More specific, visible measures, such as the successful holding of elections this summer, or targeted

efforts to reduce crime, corruption, and tax evasion, are more likely to be more effective and would serve that broader goal. A highly visible and targeted effort to crack down on tax evasion in Peru in the 1990's, for example—which targeted large and influential firms as well as small ones—had a broad influence on public confidence in institutions. Perhaps targeted efforts along these lines could have similar effects in Afghanistan. There are surely other strategies to reform public institutions and reduce rates of crime and corruption which, with visible results, might be a first step towards restoring public trust in institutions and in the system more generally.

TABLE 1. THE DETERMINANTS OF HAPPINESS IN AFGHANISTAN

	Reg 1	Reg 2	Reg 3	Reg 4	Reg 5	Reg 6
Dependent variable: happy			tlbn=1	tlbn=0	tlbn=1	tlbn=0
age	-0.0800	-0.0710	-0.0470	-0.0680	-0.0600	-0.0690
	(0.024)***	(0.026)***	-0.058	(0.029)**	-0.058	(0.029)**
age2	0.0010	0.0010	0.0000	0.0010	0.0010	0.0010
	(0.000)***	(0.000)***	-0.001	(0.000)**	-0.001	(0.000)**
gender	0.0960	0.1340	0.3020	0.1080	2.170	0.1130
	-0.146	-0.158	-1.379	-0.163	-1.364	-0.161
married	0.0640	0.0790	-0.2610	0.1460	-0.1860	0.1590
	-0.129	-0.139	-0.349	-0.153	-0.345	-0.153
hhinc1	0.9400	-0.0720	-0.2640	0.0390	-0.3160	0.0420
	(0.222)***	-0.263	-0.641	-0.293	-0.639	-0.293
unemp	-0.2030	-0.2040	-0.1010	-0.1680	-0.1210	-0.2020
	-0.150	-0.159	-0.422	-0.174	-0.425	-0.172
hlthstat	0.4410	0.2250	0.0430	0.2440	0.0330	0.2610
	(0.053)***	(0.059)***	-0.144	(0.066)***	-0.144	(0.066)***
tlbn	0.4800	0.4040				
	(0.110)***	(0.117)***				
els		0.0800	-0.0540	0.106	-0.0600	0.0860
		(0.033)**	-0.083	(0.036)***	-0.082	(0.036)**
lls		0.1130	0.2420	0.0790	0.2540	0.0940
		(0.025)***	(0.068)***	(0.028)***	(0.066)***	(0.028)***
satdemo		0.2350	0.2930	0.2170	0.3160	0.2160
		(0.061)***	(0.145)**	(0.069)***	(0.145)**	(0.069)***
outlook		1.0500	1.0370	1.0500	1.0340	1.0540
		(0.099)***	(0.240)***	(0.111)***	(0.235)***	(0.111)***
frexpr		0.0800	0.0210	0.0790	0.0500	0.0790
		(0.041)**	-0.098	(0.046)*	-0.098	(0.046)*
frchoice		0.0470	0.0740	0.0540	0.0670	0.0540
		(0.018)***	-0.045	(0.021)***	-0.045	(0.020)***
vcrime					0.2850	-0.1590
					-0.351	-0.167
vcorr			-0.6210	-0.0770		
			(0.284)**	-0.116		
Observations	1909	1732	333	1381	336	1388

Standard errors in parentheses

*significant at 10%; **significant at 5%; significant at 1%

Variable Name	Variable Description
age	Age of respondent
age2	Age: Squared
hhinc1	HH asset index: unweighted
eduyr	Years of education: 2=PS 13=HS 15=Tech Sch 17=Univ
gender	DV: Gender of respondent: 1=M 0=F
married	DV: Married 1=Y 0=N (from marital==4)
unemp	DV: Unemployed 1=Y 0=N (from occup==7)
hlthstat	R's physical health: 1=Very bad 5=Very good
tlbn	Taliban influenced: 1=Y 0=N
vcorr	DV: Witness of corruption in last 12m: 1=Y 0=N
vcrime	DV: Victim of crime in last 12m: 1=Y 0=N
els	Position on a 10-step economic ladder (self) 1=Poorest 10=Richest
lls	Position of life today on a 10 point scale: 1=Worst life 10=Best life
outlook	Outlook for 2009: 0=Trepidation 1=Hope
satdemo	Satisfaction with democracy: 1=Not at all satisfied 4=Very satisfied
frexpr	Freedom of expressing opinion: 1=Never 5=Always
frchoice	Freedom of choice: 1=None 10=Much liberty

Source: Authors' calculations based on the January 2009 survey.

