



The Asia Foundation

Afghanistan in 2007: A Survey of the Afghan People Frequently Asked Questions October 23, 2007

Q1. Who funded the poll?

The poll is a product of The Asia Foundation, funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development within the scope of a larger ongoing cooperative agreement for the period 2003-2008.

Q2. Who did TAF partner with to carry out the survey?

The Afghan Center for Socio-economic and Opinion Research (ACSOR), Kabul. 494 Afghan men and women were trained and conducted in-person interviews through out Afghanistan – in all 34 provinces.

Q3. How were the questions developed?

The poll was designed, directed, and edited by the Foundation. The decision to include or exclude questions was solely the Foundation's, but a process of consultation was used to arrive at the best possible questionnaire given the need for valid and reliable data that could be compared over time.

The Asia Foundation used its own prior surveys conducted in Afghanistan in 2004 and 2006, as well as in Bangladesh (2006), Cambodia (2000), and Indonesia (2003), for initial guidance. The survey also used some questions from the Asian Barometers as well as the public opinion survey conducted in 2004 on political culture of democracy in Mexico, Central America, and Colombia (see <http://www.lapopsurveys.org/>), to enable forthcoming cross-national comparisons. Then, the Foundation consulted USAID, Professor Russ Dalton of University of California at Irvine, and Professor Sanjay Ruparelia of the New School for Social Research to add questions of relevance and use in programming within Afghanistan. Finally, the questionnaire was tested through a pilot survey for accuracy and comprehension purposes before fieldwork commenced.

Q4. What methodology was used?

The methodology used was a multi-stage random sample of 6,263 in-person interviews with Afghan citizens 18 years of age and above, women and men, residing in Afghanistan.

The survey sample was divided first according to urban and rural characteristics of Afghanistan. The sample was distributed proportional to geographical and residential characteristics of population per province. At the outset, the universe was divided into male and female sub-samples. Each region, province, and further strata was allocated an equal number of male and female respondents per sampling points. Field-force members of their respective gender covered the two sub-samples.

(A full explanation of the methodology is provided in Appendix 2: Methodology, pages 115-119 in the survey report.)

Q5. How many Afghans were surveyed?

6263 (50% males; 50% females)

Q6. How did security issues in the country compromise the results of the survey?

In 2006, we were unable to survey the provinces of Uruzgan and Zabul because we did not expect security issues to affect almost every sampling point. In the 2007 survey, we were better aware of security issues and were able to prepare for adjustments to our sampling in insecure provinces. In fact, even though field security was worse in 2007, we were better prepared to adjust and survey every province. More information on adjustments can be found in Appendix 2: Methodology, on pages 115 and 116 of the report.

Q7. How is this different from The Asia Foundation's 2004 and 2006 polls?

The 2004 survey was geared towards assessing voter awareness of the 2004 Presidential elections, had a smaller sample size (800+), and the number of questions were aimed squarely at those who intended to vote in the 2005 elections.

The 2006 survey includes many similar questions on political processes but is much broader in its sweep, with questions about trust, problem solving, security, women's rights, religion, and development.

The 2007 survey is similar to the 2006 survey, although it uses a somewhat larger sample size and covers all 34 provinces. We adjusted the sampling plan based on observations of population distribution in the 2006 survey and asked more questions about sub-national governance and less questions related to elections.

Q8. Will there be more surveys?

Yes. Similar surveys will be conducted in 2008, 2009, and 2010.

Q9. What does The Asia Foundation think of the survey?

As with our past survey reports, we have tried not to interpret the data but have left that to the reader. We feel it is a solid, important piece of work, completed during a difficult time in Afghanistan, but The Asia Foundation does not have a position on the findings.

We are also pleased that we have now built capacity to conduct such surveys in Afghanistan and look forward to working closely with ACSOR, Kabul University and others in the coming months to continue our work.

Q10. Are you surprised that 86% of Afghans believe that the Afghan National Police is honest and fair with the Afghan people?

We agree that there are some findings in the report that appear to challenge the current wisdom on issues in Afghanistan. In addition to our earlier point on looking at trends from 2004 to 2007, we can point out that it is important to look at the categories of responses to the questions asked in the survey. On the ANP question, the 86% breaks out as "45% having great deal of trust" and "41% having fair amount of trust." The next category of response is "not very much trust." In 2006, 51% had a great deal of trust in the ANP, while 36% had a fair amount of trust. We leave it to you to make the interpretation.