

SURVEY OF SOCIO-POLITICAL NORMS AND VALUES OF PEOPLE IN RURAL AND URBAN AFGHANISTAN



ORGANIZATION FOR SOCIAL
RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS
DATA FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

SURVEY OF SOCIO-POLITICAL NORMS AND VALUES OF PEOPLE IN RURAL AND URBAN AFGHANISTAN

SURVEY OF THE AFGHAN PEOPLE
ON THE INTRA-AFGHAN PEACE NEGOTIATIONS II



SURVEY OF SOCIO-POLITICAL NORMS AND VALUES OF PEOPLE IN RURAL AND URBAN AFGHANISTAN

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ABOUT THE ORGANIZATION FOR SOCIAL RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS

The Organization for Social Research and Analysis (OSRA) is a nonpartisan and independent non-governmental organization based in Kabul. At OSRA, we conduct socio-economic research, public opinion polls, big data analytics, content analysis and a variety of data-driven research. Our mission is to facilitate fact-based transparency and research in order to support good governance and sustainable development and, above all, to promote transparency and accountability. By producing evidence-based research and high-quality data analysis, we study Afghan public attitude, demographic trends, policy impact, communication and public relations with the help of the latest technology, as well as a standardized and customized methodology to enable intelligent decision-making processes. In order to deliver meaningful messages gleaned from complex and large datasets, we focus on presenting the general public and our clients with easy to read and comprehensible information and data visualization platforms.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES	V-VI
LIST OF TABLES	VII-IX
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY & MAIN FINDINGS	1
Executive Summary	2
Main Findings	3
Rural-Urban Main Findings	5
Tendency and Trend Analysis	7
METHODOLOGY	9
Afghan High-Context Culture Approach	10
Data Collection	10
Questionnaire	11
Data Quality	11
Social Desirability Bias	11
Data Weighting Rural-Urban Population Distribution	12
Retrospective Data Weighting Rural-Urban Population Distribution for the 2020 Survey	12
Data Presentation	12
TALIBAN MORAL POLICE	13
POLITICAL SYSTEM	17
INTERIM GOVERNMENT	23
FIGHTERS INTEGRATION	27
GENDER SEGREGATION	31
WOMEN IN POLITICS	35
WOMEN IN THE NATIONAL SECURITY FORCES	39
WOMEN AS JUDGES	43
WOMEN FOR PRESIDENCY	47
CRITICAL AFGHAN MEDIA	51
WOMEN IN AFGHAN MEDIA	55
MUSIC PROGRAMS	59
ENTERTAINMENT PROGRAMS	63
SAMPLE DEMOGRAPHICS	67

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1	Overall attitude and tendency analysis of respondents	7
Figure 2	Tendency analysis of respondents along ethnic identities	8
Figure 3	Tendency analysis of respondents along age groups	8
Figure 4	Tendency analysis of respondents along gender	8
Figure 5	Tendency analysis of respondents along level of education	8
Figure 6	People's responses on reintroduction of Taliban moral police or Amr-bil-Marooof, 2020 and 2021	14
Figure 7	Geographic comparison of "No" responses 2020 and 2021	14
Figure 8	Rural-urban comparison of responses on reintroduction of Taliban moral police, 2021	15
Figure 9	People's preferences for political systems, 2020 and 2021	18
Figure 10	Geographic comparison of "Islamic Republic" responses 2020 and 2021	19
Figure 11	Rural-urban comparison of responses on political system preference, 2021	20
Figure 12	People's responses on interim government solution, 2021	24
Figure 13	Rural-urban comparison of responses on interim government solution in 2021	25
Figure 14	People's opinion on Taliban fighters integration into the ANSF, 2020 and 2021	28
Figure 15	Geographic comparison of "All of them should be integrated" responses, 2020 and 2021	28
Figure 16	Rural-urban comparison of responses on Taliban fighters integration in the ANSF, 2021	29
Figure 17	People's opinion on gender segregation in places of higher education, 2020 and 2021	32
Figure 18	Rural-urban comparison of responses on gender segregation in places of higher education, 2021	33
Figure 19	People's opinion on women's presence and role in Afghan politics in the event of a peace-agreement with the Taliban, 2020 and 2021	36
Figure 20	Geographic comparison of "Remain as is" responses 2020 and 2021	36
Figure 21	Rural-urban comparison of responses on women's presence and role in Afghan politics in the event of peace-agreement with the Taliban , 2021	37
Figure 22	People's opinion on women's presence in Afghanistan's national security forces in the event of a peace-agreement with the Taliban, 2020 and 2021	40
Figure 23	Rural-urban comparison of responses on women's presence in Afghan national security forces in the event of a peace-agreement with the Taliban, 2021	41
Figure 24	People's opinion on whether women should continue to serve as judges in the event peace agreement with the Taliban, 2020 and 2021	44
Figure 25	Rural-urban comparison of responses on whether women should continue to serve as judges in the event peace agreement with the Taliban, 2021	45

Figure 26	People's opinion on whether women should have the right to run for president in the event of a peace agreement with the Taliban, 2020 and 2021	48
Figure 27	Geographic comparison of " Yes " responses of 2020 and 2021	48
Figure 28	Rural-urban comparison of responses on whether women should have the right to run for president in the event of a peace agreement with the Taliban, 2021	49
Figure 29	People's responses on critical political opinions and programs in Afghan media, 2020 and 2021	52
Figure 30	Geographic comparison of " Should decrease" responses of 2020 and 2021	52
Figure 31	Rural-urban comparison of responses on on critical political opinions and programs in the media, 2021	53
Figure 32	People's opinion on the role and presence of women in Afghan media, 2020 and 2021	56
Figure 33	Rural-urban comparison of responses on the role and presence of women in the media, 2021	57
Figure 34	People's opinion on music programs in the media (including radio and TV), 2021	60
Figure 35	Rural-urban comparison of responses on music programs (including TV and radio) in 2021	61
Figure 36	People's opinion on entertainment programs in the media (including radio and TV), 2021	64
Figure 37	Rural-urban comparison of responses on entertainment programs (including TV and radio), 2021	65
Figure 38	Geographical Distribution	69
Figure 39	Ethnic Distribution (%)	70

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1	People's responses on reintroduction of Taliban moral police or Amr-bil-Marroof in the event of a peace-agreement with the Taliban, 2020 and 2021 - Ethnicity (in %)	16
Table 2	People's responses on reintroduction of Taliban moral police in the event of a peace-agreement with the Taliban, 2020 and 2021- Level of Education (in %)	16
Table 3	People's responses on reintroduction of Taliban moral police in the event of a peace-agreement with the Taliban, 2020 and 2021-Age Groups (in %)	16
Table 4	People's responses on reintroduction of Taliban moral police in the event of a peace-agreement with the Taliban, 2020 and 2021 - Gender (in %)	16
Table 5	People's preferences for political systems, 2020 and 2021 - Ethnicity (in %)	20
Table 6	People's preferences for political systems, 2020 and 2021 - Level of Education (in %)	21
Table 7	People's preferences for political systems, 2020 and 2021 - Age (in %)	21
Table 8	People's preferences for political systems, 2020 and 2021 - Gender (in %)	21
Table 9	People's response on interim government solution, 2021 - Ethnicity (in %)	26
Table 10	People's response on interim government solution, 2021 - Level of Education (in %)	26
Table 11	People's response to interim government solution, 2021 - Age (in %)	26
Table 12	People's response on interim government solution, 2021- Gender (in %)	26
Table 13	People's opinion on Taliban fighters integration into the ANSF - Level of Education (in %)	30
Table 14	People's opinion on Taliban fighters integration into the ANSF- Ethnicity (in %)	30
Table 15	People's opinion on Taliban fighters integration into the ANSF- Age (in %)	30
Table 16	People's opinion on Taliban fighters integration into the ANSF - Gender (in %)	30
Table 17	People's opinion on gender segregation in places of higher education in 2020 and 2021 - Ethnicity (in %)	34
Table 18	People's opinion on gender segregation in places of higher education in 2020 and 2021- Level of Education (in %)	34
Table 19	People's opinion on gender segregation in places of higher education in 2020 and 2021- Age (in %)	34
Table 20	People's opinion on gender segregation in places of higher education in 2020 and 2021 - Gender (in %)	34
Table 21	People's opinions on women's presence and role in Afghan politics in the event of a peace-agreement with the Taliban, 2020 and 2021- Ethnicity (in %)	38
Table 22	People's opinions on women's presence and role in Afghan politics in the event of a peace-agreement with the Taliban, 2020 and 2021 - Level of Education (in %)	38
Table 23	People's opinions on women's presence and role in Afghan politics in the event of a peace-agreement with the Taliban, 2020 and 2021 - Age (in %)	38
Table 24	People's opinions on women's presence and role in Afghan politics in the event of a peace-agreement with the Taliban, 2020 and 2021 - Gender (in %)	38

Table 25	Women's presence in Afghanistan's national security forces in the event of a peace-agreement with the Taliban, 2020 and 2021 - Ethnicity (in %)	42
Table 26	Women's presence in Afghanistan's national security forces in the event of a peace-agreement with the Taliban, 2020 and 2021- Level of Education (in %)	42
Table 27	Women's presence in Afghanistan's national security forces in the event of a peace-agreement with the Taliban, 2020 and 2021- Age (in %)	42
Table 28	Women's presence in Afghanistan's national security forces in the event of a peace-agreement with the Taliban, 2020 and 2021- Gender (in %)	42
Table 29	People's opinions on whether women should continue to serve as judges in the event peace agreement with the Taliban, 2020 and 2021 - Ethnicity (in %)	46
Table 30	People's opinions on whether women should continue to serve as judges in the event peace agreement with the Taliban, 2020 and 2021- Level of Education (in %)	46
Table 31	People's opinions on whether women should continue to serve as judges in the event peace agreement with the Taliban, 2020 and 2021 - Age (in %)	46
Table 32	People's opinions on whether women should continue to serve as judges in the event peace agreement with the Taliban, 2020 and 2021 - Gender (in %)	46
Table 33	People's opinions on whether women should have the right to run for president in the event of a peace agreement with the Taliban, 2020 and 2021 - Ethnicity (in %)	50
Table 34	People's opinions on whether women should have the right to run for president in the event of a peace agreement with the Taliban, 2020 and 2021 - Level of Education (in %)	50
Table 35	People's opinions on whether women should have the right to run for president in the event of a peace agreement with the Taliban, 2020 and 2021 - Age (in %)	50
Table 36	People's opinions on whether women should have the right to run for president in the event of a peace agreement with the Taliban, 2020 and 2021 - Gender (in %)	50
Table 37	People's responses on critical political opinions and programs in Afghan media , 2020 and 2021 - Ethnicity (in %)	54
Table 38	People's responses on critical political opinions and programs in Afghan media , 2020 and 2021 - Level of Education (in %)	54
Table 39	People's responses on critical political opinions and programs in Afghan media , 2020 and 2021 - Age (in %)	54
Table 40	People's responses on critical political opinions and programs in Afghan media , 2020 and 2021 - Gender (in %)	54
Table 41	People's opinion on the role and presence of women in Afghan media, 2020 and 2021- Ethnicity (in %)	58
Table 42	People's opinion on the role and presence of women in Afghan media, 2020 and 2021 - Level of Education (in %)	58
Table 43	People's opinion on the role and presence of women in Afghan media, 2020 and 2021 - Age (in %)	58
Table 44	People's opinion on the role and presence of women in the media, 2020 and 2021 - Gender (in %)	58

Table 45	People's opinion on music programs in the media (including radio and TV), 2021 - Ethnicity (in %)	62
Table 46	People's opinion on music programs in the media (including radio and TV), 2021 - Level of Education (in %)	62
Table 47	People's opinion on music programs in the media (including radio and TV), 2021 - Age (in %)	62
Table 48	People's opinion on music programs in the media (including radio and TV), 2021 - Gender (in %)	62
Table 49	People's opinion on entertainment programs in the media (including radio and TV) 2021- Ethnicity (in %)	66
Table 50	People's opinion on entertainment programs in the media (including radio and TV) 2021- Level of Education (in %)	66
Table 51	People's opinion on entertainment programs in the media (including radio and TV) 2021 - Age (in %)	66
Table 52	People's opinion on entertainment programs in the media (including radio and TV) 2021 - Gender (in %)	66

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY & MAIN FINDINGS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

To map the public opinion in Afghanistan, as well as changes in public opinion, underlying values, and consequent norms, OSRA conducted two large-scale surveys with 5,213 people in 2020 and 4,012 in 2021 covering all 34 provinces and highlighting three thematic areas: (1) government system, governance, and security forces; (2) questions related to Afghan women; and, (3) questions related to Afghan media.

This survey was conducted in April 2021, four months before the Taliban takeover of Afghanistan, and highlights prevalent socio-political norms and values of the Afghan people along ethnic, geographic, gender, age, education, and rural-urban cleavages. The data of the 2020 “Survey Of the Afghan People on Intra-Afghan Peace Negotiations” was reviewed and integrated in this survey for comparisons. With a sample size of 5,213 respondents in 2020, and 4,012 respondents in 2021, from all 34 provinces, the survey was conducted via mobile-phone interviews from a pool of almost 22.7 million mobile-phone subscribers using a random number generating algorithm. The survey was based on the probabilistic sampling approach, conducted among large rural and urban populations, guided by cultural and linguistic sensitivities to ensure honest replies, and, avoid social-desirability and urban bias.¹

The questions analyzed in both surveys were discussed in various venues between the representatives of the Taliban and the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, and were developed keeping public discourses as well as the values and principles of the Taliban, and that of the Afghan constitution of 2004 in mind.

The survey findings revealed a broad normative gap between Taliban principles and values and the vast majority of Afghanistan’s population, whether rural or urban. Equally significant but small remained the gap between the majority of Afghans and the values and principles enshrined in the Afghan constitution of 2004 (Figures 1-5).

¹ Surveys conducted in Afghanistan inherently suffer from urban bias due to non-probabilistic sampling, restricted access to rural areas and volatile security conditions.

The main findings showed that four months before the Taliban took control of Kabul in August 2021, the number of Afghans willing to reconcile with the group in return for peace and stability had increased compared to 2020. While notable increase in accommodating certain Taliban demands were observed, a redline in consistency of responses showed that people did not want to compromise on their rights and freedoms:

1. Increased willingness among the population to accommodate Taliban demands such as:
 - a compromise government solution accommodating all sides, incl. Taliban.
 - full integration of Taliban fighters within the ranks of the former security establishment.
2. Consistency in conserving and expanding liberties and rights, such as:
 - preserving or expanding Afghan women’s rights and freedoms in all fields (as of April 2021), including politics, national security forces and media rather than reducing them.
 - increased rejection of Taliban moral police or Amr-bil-Marooif authority.
 - preserving or expanding the diverse and critical media landscape in Afghanistan (as of April 2021) rather than curtailing it.

The data results indicate that as the Taliban continue to impose its interpretation of Sharia law deviating from mainstream interpretation in Afghanistan and lacking any legal means of popular representation, the group is bound to face great challenges. The data imply that Taliban’s political and ethnic exclusive form of governance in an ethnically, linguistically, and ideologically diverse country like Afghanistan, where it lacks popular support, is bound to incentivize military and political resistance.

The group urgently needs to find ways to address popular will or face further challenges in bringing stability, securing international recognition and establishing a functioning state in Afghanistan. Their treatment of women will be crucial for most international audiences and Afghans suffering from their gender apartheid. Equally critical will be their treatment of religious minorities and political dissidents.

MAIN FINDINGS

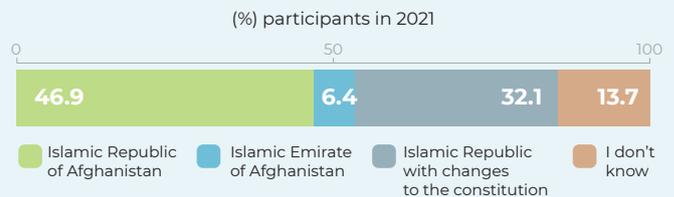
Reintroduction of Amr-bil-Marooof or Taliban moral police

- In 2021, 77.9% of the population opposed the reintroduction of Amr-bil-Marooof after a possible peace-agreement with the Taliban. In 2020, 59.9% had opposed Amr-bil-Marooof.
- The increase was observed predominantly in Pashtun majority provinces.



Political system preference

- Support for the Ashraf Ghani led Islamic Republic dropped from 71% in 2020 to 46.9% in 2021.
- Support for the Taliban led Islamic Emirate increased from 4.6% in 2020 to 6.4% in 2021.
- In 2021, 32.1% of the population chose a third option compared to only 16.1% in 2020.



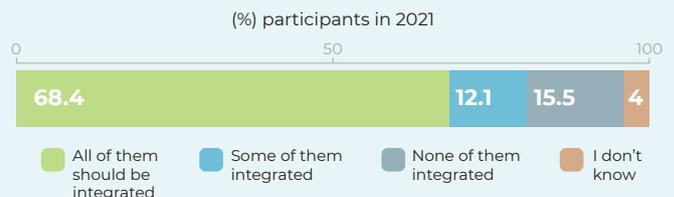
Interim government solution

- In 2021, a majority of 55.4%, opposed an interim government solution.
- 35.7% favored an interim government in 2021 compared to only 13.1% in 2019.*



Taliban fighters' integration into (former) Afghan nat. security forces

- A significant majority of people continued to support full integration of Taliban fighters into the (former) Afghan nat. security forces in 2020 and 2021.



Gender based segregation in places of higher education

- A significant majority of people continued to favor gender based segregation in universities in 2020 and 2021.



Women to continue work as judges

- In 2021, a majority of 80.1% said "yes" to whether women should continue to work as judges if a peace agreement with the Taliban was reached; this number grew from 77.7% in 2020.



* OSRA Snap Poll : Presidential Election or Interim Government 2019.
Link: <https://osra.af/opinion-poll-in-afghanistan/#report>

Women to run for presidency

- In 2021, 71.8% of the population supported the right of women to run for presidency despite the given scenario of a peace-agreement with the Taliban. This number grew from 63% in 2020.

Presence and role of Afghan women in politics, security forces and media

- Even after a peace deal with the Taliban, the majority of people continued to support the expansion of women's presence and role in all three fields in 2020 and 2021.
- Roughly 18% – 25% of the population wanted women's engagement levels to "remain" unchanged (as of April 2021) while approximately 4% – 8% wanted women fully "banned" from all three fields.

Critical media

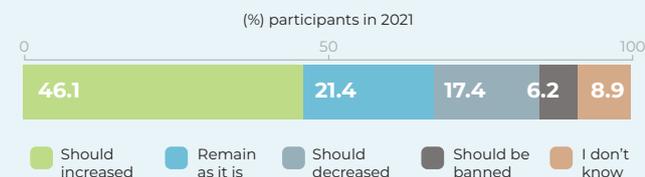
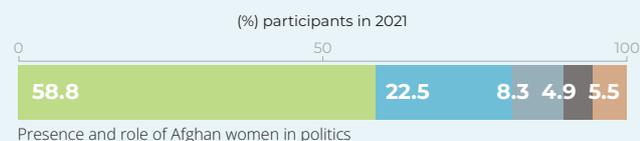
- In 2020 and 2021, the majority of the population spoke in favor of either preserving or expanding critical media reporting.
- Noticeably, the rural population was more in favor of critical media reporting than the urban population.

Entertainment programs on TV

- In 2021, a majority of 66.2% wanted entertainment programs including foreign dubbed series, satire, comedy, talkshows to "increase" or "remain as is" (as of April 2021). 31.3% wanted the number of entertainment programs "decreased" or be fully "banned".

Music programs on TV and radio

- In 2021, a majority of 57.8% wanted music programs to either "increase" or "remain as is" (as of April 2021) on Afghan TV channels and radio stations. 39.3% wanted them "decreased" or "banned".



RURAL-URBAN MAIN FINDINGS

The Rural-Urban Divide

Throughout Afghanistan's history the rural-urban divide of the country has been a major source of political tension and military conflict. Aside from socioeconomic disparities between rural and urban Afghanistan, contrasting socio-political norms and values along the rural-urban divide has shaped the country's tumultuous nation-building process, spawning several political and military groups. Contesting narratives of whether rural or urban Afghanistan is the "true Afghanistan", have divided Afghan intellectuals and local populations resulting in vague, untraceable and immeasurable sources of legitimacy.

Historic Western-informed academia and literature has tended to place the "true Afghanistan" in its rural areas. However, due to lack of regular census and other forms of data-collection prior to the Soviet invasion and increased instability and continuous war thereafter, reliable data on rural-urban difference in Afghanistan has remained largely unavailable. It is therefore crucial to re-examine notions about rural and urban Afghanistan, especially with the technological and telecommunication advancement since 2010s in order to avoid reproducing cliches and out-dated concepts.

Survey Results & Assessment

To reflect the ground reality of how different rural and urban Afghans think along the rural-urban divide, at OSRA we weighted our sample distribution of 48% urban and 52% rural population based on World Bank data, which states that 73.9% of Afghanistan's population is rural and 26.1 % urban.²

The survey results indicated differences between rural and urban populations, but not as significant as expected. Differences across ethnic groupings were more prominent than differences within ethnic groups. Along the rural-urban divide, least within-group divergence was observed among Pashtuns and Hazaras, and most within-group divergence among Uzbeks and Tajiks.

It is assessed that the widespread growth of mobile and internet connectivity, as well as growth in the number of TV channels and radio stations, particularly between 2002-2021, had a major impact on bridging the assumed large socio-political gap between rural and urban Afghanistan.

Reintroduction of Amr-bil-Marooof or Taliban morale police

The reinstatement of the Amr-bil-Marooof authority was rejected by an overwhelming 75.7% majority of the rural population and 84.1% of the urban population in 2021. While there were notable variations between ethnic groups, the rural-urban divide within ethnic groups did not exceed 10%.

Political system preference

Support for the Islamic Republic led by Ashraf Ghani fell from an overall 71% in 2020, to 47.8% in rural regions and 44.2% in urban cities in 2021. While 29.6% of the rural population and 39.3% of the urban population chose a third form of government, only 7.1% of the rural population and 4.3% of the urban population expressed their support for the Taliban Islamic Emirate.

Interim government solution

The majority of rural and urban population, 53.7% and 60.2%, respectively, were opposed to an interim government solution. Across ethnic group specific preference were noted, however within group rural-urban comparison of all ethnic groups did not exceed 10%.

Taliban fighters integration into (former) Afghan security forces

While majorities in both rural and urban Afghanistan supported full integration of Taliban fighters into the ranks of the Afghan National Security Forces, the rural population's support was higher, at 71.3%, compared to 60.2% among the urban population.

² <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.RUR.TOTL.ZS?locations=AF>

Gender based segregation in places of higher education

This was the most divisive question among the urban population, with 49 % in support of gender segregation in universities and 48.6 % opposed to it. In the meantime, 61.8 % of the rural population favored gender segregation, while 35.9 % opposed it.

Women to run for presidency and to continue to work as judges in case of a peace-agreement with the Taliban

Both rural and urban populations supported women to work as judges and to run for president with overwhelming majorities of $\geq 70\%$. The gap between rural and urban residents persisted at about 5%.

Role of women in Afghan politics, security forces and Afghan media in case of a peace-agreement with the Taliban

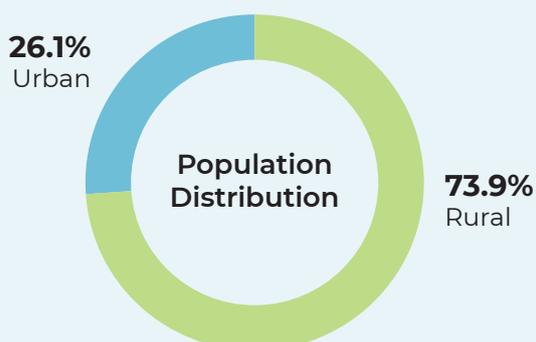
The majority of urban and rural populations favored expanding women's presence and role in all three fields. There was less than a 10% difference in answer possibilities between rural and urban residents.

Critical media reporting

Over 40% of both urban and rural Afghans wanted critical media reporting to "increase," while over 20% wanted it to "remain as is" (as of April 2021). In both urban and rural areas of Afghanistan, less than 8% of the people wanted it to be "banned." The rural population was slightly more in favor of in cirital media

Music & entertainment programs on TV and radio

56.9% of the rural population and 61.1% of the urban population supported an increase or preservation music programs on Afghan TV and radio stations. Meanwhile 25% of the rural population and 27.3% of the urban population wished to see it decrease and 14.2% of the rural population and 9.8% of the urban population wanted music banned from Afghan TV and radio stations



TENDENCY AND TREND ANALYSIS

In order to determine overall trends and tendencies pertaining to sociopolitical norms and values of the people of Afghanistan, the survey data collected in April 2021 was weighted, scaled and scored from 0 to 10. On this scale, 0 represents values and principles enshrined in the Afghan constitution of 2004 and embodied in theory in the policies of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan until its collapse in August 2021. On the other hand, 10 represents values and norms promoted by the Islamic Emirate of the Taliban and implemented during their rule from 1996-2001 and, again from August 2021 until the time of this report.