Ordered logit regressions with happiness as the dependent variable. Tlbn is a dummy variable for respondents living in Taliban influenced provinces (interviews in the city of Jalalabad in Nangarhar province and in Jaghuri district in Ghazni province).

TABLE 2. TRUST IN INSTITUTIONS

	Reg 1	Reg 2	Reg 3	Reg 4	Reg 5	Reg 6	Reg 7	Reg 8
	Dependent variable							
Independent variables	trpeop	trneigh	trgov	trarm	trpol	trintsec	taxevs	dpoum
age	-0.0410	-0.1220	-0.0220	0.0040	-0.0370	0.1370	0.0250	-0.0670
	-0.025	(0.033)***	-0.033	-0.032	-0.034	(0.035)***	-0.034	(0.024)***
age2	0.0010	0.0010	0.0000	0.0000	0.0010	-0.0020	0.0000	0.0010
	(0.000)*	(0.000)***	0.000	0.000	0.000	(0.000)***	0.000	(0.000)***
hhinc1	-0.7460	0.4520	0.3580	1.0050	-0.0590	0.7370	-0.0220	-0.1530
	(0.212)***	(0.256)*	-0.260	(0.263)***	-0.259	(0.265)***	-0.260	-0.178
eduyr	0.0080	-0.0210	-0.0190	-0.0250	-0.0180	-0.0050	0.0260	0.0000
	-0.009	(0.011)**	(0.011)*	(0.011)**	-0.011	-0.011	(0.011)**	-0.007
gender	-0.0450	0.3850	-0.1340	0.2170	-0.2370	-0.4770	0.0580	-0.0280
	-0.131	(0.164)**	-0.167	-0.165	-0.169	(0.176)***	-0.163	-0.115
married	-0.2010	0.4000	-0.0370	0.0980	0.0740	-0.0900	-0.1030	0.0930
	(0.120)*	(0.152)***	-0.153	-0.151	-0.153	-0.158	-0.147	-0.104
unemp	0.1590	-0.2690	-0.2220	-0.3860	-0.2900	-0.0270	-0.2990	0.0250
	-0.139	-0.187	-0.194	(0.182)**	-0.192	-0.193	-0.183	-0.127
hlthstat	0.1740	0.2480	0.1370	0.1750	0.1040	0.0780	-0.0540	0.1590
	(0.051)***	(0.063)***	(0.064)**	(0.064)***	-0.064	-0.066	-0.062	(0.042)***
happy	-0.0410	0.1140	0.2900	0.2520	0.2780	0.2410	-0.1360	
	-0.045	(0.058)**	(0.059)***	(0.058)***	(0.059)***	(0.062)***	(0.057)**	
tlbn	0.2470	0.3260	0.6410	0.6530	0.4050	0.0620	-0.7820	0.3540
	(0.101)**	(0.129)**	(0.137)***	(0.133)***	(0.134)***	-0.136	(0.140)***	(0.094)***
Constant	-0.5170							0.8450
	-0.452							(0.409)**
Observations	1361	1391	1392	1392	1389	1384	1370	1388

Standard errors in parentheses
 *significant at 10% **significant at 5% ***significant at 1%

Variable Name	Variable Description
age	Age of respondent
age2	Age: Squared
hhinc1	HH asset index: unweighted
eduyr	Years of education: 2=PS 13=HS 15=Tech Sch 17=Univ
gender	DV: Gender of respondent: 1=M 0=F
married	DV: Married 1=Y 0=N (from marital==4)
unemp	DV: Unemployed 1=Y 0=N (from occup==7)
hlthstat	R's physical health: 1=Very bad 5=Very good
happy	Happy: 1=Not happy at all 4=Very happy
tlbn	Taliban influenced: 1=Y 0=N
trpeop	DV: Trust in people: 1=Can trust majority 0=Cannot
trneigh	Trust in neighbors: 1=None 4=A lot
trgov	Trust in government: 1=None 4=A lot
trarm	Trust in army: 1=None 4=A lot
trpol	Trust in police: 1=None 4=A lot
trintsec	Trust in international security forces: 1=None 4=A lot
taxevs	How justifiable to evade taxes: 1=Never 10=Totally
dpoum	DV: Prospect of economic mobility: 0=Born poor cannot be wealthy 1=Can

Source: Authors' calculations based on the January 2009 survey.

