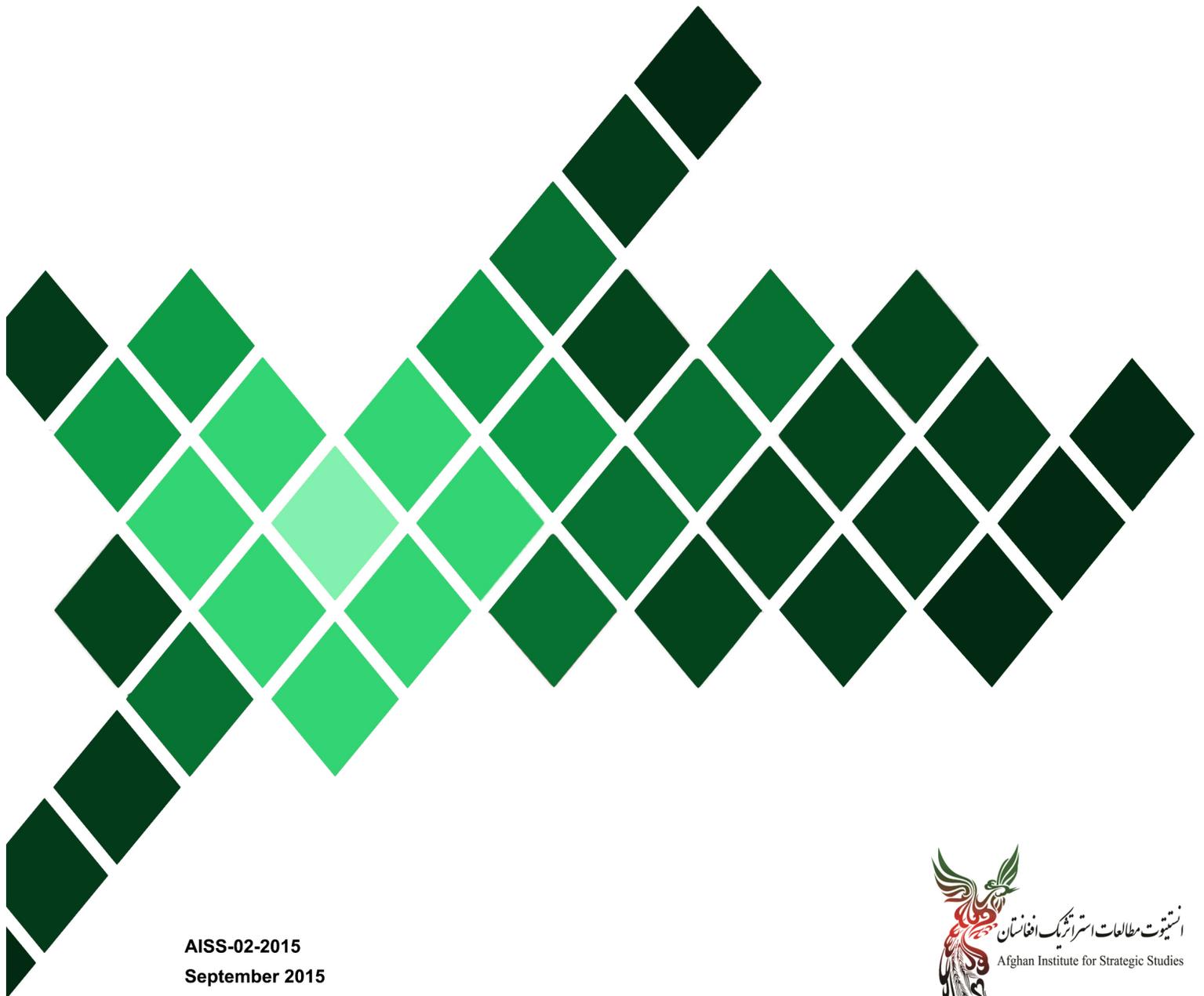


Trends in Radicalization across Unregistered Madrassas in Afghanistan

Policy Paper

Abdul Ahad Mohammadi | Musab Omer | Muhammad Moheq



AISS-02-2015
September 2015



This Page Intentionally Left Blank

Trends in Radicalization across Unregistered Madrassas in Afghanistan

Authors: Mr. Abdul Ahad Mohammadi, Mr. Musab Omer, and Mr. Muhammad Moheq

Chief Editor: Mr. Benjamin Elowe

Consultant: Mr. Abdul Kabir Salehi

Research Design Review and Peer Review

- Professor Shahrbanou Tadjbakhsh, Chief Academic Advisor to the Afghan Institute for Strategic Studies (AISS); Director of the program on Human Security at the Master of Public Affairs (MPA), Institute of Political Studies, Sciences Po, Paris; and Associate Researcher, Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO)
- Dr. Sabiha Hussain, Associate Professor, Dr. K. R. Narayanan Centre for Dalit and Minorities Studies, Jamia Millia Islamia (JMI), New Delhi, India
- Dr. Ahmet Sait Yayla, Professor and Chair, Sociology Department, Faculty of Arts and Sciences, Terrorism and Radicalization Specialist, Harran University, Turkey
- Mr. Robert Zaman, Senior Researcher, Afghan Institute for Strategic Studies (AISS), and Ph.D. Candidate, University of Kent, Brussels, Belgium

Field Researchers

- Mr. Abdul Basir Moheb
- Mr. Bashir Ahmad Osmani
- Ms. Farzana Ahmad
- Ms. Samira Rahmati
- Ms. Dilkha Fayazi
- Mr. Habibullah Azad
- Mr. Mawlawi Abdullah Jamai
- Mr. Hasan Jafari
- Mr. Khalid Yousufzai
- Mr. Abdul Baqi Bariz
- Mr. Nazir Ahmad
- Mr. Farhad Safi
- Ms. Nabila Safi
- Mr. Agha Shirin Shokohmand
- Mr. Fazl Ahmad Anis

September 2015
Kabul, Afghanistan

This Page Intentionally Left Blank

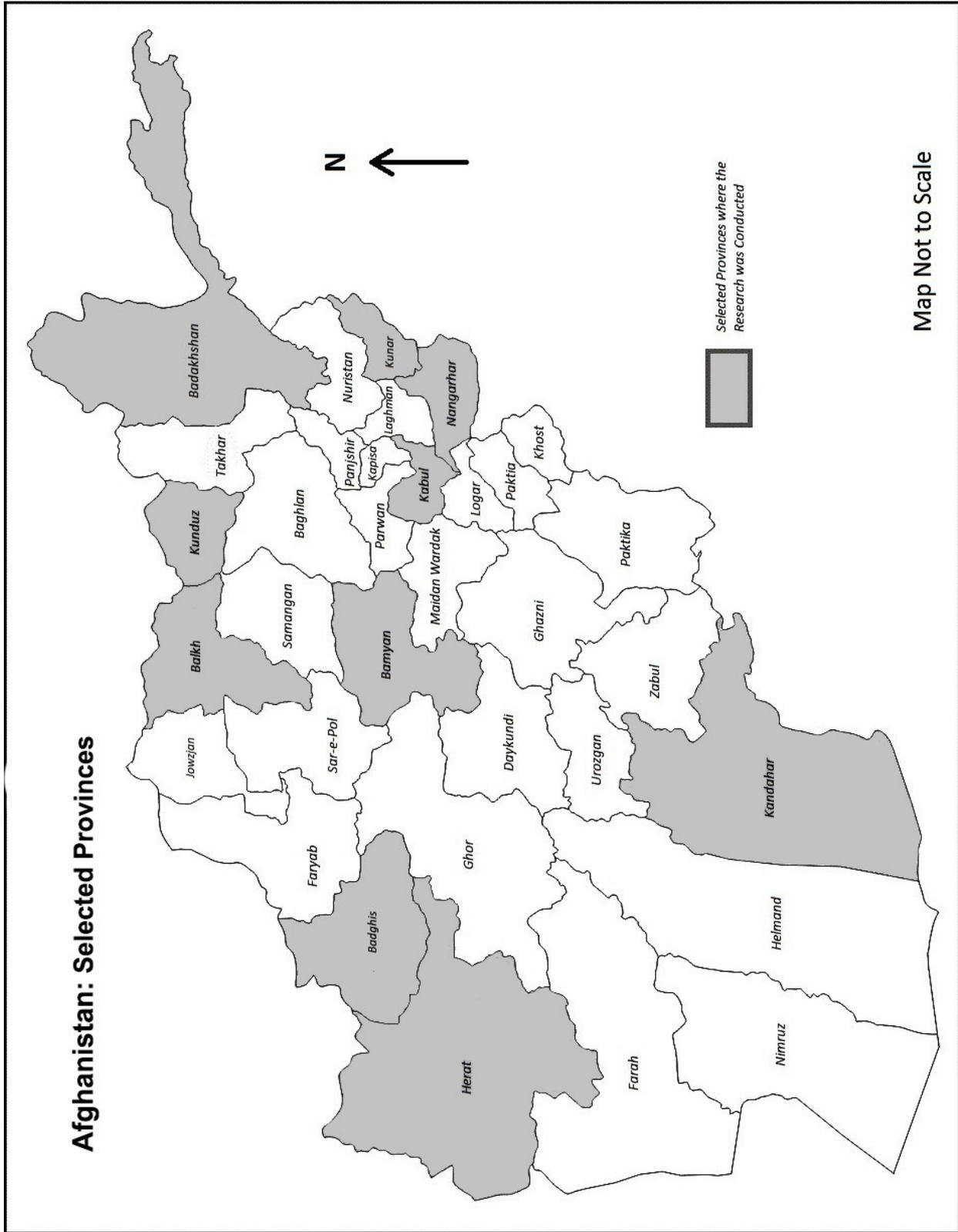
CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	8
ACRONYMS.....	9
GLOSSARY.....	9
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	11
Main Findings	12
Recommendations.....	13
INTRODUCTION	14
Methodology and Approach	15
STUDY FINDINGS.....	16
a) Religious denominations followed by respondents.....	16
b) Tolerance and respect towards Muslims of other sects, and non-Muslims	17
c) Sense of respect for other religious faiths	19
d) Contribution of various religious faiths towards the society	20
e) Religious justification of violence against dissidents	21
f) Views about the state and governance.....	22
g) Supportive views towards notion of peace deal with non-Muslims.....	24
h) Support for violence and violent actions against the state.....	26
i) Views about Taliban resistance against the Government of Afghanistan	27
j) Views about society and social norms.....	28
k) Analysis of democratic vs. Islamic values.....	30
Madrasa funding sources and transnational links	31
a) Financial external linkages.....	31
b) Non-financial external linkages.....	34
c) Support by other governments.....	37
d) Sponsors' influence.....	38
e) Alumni networks	38
f) Drug money as charity	38
g) Substantive aspects of curriculum observed.....	39
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	42
REFERENCES.....	44
ANNEXES	46
Annex 1: Methodology Expanded	46
Annex 2: Sample Questionnaire.....	47
About the AISS	55
CONTACT	58

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: In your opinion, which religious authority is best at representing Islam?	17
Figure 2: Most Islamic religious denominations make positive contributions to Islam	19
Figure 3: People adhering to other religious faiths should be respected	20
Figure 4: Most religious faiths make a positive contribution towards the society.....	21
Figure 5 Violence against non-Muslims, who are not at war with Muslims, is religiously justified	22
Figure 6: Government of Afghanistan is a legitimate Islamic regime.....	24
Figure 7: Are Muslims allowed to enter into peace agreements with non-Muslims?.....	26
Figure 8: Suicide attacks are forbidden in Islam in all circumstances.....	27
Figure 9: What do you think about the Taliban resistance to the Afghan government?	28
Figure 10: Everyone should enjoy equal rights under the law, regardless of their sex, ethnicity or religion	29
Figure 11: Democracy challenges Islamic values	31
Figure 12: Aggregate donation sources for construction of madrassas.....	33
Figure 13: Aggregate sources of capital for daily madrassa expenses	33
Figure 14: Prevalence of linkages between Afghan and foreign madrassas	34
Figure 15: Exchange visits by students to madrassas inside and outside of Afghanistan	35
Figure 16: Ideal sources of madrassa funding according to madrassa officials.....	36
Figure 17: Affiliation with politicians, businessmen and religious leaders	37
Figure 18 : Connections with alumni	38
Figure 19: Texts utilized by madrassas surveyed.....	39

Map of selected provinces covered in this study



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The authors are grateful to the Afghan Institute for Strategic Studies (AISS), for its logistical support, and National Endowment for Democracy (NED) for its generous financial contribution to this project.

We are grateful to our chief academic advisor, Professor Shahrbanou Tadjbakhsh and our peer reviewers, Dr. Sabiha Hussain, Dr. Ahmet Sait Yayla and Mr. Robert Zaman for their thoughtful and expert comments and feedback during the preparation of this paper.

We are grateful to all our field researchers for their tireless contributions in the field: Mr. Abdul Basir Moheb, Mr. Bashir Ahmad Osmani, Ms. Farzana Ahmad, Ms. Samira Rahmati, Ms. Dilkha Fayazi, Mr. Habibullah Azad, Mr. Mawlawi Abdullah Jamai, Mr. Hasan Jafari, Mr. Khalid Yousufzai, Mr. Abdul Baqi Bariz, Mr. Nazir Ahmad, Mr. Farhad Safi, Ms. Nabila Safi, Mr. Agha Shirin Shokohmand and Mr. Fazl Ahmad Anis.

Thanks are also due to our chief editor, Benjamin Elowe and our colleagues at the AISS, Mr. Mohebullah Faghiri, for designing this paper, and Mr. Ghulam Reza Ebrahimi for his overall management of the fieldwork.

A special thanks is also extended to our partner organization Afghanistan Academic and Islamic Research Centre (AAIRC), for providing guidance and assisting our field researchers to gain access to the madrassas for data collection.

Abdul Ahad Mohammadi and Musab Omer
September 2015, Kabul

ACRONYMS

AAIRC	Afghanistan Academic & Islamic Research Center
AISS	Afghan Institute for Strategic Studies
ANSF	Afghan National Security Forces
GoA	Government of Afghanistan
HIA	Hezb-e-Islami Afghanistan
ISAF	International Security Assistance Force
ISIS	Islamic State of Iraq and Syria
MoE	Ministry of Education
MoFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MoHE	Ministry of Higher Education
MoHRA	Ministry of Hajj and Religious Affairs
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NDS	National Directorate of Security
NED	National Endowment for Democracy

GLOSSARY

Aalim - a learned scholar of Islam in any of the Islamic sciences, such as: Quran commentary, Hadith, philosophy, etc.

Ahl-e-Sunnah - derived from the Arabic word Sunnah, referring to the sayings and actions of the Prophet Muhammad as recorded in the Hadith; those that follow the way of life led by Prophet Muhammad are called Ahl-e-Sunnah.

Ahmadiyya - a Muslim movement whose followers believe that its founder Mirza Gulam Ahmad Qadiani was the Mahdi or promised messiah. Muslims in general hold strong resentment against his followers.

Burqa - an enveloping outer garment worn by women in some Islamic traditions to cover their bodies when in public.

Da'wah - the purpose of da'wah in Islamic theology is to invite people, both Muslims and non-Muslims, to understand the message of Allah as expressed in the Quran, the teachings of Prophet Muhammad, and to inform them about Islam.

Deobandi Hanafi - a revivalist movement within Hanafi Islam. It is mainly centred in India, Pakistan, Afghanistan and Bangladesh, has recently spread to the United Kingdom, and has a presence in South Africa.

Fiqh - Islamic jurisprudence concerning the observance of social legislation in Islam as well as the practice of rituals specific to a particular pillar of Islam.

Hadith - a collection of traditions containing sayings of the prophet Muhammad which, with accounts of his daily practice (the Sunnah), constitute the major source of guidance for Muslims apart from the Quran.

Hijab - a veil worn by Muslim women to cover the head. It is representational of modesty, privacy, and morality.

Imam - a person entrusted in an Islamic leadership role to both lead prayers in a mosque as well as to participate as a community leader or to give guidance to community leaders.

Jihad - with a literal translation of 'struggle', it is most closely associated with 'holy war'. Regardless, the term speaks to a believer's internal struggle with faith, or with the struggle to maintain and defend Muslim society and Islam externally.

Jizya - during the time of Prophet Muhammad, non-Muslims living in the Islamic state were taxed a varying amount under the name of *Jizyah*, depending on their wealth. Tax revenue was appropriated not to Muslims' needs, but to provide protection to the minority non-Muslims and to the physical means necessary to practice their religion freely, through temple and church construction, for example.

Khateb - an individual who delivers speech during Friday afternoon prayer or sermon.

Madrassa - derived from Arabic, is the term for educational institutions. However, more contemporary usage associates the term with Islamic religious schools.

Mufti - a Muslim legal expert who is empowered to give rulings on religious matters.

Quran - the holy book revealed to the Prophet Muhammad by God. It consists of 114 chapters and is originally written in Arabic.

Shariah - Islamic canonical law that is based on the Quran and Hadith but has jurisdiction over both religious and secular duties and prescribes the penalties for offences against such duties.

Shia - one of the two largest sects of Islam. Followers of this sect consider Prophet Mohammad's cousin and son-in-law, Ali and his descendants as the successors of the Islamic State (Khilafat) after Prophet Muhammad.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This study seeks to identify and measure trends of radicalization among unregistered madrassas across ten provinces throughout Afghanistan. Specifically, we sought to determine to what extent unregistered religious schools contribute to the dissemination of radical ideologies in Afghanistan. Fundamentally, radicalization is a restriction and reliance on a core set of ideals that limit the maneuverability an individual has in integrating an orthodox perspective into a more secular context. From a definitional perspective, this study identifies radicalization as an inability to tolerate parallel ideologies within a given theoretical, spatial, or temporal space. Our research targets three sources of radicalization, namely: teachers, students, and curricula. We conclude from our research three primary findings relating to religious tolerance and interpretation, as well as external linkages between transnational sources and madrassas. First, weak and uncompetitive advanced education programs in Afghanistan incentivize madrasa students to seek degrees outside of Afghanistan. Second, relevant bodies within the Government of Afghanistan (GoA), especially Ministry of Education (MoE) and Ministry of Hajj and Religious Affairs (MoHRA), remain detached from a substantive and funding perspective, allowing alternate transnational financial inputs. Finally, we observed that aggregate responses from teachers and students regarding the tolerance of integrating non-Islamic followers in Afghan society were positive. More generally, our results demonstrated that individual respondents, regardless of geographic area, were tolerant of other Islamic and non-Islamic denominations, thereby suggesting that policies directed at reducing radicalization may be met with support within the Afghan madrasa context.