The collected data was analyzed to assess trends based on respondents' ethnic identities (the four largest ethnic-groups), gender, age, and educational backgrounds. Despite distinct differences in responses, notable trends along demographic attributes were observed.

The majority of the population was evaluated at an average of score of 3.56 on a scale of 0-10 (Figure 1).

The majority of Hazaras, with a score of 2.66, were the most closely aligned with the constitutional principles of the Afghan constitution of 2004, followed by the majority of Tajiks, with a score of 3.39, Uzbeks, with a score of 3.69, and Pashtuns, with a score of 3.96 (Figure 2).

The older the respondents, the more likely they were to support the 2004 Afghan constitution's ideals and norms (Fig. 3).

Female respondents, with an average of 2.81 scores compared to 3.66 scores for male respondents, were more inclined to the principles and ideals espoused by the Afghan constitution of 2004 (Figure 4).

The higher an Afghan's level of education, the more likely she/he was to support republican values (Figure 5).

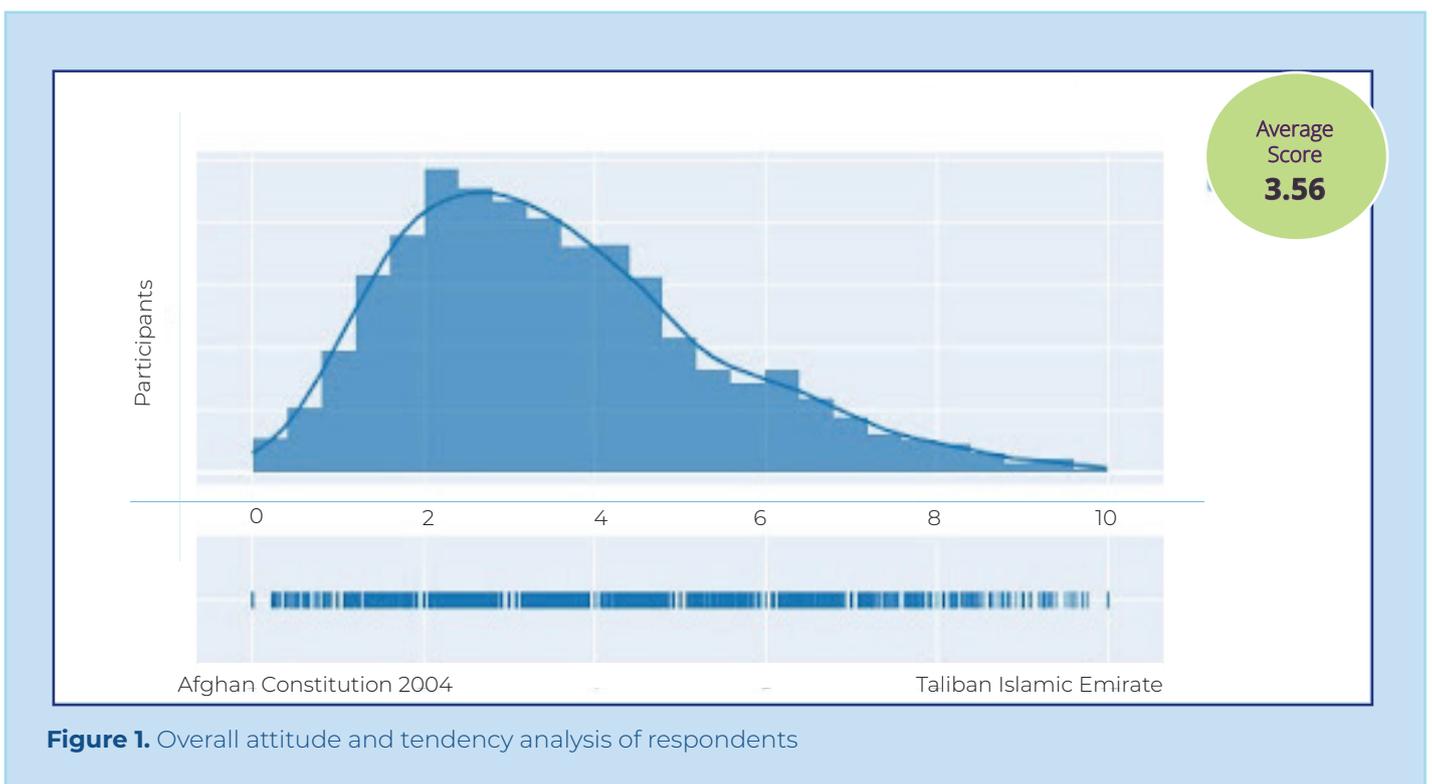


Figure 1. Overall attitude and tendency analysis of respondents

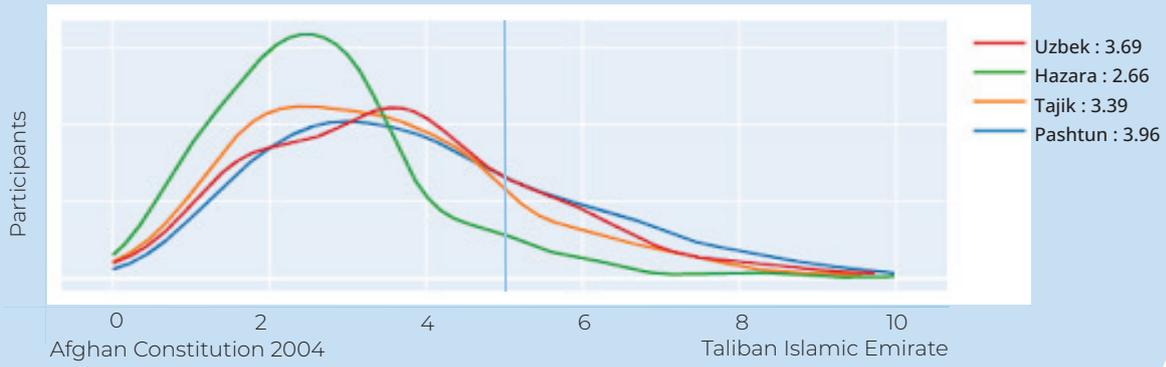


Figure 2. Tendency analysis of respondents along ethnic identities

Average Score
3.56

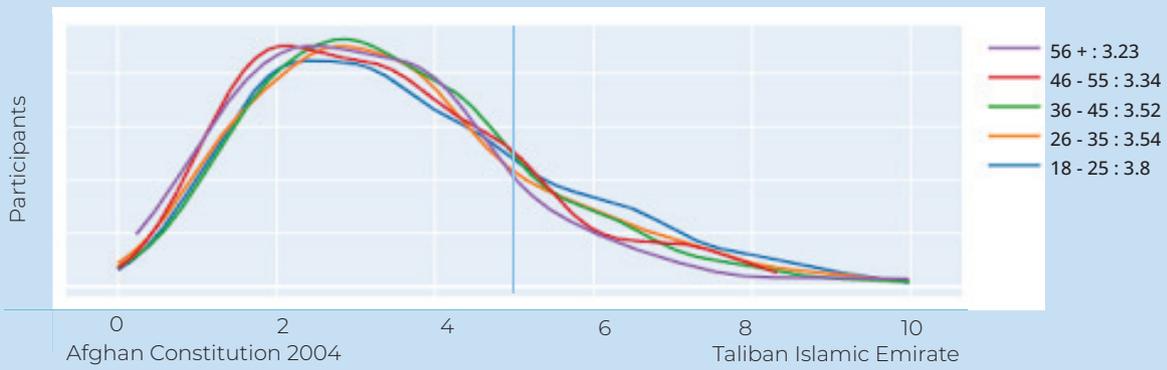


Figure 3. Tendency analysis of respondents along age groups

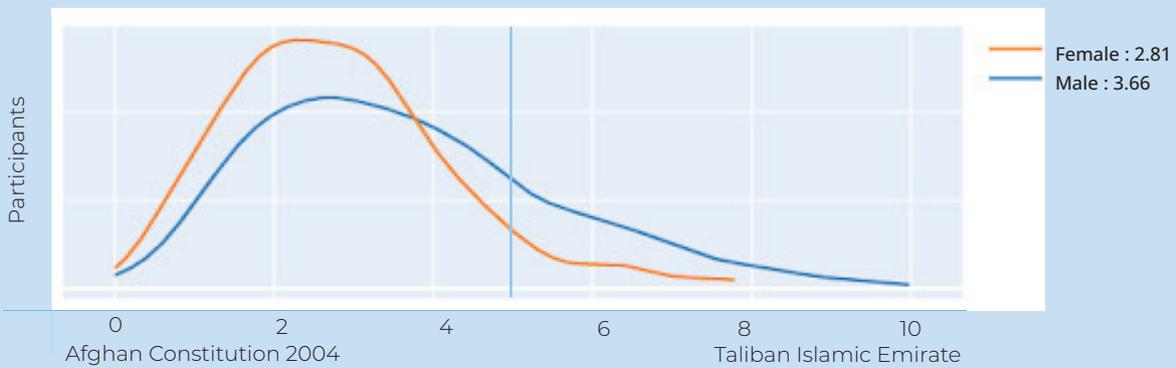


Figure 4. Tendency analysis of respondents along gender

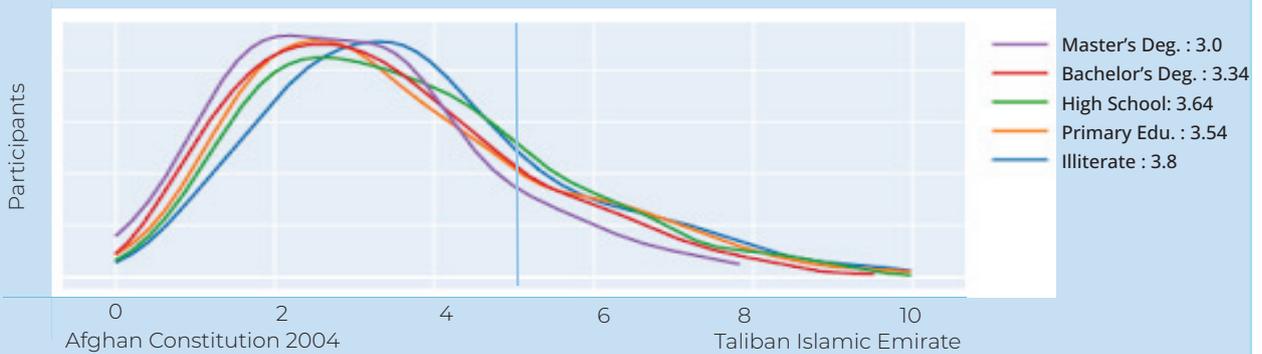
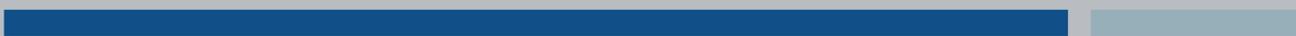


Figure 5. Tendency analysis of respondents along level of education

METHODOLOGY



METHODOLOGY

The Organization for Social Research and Analysis in later partnership with The Digital Bridge gGmbH surveyed 4012 adults to map public opinion, changes in public opinion as well as underlying values, and consequent norms of Afghans from 33 provinces (except Nuristan). This was a repeated cross-sectional survey carried out 14 months after the baseline survey (December 2019-February 2020). Data collection began from early March 2021 till the end of April 2021. The survey covered a random and representative sample of men and women aged 18 and above and was carried out via mobile-phone interviews. OSRA chose Random Digit Dialing (RDD) technique to establish a probabilistic and highly representative sample, ensure non-discriminatory maximum outreach, and, avoid social desirability bias.

Afghan High-Context Culture Approach

OSRA's diverse survey team used a tailored approach to tap into known behavioral patterns of local men and women to win their trust and ensure honest replies. (1) Favoring mobile-phone interviews over face-to-face interviews to avoid peer and social pressure from bystanders, friends or family members to ensure honest replies and reduce social desirability bias. (2) Mirroring linguistic and dialect patterns and peculiarities in order to create a sense of familiarity and ultimately build trust. (3) "Breaking-the-ice" technique or carrying small-talk, asking people about their well-being, economic concerns, work-life

balance and showing genuine interest to allow respondents to feel comfortable and again build trust. (4) Giving respondents enough time to elaborate their responses and reflect upon them, before carefully bringing them back to the question to obtain a final response. It's critical to remember that people with lower education levels or less exposure to political issues and who have never directly been asked about their individual opinion require time to collect their thoughts and give a response.

The approach framework was guided by Afghan cultural sensitivities, the fact that the bulk of the population is low-income, and the knowledge that people in Afghanistan want to converse, and especially want to complain, but only once trust is established. However due to deep seated mistrust in authorities and institutions, and due to lack of grassroots democracy, people in Afghanistan are unaccustomed to being polled or surveyed. They are largely apprehensive about sharing their opinions, particularly on political issues, with strangers. Due to OSRA's long-standing experience in data collection and polling, the survey team was able to overcome these obstacles and collect reliable data in Afghanistan.

Data Collection

A number generating algorithm was used to tap into a pool of 22.7 million Afghan mobile-phone subscribers. To ensure inclusive and non-discriminatory coverage, numbers from all Afghan telecommunication providers, including Roshan, Etisalat, Afghan Wireless, MTN, and Salaam was used. The Random Digit Dialing (RDD) technique was applied to generate a sample based on the simple random sampling method.³ Mobile-phone RDD technique was chosen because empirical evidence indicates that it is the most accurate, representative, and cost-effective strategy in non-Western

³ For further reading please refer to the following literature (1) Dabalen, A., et al., "Mobile Phone Panel Surveys in Developing Countries - A practical guide for Microdata Collection", The World Bank, 2016
Link: [Mobile Phone Panel Surveys in Developing Countries](#); (2) Patnaik, S. et. "Evaluating the accuracy of data collection on mobile phones: A study of forms, SMS, and voice." Information and Communication Technologies and Development (ICTD), 2009 International Conference on. 2009. 74-84.
Link: [Evaluating the Accuracy of Data Collection on Mobile Phones: A Study of Forms, SMS, and Voice](#)

contexts of developing and fragile countries. Particularly in capturing and monitoring changes as well as obtaining real-time feedback from households.⁴ Aside from producing a large and highly representative sample, the mobile-phone RDD technique proved to be the safest way to collect data from remote, insecure, and unusual places in Afghanistan, such as the infamous Kabul Pul-e-Charkhi prison or from territories controlled by armed opposition groups such as the Islamic State of Khorasan Province and the Taliban (before the Taliban took over power in 2021). This was critical because it allowed OSRA to collect people's perspectives and opinions in locations where travel and data collection on such sensitive issues would have been close to impossible.

A survey management system (SuMSy) was designed and deployed specifically to support computer-assisted telephone interviews. SuMSy aided and accelerated the data collection process, ensuring consistency and authenticity of the data throughout the entry. It aided data collection during the survey and enabled trained operators to follow a script provided by the software.

Data was gathered by professional and qualified interviewers who contacted respondents. The interviewers were fluent in all of Afghanistan's official languages, including Dari, Pashto, Uzbeki, and Turkmani. Female interviewers were specifically trained to make the interview process easier for female interviewees who felt more confident and willing to speak with female rather than male interviewers. Respondents were informed that the interviews would be digitally recorded and saved, and that the interview would only begin when each respondent gave their consent to this process. A three-day trial-survey was conducted prior to the actual survey. Each interview lasted 15-35 minutes, giving respondents enough time to grasp each topic and share their opinions before listening to the answer possibilities. This was a deliberate approach to give respondents enough time and space to collect and reflect upon their thoughts. Talking about socio-political and value based questions with strangers is a very sensitive issue in Afghanistan, which interviewers were trained to handle tactfully. The methods and techniques elaborated in "Afghan

High-Context Culture Approach" were used at this stage. After allowing respondents to express their opinions freely, the answer possibilities were presented to the respondents. Then they selected the one answer option that reflected their views. Demographic information on respondents was collected once the questions portion was over.

Questionnaire

The questionnaire was divided into three parts: (1) governance, security forces and form of government; (2) questions related to Afghan women; and, (3) questions related to the Afghan media.

The questions analyzed in this survey were discussed at various venues between the representatives of the Taliban and the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. The questions and answers were developed keeping in mind public discourse, policies and principles of the Taliban, and those of the Afghan constitution of 2004, which were promoted by the Islamic Republic until August 2021.

The questionnaire was prepared in Dari/Farsi, Pashto and Uzbeki to enable a wide outreach across language barriers. Questions were formulated in a comprehensible manner and touched upon topics that affected people's daily lives and were debated among ordinary Afghans and experts on traditional media (TV and radio), as well as social media.

Data Quality

A two-layer quality assurance check was developed and used to confirm the consistency and authenticity of the data. First, the integrated data validity and consistency verification of SuMSy was employed. Second, a data quality control team double-checked data entries to ensure they matched the recorded voice responses. Following the completion of these two processes, the data was released for publication on our open-data platform.

The margin of error in this poll was 1.5%, calculated from an estimated proportion of $p=0.5$ and a confidence interval of 95%. A Chi Square test was conducted to calculate associations and correlations between variables.

⁴ Ibid

Social Desirability Bias

Social desirability bias, or the tendency to react in ways that are believed to be more proper or socially acceptable to others, can distort data and affect survey results. A number of steps were taken to reduce social desirability bias. (1) Favoring mobile-phone interviews over face-to-face interviews the anonymity of the mobile-phone interviews was valued by respondents because it allowed them to express their opinions free of peer-pressure, moral obligations, and the gazes of bystanders, relatives, or, in some cases, family members. Interviewers were often requested to call back at a later time in order for respondents to move to a place with fewer or no bystanders. (2) Survey questions were formulated openly and answer options were not given right away. Each interview lasted 15-35 minutes, giving participants enough time to grasp each topic and share their opinions and points of view before hearing the answer possibilities. This was a deliberate approach to give respondents the time and space to reflect and collect their thoughts before selecting the answer option that best described their position. Demographic details were collected once the actual interview was over maintaining respondent-anonymity throughout the interview. (3) In instances where respondents appeared doubtful and hesitant about whether to respond to specific questions due to the high-context culture in Afghanistan, trained interviewers presented them with socially desirable and undesirable answers provided by other respondents. This proven technique relieved pressure, reduced hesitation, and assured respondents that there is no right or wrong answer option and that any answer possibility is valid as long as it reflects their standpoint.

Data Weighting Urban-Rural Population

The urban-rural sample distribution was 48% urban and 52% rural. In order to achieve a balanced and representative sample, the sample was divided into rural and urban sub-groups. The majority class of rural population was oversampled using the Synthetic Minority Oversampling Technique (SMOTE) to represent the official World Bank

population distribution data on Afghanistan of 26.1% urban and 73.9% rural population. This methodology is used to create additional synthetic examples for the majority class as required. Random undersampling was first used to trim the number of examples in the minority class (urban population), then SMOTE was used to oversample the majority class to balance the distribution.

Retrospective Data Weighting of Urban-Rural Population Distribution for the 2020 Survey

In order to conduct a comparative study and show changes in opinion between 2020 and 2021 and derive accurate findings, the same SMOTE weighting process of 26.1 : 73.9 urban-rural distribution was applied to the data collected in the 2020 survey in retrospect. Because this step was not taken in 2020, the statistics in the Afghan People's Survey on Intra-Afghan Peace Negotiations reflect slightly different percentages in its report. The rural-urban population distribution of the 2020 survey was 49 % urban and 51 % rural.

All the 2020 data presented in figures and tables in this survey have been weighted according to the rural-urban population distribution of 26.1% urban and 73.9% rural.

Data Presentation

For the purpose of comprehensible and easy-to-understand presentation of the collected data, The Digital Bridge gGmbH designed an open-data platform where the data can be openly accessed. Users can see the data broken down into categories and filter it according to demographic attributes, enabling them to infer varying correlations with the help of multiple concurrent filters. This allows a wide range of hypotheses to be drawn and possible conclusions to be made. The open-data platform is free and is available for the public to use and study.

TALIBAN MORAL POLICE

TALIBAN MORAL POLICE

Are you in favor of the Taliban moral police or Amr-bil-Marooof in the event of a peace-agreement with the Taliban?

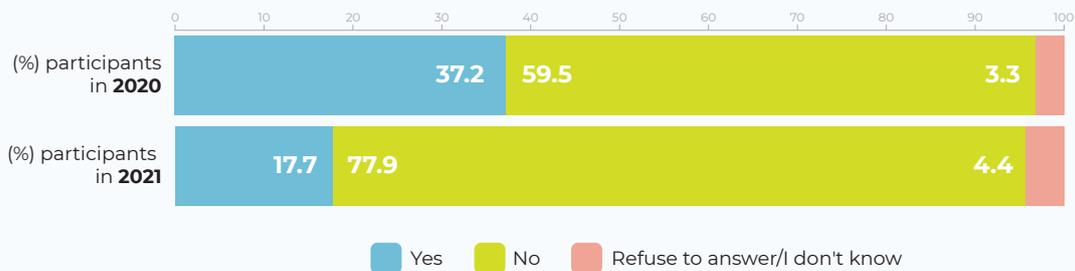


Figure 6. People’s responses on reintroduction of Taliban moral police or Amr-bil-Marooof, 2020 and 2021

Observations & Analysis

In April 2021, 77.9% of the population rejected the re-establishment of Amr-bil-Marooof-wa-Nahi ‘anil Munkar authority, or Taliban moral police in case of peace-agreement with the Taliban. This figure was 59.5% in 2020 (Figure 6).

The data revealed that illiterate and primary school graduate respondents had become

increasingly opposed to the Taliban moral police in 2021 than people with higher education background (Table 2). The older the respondents, the more likely they were to be against Taliban moral police (Table 3).

While the surge in rejection of Taliban moral police was recorded in all provinces, this was particularly high in Pashtun-dominated provinces in 2021 (Figure 7). It is assessed that the areas/districts captured by the Taliban

Are you in favor of the Taliban moral police or Amr-bil-Marooof in the event of a peace-agreement with the Taliban?

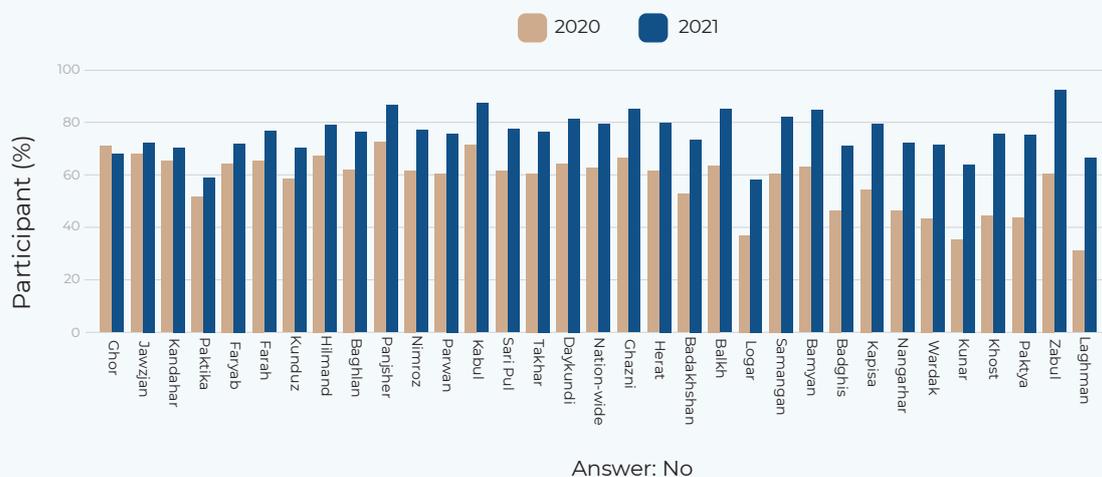


Figure 7. Geographic comparison of “No” responses 2020 and 2021

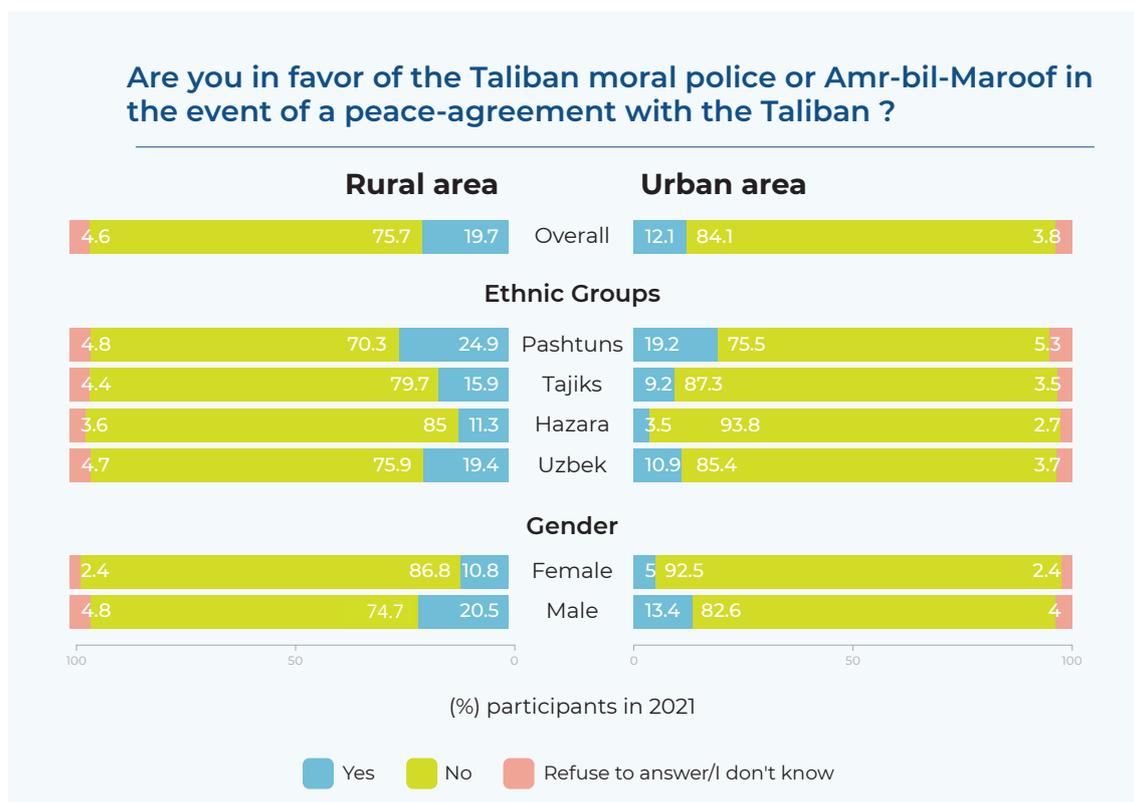


Figure 8. Rural-urban comparison of responses on reintroduction of Taliban moral police in 2021

between February 2020 and April 2021 in the provinces of Laghman, Zabul, Paktya, Khost, Kunar, Wardak, Nangarhar, Kapisa, and Badghis, saw a growth in the group’s unpopularity as they began to govern and regulate people’s lives through the Amr-bil-Marooof authority. Furthermore, the Ghani government’s Pashtun-nationalist and anti-Taliban media campaign, which began shortly after the US-Taliban Doha deal in February 2020, was most effective among populations in these border provinces, which are also home to large numbers of Afghan national army and special forces soldiers.

