Securing Legitimacy

Examining Indicators of State Legitimacy in Afghanistan

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This paper contributes to the discourse of state legitimacy through a quantitative analysis of variables that influence perceptions of the central government's legitimacy in Afghanistan. In April 2012, the Afghan Center for Socio-Economic and Opinion Research (ACSOR) fielded a survey commissioned by D3 Systems, Inc. consisting of 2,039 interviews distributed across all 34 provinces of Afghanistan. This survey measures public perceptions of general living conditions, performance of the central government, reconciliation with the Taliban, and recent events with over 125 demographic, attitudinal and behavioral metrics. The authors of this paper conduct a thorough analysis of the dataset obtained from this survey to understand the significance and strength of variables (such as: region, security, opinion of Taliban, income, religion, socio-economic status, etc.) on perceptions of state legitimacy. This study supports the hypothesis that security situation is a key indicator of perceptions of state legitimacy.

BACKGROUND

As the United States considers the political future of Afghanistan after 2014, the question of *how* to ensure a secure future for Afghanistan remains. While civilian and military leaders from the United States and Afghanistan are currently negotiating the size and scope of a post-2014 mission, there is no doubt that a legitimate central government is a *sine qua non* for a secure future for Afghanistan. The actions of the government in Kabul will prove critical in ensuring the future cohesion of Afghanistan; if this government is not viewed as legitimate by the people of Afghanistan, the future prospects for stability are dim. Consequently, social science research on Afghan public opinion must inform the debate over a post-2014 mission in Afghanistan, as policymakers consider how the United States and NATO can most effectively support the central government in Kabul in the long-term.

This paper contributes to the conversation by examining state legitimacy through the lens of direct interaction with the Afghan population. Using the results from a D3 Systems national face-to-face survey conducted in Afghanistan in 2012, this paper examines which variables measured by the survey contribute significantly to perceptions of state legitimacy among the adult population.

RESEARCH QUESTION

In April 2012, the Afghan Center for Socio-Economic and Opinion Research (ACSOR Surveys) fielded a survey on behalf of D3 Systems, Inc. consisting of 2,039 interviews distributed across all 34 provinces of Afghanistan. This survey measured public opinion of general living conditions, performance of the central government, reconciliation with the Taliban, and recent events in Afghanistan. With over 125 different demographic, attitudinal, and behavioral metrics, we conducted a thorough analysis of the dataset obtained from this survey to understand the significance and strength of variables (such as: region, security, opinion of Taliban, income, religion, socio-economic status, etc.) on perceptions of state legitimacy. The central research questions guiding our analysis are:

1. What variables captured in the questionnaire influence Afghans' perceptions of state legitimacy?
2. Of these variables, which one has the most significant impact?

While much of political science is occupied with the theorization and study of political legitimacy, establishing a definition for political legitimacy is a perpetual challenge. What precisely defines legitimacy is an academic debate beyond the purview of this paper.[1] We thus conceptualize legitimacy by borrowing Gilley's definition: "a state is more legitimate the more that it is treated by its citizens as rightfully holding and exercising power."[2] As Gilley has done in his study, we choose a constitutive definition of legitimacy over a substitutive definition, as

[1] The contours of this debate are explored in Bruce Gilley, "The Determinants of State Legitimacy: Results for 72 Countries," *International Political Science Review / Revue international de science politique* 27, No. 1 (Jan., 2006), 47-71 and M. Stephen Weatherford, "Measuring Political Legitimacy," *The American Political Science Review* 86, No. 1 (Mar., 1992), 149-162. For a historical perspective on the factors shaping legitimacy in Afghanistan over the past millennium, see Thomas J. Barfield, "Problems in Establishing Legitimacy in Afghanistan," *Iranian Studies* 37, No. 2, Afghanistan (Jun., 2004), 263-293.

[2] Gilley, "Determinants," 48.

our study concerns itself with what causes legitimacy rather than the effects such legitimacy produces.[3] As researchers, our challenge was to operationalize Afghans' perceptions of whether the central government in Kabul rightfully holds and exercises power using the wide range of questions included in the Afghan Futures Survey.[4]

OPERATIONALIZING LEGITIMACY

While Gilley operationalizes legitimacy using nine quantitative indicators for three "subtypes" of legitimacy, the constitutive elements of our legitimacy variable are limited to the questions included in the Afghan Futures survey. We therefore operationalize legitimacy with three component variables (Figure 1). The legitimacy index used in this study averages data from the following four-point Likert scale questions:

1. Do you have a very favorable, somewhat favorable, somewhat unfavorable, or very unfavorable opinion of the central government in Kabul?

2. Please tell me how confident you are in the ability of the central government led by Hamid Karzai to provide security and stability in your area – very confident, somewhat confident, not so confident, or not confident at all?

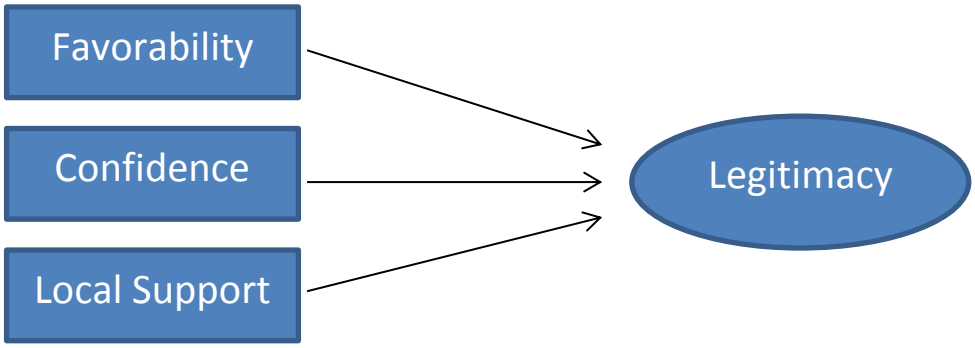
3. What would you say is the level of support for the central government led by Hamid Karzai among the people in the area? Very strong support, fairly strong support, fairly weak support, or no significant support at all?

Taken together, these three variables shed light on whether or not individuals perceive the central government as "rightfully holding and exercising power." The components of our legitimacy index measure respondents' levels of *favorability, confidence, and local support* of the central government—with the assumption that high levels of each would yield higher perceptions of

[3] Ibid., 49. See also Kenneth A. Bollen and Richard Lennox, "Conventional Wisdom on Measurement: A Structural Equation Perspective," *Psychological Bulletin* 110 (2), 305-314.

[4] This is the third installment of its Afghan Futures series, a survey of 2,039 Afghans by its subsidiary ACSOR Surveys. The survey features a detailed look at how Afghan public opinion has changed overtime. For more information, see the following press release: http://www.d3systems.com/2012/05/20/afghan-futures-wave-3/ or contact D3 Systems, Inc.

Figure 1: Operationalizing Legitimacy



legitimacy. The first of these questions measures *favorability*. While the concept of legitimacy is much more expansive than favorability – *e.g.*, despite the abysmally low approval ratings of the US Congress, its legitimacy as a legislative body is not subject to question[5]– the novelty of this central government, installed less than fifteen years ago, requires that Afghan citizens view it favorably for its institutions to persist. The second component measures respondents' *confidence* in the ability of the central government to provide security and stability in respondents' respective areas, which incorporates citizens' notions of whether the state is able to fully exercise its power. The third and final component of our legitimacy metric measures *support* for the central government among other people in the area, thus including respondents' perceptions of *other* opinions, in addition to their own, in the legitimacy scale.

To avoid biasing the legitimacy scale in the direction of any of these variables, the scale was created by taking the mean of these the four-point Likert scales. The final scale thus has a

[5] Alyssa Brown, "Congress Approval Remains in a Slump," Gallup, April 12, 2013, http://www.gallup.com/poll/161771/congress-approval-remains-slump.aspx. A whimsical survey conducted by Public Policy Polling found Congress to be viewed less favorably among Americans than cockroaches, traffic jams, and even the band Nickelback. See: "Congress somewhere below cockroaches, traffic jams, and Nickelback in Americans' esteem," Public Policy Polling, January 08, 2013, http://www.publicpolicypolling.com/main/2013/01/congress-somewhere-below-cockroaches-traffic-jams-and-nickleback-in-americans-esteem.html.

range of 1.00 to 4.00. Respondents with a legitimacy score of 1.00 are those who consider the government *most legitimate*, while those respondents with a legitimacy score of 4.00 regard the central government in Kabul as *less legitimate* (Figure 2). Respondents in the Afghan Futures Survey who did not provide a response to any of the three component questions were excluded from the legitimacy scale. The final scale thus omits 21 respondents from the total sample, slightly reducing the sample size for the study to n=2018.

Interestingly, the legitimacy scale has a positive skew of 1.085; the majority of Afghan respondents are on the lower end of the scale. In fact, a plurality of respondents (27%) gave the government a score of 1.00 on the legitimacy scale, the lowest value possible and thus the most legitimate assessment of the central government. While these results may seem counterintuitive, they are in fact consistent with the results of other quantitative and qualitative studies conducted by D3 Systems, Inc. in Afghanistan.

Readers may question the validity and utility of such a scale in which responses are positively skewed towards more legitimate views of the central government. It is important to consider how the political realities of Afghanistan inform responses to the questions constituting the legitimacy scale. These realities include the fragmented structure of Afghan politics, historical context, and social desirability bias.

While the results of this study indicate that Afghans have favorable views of the central government, the fractious and multidimensional nature of Afghan politics limits the capabilities of this government to govern effectively. As Cordesman notes, the "internal political dynamics and the weakness and corruption of Afghan governance mixed with growing de facto power of regional and ethnic power brokers" presents one of the greatest threats to a stable centralized

government.[6] In Afghanistan, the central government is not the only authority seen as rightfully holding and exercising power. Poor delivery of services and endemic corruption compound this problem by deterring people from trusting and cooperating with the government, undercutting its long-term ability to govern effectively. The shifting power dynamics of Afghanistan thereby present challenges when measuring public perceptions of the central government's legitimacy.

Despite the many problems that beset this government, the historical significance of a democratically elected Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GIRoA) frames Afghans' perceptions of state legitimacy. The instability experienced during the preceding years of civil war and Taliban rule shadows Afghans' political attitudes and contextualizes views of the central government. Furthermore, respondents may feel pressured to provide socially desirable responses to questions regarding politically sensitive topics, such as opinions of the central government. While a small sub-sample of respondents expresses support for the Taliban, the presence of social desirability bias is likely to understate the actual share of Taliban support. Support among even a small segment of the population is enough to sustain a lasting insurgency that threatens government legitimacy.

While these factors may inflate responses of favorability, confidence, and local support used in the legitimacy index, this index is not intended as an absolute measure of Afghans' perceptions of state legitimacy. Rather, this scale has been developed for the purpose of comparing attitudes of state legitimacy across the Afghan population. By comparing mean legitimacy scores across various sub-groups, this paper draws meaningful conclusions about the factors contributing positively or negatively to perceptions of state legitimacy.

[6] Anthony H. Cordesman, "The Afghan War in 2013: Meeting the Challenges of Transition," The Afghan Project, Center for Strategic & International Studies, March 27, 2013, http://csis.org/program/afghan-project.