Ordered logit and 2 probit regressions, depending on the nature of the dependent variables. The set of alternative dependent variables are: trpeop (Trust in people; probit regression) trneigh (Trust in neighbors), trgov (Trust in Government), trarm (Trust in Army), trpol (Trust in police), trintsec (Trust in International Security Forces), taxevs (Perspective towards tax evasion), and dpoum (Prospect of upward mobility; probit regression).

TABLE 3. TALIBAN INFLUENCE

Reasons for support of the Taliban	Taliban influenced region		Total
	0=No	1=Yes	
Ideology (as % of column total)	173 11.18%	50 13.48%	223 11.63%
Ethnic affinity (as % of column total)	353 22.82%	53 14.29%	406 21.27%
Corruption of Karzai government (as % of column total)	426 27.54%	113 30.46%	539 28.10%
Resentment of foreign forces (as % of column total)	341 22.04%	109 29.38%	450 23.46%
Economic reasons other than drugs (as % of column total)	104 6.72%	32 8.63%	136 7.09%
Its protection of the drug economy (as % of column total)	56 3.62%	7 1.89%	63 3.28%
Intimidation by the Taliban (as % of column total)	97 6.08%	7 1.89%	101 5.27%
Total (as % of column total)	1,547 100.00%	371 100.00%	1,918 100.00%

QUESTIONNAIRE – WELL-BEING IN AFGHANISTAN

REPORTED WELL-BEING

Q1. Generally speaking, would you say that you are:

- 1) very happy
- 2) pretty happy
- 3) not very happy
- 4) not at all happy;
- (DK/NR)¹⁹

Q2. It is near the end of the year 2008. Would you say that you look at next year with hope or with trepidation?

- 1) hope
- 2) trepidation;
- DK/NR

Q3. Some people believe that they have freedom to choose and control their own lives, and other people believe that what they do has no effect on what happens in their lives. Please indicate, on this ladder, how much freedom and control you feel that you have over the way in which your life turns out? 1 on the ladder is no liberty, 10 is much liberty

- 1 2 3 4 5
6 7 8 9 10 (DK/NR)

Q4. Imagine the best possible life. Think of a ladder with 10 steps, with the best possible life as step 10 and the worst life on step 1. Where would you place your life today?

- 1 2 3 4 5
6 7 8 9 10 (DK/NR)

ECONOMIC SITUATION/MANAGEMENT OF THE ECONOMY

Q5. Would you say that the country is:

- 1) progressing
- 2) stalling
- 3) going backwards;
- (DK/NR)

Q6. How would you describe the current economic situation in the country?

- 1) very good
- 2) good
- 3) regular
- 4) bad
- 5) very bad;
- (DK/NR)

Q7. Compared to twelve months ago, do you think the current economic situation is:

- 1) much worse
- 2) worse
- 3) the same
- 4) better
- 5) much better;
- (DK/NR)

Q8. In general, how would you describe your economic situation and that of your family?

- 1) very good
- 2) good
- 3) average
- 4) bad
- 5) very bad;
- (DK/NR)

¹⁹ The don't know/no response option is ONLY a marker for the interviewer; it should NOT be read to the respondent

Q9. Compared to twelve months ago, do you think your economic situation and that of your family is:

- 1) much better
 - 2) better
 - 3) the same
 - 4) worse
 - 5) much worse;
- (DK/NR)

Q10. In the next twelve months, do you think your economic situation and that of your family will be:

- 1) much better
- 2) better
- 3) the same
- 4) worse
- 5) much worse

Q11. Do you think that in this country a person who is born poor and works hard can become rich, or do you think that it is not possible to be born poor and become rich?

- 1) Born poor and working hard can become wealthy
 - 2) It is not possible to be born poor and become rich
- (DK/NR)

Q12. Imagine a 10 step ladder, on which the poorest people are found on the first step, and the richest people are found on the 10th step. a) Where would you place yourself? b) where would you place your parents? c) where do you think your children will be?