The Rural-Urban Divide

The overall rural-urban divide did not exceed 10%. While there were notable differences exceeding the 10% threshold between ethnic groups and the sexes, the rural-urban divide within each ethnic group did not exceed the 10% threshold (Figure 8).

Background & Current Situation

The al-amr bi-l-ma’ ruf wa-n-nahy’anil-munkar or preaching and the propagation of virtue and the prevention of vice authority, in short,

Taliban moral police was introduced in 1996. This authority was a typical feature of Taliban rule from 1996-2001 and post 2001 in areas under Taliban control. Though never openly acknowledged during numerous rounds of the Afghan peace-negotiations, it remained a core tenet of Taliban philosophy. Taliban officials’ responses at international venues were consistent with their aim to control and regulate people’s moral and private lives in the name of religion.

Shortly after coming to power in August 2021, the Taliban reintroduced the Amr-bil-Marooof authority and abolished the Afghan Ministry for Women’s Affairs (MWA). They renamed and occupied the MWA building the Amr-bil-Marooof authority. Latest reports show that moral policing of the local population remains the signature and main feature of Taliban rule. Common practices include random content control of people’s mobile phones; forcing men to wear beards; prohibiting music; prohibiting and restricting women from traveling, recreational activities, public women-only baths; imposing Talibani interpretation of hijab to replace the commonly worn head-cover in Afghanistan; and pushing women increasingly away from public life through new regulations.

Table 1: People's responses on reintroduction of Taliban moral police or Amr-bil-Marooof in the event of a peace-agreement with the Taliban, 2020 and 2021 - Ethnicity (in %)

Ethnic Groups	Yes		No		I don't know	
	2020	2021	2020	2021	2020	2021
Pashtuns	44.2	23.4	51.7	71.6	4.1	5
Tajiks	33.8	14.2	63.3	81.7	2.9	4.1
Hazara	26.9	9.4	72.1	87.3	1	3.3
Uzbek	34.6	17.2	63.1	78.4	2.3	4.4

Table 2: People's responses on reintroduction of Taliban moral police or Amr-bil-Marooof in the event of a peace-agreement with the Taliban, 2020 and 2021 - Level of Education (in %)

Level of Education	Yes		No		I don't know	
	2020	2021	2020	2021	2020	2021
Illiterate	46.8	24.9	48.8	69.1	4.4	6
Primary School	39.6	18.1	56.2	76.8	4.2	5.1
High School Graduate	35.7	18	61.5	77.9	2.8	4.1
University Graduate	26	9.8	71.7	86.8	2.3	3.4
Masters Degree	18.6	10.9	81.4	84.8	0	4.3
Doctorate	28.5	14.2	71.5	71.4	0	14.4

Table 3: People's responses on reintroduction of Taliban moral police or Amr-bil-Marooof in the event of a peace-agreement with the Taliban - Age Groups (in %)

Age Groups	Yes		No		I don't know	
	2020	2021	2020	2021	2020	2021
18-25	37.4	19.3	59.2	76.9	3.4	3.8
26-35	35.6	15.7	61.6	80.1	2.8	4.2
36-45	36.9	15.6	58.5	79.4	4.6	5
46-55	40.8	11.2	56.6	82.3	2.6	6.5
56+	40	14.7	56.2	78.6	3.8	6.7

Table 4: People's responses on reintroduction of Taliban moral police or Amr-bil-Marooof in the event of a peace-agreement with the Taliban, 2020 and 2021 - Gender (in %)

Gender	Yes		No		I don't know	
	2020	2021	2020	2021	2020	2021
Female	24.6	9.3	72.8	88.2	2,6	2.5
Male	40.7	18,6	55.8	76.8	3.5	4.6



POLITICAL SYSTEM PREFERENCE

POLITICAL SYSTEM PREFERENCE

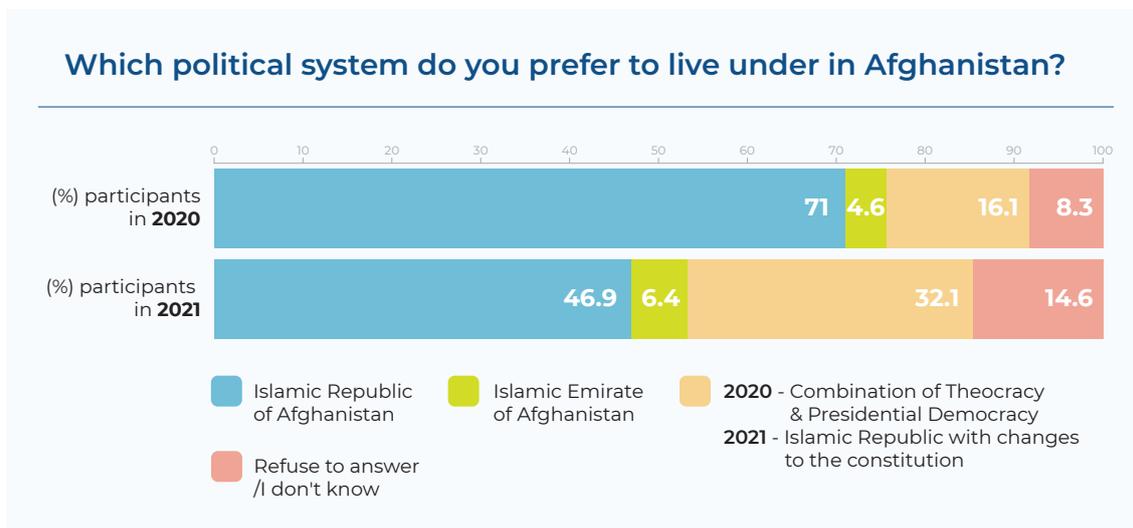


Figure 9. People's preferences for political systems, 2020 and 2021

Observations & Analysis

When asked what political system the people wanted, only 46.9% of Afghans chose the Ashraf Ghani led Islamic Republic in April 2021. In February 2020 this number was 71%. Meanwhile, as support for the Ghani led Islamic Republic dropped, support for a third option or form of government doubled from 16.1% in February 2020 to 32.1% in April 2021.⁵ However, increased support for the Islamic Emirate of the Taliban remained largely insignificant from 4.6% in February 2020 to 6.4% in April 2021 (Figure 9).

The 24.1% drop in support for the Islamic Republic and the twofold increase for a third option is assessed to be related to the political volatility, economic upheavals, and, most critically, a deterioration in the security situation between February 2020 and April 2021. Deteriorating security conditions shortly after the US-Taliban agreement, which were directly linked to changes in the rules of engagement for Afghan and

US militaries after the deal, combined with widespread corruption and an increase in unemployment and poverty as international aid and development programs rolled back, led Afghans to believe that the Ghani-led Islamic Republic could not solve the country's problems. Willingness among Afghans to support a consensus third solution form of government formed between the Islamic Republic and the Islamic Emirate in exchange for peace and stability increased. Moreover, this shift did not result in any notable or significant increase in support for the Islamic Emirate of the Taliban.

Though this shift was recorded across the country, it remained the highest in predominantly non-Pashtun provinces. Except for the provinces of Paktiya, Paktika and Kunar, support for the Islamic Republic plummeted in almost every province (Figure 10).

Drop in support for the Islamic Republic was the highest among Hazara's followed by Tajiks, Uzbeks and Pashtuns (Table 5). In the

⁵ The third option was "theocracy in combination with presidential democracy" in 2020 and "Changes to the Afghan constitution to accommodate the Taliban interpretation". The two options reflect contemporary discourses of their times. In 2020, an Iranian style of government was discussed as a viable option. This was not the case in 2021 anymore.

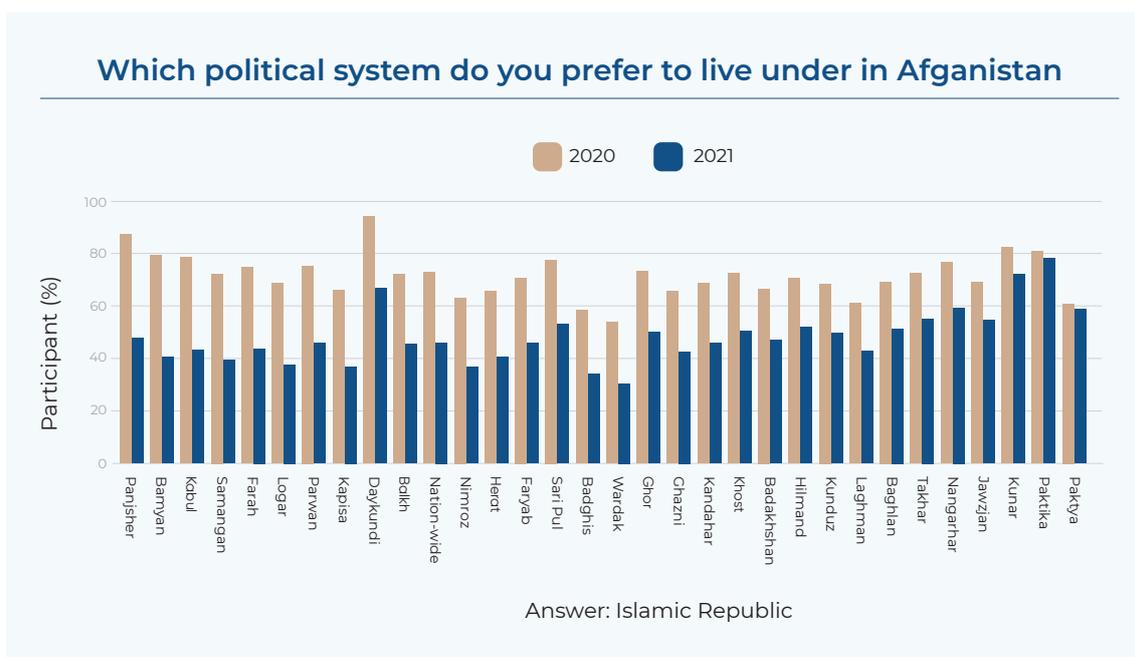


Figure 10. Geographic comparison of “Islamic Republic” responses 2020 and 2021

same order, an increase in support for a third option, Islamic Republic with changes to the constitution, was registered (Table 5).

Support for the Islamic Republic dropped among all respondents, but significantly among those with higher levels of formal education (Table 6). People who had finished high school and those with university degrees seemed largely divided between Islamic Republic and a consensus third solution form of government in 2021 (Table 6).

Furthermore, while female respondents were roughly split between the Islamic Republic, 44.8%, and a consensus third-solution style of government, 41.6%, in 2021, male respondents were inclined and chose the Islamic Republic, 47.3%, over a consensus option, 31%. In 2021, the percentage of male respondents who refused to answer, didn't know how to answer this question nearly doubled (Table 8).

Background & Current Situation

The Islamic Republic of Afghanistan was formed in 2004 following the transition authority created after the US invasion of

Afghanistan in winter 2001. The Islamic Republic was a presidential republic established on the bases of a new constitution, an independent judiciary, free elections and a centralized security sector under the consensus of varying Afghan political and military groups, as well as the UN, US and EU countries. The Islamic Emirate was a form of government established by the Taliban movement from 1996-2001 when they seized control of Kabul. After the fall of Kabul on 15 August 2021 the Taliban declared Afghanistan an Islamic Emirate once again. Both Taliban governments, the former and the current continue to be interim governments.

The Taliban's Islamic Emirate remains a sanctioned and isolated pariah state on the international stage. As a result, Afghanistan's economy is on the verge of collapse. As the international community presses the Taliban to form a broad-based and inclusive government, top Taliban officials have stated in recent reports that they will not form a government with any former Afghan government officials or politicians, further eroding chances of any long-term peace solution for Afghanistan.

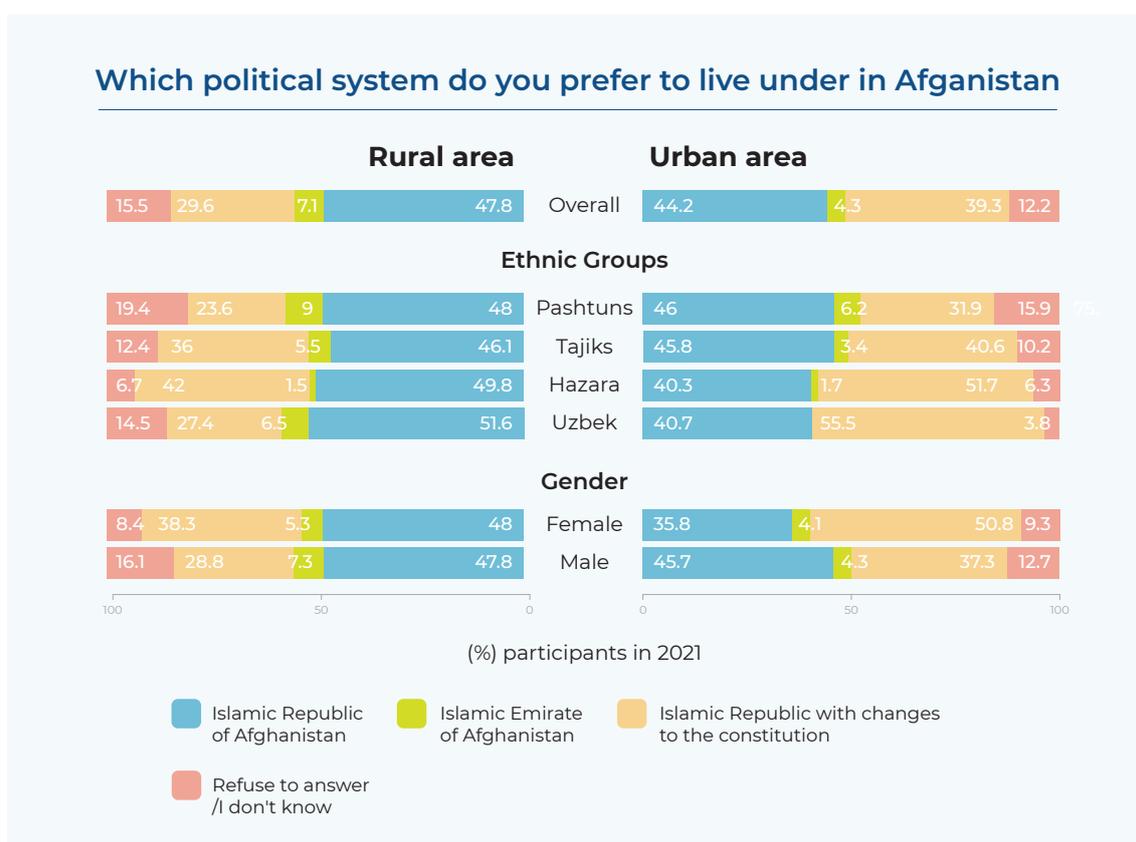


Figure 11. Rural-urban comparison of responses on political system preference in 2021

The Rural-Urban Divide

On this question, the overall rural-urban divide was not as pronounced as commonly assumed between the rural and urban populations (Figure 11). This is largely attributed to Afghanistan’s technology and telecommunication advancements, which allowed for rapid dissemination of information to both rural and urban populations via television, radio, and mobile phones.

Nonetheless, there were considerable differences between the urban and rural Uzbek populations. While there was no support for the Islamic Emirate among urban Uzbeks, it was supported by 6.5 % of rural Uzbeks. Furthermore, the majority of urban Uzbeks supported a consensus third-solution government, whereas the majority of rural Uzbeks supported the Islamic Republic.

Table 5: People’s preferences for political systems, 2020 and 2021 - Ethnicity (in %)

Ethnic Groups	Islamic Republic of Afghanistan		Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan		Combination of Theocracy & Presidential Democracy		Islamic Republic with changes to the constitution		Refuse to answer I dont know	
	2020	2021	2020	2021	2020	2021	2020	2021	2020	2021
Pashtuns	67.8	47.5	5.6	8.3	19.5	25.8	7.1	18.4		
Tajiks	73	46	4.7	5	13.9	37.2	8.4	11.8		
Hazara	78.6	47.3	1.9	1.6	9.7	44.5	9.8	6.6		
Uzbek	70.9	48.7	2.5	4.8	14.2	34.7	12.4	11.8		

Table 6: People's preferences for political systems, 2020 and 2021 - Level of Education (in %)

Level of Education	Islamic Republic of Afghanistan		Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan		Combination of Theocracy & Presidential Democracy		Islamic Republic with changes to the constitution		Refuse to answer I don't know	
	2020	2021	2020	2021	2020	2021	2020	2021	2020	2021
Illiterate	62.2	48.4	7.5	8.5	17	20.6	13.3	22.5		
Primary School	65.8	49.8	4.9	6.4	19.6	30.3	9.7	13.5		
High School Graduate	74.8	48.2	3.7	6.3	16.1	33.4	5.4	12.1		
University Graduate	81.8	43.9	2.3	3.6	11	41.4	4.9	11.1		
Masters Degree	83.6	39.6	1	4.1	7.6	48.7	7.8	7.6		
Doctorate	71.4	42.8	0	0	0	28.5	28.6	28.7		

Table 7: People's preferences for political systems, 2020 and 2021 - Age (in %)

Age Groups	Islamic Republic of Afghanistan		Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan		Combination of Theocracy & Presidential Democracy		Islamic Republic with changes to the constitution		Refuse to answer/ I don't know	
	2020	2021	2020	2021	2020	2021	2020	2021	2020	2021
18-25	72.2	44.4	4.9	9.1	16.8	34.3	6.1	12.2		
26-35	71.5	45.4	4.8	5.6	15	32.5	8.7	16.5		
36-45	67.8	48.9	4.3	3.5	17.2	30.5	10.7	17.1		
46-55	68.3	46.3	2.7	3.3	15	31.5	14	18.9		
56+	67.5	55.2	5.5	5.5	16.6	23.7	10.4	15.6		

Table 8: People's preferences for political systems, 2020 and 2021 - Gender (in %)

Gender	Islamic Republic of Afghanistan		Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan		Combination of Theocracy & Presidential Democracy		Islamic Republic with changes to the constitution		Refuse to answer I don't know	
	2020	2021	2020	2021	2020	2021	2020	2021	2020	2021
Female	75.2	44.8	4.1	5	12.1	41.6	8.6	8.6		
Male	69.6	47.3	4.8	6.5	17.3	31	8.3	15.2		

INTERIM GOVERNMENT

INTERIM GOVERNMENT SOLUTION

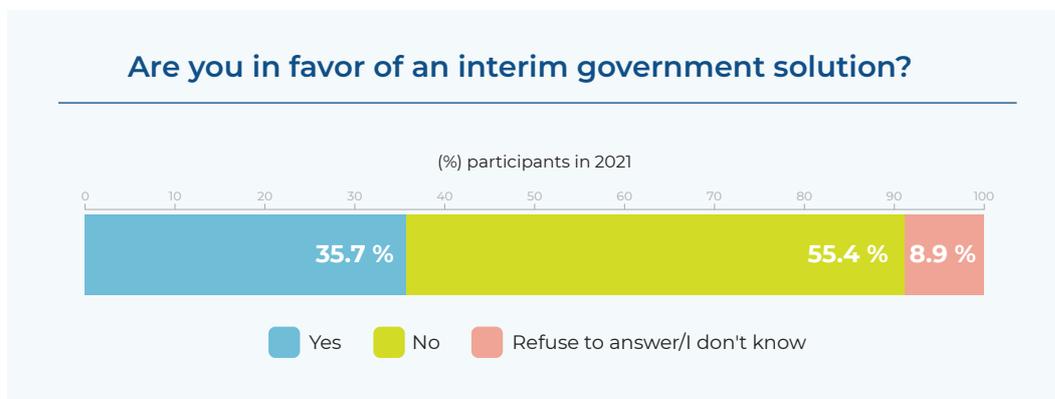


Figure 12. People's responses on interim government solution in 2021

Observations & Analysis

The majority of Afghans, 55.7%, opposed an interim government solution in 2021, while a considerable percentage, 35.7%, supported it (Figure 12). Though not included in the 2020 survey, a poll conducted just before the Afghan presidential elections in 2019 asked respondents whether they preferred an interim government solution or the then Afghan presidential election. Only 13.1% supported an interim government solution in 2019.* This almost threefold rise in support for an interim government in 2021 indicates that increasing number of Afghans were willing to accept it, if it meant peace and stability for them.

According to the data, Pashtuns constituted the largest group among the ethnic groups that opposed an interim government solution, followed by Hazaras, Tajiks, and Uzbeks in descending order (Table 9). Furthermore, the higher the levels of education of respondents, the more likely they were to oppose an interim government solution (Table 10). Older respondents were more likely to accept an interim government solution than younger respondents (Table 11). Women were more divided on this question than men (Table 12).

A Bad Reputation

Interim government solutions have historically served as an elite-driven approach to resolve political impasse between rival political blocs in Afghanistan. They have been promoted as a path to subsequent elections to form a permanent and legitimate government. In reality, however, every interim government that came to power in Afghanistan suffered from internal incohesion, and remained exclusionary, marginalizing other political forces. The Afghan civil wars of the 1990s were sparked by military battles between the various Mujahideen groups that could not agree among themselves on a permanent government solution. A Mujahideen interim government formed in 1992 marked for Afghans their initial experience with an interim government, which remained largely unaccountable to the people, and was belligerent in the civil war. The subsequent Taliban government from 1996-2001 was also an interim government and remained equally unaccountable to the people. Afghans, especially urban Afghans, who were more exposed to military conflict during the 1990s as the frontlines of the civil war among the militant groups ran through the cities, associate interim government with a period of lawlessness, economic instability, and military conflict.