HYPOTHESIS

We hypothesize that security is a key indicator of perceptions of state legitimacy: as Afghan respondents' security situation gets worse, respondents perceive the central government as less legitimate. Although there are a number of variables that affect how Afghans perceive state legitimacy, perceptions of the local security situation explain the most variation in opinion. Regardless of other socio-economic or democratic indicators, if an individual's perception of their security situation improves, then they are more likely to perceive the central government as more legitimate.

SURVEY METHODOLOGY

All survey results referenced in this paper are taken from the Afghan Futures Wave 3 survey, fielded between April 11th, 2012 and April 18th, 2012.[7] The Afghan Futures series is a set of surveys commissioned by D3 Systems, Inc. with fieldwork conducted by the Afghan Center for Socio-Economic and Opinion Research (ACSOR Surveys). The Afghan Futures Wave 3 survey consisted of 2,039 interviews with Afghans over the age of 18. All interviews were conducted in-person, in Dari or Pashto, by local Afghan interviewers. Surveys are conducted by male and female teams, with women accompanied by male family members. ACSOR Surveys uses gender matching in conducting its surveys across Afghanistan.

D3 Systems created a national sample of 2,039 interviews using a multi-stage random stratification process, using districts as the primary sampling unit and settlements as the secondary sampling unit. The interviews were distributed proportionally across the seven regions according to available population figures. Due to the lack of current census data for Afghanistan, the sampling plan utilized 2006 population statistics released by the Afghan Central

[7] The section of the Afghan Futures Wave 3 questionnaire used for analysis can be found in Appendix A.

Statistics Office (CSO) with assistance from the United Nations and World Food Program for total numbers of residents by region, province, and district. ACSOR believes that the data are generally accurate to the provincial level, but population parameters at the district level were projections from the Afghan CSO. A total of 262 sampling points were distributed proportionally to population size in each of Afghanistan's 34 provinces, stratified by urban/rural status. Sampling points were then distributed from randomly selected districts within provinces, also proportionately to population size. Lastly, simple random sampling was used to select villages or neighborhoods. Within cities, *nahias* (neighborhoods) were the primary sampling unit, while in rural areas towns and villages were the primary sampling unit. Because there are no reliable population data about settlement sizes, a simple random selection of all known settlements was used to select the sampling point within the primary sampling units. Under no circumstances were interviewers allowed to substitute an alternate member of a household for the selected respondent. If the respondent refused to participate or was not available after two call-backs, the interviewer then moved on to the next household according to the random walk method.

Of the 129 districts initially drawn in the sample, 10 were inaccessible on security grounds, 3 were inaccessible due to transportation issues, and 1 was inaccessible due to poor weather conditions. These districts were randomly replaced with other districts within the same province. At the settlement level, 46 of the 264 selected locales were replaced: 21 were inaccessible on security grounds, 8 could not be located or were in the wrong district, 7 were inaccessible due to transportation reasons, 6 were inaccessible due to remoteness, and 4 could not be reached because of weather or other reasons. These were substituted with randomly

selected settlements in the same districts. This represents a customary number of settlement-level replacements for surveys across Afghanistan.

The interviews, averaging 30 minutes in length, were conducted by 230 interviewers (98 female and 132 male) in 34 supervised teams. All interviewers were briefed on the specific requirements of this project and the administration of the questionnaire, and 225 of the 230 had experience from previous ACSOR projects. Three percent of the interviews were directly observed by field supervisors and 16 percent were back-checked in person afterwards. Questionnaires were all subjected to logical controls conducted at ACSOR offices in Kabul and a statistical analysis of the full body of work of each interviewer by D3 Systems.

The survey had a contact rate of 78 percent and a cooperation rate of 94 percent for a net response rate of 73 percent using formulas for rate calculations developed by AAPOR. The impact of clustering on the sample produces an estimated design effect of 2.87 with a margin of sampling error of 3.68 percentage points at the 95 percent confidence level.

All differences between groups described in this paper as "significant" were found to be statistically significant through ANOVA tests. All statistical testing done in this study treated the data as a simple random sample. Assuming a simple random sample, ANOVA tests were run at the alpha=.5 level.

KEY FINDINGS: BIVARIATE ANALYSIS

Comparing respondents' average legitimacy scores by gender, age, education, employment status, socio-economic status, income, religion, and urbanity, we did not find sufficient evidence to reject the null hypothesis that these factors influence variation in legitimacy scores beyond random sampling error. More detailed analysis of these variables is included in Appendix C. Means comparisons indicate that ethnicity, political attitudes, and security situation account for variation in legitimacy scores. The following section explores each

in further detail. Our analysis of the relationship between a respondent's security situation and legitimacy score supports the hypothesis that security situation is a key indicator of state legitimacy.

Ethnicity

Comparing perceptions of legitimacy across key ethnic groups, non-Pashtuns (n=1218) have a mean legitimacy score of 1.85 while Pashtuns (n=797) have a mean legitimacy score of 1.61 (Figure 3). These results are significant at the 95% confidence level, indicating that the null hypothesis can be rejected and the legitimacy scores of Pashtuns are statistically different than those of non-Pashtuns. Among non-Pashtun groups, Hazaras (n=181), Uzbeks (n=206), and Tajiks (n=718) are significantly more likely to have a lower legitimacy score, *i.e.* a more legitimate assessment of the central governments, than Pashtuns. While respondents from twelve additional ethnicities were included in the Afghan Futures Survey, the small share of the total sample these ethnicities represents do not provide sufficient data to draw conclusions about their relationship, if any, with perceptions of state legitimacy (Table 1).

Figure 3: Legitimacy Score by Ethnicity (Pashtun vs. Non-Pashtun)

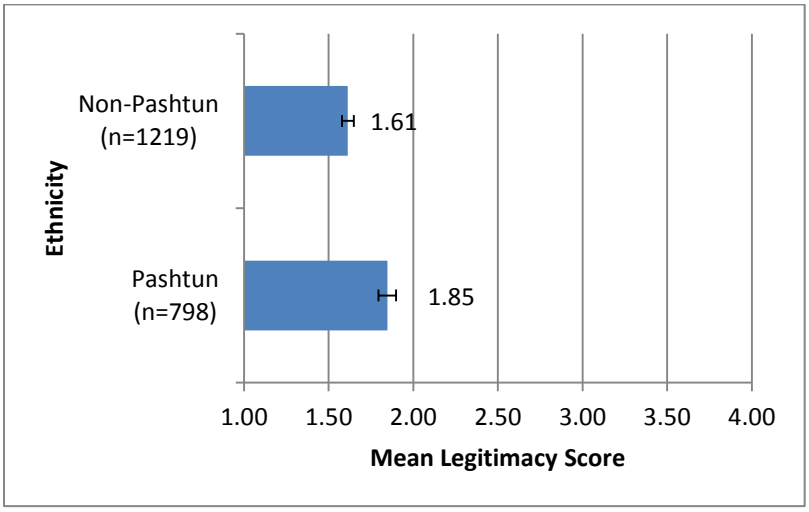


Figure 4: Legitimacy Score by Ethnicity

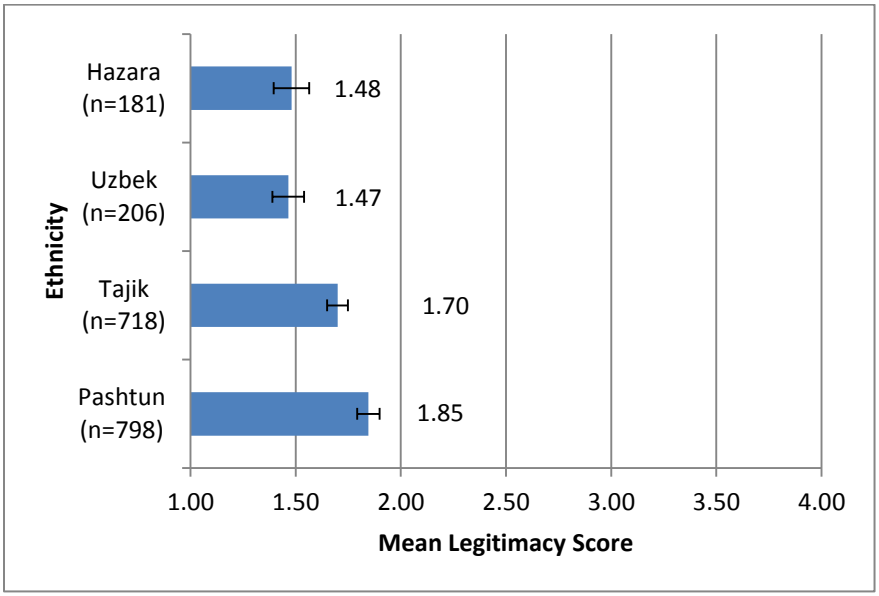


Table 1: Total Sample by Ethnicity

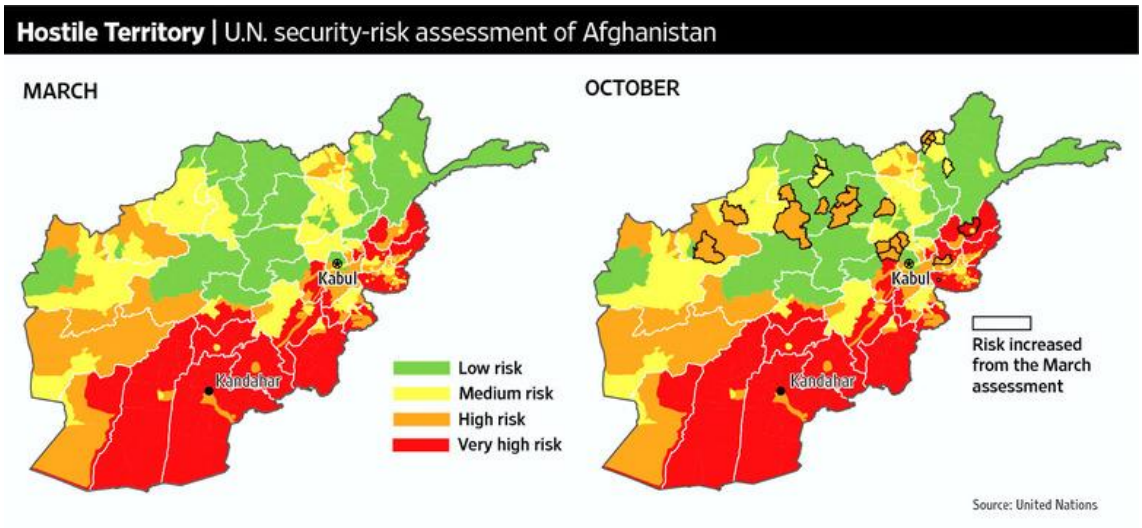
Ethnicity	*Frequency*	*Percent of Sample*
Pashtun	807	40%
Tajik	725	36%
Uzbek	209	10%
Turkmen	28	1%
Hazara	181	9%
Baloch	14	1%
Nuristani	13	1%
Aimak	4	0%
Arab	11	1%
Don't know	1	0%
Sadat	4	0%
Pashaye	11	1%
Qezlbash	1	0%
Tatarie	7	0%
Eshan	10	0%
Bayat	1	0%
Gojar	11	1%
Total	*2039*	*100%*

Primarily residing in the south and east regions of Afghanistan, the Pashtun people make up the largest ethnic group in Afghanistan, comprising 42% of the country's population.[8] According to the 2010 U.N. security-risk assessment of Afghanistan, the south and east regions are the most hostile territories in the country (See Map 1). Thus, Pashtuns may perceive less legitimacy than non-Pashtuns due to their security situation. Pashtun respondents are less likely to rate their security situation as *'very good'* (32%), compared to Non-Pashtun respondents (46%).