POOREST 1 2 3 4 5
6 7 8 9 10 RICHEST

Q12a. personal placement

Q12b. parents step

Q12c. children's step

Q13. How fair do you think the distribution of income is in this country?

- 1) very fair
 - 2) fair
 - 3) unfair
 - 4) very unfair
- (DK/NR)

TRUST/CONFIDENCE IN INSTITUTIONS

Q14. Generally speaking, do you think that you can trust the majority of people or that one can never be careful enough in dealings with other people?

- 1) you can trust the majority of people
 - 2) one can never be cautious enough in dealings with others
- (DK/NR)

Q15. How much you can trust your neighbors?

- 1) Not at all
- 2) Just a little bit
- 3) A fair amount
- 4) A great deal

Q16. How much can you trust the government?

- 1) Not at all
- 2) Just a little bit
- 3) A fair amount
- 4) A great deal

Q17. How much can you trust the army?

- 1) Not at all
- 2) Just a little bit
- 3) A fair amount
- 4) A great deal

Q18. How much can you trust the police?

- 1) Not at all
- 2) Just a little bit
- 3) A fair amount
- 4) A great deal

Q19. How much can you trust the international security forces (NATO/US)?

- 1) Not at all
- 2) Just a little bit
- 3) A fair amount
- 4) A great deal

Q20. How much can you trust the non-government organizations (NGO's)?

- 1) Not at all
- 2) Just a little bit
- 3) A fair amount
- 4) A great deal

Q21. With which of these phrases are you most in agreement?

- 1) Democracy is preferable to any other system of government
 - 2) In some circumstances, an authoritarian government can be preferable to a democratic one
 - 3) To people like me, it does not make a difference
- (DK/NR)

Q22. Which of the following things do you think a person cannot stop doing if they want to be considered a citizen (more than one answer is allowed):

- 1) voting
 - 2) paying taxes
 - 3) always obeying the law
 - 4) participating in social organizations
 - 5) participating in political organizations
 - 6) choosing products that are environmentally responsible
 - 7) helping those Afghans that are worse off than you
 - 8) complying with military service
- (DK/NR)

Q23. In general, how satisfied are you with the functioning of democracy in Afghanistan?

- 1) very satisfied
 - 2) satisfied
 - 3) not very satisfied
 - 4) not at all satisfied
- (DK/NR)

Q24. Can one voice opinions freely in Afghanistan?

- 1) always
 - 2) almost always
 - 3) sometimes
 - 4) almost never
 - 5) never
- (DK/NR)

Q25. In which of the following organizations/groups/associations do you participate in, or you do not participate in any of them?

- 1) political
 - 2) labor or
 - 3) communal
 - 4) religious
 - 5) voluntary, community service
 - 6) cultural or artistic
 - 7) sports oriented
- (DK/NR)

Q26. Please look at this list and tell me, for each of these groups, institutions, or persons mentioned on the list, how much confidence you have in them:

- 1) a great deal
 - 2) some
 - 3) little
 - 4) none
- (DK/NR)
- 1) your imam
 - 2) the national congress/parliament
 - 3) the judicial power
 - 4) political parties
 - 5) the army
 - 6) the police
 - 7) the public administration
 - 8) local governments/municipalities
 - 9) village elders/ village jirga

Q27. Please look at this list and tell me, for each of these groups, institutions, or persons mentioned on the list, how much confidence you have in them:

- 1) a great deal
- 2) some
- 3) little
- 4) none

(DK/NR)

- 1) the government
- 2) the police
- 3) the press/media/television
- 4) business associations

Q28. In general terms, what would you say your opinion is about the functioning of public institutions?

- 1) very well
- 2) well
- 3) average
- 4) badly
- 5) very badly

Q29. How important do you think that the role of women in public life should be compared to men's:

- 1) They should not be in public life
- 2) Just a small presence in public life
- 3) A presence at least equal to men in public life
- 4) As great a presence as possible

Q30. In general would you say that people should obey laws without exception or are there exceptional occasions in which people can follow their conscience even though it means breaking the law?

- 1) obey the law without exception
- 2) follow one's conscience on certain occasions

(DK/NR)

Q31. Under what circumstances is it acceptable for individuals to cultivate poppy?