Despite gaps in this study's results, all findings are relevant and offer clarity with respect to determining the extent to which unregistered Afghan madrassas contribute to the dissemination of radical ideologies. Social and political fragmentation, security concerns, and instances of respondent reluctance both characterize efforts to research unregistered Afghan madrassas generally, and provide motivation to further research the radicalization-religious education nexus. Despite this, madrassas are instrumental in determining and propagating social and political ideology in Afghanistan. With the rapid proliferation of unregistered madrassas in Afghanistan, there is a growing concern within the GoA and international community that these schools are loci for radical Islamic ideologies, cultivating a generation of radicalized Afghan youth. This study purports that any clarity within this space is therefore relevant and critical to subsequent policy action.

This study is the second policy paper in an ongoing series of investigations conducted by the AISS dedicated to the consideration of radicalization trends across Afghanistan. Launched in late 2013, AISS published the first policy paper of this series on trends in student radicalization across university campuses in Afghanistan and plans to continue this research by examining radicalization trends within the Afghan National Special Forces (ANSF) and new media, as well as Afghan political parties and the wider region.

Main Findings

Ideological tolerance and interpretation among respondents

- I. The most accepted religious authority to represent Islam was determined to be mainstream Hanafi, accounting for 40% of the religious authorities surveyed. The more contemporary Deobandi Hanafi movement accounted for 16% of the religious authorities surveyed. All other religious authorities were at most half as prominent as the Deobandi Hanafi school of thought.
- II. More than 85% of respondents believed that most other Islamic doctrines have a positive contributive relationship to Islam, generally. However, respondents exhibited compartmentalized preference with respect to other denominations concerning matters of social integration, like marriage. Only 7.5% of individuals' responses were classified as supportive of negative attitudes towards the observance of different Islamic denominations in Afghan madrassas.
- III. Respondents were generally accepting toward non-Muslims, holding a positive approach towards those who did not conform to their religious ideology. The results are predicated on perceived physical or ideological threat to a respondent's own religious ideology. Over half of those surveyed did not view non-Muslims as a threat to their own religious ideology, whereas nearly 40% of respondents believed non-Muslims should not be respected.
- IV. Aggregate responses from teachers and students regarding the positive contribution of different religions towards society were negative and based on the perceived notion that monotheistic texts have been corrupted by its followers. The majority (80%) confirmed that an individual following a different monotheistic religion could live in the 10 Afghan provinces surveyed without any problems.
- V. The majority of respondents did not approve of the liberal nature of Afghan government officials, expressing concern that government employees promote Western values counter to those held in the *Quran* and *Hadith*. If the Government failed to accommodate religious authorities, 70% of those surveyed thought extrajudicial intervention could be sanctioned. In spite of the diverse interpretations of Islam, a unified majority of respondents felt that the current Afghan government was a legitimate Islamic state.

External financial and non-financial linkages

- I. The majority of capital flows to madrassas surveyed are domestically sourced. Financial donations from local community bodies and individuals, as opposed to funds originating from outside of Afghanistan, were observed to be predominant sources of funding.
- II. The majority of respondents surveyed affirmed that the GoA should provide financial support to madrassas. Specifically, more than half of madrasa officials interviewed considered government funds as the ideal financial source for madrassas. However, a small but significant number of respondents signalled the importance of continued local community body and individual-based funding.

III. The majority of madrassas surveyed do not facilitate student exchange programs within Afghanistan, or abroad. Moreover, less than 15% of madrassas claim to have educational links with religious institutions within or outside of the country. Shia affiliated madrassas were found to have more links with external sources than Sunni institutions.

Recommendations

- I. To increase and encourage tolerance and cross-denominational collaboration, this paper recommends the establishment of integrated madrassas, which are financed, managed, and incorporated under the MoE and MoHRA. Moderate interpretations of the Quran and Hadith should be communicated under reformist Islamic scholar guidance.
- II. To promote moderate interpretations of the Quran and Hadith, the GoA should take control of funding, curriculum design, and infrastructural development of madrassa in all provinces. Selected GoA representatives and reformist scholars of all sects should manage operations jointly. Opportunities to pursue inter-faith zones should additionally be explored.
- III. Civil society should sponsor the inception of a counter-narrative to the Islamic State as defined by reformist scholars, such as Dr. Javed Ahmad Ghamidi. Critically, this will purport the presentation of a counter-narrative to existing religious identities, rather than advocating for secularism.
- IV. The GoA should reform existing financial regulatory framework, and encourage the development of a more robust one that requires all privately listed madrassas to: i) report and document income and expenditures pursuant to said framework, and be held accountable vis-à-vis annual audit-cycles from an independent third party; and ii) declare and clear all foreign-based capital allocations through a central body.
- V. To encourage the development of a centralized student database controlled by the GoA that records detailed information about madrassa students, including but not limited to place of birth, residency, age, and religious identity.
- VI. To integrate non-conventional subjects, such as foreign language, mathematics, and social sciences into the madrassa curriculum, in order to encourage the development of critical and analytical thinking in a process similar to that introduced by India in 2009.¹
- VII. To address gaps illuminated within this study so that a more comprehensive image of the radicalization - unregistered Afghan madrassa nexus is supported.

¹ Scheme to Provide Quality Education in Madrassas, Department of School Education and Literacy, Ministry of Human Resources Development (MHRD), India, http://mhrd.gov.in/edu_mdrasas, Accessed on June 10, 2015

INTRODUCTION

Unregistered madrassas are defined by this study as all religious schools that are not formally registered by any relevant GoA institution; the GoA therefore enjoys no control over its finances and curriculum. The majority of research studies conducted by national, regional, and international actors on madrassas have frequently been tied to efforts seeking to establish an understanding of risks within the larger security dialogue established post- September 11, 2001. The majority of these studies focus on madrassas reflecting Pakistani-interests, due to their prevalence, and their known associations with radical groups. Comprehensive research studies focusing solely on Afghan madrassas, especially unregistered madrassas are limited, however. Existing literature on Afghan madrassas often does little to accurately measure the relationship between religious education and the development and propagation of radical ideologies. With the exception of select journalistic articles and policy papers, little has been written on the role of unregistered madrassas propagating radical ideologies in Afghanistan.

Insufficient research is available to understand the full extent of which unregistered madrassas in Afghanistan are radicalized and where such radical ideologies originate from. Pursuant to the aforementioned definition of radicalization, this study sees radicalism as a departure from traditional Islam and its associated principles of tolerance, non-violence, and co-existence. There are clear socio-political, economic, and security-related implications for understanding radicalization within this context and it is therefore vital to understand both how radicalization is typified within the context of unregistered Afghan madrassas, and how radicalization is projected externally on a regional and national level. There is every single possibility that non-state actors may use unregistered madrassas for propagating radical ideology, or that that ideology is sourced domestically. Regardless, madrassas have a long history in Afghanistan and have been a communal focal point for children to receive religious education. They are therefore necessary to consider when designing effective domestic policy.

As evidenced by our findings, if not dealt with effectively, creatively, and with a comprehensive understanding, the problems posed by unregistered madrassas may have serious implications for the long-term peace and stability of Afghanistan. Our results quantify and define the prevalence and extent of radical sectarian ideologies across unregistered religious schools in 10 selected provinces in Afghanistan. This paper seeks to illuminate susceptibilities of unregistered madrassas with respect to radicalization. Moreover, the study attempts to fill the gap in general knowledge with respect to the conceptual framework of religious radicalization in the context of Afghan religious institutions.

Recent theoretical and field-based research has suggested a misrepresentation of Afghan madrassas with respect to radicalization. In a 2010 study² determining if Afghan madrassas contribute to political radicalization and militancy, Kaja Borchgrevink illuminated several prejudices and misinformation regarding established perceptions about the madrassas in Afghanistan. A counterproductive narrative that substantiates Afghan madrassas as sources of militarization exists, according to Borchgrevink's work.

² Kaja Borchgrevink, *Beyond Borders: Diversity and Transnational Links in Afghan Religious Education*, PRIO, Oslo, 2010

Despite Borchgrevink's significant contributions to quantify and measure the linkages between madrasa and radicalization, her research is too selective to use outside regional and specific instances. A 2013 follow-on study to her 2010 work examined ten Afghan and three Pakistani madrassas, all belonging to the Sunni denomination. This paper argues that her sample size and ideological composition cannot be correlated to the larger Afghan population; it is, therefore, not possible to reach conclusions regarding Afghan madrasa contributions to radicalized ideologies. In addition to adjusting our sample composition to be more representative of the population, this study builds on Borchgrevink³ by examining texts and curricula taught in Afghan madrassas. Whereas her research remains confined to a qualitative study of the Sunni sect in both Afghanistan and Pakistan, this study aims for a broader scope and mixed-methodological approach to understand the links between madrassas and radicalization in Afghanistan.

Methodology and Approach

This paper seeks to substantiate the research question through three primary meta-contexts: respondent perceptions and manifestations of radicalization; institutional adoptions of radicalization; and radicalized funding and transnational influences. In support of this theoretical framework, the following substantive capacities were examined:

- I. Religious denominations followed by respondents
- II. Tolerance of dissimilar Islamic denominations
- III. Tolerance of non-Islamic religious denominations
- IV. Integration of Islamic ideology with socio-political structures
- V. Prevalence and nexus of sectarian and secular values
- VI. Positions on conservative radical Islam
- VII. Linkages with external financial donors
- VIII. Linkages with external non-financial and ideological donors

Field research was conducted in 10 Afghan provinces, Badakhshan, Badghis, Balkh, Bamian, Herat, Kabul, Kandahar, Kunar, Kunduz, and Nangarhar, at 50 separate unregistered madrassas by a team of 15 localized field researchers trained by the AISS.⁴ Province selection was the result of socio-political relevance to national interests and perceived proximity to radical religious ideology as determined by the research design team who oversaw the theoretical framing of this paper. Primary data sources were both qualitative, responding to survey questions and interviews, and quantitative, the result of scalable preference-based questions. The sample size was determined by a selection of two teachers and four

³Kaja Borchgrevink, *Beyond Borders: Diversity and Transnational Links in Afghan Religious Education*, PRIO, Oslo, 2010; Kaja Borchgrevink, 'Transnational Links of Afghanistan Madrassas: Implication for the Reform of Religious Education', *Prospect Quarterly Journal*, Volume 43, Number 1, PRIO, Oslo, 2013

⁴ AISS held a two-day training program for the field research team. Training and approach to fieldwork adhered to standards outlined in the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) ethics guidelines. For more information, please refer to: <http://www.esrc.ac.uk/about-esrc/information/research--ethics.aspx>

students from each madrassa, with an aggregate respondent sample of 306 individuals.⁵ It should be noted that this study is fundamentally more qualitative in nature. Due to this, the sample size is not necessarily intended to reflect the population size; rather, it serves to be more comprehensive than past studies, and is meant to provide insight into a relatively un-researched substantive area of Afghan society. Both Purposive and Snowball techniques were used for the sampling of madrassas. As we wanted to study a small number of unregistered Madrassas, the field team asked some key informants and members of our local partners working in the similar fields to use their judgment in picking the most suitable Madrasas in line with our study purpose and nature. In order to validate the quality of the fieldwork, AISS signed a memorandum of understanding with Afghanistan Academic and Islamic Research Center (AAIRC) - a well-known organization for its wide range connections with local madrassas across the country. The AAIRC representatives worked closely with our field researchers in each of the selected provinces and monitored the whole process of data collection.

STUDY FINDINGS

a) Religious denominations followed by respondents

Rejecting and discrediting other sects of Islam is considered a vivid indicator of radical ideology. Radical Islamists put themselves at the center of what they call the only true faith and believe strongly in themselves as the true followers of Islam, alleging other sects as corrupt in faith, blaming them for having deviated from real Islamic values. For example, followers of the Wahhabi, Salafi and some Hanafi strands of Islam have a tendency to openly criticize non-Muslims and Muslims of other denominations. Conversely, other denominations, like followers of Sufism or Muslims following the mainstream Hanafi school of thought, are more tolerant and less critical of non-Muslims and Muslims of other denominations.

The figure below shows that 40% of the respondents believe that mainstream Hanafi school of thought is the best religious authority representing Islam, while only 8% of the respondents believe that the Wahhabi or Salafi school of thought is the preeminent.

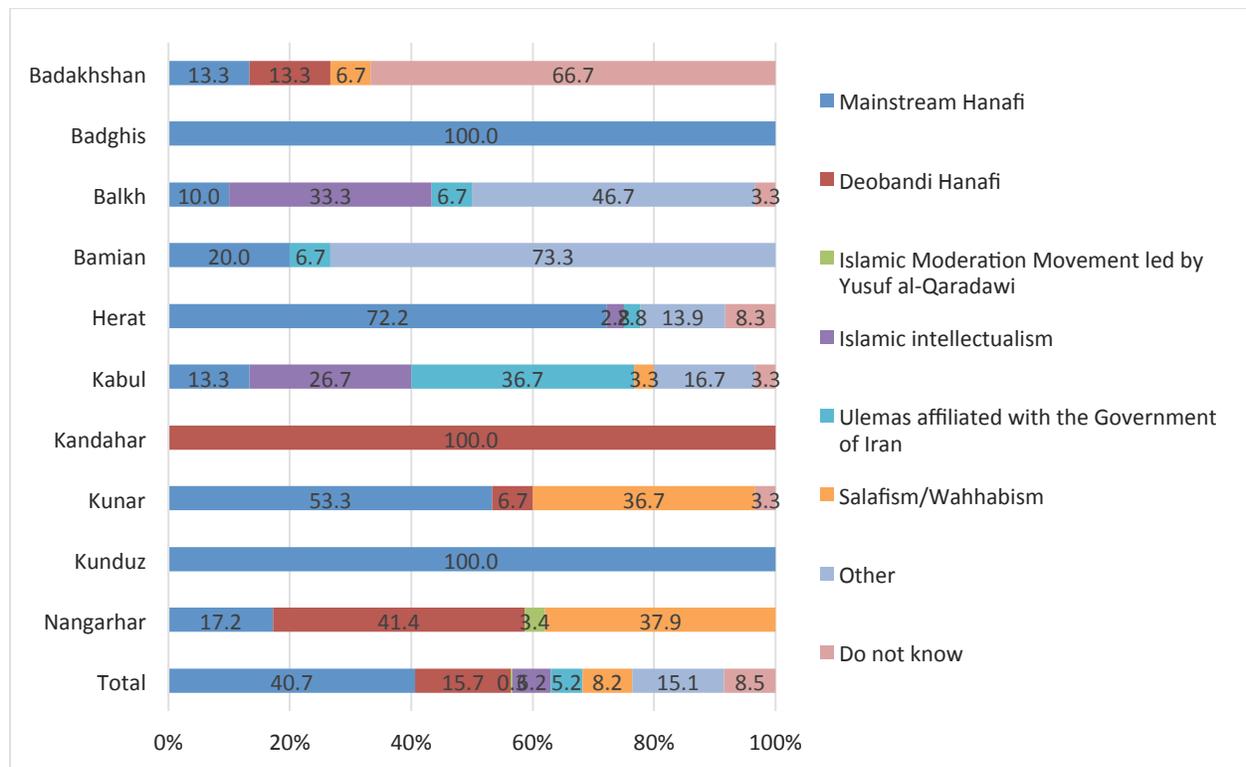
Not a single respondent believed that Sufi Islam, revered for its mystical practices and non-violent teachings, is best at representing Islam, despite the fact that the Sufi order has millions of followers in Afghanistan and across South Asia.⁶ In this study, most students and teachers claim that Sunni-Hanafi and Shia-Jafari sects have some fundamental shared values that represent real Islam. Simultaneously, there is a common belief among Sunni-Hanafis and Shia-Jafaris that Wahhabism or Salafism cannot represent the real Islam.

⁵ For an expansion of methodologies, tools, and research constraints, please refer to *Annex 1*.

⁶ Ali M. Latifi, *Afghanistan's Ancient Sufi Order Shocked by Deadly Attack*, Los Angeles Times, March 08, 2015, <http://www.latimes.com/world/afghanistan-pakistan/la-fg-afghanistan-sufi-attack-20150308-story.html>

Our study further illuminated that the level of positive inclination towards all major sects (including Ahle Sunnah and Shias) are limited. The limitation of such views does not reflect the existence of radical ideology because traditionally the notion of sectarian centrality has been one of the main characteristics of each Islamic sect. Crucially, however, this perspective can hinder the joint efforts of the aforementioned sects to effectively struggle against the new ideologies, which have antagonistic approaches towards each of them.

Figure 1: In your opinion, which religious authority is best at representing Islam?



b) Tolerance and respect towards Muslims of other sects, and non-Muslims

The two major denominations of Islam, Sunni and Shia, insist that more than one correct interpretation of religion does not exist. They also share the belief that their respective interpretation of the Quran and Hadith summarizes the true essence and religious beliefs in Islam. Theoretically, in this context, radicalization is defined as a person's attempt to preserve the sanctity of his/her religious identity by controlling or influencing others with respect to their own religious denomination.

Sectarian division with relatively vibrant ideological differences is considered a basic reality of contemporary Islam. Followers of each sect attempt to match the beliefs and values of their faith to the same version of Islam that prevailed during the time of Prophet Mohammad. These differences among Islamic sects have become considerably more robust in the last century, as many of these sectarian differences are associated with national, ethnic and linguistic identity. Such complex conceptual tensions among traditional sects in Islam are further complicated with the emergence of new sects that not only

consider the beliefs and religious practices of the traditional sects as non-Islamic but also call upon their followers to actively take a stand against them. It is important to note, however, that the demand for such practices in the majority of Muslim countries is not considerable. This study conducted confirms this.