Political Attitudes

Attitudes towards various political groups prove to influence perceptions of the central government's legitimacy. As expected, favorable opinions of groups affiliated with the central government (such as the Afghan National Army and Afghan National Police) or in support of the

Map 1: Hostile Territories in Afghanistan, 2010[9]



[8] "Afghanistan," CIA World Factbook, April 22, 2013, https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/af.html

[9] Yaroslav Trofimov, "U.N. Maps Out Afghan Security," *The Wall Street Journal*, December 26, 2010, http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052970203568004576043842922347526.html.

central government (such as the United States) yield perceptions of *more* legitimacy, while those in favor of insurgent groups perceive *less* legitimacy. The results of this survey demonstrate that the Taliban remains unpopular at the national level. An overwhelming majority of overall respondents (91%) report a 'very unfavorable' or 'somewhat unfavorable' view of the Taliban. Furthermore, when asked who respondents blame most for the violence that is occurring in the country, *Taliban* was the most frequent response (38%). Other responses included *Al Qaeda/foreign jihadis* (17%), *the U.S./American forces*, (15%), *NATO/ISAF forces* (6%), and *Obama/Bush/U.S. government/America* (6%). Nearly 9 out of every 10 respondents (89%) reported that they would rather have the current government ruling Afghanistan than the Taliban.

Respondents with *favorable* opinions of the Taliban have higher scores on the legitimacy index than those with *unfavorable* opinions, indicating that those who favor the Taliban think of the central government as *less* legitimate.[10] The mean legitimacy score for those with unfavorable opinions (n=1,829) is 1.66, while the mean for those with favorable opinions of the Taliban (n=162) is 2.22. Although the sample size of those with favorable views of the Taliban is much smaller, the mean legitimacy scores between the two groups are statistically different at the 95% confidence level. This finding indicates that opinion of the Taliban plays a role in shaping Afghans' perceptions of state legitimacy. In light of the central government's role in fighting the Taliban, it is unsurprising that those who have *favorable* views of the Taliban have lower scores of state legitimacy.

While respondents who have favorable views of the Taliban are more likely to perceive less legitimacy, those who view the *United States* favorably perceive more legitimacy. The mean legitimacy score for those with favorable opinions of the U.S. is 1.52 (n=871), while the

[10] Reported figures for *favorable* and *unfavorable* opinions are combined totals of respondents who answered 'very favorable' and 'somewhat favorable' or 'very unfavorable' and 'somewhat unfavorable.'

Figure 5: Legitimacy Score by Opinion of Taliban

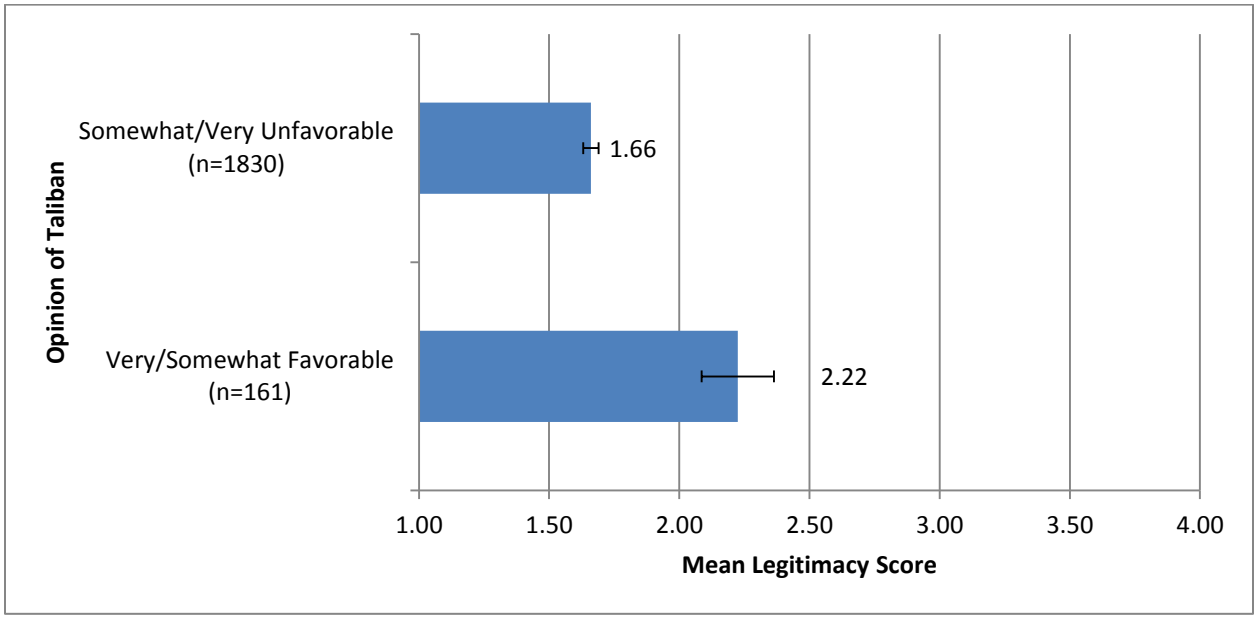


Figure 6: Legitimacy Score by Opinion of US

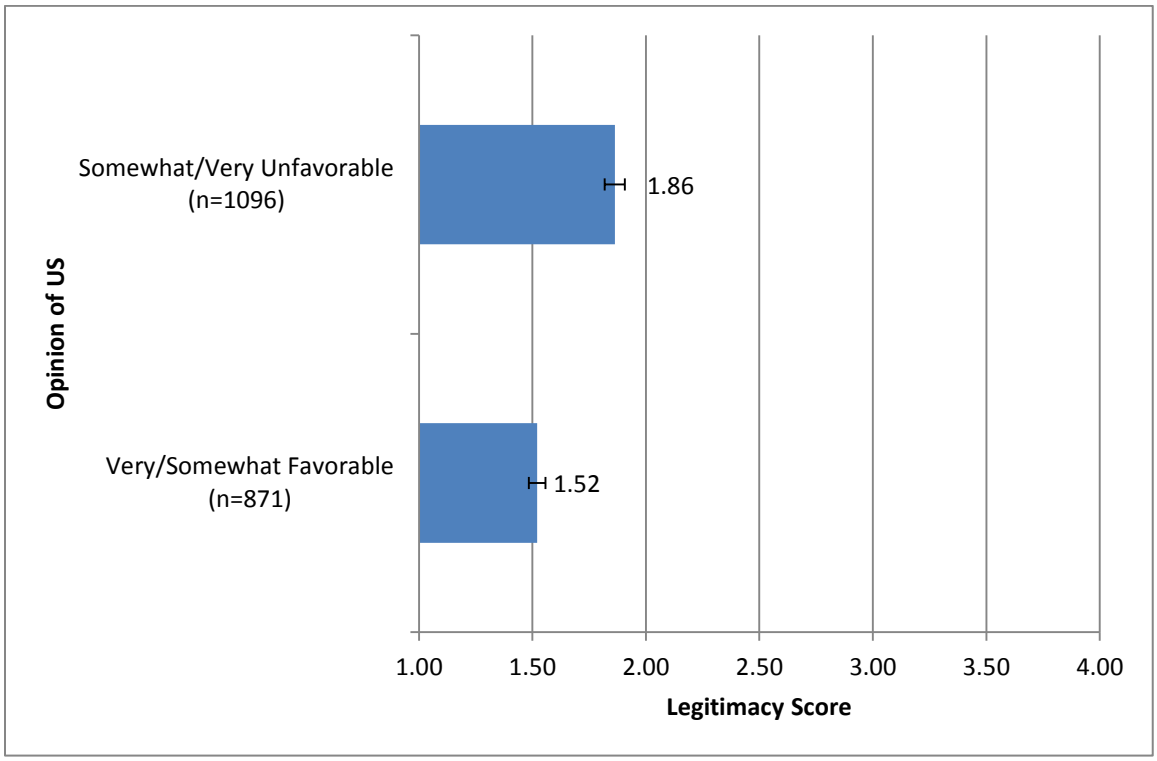
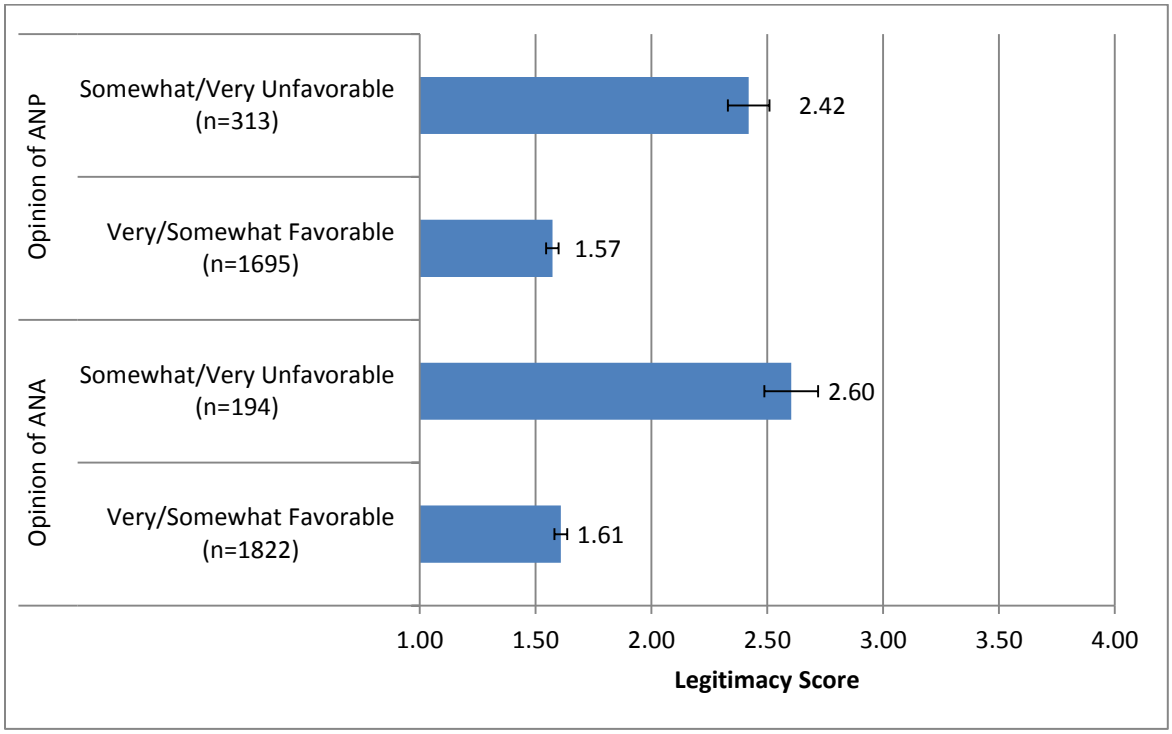


Figure 7: Legitimacy Score by Opinion of Afghan National Army / Afghan National Police



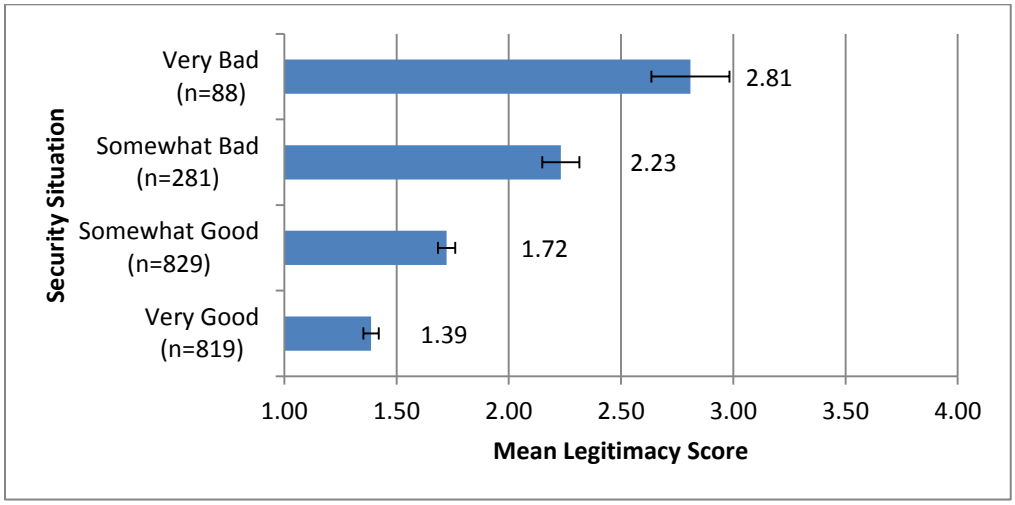
score for those with unfavorable opinions (n=1,096) is 1.86, suggesting that those who view the U.S. favorably are more likely to perceive the central government as more legitimate than those who do not.

