

The Politicisation of Afghanistan's High Schools

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1. Introduction

In 2010, AREU produced a report on political activism in Afghanistan's universities. The report found that among politically active students, radical organisations of Islamist leanings predominated. These organisations are all, to various degrees, opposed to the status quo, although none of the most active organisations openly endorses armed struggle in Afghanistan. While carrying out the project, the research team found evidence of political activities even in high schools; a source indicated that there were cases of significant radicalisation occurring even in some schools within Kabul. The idea of a follow-up project was planted at that time, although it took some time for it to fully germinate.

Political activism in Afghanistan's high schools is not new. Already during the 1960s and 1970s, the country's new political parties identified schools and universities as ideal recruitment grounds. The New Leftist and Islamist parties had significant numbers of teachers among their ranks, a fact that gave them direct access to students and the moral authority to influence them. Moreover, there were few alternatives for political proselytising in a country without a working class or large trade unions, and in the presence of a government that tried to present the emergence of political parties. For these various reasons, it would make sense to look at how political organisations approach high schools in today's Afghanistan.

Another rationale for carrying out the present study is that the 2010 study highlighted the predominance of radical and even extremist organisations within campuses. Therefore, this project also aims to assess the extent of politicisation and radicalisation in high schools. The survey discussed in this report is part of a wider project featuring a more qualitative study of political activism in Afghanistan's high schools, which will be published after the present one.

2. Methodology

This survey covered 18 provinces and a total of 136 schools. The research planners selected locations (districts), while the enumerators were tasked with finding students and teachers to be interviewed. The schools were not pre-selected. In total, 431 students and teachers who agreed to answer the questions were surveyed: 28 teachers and 403 students. The interviewees were purposively sampled on the basis of whoever the enumerators could find and then snowballing from the first successful contacts; that is, the first high school students contacted by the enumerators and willing to answer questions were interviewed. The questions did not deal with the interviewees' own political views, but rather with the presence of political activities in their schools and the incidence of student indiscipline. Political activities are to this day banned in Afghanistan's high

schools, so asking questions on this matter is sensitive. Interviewees were asked about political activities without being given a definition, so their answers were based on their own definition of political activity. However, their initial answers were then followed up with detailed questions about diverse types of political activity, such as proselytising or conducting propaganda for political organisations, engaging in debates about political matters, campaigning for candidates in political elections, or staging protests on political issues.

For the purpose of this study, cities are taken as a category including large urban conglomerates such as Kabul, Herat, Mazar-i Sharif, Jalalabad and Kandahar. Towns are all remaining urban centres, typically provincial capitals and district centres.

3. Spread and Frequency of Political Activism in High Schools

The survey indeed found evidence of very widespread political activity in high schools (Tables 1A, 1B, 2A, and 2B). Nationwide, 91.8 percent of interviewees indicated that they personally witnessed some kind of political activity in their high school. Others had heard people talking about political activity in the school (Tables 2A and 2B). The lowest percentage of interviewees having directly witnessed some kind of political activity in high schools was 67.9 percent in Balkh province; in half of the provinces, all interviewees stated that they had witnessed such

activities (Kandahar, Helmand, Zabul, Kabul, Takhar, Parwan, Baghlan, Badakhshan and Herat). Many other interviewees had *heard of* (as opposed to *witnessed*) political activities going on in their schools from other students: for example, 75 percent in Balkh. On the whole, it would appear that almost all schools included in the survey were the site of some kind of political activity, despite this being illegal. The forthcoming companion report to this study includes a section on the viability and wisdom of this ban.

Table 1A: Timing of political activities as witnessed by interviewees

Province	Question: When did you start observing these signs of political activity?					Number of answers
	In the past month	In the past 2-3 months	In the past year	More than a year ago	No answer	
Zabul	0.0%	0.0%	14.3%	85.7%	0.0%	23
Kandahar	0.0%	2.9%	20.0%	77.1%	0.0%	35
Helmand	0.0%	5.9%	5.9%	88.2%	0.0%	17
Ghazni	0.0%	0.0%	31.3%	50.0%	18.8%	16
Paktia	0.0%	10.0%	10.0%	10.0%	70.0%	22
Logar	0.0%	0.0%	6.3%	81.3%	12.5%	16
Wardak	0.0%	5.0%	30.0%	45.0%	20.0%	20
Kabul districts	2.6%	25.6%	53.8%	20.5%	0.0%	40
Kabul city	0.0%	4.5%	36.4%	50.0%	9.1%	22
Kapisa	0.0%	27.3%	45.5%	18.2%	9.1%	12
Parwan	0.0%	0.0%	33.3%	55.6%	11.1%	16

Takhar	0.0%	30.0%	56.7%	13.3%	0.0%	30
Kunduz	0.0%	23.3%	53.3%	16.7%	6.7%	30
Baghlan	30.4%	21.7%	47.8%	30.4%	0.0%	30
Badakhshan	5.3%	47.4%	42.1%	10.5%	0.0%	21
Balkh	0.0%	39.3%	28.6%	0.0%	32.1%	22
Herat	0.0%	6.3%	18.8%	75.0%	0.0%	16
Kunar	0.0%	0.0%	12.5%	81.3%	6.3%	16
Laghman	0.0%	0.0%	12.5%	62.5%	25.0%	26
Nangarhar	0.0%	0.0%	19.0%	57.1%	23.8%	21
Rural schools	0.0%	12.7%	23.0%	54.0%	10.3%	126
Town schools	3.1%	16.2%	31.1%	44.3%	5.3%	227
City schools	0.0%	12.8%	25.6%	59.0%	2.6%	78
All schools	1.6%	14.6%	27.8%	49.8%	6.3%	431

Table 1B: Frequency of political activities as witnessed by interviewees

Province	Question: How often did you observe cases of political activity?					Number of answers
	Just once	2-3 times	4-10 times	More than 10 times	No answer	
Zabul	9.5%	14.3%	4.8%	76.2%	0.0%	23
Kandahar	2.9%	2.9%	8.6%	85.7%	0.0%	35
Helmand	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	17
Ghazni	0.0%	12.5%	6.3%	62.5%	18.8%	16
Paktia	10.0%	0.0%	10.0%	80.0%	20.0%	22
Logar	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	87.5%	12.5%	16
Wardak	0.0%	20.0%	10.0%	50.0%	20.0%	20
Kabul districts	22.5%	35.0%	40.0%	2.5%	0.0%	40
Kabul city	0.0%	4.5%	31.8%	54.5%	9.1%	22
Kapisa	0.0%	18.2%	72.7%	9.1%	0.0%	12
Parwan	0.0%	44.4%	33.3%	22.2%	0.0%	16
Takhar	0.0%	20.0%	50.0%	30.0%	0.0%	30
Kunduz	0.0%	30.0%	36.7%	26.7%	6.7%	30
Baghlan	10.0%	30.0%	36.7%	23.3%	0.0%	30
Badakhshan	10.0%	25.0%	50.0%	20.0%	0.0%	21
Balkh	0.0%	25.0%	42.9%	0.0%	32.1%	22
Herat	0.0%	6.3%	18.8%	75.0%	0.0%	16
Kunar	6.3%	0.0%	0.0%	87.5%	6.3%	16
Laghman	0.0%	0.0%	6.3%	62.5%	31.3%	26
Nangarhar	0.0%	0.0%	19.0%	57.1%	23.8%	21
Rural schools	2.4%	10.3%	31.0%	48.4%	7.9%	126
Town schools	3.1%	15.8%	26.8%	49.1%	5.3%	227
City schools	1.3%	10.3%	25.6%	60.3%	2.6%	78
All schools	2.5%	13.2%	27.8%	50.9%	5.6%	431

Table 2A: Timing of political activities as heard by interviewees from third parties