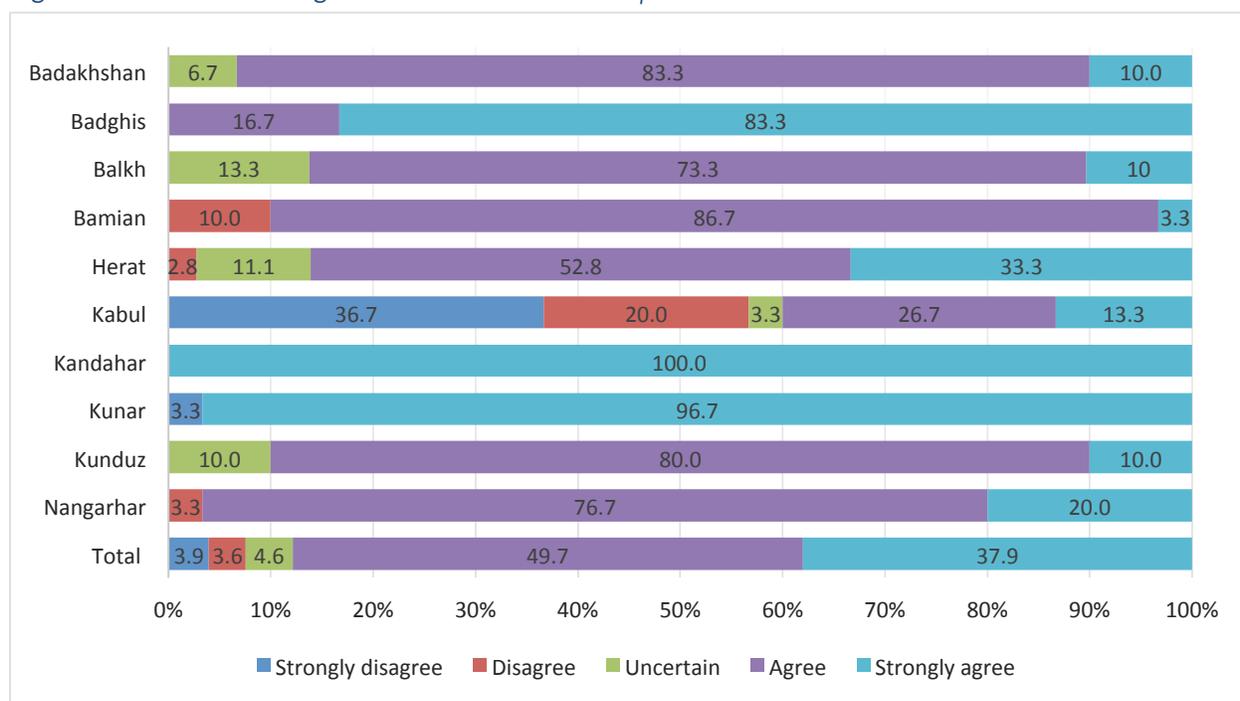
The figures below show that more than 85% of the respondents believe that most Islamic religious denominations make a positive contribution to Islam. An overwhelming majority of the respondents agreed with the statement that Muslims adhering to other schools of thought should be respected. It was also found that the majority of the students and teachers interviewed from the madrassas do not have any issues marrying a person from other schools of thought. Most notably, according to one of the teachers from Badakhshan province, all Muslims are brothers under one ideological umbrella called Islam and hence Muslims should not divide themselves on sectarian basis.

However, denominations associated with extreme interpretations of Islam allow marriages and civil relationships between Muslims of their own sects only. There were some segregated views noticed among the followers of Shia and Sunni sects. Some Sunni respondents believe that only those who follow the four main sects of Ahle Sunnah can marry among each other, and marriage with a Shite family should be avoided. A student from Nangarhar stated that even if a person is not a Shia or *Ahmadiyya*, initiating a relationship with them is not an issue. Few other respondents restricted civil relationships to their denominations only. A teacher belonging to Salafi school of thought interviewed from Nangarhar strongly believed that people of this sect should not marry or build relationships with people following other sects of Islam. Another interesting view highlighted that marrying a girl from a different religious sect was acceptable; however, if their sisters or daughters wanted to marry a man belonging to a different religious sect it would be met with resistance.

Another noticeable view reflected in respondents' remarks was that only four main Sunni sects should be respected. In support of this view, a student from Nangarhar said that he only respects people who follow the sects of Ahle Sunnah – the four major Sunni sects, including Salafism. Similarly, a student from Kunar believed that all sects of Islam, with the exception of Shia sect, contribute positively towards Islam and hence should be respected. Another student from Nangarhar believed that the majority of the current sects in Islam instead of helping Muslims are promoting division and confusion in the Muslim community. One student from Kabul belonging to the Shite community showed his resentment towards other sects by saying that since they do not respect our sect, there is no way we should respect theirs.

However, few respondents in Afghan madrassas support negative attitudes towards people following other schools of thought. Overall, it can be concluded from these results that unregistered madrassas in Afghanistan, as such, do not promote sectarian division of Islam.

Figure 2: Most Islamic religious denominations make positive contribution to Islam.



c) Sense of respect for other religious faiths

One of the grave concerns is the level of collective activity and ideological homogeneity among radical and extremist Islamist groups. This way of thinking can be observed across the strategic objectives of nearly all radical and extremist groups and movements in Afghanistan. A recent example of such an ideological homogeneity may be observed through the emergence of the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) that actively seeks to establish puritanical Islamic states, in contrast to the more passive, radical Islamist groups.⁷ Such an ideology, which aims to purify people based on religious practices, leaves no room for an ideologically diverse society.

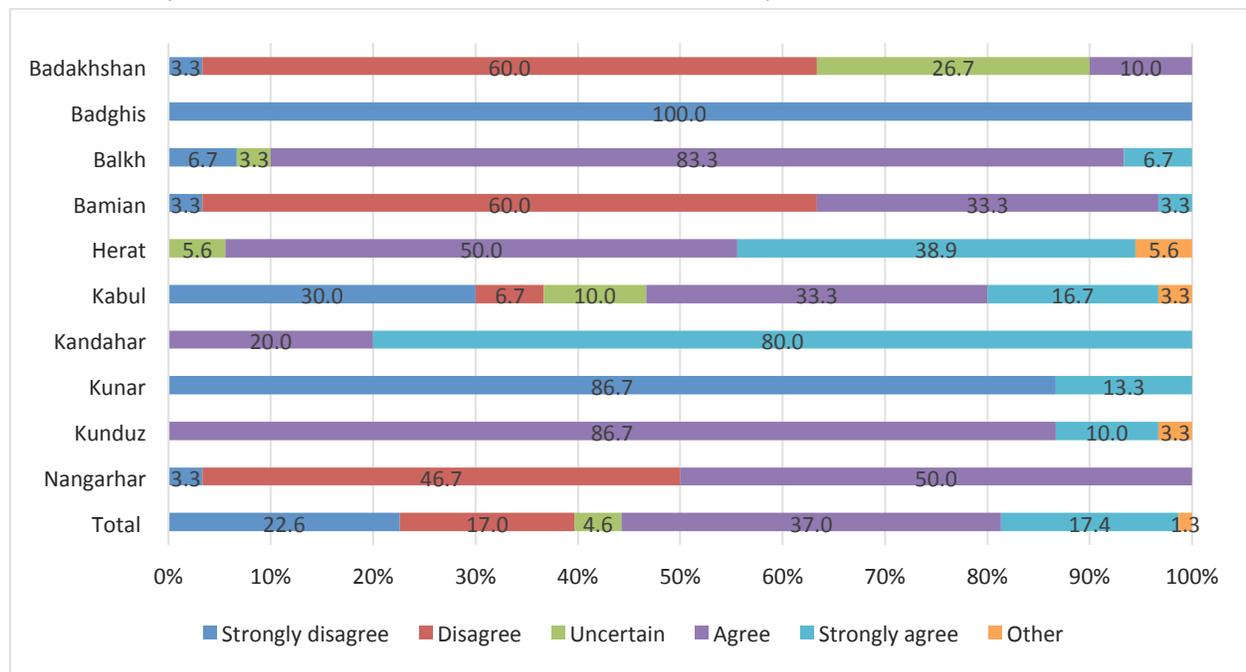
According to various extremist Islamist groups and individuals, it is believed that non-Muslims in an Islamic state do not qualify for full citizenship. For example, in a debate between two widely known Muslim scholars from Pakistan, Dr. Israr Ahmad and Dr. Javed Ahmad Ghamidi, Dr. Israr clearly says that according to his interpretation of Quran and Hadith, non-Muslims do not qualify for full citizenship in an Islamic state and will always be treated as a protected minority.⁸ Dr. Ghamidi and other moderate religious scholars of Islam, who affirm that Dr. Ahmad’s findings have no roots in the teachings of the Quran and Hadith, contradict this view.

⁷ Daniel L. Byman, *Comparing Al Qaeda and ISIS: Different Goals, Different Targets*, Brookings, April 29, 2015, <http://www.brookings.edu/research/testimony/2015/04/29-terrorism-in-africa-byman>

⁸ Javed Ahmed Ghamidi and Israr Ahmad, *Discussion on the Procedure of Establishing an Islamic State*, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wlf3_1tHzKs, Accessed on June 15, 2015

In response to the statement that *people adhering to other religious faiths should be respected*, more than 50% of the respondents agreed with the statement, whereas approximately 40% respondents disagreed. A clear distinction between the levels of respect respondents give to Muslims and non-Muslims became visible. It is widely believed that Muslims who are not at war against, or dangerous to, other Muslims should be respected, though they should not be considered as equals. Others believe that irrespective of their hostility towards Muslims, non-Muslims should be respected, such that non-Muslims feel accepted by the Islamic faith and assimilate to it. A madrassa student from Herat stated that people from all religions should be equally respected for that is the way Prophet Muhammad had taught Muslims. Another group of students believed that non-Muslims deserve respect only if they are not hostile towards, and at war with, Muslims.

Figure 3: *People adhering to other religious faiths should be respected.*



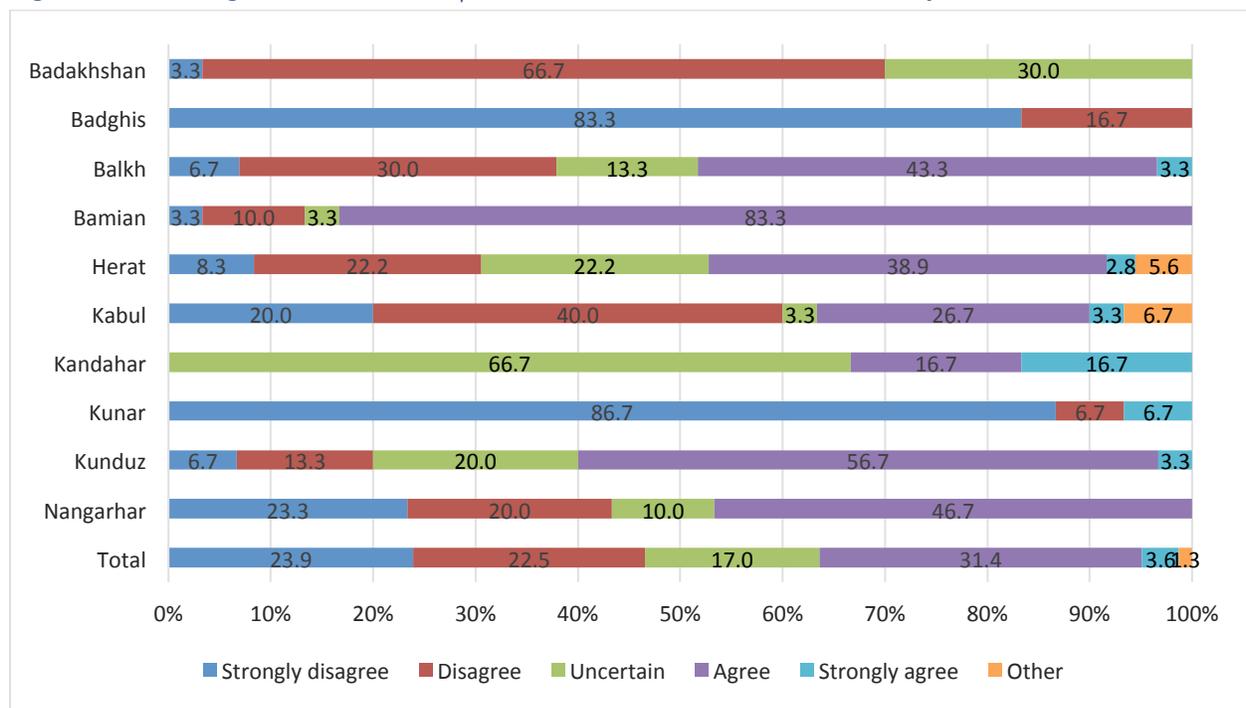
d) Contribution of various religious faiths towards the society

In response to the statement *most religious faiths make a positive contribution to society*, more than 33% of the respondents agreed, whereas approximately 45% respondents disagreed, believing that people belonging to other religious faiths do not contribute positively towards society. Overall, teachers and students held a negative attitude towards other religious faiths and their contribution to society. It was believed by many of the respondents that only Islam contributes positively to society, whereas other monotheistic religions, that is Christianity and Judaism, could have also contributed positively had their followers not corrupted their religious scriptures. However, these views do not necessarily imply that respondents are radical or extremist in their behavior. Rather, these findings reflect ignorance towards other societies and world religions. We attribute this to an outdated educational system within the madrassas. The educational systems in unregistered madrassas do not encourage critical thinking,

consequently leading to intellectual stagnation. Students of madrassa preach the same things they were taught during their time in the religious schools; they are thereby further perpetuating ignorance.

Over 80% of respondents agreed with the statement that a *person adhering to a different religious faith can move into their community without any difficulty*. This is an encouraging finding, countering radical ideas of the creation of an Islamic state with zero tolerance towards religiously diverse societies. However, a few respondents believed that a non-Muslim could only live in a Muslim community on certain conditions. One of the teachers interviewed in Badakhshan province believed that if a non-Muslim family moves into a Muslim community, they would have to pay *jizya*. A teacher from Nangarhar stated that non-Muslims can move into a Muslim community only if they do not practice their religion openly. There were some other respondents who believed that non-Muslims should be allowed to live among Muslim communities in order to be given *da'wah* to accept Islam.

Figure 4: Most religious faiths make a positive contribution towards the society.

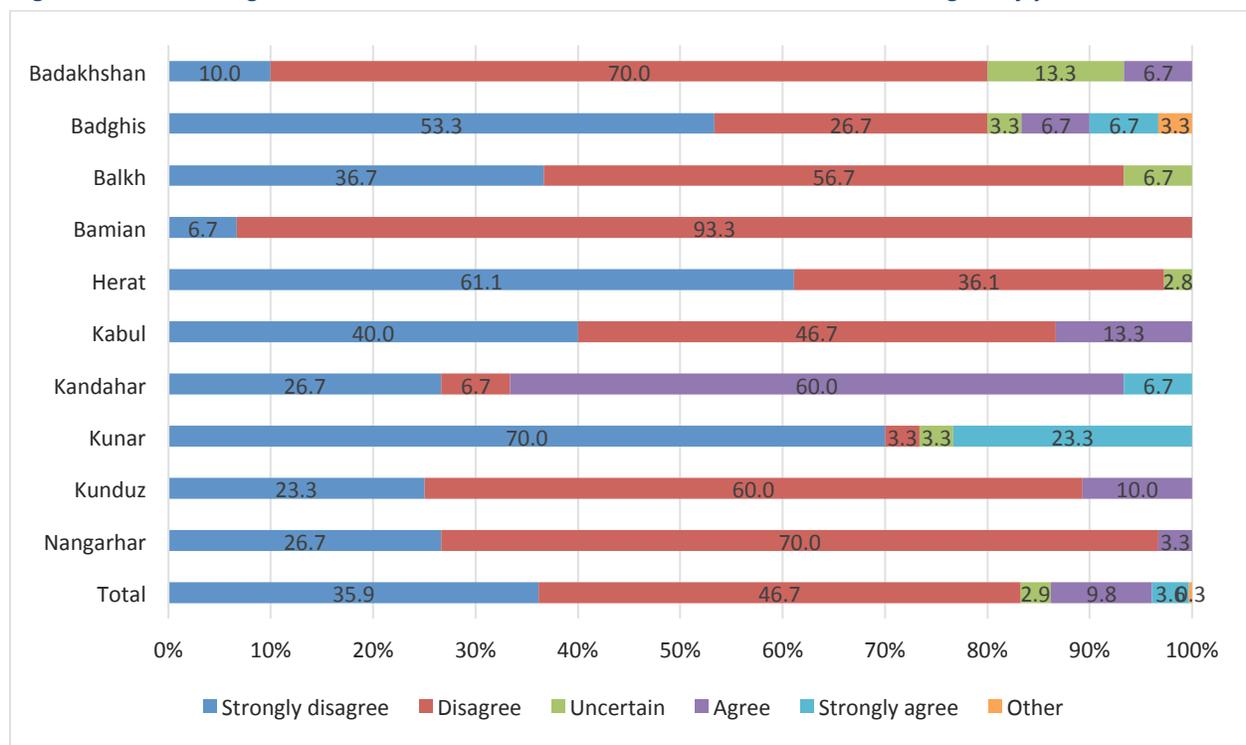


e) Religious justification of violence against dissidents

War can be waged in an Islamic state only under certain conditions. Moreover, the Quran and Hadith clearly substantiate that non-combatants, women, and children cannot be hurt during conflict. The chart below shows that more than 80% respondents disagree with the statement that *violence against non-Muslims who are not at war with Muslims is religiously justified*. The majority of views were based on the notion that Islam is a peaceful religion and violence against those who follow different religious faiths is not allowed. Only teachers interviewed from the Badghis province believed that violence is allowed against non-Muslims if they refuse to accept Islam. This indicates that, with a few exceptions, a majority

of the madrassa teachers and students have the basic understanding of Islam and do not show any major deviance from traditional Islam, known for peace and tolerance. However, when asked about whether Muslims can shake hands with non-Muslims and sit together with them at the dining table, nearly 40% of the respondents gave a negative response to both statements providing three different reasons. One group found that shaking hands and sitting at dinner with non-Muslims as only permissible if the person is of the same sex while a second group believed that Muslims are allowed to shake hands and sit at the dining table with those who follow monotheistic religions only, such as Jews and Christians, and on the condition that they are of the same sex. The third group finds that there are no issues with a Muslim sitting with a non-Muslim at the dining table; however, he or she cannot shake hands with a non-Muslim if his or her hand is wet.

