

Senior Appointments and Corruption within the Afghan Mol: practices and perceptions



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Senior Appointments and Corruption within the Afghan Mol: practices and perceptions

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Establishing meritocracy in appointments is an indispensable part of police reform and the establishment of the rule of law in post-conflict societies because the de-politicization of the police force and professional provision of security and law-enforcement depend on it. This study, however, demonstrates that meritocracy does not dominate the policy of appointments of the MoI and the ANP. Although the number of educated officials and police officers have increased and merit-based appointments are made to positions for which technical expertise is needed, connections and money are still instrumental in securing many senior positions within MoI and ANP. There also has been improvement in ethnic representation of the police chiefs, particularly in districts but to lesser extent in the MoI. Non-meritocratic appointments, nevertheless, has undermined police accountability and the relation between the ANP and the public. The on-going insurgency and the ANP engagement in fight against insurgents are also viewed to preclude the efforts to promote civilian policing. As the responsibility of providing security will lie on the shoulders of the Afghan security forces and international aid will dwindle after 2014, establishing meritocracy and fighting the corruption in the ANP appointment system seems more urgent than ever for long-term stability and durable peace in the country.

Recommendations

- The new government needs to introduce and, more importantly, enforce clear educational qualifications and experience requirements for senior appointments and promotions.
- The leadership of the Ministry of Interior must be insulated from political influence and pressures from politicians for making appointments or promotions within the MoI and ANP.
- The HR office of MoI is responsible for overseeing appointments and promoting meritocracy. This study, however, shows that this office has had limited success in promoting merit-based appointments. The function of this institution and its procedures need to be reviewed and examined to ensure that it performs its envisioned function.
- There is currently no mechanism for obtaining public feedback about the ANP. An ombudsman office needs to be established, independent of MoI and ANP structures, for receiving public complaints and feedback regarding the police performance. The office must have the power to investigate the complaints and publicize them.
- Central to the corruption within MoI and ANP is the prevalent impunity and lack of transparency in dismissal of corrupt officials. To end the existing culture of impunity, the new government needs to take the prosecution of cases of corruption seriously and end secrecy surrounding the prosecution of cases of corruption and the decisions made on these cases.
- Reinstate the cyclical rotation procedure for all senior appointments at province and district level.
- While this report mainly deals with just perceptions of corruption, the fact that so many police officers are adamant that corruption is widespread within the MoI should warrant an in-depth investigation into the issue, as the legitimacy of the Afghan state is at stake.

GLOSSARY

ANA	Afghanistan National Army
ANP	Afghanistan National Police
Mol	Ministry of Interior
CoP	Chief of Police
PCoP	Provincial Chief of Police
DCoP	District Chief of Police
NTM-A	NATO Training Mission-Afghanistan
EUPOL	European Union Police Mission
UNAMA	United Nations Assistance Mission to Afghanistan
UNDP	United Nations Development Program

INTRODUCTION

Police reform is widely believed to be essential for long-term peace building in post-conflict societies, since it is prerequisite for providing security and establishing the rule of law.¹ The three pillars of police reform are usually indicated as technical training, de-politicization of the police force and establishing a merit-based system of appointments and promotions.² This project aims at examining one of the key pillars of police reform in Afghanistan, that is, dynamics of senior appointments within the Ministry of Interior and the Afghanistan National Police. It looks at corruption and nepotism in senior appointments, which are inimical to the accountability of the police force and, consequently, to the rule of law in Afghanistan. The research project intends to put pressure on policy makers to take meritocracy and transparency in these appointments seriously by providing insights to key stakeholders and raising public awareness about this critical issue.

The project created a database to centralize the information collected through qualitative, interviews with approximately 250 individuals middle rank to senior police officials. The study collected limited quantitative and/or demographic data which will be included in the database and analysis. The study looked at the interviewees' past, qualifications and reputation, current affiliation and the reasons for which they were appointed. The sample is comprehensive enough to provide the very first study of such kind, allowing us to draw ideal-types of appointments and ideal-types of corruption related to them and what all this means for governance and state building in the context of transition.

The long-term impact of the research will hopefully be contributing to increased transparency and meritocracy for senior appointments within the ministry of interior and the police ranks, which would contribute to the success of police reform and the improved accountability of police force and the rule of law in Afghanistan.

The study is organised into two main sections, one dedicated to appointments and the other to the issue of corruption, which is linked to it. The section on appointments first discusses the data gathered through this survey, the perceptions of professional police officers with regard to the same appointments and finally the mechanisms presiding over appointments in the MoI. The perceptions of professional police officers are important because these men are supposed to be the protagonists of any successful effort to fully professionalise the MoI. This sub-section discusses topics such as the extent of professionalization so far and the various factors driving appointments. The concluding paragraph raises doubts about the suitability of a mere head count of professional officers as a measure of the meritocratic character of a system. The section on corruption is divided in two sub-sections, one

¹ Rachel Neild, 'Democratic Police Reform in War-Torn Societies', *Conflict, Security & Development*, Vol. 1, No. 12: 21-43, 2001; Marina Caprini, 'Civil Society and Democratic Oversight of the Security Sector: A Preliminary Investigation', in *Sourcebook on Security Sector Reform*, Philipp Fluri and Miroslav Hadzic (eds.), Geneva: Geneva Center for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces, 2004.