Province	Question: When did you start hearing about these signs of political activity?					Number of answers
	In the past month	In the past 2-3 months	In the past year	More than a year ago	No answer	
Zabul	0.0%	0.0%	21.7%	78.3%	0.0%	23
Kandahar	2.9%	0.0%	8.8%	91.2%	0.0%	35
Helmand	0.0%	5.9%	5.9%	88.2%	0.0%	17
Ghazni	0.0%	6.3%	31.3%	43.8%	18.8%	16
Paktia	20.0%	0.0%	0.0%	80.0%	20.0%	22
Logar	0.0%	0.0%	12.5%	87.5%	0.0%	16
Wardak	0.0%	5.0%	30.0%	45.0%	20.0%	20
Kabul districts	5.3%	28.9%	50.0%	21.1%	0.0%	40
Kabul city	0.0%	0.0%	4.5%	27.3%	59.1%	22
Kapisa	0.0%	18.2%	54.5%	18.2%	9.1%	12
Parwan	0.0%	33.3%	55.6%	11.1%	0.0%	16
Takhar	0.0%	33.3%	60.0%	6.7%	0.0%	30
Kunduz	0.0%	33.3%	50.0%	10.0%	6.7%	30
Baghlan	0.0%	26.7%	56.7%	16.7%	0.0%	30
Badakhshan	5.0%	70.0%	20.0%	10.0%	0.0%	21
Balkh	0.0%	46.4%	28.6%	0.0%	25.0%	22
Herat	0.0%	0.0%	37.5%	56.3%	6.3%	16
Kunar	0.0%	0.0%	12.5%	81.3%	6.3%	16
Laghman	0.0%	0.0%	18.8%	75.0%	6.3%	26
Nangarhar	0.0%	0.0%	25.0%	75.0%	0.0%	21
Rural schools	0.8%	15.9%	26.2%	53.2%	4.0%	126
Town schools	1.8%	18.9%	32.5%	44.3%	2.6%	227
City schools	0.0%	15.4%	26.9%	55.1%	2.6%	78
All schools	1.2%	17.4%	29.6%	48.8%	3.0%	431

Table 2B: Frequency of political activities, as heard by interviewees from third parties

Province	Question: How often were cases of political activity observed?					Number of answers
	Just once	2-3 times	4-10 times	More than 10 times	No answer	
Zabul	4.3%	13.0%	8.7%	73.9%	0.0%	23
Kandahar	0.0%	5.7%	11.4%	82.9%	0.0%	35
Helmand	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	17
Ghazni	0.0%	18.8%	12.5%	50.0%	18.8%	16
Paktia	8.3%	0.0%	0.0%	75.0%	16.7%	22
Logar	0.0%	0.0%	18.8%	81.3%	0.0%	16
Wardak	0.0%	15.0%	15.0%	50.0%	20.0%	20
Kabul districts	22.5%	37.5%	35.0%	5.0%	0.0%	40
Kabul city	9.1%	0.0%	4.5%	40.9%	45.5%	22
Kapisa	0.0%	18.2%	72.7%	0.0%	9.1%	12
Parwan	0.0%	44.4%	33.3%	11.1%	0.0%	16
Takhar	0.0%	20.0%	50.0%	30.0%	0.0%	30
Kunduz	0.0%	30.0%	36.7%	23.3%	6.7%	30
Baghlan	10.0%	33.3%	40.0%	16.7%	0.0%	30
Badakhshan	9.5%	23.8%	42.9%	19.0%	0.0%	21

Balkh	0.0%	39.3%	35.7%	0.0%	25.0%	22
Herat	0.0%	12.5%	25.0%	56.3%	6.3%	16
Kunar	0.0%	0.0%	6.3%	87.5%	6.3%	16
Laghman	0.0%	6.3%	18.8%	68.8%	6.3%	26
Nangarhar	0.0%	0.0%	43.8%	87.5%	0.0%	21
Rural schools	1.6%	15.9%	23.0%	55.6%	4.0%	126
Town schools	1.3%	15.8%	30.7%	49.6%	2.6%	227
City schools	0.0%	15.4%	32.1%	50.0%	2.6%	78
All schools	1.2%	15.7%	28.7%	51.4%	3.0%	431

The political activity recorded in schools is not very intense, which is not surprising given that it is officially banned. The interviewees rarely reported having witnessed any activity in the month predating the interview—just 1.6 percent nationwide. Only in Baghlan was the percentage substantially higher than in the other provinces at 30.4 percent. Most interviewees indicated that the witnessed activities dated back to at least several months prior. The data collected about the frequency of episodes of political activism nevertheless indicates that it does not concern a few isolated episodes. In most provinces, a majority of the interviewees indicated that they witnessed more than ten episodes of political activism (all of the surveyed provinces in the south, east, and southeast as well as Herat). Nationwide, 51.4 percent answered so. Even in the remaining provinces, the vast majority of interviewees reported witnessing

multiple episodes of political activism. In general, it appears that the provinces most affected by insurgency also characterised those with the highest degree of political activism in high schools: the south, east, and southeast. Yet a very high level of student politicisation was also recorded in the northeast, with three out of four provinces recording that 100 percent of interviewees had witnessed political activities in their school. It should also be kept in mind that the qualitative interviews (see companion report) evidenced a significant amount of underground activity, which is very difficult to detect.

Of some interest is the fact that the level of politicisation of high schools is higher in towns (94.7 percent) and rural areas (91 percent) than it is in cities (84.6 percent) (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Spread of political activities as witnessed by interviewees

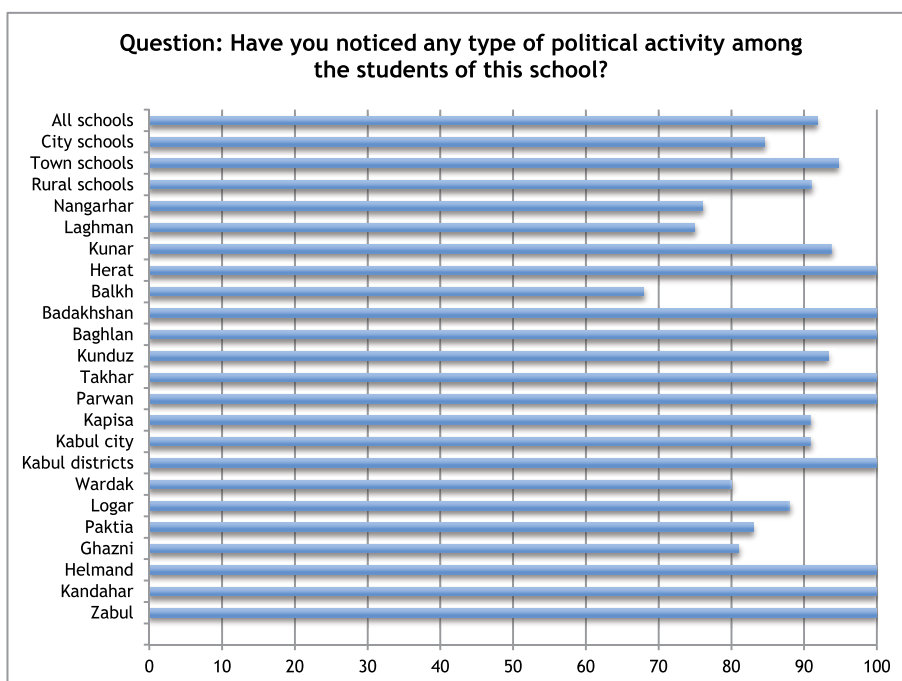
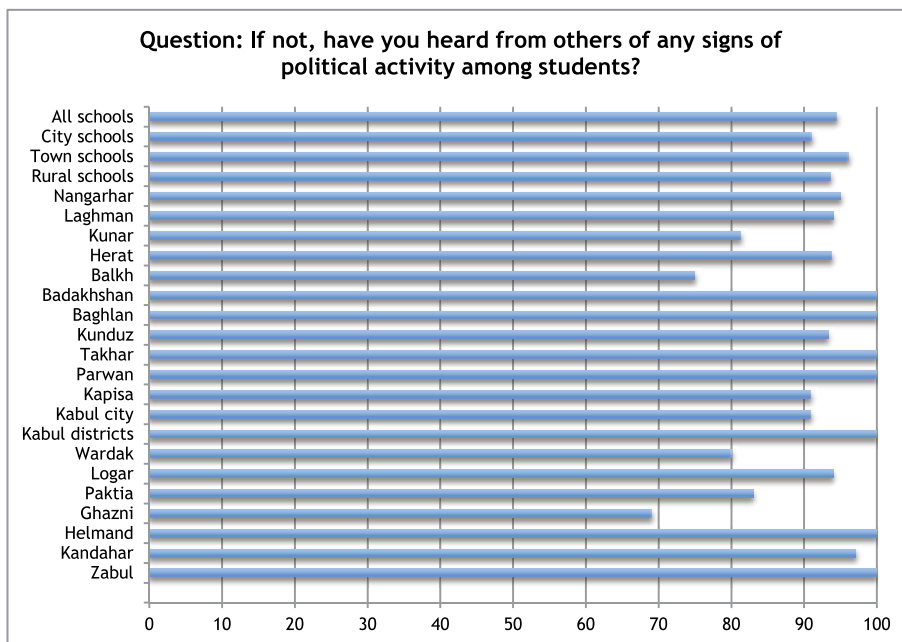


Figure 2: Spread of political activities as heard by interviewees from third parties



4. Types of Political Activity Reported

The different types of political activity suggested to interviewees showed very different responses from province to province. Nationwide, 22.6 percent of interviewees identified the distribution of political literature, such as leaflets, to occur within their school, but this was reported to be much more common in provinces such as Baghlan (over 47 percent of positive responses), Takhar, and generally in the eastern provinces, all reporting positive responses

among one-third to two-fifths of interviewees. At the other end of the spectrum, no such political activity was reported in Parwan, while in Kandahar less than 10 percent of interviewees answered positively. In the remaining provinces, 10 percent to 20 percent of interviewees indicated that distribution of political literature did take place, with the exception of Paktia and Balkh, where the level of positive responses was between 20 percent and 30 percent (Table 3).