Figure 5: Violence against non-Muslims, who are not at war with Muslims, is religiously justified.



f) Views about the state and governance

In recent years, many attempts by the GoA to foster a peace deal with the Taliban⁹ have failed. There are many factors that contribute to this failure, but one factor that seems to have played a more prominent role is the rejection of the current Afghan constitution by the Taliban. The Taliban considers the current Afghan constitution non-Islamic due to a number of provisions relating to women's rights and human rights. In contrast, the Taliban leadership seeks to replace constitutional provisions with the

⁹ Taliban is an Islamic fundamentalist political movement in Afghanistan. It spread throughout Afghanistan and formed a government, ruling as the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan from 1996 until 2001.

imposition of Islamic Sharia law in Afghanistan. In connection with this reality, we asked our respondents several questions about the current Government of Afghanistan. In response to the statement that *the Afghan government is a legitimate Islamic regime*, more than 75% of the respondents agreed, while less than 15% respondents across the 10 provinces believed that the GoA is not an Islamic regime. The respondents who disagreed with this statement believed that there are certain laws in the Afghan constitution that are not Islamic. For example, a student from Herat had issues with Afghanistan's banking system, which according to him, should be based on the principles of Islam. Another student from Nangarhar had a different view about Islam, expressing that Afghanistan cannot be an Islamic country unless U.S. troops leave the country. It is important to recognize that when referencing to U.S. troops, generally Afghan citizens refer to all foreign-based troops in Afghanistan.

Similarly, more than 80% of the respondents said that according to their understanding of Islam, there are no problems with being an active member of the current Afghan government. However, a student from Nangarhar believed that Afghans can work for the government provided that their workplace fully abides by Islamic laws and does not assist non believers, referring to U.S. and NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) interests operating in Afghanistan, in any way. The statement that *violent activities against the Afghan government are religiously justified* was denounced by more than 80% of the respondents. However, one student each from Badghis, Herat, and Nangarhar were of the view that people should peacefully resist against the current Afghan government. But, if the GoA attempts to alter or substitute Islamic law with secular law, the respondents argued that every Afghan Muslim should resist any such decision made by the GoA with armed force.

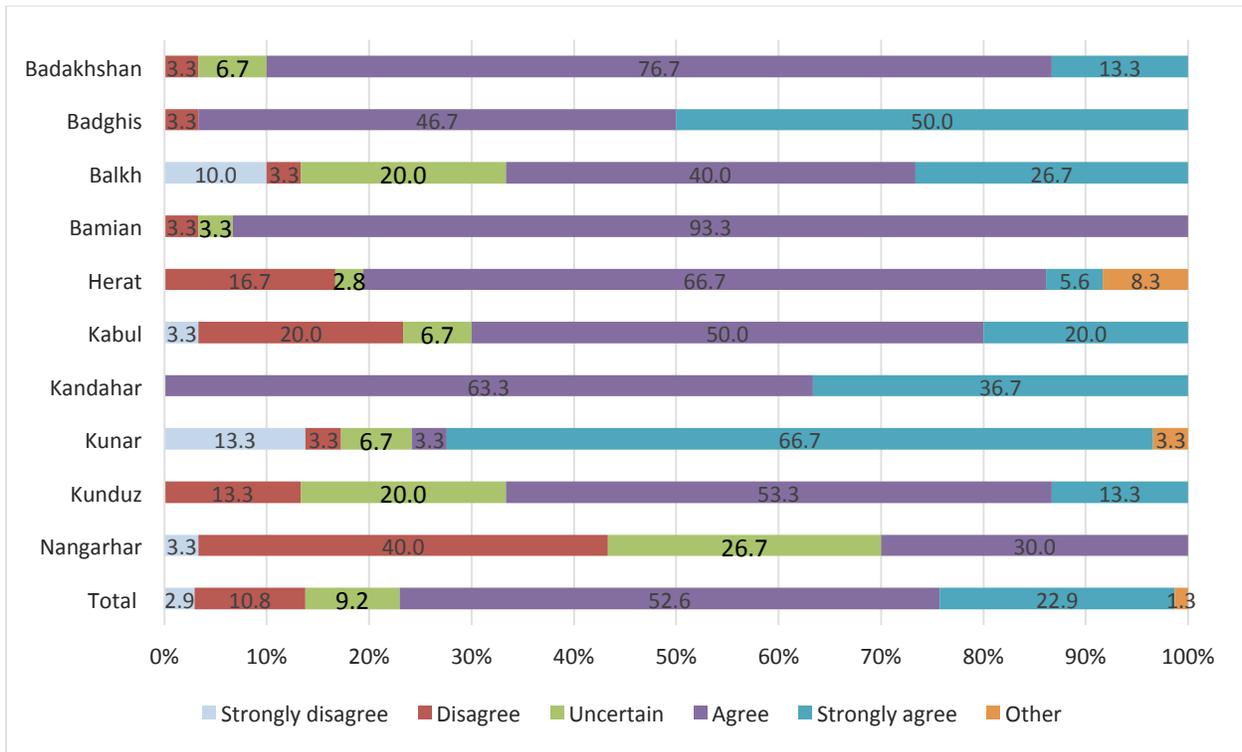
Interestingly, nearly 65% of the respondents did not approve the liberal nature of GoA officials and feared that they are promoting Western culture in Afghanistan, in violation of the teachings of the Quran and Hadith. One student from Herat had a different view and said that he has no problem with liberal officials in the Afghan government as long as they abide by Islamic values and do not promote Western culture.

In addition to this, approximately 70% of the respondents believed that opposing the GoA if it fails to listen to the advice given by religious scholars in Afghanistan, was justified. According to a student from Badakhshan, religious scholars quote the message of God from Quran and everyone including the GoA must listen, otherwise revolt is mandatory for every devoted Muslim. Moreover, around 60% of respondents advocated that despite the presence of police and judiciary, Muslims should supersede formal judicial institutions if evil, as defined by the holy book, is committed. Some students and teachers from Balkh, Badakhshan and Badghis provinces reiterated that if the judiciary and police do not take action against anyone who is committing evil openly, it becomes the duty of every Muslim to stop that person from doing so. They based their argument on a Hadith, which states the following:

Whoever of you sees an evil must then change it with his hand. If he is not able to do so, then he must change it with his tongue. And if he is not able to do so, then he must change it with his heart. And that is the slightest effect of faith.¹⁰

A teacher and a student from Badakhshan and Badghis provinces said that this particular Hadith is a clear indication that gives every Muslim the authority to take the law in their hands in order to stop evil from happening. The recent case of lynching of Farkhunda,¹¹ a young Afghan woman who was killed by people after being alleged for burning a copy of Quran, is a clear example of this view.

Figure 6: Government of Afghanistan is a legitimate Islamic regime.



g) Supportive views towards notion of peace deal with non-Muslims

The lack, or inexistence, of complete and responsible media reporting in the provinces surveyed isolates these provinces. Communities are unable to remain abreast to global, and often, national events. Moreover, these communities are not exposed to ideologically diverse ideas and events that often define modern-day world news coverage. This censorship has stunted the growth of Muslim societies

¹⁰ Recorded by Sahih Muslim in Kitab Al-Iman (Book on Faith), Hadith No. 49/78

¹¹ Afghan Woman Farkhunda Lynched in Kabul For Speaking Out, BBC, March 23, 2015, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-32014077>

across Afghanistan. In effect, Afghan communities often operate like islands, which each one isolated from global events, living in isolation and responsible only to itself.

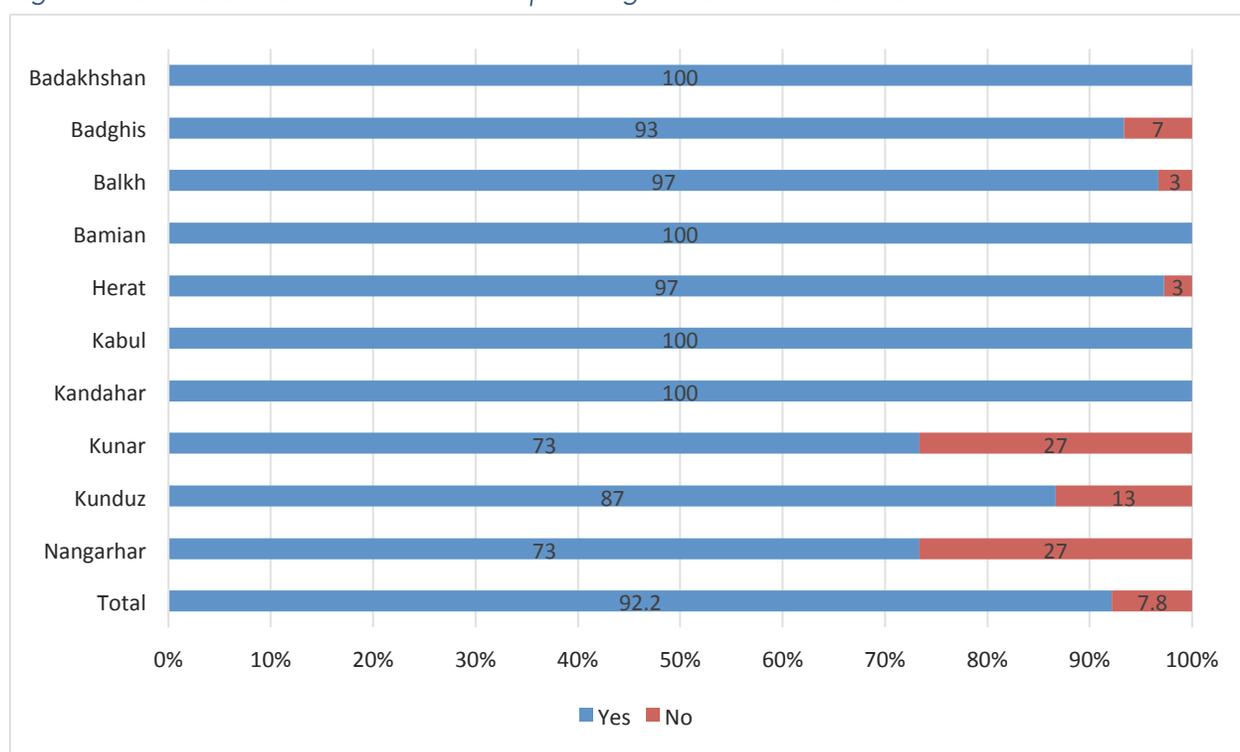
However, communities are seldom completely isolated from global media. Mobile technology, wireless networks, and a large and inquisitive youth population means that media often does reach provincial communities as was found in our survey. However, one of the outcomes of this is the dissemination of anti-Muslim sensationalist stories. Tribal communities spread information rapidly and parties wishing to stimulate feelings of Muslim identity use these media stories as a recruitment tool.

Some radical Islamic scholars, like Sayed Qutb, believe that entering into peace agreements with non-Muslims is allowed in certain conditions only. However, this view is contradicted and rejected by the Muslims following moderate schools of thought. Islamic scholars like Maulana Wahiddudin Khan from India and Dr. Javed Ahmad Ghamidi from Pakistan clearly state that Muslims and non-Muslims can enter into any kind of peace agreement that is beneficial for both parties. In an era where humans are interdependent, it goes against logic and reason to say that two parties cannot enter into a peace agreement due to difference of religious faith. In response to *whether Muslims are allowed to enter into a peace agreement with non-Muslims*, more than 90% respondents answered in the positive, whereas only 8% held the negative views. Such a view, held by teachers and students of the madrassas, is very encouraging for the development of a peaceful and stable Afghanistan as it indicates that there is no serious resentment towards non-Muslims in general.

The idea that Muslims may enter into a peace agreement is derived from the *Treaty of Hudaibiya* wherein Prophet Muhammad entered a ten-year peace treaty with the non-Muslims of Mecca. In doing so, the Prophet made large concessions that were initially not accepted by his companions. In this study, even though an overwhelming majority supported peace agreements with non-Muslims, there were some respondents who suggested caution while entering into such agreements with non-Muslims. One of the teachers interviewed in the Nangarhar province said that a peace treaty should be signed with non-Muslims only if their intentions are clear and they are subsequently given da'wah according to the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad and the Quran. A teacher from Herat had a completely different view, suggesting that peace agreements could be signed with non-Muslims only if it benefits Islam. A student from Nangarhar believed that even though it is permissible to enter into a peace agreement with non-Muslims, given the reality of Muslim sentiments towards non-Muslims in Afghanistan, Muslims cannot trust non-Muslims. As a result, according to this student, any such agreement would mean surrendering to non-Muslims.

In addition to the abovementioned conditions to a peace treaty, there were a few respondents who believed that due to the existing trust deficit between Muslims and non-Muslims, it is impossible for the two to have any kind of peace deal in the present world.

Figure 7: Are Muslims allowed to enter into peace agreements with non-Muslims?



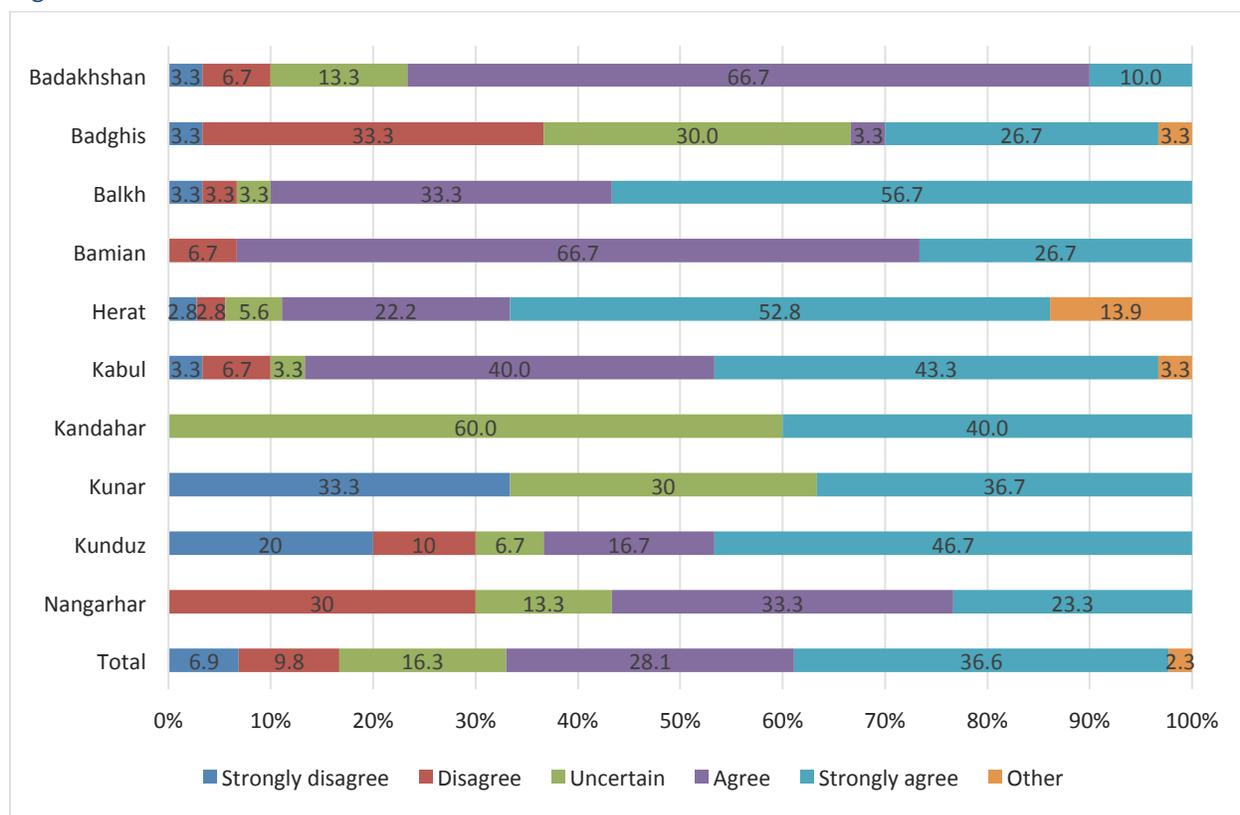
h) Support for violence and violent actions against the state

From an ideological perspective, those who suffer from turmoil, corruption, exclusion, and injustice, should not use force as an initial means of reaching resolve. However, due to institutional failure in many of the provinces surveyed, it has become an acceptable response to mobilize and resist such instances of suffering. The reality in many of the provinces surveyed suggests that collective action responses to such instances of injustice are slow, ineffective, and more often than not, youth and middle-aged religious activists prefer to engage in swift, and sometimes, violent ways. These individuals believe that even if institutional reform on a provincial or national level to the judicial system, for example, cannot occur, they should do whatever is in their power to avoid promoting the prevalence of ideas and norms that run counter to their socio-religious values. Radical groups oftentimes promote this type of rationale to young demographics across Afghanistan.

There are multiple radical groups and individuals across the Muslim world that allows the practice of suicide attacks as a legitimate way of fighting for the cause of God. However, followers of moderate schools of thought in Islam strictly prohibit the practice of suicide attacks and believe that it is against the teachings of Islam. When responding to a statement that *suicide attacks are forbidden in Islam in all circumstances*, approximately 75% of respondents agreed with this statement, while 17% believed that suicide attacks are allowed in Islam in certain circumstances. Similarly, 17% of the respondents believed that suicide attacks are justifiable against non-Muslims, while more than 80% respondents disagreed with this view, believing that suicide attacks are not religiously justified against the GoA, ANSF, international community, or against the people who work for the international community for peace and development

in Afghanistan. Despite this, a few responses suggested that suicide attacks are allowed against infidels and in cases where it is the only way to defend Islam.