- 1) never
- 2) to avoid great economic distress
- 3) to achieve economic prosperity
- 4) depends on whether or not the government enforces the ban on poppy cultivation

Q32. Please answer from the following list –

- 1) a great deal
- 2) some
- 3) little
- 4) none

(DK/NR)

for each of the following :

Would you say that Afghans

- 1) follow laws
- 2) are demanding of their rights
- 3) are conscious of their rights and obligations
- 4) are the same before the law

Q33. On a scale of one to ten, where one is never justifiable and 10 is totally justifiable, how justifiable do you think it is to avoid taxes?

- 1 2 3 4 5
6 7 8 9 10 (DK/NR)

Q34. Have you or a family member witnessed an act of corruption in the past twelve months?

- 1) yes
 - 2) no
- (DK/NR)

Q35. Imagine that there were a total of 100 public servants in Afghanistan. Of those 100, how many would you say were corrupt?

Scale of 1 to 100; (DK/NR)

SECURITY

Q36. Have you or a family member been a victim of a crime in the past twelve months?

- 1) yes
- 2) no
- (DK/NR)

Q37. Have you or a family member been a victim of a kidnapping in the past twelve months?

- 1) yes
- 2) no
- (DK/NR)

Q38. Do you feel safe walking alone in your neighborhood after dark?

- 1) yes
- 2) no
- (DK/NR)

Q39. Do you feel safe traveling on the Ring Road?

- 1) yes
- 2) no
- (DK/NR)

Q40. How would you say that the security situation is in Afghanistan each day:

- 1) more secure
- 2) secure
- 3) insecure
- 4) more insecure
- (DK/NR)

Q41. How would you say that the security situation is in your neighborhood each day?

- 1) more secure
- 2) secure
- 3) insecure
- 4) more insecure
- (DK/NR)

Q42. Have you or a family member consumed drugs in the past twelve months?

- 1) yes
- 2) no
- (DK/NR)

Q43. Which of the following phrases is the principle cause of delinquency in the country?

- 1) the weakness of the state in imposing the law
- 2) corrupt state institutions
- 3) inequalities and socio-economic problems
- 4) bad people
- (DK/NR)

Q44. In your neighborhood or village where you live, with how much frequency are the following occurrences?

- 1) very frequently
- 2) frequently
- 3) occasionally/almost never
- 4) never
- (DK/NR)

- 1) Mistreatment and fights in schools
- 2) Violence in families
- 3) Fights among neighbors
- 4) Fights among groups of youth

Q45. What sort of influence does the presence of foreign forces have on your and your family's lives?

- 1) very bad
- 2) bad
- 3) good
- 4) very good

Q46. What role does the growth of poppy and other drugs play in your village's economy?

- 1) none
- 2) a very small role
- 3) an important role
- 4) a dominant role

Q47. Was there poppy eradication in the village last six months?

- 1) no
- 2) yes

if yes then:

Q48. Was it supported locally?

- 1) no
- 2) yes

Q49. How fair was the process?

- 1) very unfair
- 2) unfair
- 3) fair
- 4) very fair

Q50. Did eradication lead to more or less confidence in local leaders?

- 1) less confidence
- 2) no effect
- 3) more confidence

Q51. What is the best way to address the opium problem?:

- 1) Eradication everywhere
- 2) Eradication in other regions
- 3) Interdiction of drug lords
- 4) Prosecution of corrupt government officials
- 5) Alternative livelihoods

Q52. Why do people support the Taliban?

- 1) Its ideology
- 2) Ethnic affinity
- 3) Corruption of Karzai government
- 4) Resentment of foreign forces
- 5) Economic reasons other than drugs
- 6) Its protection of the drug economy
- 7) Intimidation by the Taliban

Q53. Why do people join the Taliban?

- 1) Its ideology
- 2) Ethnic affinity
- 3) Corruption of Karzai government
- 4) Resentment of foreign forces
- 5) Economic motivations, salaries
- 6) Displacement due to eradication
- 7) Intimidation by the Taliban

Q54. Why do people dislike the Taliban?

- 1) Its ideology
- 2) Ethnic affinity
- 3) Its alliance with al Qaeda and other foreign fighters
- 4) Its brutality

Q55. Does presence of NATO forces make you feel less or more secure?

- 1) Less
- 2) more

Q56. Does presence of ANA forces make you feel less or more secure?

- 1) Less
- 2) more

SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHICS

S1. How concerned are you that you will lose your work in the next twelve months or do you not have a job?