Table 3: Types of political activity reported

Province	Distributing leaflets and political literature	Political meetings	Protest	Debates	Physical clashes	Recruitment	Graffiti	Students challenging teachers	Verbal Arguments
Zabul	13.0%	34.8%	0.0%	87.0%	13.0%	69.6%	13.0%	4.3%	65.2%
Kandahar	8.6%	48.6%	0.0%	100.0%	8.6%	94.3%	0.0%	0.0%	94.3%
Helmand	17.6%	29.4%	5.9%	100.0%	5.9%	52.9%	0.0%	0.0%	84.2%
Ghazni	18.8%	18.8%	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	50.0%	0.0%	0.0%	37.5%
Paktia	25.0%	8.3%	0.0%	100.0%	8.3%	66.7%	8.3%	0.0%	66.7%
Logar	12.5%	25.0%	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	6.3%	12.6%	0.0%	43.8%
Kabul districts	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	42.5%	100.0%	0.0%	100.0%
Kabul city	13.6%	22.7%	18.2%	100.0%	13.6%	77.3%	9.1%	11.0%	72.7%
Wardak	10.0%	25.0%	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	30.0%	5.0%	0.0%	80.0%
Kapisa	18.2%	0.0%	0.0%	90.9%	0.0%	36.4%	90.9%	27.3%	90.9%
Parwan	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	22.2%	100.0%	0.0%	100.0%

Kunar	37.5%	31.3%	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	18.8%	0.0%	6.3%	75.0%
Laghman	38.5%	25.0%	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	56.3%
Nangarhar	33.3%	28.6%	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	4.8%	0.0%	0.0%	81.0%
Takhar	33.3%	13.3%	0.0%	96.7%	26.7%	90.0%	96.7%	20.0%	93.3%
Kunduz	20.0%	20.0%	0.0%	90.0%	6.7%	56.7%	3.3%	10.0%	96.7%
Baghlan	46.7%	0.0%	10.0%	100.0%	0.0%	56.7%	100.0%	0.0%	100.0%
Badakhshan	19.0%	4.8%	0.0%	100.0%	14.3%	76.2%	81.0%	14.3%	100.0%
Balkh	28.6%	0.0%	0.0%	82.1%	14.3%	3.6%	60.7%	28.6%	85.7%
Herat	12.5%	50.0%	37.5%	100.0%	25.0%	100.0%	25.0%	62.5%	100.0%
Rural schools	19.8%	28.6%	0.0%	96.8%	6.3%	46.8%	30.2%	6.3%	19.8%
Town schools	23.2%	19.3%	1.3%	96.9%	7.9%	56.1%	47.8%	6.6%	85.5%
City schools	25.6%	25.6%	9.0%	96.2%	12.8%	50.0%	23.1%	30.8%	74.4%
All schools	22.6%	23.2%	2.3%	96.7%	8.3%	52.3%	38.2%	10.9%	64.3%

By contrast, explicit forms of opposition like protests were rarely reported: only 2.3 percent of interviewees nationwide indicated having witnessed them. In 15 provinces, there was no report of protests whatsoever, while only Herati interviewees indicated a relatively frequent occurrence of protests (37.5 percent). Protests were occasionally reported to occur in Baghlan and Helmand. Students openly challenging teachers were cited rarely. Only in Herat did this appear to be a common occurrence, with 62.5 percent of interviewees stating that they knew of such incidents. In 11 provinces, the interviewees reported no such incidents and in the remaining six provinces, positive responses ranged from four percent to 28 percent for this question. Protests were largely confined to city schools (nine percent reported them) and were not at all reported in rural schools.

Politically driven physical clashes between students were reported slightly more often, but nonetheless still quite infrequently, being described by just 8.3 percent of interviewees. The highest percentage of respondents indicating that they knew of physical clashes in their school was 26.7 percent (Takhar). Herat followed with 25 percent of positive answers. Half of the provinces reported no incidence of physical clashes, which were reported to occur more often in city schools (12.8 percent) than in town and rural schools (7.9 percent and 6.3 percent, respectively).

Verbal arguments among students were instead reported very frequently by the respondents, with 64.3 percent of positive answers nationwide. In five provinces, in fact, all interviewees stated that verbal arguments occurred at their school, while Ghazni recorded the lowest level of arguments at 37.5 percent. No other province was below the 50 percent mark in

terms of positive answers. The incidence of reports of verbal arguments was much greater in cities and towns (74.4 percent and 85.5 percent, respectively) than in rural schools (19.8 percent).

Another form of protest, graffiti, varied widely in the extent to which it was reported by interviewees: 38.2 percent reported it nationwide; in six provinces (Kandahar, Helmand, Ghazni, Laghman, Nangarhar and Kunar) the interviewees reported no such thing, while in three other provinces all interviewees asserted that graffiti could be seen on the walls of their school (Baghlan, Kabul, and Parwan). In the remaining nine provinces, the presence of graffiti varied between three percent in Kunduz and 90 percent in Kapisa.

Recruitment by political groups was reported quite often, with 52.3 percent of positive answers nationwide: only in Laghman did no interviewee report recruitment activities in their high school. Logar, Nangarhar and Balkh interviewees also reported rare cases of political recruitment, while two provinces (Takhar and Kandahar) had positive responses exceeding 90 percent of interviewees. It should be noted that this type of activity is likely to be under-reported, because it can easily take place away from public sight (see companion report).

The most common form of political activity reported in the high schools surveyed across the country was political debates; that is, students engaging in discussions over political matters: 96.7 percent of respondents said that they took place in their school. Among the topics of debate, the 2014 elections were a very popular subject, with 96.7 percent of positive answers nationwide and with no province having

a response rate of less than 80 percent; in most provinces, 100 percent of respondents confirmed that such debates took place in their school.

The next most popular topic was the foreign presence in Afghanistan: only in Kapisa and Balkh was the percentage of those responding affirmatively a low 18 percent and 3.6 percent, respectively, while in Kabul it was 42.5 percent. All other provinces reported positive responses ranging between 75 percent and 100 percent. The nationwide positive response rate of 80.8 percent conceals the large difference between cities—where the topic is somewhat less popular (60.3 percent)—and towns and rural areas (88.5 percent and 79.4 percent, respectively).

Islam versus Westernisation debates were reported to be popular only in certain provinces, notably in Herat, Badakhshan, Baghlan and Kunduz (all well above 50 percent of positive responses), while others like Kabul, Wardak, Logar, Nangarhar, Kapisa and Balkh reported no such debates at all. At the national level, positive responses stood at 41.9 percent, but they were much more frequent in towns (50 percent) than in cities (37.1 percent) and rural areas (30.2 percent). Indeed, the role and influence of Western powers in Afghanistan is an issue that emerged strongly in the qualitative interviews (see the companion report).

While not overwhelmingly popular with 29.9 percent of positive answers nationwide, women’s rights were

reportedly debated in several schools: more than 50 percent of respondents in three provinces (Herat, Ghazni, and Helmand) indicated that such debates occurred in their schools, although another three provinces reported no such debates about women’s rights. Unsurprisingly, this issue is more likely to be debated in cities (41 percent) than in towns (26.8 percent) and rural areas (28.6 percent). The interviewees, however, turned out to be reluctant to discuss women’s rights in any detail (see companion report).