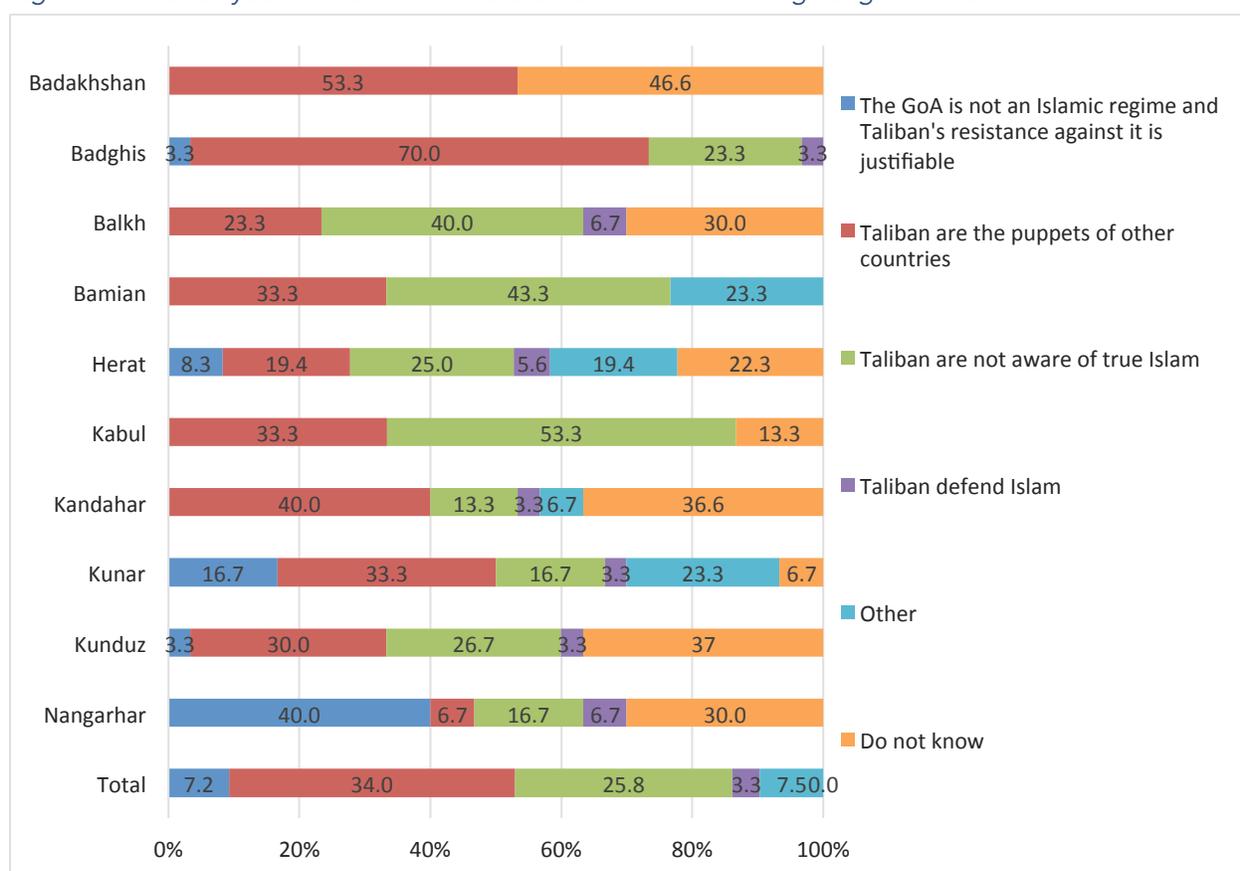
Figure 8: Suicide attacks are forbidden in Islam in all circumstances.



i) Views about Taliban resistance against the Government of Afghanistan

Generally most interpretations of Islamic texts by Taliban match with the interpretations and ideology of extremist and radical groups belonging to different schools of thought. Due to Taliban’s violent actions and rejection of democratic institutions in Afghanistan, this is a movement that is considered radical. During the Taliban regime, the use of free and open media, including using televisions, radios, and other technologies, as well as listening to music, were banned for public use. Moreover, during the Taliban rule, women hardly enjoyed any right as they were not allowed to attend formal education and were forced to wear *burqa in public*. We asked the madrassa teachers and students about their views towards the Taliban. The chart below shows that approximately 60% of the respondents believe that Taliban are puppets of other countries and not aware of true Islamic values. Only 3% of respondents across the 10 provinces believed that the Taliban are defending Islam. It is widely believed, by both madrassa teachers and students that the Taliban are fighting only for authoritative powers pursuing foreign interests. However, some respondents believed that as long as the Taliban are fighting against the international community without injuring Afghans, their resistance is justified.

Figure 9: What do you think about the Taliban resistance to the Afghan government?



j) Views about society and social norms

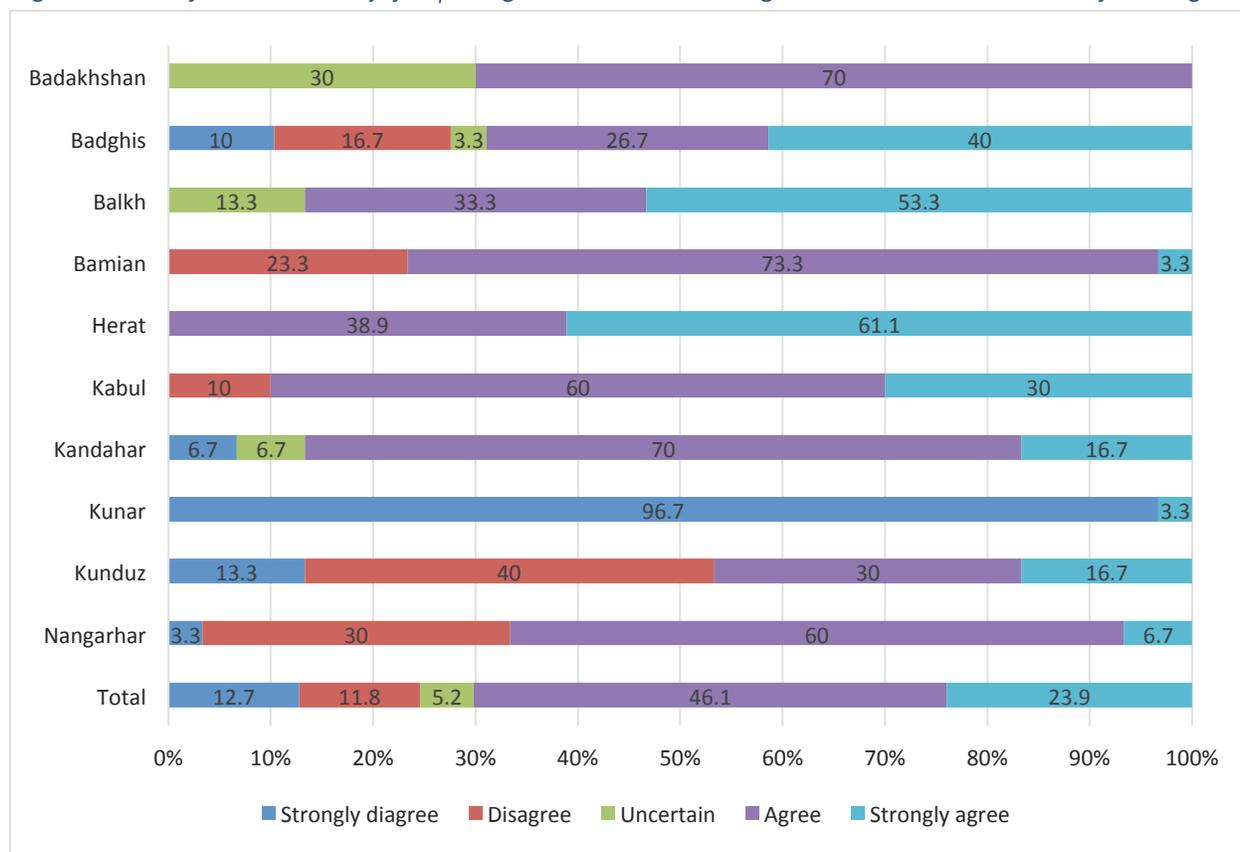
Women in Afghanistan have suffered because of unjust laws imposed by radical Islamist groups and movements. The way Taliban treated women during their political domination in Afghanistan is a good illustration of this issue. To understand the mindset of current Afghan madrassa teachers and students, we asked them various questions about their views towards gender and women's rights in Islam. Approximately 70% of the participants agreed with the statement that *everyone should have equal rights under the law, regardless of sex, ethnicity or religion*. Approximately 25% clearly opposed this view. Similarly, more than 90% respondents supported the view that *women and girls should have access to higher education in Afghanistan*. However, the majority of respondents support the fact that women should abide by all Islamic values. Therein, this perspective does not support co-education and only female teachers should be made available to teach girls. However, approximately 12% of the respondents believed that education is not needed for women and over 60% of the respondents believe that *women should stay at home to take care of their children and do household work only*.

In response to *whether women are allowed to work outside of their homes*, more than 85% of the respondents said that according to Islam, *women are allowed to work outside of their homes*; nevertheless, approximately 33% of the respondents believe that *according to Islam, women are not allowed to take part in political activities*. In a different question about women working for various civil

society organizations, more than 60% of the respondents believed that women working for civil society organizations deserve equal respect and it is acceptable for a person to marry a woman who works for the GoA or a civil society organization. This view was opposed by approximately 23% of the respondents. Overall, only a few responses were completely against women gaining an education. For example, a teacher interviewed in Nangarhar said that the current educational system in Afghan universities does not promote Islamic values; women should therefore stay indoors and refrain from attending the university.

Both madrasa teachers and students were found to be deeply attached to orthodox religious values as a number of respondents compared the rights of men and women on the basis of their understanding of Islam. A teacher from Badakhshan province clearly said that there is no point in discussing the equality of rights for men and women for it has been made clear in the Quran and Hadith that men and women have different rights according to their respective social needs. The teacher further said that women enjoy half of men’s rights. His rationale was that it was impossible to attain equal rights in a community, highlighting the relationship between a teacher and a student, who enjoy different rights based on the power structure between them.

Figure 10: Everyone should enjoy equal rights under the law, regardless of their sex, ethnicity or religion.



k) Analysis of democratic vs. Islamic values

Critically, many Afghan citizens do not differentiate between democratic, political structures and historical or ideological conflicts between the West and their own socio-religious identities. From the colonial era in the 19th century until present day, many Afghans associate the Western world with aggression, hostility, and evil. Leftist propaganda against the West during the Soviet occupation deepened and cemented this perspective. For many Muslims in Afghanistan, the West is synonymous with injustice, corruption, prostitution, and other vices and thus assumes it to be a threat to religious authority and social identity.¹² Although there are groups that are tolerant and in favor of dialogue with Western actors, recognizing that tolerance and global integration are necessary for the development of a country, a strong majority do not reflect this position. It is this paper's understanding that even if Western politicians are aware of this reality and seek to engage Afghan communities in a constructive manner, the general perception in much of Afghanistan is that these global actors do not understand, or do not wish to change these perceptions in a constructive and sustainable way. Moreover, many Afghan youth feel that their religious, and therefore their identity, is threatened by Western interests, thereby validating the need for defense, often violent and with the support of radicalized ideology.

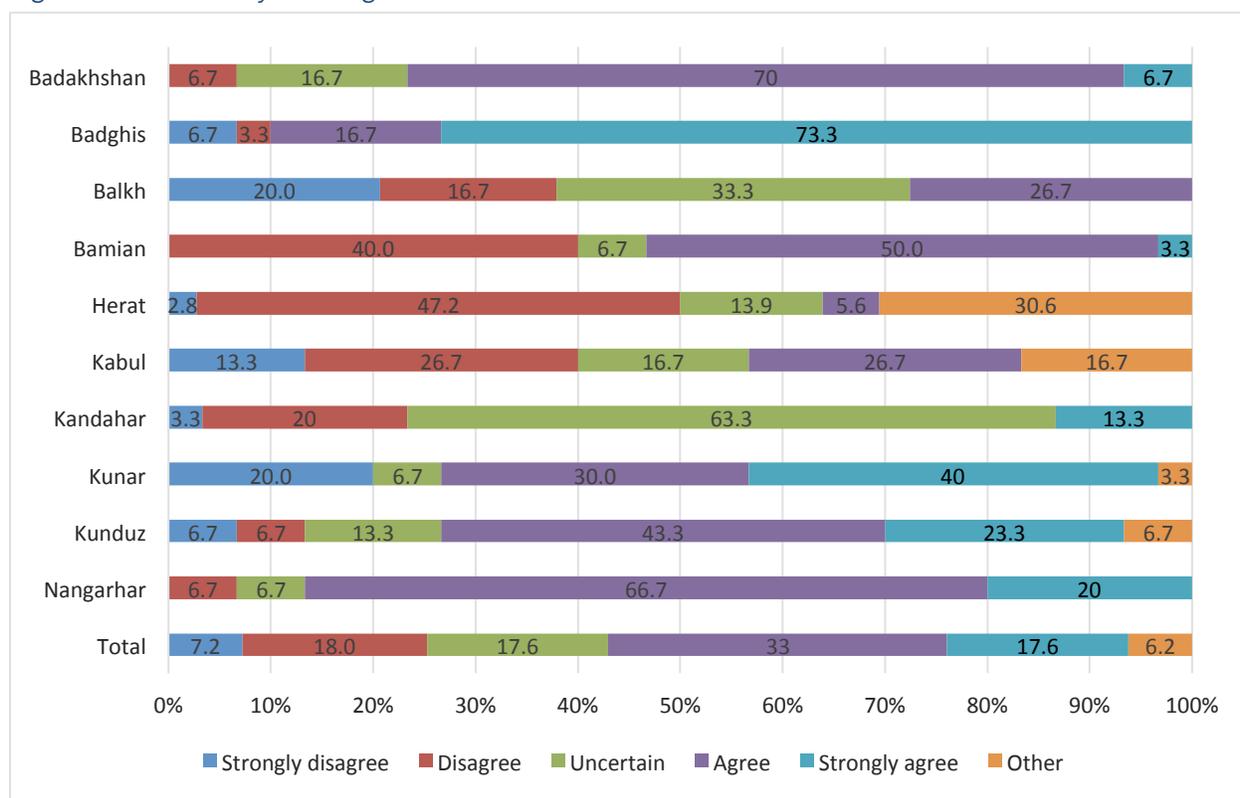
Generally, most radical Islamist groups strongly disagree with the internationally accepted norms of democracy, human rights, and women's rights. According to them, Islamic Shariah informs the best way of life and no Western concept of democracy and human rights are in line with Islamic Shariah. We asked our respondents several questions about democracy and human rights and nearly 50% of the respondents said that *democracy challenges Islamic values*, and if need be, they would personally try to prevent it from being imposed in their societies.

The majority of respondents believed that democracy is a Western product; hence, it cannot be compatible with Islamic values. However, approximately 35% of the respondents agreed with the statement that *internationally accepted norms of human rights principles and democracy are in line with Islamic values* if slightly adjusted, and approximately 70% of the respondents claimed that *democracy is compatible with Islam* but only with certain conditions.

In another question, more than 50% of the respondents believed that a person following a different faith other than Islam was eligible for a citizenship in an Islamic state, whereas around 36% of the respondents believed otherwise. With regards to the establishment of Islamic state, approximately 70% of the respondents believed that *it is a duty of every Muslim to work for the establishment of an Islamic State* and approximately 67% respondents said that if need be, they would personally take part in the establishment of Islamic state.

¹² Abul A'la Maududi, *Nahn Wa Al Hazarah Al Garbiyah*, Darul Fikr Al-Hadees, 1987

Figure 11: Democracy challenges Islamic values.



Madrasa funding sources and transnational links

a) Financial external linkages

Identifying and quantifying funding sources, which foster and maintain linkages between a madrasa and an external actor, are pivotal to understanding the ideological makeup of a particular madrasa. It is certainly the reality that some donors promote their own agenda or ideology through the donor-recipient relationship. Therefore, any form of external financial support can be considered as a way to influence a madrasa's political and ideological identity. However, transparency surrounding the donor-recipient relationship with respect to the funding of unregistered Afghan madrassas is non-existent or flawed. It is this lack of transparency which allows external influences to act on their own interests in relative secrecy, adding to risk and consequential instability.

Following the end of King Amanullah Khan's reign in 1929, a myriad of succeeding governments have attempted to control madrassas. Due to capital constraints and illiquidity, the ability of successive central Afghan governments to comprehensively fund madrassas has been limited, and their influence over these has thus been limited.¹³ The current Afghan government is not an exception, enjoying negligible influence and oversight with respect to curriculum design and organizational structure. There are no

¹³ Pia Karlsson and Amir Mansoor, *Educational Strategies Among Muslims in the Context of Globalization*, Brill, 2004

existing regulatory frameworks in place regarding unregistered madrassas, nor is there a mandated curriculum design or mechanism to ensure the qualification of instruction.¹⁴ Due to this, madrassas may operate unregistered and detached from government-setting standards and oversight.

The resulting absence of regulation regarding the establishment of madrassas has direct implications for monitoring and subsequent radicalization analysis. Within the scope of this paper, all of the 50 unregistered madrassas studied in the 10 provinces are not required to file annual financial records with relevant authorities. In reality, financial receipts and budgets necessary to clarify the donor-recipient nexus are unavailable for audit, informal, and in some cases non-existent. In light of this reality, this section seeks to develop a comprehensive picture of funding sources and external support to unregistered Afghan madrassas.

While many of the madrassas studied in this paper disprove of receiving financial support from external sources, several analysts allege strong links between madrassas and foreign funders. Some researchers who have conducted case studies on Afghan madrassas also assert that madrassas have traditionally received foreign funding and still continue to enjoy transnational financial support. However, it is extremely difficult to estimate the level of this external support.¹⁵ This is due to an absence of rules and regulations with regards to the financial management of unregistered madrassas. These madrassas are not required to submit any information about the funding sources nor keep any track of daily, monthly or yearly expenditures and it is the head teacher or the principal of these madrassas who is the sole decision-maker on how to generate and later spend those funds.