² Sanam N. Anderlini and Camille P. Conaway, 'Security Sector Reform', in *Inclusive Security, Sustainable Peace: A toolkit for Advocacy and Action*, The Institute for Inclusive Security, 2004; Damian Lilly, Robin Luckham, and Michael V. T. Page, *A Goal Oriented Approach to Governance and Security Sector Reform*, London: International Alert, 2002.

dedicated to evidence of anti-corruption efforts, as described by the interviewees, and the other to the description of corrupt practices, as provided by the same interviewees.

Methodology

The study is based on qualitative interviews to collect information about qualifications, ethnic and regional background, political affiliation and the reasons for which senior appointments within the MoI and ANP were made. The senior positions covered by this study will include:

- a. All provincial chiefs of police in July 2014 and two years earlier;
- b. All district chiefs of a representative sample of 8 provinces in July 2014 and a year earlier;
- c. All chiefs of main departments at the central level including deputy ministers, in July 2014 and a year earlier.

47 qualitative interviews were conducted in Kabul and provinces, in addition to about 15 interviews dedicated to data gathering. 36 of the qualitative interviews were conducted in the targeted provinces and another 11 in Kabul. Media articles were also used as a source of information about appointments, as often high level appointments are reported and even discussed in the press.

This type of data allowed to carry out two types of analysis:

- 1. a sociological analysis of appointments, based on objective information such as the regional, ethnic, professional and educational background of the appointees;
- 2. a social and political analysis of perception of appointments and of corruption within the MoI.

The distinction drawn above is an important one as there is limited objective information available in Afghanistan about police corruption.³ Very few cases of corruption have gone as far as prosecution and even fewer have resulted in convictions. Therefore, there are no judicial statistics to use. What is being discussed in this study is therefore not an uncontroversial reality, but the views expressed by police officers about the environment where they work and about their colleagues. Although such an inquiry is not unsusceptible to subjectivity, it offers valuable insights about the police since the respondents enjoy internal insights which outsiders lack. The same interviewees were also asked about their views of appointments in the MoI and what drives them. Their answers were then compared with the objective data we collected about the ethnic, education and regional background as well as political affiliation and experience of these officers.

In order to assess how the appointment dynamics impact the police performance and professionalism, we also used IWA's *Afghanistan National Corruption Survey* and a public opinion poll run by the Asia Foundation on annual basis. The advantage of these surveys is that they are pretty consistent across years (2009-2013) as the same questions are asked each year, following the same sampling criteria.

This report is organized in five parts. Part I examines the dynamics of appointments in the center and provinces. Part II studies the perception of police professionalism, its prospect and challenges as viewed

³ *There have been a number of surveys (such as the Survey of People of Afghanistan by the Asia Foundation and National Corruption Survey by IWA) conducted over the past few years studying police corruption as well. Even these studies, however, are subjective since they make inquiry about people's perception of police corruption, rather than actual corruption perpetrated by the police.*

by the police officers. Part III investigates the drivers of corruption. Part IV looks at non-meritocratic professionalization and police performance.

Part I: Dynamics of appointments

The dynamics of appointments is important for police reform and the establishment of the rule of law in post-conflict societies because the de-politicization of the police force and professional provision of security and law-enforcement depend on it. De-politicization of the police (insulation of the police force from politics) is to ensure that the police force provides security and enforces the rule of law across the country impartially and in an unpartisan manner, regardless of the political affiliation and ethnic background of the communities they serve.⁴ The police are expected to serve the public interests, rather than the interests of political elites, factions or ruling party.⁵ While a completely impartial police force might be an ideal type never to be embodied in actual reality, significant progress in this direction is important for reconciliation and trust building among different ethnic groups, and consequently sustainable peace, in post-conflict countries where inter-ethnic relations are often marred by lack of trust and hostility, due to the years of conflict and war.⁶ The indispensable step toward de-politicization of the police, built on Samuel Huntington's concept of 'objective civilian control' of the police force, is the isolation of the police force from politics by making senior appointments to the police based on merit and qualifications, rather than political ties, and allowing professional officers to manage the internal affairs and daily operation of the police without the intervention of political appointees and politicians.⁷

In addition, the dynamics of appointments directly impact the capacity of the police as a security force and the main agent of law enforcement. A system of merit-based appointments and promotions is much more likely to lead to the establishment of a police force that is capable of discharging its duties effectively and efficiently. Even if perfect meritocratic criteria of appointment were not applied, only educated police officers are likely to develop the knowledge of the body of laws and regulations, norms and standards to which an effective police force is supposed to abide to. On the contrary, a system of appointment based on nepotism or venality affects negatively the establishment of a capable police force and undermines accountability and the provision of security and law enforcement.⁸

In Afghanistan, however, it does not take a survey to establish that meritocracy does not dominate the policy of appointments of the MoI. Some appointments are almost universally considered to be suspicious because of their odd character. Some of the most obvious examples mentioned by many interviewees include:

- One of the senior MoI officials, previously the secretary of an influential governor and with no experience of policing, is widely believed to have been appointed for political reasons. [Int. 1]

⁴ Marina Ottaway, 'Rebuilding State Institutions in Collapsed States', *Development and Change*, Vol. 33, No. 5: 1001-1023, 2002.