Debates on language issues (essentially Pashto versus Dari) were quite common in provinces characterised by a majority non-Pashtun population; such debates were reported by 36.5 percent of respondents nationwide. They tended to be more of an issue in cities (46.2 percent) than in towns and rural areas (37.1 percent and 29.4 percent, respectively).

Finally, political corruption was a relatively popular topic, although perhaps not as prevalent as could be expected in a country so deeply affected by the problem. Nationwide, 50.5 percent of respondents identified it as a topic of debates at their school, with cities reaching 57.7 percent followed by towns and rural areas (53.1 percent and 41.3 percent, respectively). While positive answers exceeded 90 percent in six provinces, all interviewees in Ghazni denied the occurrence of such debates and another five provinces had positive answers below 20 percent (Table 4).

Table 4: Topics of political debates

Province	Political debates about elections	Women’s rights	Islam versus Westernisation	Foreign presence in Afghanistan	Language issues (e.g., Pashto vs. Dari)	Political corruption	Other
Zabul	82.6%	43.5%	65.2%	91.3%	4.3%	26.1%	0.0%
Kandahar	94.3%	45.7%	48.6%	91.4%	5.7%	31.4%	0.0%
Helmand	100.0%	70.6%	47.1%	100.0%	23.5%	23.5%	0.0%
Ghazni	100.0%	62.5%	12.5%	75.0%	18.8%	0.0%	0.0%
Paktia	100.0%	8.3%	25.0%	100.0%	16.7%	16.7%	25.0%
Logar	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	93.8%	0.0%	25.0%	0.0%
Kabul districts	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	42.5%	100.0%	100.0%	0.0%
Kabul city	100.0%	23.0%	68.0%	82.0%	59.0%	77.0%	100.0%
Wardak	100.0%	20.0%	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	10.0%	0.0%
Kapisa	81.8%	36.4%	0.0%	18.2%	0.0%	90.9%	0.0%
Parwan	100.0%	0.0%	11.1%	100.0%	33.3%	88.9%	0.0%
Kunar	100.0%	31.3%	6.3%	100.0%	6.3%	12.5%	0.0%
Laghman	100.0%	25.0%	6.3%	100.0%	6.3%	12.5%	0.0%
Nangarhar	100.0%	38.1%	0.0%	95.2%	14.3%	14.3%	9.5%

Takhar	100.0%	23.3%	100.0%	93.3%	90.0%	70.0%	3.3%
Kunduz	100.0%	26.7%	63.3%	70.0%	70.0%	83.3%	3.3%
Baghlan	100.0%	6.7%	96.7%	100.0%	90.0%	96.7%	0.0%
Badakhshan	100.0%	14.3%	85.7%	90.5%	38.1%	90.5%	0.0%
Balkh	100.0%	35.7%	0.0%	3.6%	75.0%	71.4%	0.0%
Herat	100.0%	67.8%	87.5%	93.8%	50.0%	93.8%	87.5%
Rural schools	96.0%	28.6%	30.2%	79.4%	29.4%	41.3%	1.6%
Town schools	96.9%	26.8%	50.0%	88.5%	37.1%	53.1%	3.1%
City schools	97.4%	41.0%	37.1%	60.3%	46.2%	57.7%	38.5%
All schools	96.7%	29.9%	41.9%	80.8%	36.5%	50.5%	9.1%

5. Political Groups Active in Schools

Islamic groups (a category including both Islamist and fundamentalist groups according to our definition) were by far the most frequently reported group to be active in high schools. Nationwide, they were reported to be present by 81.9 percent of respondents. The lowest percentage of positive answers was from Ghazni with 50 percent; all other provinces ranged from 60 percent to 100 percent (Table 5). Two other typologies of political groups reported to be widely active in high schools were ethno-nationalist groups and the so-called jihadis (protagonists of

the 1980s and 1990s civil wars). The presence of ethno-nationalist groups was reported mostly in the northeastern provinces, never falling below 75 percent compared to 51.4 percent nationwide. High percentages (above 50 percent) were also reported in Nangarhar as well as Kandahar and Helmand, neither of which has a long-standing tradition of support for ethno-nationalist groups. As shown by the qualitative interviews discussed in the companion report, these Islamic groups are largely opposed to the established political system in Afghanistan.

Table 5: Reported presence of political groups by typology

Province	Islamic groups	Ethno-nationalist groups	Maoist and leftist groups	Groups derived from the militias of the civil wars	Liberal and democratic groups
Zabul	95.7%	18.2%	9.5%	81.0%	4.5%
Kandahar	80.0%	68.6%	40.0%	80.0%	5.8%
Helmand	88.2%	64.7%	47.1%	94.1%	5.9%
Ghazni	50.0%	12.5%	0.0%	75.0%	12.5%
Paktia	91.7%	41.7%	0.0%	58.3%	8.3%
Logar	75.0%	0.0%	0.0%	50.0%	0.0%
Wardak	80.0%	25.0%	0.0%	95.0%	0.0%
Kabul districts	72.5%	5.0%	0.0%	87.5%	0.0%
Kabul city	90.9%	72.7%	45.5%	59.0%	54.5%
Kapisa	100.0%	9.1%	0.0%	81.8%	0.0%
Parwan	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%
Kunar	81.3%	50.0%	18.8%	50.0%	0.0%
Laghman	62.5%	31.3%	0.0%	81.3%	6.3%
Nangarhar	61.9%	57.1%	19.0%	47.6%	0.0%
Balkh	67.9%	7.1%	32.1%	75.0%	0.0%
Takhar	100.0%	100.0%	10.0%	100.0%	23.3%
Kunduz	90.0%	86.7%	3.3%	90.0%	10.0%
Baghlan	96.7%	96.7%	3.3%	100.0%	0.0%
Badakhshan	76.2%	71.4%	0.0%	90.5%	19.0%

Herat	81.3%	12.5%	12.5%	100.0%	18.8%
Rural schools	77.8%	46.8%	16.7%	76.2%	6.3%
Town schools	84.2%	56.2%	14.5%	84.6%	9.2%
City schools	82.0%	44.9%	44.9%	47.4%	19.2%
All schools	81.9%	51.4%	20.6%	75.4%	10.2%

The “jihadi” groups were said to be active in schools by at least 50 percent of interviewees in all provinces, except in Nangarhar, where the percentage was 47.6 percent. In several provinces, all interviewees indicated a presence of jihadi groups in their schools (Herat, Baghlan, Takhar and Parwan). Nationwide, their presence was reported by 75.4 percent of respondents. They are less present in cities (47.4 percent) than in towns (84.6 percent) and rural areas (76.2 percent). These jihadi groups mostly identify with the status quo and could be described as the establishment parties (see companion report).

Leftist groups seem to have a generally weak presence in high schools, with their presence being reported by just 20.6 percent of respondents. They are much

more likely to be active in cities (44.9 percent) than in towns (14.5 percent) and rural areas (16.7 percent). The only provinces where their activities were absent or negligible were Balkh, Kandahar, Helmand, Kunar and Nangarhar. The reported presence of liberal, democratic, and progressive groups was even less, with only 10.2 percent of interviewees reporting their presence nationwide: only interviewees in Ghazni, Takhar, Kunduz, Badakhshan and Herat reported such groups in more than 10 percent of cases (Table 6). Unsurprisingly, these groups are much more likely to be found in cities (19.2 percent) than in towns (9.2 percent) and rural areas (6.3 percent). The presence of these groups is so negligible that the research team struggled to find interviewees.