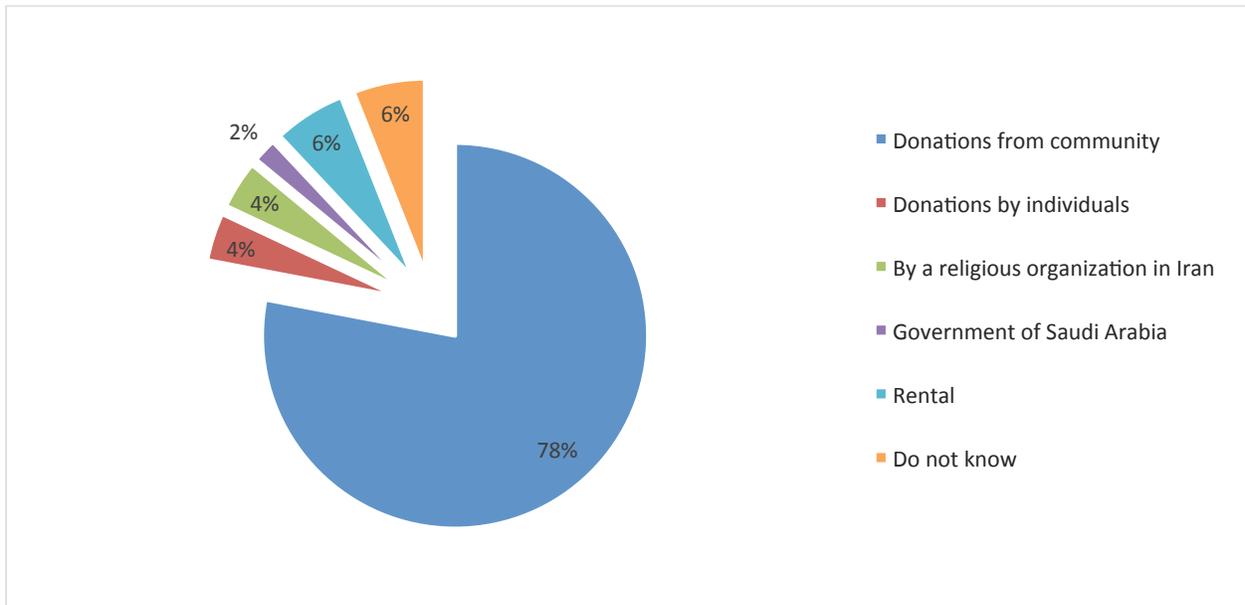
Field researchers observed large numbers of madrassa students collecting donations on the roads that connect major urban centers in Afghanistan. This money is collected for several purposes, including but not limited to the construction of new or existing madrassas and daily operational expenses. It is unlikely that the majority of donations appropriated for construction are generated from these informal collection mechanisms. This survey found that over 78% of aggregate donations, including those solicited by student-operated collection sites, originated from community sources. The likelihood of such heterogeneity with respect to particular sources of funding, like street collection, is low. As such, capital inflows from other sources are therefore likely and relevant for the purpose of this paper. It is important, however, not to view this data as aggregates, but rather to consider geographic specificity. Provincial and ideological specificity within the scope of this survey would suggest a nation-wide perspective that is incorrect when considering unregistered madrassa funding sources. Data suggests that financial support for construction projects with Salafi-affiliated madrassas in Nangarhar, for example, come almost exclusively from the Government of Saudi Arabia. In Kabul, madrassas with a Shia Jafari affiliation are

¹⁴ Kaja Borchgrevink, *Beyond Borders: Diversity and Transnational Links in Afghan Religious Education*, PRIO, Oslo, 2010

¹⁵ Kaja Borchgrevink, 'Transnational Links of Afghanistan Madrassas: Implication for the Reform of Religious Education', *Prospect Quarterly Journal*, Volume 43, Number 1, PRIO, Oslo, 2013, Page No. 69-84

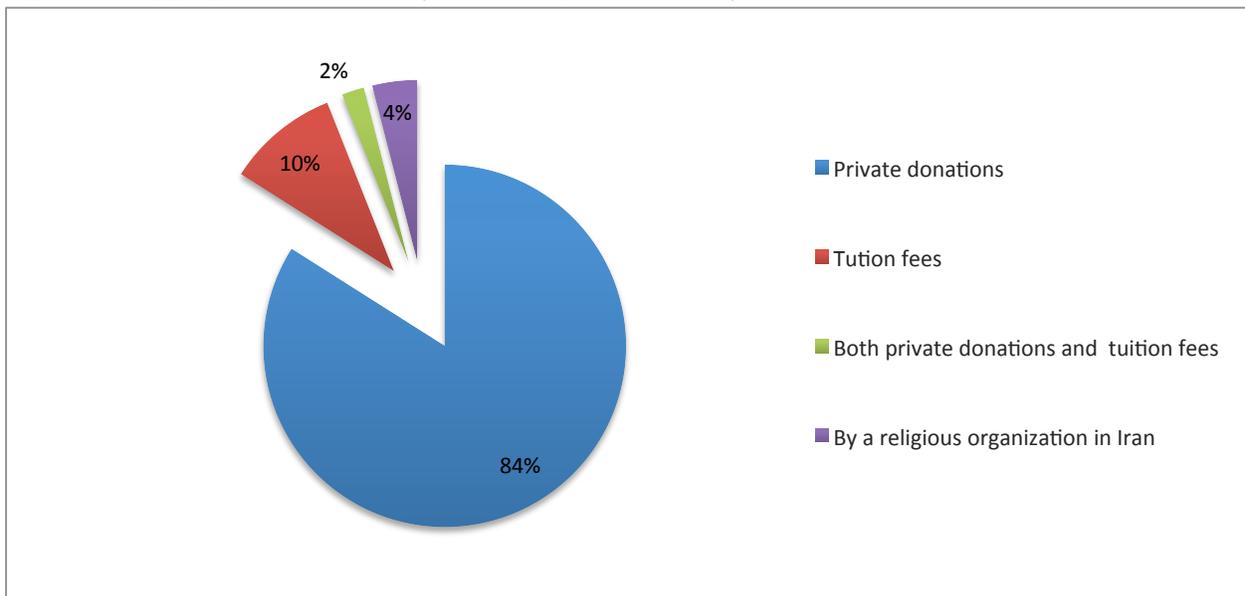
constructed as a result of deep religious ties with the Government of Iran. Still, in other cases, madrassas were built with donations from select wealthy local individuals.

Figure 12: Aggregate donation sources for construction of madrassas



Aggregate results showed that 84% of madrassas across all the 10 provinces meet their daily expenses with donations made by individuals and local communities, and around 10% of the madrassas charge students a tuition fee to keep them running. Only two madrassas in Balkh province confirmed that they received donations from a religious organization in Iran. The madrassa officials did not disclose any information about this organization.

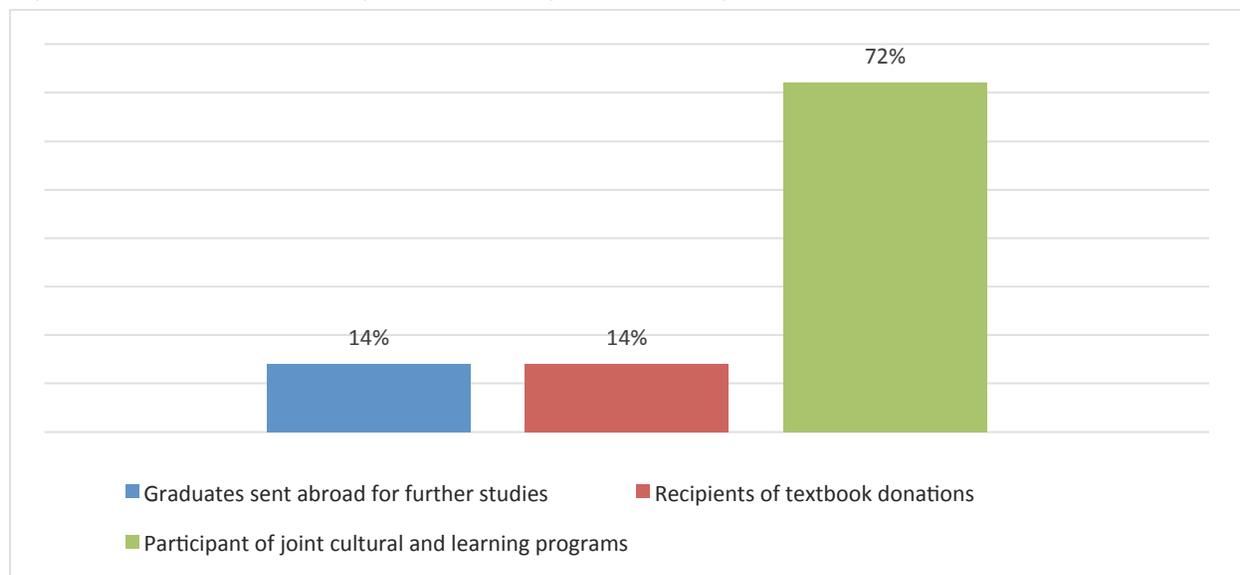
Figure 13: Aggregate sources of capital for daily madrassa expenses



b) Non-financial external linkages

A number of civil conflicts in Afghanistan, particularly in the past century, have severely damaged the religious educational system. The educational infrastructure in Afghanistan was damaged and destabilized as a result of the influence of radical elements, widely believed to have been borrowed from neighboring countries, especially during the Taliban era. Following the U.S. intervention, however, the overall educational system in Afghanistan improved; before 2001, the MoE was not functioning properly, the construction of new schools was minimal, and enrollment levels were incredibly low - for girls and young women it was negligible. Despite several improvements¹⁶ in the educational sector, the politicization of religious ideology, rent-seeking behavior, and other collective action problems associated with frequent regime changes have prevented religious educational institutions from achieving pre-civil war levels of efficiency. Poor governance, insecurity, lack of resources, and the existing gap between madrassas and governmental institutions that typify the provinces surveyed suggest that fragmentation and low institutional capacity has forced the externalization of religious education both from a human and curriculum-based perspective. Within the context of major Islamic denominations common to the 10 provinces discussed in this paper, it is common for young boys to seek religious education abroad and become cultural ambassadors of their host institutions. Given the highly integrated nature of religious and political ideology in these provinces, the potentiality of exposure to foreign ideology increases the potential risk of radicalized thought within local and regional Afghan religious education systems.

Figure 14: Prevalence of linkages between Afghan and foreign madrassas

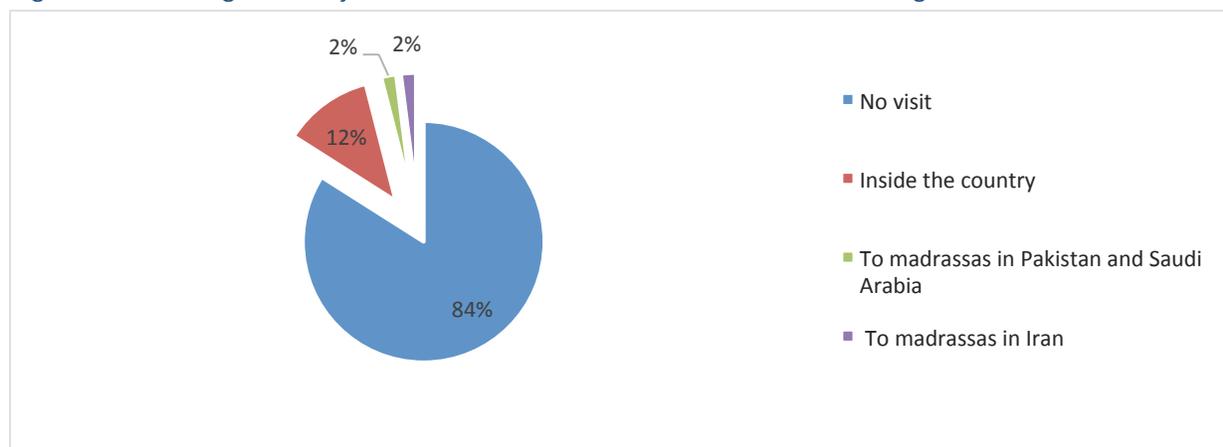


¹⁶ Since 2001, the MoE, with support from USAID and other donors, has built more than 13,000 schools, recruited and trained more than 186,000 teachers, and increased net enrollment rates for school-aged children past 56%. Today, more than 8 million students are enrolled in schools, including more than 2.5 million girls. Source: USAID official website - <https://www.usaid.gov/afghanistan/education>, Accessed on September 03, 2015

86% of the madrassas surveyed in the 10 provinces claimed to have no links with madrassas outside Afghanistan, and were found to be operating independently in Afghanistan. Moreover, Shite madrassas seemed more likely to have linkages with madrassas abroad compared to Sunni madrassas. Only 14% of the madrassas confirmed having transnational links with madrassas in Iran; all of which were affiliated with the Shia Jaffari school of thought. Approximately 10% of these madrassas participate in joint cultural and learning programs; in addition to receiving textbooks as donations from the madrassas in Najaf in Iraq and Pakistan, while a number of students were sent to madrassas in Qom and Najaf for further studies. None of the madrassas in Afghanistan offer higher education, hence there is long tradition among the madrassa students in Afghanistan to seek higher education in a reputed institution abroad.¹⁷

In response to whether madrassa teachers held exchange programs for students within or outside of Afghanistan, 84% responded that they did not facilitate any exchange visits for their students. Out of the total 50 madrassas surveyed, only six madrassas claimed to have facilitated students' exchange programs within Afghanistan, of which two madrassas, situated in Kabul, facilitated exchange programs with madrassas in Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Iran.

Figure 15: Exchange visits by students to madrassas inside and outside of Afghanistan



Our results illustrate that most madrassas deny having any exchanges with the madrassas abroad. However, the transnational flow of ideological positions and socio-political ideas does occur. It is clear that our survey results do not correlate to the introductory theoretical frame that illuminated the prevalence of risks associated with the injection of foreign religious education. As discussed in the introduction however, radicalization in unregistered Afghan madrassas is a reality. A clear area of foreign exposure and thus possible radicalization comes from foreign-educated Afghan students. Afghanistan has few domestically educated religious thinkers; both radical Islamists and the Taliban have borrowed extremist ideologies from foreign sources.¹⁸ Advanced degree programs in Afghan madrassas are

¹⁷ Kaja Borchgrevink, 'Transnational Links of Afghanistan Madrassas: Implication for the Reform of Religious Education', *Prospect Quarterly Journal*, Volume 43, Number 1, PRIO, Oslo, 2013, Page No. 69-84

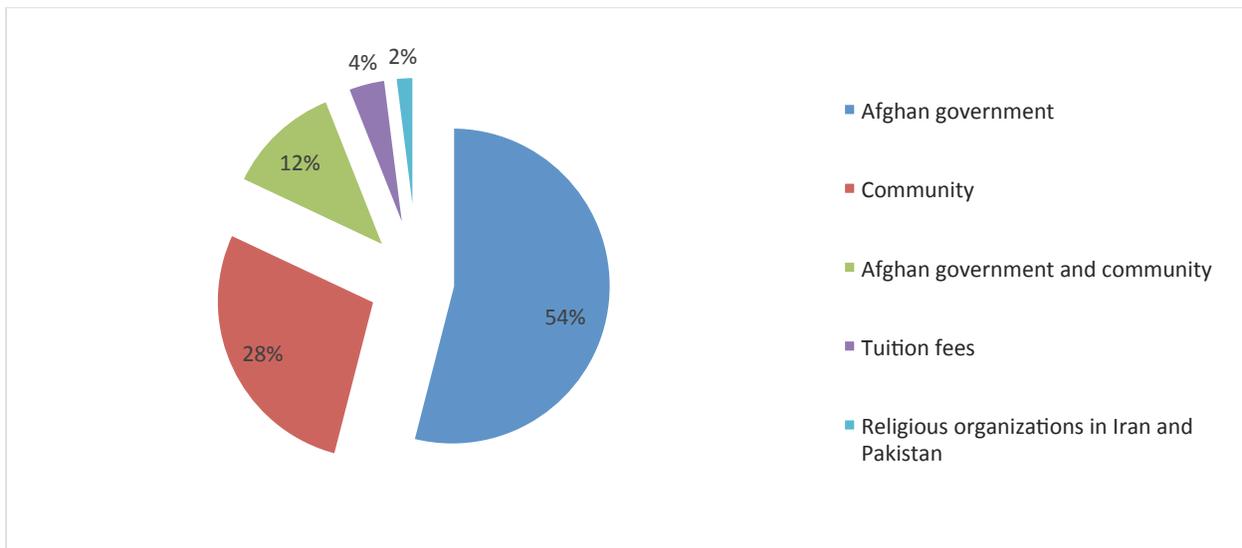
¹⁸ Oliver Roy, *Afghanistan: From Holy War to Civil War*, Darwin Press, Princeton - New Jersey, 1995

uncommon and substantively weak compared to programs in other countries. Depending on which Islamic pillar an individual subscribes to, many madrassa students in Afghanistan choose to pursue degree programs in Iran, Pakistan, and Saudi Arabia. After graduation, students return to Afghanistan as teachers, *muftis*, religious scholars and imams, bringing with them alternative interpretations of Islam, and new curricula and teaching methods. Importantly, this paper does not claim that foreign trained religious students are necessarily radical, nor does it claim that this demographic represents a direct security risk. Rather, there is a causal relationship between the lack of higher Afghan religious education programs and the prevalence of Afghan students seeking degree programs outside Afghanistan.

From a theoretical perspective, the eradication of radical ideology increases tolerance and facilitates socio-political and economic development. By reducing Afghan madrassa's exposure to external sources from a funding perspective, instead exploiting government resources, this paper affirms a risk reduction associated with foreign involvement, like the prevalence of foreign radical ideology. Importantly, by leveraging central government funds and institutional capacity, the educational capacity of these madrassas may become more robust. By doing so, madrassas can improve and contribute to human capacity growth in Afghanistan.

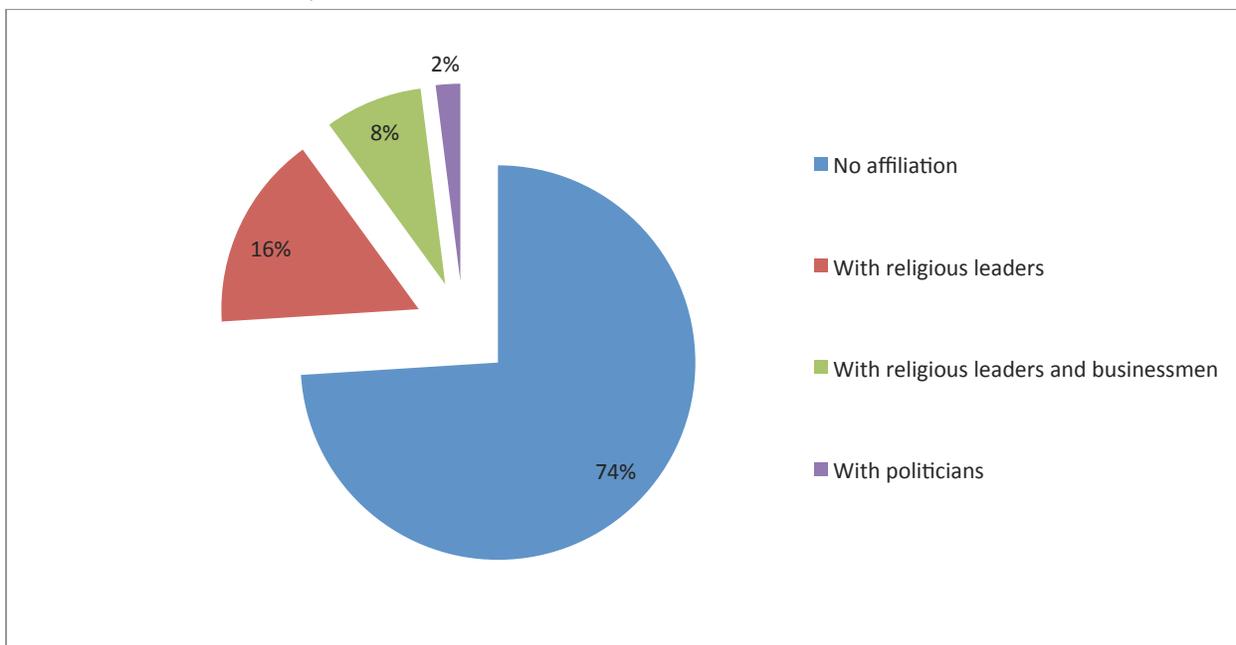
This paper found that unregistered madrassas seek financial coverage from the Afghan government. Head teachers and principals of madrassas were asked about their ideal source of funding for their madrassas; 54% of respondents expressed that the Afghan government should provide funds. However, a statistically relevant number of respondents expressed conditions before they accept any grant from the government. Conditionality, as expressed by respondents, was intended to maintain autonomy from the central government. Approximately 28% of the madrassa leadership prefer to run their madrassas on community donations only, and 12% prefer both community donations and funding from the government. There were a few other respondents who preferred to receive financial support from well-established madrassas in Iran and Pakistan for their madrassas (see figure 16).