Similar patterns emerge when respondents are asked their opinion of the Afghan National Police and Afghan National Army. Those with favorable opinions of the Afghan National Police (n=1,695) have a mean legitimacy score of 1.57, while those who view them negatively (n=313) have a score of 2.42. Furthermore, those with favorable opinions of the Afghan National Army (n=1,822) have a mean legitimacy score of 1.61, while those with unfavorable opinions (n=194) have a score of 2.60. When respondents were asked about their confidence in the Afghan National Army to provide security and stability in their area, a vast majority (90%) said they were 'very confident' or 'somewhat confident.'

Security Situation

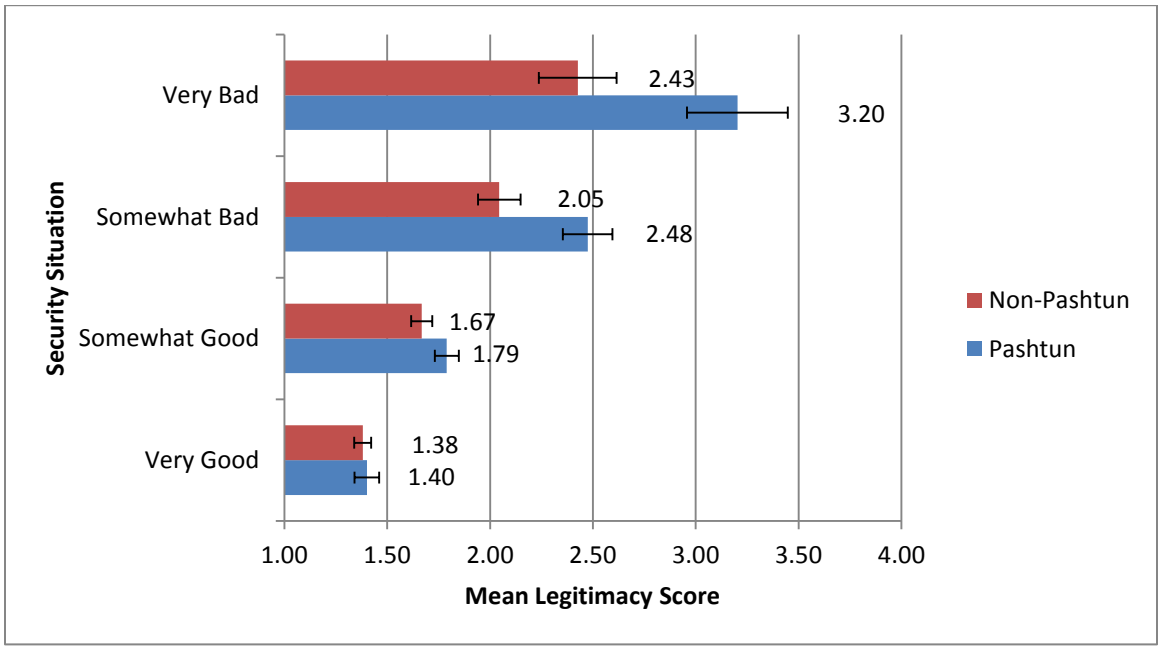
Our findings support our initial hypothesis that perceptions of security are key indicators of legitimacy scores. Sixty-nine percent of respondents who rate the security situation in their area as "very good" or "somewhat good" (n=1,648) have a legitimacy score between 1 or 2, while a much smaller percentage (26%) of those who rate their security situation as "somewhat bad" or "very bad" have the same. Those who rate their security situation as good ('very good' or 'somewhat good', n=1,649) have a mean legitimacy score of 1.55, significantly different from the mean legitimacy score of 2.37 belonging those who report bad security ('somewhat bad' or 'very bad,' n=369). As Figure 8 demonstrates, there is a significant relationship between the level of one's security situation and legitimacy score. These results suggest that the degree to which a respondent's security situation is "good" or "bad" plays a role in Afghans' assessments of the legitimacy of the central government.

Figure 8: Legitimacy Score by Security Situation



Furthermore, taking a closer look at ethnicity and political attitudes, we found there is an interactive relationship between the aforementioned variables and security situation. The *legitimacy gap*, referring to the difference of mean legitimacy scores between groups, becomes more apparent among groups as their security situation worsens. As Figure 9 demonstrates, there no significant difference in legitimacy scores among Pashtuns and non-Pashtuns who rate their security situation as "very good." However, among respondents who rate their security situation as "*somewhat* good" a legitimacy gap emerges between Pashtuns and non-Pashtuns. As security situation worsens, this gap continues to expand. The "legitimacy gap" between Pashtuns and non-Pashtuns thereby manifests itself more strongly as security situation deteriorates.

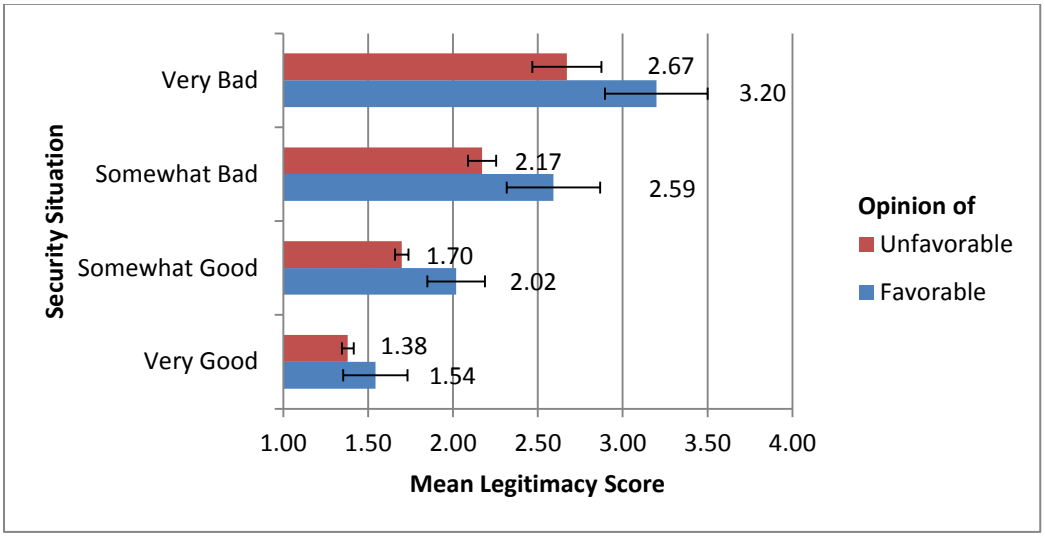
Figure 9: Legitimacy Score by Ethnicity, Controlling for Security Situation



A similar phenomenon appears in the relationship between political attitudes and legitimacy. As security situation deteriorates, the legitimacy gap between Taliban-favorable and Taliban-unfavorable respondents widens. However, the small number of Taliban-favorable respondents in the survey makes the confidence intervals for their legitimacy score statistics quite large. Although the small sub-sample of respondents with favorable opinions of the Taliban yields insufficient evidence to reject the null hypothesis, we note the interactive trend between levels of security and the legitimacy gap.

The existence of such legitimacy gap supports our initial hypothesis that security situation remains a key indicator of perceptions of state legitimacy. As security situation worsens, Afghans perceive the central government to be less legitimate. However, as our analysis demonstrates, the relationship between security situation and legitimacy is complex and interactive with a number of key variables, including ethnicity and political attitudes. Additional research should be done to gain a further understanding of this interaction and explore its causes.

Figure 10: Legitimacy Score by Opinion of Taliban, Controlling for Security Situation



LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

Although our analysis has reached its aims, we do acknowledge that there are a number of limitations restricting this study. We consider this quantitative piece to be an exploratory look at the perceptions of state legitimacy in Afghanistan. The primary limitations of this study include: the operationalization of legitimacy and security, cultural considerations, and difficulties encountered when conducting surveys in conflict environments, such as Afghanistan.

As state legitimacy was not the primary purpose of the Afghan Futures Wave 3 survey, there were no questions that directly ask about legitimacy of the central government. Thus, we created the legitimacy index based on component variables that measure respondents' favorability, confidence, and support for the central government, given the assumption that these three factors play heavily into our definition of legitimacy. In future studies concerned with state legitimacy, we suggest adding a question that directly asks for respondents' perceptions of legitimacy, in addition to questions that probe respondents for reasons why they may perceive the central government to be more or less legitimate.

We also were limited by the variable used to operationalize security. With security being our primary independent variable, our analysis would have benefited from a more robust understanding of perceptions of local security situation. However, we were constrained by the following measure of security: "Would you rate the security situation as very good, somewhat good, somewhat bad, or very bad in your area?" In future studies, we suggest including more in depth questions about security today – as well as compared to typical time frames, such as "one year ago" – by probing about local crime, occurrences of violence, and general feelings of safety.

Cultural considerations may also limit the validity of responses. Based on D3's experience with public opinion surveys in Afghanistan, we are aware that Afghans tend to report

a favorable attitude and support for whoever is in power. Regardless of the actual living conditions and the quality of life in Afghanistan, the majority of Afghans (83%) report favorable ("very favorable" or "somewhat favorable") opinions of the central government. Due to a cultural obligation to respect those in power, respondents have generally positive reactions to all leaders, whether they are village elders, local officials, or national figures. In order to obtain more transparent views of the central government or political leaders, one must ask specific questions about their roles in solving specific problems. For example, although questions about the current administration are likely to yield favorable ratings, much lower ratings are expected if respondents are asked about the effectiveness of the administration in reducing corruption, creating jobs, providing basic services, etc. A major limitation in our legitimacy index is the inflated ratings of the central government from the component variables. In the next Afghan Futures Survey we plan to ask more specific questions on these topics.