Table 6: Liberal and progressive groups active in schools

Province	Rights and Justice Party	Afghanistan 1400	Afghan Awareness and Analysis	Afghanistan Forward	Republican Party	Green Trend (Amrullah Saleh)	Others
Zabul	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Kandahar	5.8%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Helmand	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Ghazni	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	12.5%	0.0%
Logar	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Paktia	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	8.3%	0.0%	0.0%
Kabul districts	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Kabul city	36.4%	22.7%	18.2%	0.0%	31.8%	9.1%	4.5%
Wardak	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Kapisa	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Parwan	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Kunar	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Laghman	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	6.3%	0.0%
Nangarhar	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Takhar	0.0%	0.0%	3.3%	0.0%	10.0%	10.0%	0.0%
Kunduz	3.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	3.3%	3.3%	3.3%
Baghlan	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Badakhshan	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	9.6%	0.0%	14.3%
Balkh	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Herat	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	12.5%	6.3%	18.8%
Rural schools	2.0%	0.0%	1.0%	0.0%	1.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Town schools	2.0%	1.0%	1.0%	1.0%	3.0%	4.0%	2.0%
City schools	13.0%	6.0%	5.0%	0.0%	10.0%	4.0%	3.0%
All schools	3.9%	1.6%	1.8%	0.5%	3.7%	2.5%	1.4%

Looking in greater detail at the political groups active in schools, we find that the three most represented groups are Jamiat-i Islami, the Taliban, and Hekmatyar's Hizb-i Islami. These groups elicited positive answers from 58.3 percent, 55.1-61.8 percent, and 41 percent of interviewees, respectively. We did not include Jamiat among "Islamic groups" in this survey because the party has lost much of its original Islamist character, today resembling more of a catch-all party, intent on occupying the centre of the political scene. Hizb-i Islami is a special case as it has two branches, both of which are active in high schools: one is legally registered and has been included among the "parties active during the civil wars," while the other is active in the insurgency. This distinction consequently created some confusion among the interviewees, and as a result, there might be some overlap in reports of the party's presence. Regardless, most respondents viewed Hizb-i Islami more as a militia-jihadi organisation, intent on occupying the political scene like Jamiat rather than as an Islamic organisation (61.8 percent of positive answers vs. 55.1 percent). Its presence was widely reported in every province surveyed for this study, with the weakest

presence being in Herat, where only 12.5 percent of respondents claimed to have witnessed or heard of its presence in their school.

The Taliban were reported to be active in high schools in a surprisingly high number of cases, given that they are the main object of the counter-insurgency effort of the Afghan government. As expected, they are much less likely to be active in city schools (28.2 percent) than in towns (43 percent) and rural areas (45.2 percent). While the Taliban were not reported to be present in Logar, Badakhshan and Balkh, Jundullah, a branch of the Taliban that acts with a degree of autonomy, was indeed present in many schools in Badakhshan, as well as in all of the northeastern provinces. Jundullah was reported by 18.1 percent of all respondents, but its presence is concentrated in the northeast where positive responses exceeded 70 percent. The widespread presence of the Taliban in high schools may be somewhat surprising, as the group is widely seen as a clerical movement with roots in madrasa networks. However, in recent years, the Taliban has expanded recruitment efforts towards high schools, with an apparent degree of success (Table 7).

Table 7: Islamic groups active in schools

Province	Hizb-i Islami	Jamiat-ul Islah (Salafis)	Hizb-ut Tahrir	Taliban	Jundullah	Others
Zabul	65.2%	43.5%	4.3%	87.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Kandahar	60.0%	14.3%	0.0%	68.6%	0.0%	5.7%
Helmand	88.2%	5.9%	0.0%	47.1%	0.0%	11.8%
Ghazni	25.0%	31.3%	50.0%	43.8%	0.0%	25.0%
Paktia	66.7%	0.0%	8.3%	83.3%	0.0%	0.0%
Logar	31.3%	0.0%	0.0%	75.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Kabul districts	10.0%	60.0%	55.0%	15.0%	0.0%	15.0%
Kabul city	9.1%	59.1%	54.5%	0.0%	0.0%	81.8%
Wardak	80.0%	20.0%	15.0%	40.0%	0.0%	2.5%
Kapisa	100.0%	18.2%	45.5%	45.5%	0.0%	54.5%
Parwan	66.7%	55.6%	66.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Kunar	43.8%	75.0%	6.3%	75.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Laghman	56.3%	6.3%	0.0%	50.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Nangarhar	47.6%	19.0%	0.0%	47.6%	0.0%	0.0%
Takhar	83.3%	80.0%	93.3%	23.3%	73.3%	13.3%
Kunduz	50.0%	66.7%	53.3%	40.0%	80.0%	66.7%
Baghlan	96.7%	46.7%	96.7%	26.7%	96.7%	20.0%
Badakhshan	33.3%	14.3%	71.4%	0.0%	71.4%	19.1%
Balkh	67.9%	10.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	60.7%
Herat	12.5%	12.5%	62.5%	43.8%	0.0%	6.3%
Rural schools	53.2%	27.8%	20.6%	45.2%	11.1%	14.3%
Town schools	63.2%	35.5%	35.5%	43.0%	28.1%	13.6%
City schools	34.6%	33.3%	24.4%	28.2%	0.0%	51.3%
All schools	55.1%	32.9%	29.2%	41.0%	18.1%	20.6%

Two other groups reported to be active in high schools were Jamiat-ul Islah, the main Salafi group in Afghanistan, and Hizb-ut Tahrir. Nationwide, Jamiat-ul Islah was reported by 32.9 percent of interviewees with a widespread presence throughout the country, stated to be active in every province except in the southeastern ones of Logar and Paktia, with the highest percentages of positive responses from the northeastern provinces of Kunar, Parwan and Kabul. Hizb-ut Tahrir by contrast appears to have a very weak presence in the south (some positive responses only in Helmand), the southeast, and the east (except for Ghazni where 50 percent of respondents were aware of its activities), but a strong presence in the northeast and in Kabul's region. This picture corresponds to existing information, according to which Hizb-ut Tahrir started its activities in Afghanistan in the northeast. Its high presence in towns (35.5 percent vs. a national average of 29.2 percent) is the result of its strong presence in northeastern towns.

Table 8 below shows the spread of ethno-nationalist groups in high schools according to the interviewees. The presence of these groups should be expected to vary widely, given that they have largely ethnic constituencies. Settam-i Milli (SAZA) is indeed mostly concentrated in the northeast, with some very limited presence in Herat; Kangar-i Milli has a more modest presence, but follows the same pattern. Afghan Millat, by contrast, was often reported to be present in southern schools (Kandahar and Helmand), as well in some northeastern provinces characterised by strong ethnic tensions, in the east (the group's original base), and in Paktia. In Kabul's region, the group was weakly reported, except to some degree in Wardak (25 percent of positive answers).

Table 8: Ethno-nationalist groups active in high schools

Province	Settam-i Milli (SAZA)	Tehrik-i Milli (Ismail Yun)	Afghan Millat	Kangar-i Milli	Others
Zabul	0.0%	4.8%	9.5%	0.0%	0.0%
Kandahar	0.0%	0.0%	68.6%	0.0%	2.9%
Helmand	0.0%	5.9%	58.8%	0.0%	0.0%
Ghazni	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	12.5%
Paktia	0.0%	0.0%	41.7%	0.0%	0.0%
Logar	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Kabul districts	0.0%	0.0%	2.5%	0.0%	2.5%
Kabul city	13.6%	4.5%	45.5%	22.7%	45.5%
Wardak	0.0%	0.0%	25.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Kapisa	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	9.1%
Parwan	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Kunar	0.0%	37.5%	43.8%	0.0%	0.0%
Laghman	0.0%	25.0%	25.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Nangarhar	0.0%	38.1%	57.1%	4.8%	0.0%
Balkh	0.0%	0.0%	7.1%	0.0%	0.0%
Takhar	96.7%	10.0%	90.0%	10.0%	16.7%
Kunduz	80.0%	6.7%	76.7%	20.0%	50.0%
Baghlan	66.7%	0.0%	83.3%	0.0%	3.3%
Badakhshan	57.1%	0.0%	4.8%	33.3%	23.8%
Herat	6.3%	0.0%	6.3%	0.0%	12.5%
Rural schools	13.5%	4.8%	41.3%	2.4%	8.7%
Town schools	29.4%	6.7%	45.2%	8.0%	12.3%
City schools	3.8%	6.4%	38.5%	6.4%	16.7%
All schools	20.2%	60.9%	42.9%	60.8%	12.0%

The presence of leftist groups is detailed in Table 9. Derivatives of Shula-i Jawid (Maoist) groups were reported to negligible levels, except in Herat, an old stronghold of Maoist groups in Afghanistan. By contrast, derivatives of the former People's Democratic Party

of Afghanistan were reported to have significant levels of activity in several provinces, primarily in Balkh, Helmand, Kandahar and, to a lesser extent, in Nangarhar and Kunar.