Figure 16: Ideal sources of madrassa funding according to madrassa officials



Over the course of the last decade, an inconsistent, and institutionally weak political environment in Afghanistan has resulted in two significant regime changes, both of which stunt economic development and social progress. The Taliban and other anti-governmental elements have leveraged religious institutions as a tool to mobilize the public around various political and ideological foci. Of the 50 madrassas surveyed across the 10 provinces, none of them claimed to have any affiliation with political parties, and approximately 74% of the madrassas were found to have no formal affiliation with any religious leader, individual or businessmen. It was suggested in interviews with a number of the madrasa leadership that, as a result of political instability, including the politicized killings of innocents, madrasa officials prefer not to associate themselves with any political party, and are skeptical about political agendas and activities. Madrassas do not operate in complete isolation from political and religious leaders, however. Madrassas affiliated with the Shia Jaffari denomination, for example, suggested some informal links with religious leaders, thus enjoying support from undisclosed businessmen. On the other hand, it is nearly impossible to learn of potential links between politicians and the madrasa officials since madrasa officials avoid disclosing any information about their possible connections with politicians.

Figure 17: Affiliation with politicians, businessmen and religious leaders



c) Support by other governments

According to all of the respondents, none of the madrassas surveyed during this study receive any kind of support from the governments of neighboring or extended neighboring countries. However, there is every possibility that foreign governments fund these madrassas indirectly to avoid the sensitivity of direct linkages.

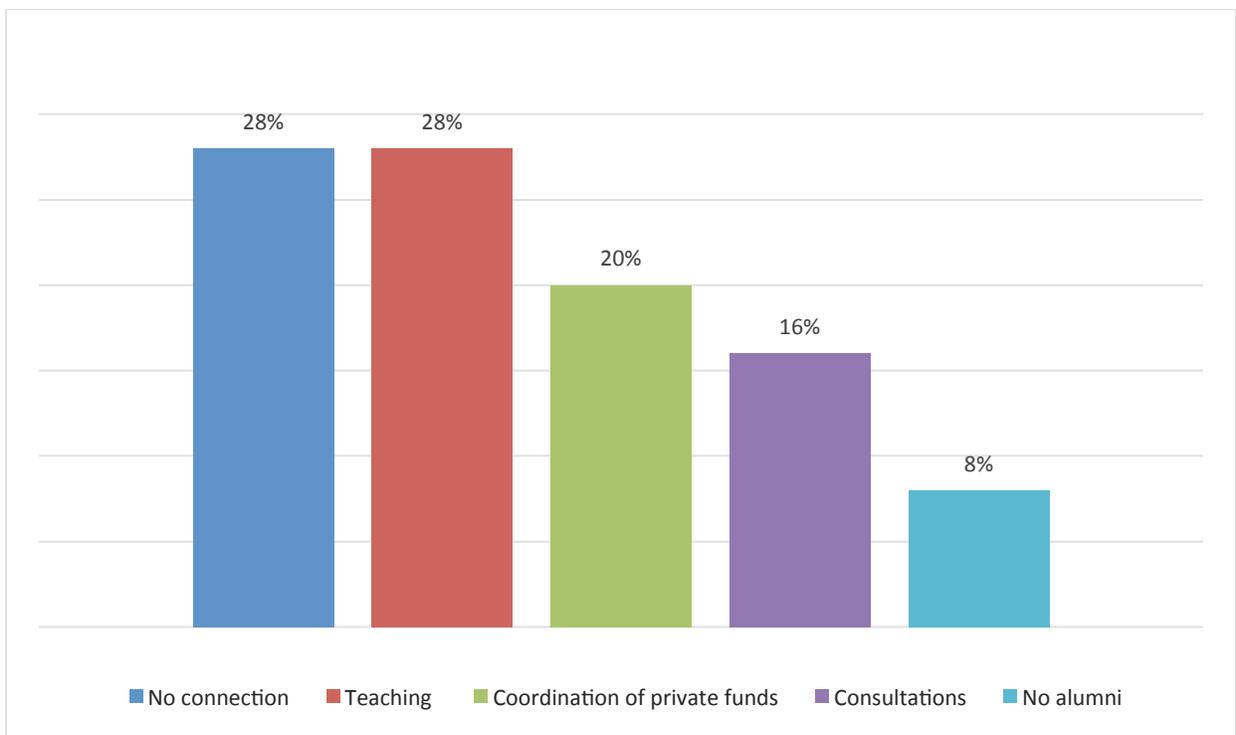
d) Sponsors' influence

None of the respondents confirmed intervention by any external actor with respect to curriculum design, content or admission in his or her respective madrassa.

e) Alumni networks

When asked if madrassa officials remain in touch with their alumni and receive any support from them, it was found that 28% of the madrassas have not maintained any sort of connection with their former students, whereas another 28% of the madrassas have recruited their former students as teachers, and around 20% of the madrassas raise funds through their former students. The total of 8% of madrassas were newly established and did not have any alumni.

Figure 18: Connections with alumni



f) Drug money as charity

It is widely believed amongst Muslims that if one provides financial charity to a religious institution, whether it is an unregistered madrassa or a mosque, one divorces ones self of past sins. A subset of drug traffickers, therefore, believes that if money is given as charity to a madrassa, the illegal activity of trafficking is negated. All respondents strongly believe that drug trafficking is forbidden in Islam, confirming the abovementioned. Nevertheless, money generated through drug businesses is forbidden in Islam and cannot be spent on a madrassa.

g) Substantive aspects of curriculum observed

It is conventionally held that there are four distinct Islamic schools in Afghanistan, these are: mosques, primary level traditional madrassas, secondary level traditional madrassas, and modern madrassas.¹⁹ Religious education is the primary focus of all four schools. The use of specific teaching materials, religious texts, and the methods utilized by instructors to teach a curriculum are most significant in influencing students' ideological doctrine. Unlike conventional modern educational institutions, teacher preference, and the selectiveness of teaching materials define the quality of the education at a madrassa. In order to assess institutional ideologies and their trajectories, it is necessary to observe and evaluate the aforementioned in all stages of the education provided at a madrassa.

The majority of educational materials used in the madrassas surveyed do not effectively meet the demands of rigorous, competitive, and progressive sectarian and scientific curriculum. Despite their prevalence as key resources for all of the madrassas operating in the 10 provinces surveyed, most of the materials used were found not to meet epistemic, ethical, or ideological demands of students and teachers. The table below illustrates the collection of texts used by respondents across the madrassas surveyed in this study:

Figure 19: Texts utilized by madrassas surveyed

Approx. date of text	Level of teaching	Author	Name of text
Interpretive Texts			
Second half 15 th century C.E	Year 11-12, madrassa; semester 3 and 4, Sharia Law Faculty, university	Jalaluddin Mahallali (864 C.E./Jalaluddin Seuti (911 C.E)	Aljalalin ²⁰
The 2 nd half of 13 th century C.E	Year 13-14, madrassa; semester 5 and 6, Sharia Law Faculty, university	Abdullah bin Ahmad Ul Nasfi (710 C.E)	Maderek Ul Tanzil
The 2 nd half of 13 th century C.E	Year 14, madrassa	Abudullah bin Omar-Ul-Baizawi (1286 C.E)	Anwar Ul Tanzil
Ideological Texts			
The 7 st century C.E	Year 7, madrassa	Attributed to Imam Abu Hanifa/767 C.E	Fiqh-e-Akbar
The 2 nd half of 12 th century C.E	Year 14, semester 1, madrassa	Saduddin Ul Taftazani/1389 C.E	SharhulAqaed Ul Nasfia
The 1 st or 2 nd half of 14 th century C.E	Year 14, semester 2, madrassa	Shamsuddin Alrumi Al Hanafi/1465 C.E	Hashia Ul Khiali
The 2 nd half of 14 th century C.E	Semester 3, Sharia Law Faculty, university	Ibn Aabil Az Dimishqi (1389 C.E)	Sharhul Aqidadh Al Tahavia

¹⁹ Pia Karlsson and Amir Mansoor, *Educational Strategies Among Muslims in the Context of Globalization*, Brill, 2004

²⁰The texts used in these institutions have mainly been produced in the 13th and 14th century C.E. Of course, as it is evident in the above table, some of the sources have also been written in 10th, 11th and 12th century C.E.

Jurisprudence Texts			
The 1 st half of 11 th century C.E	Year 7-8, madrassa	Ahamd Bin Mohammad Alqodri (1036 C.E)	Mukhtasar Al Qadori
The 2 nd half of 13 th century C.E	Year 9-10, madrassa	Abdullah Bin Ahmad Alnasfi (1310 C.E)	Kenz Al Daqaeq
The 2 nd half of 13 th century C.E	Year 12-14, madrassa	Ali Bin Abu Bakr Almer Ghinati (1196 CE)	Alhidaya Fi Sharh Al Badaya
Juristic Principal Texts			
The 1 st half of 10 th century C.E	Year 9, madrassa	Nezamuddin Al Shahshi (955 C.E)	Usol Al Shashi
The 1 st half of 18 th century C.E	Year 12-13, madrassa	Mullah Jiun (1717 C.E)	Noor Al Anwar
The 1 st half of 13 th century C.E	Year 14, semester 1, madrassa	Hisam Al Din Al Aksikasi (1246 C.E)	Muntakhab Al Hisami
The 2 nd half of 14 th century C.E	Year 14, semester 2, madrassa	Saduddin Al Taftazae (1389 C.E)	Altal Wihal Al Tawzih

Regardless of whether the substantive nature of the abovementioned texts meet the demands of Islamic society and curriculum requirements of conventional madrassa and sharia law studies, the materials were found to be repetitive. The same texts which were first taught in the madrassa were later used again as part of the curriculum at the Faculty of Sharia Law in the universities.

The abovementioned resources are linguistically inaccessible to the majority of students in a contemporary setting. Authors were found to have framed their texts with outdated and complicated language. The linguistic inaccessibility of materials divert the students' attention from understanding the epistemic dimension of religious study and may disincentivize enrollment and students participation. Moreover, students are unable to utilize knowledge gained through madrassa education since the institution of madrassa does not adequately prepare students for life outside a religious context. This has direct implications on students' ability to find employment in fields other than those of religious nature.

Strategies to combat radicalism in conventional educational institutions are not necessarily appropriate or effective in the madrassa context. Teachers in Afghan madrassas are different than professors in universities and schools. In madrassas, teachers act as spiritual leaders and, to a degree, as a connection to the Prophet Mohammed. The position of a teacher therefore holds sacredness. Moreover, the relationship between a teacher and his student is not comparable to other educational systems. Typically not financially motivated, madrassa instructors hold the right to advise students on matters beyond the curriculum, to provide direction, order, and specify how a student should conduct himself. Further, obedience in the classroom is a sign of successful teaching, and for many, a precondition for being an *aalim*. This direct and intimate relationship between student and teacher offers opportunities to control the prevalence of radicalized thought, though it too affords incredible leeway for an instructor to pursue a radicalized agenda.

Formality and obedience translate externally to actors outside the madrassa. Community members, including governmental representatives rarely disrespect or question a religious scholar. Moreover, madrassa students will frequently follow teachers' instructions outside the four walls of the classroom. This was observed during initial Taliban recruitment during the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan.

Madrassa students are typically divided into two social and intellectual groups, a higher more senior group, and, a lower junior group. Senior students were observed acting as assistant teachers, and were found to demand respect from the lower, more junior groups. Students who have been promoted to higher levels of education may choose to take the responsibility of teaching primary level students, or re-sit primary level lessons with their younger peers. Regardless, a less formal, yet equally prevalent social hierarchy, like the one observed between a student and a teacher, is among students in Afghan madrassas. As many students come from economically disadvantaged, more conservative regions, social popularity among students is often determined to an extent by a student's willingness to follow and integrate religion into their daily life.

Curricula in religious schools, especially unregistered madrassas do not necessarily follow a particular framework. Moreover, the curricula of madrassas surveyed were found to be entrenched in 13th and 14th century C.E social norms. While many curricula follow the one used in Nizamiyah madrassas or those prepared by Shah Wali Ullah and used by Deobandi schools, regional nuances are prevalent. As an extreme example, Deobandi curricula often reduce the prevalence of rational sciences such as logic, ancient philosophy, mathematics, and even advanced Arabic studies, instead focusing more on pure religious subjects such as jurisprudence, principles of jurisprudence, the Hadith, and textual interpretation and ideology. In regions along the Afghanistan-Pakistan border where Deobandi influences are minimal, other sciences such as semantic, rhetoric, prosody, logic, philosophy, ancient mathematics and geometry are taught along with religious subjects.²¹

Teaching methods, in the majority of madrassas, are teacher rather than student-centered and textually derived, predicated on the student's ability to memorize material. It is common practice in many of the madrassas surveyed for students to study a particular and often famous text as opposed to being exposed to diverse set of resources. Generally, education is centered on the instructor's preference, not the student's demands. Moreover, critical thinking and discussions is not a common practice in the madrassas surveyed.

To encourage students to take ownership of their education, often madrassa teachers and other students communicate to one another that they are themselves heirs of the prophets, giving them the obligation to perpetuate religious study. Many students surveyed hold this view seriously and believe that they are accountable to God. A number of students who demonstrate the ability and skills to influence their peers feel the need to become influential figures that will propagate a religious ideology through such beliefs

²¹ Misbahullah Abdul Baqi, 'Madrassas in Afghanistan: Evolution and its Future', *Policy Perspectives*, Vol. 5, No. 2. Islamabad: Institute of Policy Studies, 2008

and use of propaganda. To reinforce this belief, many curricula incorporate public speaking and the development of other interpersonal skills.

The most traditional and common use of propaganda occurs during the Friday sermon. In Islam it is an obligation for a preacher to communicate religious teachings. In reality, these sermons often focus on political and social issues, attacking opinions that are not shared by the orator. Given the popularity of religious sermons, orators are often called upon to speak on secular issues as well, as this becomes a source for secular-religious infusion.

With increased communications-related infrastructural development in addition to traditional ways to proselytize, media outlets, television and radio programs have begun to host religious, political, and social sermons. Television advertising, in particular, has become increasingly popular for the proselytization of religious and political messages. Similarly, the rise of social media has created new avenues for sermons to reach increasingly larger numbers of individuals. Nevertheless, letterpress media remains popular in the provinces surveyed in this study. Gazettes have had substantial effects on intellectual preference formation. As an example, refer to the translation of the Quran from Abul A'la Maududi, which has become a main source of disseminating fundamentalist ideology in Afghanistan and other regions.

As a means for distribution of information, the internet becomes increasingly necessary for unregistered madrassas to transmit religious texts and publish opinion pieces. This increased prevalence coupled with the reduced costs associated with using such technology allows for the mass distribution of radicalized messages. While this study, only briefly alludes to the dynamics of this condition, please see our following-up research on *Media and Radicalization* which provides greater depth of analysis on this topic.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Contemporary studies of religious schools in Afghanistan offer various narratives that purport that these schools encourage the development and propagation of radicalized and extremist ideologies. Expanding on the work of Borchgrevink,²² this study aimed to examine radicalization trends across 50 separate unregistered madrassas in 10 provinces across Afghanistan, to determine the extent to which these religious schools contribute to the dissemination of radical ideologies in Afghanistan. Within this context, this report illuminates the myriad challenges faced by the civil society, government, and religious institutions due to ideological, financial and non-financial sources of radicalization. Ultimately, this research redefines existing considerations of radicalized actors in the Afghan madrasa context, and offers clarity surrounding ideological justifications for radicalized action. The issues examined in this

²² Kaja Borchgrevink, *Beyond Borders: Diversity and Transnational Links in Afghan Religious Education*, PRIO, Oslo, 2010; Kaja Borchgrevink, 'Transnational Links of Afghanistan Madrassas: Implication for the Reform of Religious Education', *Prospect Quarterly Journal*, Volume 43, Number 1, PRIO, Oslo, 2013

study seek to clarify and contextualize radicalization in unregistered Afghan madrassas with direct implications for policy makers operating in Afghanistan.

Religious education in Afghanistan is not devoid of misinterpretations of religious texts, nor are these environments isolated from the conservative nature of Afghan society that was found to play a central role in shaping the mindsets of madrasa teachers and students. However, we conclude from our findings that unregistered madrassas in Afghanistan do not necessarily promote radical ideologies as posited by previous studies. Considering the realities of systemic conservatism and political instability in Afghanistan, this study suggests that respondents' views of religious tolerance, disapproval of violence, and support of women's rights are positive. Critically, the respondents justified these views during interview sessions, suggesting that there is meaningful connection between our results and the ideological realities of the provinces surveyed. Further, respondents did not agree on the issue of radicalized resistance against the GoA, implying that groups who employ militant strategies, like the Taliban, do not represent the aggregate ideological affirmations of madrasa students and teachers. Ultimately, this study posits that unregistered Afghan madrasa teachers and students support efforts to pursue a peaceful and stable Afghanistan, and show no significant resentment toward the non-Muslim community. This is evidenced by respondent willingness to pursue peace deals with non-Muslims, for example.

It is important to appreciate the multidimensionality of this study's findings, however. With respect to the establishment of an Islamic State, the majority of respondents indicated that every Muslim is obligated to participate in its establishment, and, if necessary, circumnavigate the judicial system to ensure such a state is established. Despite this, in addition to an overwhelming majority of respondents condoning suicide attacks and violent recourse, a majority preferred to establish formal relations between madrassas and the GoA relations to other non-state actors. Moreover, more than half of respondents indicated that they preferred to seek funds from the GoA and considered this to be the most ideal source of funding. As a result of this reality, this paper outlines that there are opportunities for the GoA to incentivize unregistered madrasa registration and formality through the auspices of funding allocation. Policy must appreciate the heterogeneity of preference in the context of unregistered Afghan madrassas.