Lastly, perhaps the most predictable limitation encountered in this study includes the difficulties of conducting research conflict environments. Of the 129 districts initially drawn in the sample, 14 were inaccessible due to security, transportation, or weather conditions. These were randomly replaced with other districts within the same province. At the settlement level, 46 of the 264 sampling points were replaced: (21) were inaccessible on security grounds, (7) were inaccessible due to transportation reasons, (6) were inaccessible due to remoteness, and (4) couldn't be reached for weather or other reasons. Due to the lack of updated census data, it is challenging to maintain population estimates at the settlement level. Eight sampling points were replaced because the village or Nahia no longer existed or could not be located. Given the instability and unpredictability of hostile regions in Afghanistan, we attempted to draw a

representative sample of the population by substituting inaccessible sampling points with settlements in the same districts.

Appendix A: Afghan Futures Wave 3 Substantive Questions

Q-1. Generally speaking, do you think things in Afghanistan today are going in the right direction, or do you think they are going in the wrong direction?

1. Right direction
2. Wrong direction

_____

DO NOT READ OUT, MUST BE VOLUNTEERED.

3. Mixed directions (vol.)
8. Refused (vol.)
9. Don't Know (vol.) **(63)**

Q-2. I would like to ask you about today's conditions in the village/neighborhood where you live. Would you rate *(insert item here)* as very good, somewhat good, somewhat bad, or very bad in your area?

Check Starting Item, Rotate Starting Item Between a to c only	VG	SG	SB	VB	Ref. (vol.)	DK (vol.)
a.) The security situation	1	2	3	4	8	9
b) Your freedom of movement—the ability to move safely in your area or district	1	2	3	4	8	9
c) Your living conditions overall	1	2	3	4	8	9

Q-3. Do you have a very favorable, somewhat favorable, somewhat unfavorable, or very unfavorable opinion of the following?

	VF	**SF**	**SUF**	**VUF**	**Ref. (vol.)**	**DK (vol.)**
a. The central government in Kabul	1	2	3	4	5	6
b. The Afghan National Army	1	2	3	4	5	6
c. The Afghan National Police	1	2	3	4	5	6
d. The Taliban	1	2	3	4	5	6
e. Haqqani network	1	2	3	4	5	6
f. The United States	1	2	3	4	5	6

Q-4. Who would you rather have ruling Afghanistan today: the current government, or the Taliban?

1. The current government
2. The Taliban

____

3. Other, specify **(DO NOT READ OUT, MUST BE VOLUNTEERED)**
8. Refused (vol.)
9. Don't Know (vol.)

Q-5. From today's perspective, do you think it was very good, mostly good, mostly bad or very bad that US military forces came into our country to bring down the Taliban government in 2001?

1. Very good
2. Mostly good
3. Mostly bad
4. Very bad

____

8. Refused (vol.)
9. Don't Know (vol.)

Q-6. Who do you blame the most for the violence that is occurring in the country? [**OPEN ENDED QUESTION WITH PRE CODES, DO NOT READ RESPONSES, CODE ONE ONLY]**

Q-6. **WRITE ONE ANSWER ONLY**:_____

1. Afghan government/Karzai
2. Afghan forces
3. U.S./American forces
4. NATO/ISAF forces
5. Taliban
6. Al Qaeda/foreign jihadis
7. Obama/Bush/U.S. government/America
8. Local commanders/warlords
9. Drug traffickers

_____

80. Other **SPECIFY:** _____
98. Refused
99. Don't Know

Q-7. Over the past 12 months, would you say the Taliban in Afghanistan have grown stronger, grown weaker, or remained about the same?

1. Grown stronger
2. Grown weaker
3. Remained about the same

____

8. Refused (vol.)
9. Don't Know (vol.)

Q-8. In the terms of each item below, over the past 12 months would you say the performance of U.S. and NATO/ISAF forces has got better, got worse, or remained about the same?

	Got Better	**Got Worse**	**Remained about the same**	**REF (vol.)**	**DK (vol.)**
a. Providing security in our country	1	2	3	8	9
b. Avoiding civilian casualties	1	2	3	8	9
c. Training the ANA and local police	1	2	3	8	9

Q-9. Now, for each group I mention, please tell me how confident are you in its ability to provide security and stability in your area – very confident, somewhat confident, not so confident or not confident at all?

	Very Confident	**Somewhat Confident**	**Not so Confident**	**Not Confident at All**	**REF (vol.)**	**DK (vol.)**
a. The central government led by Hamid Karzai.	1	2	3	4	8	9
b. The Taliban.	1	2	3	4	8	9
c. United States or NATO or ISAF forces	1	2	3	4	8	9
d. The Afghan National Army (ANA)	1	2	3	4	8	9

Q-10. For each of these groups, what would you say is its level of support among the people in this area – very strong support, fairly strong support, fairly weak support or no significant support at all?

	Very Strong Support	**Fairly Strong Support**	**Fairly Weak Support**	**No Significant Support at All**	**REF (vol.)**	**DK (vol.)**
a. The central government led by Hamid Karzai.	1	2	3	4	8	9
b. The Taliban.	1	2	3	4	8	9
c. United States or NATO or ISAF forces	1	2	3	4	8	9
d. The Afghan National Army (ANA)	1	2	3	4	8	9

Appendix B: ANOVA Tests

ANOVA Table

			Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Legitimacy * Pashtun2	Between Groups	(Combined)	26.303	1	26.303	57.749	.000
	Within Groups		917.474	2014	.455		
	Total		943.778	2015			

ANOVA Table

			Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Legitimacy * D11. Do you consider yourself to be…	Between Groups	(Combined)	36.771	3	12.257	26.495	.000
	Within Groups		878.276	1899	.463		
	Total		915.047	1902			

ANOVA Table

			Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Legitimacy * Q3d. Do you have a very favorable, somewhat favorable, somewhat unfavorable, or very unfavorable opinion of the following?...The Taliban	Between Groups	(Combined)	47.108	2	23.554	52.848	.000
	Within Groups		896.386	2011	.446		
	Total		943.494	2013			

ANOVA Table

			Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Legitimacy * Q3f. Do you have a very favorable, somewhat favorable, somewhat unfavorable, or very unfavorable opinion of the following?... The United States	Between Groups	(Combined)	60.504	2	30.252	68.840	.000
	Within Groups		881.614	2006	.439		
	Total		942.117	2008			

ANOVA Table

			Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Legitimacy * Q3b. Do you have a very favorable, somewhat favorable, somewhat unfavorable, or very unfavorable opinion of the following?...The Afghan National Army	Between Groups	(Combined)	174.202	2	87.101	227.755	.000
	Within Groups		770.198	2014	.382		
	Total		944.399	2016			

ANOVA Table

			Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Legitimacy * Q3c. Do you have a very favorable, somewhat favorable, somewhat unfavorable, or very unfavorable opinion of the following?... The Afghan National Police	Between Groups	(Combined)	189.492	2	94.746	253.033	.000
	Within Groups		753.709	2013	.374		
	Total		943.201	2015			

ANOVA Table

			Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Legitimacy * Q2a. Would you rate (insert item here) as very good, somewhat good, somewhat bad, or very bad in your area?... The security situation	Between Groups	(Combined)	269.249	3	89.750	267.654	.000
	Within Groups		675.268	2014	.335		
	Total		944.517	2017			

ANOVA Table

			Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Legitimacy * PashtunSS	Between Groups	(Combined)	298.466	7	42.638	132.643	.000
	Within Groups		646.050	2010	.321		
	Total		944.517	2017			

ANOVA Table

			Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Legitimacy * TalibanSS	Between Groups	(Combined)	285.615	7	40.802	124.456	.000
	Within Groups		658.902	2010	.328		
	Total		944.517	2017			

ANOVA Table

			Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Legitimacy * D1. Gender	Between Groups	(Combined)	1.551	1	1.551	3.315	.069
	Within Groups		942.966	2016	.468		
	Total		944.517	2017			

ANOVA Table

			Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Legitimacy * Age Groups	Between Groups	(Combined)	7.257	3	2.419	5.197	.001
	Within Groups		937.260	2014	.465		
	Total		944.517	2017			

ANOVA Table

			Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Legitimacy * Regional Command	Between Groups	(Combined)	72.081	5	14.416	33.243	.000
	Within Groups		872.436	2012	.434		
	Total		944.517	2017			

ANOVA Table

			Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Legitimacy * Education Groups	Between Groups	(Combined)	1.358	3	.453	.967	.408
	Within Groups		943.159	2014	.468		
	Total		944.517	2017			

ANOVA Table

			Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Legitimacy * D4a. Can you perform any of the following activities in your native language?...Read a letter	Between Groups	(Combined)	.003	1	.003	.006	.941
	Within Groups		944.514	2016	.469		
	Total		944.517	2017			

ANOVA Table

			Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Legitimacy * D10. What is your household's total monthly income from all sources, that is all types of income for all the people living at this address?	Between Groups	(Combined)	21.167	7	3.024	6.582	.000
	Within Groups		923.350	2010	.459		
	Total		944.517	2017			

ANOVA Table

			Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Legitimacy * D15. SES Level	Between Groups	(Combined)	14.115	4	3.529	7.634	.000
	Within Groups		930.402	2013	.462		
	Total		944.517	2017			

ANOVA Table

			Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Legitimacy * M6. Geographic Code	Between Groups	(Combined)	2.265	3	.755	1.614	.184
	Within Groups		942.251	2014	.468		
	Total		944.517	2017			

ANOVA Table

			Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Legitimacy * D12. What is your religious affiliation? (If respondent says Muslim ask) Do you consider yourself to be Sunni or Shia?	Between Groups	(Combined)	9.196	1	9.196	19.819	.000
	Within Groups		935.321	2016	.464		
	Total		944.517	2017			

Appendix C: Additional Bivariate Analysis

Methods

The index used in this study measures perceptions of state legitimacy on a scale of 1 to 4, with '1' being the most legitimate and '4' being the least legitimate. As the legitimacy index is an interval dependent variable and all independent variables in the bivariate analysis are nominal or ordinal, means comparisons were used to study the relationships between the independent variables and the dependent variable.

Demographic Characteristics (Gender, Age, and Geography)

Comparing respondents' legitimacy scores across their gender and age, there is little variation among perceptions of state legitimacy across these demographic characteristics.[11] A means comparison indicates that there is little variation in legitimacy score across gender (Figure 3); as the mean legitimacy scores of each gender are within the other's 95% confidence interval, there is not sufficient evidence to reject the null hypothesis that such difference is due to random sampling error. A means comparison of respondents' legitimacy scores by age group yields similar results; there is insufficient evidence that the difference in means across age group is due to factors outside of random sampling error (Figure 5).

A means comparison of respondents by regional command suggests geography is an indicator of respondents' opinions of the central government, with respondents in the west of Afghanistan having the least legitimate rankings of the central government and respondents in the north having the most legitimate. However, the small size of the sub-sample for some regional commands does not allow for most robust conclusions to be drawn.

[11] All cross-tabulations are provided in Appendix B.