Table 9: Leftist groups active in schools

Province	Maoist (Shula-i Jawid and derived groups)	Groups derived from Khalq and Parcham
Zabul	0.0%	9.5%
Kandahar	5.7%	34.3%
Helmand	11.8%	41.1%
Ghazni	0.0%	0.0%
Paktia	0.0%	0.0%
Logar	0.0%	0.0%
Kabul districts	0.0%	0.0%
Kabul city	40.9%	63.6%
Wardak	0.0%	0.0%
Kapisa	0.0%	0.0%
Parwan	0.0%	0.0%
Kunar	0.0%	18.8%
Laghman	0.0%	0.0%
Nangarhar	0.0%	19.0%
Takhar	0.0%	10.0%
Kunduz	0.0%	3.3%
Baghlan	0.0%	3.3%
Badakhshan	0.0%	0.0%
Balkh	0.0%	32.1%
Herat	12.5%	0.0%
Rural schools	0.8%	15.9%
Town schools	2.3%	13.6%
City schools	14.1%	39.7%
All schools	37.5%	19.0%

The so-called jihadi groups are shown in detail in Table 10. Despite efforts by Junbesh-i Milli to spread nationwide, its activities were clearly concentrated in northern and northeastern Afghanistan. Nationwide, its presence was reported by a modest 24.7 percent of interviewees. Outside these regions, only Helmand and Herat had levels of presence higher than negligible. Similarly, the different factions of Hizb-i Wahdat and Harakat-i Islami (here grouped together for the sake of simplicity) were found in areas of strong Shi'a presence. The two "jihadi groups" with a legitimate claim to being national parties are instead Jamiat-i Islami and Hizb-i Islami. Jamiat was reported to be active in every single province surveyed, although two (Wardak and Kunar)

reported quite negligible levels of presence. The party not only had a high level of presence in the traditional strongholds of the northeast, the north, and in Parwan, Kapisa and Herat, but also in the south. In comparison, the legal wing of Hizb-i Islami had a weak presence in Kabul and surprisingly none at all in Parwan, but it was rather well represented elsewhere. This absence in Parwan might be due to the hostility of local Jamiati networks to any Hizbi presence, which would affect the legal wing of Hizb-i Islami more than the underground one. As the qualitative interviews showed, the political views of activists in Jamiat-i Islami and the legal wing of Hizb-i Islami are quite similar to each other (see companion report).

Table 10: Groups derived from the civil wars active in schools

Province	Jamiat-i Islami	Hezb-i Islami	Hezb-i Wahdat	Junbush-i Milli	Harakat-i Islami (Mohseni, Anwari)
Zabul	61.9%	19.0%	0.0%	0.0%	28.6%
Kandahar	60.0%	71.4%	0.0%	2.9%	22.9%
Helmand	70.6%	88.2%	17.6%	11.8%	5.9%
Ghazni	68.8%	56.3%	56.3%	0.0%	62.5%
Paktia	25.0%	58.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Logar	31.3%	50.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Kabul districts	82.5%	7.5%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Kabul city	27.3%	9.1%	18.2%	0.0%	22.7%
Wardak	2.5%	95.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Kapisa	81.8%	54.5%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Parwan	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Kunar	6.3%	43.8%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Laghman	18.8%	81.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Nangarhar	19.0%	47.6%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Takhar	90.0%	70.0%	40.0%	96.7%	0.0%
Kunduz	83.3%	33.3%	20.0%	83.3%	0.0%
Baghlan	60.0%	96.7%	20.0%	6.7%	0.0%
Badakhshan	66.7%	42.9%	4.8%	38.1%	0.0%
Balkh	75.0%	67.9%	57.1%	75.0%	35.7%
Herat	93.8%	25.0%	75.0%	12.5%	18.8%
Rural schools	50.0%	64.3%	11.1%	20.6%	15.0%
Town schools	64.0%	64.9%	14.0%	27.6%	10.1%
City schools	55.1%	48.7%	30.8%	23.1%	33.3%
All schools	58.3%	61.8%	16.2%	24.7%	15.7%

6. Civil Society Organisations

Different types of civil society organisations showed huge variations in their level of presence across provinces. Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) were reported to be active in schools in almost all provinces, except Baghlan and Badakhshan. Nationwide, 57 percent of respondents reported their

activities, with peaks occurring in cities (73.1 percent). Very low levels of NGO-type organisations were reported in the other provinces of the northeast. By contrast, a high presence was reported in the south, southeast, and east, as well as in Herat and Balkh (Table 11).

Table 11: Presence of civil society organisations

Province	NGOs	Women's rights groups	Religious associations (Tabligh-i Jamiat)	Others
Zabul	81.0%	0.0%	57.1%	0.0%
Kandahar	97.1%	54.3%	34.3%	2.9%
Helmand	100.0%	82.4%	52.9%	0.0%
Ghazni	100.0%	62.5%	43.8%	0.0%
Paktia	83.3%	83.3%	8.3%	0.0%
Logar	37.5%	12.5%	0.0%	0.0%
Kabul districts	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Kabul city	27.3%	22.7%	40.1%	22.7%
Wardak	55.0%	0.0%	5.0%	0.0%
Kapisa	90.9%	9.1%	9.1%	0.0%
Parwan	77.8%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Kunar	43.8%	12.5%	12.5%	0.0%
Laghman	81.3%	43.8%	31.3%	0.0%
Nangarhar	95.2%	81.0%	14.3%	4.8%
Takhar	3.3%	3.3%	93.3%	3.3%
Kunduz	3.3%	0.0%	86.7%	3.3%
Baghlan	0.0%	0.0%	76.7%	10.0%
Badakhshan	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	4.8%
Balkh	71.4%	0.0%	21.4%	0.0%
Herat	100.0%	68.8%	81.3%	100.0%
Rural schools	56.3%	25.4%	32.5%	1.6%
Town schools	51.8%	27.6%	52.2%	2.6%
City schools	73.1%	39.7%	38.5%	6.4%
All schools	57.0%	29.1%	44.0%	29.9%

In comparison, women's rights groups were reported much less often, with 29.1 percent of positive answers at the national level. In eight provinces, there was no trace of their presence, although in six other provinces, more than 50 percent of interviewees reported their presence, including seemingly unlikely places like Kandahar, Helmand, Ghazni and Paktia. Unsurprisingly, women's groups are more likely to be active in cities

(39.7 percent) than in towns and rural areas (27.6 percent and 25.4 percent, respectively). The presence of non-political religious groups is not uncommon on the whole, with 44 percent of respondents reporting it, but their prevalence is very irregular, with provinces like Kabul, Parwan and Logar seemingly completely unaffected, while others like the northeast and Herat reporting high levels of presence.

7. The Influence of Adults

As explained in the introduction, teachers were often involved in political proselytising in the 1960s and 1970s. For this reason, it was decided to test the extent to which teaching staff are still involved in spreading political views among students. The responses of the interviewees indicated that the perceived involvement of teachers in influencing the political attitudes of students stands at 41.7 percent nationwide. The percentage is considerably higher in Kabul's districts (not in the city), Badakhshan, and Herat (all over 90 percent of positive responses),

but the lowest in Ghazni and Parwan (no positive responses) as well as in Nangarhar and Logar (under 10 percent of positive responses). In most cases, it was reported that teachers of religious subjects were the most active in trying to influence the political views of their students, followed a long way by teachers of Pashto and Dari. Teachers of history and science were rarely reported to play a political role; there were no positive responses in this regard in 11 and 14 provinces, respectively (Figure 3, Table 12).