Following from our conclusions, we advance a number of suggested recommendations. First, the MoE and MoHRA should develop integrated madrassas as a means for bringing together people toward a goal of achieving greater tolerance. Second, the GoA should manage funding and curriculum design in an effort to streamline and promote more moderate interpretations and teachings of the Quran and Hadith. Finally, the GoA should establish oversight as a means for instituting regular reviews of religious schools.

This study is part of a larger, sensitive, and timely discussion on the religious justification for radical and militant action in Afghanistan. In this context, this study seeks to dissolve perceptions of radicalized religious students and teachers by providing critical data necessary for a productive discussion on

radicalization in unregistered Afghan madrassas. The gaps and challenges addressed in the abovementioned sections signify that further research is needed to develop more complete data sets. This paper, therefore, recommends adopting the methodologies utilized to make more robust the findings and recommendations contained herein, with the ultimate purpose of informing more effective and beneficial development and security policy.

REFERENCES

- Afghan Woman Farkhunda Lynched in Kabul For Speaking Out*, BBC, March 23, 2015, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-32014077>
- Al-Ghazali, Muhammad, *How Do We Deal With Quran*, Egypt Print, Cairo, 2005
- Al-Samadi, Khalid and Halaly, Abdur Rahman, *Education and Religious Crisis in the Muslim World*, Darul Fikr Al Misr, Beirut, 2007
- Awais, Abdul Halim, *Dar Astah Lisquwat Salaseen Dawlat-e-Islamiyah*, Al-Wafa Publications, 2010
- Baiza, Yahia, *The Progress and Degradation of Madrassa Education: The Case of Afghanistan*, The RIDEP Institute, Indonesia
- Baqi, Misbahullah Abdul, 'Madrassas in Afghanistan: Evolution and its Future', *Policy Perspectives*, Vol. 5, No. 2. Islamabad: Institute of Policy Studies, 2008
- Baqi, Misbahullah Abdul, *Religious Schools in Pakistan*, Maktaba Madbuli, Cairo, 2010
- Borchgrevink, Kaja, 'Transnational Links of Afghanistan Madrassas: Implication for the Reform of Religious Education', *Prospect Quarterly Journal*, Volume 43, Number 1, PRIO, Oslo, 2013
- Borchgrevink, Kaja, *Beyond Borders: Diversity and Transnational Links in Afghan Religious Education*, PRIO, Oslo, 2010
- Byman, Daniel L., *Comparing Al Qaeda and ISIS: Different Goals, Different Targets*, Brookings, April 29, 2015, <http://www.brookings.edu/research/testimony/2015/04/29-terrorism-in-africa-byman>
- Ghamidi, Javed Ahmed and Ahmad, Israr, *Discussion on the Procedure of Establishing an Islamic State*, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wlf3_1tHzKs, Accessed on June 15, 2015
- Gilani, Asad, *Al Imam Al-Maududi, Hayatah, Dawat-e-Jihad*, Islamic Publications, Lahore, 1986
- Herawi, Abdullah Khamoosh, *Al-Madaris al- Diniya al- Arabiya al-Hokomia Fi Afghanistan*, The Asian, March 25, 2013, <http://ar.theasian.asia/archives/8689>
- Howaidi, Fahmi, *Taliban and Jundullah in Wrong War*, Dar-Al-Sharuq, Cairo, 2001
- Kamgar, Jamil-ur-Rahman, *History of Education in Afghanistan: From 1747 to 1992*, Maiwand Kabul, 1997
- Karlsson, Pia and Mansoor, Amir, *Educational Strategies Among Muslims in the Context of Globalization*, Brill, 2004

Kathir, Ibn, *Albidayah Wa Alnihayah*, Volume 15, Darul Hadith, Cairo

Latifi, Ali M., *Afghanistan's Ancient Sufi Order Shocked by Deadly Attack*, Los Angeles Times, March 08, 2015, <http://www.latimes.com/world/afghanistan-pakistan/la-fg-afghanistan-sufi-attack-20150308-story.html>

Lewis, Bernard, *The History of the Ismailiyah*, Translated by Faraidoon Badrai, Toos Publication, Tehran, 1983

Maududi, Abul A'la, *Muajiz Tareekh Tajdeed Al Deen Wa Ahya'ah*, Darul Fikr Al-Hadees, 1967

Maududi, Abul A'la, *Nahn Wa Al Hazarah Al Garbiyah*, Darul Fikr Al-Hadees, 1987

Moheq, Muhammad, *Eyes Shall Be Washed*, Kabul, 2013

Motahari, Morteza, *Dah Goftar*, Sadra Publications, Tehran

Osman, Mohammad Tariq, *Religious Institution Building in Afghanistan: An Exploration*, PRIO, Oslo, 2011

Qutb, Mohammad, *The Implementation of Sharia*, Maktaba Al Sunnah, Cairo, 1991

Rafipur, Faramarz, *Anatomy of the Society*, Intishaar Publications, 2010

Roy, Oliver, *Afghanistan: From Holy War to Civil War*, Darwin Press, Princeton - New Jersey, 1995

Shalabi, Ahmad, *The History of Education in Islam*, Translated by Mohammad Hossain Saket, Islamic Culture Publishing Office, Tehran, 1984

Soroush, Abdul Kareem, *Tolerance and management*, Serat Publications, Tehran

Tan, Charlen and Contributors, *Reforms in Islamic Education: International Perspectives*, London, Bloomsbury, 2014

Zarinkoob, Abdul Hossain, *Farar az Madrassa*, Amir Kabir Publications, Tehran, 2010

ANNEXES

Annex 1: Methodology Expanded

This paper utilized purposive and chain-referral non-probability sampling techniques when structuring data collection. The authors of this paper sought to study a small number of unregistered madrassas in a number of rural and closed communities. As a result, the field team developed key informants and partners working in similar fields in order to gain greater access in certain situations. In order to validate the quality of fieldwork conducted, the AISS signed a memorandum of understanding with the Afghanistan Academic & Islamic Research Center (AAIRC) - a well established organization focusing on promoting the moderate and peaceful teachings of Islam and well known for its extensive connections with local and unregistered madrassas in Afghanistan. AAIRC representatives worked closely with the field researchers in each of the selected provinces and assisted them to gain access to the selected madrassas, in addition to monitoring the entire data collection process.

The collected data was a combination of both quantified and qualified information. Descriptive analysis and cross-tabulation was conducted using SPSS Statistics. Data was initially entered into Microsoft Excel and subsequently analyzed. Open-ended responses were codified and analyzed in Excel, as well.

Research and discovery relating to sectarian ideology is a sensitive topic in Afghanistan, associated with various security risks. Illegal armed groups, anti-government elements, and influential informal actors presented varying levels of difficulty to the research teams. Complications were exacerbated in certain instances. In one particular case, an undisclosed armed group threatened one of the field researchers when conducting research in the Kunduz province. In an incredibly unfortunate incident, The Taliban killed an advisor to the field research in this province. It was later learned, however, that the targeted attack was isolated from this paper's research.

Given the remoteness and security concerns outlined above, it became evident that finding qualified field researchers was going to be both costly and time-consuming. Due to a lack of trained and qualified field researchers, computer literacy and English language proficiency was identified as the primary constraints when conducting research. Moreover, the lack of existing studies on the prevalence of radicalization in unregistered Afghan madrassas provided challenges in engaging in a comparative study. Specifically, the lack of existing research in this field was problematic when seeking comparative benchmarks to measure the growth or decline of radicalized ideology against a particular respondent or madrasa.

Annex 2: Sample Questionnaire

General Information (both teachers and students)

1. Name of the madrassa: _____
2. How long have you attended this madrassa: _____
3. What is your age: _____
4. Sex:
 - Male
 - Female

5. Which ethnic group do you belong to?
 - Pashtun
 - Tajik
 - Hazara
 - Uzbek
 - Other (please specify): _____

6. Which school of thought do you follow?
 - Sunni Hanafi
 - Sunni Salafi
 - Shia Jafari
 - Shia Ismaeli
 - Any other (please specify): _____

A. How radicalized are madrassa teachers and students?

Cluster 1: Religious tradition

1. In your opinion, which religious authority is best at representing Islam?
 - Mainstream Hanafi
 - Deobandi Hanafi
 - Sufi Islam
 - Islamic Moderation Movement led by Yusuf al-Qaradawi
 - Islamic intellectualism
 - Ulemas affiliated to the Government of Iran
 - Salafism/Wahhabism
 - Other (please specify): _____

Cluster 2: Degree of tolerance and respect towards non-Muslims

2. I'm going to read some statements to you about other schools of thought. Please tell me if you agree with each strongly or somewhat?

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Uncertain	Comments
Muslims adhering to other schools of thought should be respected.						
Most Islamic denominations make a positive contribution to Islam.						
Family members can get married to a person adhering to a different school of thought.						
I would marry someone, who follows a different school of thought.						
Followers of other schools of thought are as good as those adhering to my school of thought						

3. I'm going to read some statements to you about non-Muslims. Please tell me if you agree with each strongly or somewhat?

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Uncertain	Comments
People adhering to other religious faiths should be respected.						

Most religious faiths make a positive contribution to society.						
A person adhering to a different religious faith can move into my community without any difficulty.						
Non-Muslims should be respected.						
Violence against non-Muslims, who are not at war with Muslims, is religiously justified.						
It is acceptable to shake hands with non-Muslims.						
It is acceptable to eat at the same table as non-Muslims.						

Cluster 3: Views about the state/governance

4. I'm going to read some statements to you about the Afghan government. Please tell me if you agree with each strongly or somewhat?

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Uncertain	Comments
The Afghan government is a legitimate Islamic regime.						
In accordance with my understanding of Islam, it is allowed to be a part of the current Afghan government						

The violent activities against the Afghan government are religiously justified.						
I have no problem with the liberal officials within the Afghan government.						
If the Afghan government does not listen to the Ulemas' advice, there must be a revolt against the government.						
Despite the presence of police and judiciary, it is necessary for every Muslim to stop people from committing various kinds of sins.						

5. Are Muslims allowed to enter into peace agreements with non-Muslims?

a. Yes b. No

Please explain: _____

Cluster 4: Support for violence and action against the state

6. I am going to read some statements to you about suicide attacks. Please tell me if you agree with each strongly or somewhat?

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Uncertain	Comments
Suicide attacks are forbidden in Islam in all circumstances.						

Suicide attacks are justified against non-Muslims.						
Suicide attacks are justified against people who work for the International Security Assistance Forces (ISAF).						

7. What do you think about the Taliban resistance against the Afghan government?

- a. The Afghan government is not fully an Islamic regime, therefore the actions of Taliban against the government is justified
- b. The Taliban are the puppets of other countries
- c. The Taliban are ignorant about real Islamic values
- d. The Taliban are defending Islam
- e. I do not know
- f. No answer
- g. Other (please specify _____)

Cluster 5: Views about society and social norms

8. I'm going to read some statements to you about gender and women's rights. Please tell me if you agree with each strongly or somewhat?

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Uncertain	Comments
Everyone should have equal rights under the law, regardless of their sex, ethnicity or religion.						
Women and girls should have access to higher education.						
Women and girls do not need education.						
According to Islam, women are allowed to work outside of their home.						
Women should stay at home to take care their children and household work.						
According to Islam, women are not allowed to take part in political activities.						

Woman can run for elections.						
Women can be elected as a minister.						
Women working for civil society organizations are undeserving of respect.						
It is acceptable to marry a girl who works for the Afghan government, or a civil society organization.						

9. I'm going to read some statements to you about democracy and human rights. Please tell me if you agree with each strongly or somewhat?

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Uncertain	Comments
Democracy challenges Islamic values.						
Internationally accepted norms of human rights principles and democracy are in line with Islamic values.						
Democracy is compatible with Islam.						
Non-Muslims should not be granted a citizenship in an Islamic state.						
Working toward the establishment of an Islamic State is the duty of every Muslim.						

Curriculum (How radicalized are the madrasa curricula?)

1. Is your madrasa following the curriculum as proposed by the Ministry of Higher Education?
2. If your madrasa is following the curriculum as proposed by the Ministry of Higher Education, have you brought any changes to it? Or you are following the curriculum without any changes?
3. Do you think that there is a need to make any specific changes to the curriculum proposed by the Ministry of Higher Education? If yes, please give some examples.
4. Do you think that your current studies will help you find a job in the non-religious sector?
5. Suppose that you don't find a job based on your current field of study, do you have an alternative in mind?
6. If you are not following the curriculum prescribed by the Ministry of Higher Education, then where does your curriculum originate?
7. Do you agree that all the madrasahs should come under the supervision of the Ministry of Higher Education?
8. Some governments in Islamic countries fully supervise the madrasahs. Do you think the Afghan government should follow in their footsteps?

Funding and External Support: How radicalized is the external support provided?

1. When was this madrasa established and who contributed to the building of this madrasa financially?
2. What kind of linkages are there with other madrasahs abroad and where?
3. Do you offer student any exchange programs within or outside of Afghanistan? If yes, where do you send your students to attend such programs?
4. Do any madrasahs from within or outside of Afghanistan support your madrasa? If yes, which madrasahs? If no, how do you manage to meet the daily expenses in your madrasahs?
5. Do you charge students any tuition fees for attending your madrasa?
6. How would you like the financing of your madrasa to be sustained in the long term? Who should finance it ideally, and how?
7. Do you know of any affiliation between your madrasa and any particular political party?
8. Do you know of any affiliation between your madrasa and a specific person (politician, businessman, religious leader, etc.).

9. Are you aware of any financial support provided to your madrassa by other governments outside of Afghanistan?
10. In your opinion, to what extent do sponsors have a say on the curriculum of the madrassa and how do they influence the content, the admission, etc.?
11. Are you in contact with the alumni of your madrassas and do they support your school? How?
12. Do you believe that charity coming from drug money is acceptable to be spent on a madrassa?
13. Can a madrassa be financially part of a bigger network or organization?

About the AISS

The Afghan Institute for Strategic Studies (AISS) was established in October 2012 in Kabul. It aims to create an intellectual space for addressing strategic issues pertaining to Afghanistan in wider regional and international contexts. Promoting dialogue between and among different stakeholders is an end as well an integral means in attaining AISS' objectives. All activities and programs are based on the principles of professionalism, independence, internationalism and progressive values.

AISS is an independent research body, officially registered with the Afghan Ministry of Economy as a not-for-profit research institute dedicated to providing qualitative, non-partisan and policy-oriented research; publication, professional training and policy advocacy with a distinct focus on Afghanistan. Empowering and investing in Afghan youth constitutes the crosscutting priority of the AISS.

Board of Advisors

- Ambassador Kai Eide, former Special Representative to the UN Secretary General;
- Professor Radha Kumar, Director General, Delhi Policy Group (DPG);
- Mr. Nader Nadery, Director of Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit (AREU) and Head of the Free and Fair Election Foundation of Afghanistan (FEFA);
- Dr. Barnett Rubin, Director and Senior Fellow, Center on International Cooperation, and Professor of Political Science at New York University;
- Dr. Sima Samar, Chairwoman, Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission (AIHRC);
- Dr. Rangin Spanta, Former National Security, Government of Afghanistan;
- Professor Shahrbanou Tadjbakhsh, Chief Academic Advisor at the Afghan Institute for Strategic Studies (AISS), Director of the program on Human Security at the Master of Public Affairs (MPA), Institute of Political Studies, Sciences Po, Paris and Associate Researcher, Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO);
- Dr. David Samuel Sedney, Former Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Afghanistan, Pakistan and Central Asia in the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Asian and Pacific Security Affairs; and
- Professor Wang Jisi, Dean, School of International Studies and Director of the Center for International and Strategic Studies, Peking University.

About the Authors

Abdul Ahad Mohammadi is a Researcher and Head of Department of Peace Studies at the AISS. He has previously conducted research on radicalization trends among Afghan university students. His previous research has focused on the practice of *baad* and its negative social impact in Afghanistan; the Norwegian Provincial Reconstruction Team's withdrawal and impact in the Faryab province; food insecurity on post-emergency settings; and policy and program implementation by the International Rescue Committee and European Commission Directorate General for Humanitarian Aid and Protection. He holds an MA in Sociology from Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi.

Musab Omer is a Researcher and Project Coordinator at the Department of Peace Studies at the AISS. His main areas of research are radicalization and political violence, as well as regional cooperation, focusing on Afghanistan and its neighboring countries. Mr. Omer has previously conducted research on radicalization trends among Afghan university students and the Heart of Asia Process on Regional Cooperation. He has also conducted research on the widows and orphans in the aftermath of the conflict in Kashmir, in addition to evaluating madrassa schemes implemented by the Government of India. He holds an MA in Conflict Analysis and Peace Building from Nelson Mandela Center for Peace and Conflict Resolution, Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi.

Muhammad Moheq has authored and translated a number of publications in Persian, Arabic and Pashto languages. He has also published numerous articles on Islamic extremism in different national and international journals. He has been a keynote speaker in a number of international conferences and participated in television debates with the BBC and TOLO News. In 2007, he was appointed as an expert at the Center for Strategic Studies Department at the Afghan Ministry of Foreign Affairs. From 2009 to 2011, Mr. Moheq was in charge of cultural and political affairs at the Afghan embassy in Cairo, Egypt. He works as a socio-cultural advisor with the Afghan government and is a Ph.D. fellow at Cairo University, Egypt.

This Page Intentionally Left Blank

CONTACT

Afghan Institute for Strategic Studies (AISS)

Former Turquoise Mountain Fort | Post Box No: 5214 | Karte-Parwan | Kabul | Afghanistan

Abdul Ahad Mohammadi

Researcher and Head, Department of Peace Studies

E: amohammadi@aiss.af

Musab Omer

Researcher and Project Coordinator, Department of Peace Studies

E: musab.omer@aiss.af

www.aiss.af | contact@aiss.af | Facebook: facebook.com/afghaninstituteforstrategicstudies

Twitter: @aissofficialpag | LinkedIn: Afghan Institute for Strategic Studies

Commercial use of all publications by the AISS is not permitted without the written consent of the AISS.

ISBN 978-9936-8043-0-2



The analyses provided in this report are those of the research team and do not reflect the official position of Afghan Institute for Strategic Studies (AISS) or National Endowment for Democracy (NED).