Figure 11: Legitimacy Score by Gender

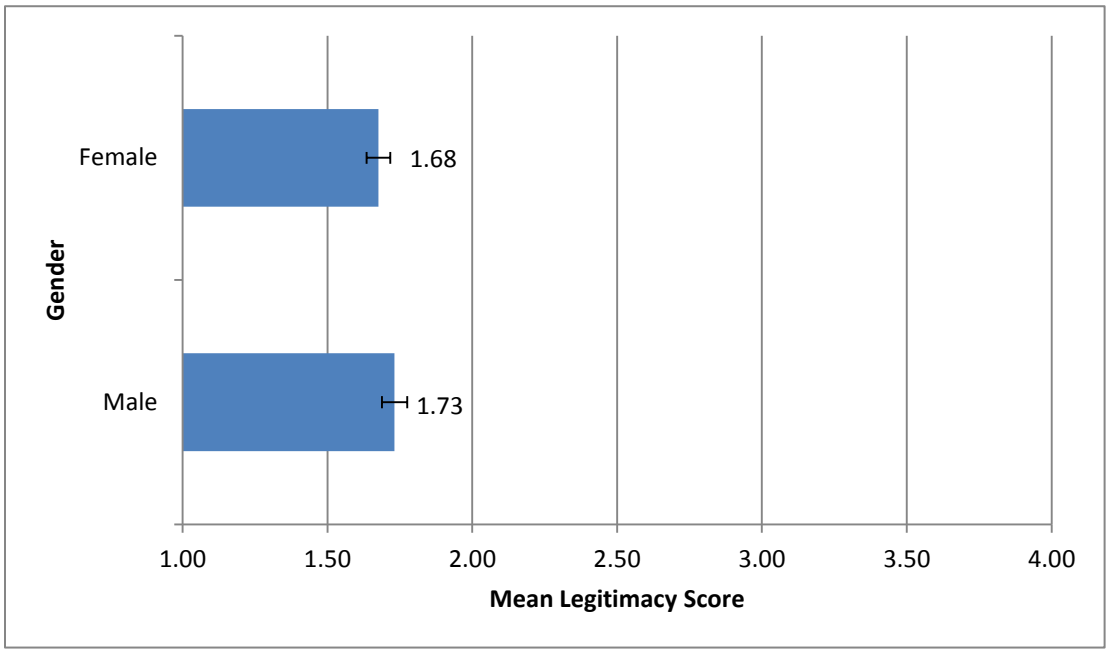


Figure 12: Legitimacy Score by Age

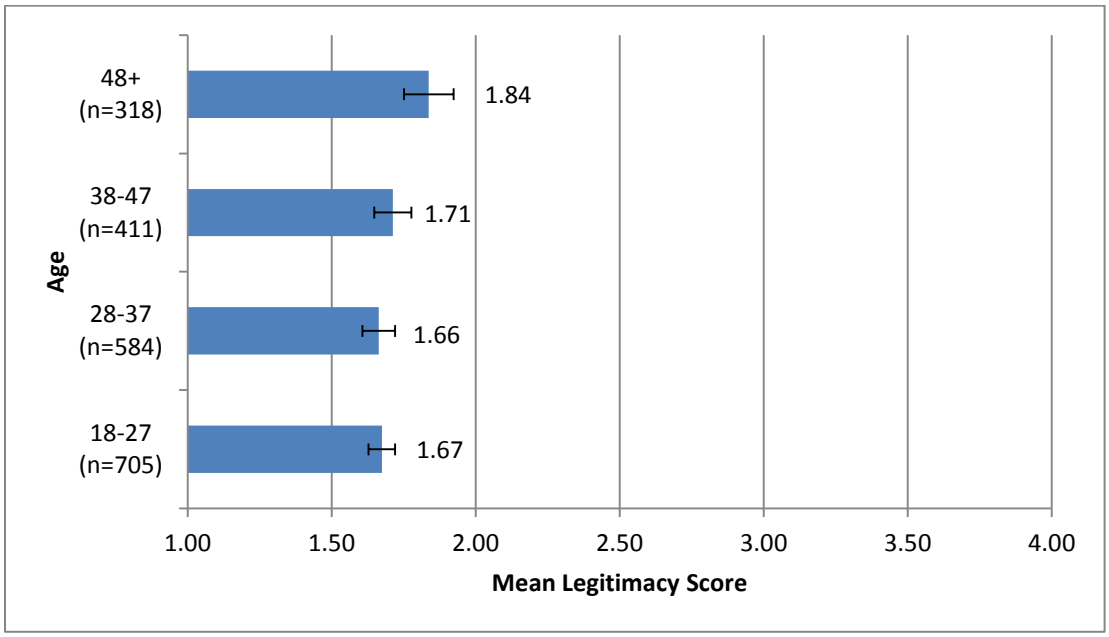
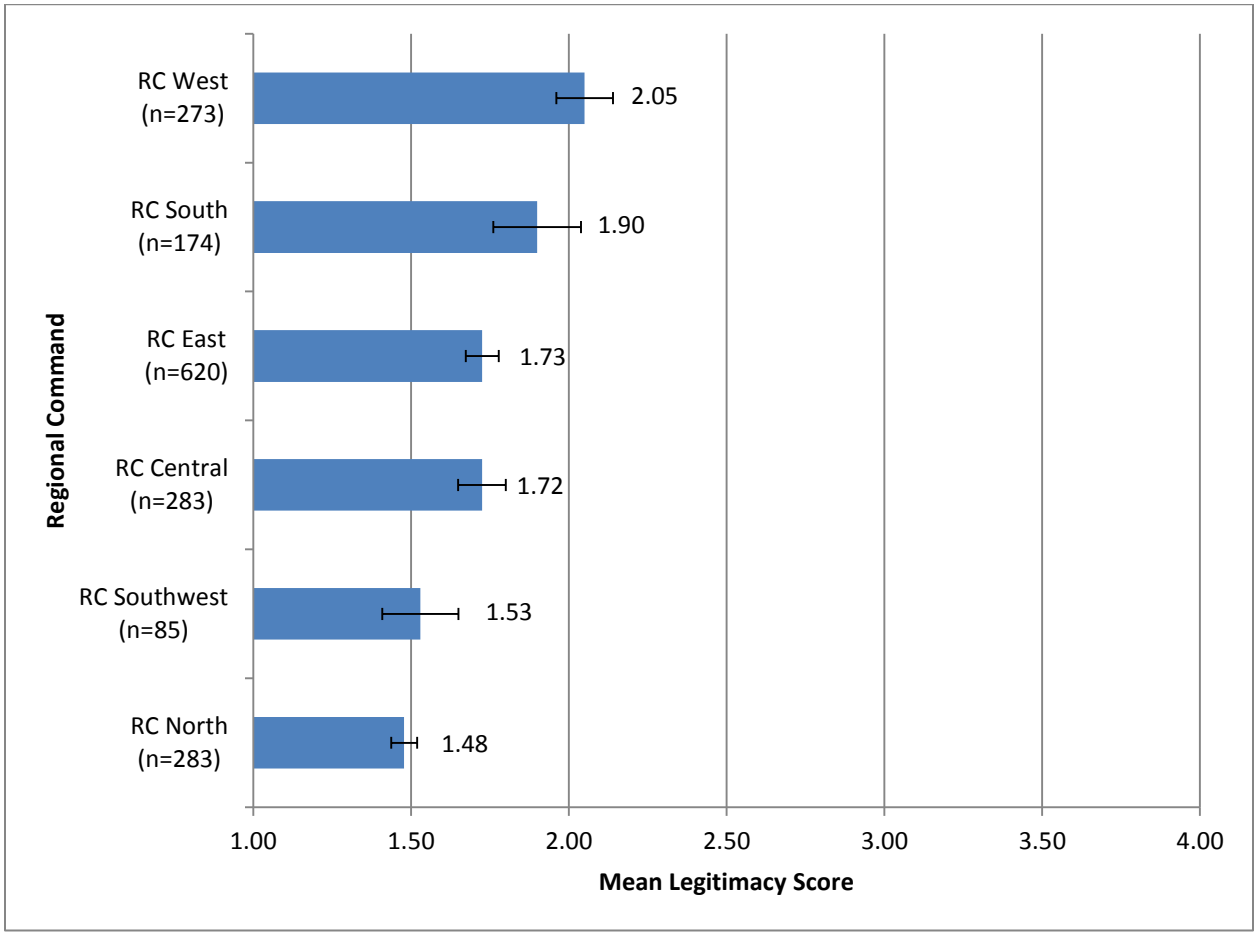


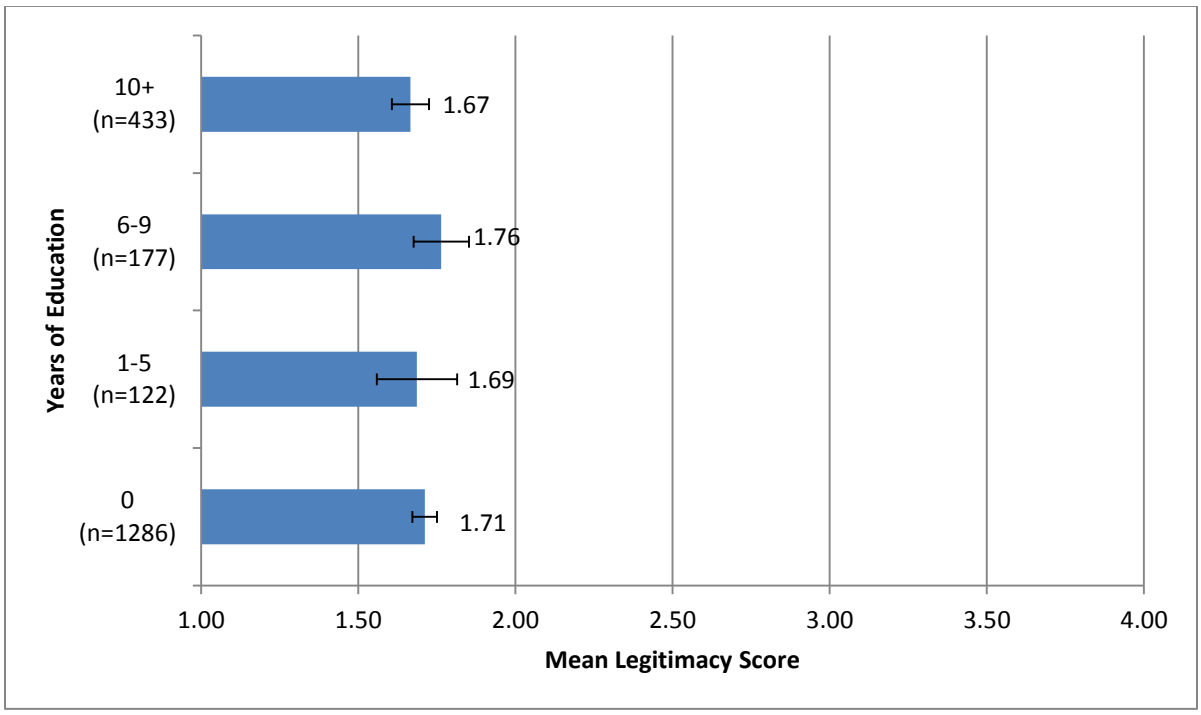
Figure 13: Legitimacy Score by Regional Command



Socioeconomic Characteristics (Education, Literacy, Employment, Income, and SES)

Additional means comparisons do not provide ample evidence to reject the null hypothesis that differences in legitimacy scores across socioeconomic variables are ascribable to factors outside of random sampling error. Among these socioeconomic variables, means comparisons of years of education and literacy suggest that education level and attainment have little effect on respondents' legitimacy scores. Similarly, the small difference in means across respondents of different employment status suggests that employment status accounts for little variation in respondents' legitimacy scores (Figure 3).[12]

Figure 14: Legitimacy Score by Years of Education



[12] Employment status was determined by a close-ended question asking "What is your job status now?" Respondents who replied "Working full-time" or "Working part-time" were grouped together as "Working"; respondents who replied "Unemployed-Looking for work," "Unemployed-Not looking for work," "Housewife (not working outside of the home)," "Student/Apprentice," and "Retired/Disabled" were grouped together as "Not Working."