- 1) very concerned
 - 2) concerned
 - 3) a bit concerned
 - 4) not concerned
 - 5) does not have work
- (DK/NR)

- S2.** Is the salary or wage that you earn and the total of your family income sufficient to meet your needs satisfactorily? In which of the following situations do you find yourself?
- 1) They are enough, and allow us to save
 - 2) They are just enough, with no great difficulties
 - 3) They are not enough, there are difficulties
 - 4) They are not enough, there are great difficulties
- S3.** Have you and your family had difficulties paying for food or other basic necessities in the past 12 months?
- 1) yes
 - 2) no
- S4.** Are you able to send all of your children to school?
- 1) yes
 - 2) no
- S5.** If no, was it for economic, security, or other reasons?
- 1) Economic
 - 2) Security
 - 3) Other
- S6.** Have you had to take on debt to make ends meet?
- 1) no
 - 2) yes, a little bit
 - 3) yes, a lot
- S7.** In terms of religion, do you consider yourself:
- 1) very devout
 - 2) devout
 - 3) not very devout
 - 4) not at all devout
 - (DK/NR)
- S8.** How important is religion in you and your family's day to day activities?
- 1) not at all important
 - 2) somewhat important
 - 3) important
 - 4) very important
- S9.** Have you and your family thought seriously about the possibility of going to live in another country?
- 1) yes
 - 2) no
 - (DK/NR)
- S10.** Do you use the internet or electronic mail?
- 1) yes, every day
 - 2) yes, occasionally
 - 3) yes, almost never
 - 4) no, never
 - (DK/NR)
- S11.** Are you an Afghan citizen?
- 1) yes
 - 2) no
 - (DK/NR)
- S11X.** Did you ever live as a refugee in a neighboring country?
- If yes, which one:*
- a) Pakistan
 - b) Iran
 - c) other
- S11XX.** Are—or have you ever been—internally displaced and forced to leave your own community?
- 1) no, never
 - 2) yes, I am presently displaced.
 - 3) yes, I was displaced, but I have since returned to my own community.
- S11XXa.** If yes, why?
- 1) security
 - 2) economics/livelihoods
 - 3) land dispute
 - 4) drought
- S11XXb.** If yes, when did you return?
- 1) Within the past year
 - 2) Within the past 2-5 years (or 2002-2006) ____
 - 3) More than 5 years ago (or before 2001) ____

S12. Sex of the respondent being interviewed

- 1) male
- 2) female

S13. What is your age? ____

S14. Is it you in the house that most contributes to the family income?

- 1) yes, is the head of household
- 2) no

[If not the head of household, do not forget to ask for head of household and occupation of head of household in later questions.]

S15. What is your marital status:

- 1) married/co-habiting
 - 2) single
 - 3) separated/divorced
 - 4) widowed
- (DK/NR)

S16. At what age did you finish your education? ____

- 1) did not study
 - 2) is studying
- (DK/NR)

S17. What kind of education did you complete?

- 1) government elementary school
 - 2) private elementary school
 - 3) technical school
 - 4) government high school
 - 5) private high school
 - 6) university education
- (DK/NR)

S18. Where did you do your highest level of studies?

- 1) Afghanistan
- 2) Pakistan
- 3) Other Foreign Country

S19. At what age did your parents finish their education?

- 1) father ____
 - 2) mother ____
- (DK/NR)

S20. What is your current occupational situation?

- a) independent/self-employed
 - b) salaried, public sector
 - c) salaried, private sector
 - d) farmer
 - e) responsible for household
 - f) student
 - g) unemployed
- (DK/NR)

S21. FOR THOSE THAT ANSWER g to S20:

What was your previous occupation? Please use categories a-f from S14. ____

S22. FOR THOSE THAT ANSWER a, b, or c to S20:

For independent workers, which category are you in:

- 1) Professional (doctor, lawyer, architect, accountant)
- 2) Owner of business
- 3) Farmer, fisher
- 4) Work on own, salesman

For salaried workers, which category are you in:

- 1) Professional
- 2) High executive (manager, director)
- 3) Middle manager
- 4) Other employee
- 5) Not applicable

For farmers, what is the status of your land:

- 1) itinerant worker
- 2) rent land
- 3) own land

(DK/NR)

S23. Do you or a member of your household possess any of the following items:

- 1) television
 - 2) radio
 - 3) refrigerator
 - 4) own home
 - 5) computer
 - 6) washing machine
 - 7) telephone, fixed line
 - 8) telephone, cellular
 - 9) car
 - 10) a vacation/second home
 - 11) running water
 - 12) hot water
 - 13) sewage/piped toilet
 - 14) bathroom with a shower
 - 15) electricity
 - 16) water pump
 - 17) electric generator
- (DK/NR)

S24. How have you or do you expect to cover the costs of any weddings in your family?