* OSRA Snap Poll : Presidential Election or Interim Government 2019.
Link: <https://osra.af/opinion-poll-in-afghanistan/#report>

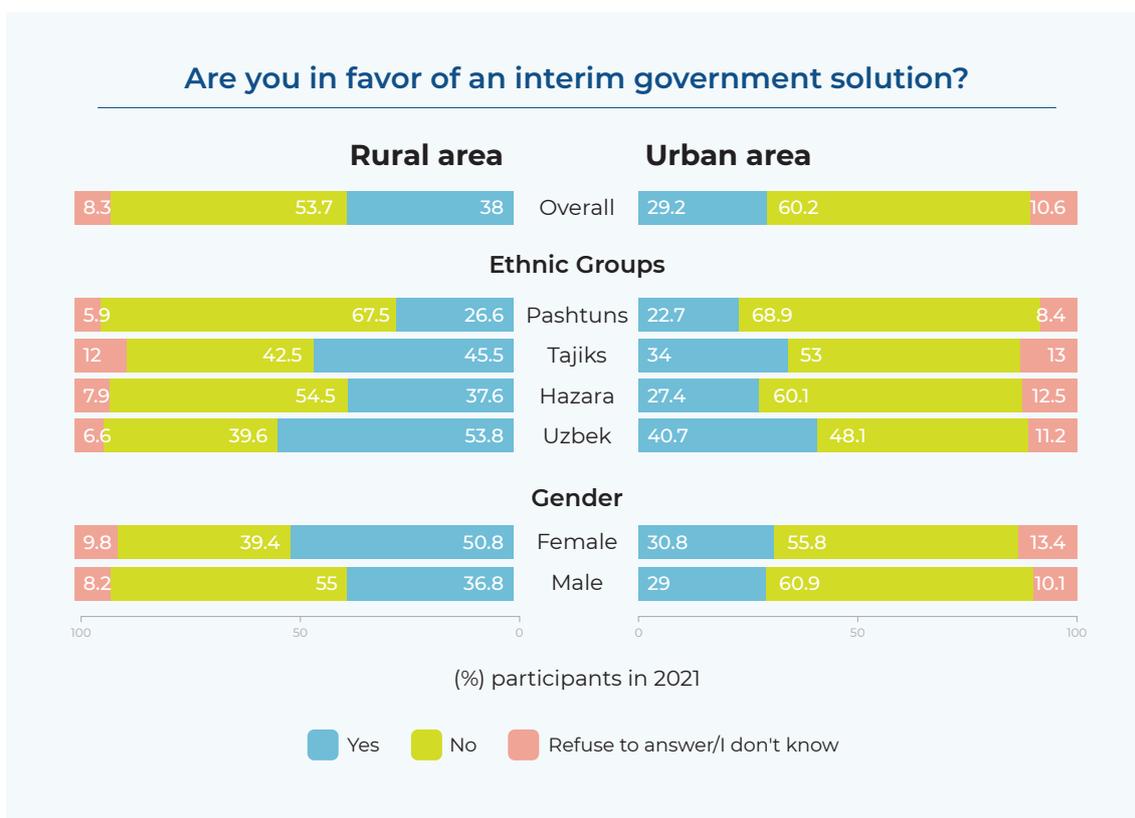


Figure 13. Rural-urban comparison of responses on interim government solution in 2021

Except for the interim government formed after the US invasion of Afghanistan in 2002 that led to the first Afghan presidential election in 2004, none of the earlier interim governments led to any elections.

The Rural-Urban Divide

The rural-urban divide did not exceed 10%, notwithstanding, notable differences between the ethnic groups though (Figure 13). Pashtuns and Hazaras in both urban and rural areas persisted in their opposition to an interim government solution. The question was however more divisive among rural and urban Uzbeks, Tajiks and women. While 53.8% of rural Uzbeks supported an interim government solution, 48.1% of urban Uzbeks opposed it. Similarly, the majority of urban Tajiks, 53%, opposed it, while 45.5% of rural Tajiks supported it. Also, while the majority of rural women, 50.8% supported an interim government solution, the majority of urban women opposed it.

Background & Current Situation

In the 1980s, when the Soviet-backed Afghan government of the People’s Democratic Party tried to reconcile to achieve a peace-settlement with the Afghan Mujadidden, the UN proposed an interim government option. Though this never materialized as planned, the subsequent Mujahidden government from 1992-1996 was an interim government. This period was marked by a brutal civil war enabling a swift takeover by the Taliban. The Taliban government, which ruled Afghanistan from 1996 to 2001, was also an interim government, and it ushered in yet another period of uncertainty, chaos and war. Following the US invasion in 2001, a new interim administration was established, however this time it laid the groundwork for elections, as the UN and international community had pledged.

The current Taliban government of the Islamic Emirate, post August 2021, is also an interim government.

Table 9: People's responses on interim government solution, 2021 - Ethnicity (in %)

Ethnic Groups	Yes	No	I don't know
Pashtuns	25.6	67.9	6.5
Tajiks	42.5	45.3	12.2
Hazara	35	55.9	9.1
Uzbek	50.4	41.8	7.8

Table 10: People's responses on interim government solution, 2021 - Level of Education (in %)

Level of Education	Yes	No	I don't know
Illiterate	46.1	42.8	11.1
Primary School	41.2	48	10.8
High School Graduate	32.4	60.9	6.7
University Graduate	25.1	66.1	8.8
Masters Degree	16.8	76.4	6.8
Doctorate	35.7	50	14.3

Table 11: People's responses on interim government solution, 2021 - Age (in %)

Age Groups	Yes	No	I don't know
18-25	34	59	7
26-35	31	59.4	9.6
36-45	38.6	49.6	11.8
46-55	40.5	46	13.5
56+	41.7	47.2	11.1

Table 12: People's responses on interim government solution, 2021- Gender (in %)

Gender	Yes	No	I don't know
Female	45.6	43.6	10.8
Male	34.8	56.5	8.7



FIGHTERS INTEGRATION

FIGHTERS INTEGRATION

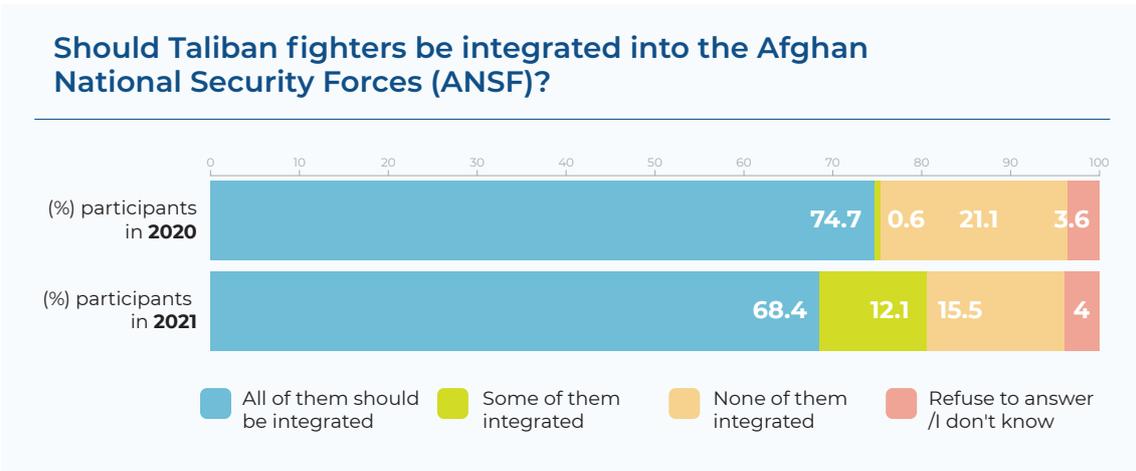


Figure 14. People’s opinion on Taliban fighters integration into the ANSF, 2020 and 2021

Observations & Analysis

In 2021, a significant majority of Afghans backed the total integration of all Taliban fighters into the former ANSF. This number dropped by 6.3% from 74.7% in 2020 to 68.4% in 2021. The number of Afghans against any integration dropped from 21.1% in 2020 to 15.5% in 2021 signaling increased willingness to accommodate the Taliban to achieve peace

and stability. A notable increase of 11.5% was observed in 2021 compared to 2020 in the number of people who favored the integration of some Taliban fighters into the ANSF (Figure14).

Drop in support of integrating all Taliban fighters was observed in the provinces of Nimroz, Helmand, Kunduz, Paktya and Khost, where fighting between ANSF and Taliban had

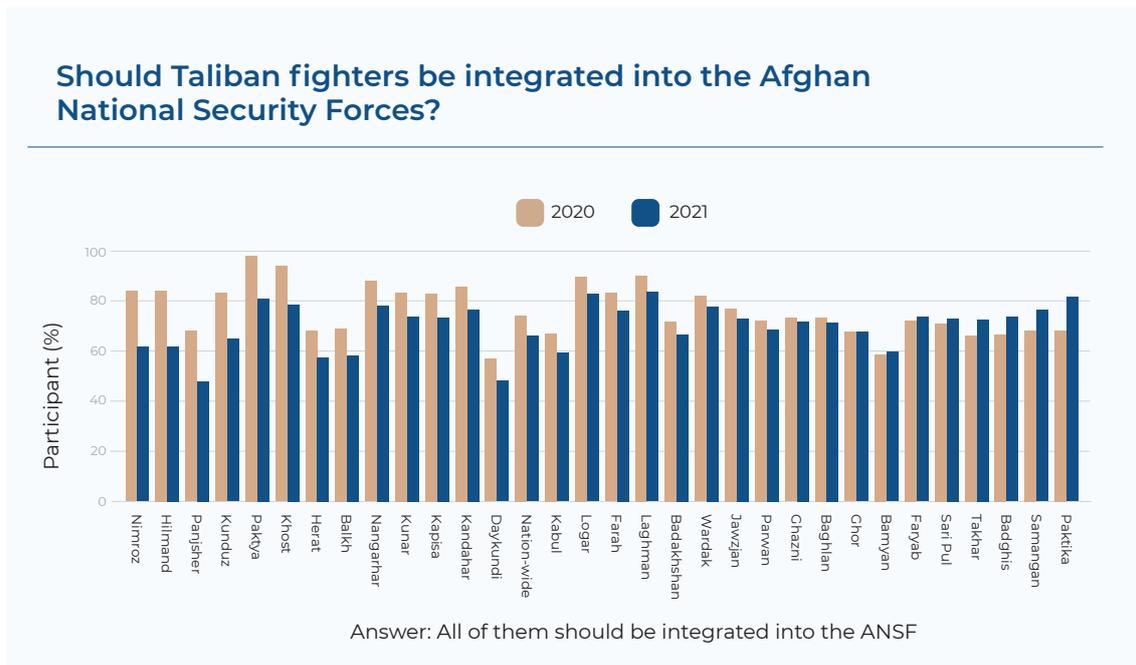


Figure 15. Geographic comparison of “All of them should be integrated” responses 2020 and 2021

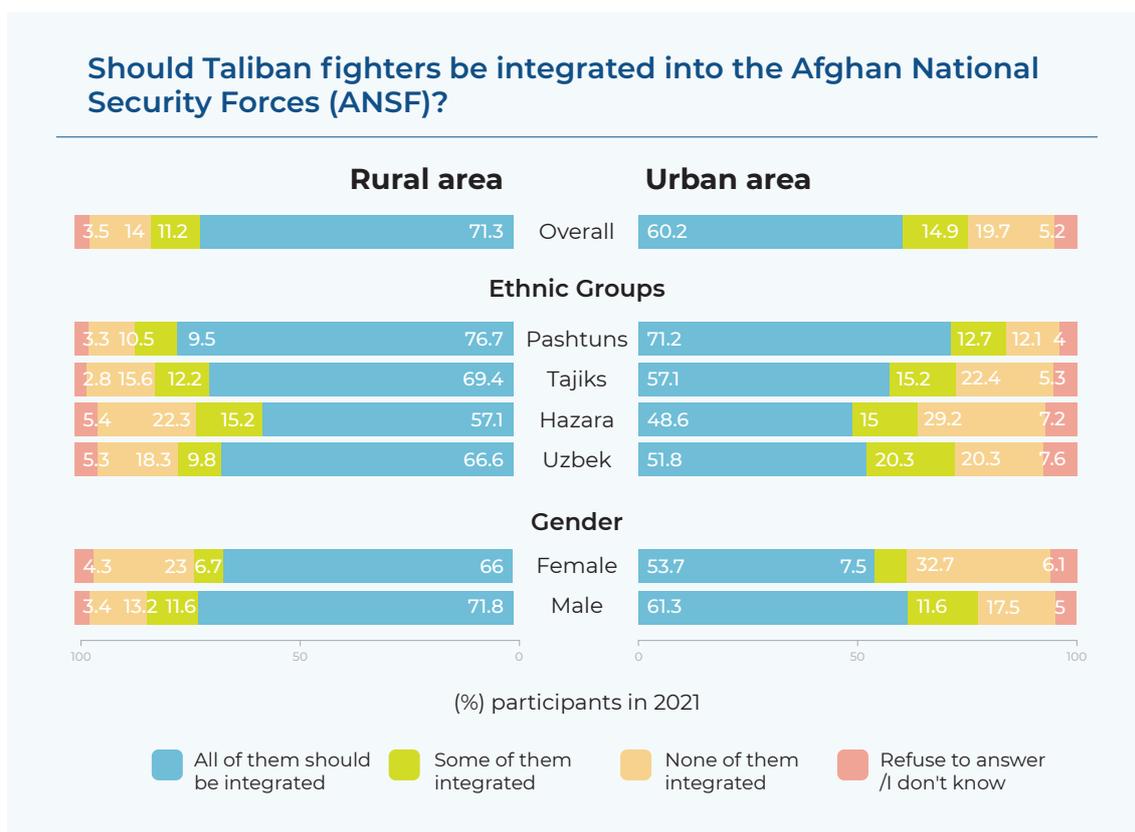


Figure 16. Rural-urban comparison of responses on Taliban fighters integration in the ANSF, 2021

begun to intensify from mid 2020 to the fall of the Islamic Republic in August 2021 (Figure 15).

The Rural-Urban Divide

The overall rural-urban divide exceeded 10%. Though largely in favor of full integration of Taliban fighters into the former ANSF, the rural population was more in favor of integration of all Taliban fighters into the ANSF than the urban population. Except for rural and urban Pashtuns, within ethnic-group difference exceeded the 10% threshold among all other ethnic groups on this answer option (Figure16).

Background & Current Situation

The Taliban and the ANSF, which were backed and trained by the US and NATO, fought each other for nearly two decades. As the Trump administration pressed for a negotiated settlement between the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and the Taliban, talks of combining the two forces became an important topic of discussion. The idea of full or partial integration of Taliban fighters in the ANSF became a

feasible scenario during the 2018 Eid al-Fitr ceasefire, which saw Taliban and ANSF soldiers embracing and taking selfies together. Moreover, following the release of 5000 Taliban detainees in summer 2020, local Afghan police and Taliban fighters sought to improve ties in villages and small towns in order to safeguard their mutual interest and guarantee relative stability.

Meanwhile, following the US-Taliban deal in February 2020, a change in the rules of engagement for both the US and Afghan militaries led to the fall of numerous remote ANSF checkpoints, compelling those ANSF troops to surrender and reconcile with the local Taliban. This however was not the case for the bulk of Afghan Special Forces, Afghan Airforce or the Afghan intelligence service. Extrajudicial killings and disappearances of ANSF members have been on the rise since the Taliban took power in August 2021, according to eyewitnesses and latest reports.

The survey findings imply that Afghanistan's current security structure under the Taliban post August 2021, does not reflect the desire of the majority of its people.

Table 13: People's opinion on Taliban fighters integration into the ANSF - Level of Education (in %)

Level of Education	All of them should be integrated		Some of them integrated		None of them integrated		Refuse to answer I don't know	
	2020	2021	2020	2021	2020	2021	2020	2021
Illiterate	77.9	75.6	0.5	5.1	16.6	15.1	5	4.2
Primary School	73.9	70.4	0.5	11.8	21.5	12.2	4.1	5.6
High School Graduate	73.1	69.2	0.5	11.6	23.3	15.4	3.1	3.8
University Graduate	74.8	60.5	1.2	19	21.5	18	2.5	2.5
Masters Degree	72.5	49.1	4.5	36.4	23	9.3	0	5.2
Doctorate	100	78.5	0	21.5	0	0	0	0

Table 14: People's opinion on Taliban fighters integration into the ANSF - Ethnicity (in %)

Ethnic Groups	All of them should be integrated		Some of them integrated		None of them integrated		Refuse to answer I don't know	
	2020	2021	2020	2021	2020	2021	2020	2021
Pashtuns	85.5	75.3	0.7	10.3	11.5	11	2.3	3.4
Tajiks	66	66.2	0.8	13	29	17.4	4.2	3.4
Hazara	61.1	54.9	0.5	15.1	33.3	24.1	5.1	5.9
Uzbek	71.3	62.8	0.2	12.5	24.7	18.8	3.8	5.9

Table 15: People's opinion on Taliban fighters integration into the ANSF - Age (in %)

Age Groups	All of them should be integrated		Some of them integrated		None of them integrated		Refuse to answer I don't know	
	2020	2021	2020	2021	2020	2021	2020	2021
18-25	69.4	67.2	0.5	10.1	27.2	18.8	2.9	3.9
26-35	78.1	67.8	0.8	13	17.8	14.8	3.3	4.4
36-45	79.8	71.5	0.4	13.8	14.8	10.7	5	4
46-55	80.4	71.3	0.4	15.5	15.2	9.4	4	3.8
56+	79.3	67.9	0.9	16.5	11	11	8.8	4.6

Table 16: People's opinion on Taliban fighters integration into the ANSF - Gender (in %)

Gender	All of them should be integrated		Some of them integrated		None of them integrated		Refuse to answer I don't know	
	2020	2021	2020	2021	2020	2021	2020	2021
Female	56.3	62.8	0.5	6.9	36.7	25.5	6.5	4.8
Male	80	69.1	0.8	12.8	16.5	14.3	2.7	3.8

GENDER SEGREGATION

GENDER SEGREGATION IN HIGER EDUCATION

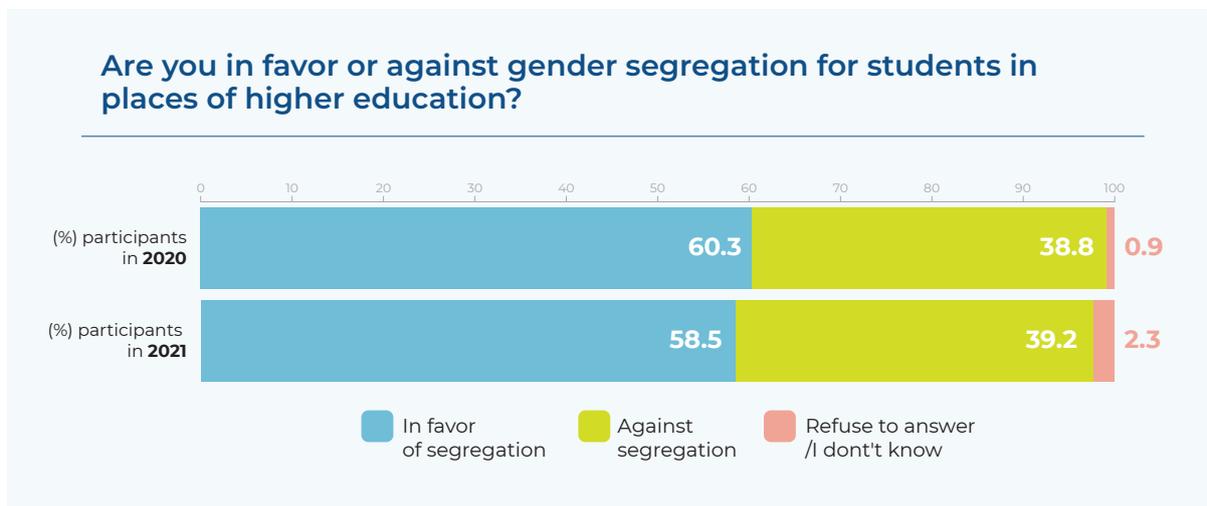


Figure 17. People's opinion on gender segregation in places of higher education, 2020 and 2021

Observations & Analysis

In 2020 and 2021, the majority of Afghans continued to support gender segregation in places of higher education while a sizable number opposed it (Figure 17).

Except for the majority of Hazara's that remained opposed to gender segregation, the majority of all other ethnic groups supported gender segregation in universities and other places of higher education (Table 17).

Furthermore, the data from 2020 and 2021 revealed that the lower the level of formal education, the more likely it was that respondents would favor gender segregation in places of higher education (Table 18).

Shortly after taking power in August 2021, the Taliban imposed gender segregation in Afghan universities. Taliban officials have stated that they intend to create facilities and build separate classrooms for female students who should be taught solely by female teachers and lecturers.

According to recent reports and assessments of female Afghan students, teachers, and lecturers, this regulation will marginalize women and girls from higher education. Apart from the lack of financial resources that the Taliban force in building separate infrastructure for women and girls, the overall shortage of female university lecturers makes this goal very unrealistic. Lack of female academic staff, especially in the male-dominated fields of engineering, computer science, and medicine, will systematically deny female students access to higher education in almost all fields in the coming years and as long as the regulation remains in place.

As a result, an increasing number of Afghan girls and women will not get the equal opportunity to pursue higher education like their male counterparts. Many Afghans, especially those with higher levels of formal education see this as an intentional step by the Taliban to gradually push women and girls further away from academic life in particular and public life in general.

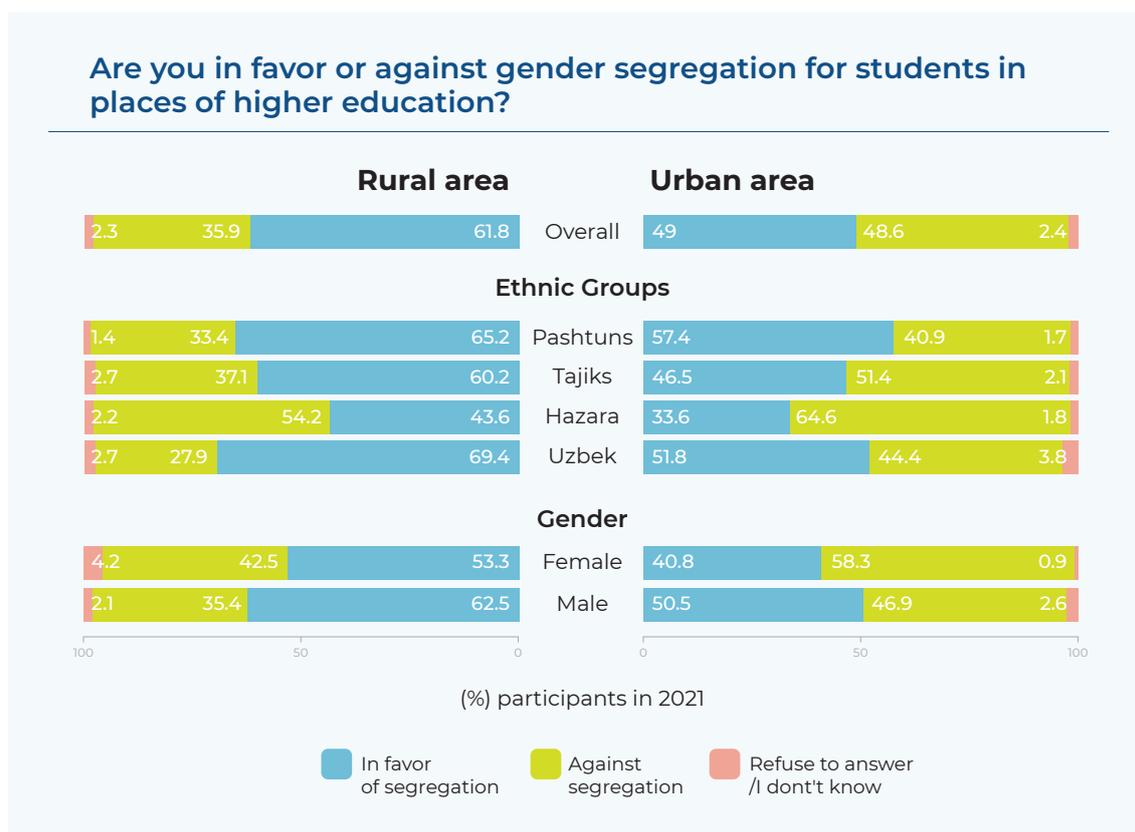


Figure 18. Rural-urban comparison of responses on gender segregation in places of higher education, 2021

The Rural-Urban Divide

This question remained the most divisive among the urban population in the entire survey. While 61.8% the rural population was in favor of gender segregation and 35.9% against it, the question polarized the urban population, with 49% in favor and 48.6% opposed to it (Figure 18). Disparity within ethnic groups along the rural-urban divide was prominent among the Uzbek community, followed by Tajiks, Hazaras and Pashtuns in descending order. In addition, the majority of both urban and rural women appeared to be split on the question, with the majority of urban women opposing gender separation and the majority of rural women supporting it.

Background & Current Situation

Conservative and religious sections of Afghan society have historically viewed the co-

education environment of Afghan universities as virtue-free spaces where girls and boys interact without supervision. As a result, gender based segregation in places of higher education, such as universities has been a key demand of Islamist parties and organizations in Afghanistan, including the Taliban, for decades.

From 1996 to 2001, the Taliban banned women and girls from any kind of education stating lack of segregated educational facilities and lack of female professionals to instruct female students.

The Taliban introduced gender segregation in Afghan universities shortly after taking power in August 2021. Taliban leaders have indicated that they intend to establish separate classrooms and facilities for female students who will be taught only by female teachers and lecturers.