Figure 15: Legitimacy Score by Literacy

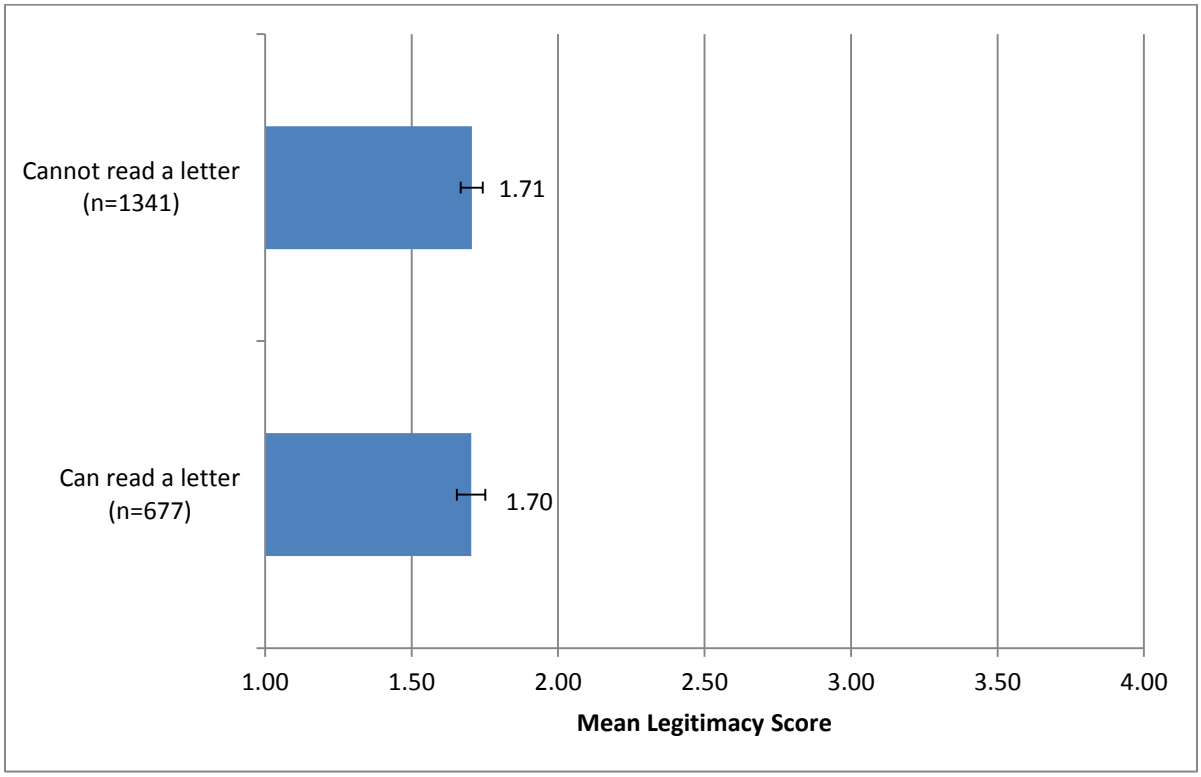
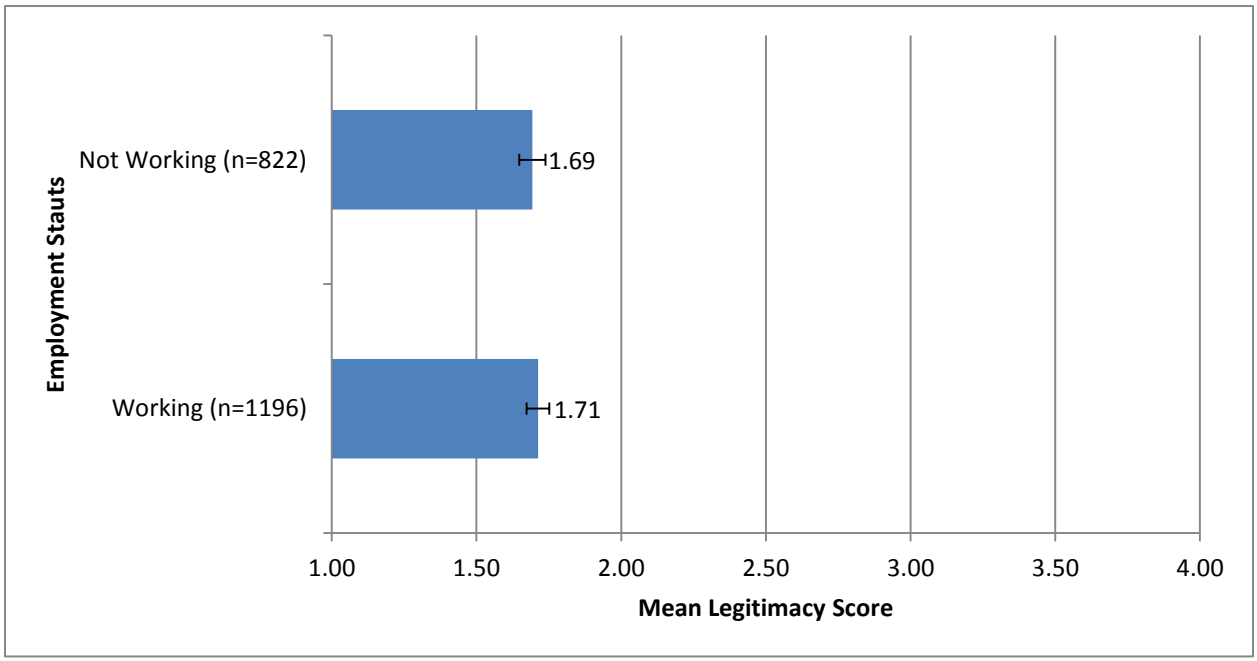


Figure 16: Legitimacy Score by Employment Status



Means comparisons of legitimacy scores by monthly income, as well as by interviewers' own assessments of respondents' socioeconomic status, likewise do not point to any observable relationships. Given the overlapping confidence intervals in both comparisons, there is insufficient evidence to suggest monthly income or socioeconomic status have statistically significant relationships with perceptions of state legitimacy.

Figure 17: Legitimacy Score by Monthly Income

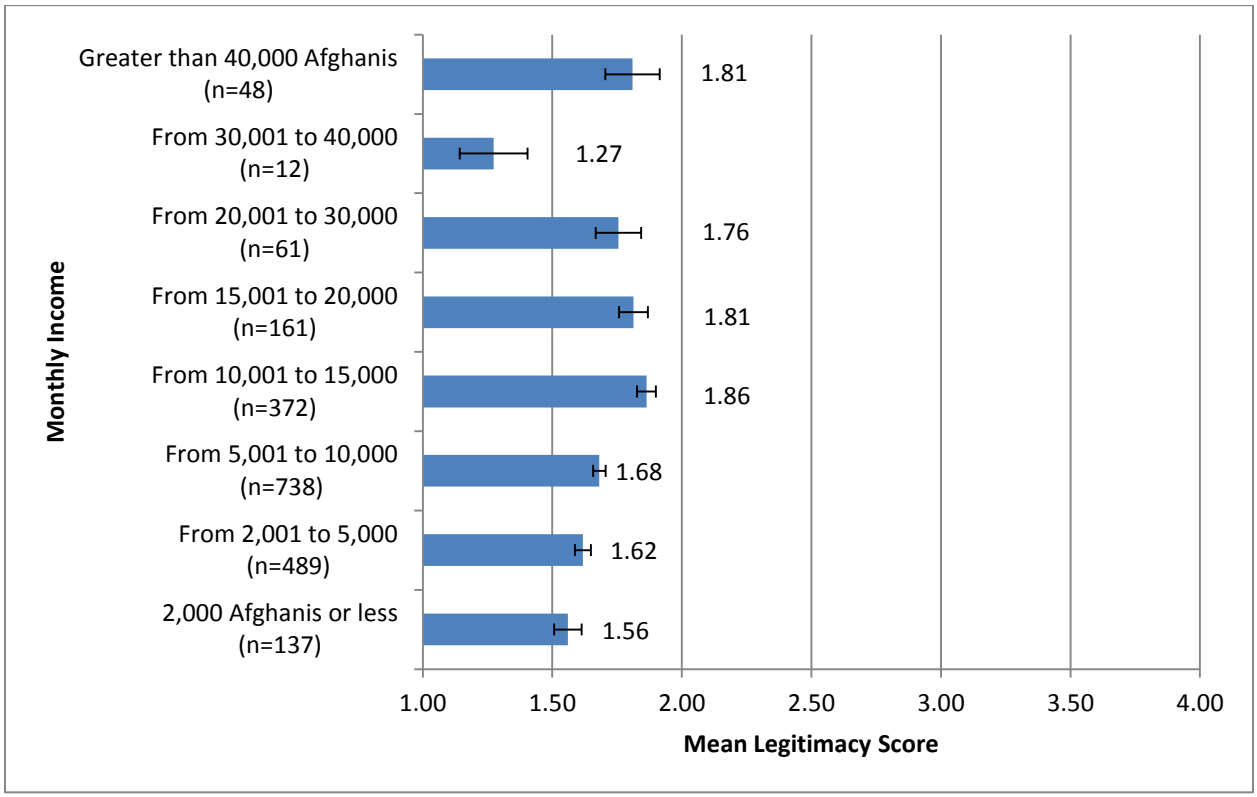
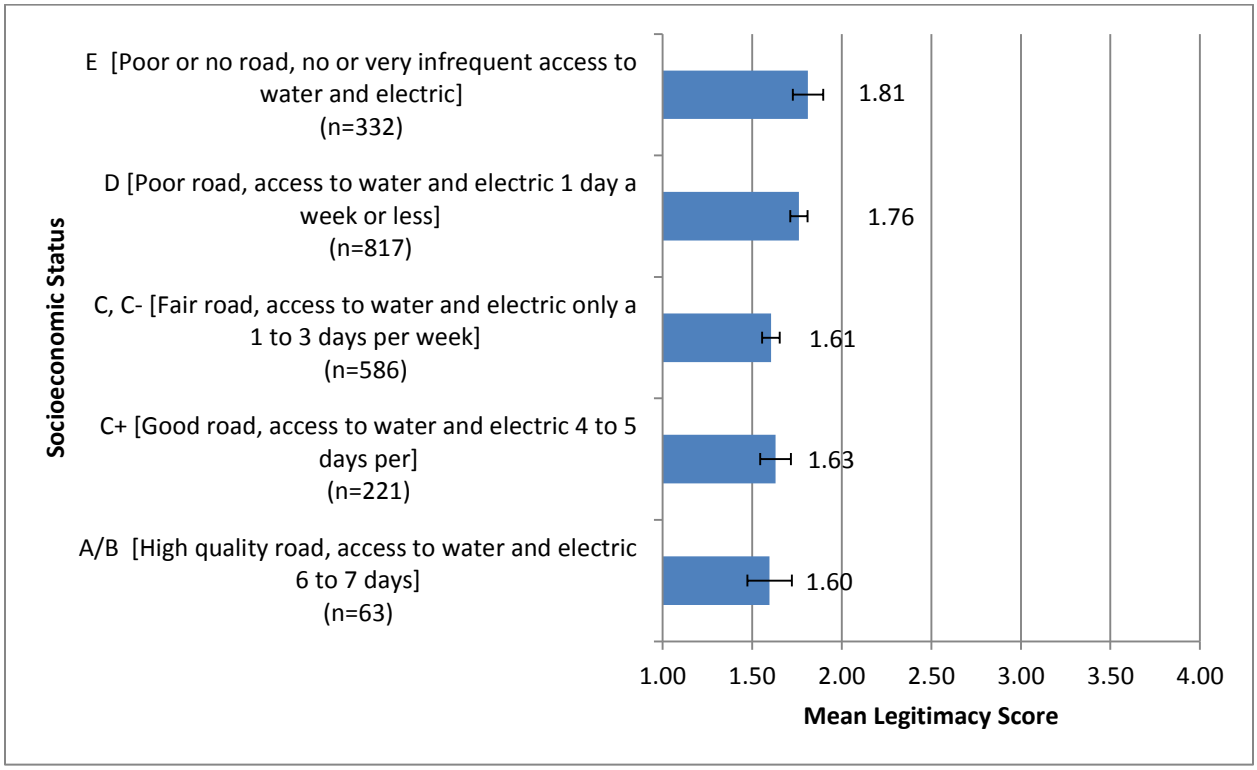