- 1) wages and earnings
 - 2) savings
 - 3) borrowing from friends or family
 - 4) borrow against opium
- (DK/NR)

S25. In the past five months how would you say your physical health has been?

- 1) very good
 - 2) good
 - 3) average
 - 4) bad
 - 5) very bad
- (DK/NR)

S26. Can you tell me please how often you smiled yesterday?

- 1) very often
 - 2) often
 - 3) a little bit
 - 4) not at all
- (DK/NR)

S27. What is your mother tongue?

- 1) Dari
- 2) Pashtu
- 3) Uzbeki
- 4) Turkmeni
- 5) Nuristani
- 6) Balochi
- 7) Pashai

S28. With which of the following ethnic groups do you most identify?

- 1) Pashtun
 - 2) Tajik
 - 3) Hazara
 - 4) Uzbek
 - 5) Aimak
 - 6) Turkmen
 - 7) Baloch
 - 8) none
- (DK/NR)

S29. In addition to the previous identification, would you describe yourself by another identity, for example a tribal one like Durrani, Ghilzai, Popalzai, Alikozai, Barakzai, Achakzai, Noorzai, Alizai, Eshaqzai, Sakzai? Please name one or two

- a) first choice
- b) second choice
- c) no other identification

S30. What are your ethnic group's relations (from question S) with other ethnic groups in Afghanistan like?

- a) very good
- b) good
- c) bad
- d) very bad

S31. What are your selected tribes' relations with other tribes in Afghanistan like?

- a) very good
- b) good
- c) bad
- d) very bad

S32. How would you describe yourself? Would you say that you belong to the majority or to a minority in Afghanistan?

- 1) I belong to the majority
 - 2) I belong to a minority
- (DK/NR)

QUESTIONS for respondent who is NOT the head of household

S33. At what age did the head of household finish his/her education? ____

- 1) Did not study
 - 2) Is studying
- (DK/NR)

S34. And what type of study did the head of household complete? [see previous division]

- 1) government elementary school
 - 2) madrasa in Afghanistan
 - 3) madrasa in Pakistan
 - 4) technical school
 - 5) high school
 - 6) university education
- (DK/NR)

S35. What is the occupational situation of the head of household?

- a) independent/self employed
 - b) salaried, public
 - c) salaried, private
 - d) farmer
 - e) retired, pensioner
 - f) responsible for household
 - g) student
 - h) unemployed
- (DK/NR)

S36. For those that answer (g) to S22. What was the previous occupational situation of the head of household? Use categories a-f above.

S37. For those that answer a-c to S22. What type of work does the head of the household do?

For self-employed

- 1) Professional (lawyer, doctor, architect, accountant)
- 2) Owner of business
- 3) Farmer, fisherman
- 4) Salesman, on own

For salaried

- 1) Professional
 - 2) High executive (manager, director)
 - 3) Middle manager
 - 4) Other employee
 - 5) Itinerant worker, sharecropper
 - 6) Not applicable
- (DK/NR)

THESE QUESTIONS ARE NOT TO BE READ. ASSESSMENTS MADE BY THE INTERVIEWER

S38. Assessment of the socioeconomic level of respondent. Take into account, as a point of reference, quality of the house, quality of furniture, and general appearance of respondent:

- 1) very good
- 2) good
- 3) average
- 4) bad
- 5) very bad

QUESTIONS FOR INTERVIEWER.

P1. How long did the interview take?

- 1) very long
- 2) a bit long
- 3) no reaction to the length

P2. Did the respondents find any of the questions to be indiscrete or offensive?

Note #'s if any

P3. Were any of the questions difficult or uncomfortable to ask?

Please answer yes or no:

- 1) economic questions
- 2) political questions
- 3) questions about democracy
- 4) questions about the environment
- 5) socio-demographic questions

I confirm that this interview was conducted in accord with the instructions that came with the questionnaire and the answers are the authentic ones.

Signature of Interviewer

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