Table 17: People's opinion on gender segregation in places of higher education, 2020 and 2021 - Ethnicity (in %)

Ethnic Groups	In favor of segregation		Against segregation		I don't know	
	2020	2021	2020	2021	2020	2021
Pashtuns	66.2	63.1	33.1	35.4	0.7	1.5
Tajiks	58.1	56.6	40.8	40.8	1.1	2.6
Hazara	46.8	41	53.2	56.9	0	2.1
Uzbek	60.7	64.9	37.5	32.2	1.8	2.9

Table 18: People's opinion on gender segregation in places of higher education, 2020 and 2021- Level of Education (in %)

Level of Education	In favor of segregation		Against segregation		I don't know	
	2020	2021	2020	2021	2020	2021
Illiterate	71.5	66.4	27.6	29.9	0.9	3.7
Primary School	69.1	63.7	29.9	34.3	1	2
High School Graduate	56.4	60.9	42.1	37.5	1.5	1.6
University Graduate	44.8	44.2	54.6	53.3	0.6	2.5
Masters Degree	36.9	35.2	63.1	63.8	0	1
Doctorate	28.5	15.3	71.5	84.7	0	0

Table 19: People's opinion on gender segregation in places of higher education, 2020 and 2021 - Age (in %)

Age Groups	In favor of segregation		Against segregation		I don't know	
	2020	2021	2020	2021	2020	2021
18-25	59.6	57.1	39.5	41.1	0.9	1.8
26-35	59.7	59.3	39.8	38.3	0.5	2.4
36-45	62.6	59.9	35.6	36.9	1.8	3.2
46-55	62.5	60.3	35.6	37.5	1.9	2.2
56+	59.5	57.9	40	37.7	0.5	4.4

Table 20: People's opinion on gender segregation in places of higher education, 2020 and 2021 - Gender (in %)

Gender	In favor of segregation		Against segregation		I don't know	
	2020	2021	2020	2021	2020	2021
Female	59.9	50.1	39.3	46.6	0.8	3.3
Male	60.5	59.4	38.6	38.4	0.9	2.2



WOMEN IN POLITICS

WOMEN IN POLITICS

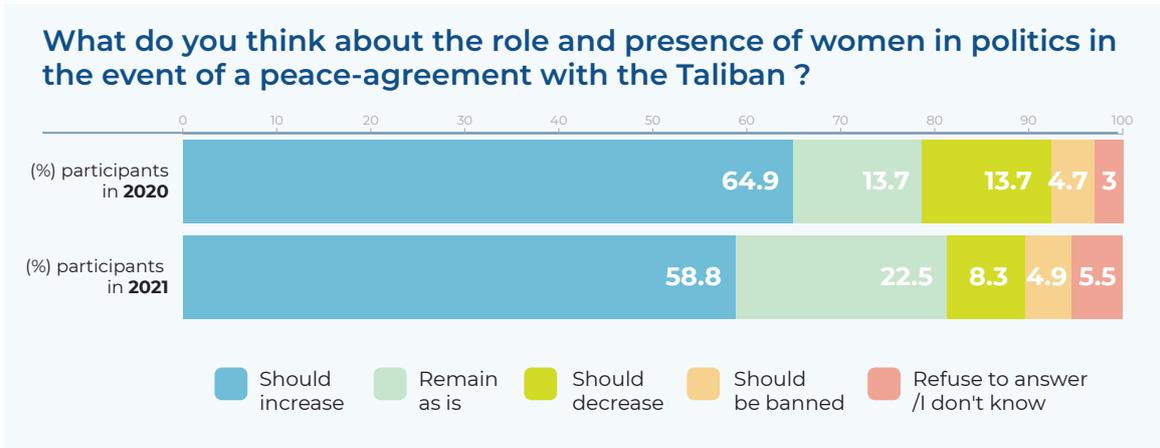


Figure 19. People's opinions on women's presence and role in Afghan politics in the event of a peace-agreement with the Taliban, 2020 and 2021.

Observations & Analysis

In 2020 and 2021, the majority of Afghans continued to favor the expansion of Afghan women's role and presence in politics even after a possible peace agreement with the Taliban. The number of Afghans who wanted women's role and presence to remain (at the level of April 2021) increased by 8.8%, from 13.7% in 2020, to 22.5% in 2021. Meanwhile the number of Afghans who wanted women's role and presence decreased in politics

dropped by 5.4 %, from 13.7% in 2020 to 8.3% in 2021 (Figure14).

According to the data, Hazara's constituted the largest group in favor of increasing women's role and presence in politics followed by Tajiks, Uzbeks and Pashtuns in descending order (Table 21) Meanwhile, Pashtuns constituted the largest group among those in favor of maintaining women's role and presence politics (at the level of April 2021) followed

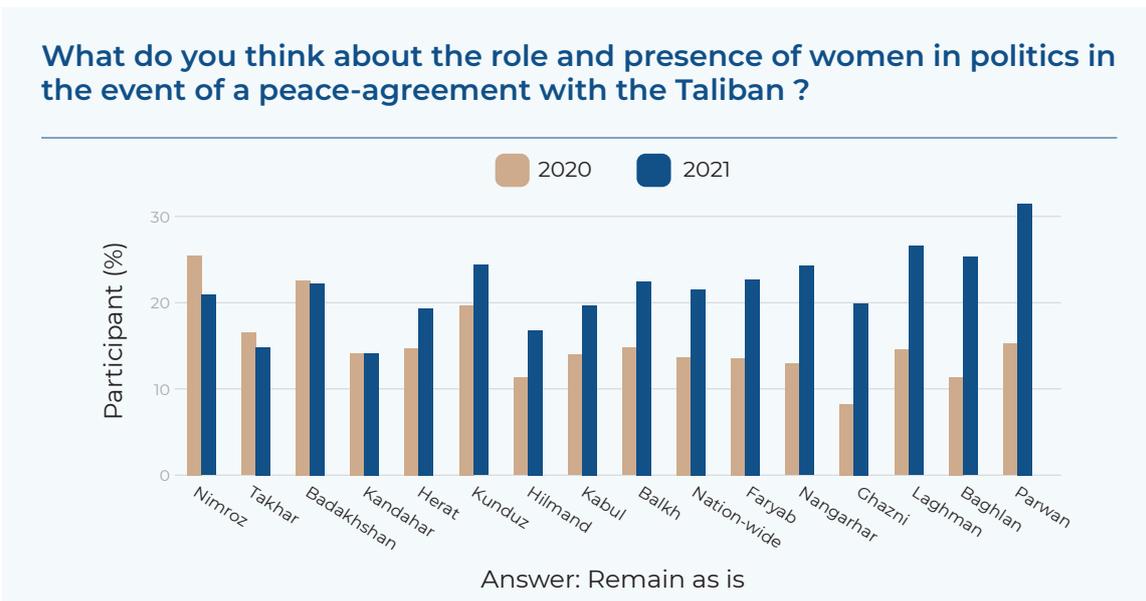


Figure 20. Geographic comparison of "Remain as is" responses 2020 and 2021

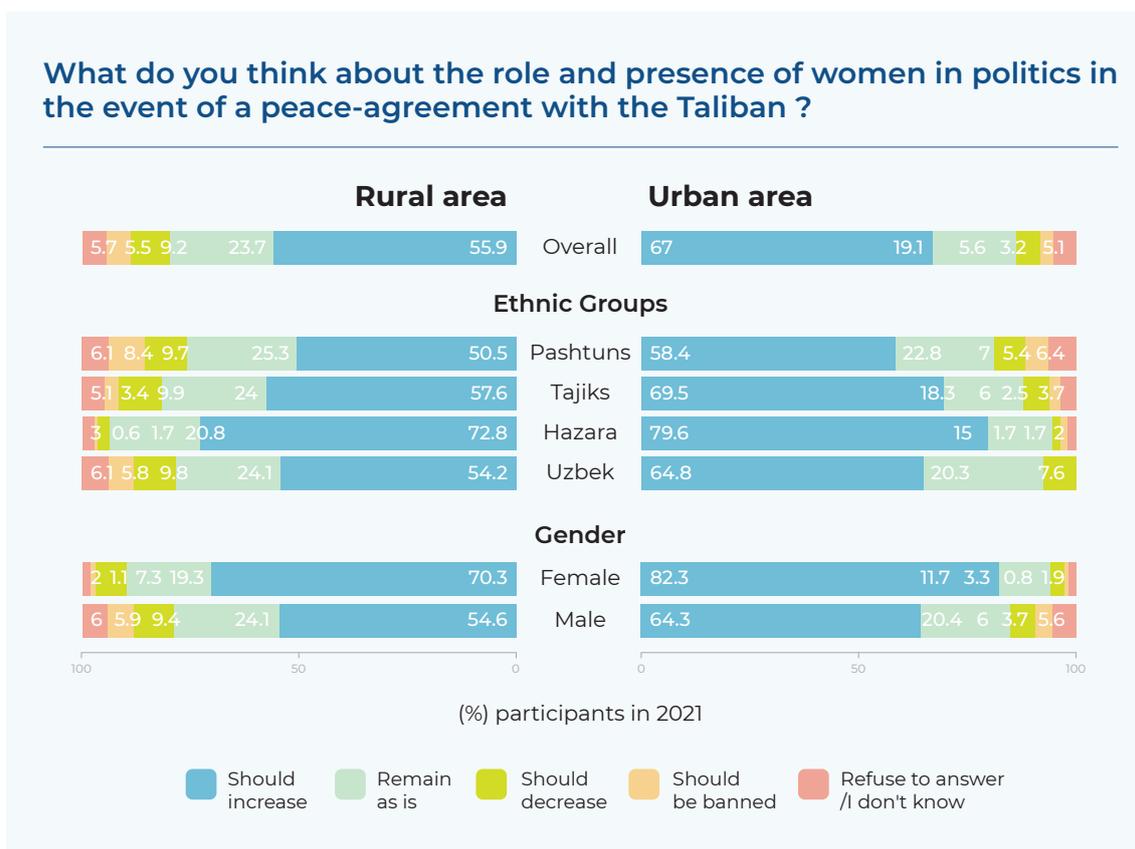


Figure 21. Rural-urban comparison of responses on women’s role in Afghan politics in the event of a peace-agreement with the Taliban, 2021

by Tajiks, Uzbeks and Hazaras in descending order. This is assessed as a pragmatic move on the part of those who opted for this option as curtailments of women’s rights and liberties in a consensus government accommodating the Taliban was anticipated.

The upsurge in “remain as is” in 2021, from people who previously wanted an increase or decrease in the role and presence of women in politics, was seen primarily in the provinces of Parwan, Baghlan, Laghman, Ghazni, Nangarhar, Faryab, Balkh, Kabul, Helmand, Kunduz, and Herat (Figure 20), and across all age groups (Table 23), and all educational backgrounds (Table 22).

Discrepancy between women and men was prominent on this question with 73.4% women in favor of increase compared to 57.1% men (Table 24).

The Rural-Urban Divide

The rural-urban divide was slightly prominent and exceeded 10%. Although the majority of both rural and urban population were in favor of expansion of women’s role and presence in Afghan politics, the urban population was more in favor than the rural population. Within ethnic groups, the rural-urban divide was most

prominent among Tajiks and Uzbeks, exceeding the 10% threshold.

Background & Current Situation

Elite and upper-middle class urban women and girls have had an active role in Afghan politics since the country gained independence in 1919. Afghan monarchies, the first republic, the Soviet and US-backed Afghan governments, supported active roles for women in the country’s politics. While this was mostly a top-down approach driven by monarchists, progressives and leftists; conservative, Islamist, and traditionalist forces pushed for interpretations of Islam that restricted women’s role to domiciliary responsibilities.

As the data indicates, this changed even within the conservative and traditionalist forces and circles during the last two decades. International pressure and promotion of women’s rights, a thriving civil society, increase in education and work opportunities, and a quota system, ensured representation and effectiveness of women in public and political life.

The current Taliban government and cabinet have no women. Moreover, new regulations by the Taliban continue to target women, restricting and marginalizing them further from public and political life.

Table 21: People's opinions on women's presence and role in Afghan politics in the event of a peace-agreement with the Taliban, 2020 and 2021 - Ethnicity (in %)

Ethnic Groups	Should increase		Remain as is		Should decrease		Should be banned		I don't know		
	Year	2020	2021	2020	2021	2020	2021	2020	2021	2020	2021
Pashtuns		63.4	52.6	13.4	24.7	14.4	9	5.8	7.6	3	6.1
Tajiks		62.5	60.7	15	22.5	16.1	8.9	3.5	3.2	2.9	4.7
Hazara		78.6	74.6	10.5	19.3	7.3	2.5	1.9	0.9	1.7	2.7
Uzbek		61.2	57	13.3	25.1	15.5	9.1	6.4	4.3	3.6	4.5

Table 22: People's opinions on women's presence and role in Afghan politics in the event of a peace-agreement with the Taliban, 2020 and 2021 - Level of Education (in %)

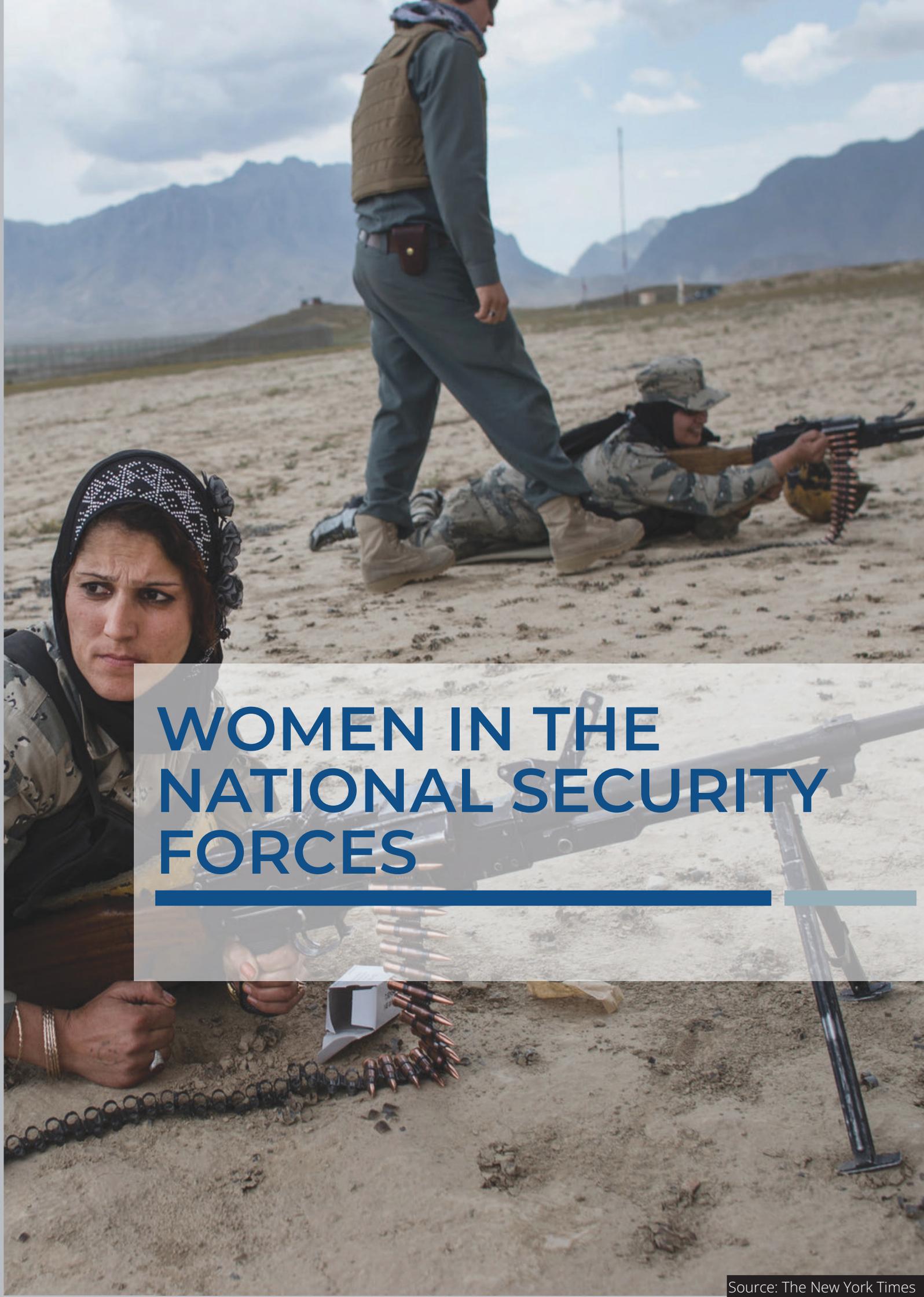
Level of Education	Should increase		Remain as is		Should decrease		Should be banned		I don't know		
	Year	2020	2021	2020	2021	2020	2021	2020	2021	2020	2021
Illiterate		64.3	56.6	12.8	23	13.1	7.4	5.9	5.5	3.9	7.5
Primary School		60.2	56	14.4	26.4	17.1	7.5	5	5.1	3.3	5
High School Graduate		63	57.2	14.7	21.3	14.9	10.1	4.5	5.9	2.9	5.5
University Graduate		71.9	64.3	14.4	21.3	9.8	6.7	2.2	3.1	1.7	4.6
Masters Degree		78	78.8	10.9	12.7	5.4	0.8	1.2	0	4.5	7.7
Doctorate		66.6	100	0	0	33.4	0	0	0	0	0

Table 23: People's opinions on women's presence and role in Afghan politics in the event of a peace-agreement with the Taliban, 2020 and 2021 - Age (in %)

Age Groups	Should increase		Remain as is		Should decrease		Should be banned		I don't know		
	Year	2020	2021	2020	2021	2020	2021	2020	2021	2020	2021
18-25		60.5	55.8	13.4	21.4	18.2	10.9	5.1	6.3	2.8	5.6
26-35		67.7	60.7	13.2	22.2	12	7.7	4.9	4.1	2.2	5.3
36-45		68.3	60.4	15.1	24.8	8.9	5.2	3.9	3.6	3.8	6
46-55		68.7	62.1	16.2	25.9	7	3.9	4.2	1.5	3.9	6.6
56+		71.7	65.3	12	22.5	6.9	3.2	4.1	3.8	5.3	5.2

Table 24: People's opinions on women's presence and role in Afghan politics in the event of a peace-agreement with the Taliban, 2020 and 2021 - Gender (in %)

Gender	Should increase		Remain as is		Should decrease		Should be banned		I don't know		
	Year	2020	2021	2020	2021	2020	2021	2020	2021	2020	2021
Female		73.4	73.4	11.3	17.3	10.9	6.3	2.2	1	2.2	2
Male		62.5	57.1	14.6	23.1	14.6	8.5	5.4	5.3	2.9	6



WOMEN IN THE NATIONAL SECURITY FORCES

WOMEN IN THE NATIONAL SECURITY FORCES

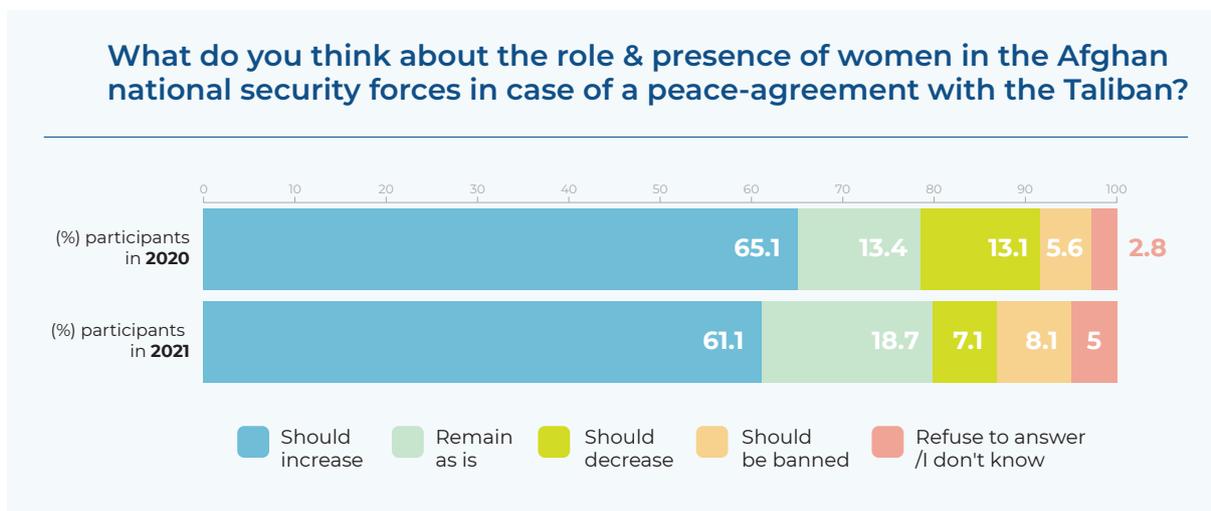


Figure 22. People’s opinions on women’s presence and role in Afghanistan’s national security forces in the event of a peace-agreement with the Taliban, 2020 and 2021

Observations & Analysis

In 2020 and 2021, the majority of Afghans continued to favor the expansion of Afghan women’s role and presence in the Afghan national security forces (ANSF) although a 4% drop was recorded in 2021 compared to 2020. The word “presence” also implies numbers in Dari and Pashto. Simultaneously an increase of 5.3%, from 13.4% in 2020 to 18.7% in 2021, was observed in the number of Afghans who wanted women’s presence and role to remain as it was (as of April 2021). In addition, the number of people who wanted women’s presence decreased sunk by 6 %, from 13.1% in 2020 to 7.1% in 2021. In the meantime, the number of people who wanted women banned from the ANSF increased by 2.5% in 2021 (Figure22).

According to the data, Hazara’s constituted the largest group in favor of expansion of women’s role and presence in Afghanistan’s security forces followed by Pashtuns, Tajiks, and Uzbeks in descending order (Table 25).

Strikingly, over 70% of illiterate Afghans continued to support the expansion or preservation of women’s role and numbers in the ANSF in 2020 and 2021 (Table26). Although advocacy of women’s rights, a thriving Afghan civil society, more

education and employment opportunities, and a quota system, have all contributed to women’s increased visibility and effectiveness in Afghan public life; illiterate and poor Afghans, however, understand the urgency of having women police as they and their female family members have been way more vulnerable and exposed to the authorities and the security forces over the last four decades compared to more educated and well-off Afghans.

In 2021, younger Afghans supported an increase of women’s involvement and participation in the ANSF than older Afghans (Table 27). This is most likely due to the stigma attached to women working in the security forces, which is more prevalent among the older population than the younger.

Given the real number of women in the ANSF, 3,343 Afghan national police women and only 1,641 Afghan national army female personnel⁶, the data reveals a significant gap between popular support and actual numbers. According to observers the discrepancy in this field, in particular, is related to the countless cases of sexual harassment and assault on female personnel by their male coworkers and the male-dominated military culture of the security forces.

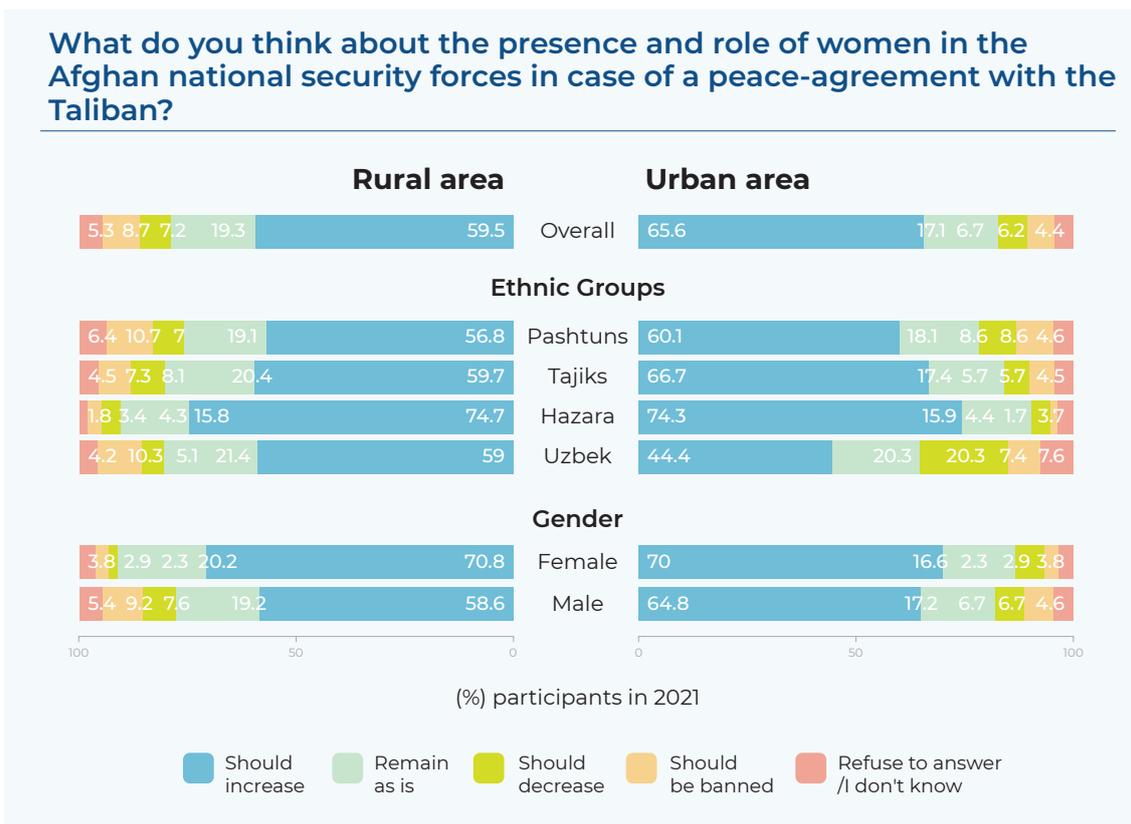


Figure 23. Rural-urban comparison of responses on women's presence and role in Afghan national security forces in the event of a peace-agreement with the Taliban, 2021

The Rural-Urban Divide

Except for rural and urban Uzbeks, the disparity between rural and urban populations was not significant and did not exceed 10%. Notably, 59% of Uzbeks supported expanding women's roles and presence in the ANSF, compared to only 44.4% of urban Uzbeks. This made them the only ethnic group where the rural population was by a difference of 14.5 % in favor of the question than against it. Moreover, women in both rural and urban areas were more supportive of increasing women's representation in the ANSF than men in either rural or urban areas.