Figure 3: Reported involvement of teaching staff in political proselytising

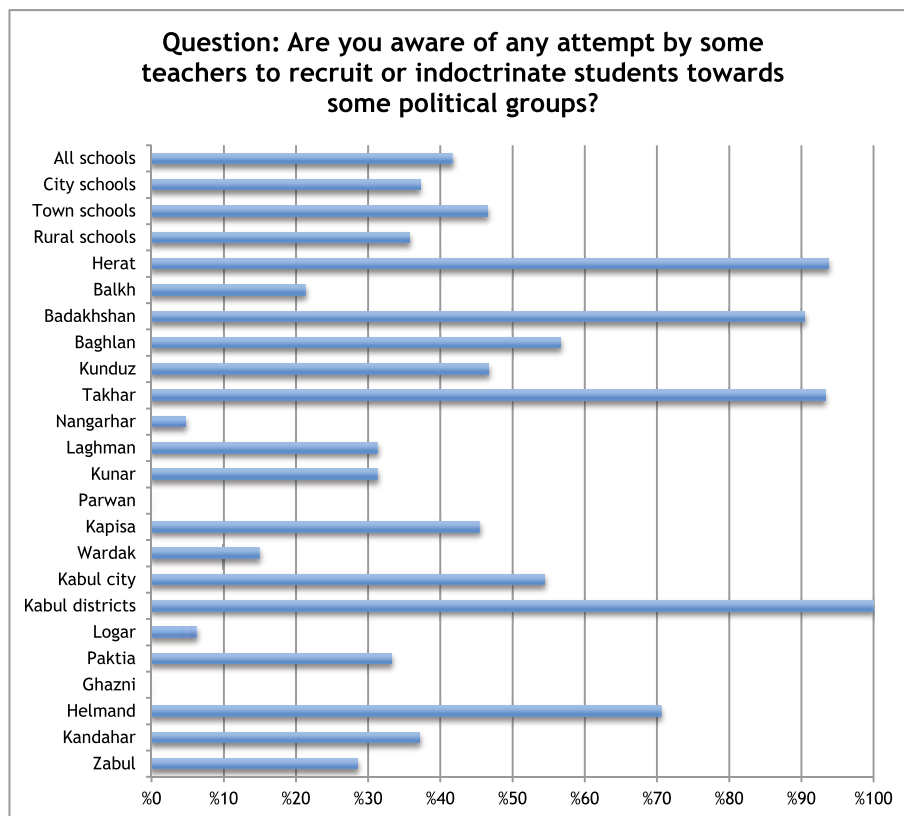


Table 12: Teaching staff and political proselytising

Province	Religious teachers	Dari and Pashto teachers	History teachers	Science teachers	Others	Number of answers
Zabul	28.6%	14.3%	19.0%	4.8%	0.0%	23
Kandahar	31.4%	0.0%	0.0%	2.9%	5.8%	35
Helmand	52.9%	23.5%	11.8%	11.8%	5.9%	17
Ghazni	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	16
Paktia	8.3%	16.7%	8.3%	0.0%	0.0%	22
Logar	6.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	16
Kabul districts	100.0%	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	20
Kabul city	50.0%	13.6%	18.2%	0.0%	22.7%	40
Wardak	15.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	22
Kapisa	45.5%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	12
Parwan	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	16
Kunar	31.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	30
Laghman	31.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	30
Nangarhar	4.8%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	30
Takhar	90.0%	33.3%	30.0%	0.0%	6.7%	21
Kunduz	53.3%	16.7%	16.7%	0.0%	0.0%	22
Baghlan	60.0%	36.7%	0.0%	13.3%	0.0%	16
Badakhshan	90.5%	4.8%	4.8%	14.3%	4.8%	16
Balkh	14.3%	14.3%	7.1%	0.0%	3.6%	26
Herat	87.5%	0.0%	25.0%	0.0%	75.0%	21
Rural schools	34.9%	13.5%	6.3%	0.8%	2.4%	126
Town schools	43.4%	12.7%	9.2%	1.8%	3.5%	227
City schools	33.3%	9.0%	9.0%	1.3%	12.8%	78
All schools	39.1%	12.3%	8.3%	14.2%	45.6%	431

The vast majority of students interviewed reported adults exercising an influence over their students' political attitudes: 78.9 percent nationwide, with small differences observed only between cities, towns, and rural areas. The lowest rate of positive responses was in Badakhshan with 42.9 percent, but seven provinces had over 90 percent of positive responses. Unsurprisingly, one of the main sources of influence over students was found to be parents, but with several provinces reporting no positive responses to this question. The most influential adults were, however, reported to be party activists, with 72.2 percent of positive

answers nationwide and provincially never below 37.5 percent (Ghazni) and, except for Badakhshan, always above 50 percent. This seems to suggest that there is little self-organisation among students and that political input tends to come from existing "grown-up organisations." Another major source of political influence over students was reported to be mullahs, being 38.2 percent nationwide, except in Parwan and Nangarhar (no positive answers) and Balkh and Kunar (both under 10 percent of positive answers) (Figure 4, Table 13).

Figure 4: Influence of adults over students

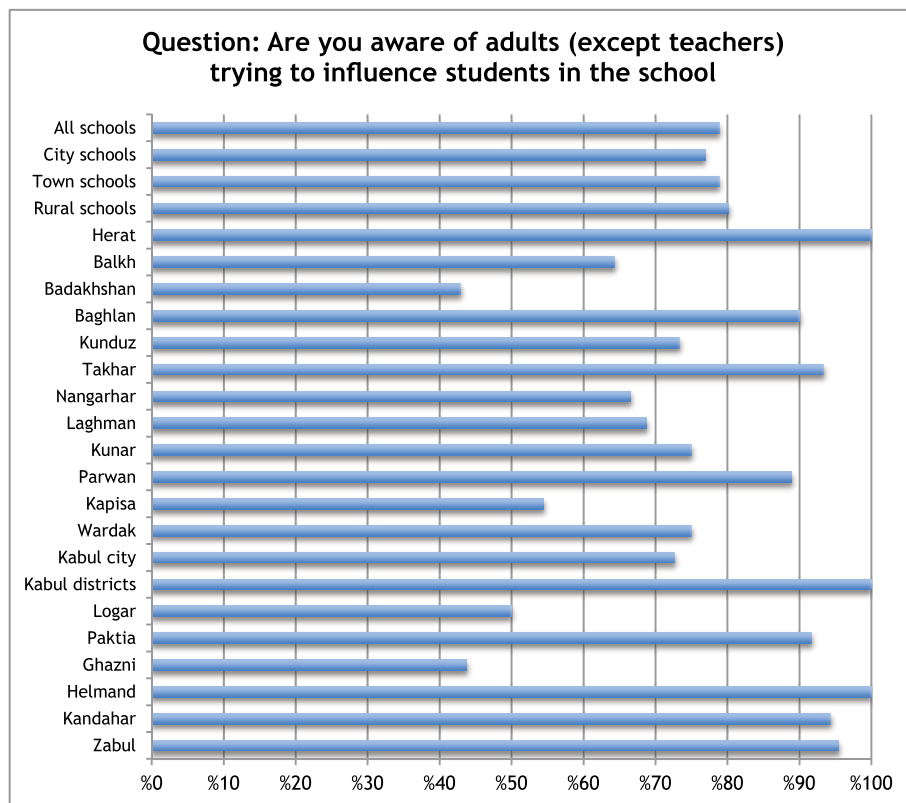


Table 13: Influence of adults over students, breakdown of answers

Province	Typologies of adults influencing students				Number of answers
	Parent	Mullahs	Party activists	Others	
Zabul	72.70%	45.50%	77.30%	0.0%	23
Kandahar	82.90%	45.70%	68.60%	0.0%	35
Helmand	47.10%	11.80%	88.20%	0.0%	17
Ghazni	18.80%	31.30%	37.50%	0.0%	16
Paktia	42.0%	17.0%	83.0%	0.0%	22
Logar	19.0%	0.0%	50.0%	0.0%	16
Kabul districts	0.0%	55.00%	100.0%	0.0%	20
Kabul city	0.0%	45.4%	45.4%	27.3%	40
Wardak	50.0%	45.0%	75.0%	0.0%	22
Kapisa	0.0%	90.0%	55.0%	0.0%	12
Parwan	0.0%	0.0%	89.0%	0.0%	16
Kunar	50.0%	6.30%	75.0%	0.0%	30
Laghman	50.0%	12.50%	62.50%	0.0%	30
Nangarhar	43.0%	0.0%	67.0%	0.0%	30
Takhar	3.0%	80.0%	90.0%	0.0%	21
Kunduz	13.0%	57.0%	60.0%	7.0%	22
Baghlan	20.0%	63.30%	86.70%	3.30%	16
Badakhshan	0.0%	42.90%	42.90%	0.00%	16

Balkh	50.0%	4.0%	64.0%	0.0%	26
Herat	13.0%	25.0%	100.0%	100.0%	21
Rural schools	42.9%	38.9%	73.8%	0.0%	126
Town schools	28.1%	39.9%	73.7%	1.4%	227
City schools	33.3%	32.1%	65.4%	11.5%	78
All schools	33.4%	38.2%	72.2%	28.2%	431

8. Indiscipline in Schools

Undisciplined behaviour in schools was reported by 70.4 percent of interviewees. The lowest positive response rate in any province was 37.5 percent (Logar), while in eight provinces all respondents affirmed that acts of indiscipline occurred at their schools. One of the most common types of indiscipline was students fighting other students (54.6 percent), with positive answers ranging from 23.8 percent to 100 percent in the provinces. Wardak was the province with the lowest percentage of positive answers (15 percent). Cases of students fighting teachers were also very common, being reported to some degree in every province and overall by 42.6 percent of respondents; only in Helmand were positive answers in this regard less than 10 percent. Vandalism was

also reported quite often (45.1 percent), although very irregularly from province to province. Damaging school equipment seems to be a widespread problem observed in every province. Writing slogans on the walls was not reported in four provinces and only very occasionally in another four, although it appears to be quite common in Kabul, Kapisa, and Parwan, as well as in the northeast and Balkh. Overall, this was reported by 42.6 percent of respondents. Drug taking was reported less often than one might expect given the ready availability of cheap drugs in Afghanistan, with 25.3 percent of positive answers nationwide: Helmand, Wardak, Kunar, Laghman and Nangarhar all had no positive responses to this issue (Figure 5, Table 14).