Figure 18: Legitimacy Score by Socioeconomic Status

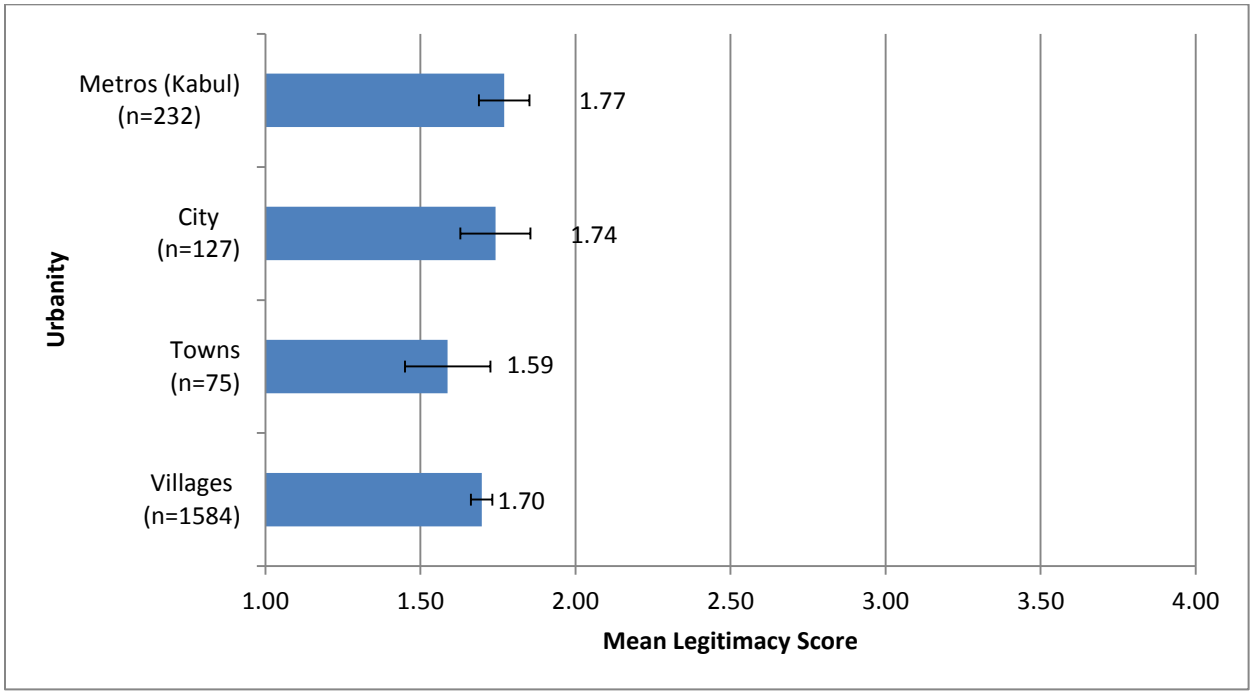


Cultural Characteristics (Urbanity and Religion)

Our analysis does not provide sufficient evidence to reject the null hypothesis that variations in legitimacy score across urbanity are due to factors outside of random sampling error. As the large majority of interviews were conducted with respondents at the village level, additional interviews would need to be conducted with respondents in towns, cities, and large metropolitan areas (Kabul) for any further conclusions to be drawn.

In contrast to the aforementioned variables, religion has a statistically significant relationship with legitimacy score. Shi'a Muslims (n=211) in the sample had a mean legitimacy score of 1.51, while Sunni Muslims had a mean legitimacy score of 1.73; this suggests that Shi'a rate the central government as more legitimate than Sunnis. While this is an interesting finding, it is probably attributable to the ethnic breakdown of Sunnis and Shi'a included in the sample more than any meaningful relationship between religion and legitimacy score. In light of the fact that Pashtuns and Tajiks – both of which had higher mean legitimacy scores than other ethnic groups

Figure 19: Legitimacy Score by Urbanity



– constitute 44% and 39% of Sunnis included in the survey, and that Hazara – the ethnic group with the lowest mean legitimacy score – constitutes more than 85% of Shi'a in the survey, ethnicity is more likely the confounding variable driving the relationship between religion and legitimacy score.

Figure 20: Legitimacy Score by Religion

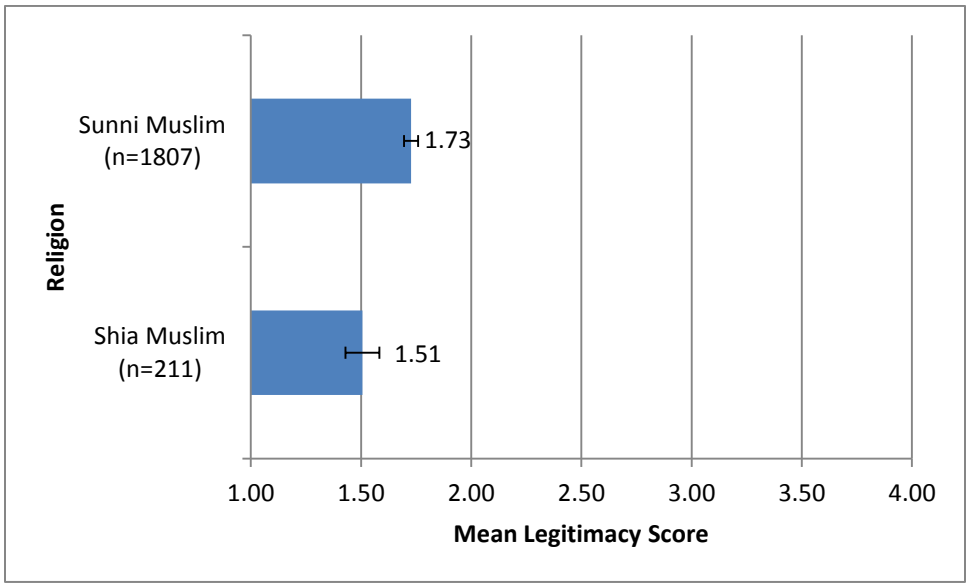


Figure 21: Sunni (n=1828) Sub-Sample by Ethnicity

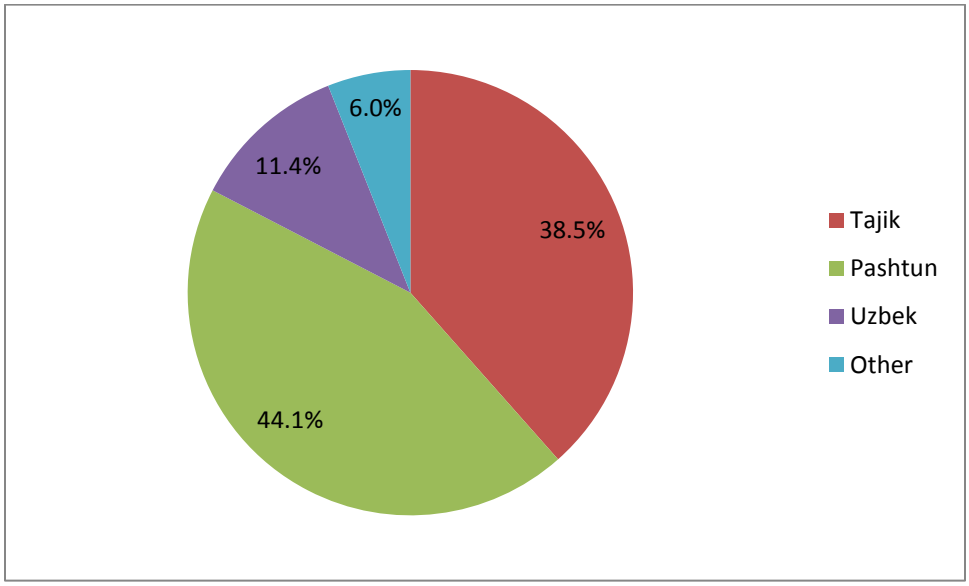
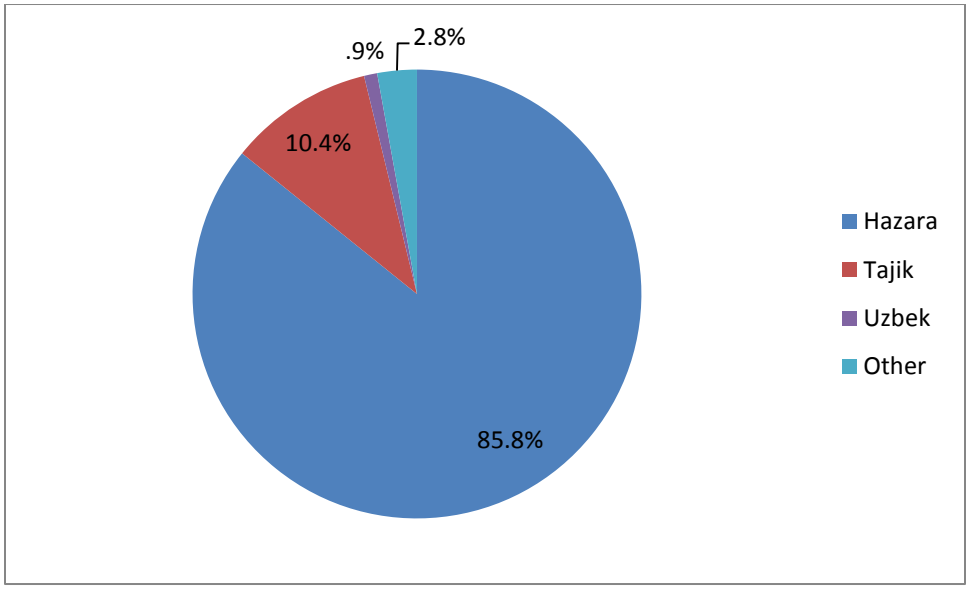


Figure 22: Shi'a (n=211) Sub-Sample by Ethnicity



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