Background & Current Situation

Women began to serve in the Afghan military forces in the late 1960s, but in limited numbers and largely without officer training. In 2010, the Afghan government, on the recommendation of NATO, set a goal of increasing the number of women in the ANSF by 10% by 2020. However, recruitment remained difficult because working in the security sector remained a stigmatized occupation for women, notably due to numerous

incidences of sexual harassment and assault by male coworkers.

Despite the need for more women in the armed forces, particularly in the police force, to enable more effective and responsive law enforcement for the female population, which continues to be victimized by domestic violence, honor killings, rape, and forced marriage, the number of women in 2019 in the Afghan national police was 3,343 and in the Afghan national army only 1,641. Women made up about a total of 1.6% of the Afghan national security forces.

Several prominent police women and army officers were assassinated in targeted killings by the Taliban during the Islamic Republic.

Since the Taliban seized control of Afghanistan in August 2021, no women serve in the country's armed or security forces any longer. Most former ANSF female soldiers or policewomen have either gone into hiding, attempted to flee the country, mainly due to a series of targeted killings of Afghan policewomen shortly after the Taliban took power.

6 <https://www.sigar.mil/pdf/quarterly-reports/2019-04-30qr-section3-security.pdf#page=20>

Table 25: Women's presence in Afghanistan's national security forces in the event of a peace-agreement with the Taliban, 2020 and 2021 - Ethnicity (in %)

Ethnic Groups	Should increase		Remain as is		Should decrease		Should be banned		Refuse to answer		
	Year	2020	2021	2020	2021	2020	2021	2020	2021	2020	2021
Pashtuns		66.9	57.7	13.1	18.9	11.7	7.4	5.5	10.2	2.8	5.8
Tajiks		61.5	61.5	14.1	19.6	16.5	7.5	5.6	6.9	2.3	4.5
Hazara		71.8	74.6	12.9	15.8	8.4	4.3	4.6	2.9	2.3	2.4
Uzbek		56.4	55.2	11.2	21.1	21.1	9.1	6.4	9.6	4.9	5

Table 26: Women's presence in Afghanistan's national security forces in the event of a peace-agreement with the Taliban, 2020 and 2021 - Level of Education (in %)

Level of Education	Should increase		Remain as is		Should decrease		Should be banned		Refuse to answer/ I dont know		
	Year	2020	2021	2020	2021	2020	2021	2020	2021	2020	2021
Illiterate		64.2	56.6	9.6	20.6	15	7.2	7.4	8.4	3.8	7.2
Primary School		61.5	60.8	14	19.5	16.1	7.4	6.1	8.2	2.3	4.1
High School Graduate		64.7	60.8	15	19.4	13	6.9	4.8	8.8	2.5	4.1
University Graduate		69.3	67	15.2	14.5	8.6	6.8	3.6	6.6	3.3	5.1
Masters Degree		79.5	78.1	7.5	8.4	5.3	4.2	2.1	7.5	5.6	1.8
Doctorate		66.6	100	0	0	33.4	0	0	0	0	0

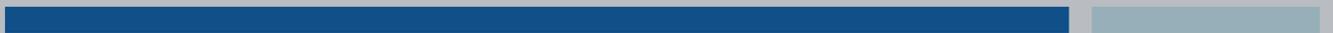
Table 27: Women's presence in Afghanistan's national security forces in the event of a peace-agreement with the Taliban, 2020 and 2021 - Age (in %)

Age Groups	Should increase		Remain as is		Should decrease		Should be banned		Refuse to answer		
	Year	2020	2021	2020	2021	2020	2021	2020	2021	2020	2021
18-25		62.9	62.3	12.9	16.2	16.3	7.2	5.7	9.3	2.2	5
26-35		67.2	61.4	13.4	19.9	11.6	6.9	5.1	6.8	2.7	5
36-45		67.2	60.4	13.4	21.8	9.5	5.5	5.6	7.2	4.3	5.1
46-55		65.8	58.1	15.1	20.7	8.1	6.4	6.5	7.3	4.5	7.5
56+		64.3	59.8	14.8	20.3	12	4.3	6	12	2.9	3.6

Table 28: Women's presence in Afghanistan's national security forces in the event of a peace-agreement with the Taliban, 2020 and 2021 - Gender (in %)

Gender	Should increase		Remain as is		Should decrease		Should be banned		Refuse to answer		
	Year	2020	2021	2020	2021	2020	2021	2020	2021	2020	2021
Female		64	70.6	9.9	19.3	16.3	3.4	7.2	3	2.6	3.7
Male		65.4	60.2	14.2	18.7	12.3	7.4	5.2	8.6	2.9	5.1

WOMEN AS JUDGES



WOMEN AS JUDGES

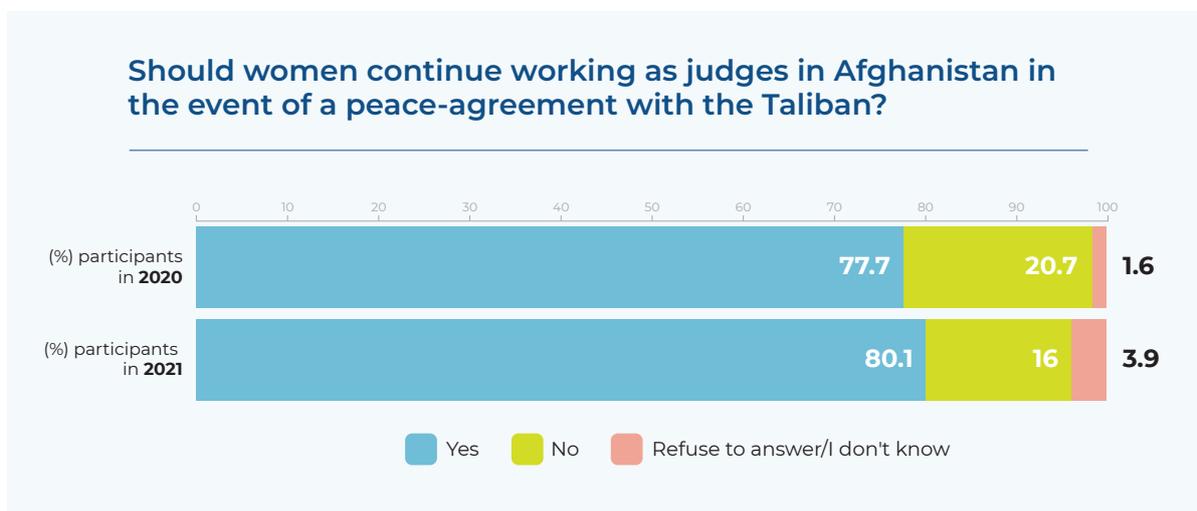


Figure 24. People’s opinions on whether women should continue to serve as judges in the event peace agreement with the Taliban, 2020 and 2021

Observations & Analysis

The vast majority of Afghans supported Afghan women judges to continue to serve as judges in Afghanistan even after a possible peace-agreement with the Taliban. When compared to 2020, the number of respondents in favor of the question grew by 2.4%, from 77.7% in 2020 to 80.1% in 2021. Simultaneously, the number of people against it dropped from 20.7% in 2020 to 16% in 2021.

According to the data, Hazara’s constituted the largest group in favor of Afghan women continuing to serve as judges in the country followed by Uzbeks, Tajiks and Pashtuns, in descending order (Table 29).

Among those who opposed women serving as judges after a possible peace-agreement with the Taliban, Afghans with higher levels of formal education (high school, university and master degree holders) constituted the largest groups in 2020 and 2021 (Table 30).

The older the respondents, the more likely they were to support women serving as judges even after a possible peace-agreement with the Taliban (Table 31).

Background & Current Situation

The first female judge was appointed to the Kabul juvenile court in 1969, but as the years of violence and political change passed, the status of women in the judiciary became basically non-existent. Post-2004, the Afghan legal system, influenced by international humanitarian organizations such as the UN, and guided by a Western post-war reconstruction logic, and, rooted in Islamic law as well as customary norms, enabled and trained Afghan women as judges. At the same time, however, women judges remained structurally limited to juvenile and family courts. Nearly 300 female judges worked in Afghanistan in the last two decades, and made

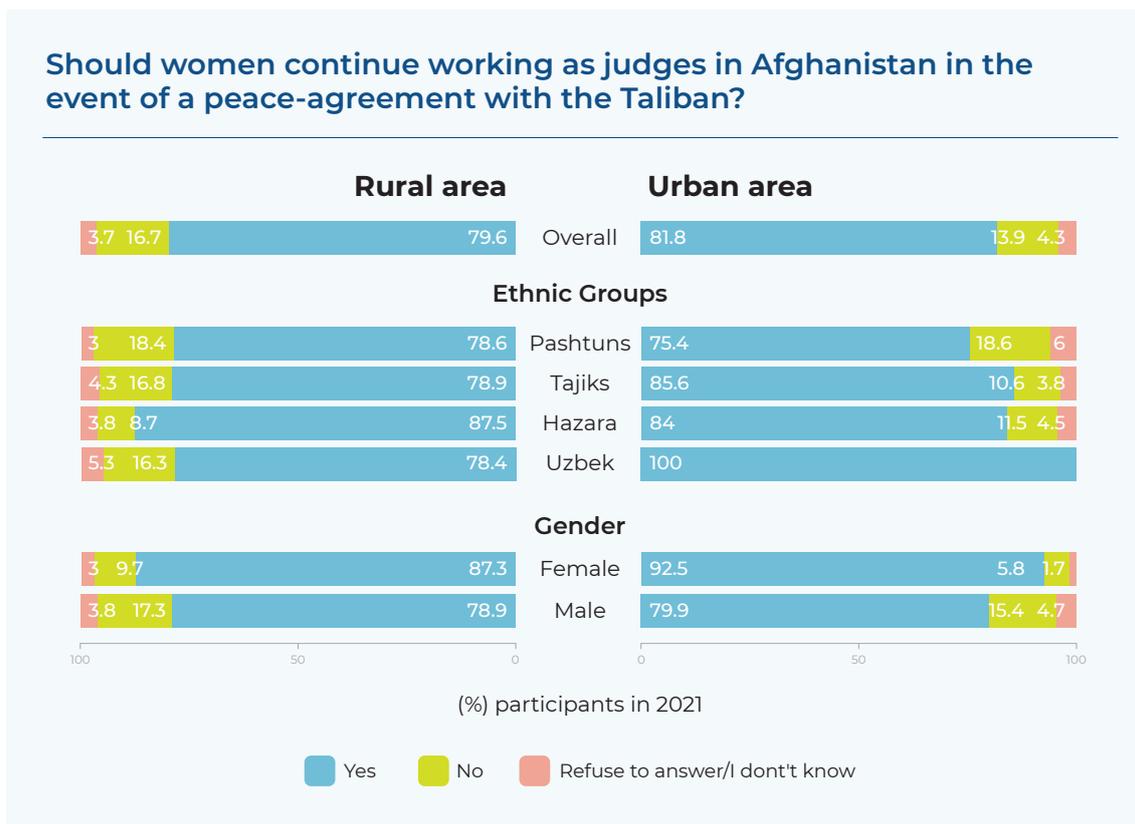


Figure 25. Rural-urban comparison of responses on whether women should continue to serve as judges in the event peace agreement with the Taliban, 2021

up roughly 10% of the judiciary. After the Taliban takeover of power in August 2021, Afghan women judges were barred from continuing to work. According to recent reports, the majority of Afghan women judges have either fled the country or gone into hiding for fear of their lives. In the spring of 2021, a series of targeted killings of female judges occurred in Kabul and other provinces, shocking most Afghans and drawing worldwide outrage. It remained unclear who was behind these attacks, the Taliban did not claim responsibility for the attacks.

The Rural-Urban Divide

The overall disparity between rural and urban populations was minimal on this question (Figure 25). The urban population in general was slightly more supportive of women judges to continue their work than the rural population. Sentiments on this question ranged between urban and

rural Uzbeks. With 100%, urban Uzbeks unanimously in favor of the question compared to the urban population of all other ethnic groups and compared to rural Uzbeks as well, 78.4%. Moreover, nearly equal percentage of rural and urban men supported the idea of women judges continuing their work after a possible peace-agreement with the Taliban (Figure 25).

Table 29: People's opinions on whether women should continue to serve as judges in the event peace agreement with the Taliban, 2020 and 2021 - Ethnicity (in %)

Ethnic Groups	Yes		No		Refuse to Answer	
	2020	2021	2020	2021	2020	2021
Pashtuns	76.5	77.8	21.7	18.5	1.8	3.7
Tajiks	78.9	80.6	19.8	15.1	1.3	4.3
Hazara	78.6	86.6	19.3	9.4	2.1	4
Uzbek	76.6	84	21.6	12	1.8	4

Table 30: People's opinions on whether women should continue to serve as judges in the event peace agreement with the Taliban, 2020 and 2021 - Level of Education (in %)

Level of Education	Yes		No		Refuse to Answer	
	2020	2021	2020	2021	2020	2021
Illiterate	82.4	84.4	15	10.6	2.6	5
Primary School	79.4	84.1	19.5	12.2	1.1	3.7
High School Graduate	77.7	79	20.7	17.9	1.6	3.1
University Graduate	69.7	73.1	29.3	22.2	1	4.7
Masters Degree	76	82.3	23.9	16.9	0	0.9
Doctorate	66.6	92.8	33.4	7.2	0	0

Table 31: People's opinions on whether women should continue to serve as judges in the event peace agreement with the Taliban, 2020 and 2021 - Age (in %)

Age Groups	Yes		No		Refuse to Answer	
	2020	2021	2020	2021	2020	2021
18-25	75.7	76.7	23.3	19.5	1	3.8
26-35	77.7	81.2	20.5	16.1	1.8	2.7
36-45	80.3	81.6	17.1	12.6	2.6	5.8
46-55	81.5	85.3	16.7	10.3	1.8	4.4
56+	83.1	82.9	14.9	12	2	5.1

Table 32 People's opinions on whether women should continue to serve as judges in the event peace agreement with the Taliban, 2020 and 2021 - Gender (in %)

Gender	Yes		No		Refuse to Answer	
	2020	2021	2020	2021	2020	2021
Female	82.1	88.6	16.1	8.6	1.8	2.8
Male	76.4	79.2	22	16.8	1.6	4

WOMEN FOR PRESIDENCY

WOMEN FOR PRESIDENCY

Should a women have the right to run for presidency in Afghanistan in the event of a peace-agreement with the Taliban?

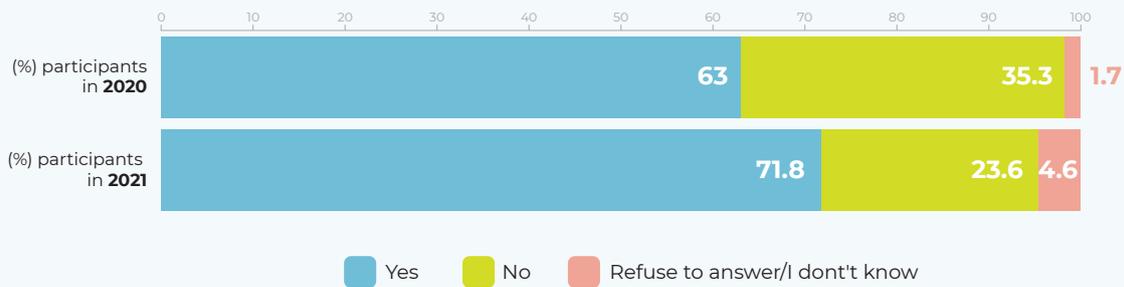


Figure 26. People’s opinions on whether women should have the right to run for president in the event of a peace agreement with the Taliban, 2020 and 2021

Observations & Analysis

When asked whether Afghan women should have the right to run for president after a possible peace agreement with the Taliban, the majority of Afghans said “yes.” An increase of 8.8%, from 63% in 2020 to 71.8% in 2021 was

observed. Meanwhile, compared to 2020, the number of those who said “no” fell by 11.7%, from 35.3% in 2020 to 23.6% in 2021. A surge in support for women to run for president was evident across all ethnic groups.

Should a woman have the right to run for presidency in Afghanistan in case of a peace-agreement with the Taliban ?

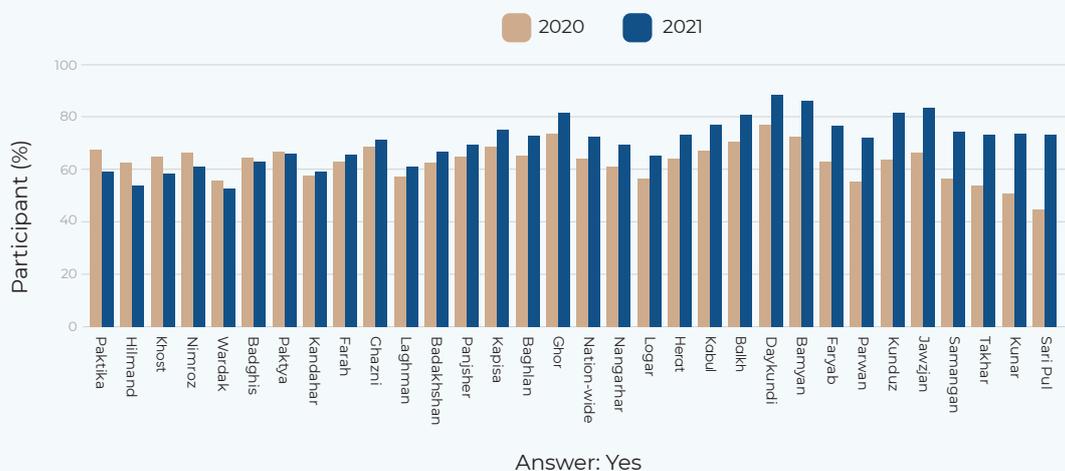


Figure 27. Geographic comparison of “Yes ” responses of 2020 and 2021

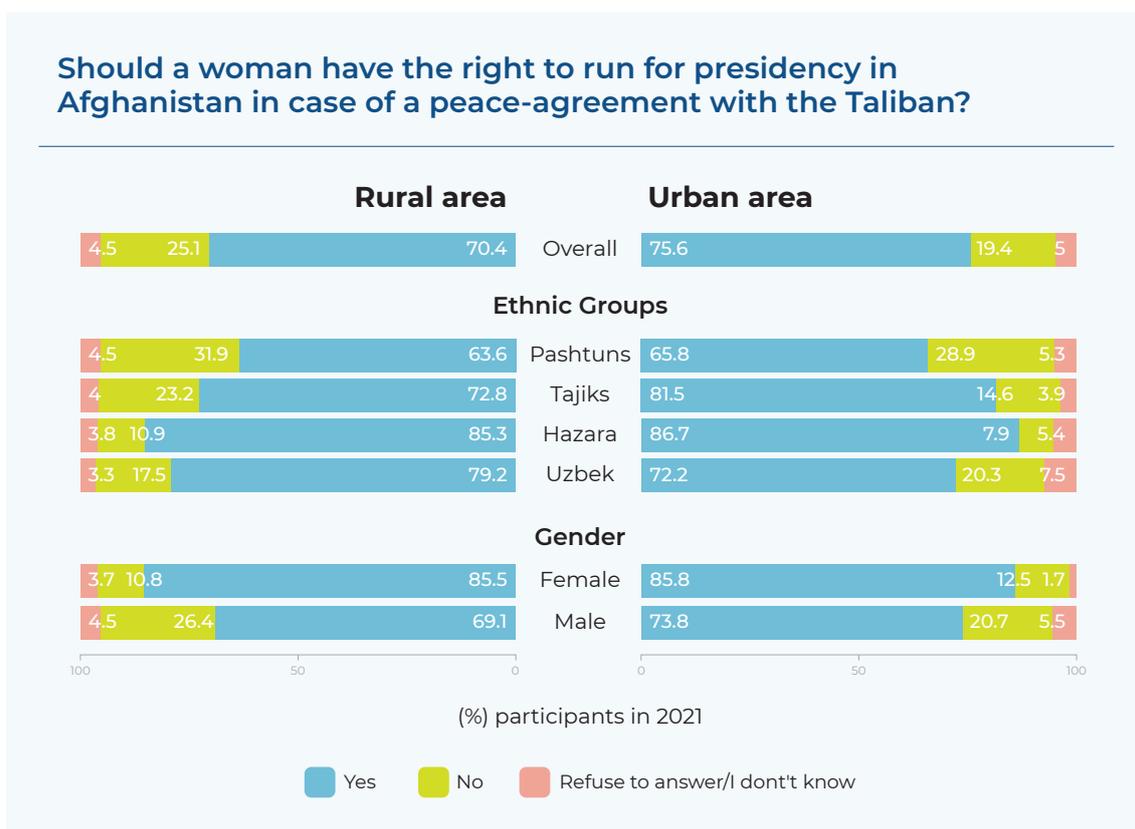


Figure 28. Rural-urban comparison of responses on whether women should have the right to run for president in the event of a peace agreement with the Taliban, 2021

According to the data, Hazara’s constituted the largest group of those in favor of Afghan women having the right to run for president in the event of a peace-agreement with the Taliban followed by Uzbeks, Tajiks and Pashtuns, in descending order (Table 33).

Notably, while master degree holders made up the largest group of “yes” responders, illiterate respondents made up the second largest group (Table 34). Furthermore, older respondents tended to support this right of women than younger respondents (Table 35).

Increase in “yes” responders was observed almost in all provinces except Paktika, Helmand, Kost, Nimroz, Wardak, Badghis and Paktiya (Figure 27).

The Rural-Urban Divide

The rural and urban disparity was not as pronounced as maybe expected and did not exceed 10%. Except among rural Uzbeks,

who were more supportive of women having the right to run for president than their urban counterparts, the urban population seemed slightly more in favor of the notion than the rural population (Figure 28).

Background & Current Situation

Since 2004, one or two women have run as independent candidates in every Afghan presidential election. Despite the fact that these women candidates did not make it to the ultimate runner-ups, the legal system that allows for their participation was praised, particularly by the international community.

During the Doha peace talks on Afghanistan in 2019 and 2020, the Taliban made it clear that they were opposed to women in key leadership roles in the government, including the presidency. They contended that this contradicted their interpretation of Islamic law.