Figure 5: Occurrence of undisciplined behaviour among students

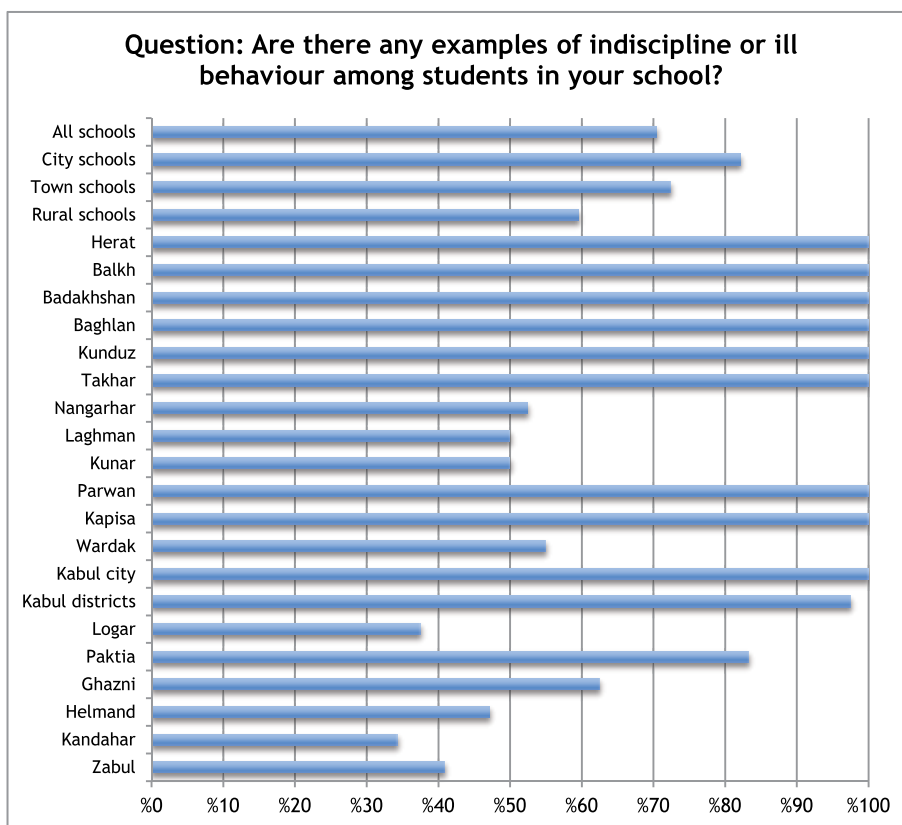


Table 14: Types of undisciplined behaviour in schools

Province	Types of undisciplined behaviour							Number of answers
	Fighting other students	Fighting teachers	Taking drugs	Disobeying teachers	Writing on school walls	Damaging schools	Other	
Zabul	40.9%	22.7%	4.5%	22.7%	22.7%	22.7%	0.0%	23
Kandahar	25.7%	14.3%	2.9%	11.4%	0.0%	14.3%	0.0%	35
Helmand	29.4%	5.9%	0.0%	5.9%	0.0%	23.5%	0.0%	17
Ghazni	56.3%	12.5%	12.5%	18.8%	25.0%	31.3%	0.0%	16
Paktia	50.0%	41.7%	16.7%	58.3%	0.0%	41.7%	0.0%	22
Logar	31.3%	0.0%	6.3%	25.0%	0.0%	6.3%	0.0%	16
Kabul districts	97.5%	97.5%	57.5%	97.5%	97.5%	97.5%	2.5%	20
Kabul city	68.2%	40.9%	13.6%	68.2%	68.2%	54.5%	100.0%	40
Wardak	15.0%	0.0%	0.0%	30.0%	5.0%	20.0%	0.0%	22
Kapisa	100.0%	100.0%	18.2%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	0.0%	12
Parwan	100.0%	100.0%	88.9%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	0.0%	16
Kunar	37.5%	0.0%	0.0%	12.5%	6.3%	12.5%	0.0%	30
Laghman	43.8%	0.0%	0.0%	18.8%	6.3%	6.3%	0.0%	30
Nangarhar	23.8%	4.8%	0.0%	28.6%	4.8%	14.3%	0.0%	30
Takhar	100.0%	86.7%	83.3%	93.3%	86.7%	83.3%	20.0%	21
Kunduz	100.0%	83.3%	53.3%	90.0%	93.3%	80.0%	3.3%	22
Baghlan	100.0%	80.0%	66.7%	96.7%	90.0%	50.0%	6.7%	16
Badakhshan	100.0%	66.7%	52.4%	85.7%	95.2%	19.0%	0.0%	16
Balkh	100.0%	100.0%	32.1%	96.4%	96.4%	96.4%	0.0%	26
Herat	93.8%	75.0%	43.8%	93.8%	12.5%	75.0%	93.8%	21
Rural schools	49.2%	30.1%	16.7%	39.7%	29.4%	34.1%	1.6%	126
Town schools	64.9%	46.9%	32.9%	55.3%	47.8%	48.7%	0.4%	227
City schools	33.3%	50.0%	16.7%	59.0%	48.7%	52.6%	35.9%	78
All schools	54.6%	42.6%	25.3%	51.4%	42.6%	45.1%	7.2%	431

9. Conclusion

The purpose of this survey was to highlight potential issues and matters worthy of further investigation to be followed up in a forthcoming AREU qualitative study of the subject; the aim was therefore not to explain why and how certain processes take place in Afghanistan's high schools. From this perspective, the survey produced a number of key findings.

The first and most obvious one is the high degree of politicisation in Afghanistan's high schools, despite a formal ban on political activities issued by the Ministry of Education. Political activities in schools take multiple shapes, but mostly consist of debates (occasionally virulent), some violent scuffles and confrontations, and the distribution of political literature; open protests and demonstrations are rare. The political debates centre primarily on issues such as the foreign presence in Afghanistan and electoral competition, with corruption a distant third.

The second main finding is that there are two main politicisation trends: the first is the spread of an anti-system sentiment, which essentially benefits radical and/or illegal Islamic organisations, some of which are actively engaged in an insurgency against the Afghan government, while others are not militarily active. The extent of the activities conducted by the Taliban, Jundullah, Hizb-i Islami (Hekmatyar branch), Hizb-ut Tahrir, and others should be a cause of concern for the Afghan authorities. Although the 2010 study by AREU focused on universities, this study seems to suggest that radicalisation might have accelerated. The other main trend shows that the mainstream Afghan political parties are trying to spread their wings wide among the population, actively trying to recruit high school students. This also confirms a finding of the 2010 report on higher education politics in Afghanistan. Despite being banned, this kind of proselytising could be described as a positive development, as political parties and organisations are trying to establish deep roots in society. There is instead little indication of student groups organising themselves autonomously from existing political parties and organisations, although the forthcoming qualitative study should produce additional insights into this aspect.

Yet another finding is that politics in Afghanistan remains quite regionalised, even among the youth. The few parties and organisations that can claim some nationwide presence are largely confined to a few regions.

NGO-type activities are also quite common among high school students; in the cities (particularly Kabul), women's rights groups are also active. The survey also tried to assess some indicators of social malaise in schools, finding that the level of indiscipline in schools is quite high, especially in cities.

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