Table 33: People's opinions on whether women should have the right to run for president in the event of a peace agreement with the Taliban, 2020 and 2021 - Ethnicity (in %)

Ethnic Groups	Yes		No		Refuse to Answer / I Don't Know	
	2020	2021	2020	2021	2020	2021
Pashtuns	59	64.2	39.3	31.1	1.7	4.7
Tajiks	63.1	75	35.3	21	1.6	4
Hazara	77.3	85.6	20.9	10.1	1.8	4.3
Uzbek	65.3	77.4	31.5	18.2	3.2	4.4

Table 34: People's opinions on whether women should have the right to run for president in the event of a peace agreement with the Taliban, 2020 and 2021 - Level of Education (in %)

Level of Education	Yes		No		Refuse to Answer / I Don't Know	
	2020	2021	2020	2021	2020	2021
Illiterate	65	76.6	33.3	18.8	1.7	4.6
Primary School	64.6	73.5	33	21.3	2.4	5.2
High School Graduate	63.6	69.2	34.8	26.4	1.6	4.4
University Graduate	57.1	66.5	42	27.9	0.9	5.6
Masters Degree	68.4	83.8	31.6	15.2	0	1
Doctorate	50	100	50	0	0	0

Table 35: People's opinions on whether women should have the right to run for president in the event of a peace agreement with the Taliban, 2020 and 2021 - Age (in %)

Age Groups	Yes		No		Refuse to Answer / I Don't Know	
	2020	2021	2020	2021	2020	2021
18-25	58.7	65.9	39.9	28.8	1.4	5.3
26-35	65.8	72.6	32.2	23.1	2	4.3
36-45	66.3	75.2	31.6	19.8	2.1	5
46-55	67.1	76.1	31.5	18.3	1.4	5.6
56+	68.3	86.8	28.8	11.5	2.9	1.7

Table 36: People's opinions on whether women should have the right to run for president in the event of a peace agreement with the Taliban, 2020 and 2021 - Gender (in %)

Gender	Yes		No		Refuse to Answer / I Don't Know	
	2020	2021	2020	2021	2020	2021
Female	67.7	85.6	30.8	11.3	1.5	3.1
Male	61.7	70.3	36.5	24.9	1.8	4.8



CRITICAL AFGHAN MEDIA

CRITICAL POLITICAL OPINION IN AFGHAN MEDIA

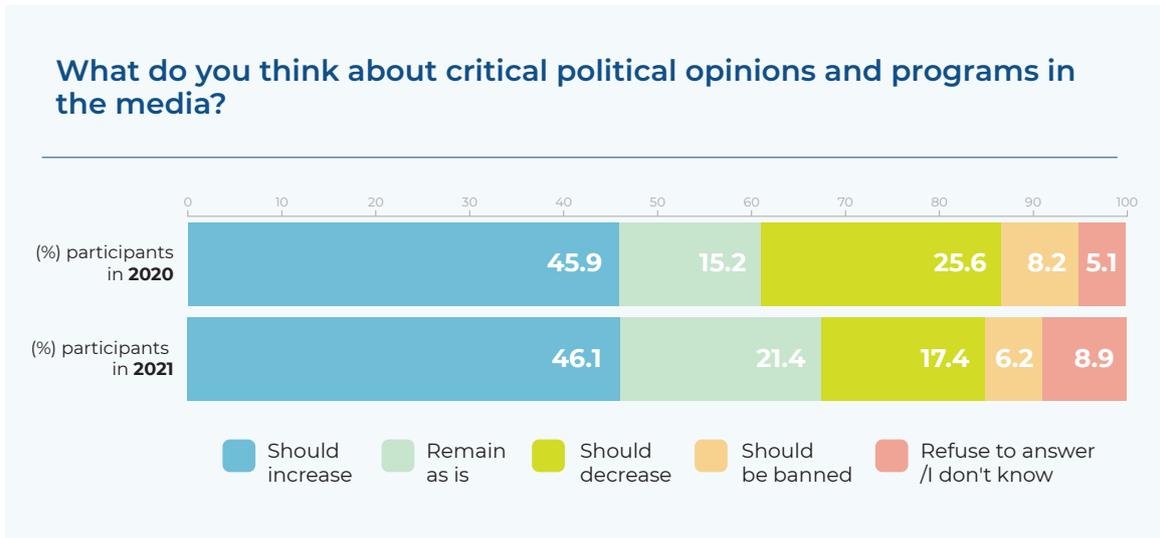


Figure 29. People’s responses on critical political opinion and programs in the media , 2020 and 2021

Observations & Analysis

In 2020 and 2021, the percentage of Afghans supportive of an increase in critical political opinions and programs in Afghan media outlets remained nearly constant, 45.9% and 46.1%, respectively. Simultaneously an increase of 6.2%, from 15.2% in 2020 to 21.4% in 2021, was observed in the number of Afghans who wanted critical media to

remain at the level it was in April 2021. The number of people who wanted a decrease in critical political opinions and programs in Afghanistan fell by 8.2% , from 25.6% in 2020 to 17.4% in 2021 (Figure 29). This drop was predominantly recorded in the provinces of Sar-e-Pul, Frayab, Parwan, Takhar, Kunduz, Kabul, Baghlan, Balkh, Jawzjan, Herat, Nangarhar and Ghazi in 2021 (Figure 30).

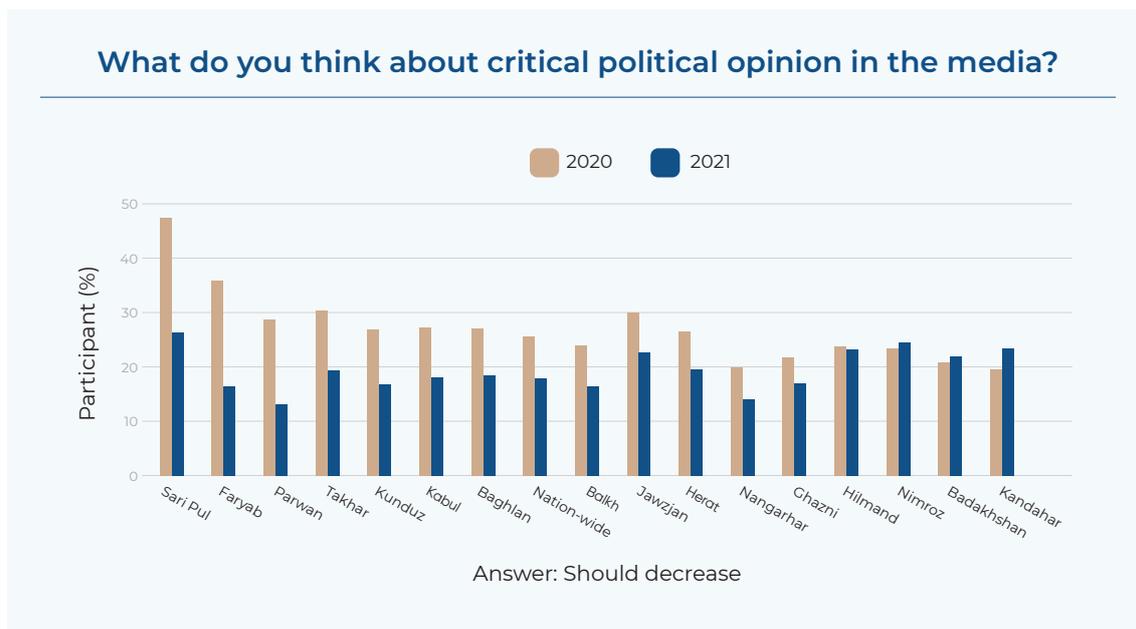


Figure 30. Geographic comparison of “ Should decrease” responses of 2020 and 2021

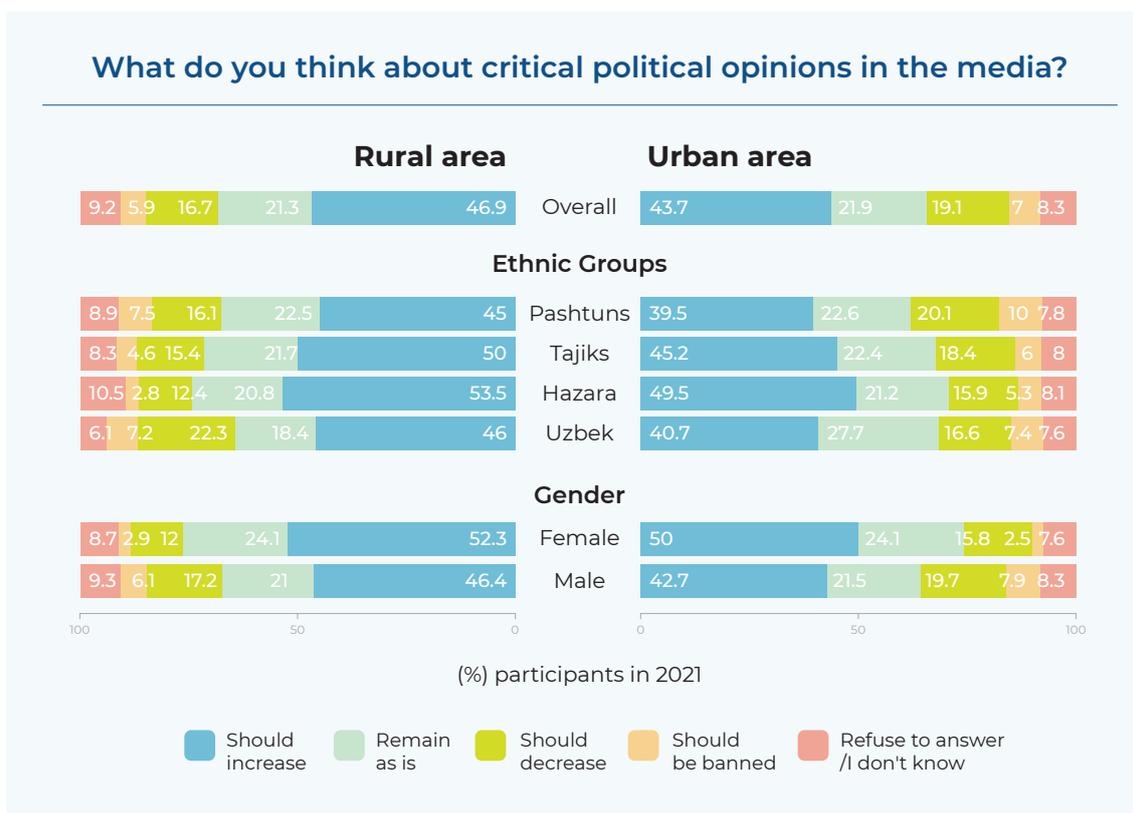


Figure 31. Rural-urban comparison of responses on critical political opinion and programs in the media in 2021

In 2021, 7.6% more Pashtuns, 7.6% more Tajiks, 4.2% more Hazaras and 6.6% more Uzbeks wanted critical media to remain at the same level as in April 2021 compared to 2020. Meanwhile, 6.1% fewer Pashtuns, 12.8% fewer Tajiks, 11.9% fewer Hazaras and 3.7% fewer Uzbeks, stated they wanted critical political opinions and programs reduced in Afghanistan in 2021 compared to 2020 (Table 37).

Notably, in 2021 Afghans with primary school education constituted the largest group in favor of an increase of critical political opinions and programs. Meanwhile, Afghans with primary school education and those considered as illiterate made up the smallest group of people in favor of reducing and banning critical media. In contrast, university graduates constituted the largest group among those in favor of a reduction and ban of critical political opinions and programs in Afghan media (Table 38).

The Rural-Urban Divide

The overall rural-urban disparity did not exceed 10%. However, the minor gap between rural and urban populations implied that the rural population was more supportive of an increase in critical political opinions and programs in the Afghan media than the urban population.

Background & Current Situation

Following the adoption of the 2004 constitution, Afghan media became increasingly independent, diverse, and critical in its reporting. In 2020 Afghanistan ranked fourth among south and central Asian nations in the World Press Freedom Index.⁷ At the same time, Afghanistan remained one of the deadliest places for journalists in the 20 years of conflict since 9/11.

After the Taliban takeover in August 2021 and by the end of November 2021, just 312 of the 543 media outlets that existed at the start of summer were still in operation. More than four out of every ten media outlets have closed, and 60 percent of journalists and media workers are no longer employed.

7 Bhutan, Kyrgyzstan and Nepal were other south and central Asian countries that scored better than Afghanistan according to the World Press Freedom Index 2020

8 <https://rsf.org/en/news/taliban-takeover-40-afghan-media-have-closed-80-women-journalists-have-lost-their-jobs>

Table 37: People's responses on critical political opinion and programs in the media , 2020 and 2021 - Ethnicity (in %)

Ethnic Groups	Should increase		Remain as is		Should decrease		Should be banned		Refuse to answer	
	2020	2021	2020	2021	2020	2021	2020	2021	2020	2021
Pashtuns	46.6	43.6	14.9	22.5	23.3	17.2	9.9	8.2	5.3	8.5
Tajiks	46.6	48.7	14.3	21.9	29	16.2	6.7	5	3.4	8.2
Hazara	47.6	52.5	16.7	20.9	25.2	13.3	5	3.4	5.5	9.9
Uzbek	44.9	44.6	14.2	20.8	24.5	20.8	9.2	7.2	7.2	6.6

Table 38: People's responses on critical political opinion and programs in the media , 2020 and 2021 - Level of Education (in %)

Level of Education	Should increase		Remain as is		Should decrease		Should be banned		Refuse to answer	
	2020	2021	2020	2021	2020	2021	2020	2021	2020	2021
Illiterate	46.2	40.6	12.4	23.5	23.4	15.9	8.3	4.9	9.7	15.1
Primary School	45.3	50.5	13.1	18.9	27.7	15.4	8.3	4.9	5.6	10.3
High School Graduate	44.7	46.4	17.3	22.7	27.9	17.3	6.9	6.3	3.2	7.3
University Graduate	47.6	46	16.1	21.9	24.4	20.5	9.6	7.2	2.3	4.4
Masters Degree	56.5	43.3	6.5	23.3	22.8	19.1	14.2	12.5	0	1.8
Doctorate	16.6	77	0	0	50	23	0	0	33.4	0

Table 39: People's responses on critical political opinion and programs in the media , 2020 and 2021 - Age (in %)

Age Groups	Should increase		Remain as is		Should decrease		Should be banned		Refuse to answer	
	2020	2021	2020	2021	2020	2021	2020	2021	2020	2021
18-25	43.7	45.5	16.2	21	28.4	18.7	8.1	6.9	3.6	7.9
26-35	43.2	45.7	17.1	21.7	24.7	17.5	9.4	6.6	5.6	8.5
36-45	51.7	43.4	10.8	22.6	23.3	17.5	7.9	3.8	6.3	12.7
46-55	55.5	48.6	12.5	20.4	19.2	12.2	6	7.3	6.8	11.5
56+	49	52.7	12.1	21.6	23.3	12.2	7.4	3.8	8.2	9.7

Table 40: People's responses on critical political opinion and programs in the media , 2020 and 2021 - Gender (in %)

Gender	Should increase		Remain as is		Should decrease		Should be banned		Refuse to answer	
	2020	2021	2020	2021	2020	2021	2020	2021	2020	2021
Female	49.9	51.7	15.8	24.1	21.7	13	6.1	2.8	6.5	8.4
Male	44.8	45.5	15	21.2	26.7	17.8	8.9	6.6	4.6	8.9

WOMEN IN AFGHAN MEDIA

WOMEN IN AFGHAN MEDIA

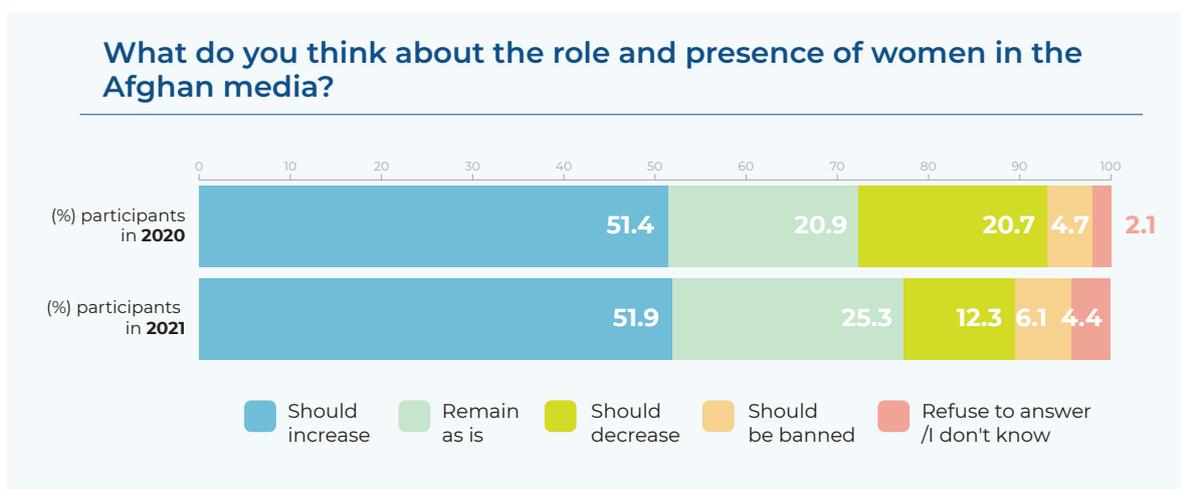


Figure 32. People's opinion on the role and presence of women in the Afghan media, 2020 and 2021

Observations & Analysis

In 2020 and 2021, an almost equal majority of Afghans continued to favor increasing Afghan women's role and presence in the country's media (Figure 32). While the number of those in favor of reducing women's role and presence in the media fell by 8.4 %, from 20.7% in 2020 to 12.3% in 2021, the number of Afghans in favor of preserving women's presence and role in the country's media increased by 4.4% , from 20.9% in 2020 to 25.3% in 2021 (Figure 32). The number of people who wished to see women banned from the media increased by 1.4 % in 2021.

Hazara's made up the largest ethnic group in favor of increasing the presence and role of women in the Afghan media, followed by Uzbeks, Tajiks and Pashtun in descending order in 2021 (Table 41). Meanwhile, 12% fewer Tajiks and 11.1% fewer Uzbeks made up the largest group of people who changed their minds in 2021 compared to 2020, and did not support a reduction of women's presence in the Afghan media any longer (Table 41).

Notably, the data revealed that 72.7% of illiterate respondents supported an expansion or preservation of women's role and presence in the Afghan media (Table 42). Moreover, in 2021, compared to 2020, 9.2% fewer illiterate, and 14.7% fewer respondents with only primary school education favored a reduction of women's presence in the Afghan media (Table42).

The older the respondents, the more likely they were to support an increase of women's presence in the Afghan media (Table 43).

Background & Current Situation

Women have been an integral part of Afghan media, including film, theater, TV, and radio, since the 1960s as artists, singers, news anchors, show hosts, and reporters, despite their relatively small numbers. From 1992 until 2001, their presence was severely restricted and subsequently banned first under the Mujahideen government and then the Taliban governments respectively. However, the

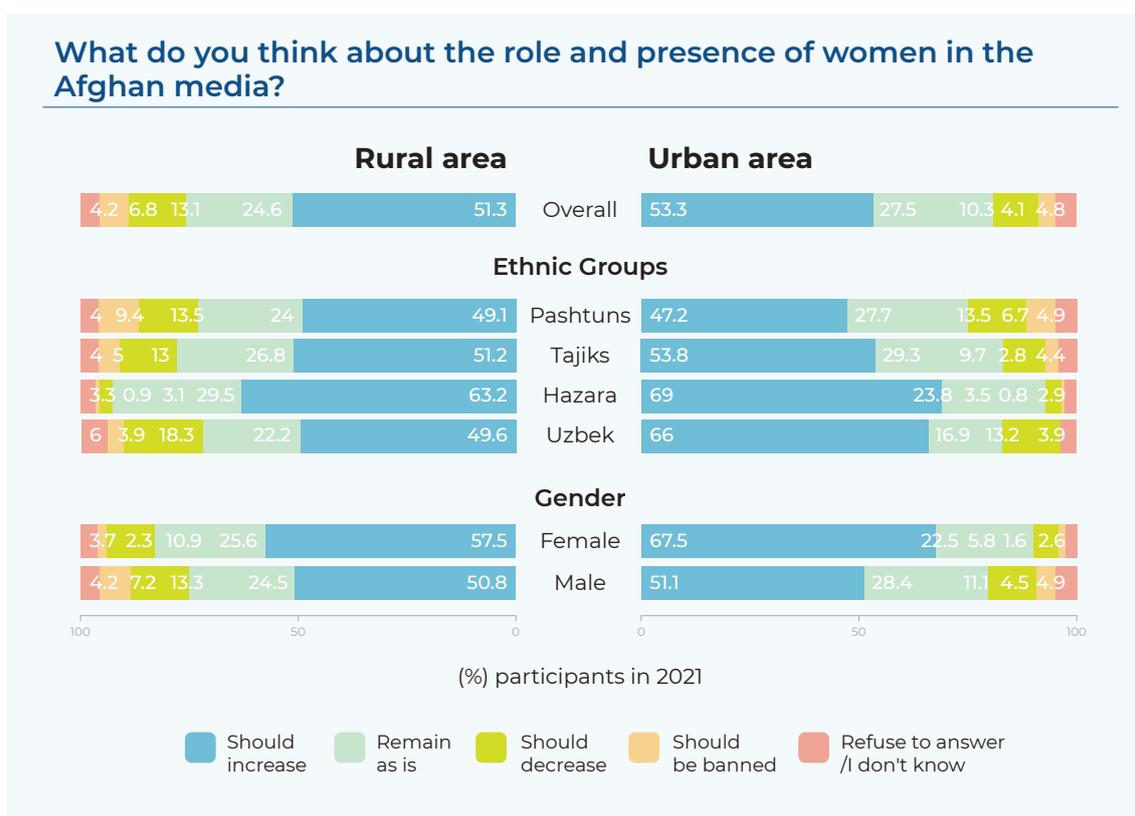


Figure 33. Rural-urban comparison of responses on the role and presence of women in Afghan media, 2021

participation of girls and women in Afghan media increased after 2001. From 2002-2021, the role and presence of Afghan women in the media, whether as journalists, content producers, filmmakers, news anchors, show hosts, or singers, spurred a generation of Afghan girls and women to pursue careers in journalism and media.

Since the Taliban took power in Afghanistan in August 2021, the presence of women in the Afghan media has diminished. Afghan female journalists, musicians, film-makers, and artists either fled the country, went into hiding, or lost their jobs. According to Reporters Without Borders, within three months of the Taliban taking over, 80% of female journalists in Afghanistan lost their employment.⁹ Notably, while Taliban commanders permitted western female journalists to continue working in Afghanistan and gave them interviews, Afghan

journalists were interrogated, assaulted, and tortured for reporting on women-led protests in cities such as Kabul and Herat.

The Rural-Urban Divide

The overall rural-urban discrepancy did not exceed 10%. Discrepancy to a certain extent were observed among rural and urban Uzbek populations. The urban Uzbek population supported an increase of Afghan women's role and presence in the country's media by a difference of 16.4% more than the rural Uzbek population (Figure 33).

⁹ <https://rsf.org/en/news/taliban-takeover-40-afghan-media-have-closed-80-women-journalists-have-lost-their-jobs>

Table 41: People's opinion on the role and presence of women in Afghan media, 2020 and 2021 - Ethnicity (in %)

Ethnic Groups	Should increase		Remain as is		Should decrease		Should be banned		Refuse to answer	
	2020	2021	2020	2021	2020	2021	2020	2021	2020	2021
Pashtuns	48.4	48.6	22.3	24.9	20.7	13.5	6.4	8.7	2.2	4.3
Tajiks	49.7	51.9	20.1	27.5	24.2	12.2	4.2	4.4	1.8	4
Hazara	70	64.7	18.4	28	8.6	3.2	1.3	0.9	1.7	3.2
Uzbek	44.7	53.8	19.7	20.8	28	16.9	4.8	2.9	2.8	5.6

Table 42: People's opinion on the role and presence of women in Afghan media, 2020 and 2021 - Level of Education (in %)

Level of Education	Should increase		Remain as is		Should decrease		Should be banned		Refuse to answer	
	2020	2021	2020	2021	2020	2021	2020	2021	2020	2021
Illiterate	49.8	50.4	17.7	22.7	22.8	13.6	6	6.7	3.7	6.6
Primary School	50	54.8	18	24.1	25	10.3	5.9	6	1.1	4.8
High School Graduate	51.3	48.4	22.8	27.2	18.7	13.7	5	7.5	2.2	3.2
University Graduate	58.1	53.5	22.9	28.4	15.2	10.9	2.5	4.1	1.3	3.1
Masters Degree	58	67.2	20.4	22.6	15	8.4	1	0	5.6	1.8
Doctorate	66.6	100	33.4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Table 43: People's opinion on the role and presence of women in Afghan media, 2020 and 2021 - Age (in %)

Age Groups	Should increase		Remain as is		Should decrease		Should be banned		Refuse to answer	
	2020	2021	2020	2021	2020	2021	2020	2021	2020	2021
18-25	47.7	48.4	19	24	24.9	15.9	6.5	7.4	1.9	4.3
26-35	52.4	51.8	22.5	26.7	18.9	11.1	4.5	5.8	1.7	4.6
36-45	54.4	55.4	21.9	25.2	17.8	9.4	2.8	4.8	3.1	5.2
46-55	56.6	56.1	24.8	28.2	13	5.5	3.2	5.2	2.4	5
56+	64	57.9	18.4	27.8	14.2	8.7	1.3	3.2	2.1	2.4

Table 44: People's opinion on the role and presence of women in Afghan media, 2020 and 2021- Gender (in %)

Gender	Should increase		Remain as is		Should decrease		Should be banned		Refuse to answer	
	2020	2021	2020	2021	2020	2021	2020	2021	2020	2021
Female	58.4	60.1	14.4	24.8	19.8	9.5	4.5	2.1	2.9	3.5
Male	49.2	50.9	22.7	25.5	21.1	12.7	5	6.5	2	4.4

MUSIC PROGRAMS

MUSIC PROGRAMS

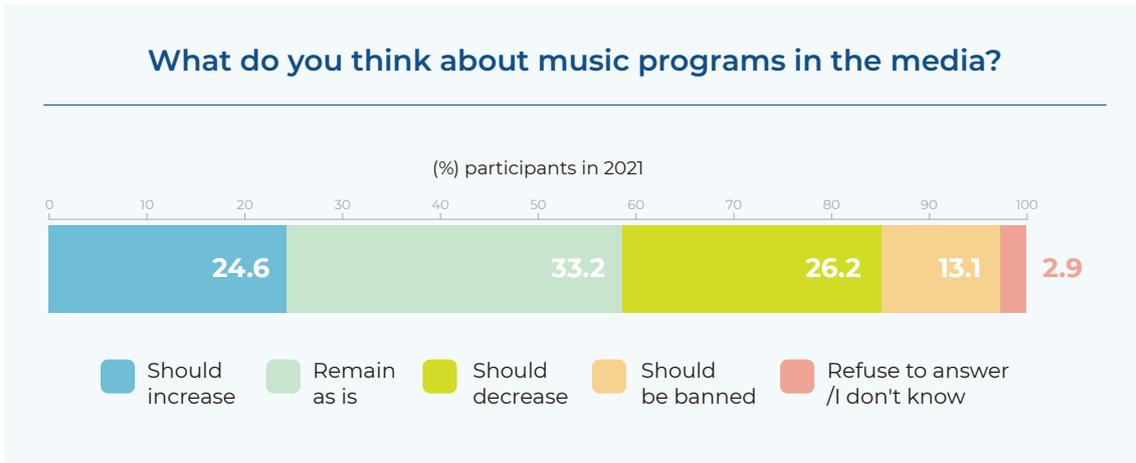


Figure 34. People's opinion on music programs in the media (including radio and TV), 2021

Observations & Analysis

In 2021 24.6% of Afghans expressed their desire for music programs to increase on Afghan television channels or radio stations, while 33.2% said they wanted music programs to “remain as is” as of April 2021. At the same time, 26.5 % favored a reduction of music programs on television and radio, while 13.1% of the population wanted musical programs completely banned from television and radio (Figure 29).

Respondents to the 2020 survey were asked a similar question. However, since it was a suggestive question, the data was not used in this survey for comparison purposes.

Background & Current Situation

Songs and music programs have been broadcast on Radio Afghanistan or Radio Kabul since the 1940s. Although Afghanistan has traditionally had a rich musical culture distinguished by its distinctive forms of composition, rhythmic emphasis, and indigenous instruments, forbidding music

and singing has been a feature of radical interpretation of certain Islamist groups in Afghanistan since independence. Music bans have always been used as a political tool and statement by Islamist organisations. In the 1980s, certain Afghan Mujahedin groups forbade music in areas under their control, particularly in the south and south-east of Afghanistan. When they formally took power in 1992, music programs were restricted, and female musicians were banned from singing on TV or radio. When the Taliban assumed power in 1996, they formally banned music in Afghanistan from 1996 until 2001.

In the two decades following the overthrow of the Taliban regime in 2001, Afghan music progressed substantially. The Afghanistan National Institute of Music was established in April 2008. The Afghan National Ensemble and the all-female Zohra Orchestra were founded in the years that followed.

Numerous radio and television music shows and particularly Afghan music

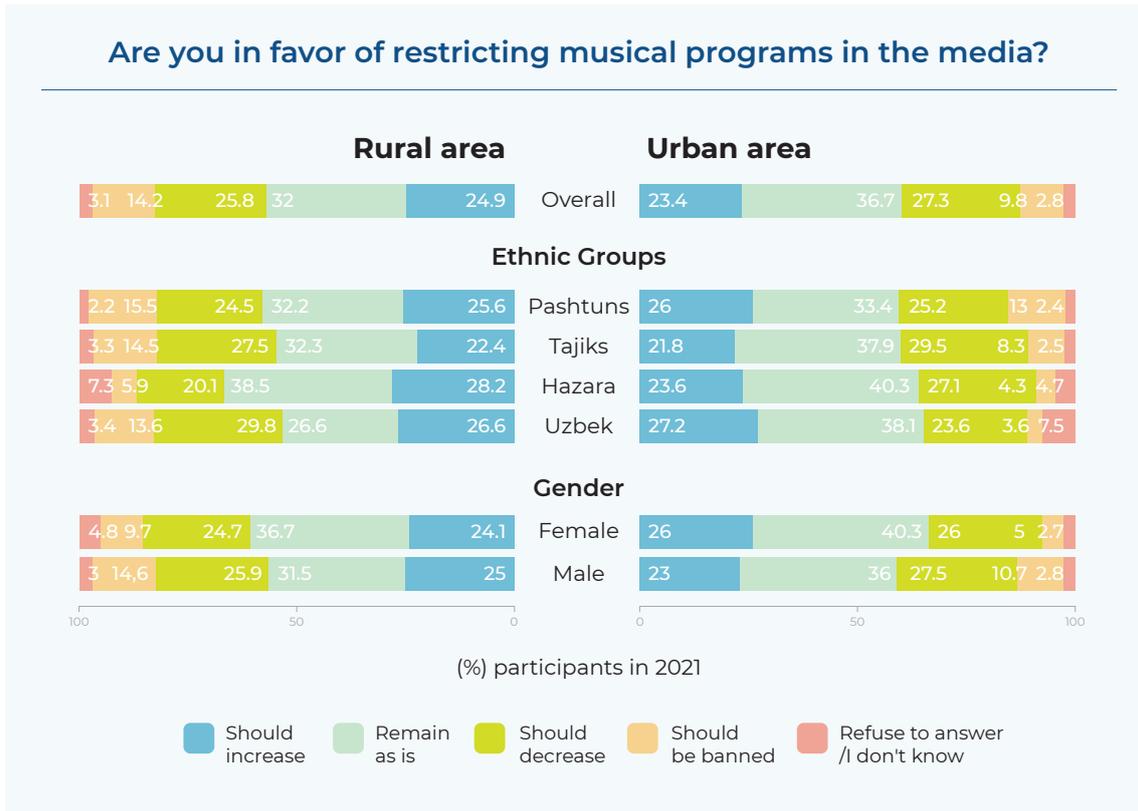


Figure 35. Rural-urban comparison of responses on music programs (including TV and radio) in 2021

shows like Setar-e-Afghan (Afghan Star) and Sada-e-Afghan (The Voice of Afghanistan), influenced an entire generation of young boys and girls to pursue singing and musical careers. A thriving Afghan music scene drew a generation of veteran Afghan artists back from exile and enabled Afghan music of various languages and streams to flourish both inside Afghanistan, and in the diaspora.

All the while, however, Afghan television networks that aired music shows were threatened, targeted and attacked by the Taliban. In a targeted attack by the Taliban in January 2016, seven Tolo TV personnel who worked on the Setar-e-Afghan (Afghan Star show) were killed and 26 wounded.

Since the Taliban assumed power in August 2021, music programs on television and radio, and 24-hour music channels have all been taken off the air in Afghanistan. Though, unlike 1996, the Taliban did not immediately release an edict banning music, however, television and radio stations began self-censoring out

of fear of Taliban reprisal. As per recent video footage, reports and statements, the Taliban have effectively outlawed music and singing by destroying musical instruments and insulting and reprimanding artists in public.

The Rural-Urban Divide

The overall rural-urban discrepancy was not as pronounced as might have been expected and remained under the 10% threshold. The dominant trend in both rural and urban Afghanistan was to want to see either an increase or preservation of music programs at the level it was as of April 2021.

Table 45: People's opinion on music programs in the media (including radio and TV), 2021 - Ethnicity (in %)

Ethnic Groups	Should be increased	Remain as it is	Should be decreased	Should be banned	Refuse to Answer
Year	2021	2021	2021	2021	2021
Pashtuns	25.7	32.5	24.7	14.9	2.2
Tajiks	22.2	33.8	28	12.9	3.1
Hazara	27	38.9	22	5.5	6.6
Uzbek	26.7	29.6	28.2	11	4.5

Table 46: People's opinion on music programs in the media (including radio and TV), 2021- Level of Education (in %)

Level of Education	Should be increased	Remain as it is	Should be decreased	Should be banned	Refuse to Answer
Year	2021	2021	2021	2021	2021
Illiterate	25.2	30.4	26.3	13.4	4.7
Primary School	29.8	36.1	19.2	12.2	2.7
High School Graduate	23.4	31.6	28.5	14.6	1.9
University Graduate	20.7	34.4	29.4	12.2	3.3
Masters Degree	26.8	41.1	16.8	10.9	4.4
Doctorate	46.1	30.7	23.2	0	0

Table 47: People's opinion on music programs in the media (including radio and TV), 2021- Age (in %)

Age Groups	Should be increased	Remain as it is	Should be decreased	Should be banned	Refuse to Answer
Year	2021	2021	2021	2021	2021
18-25	26.6	30	27.7	13.9	1.8
26-35	23.1	33.2	26.3	13	4.4
36-45	21.5	37.1	25.3	12.2	3.9
46-55	27	38.9	18.8	12.4	2.9
56+	24.7	39.5	23	8.2	4.6

Table 48: People's opinion on music programs in the media (including radio and TV), 2021- Gender (in %)

Gender	Should be increased	Remain as it is	Should be decreased	Should be banned	Refuse to Answer
Year	2021	2021	2021	2021	2021
Female	24.6	37.6	25	8.4	4.4
Male	24.5	32.7	26.3	13.6	2.9



ENTERTAINMENT PROGRAMS

ENTERTAINMENT PROGRAMS

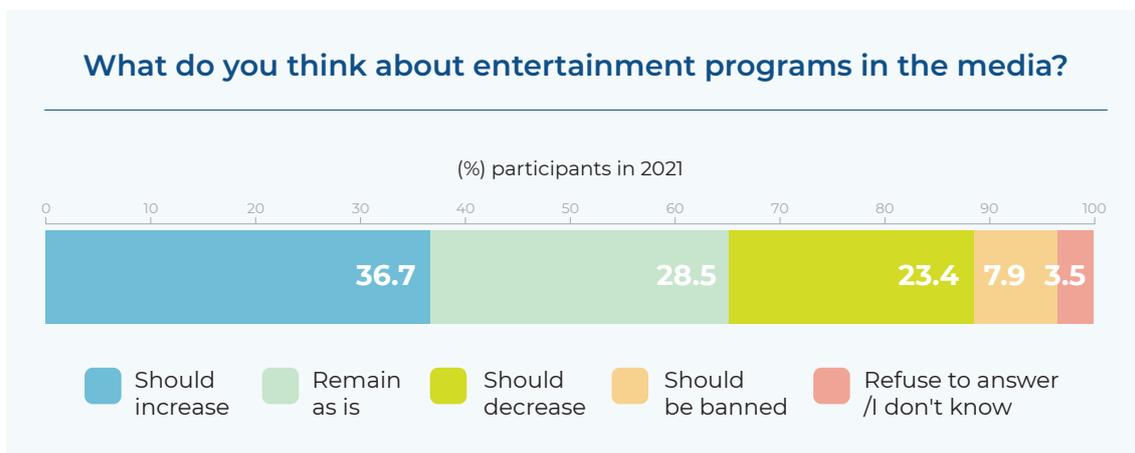


Figure 36. People's opinion on entertainment programs in the media (including radio and TV), 2021

Observations & Analysis

In 2021, 36.7% Afghans expressed their desire for entertainment programming on Afghan television channels and radio stations, such as comedy shows, satire, and series (largely foreign dubbed) to increase, while 28.5% said they wanted them to “remain as is” as of April 2021. At the same time, 23.4% said they would like to see entertainment programs reduced, while 7.9% said they wanted to see entertainment programs banned from Afghan television channels and radio stations (Figure 36).

This question was posed to respondents in the 2020 survey. However, due to the suggestive nature of the question the data were not used there for comparison purposes in this survey.

Background & Current Situation

In Afghanistan, entertainment programs have traditionally followed government-sanctioned

policies as well as cultural and traditional conventions. While social commentary, criticism, and humor in playful acts or songs were commonly displayed in private gatherings, film, theater and art in the public realm have been a vehicle of government agenda and propaganda since the 1950s. Satire and other sarcastic and critical insinuations aimed at the political establishment were disapproved of and could result in punishments for performers or artists if displayed in public.

In the post- 2001 decades, several private television operators were established in Afghanistan as a result of open market economy and international funding. The range of TV and radio programs diversified as they grew more demand-oriented due to the target rating point (TRP) system. This diversification resulted in the development of new content as well as Afghan spin-offs of popular international television program formats. Concurrently, internal competition among television operators resulted in a diverse spectrum of foreign dubbed content, including

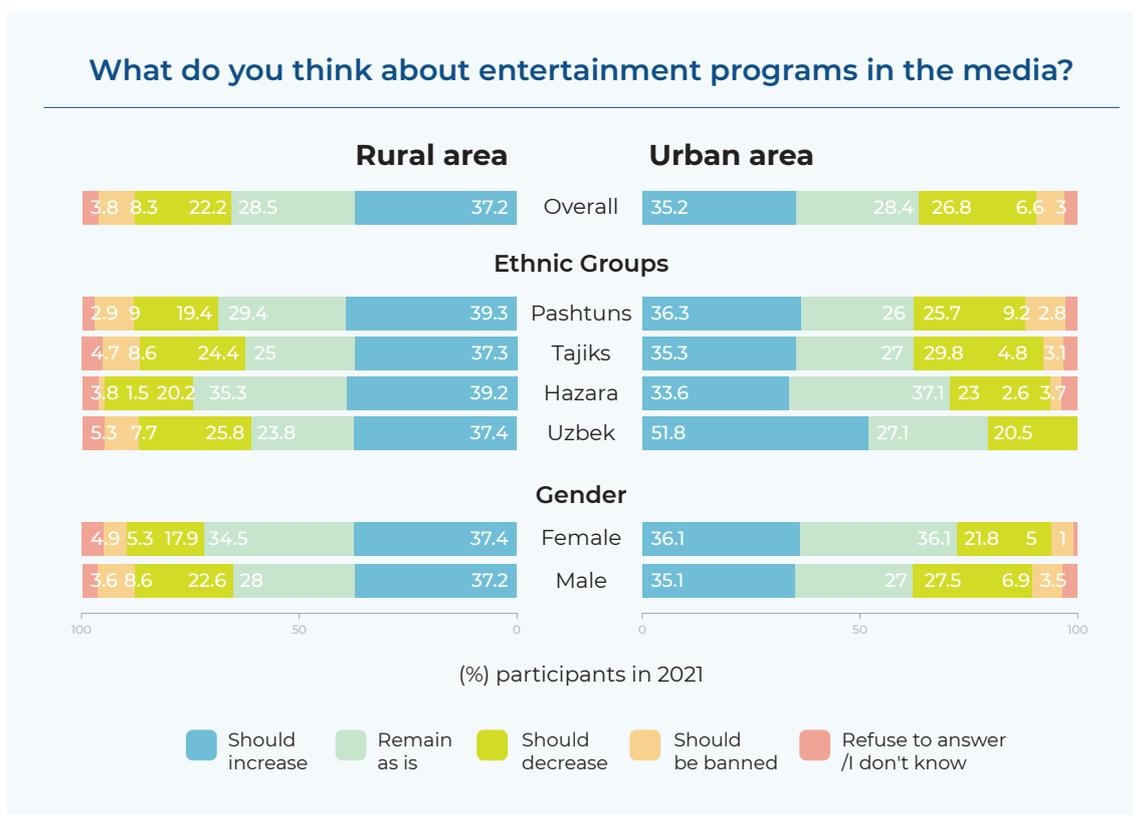


Figure 37. Rural-urban comparison of responses on entertainment programs (including TV and radio), 2021

Indian, American, Turkish, and Korean among others. Afghan satire, comedy shows, and even personality-grill shows featuring incumbent politicians became a frequent staple on Afghan TV channels. Satire and comedy-shows became a popular way for people to express their dissatisfaction and criticize government policies, systemic corruption and day-to-day life challenges.

Since the Taliban takeover in August 2021, foreign-dubbed series and other entertainment programs, as well as satire and comedy shows, have been taken off air. Afghan TV channels now broadcast mostly religious related content, recitations of the holy Quran, or political talks-shows related to the economic or political situation of the country.

The Rural-Urban Divide

The overall rural-urban discrepancy was not at all pronounced and did not exceed the 10% threshold. Except for 51.8% of the urban Uzbek population in favor of an increasing entertainment programming on Afghan television channels and radio stations, no other majority group was recorded to have inclined to a specific answer option (Figure 37).

Table 49: People's opinion on entertainment programs in the media (including radio and TV), 2021- Ethnicity (in %)

Ethnic Groups	Should be increased	Remain as it is	Should be decreased	Should be banned	Refuse to Answer
Year	2021	2021	2021	2021	2021
Pashtuns	38.5	28.5	20.9	9.1	3
Tajiks	36.7	25.5	25.8	7.7	4.3
Hazara	37.7	35.9	20.9	1.8	3.7
Uzbek	41.1	24.8	24.4	5.7	4

Table 50: People's opinion on entertainment programs in the media (including radio and TV), 2021 - Level of Education (in %)

Level of Education	Should be increased	Remain as it is	Should be decreased	Should be banned	Refuse to Answer
Year	2021	2021	2021	2021	2021
Illiterate	36.3	27.5	21.4	7.6	7.2
Primary School	40.4	30.7	17.3	8.3	3.3
High School Graduate	38	28.2	25	6.7	2.1
University Graduate	34.5	26	28.5	9.3	1.7
Masters Degree	31.9	36.9	18.4	10.9	1.9
Doctorate	35.7	42.8	7.1	0	14.4

Table 51: People's opinion on entertainment programs in the media (including radio and TV), 2021 - Age (in %)

Age Groups	Should be increased	Remain as it is	Should be decreased	Should be banned	Refuse to Answer
Year	2021	2021	2021	2021	2021
18-25	38.1	27.9	23.7	8.3	2
26-35	35.8	27.8	22.8	9.5	4.1
36-45	34.7	27	27.5	6.1	4.7
46-55	33.1	34.9	20.6	5.7	5.7
56+	37.3	28.5	23	4.9	6.3

Table 52: People's opinion on entertainment programs in the media (including radio and TV), 2021 - Gender (in %)

Gender	Should be increased	Remain as it is	Should be decreased	Should be banned	Refuse to Answer
Year	2021	2021	2021	2021	2021
Female	37.1	34.9	18.9	5.2	3.9
Male	36.7	27.7	23.9	8.1	3.6

SAMPLE DEMOGRAPHICS

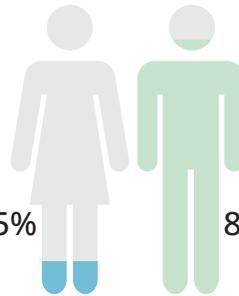
SAMPLE DEMOGRAPHICS

Survey 2021

Population

Total population of this survey is

4102



11.5%

88.5%

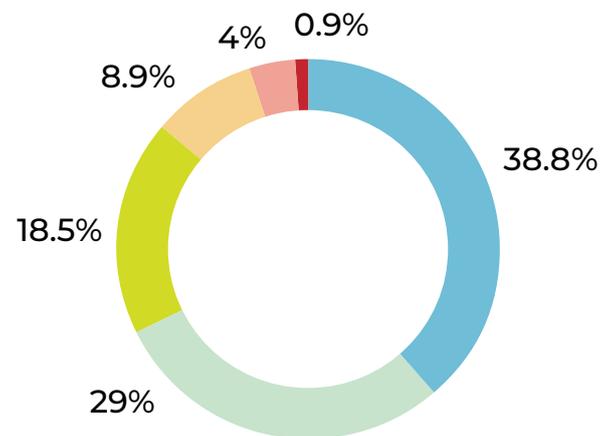
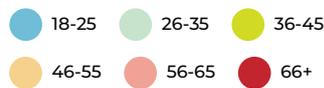
Gender Distribution

The male/female ratio of the collected sample.¹⁰

Age Distribution

The age distribution shows that 67.8 % of the 4102 respondents surveyed were aged 35 years or younger.

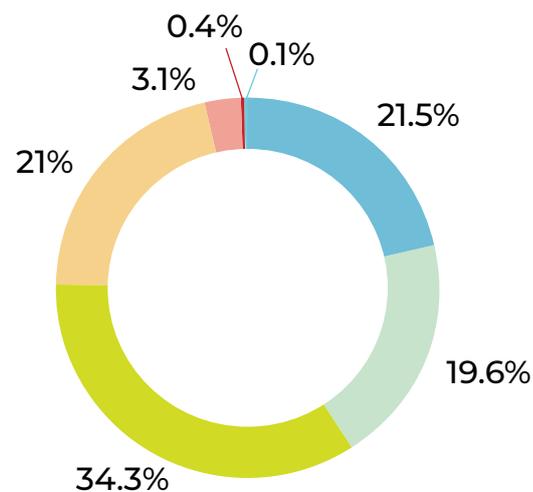
Age (Years)



Level of Education Distribution

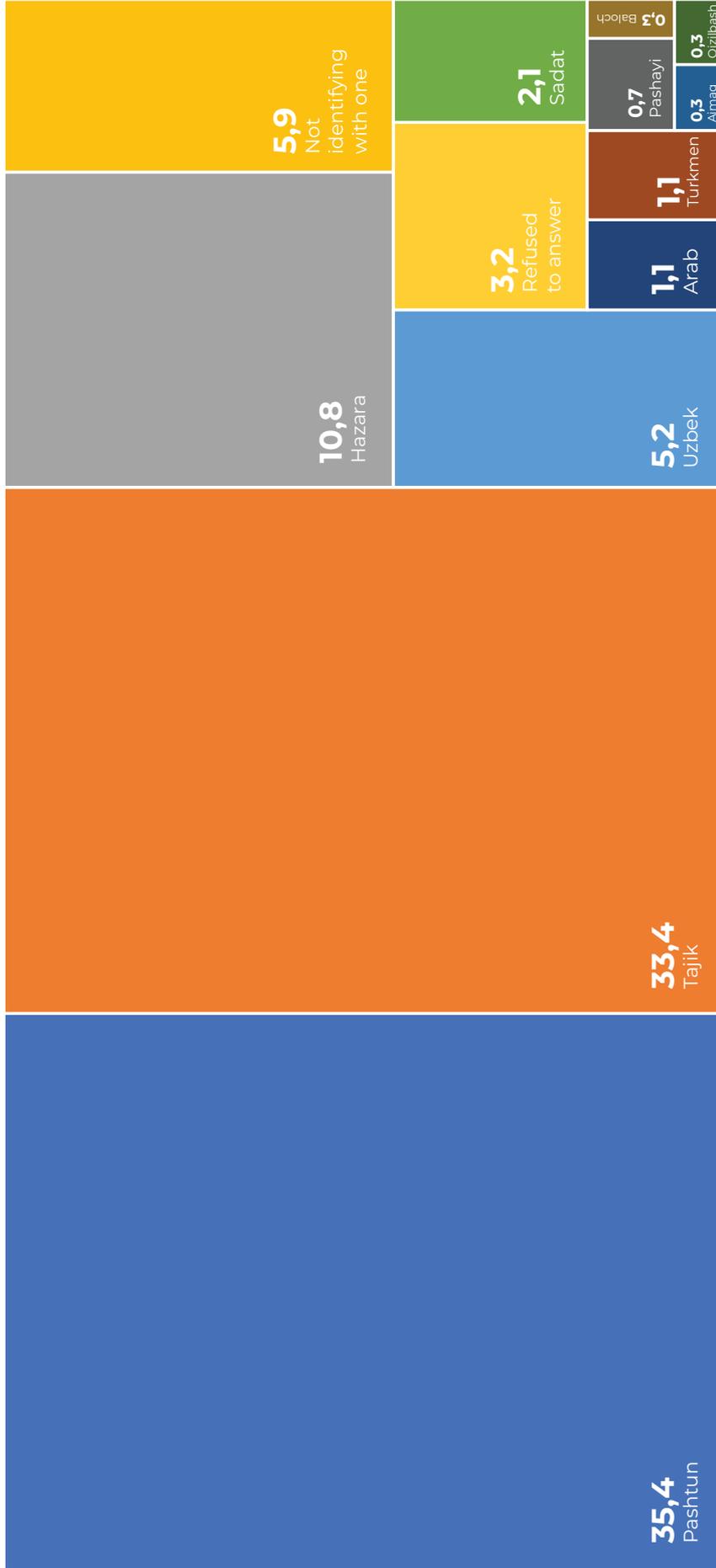
A total of 41.1% of respondents were either illiterate or had only received four years of primary education.

Education Level



¹⁰ The reason for this skewness may be twofold: Firstly, if a household can afford only one mobile phone, it is more likely that the male head of the household will have primary access to that mobile phone and therefore be more likely to be sampled. Secondly, women are less likely to answer the phone if the caller is unknown. Hence, they are less likely to be sampled.

Ethnic Distribution



Kochi O, Nuristani O, Hindu O

Figure 39. Ethnic Distribution (%)