⁵ Rachel Nield, 2001.

⁶ Marina Ottaway, 2002.

⁷ Samuel P. Huntington, *The Soldier and the State. The Theory and Politics of Civil-Military Relations*, London: Harvard University Press, 1957.

⁸ Andrew Wilder, 'Cops or Robbers? The Struggle to Reform the Afghan National Police'. *Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit, Issue Paper Series*, 2007.

- A district police chief of Balkh province is just being rotated between two districts, near each other, contrary to rotation practices. [Int. 2]
- The police officer responsible for a highway in northern Afghanistan has been ten years in that job, without ever been transferred. Since this is an obvious break of the rules [officers are supposed to rotate to a new post every three years] and the position is believed to be quite lucrative, there is speculation that he either enjoys strong political protection, or keeps buying his position. [Int. 2]
- The former head of a police district of Kabul was promoted to the rank of Colonel and Head of district in just 16 months after he joined the police. He is now trying to become a General. [Int. 3]
- The head of a security ring of Kabul became a Colonel in 3 months and commander in 6 months. He nonetheless spends 2 weeks a month in Dubai and oversees his personnel from there. [Int. 3]
- The chiefs of three police districts in Kabul are the brothers of MPs; none of these chiefs had more than 1-2 years of experience in the police and were supervising subordinate officers with 15-20 years of experience. [Int. 1]
- The head of one of Kabul's police districts was a shopkeeper previously, and he was appointed as police chief without any police education, not even short-term training. [Int. 1]
- The Nephew of a deputy minister became colonel after just attending a 6-month police course. [Int. 4]

More in general, many interviewees mentioned the fact that 'there are lots of people who don't know anything about their work and don't have skills, but became heads of departments, hence the suspicion have arisen that they were appointed because of political connections or for other non-meritocratic reasons. [Int. 6]

Appointments at the centre

The data collected through this survey suggests that between mid-2012 and mid-2014 the professional background of the 23 top MoI staff improved modestly, if any at all. For instance, the number of those who graduated from the police academy rose from 5 to 6, of those with a university degree from 1 to 3 and those graduated from the military academy from 4 to 6. Former militia commanders from the 1990s saw their number decline from 6 to 4. This change mostly occurred during the tenure of Minister Patang (see Table 1).⁹

While a positive development, the growing number of professionals at the top of the MoI does not rule out the existence of other biases in appointment. One of the targets of the police reform efforts have

⁹ *The relationship between Minister Patang and the parliament was soured after he publicized that he was under intense pressure from MPs to employ their relatives but he rejected such requests. It is also believed that his dismissal from his position was not unrelated to his resistance to such pressures.*

been to establish an ethnically representative police force – the representation of ethnic groups in the police to be proportionate to their population.¹⁰ As late as 2012, however, Tajiks were still clearly over-represented at the top of the MoI, with 45% of positions. This was at the expense of every other ethnic group. By mid-2013 Tajiks were still over-represented, but Pashtuns had caught up to some extent and the two ethnic groups accounted for 41% of top positions each. By July 2014 Pashtuns had grown to 50%, but not at the expense of Tajiks, still at 41%. Smaller ethnic groups were by 2014 almost insignificant, accounting for 9% of top positions altogether (Table 2).

A look at the regional background of top MoI staff shows clear signs of persistent bias in appointments: the Central Region, which included Kabul, suffered a decline in Patang's time even if it remained the single largest source of top MoI officials. Under Daudzai the region recovered dramatically and by July 2014 it accounted for 59% of all top MoI positions, leaving all other regions under-represented (if represented at all). This further exacerbates the demographic imbalance of the MoI since most Tajik officials come from this region rather than other parts of the country. Although the demographic weight of the Central Region is the highest, it should be noted that most top level staff were not from Kabul city, where most of the population of the region is concentrated, but from Parwan, Panjshir, Kapisa, Wardak and Logar.

The unbalanced representation of ethnic groups and regions within the MoI is inimical to the reputation and impartiality of the MoI as a key security sector institution. An ethnically representative police force can improve the relationship between citizens and the police, while the domination of the police force by one or even more ethnic groups would undermine the legitimacy of the police and would exacerbate the resentment and grievances of under-represented ethnic groups.¹¹

Table 1: professionalism of top ranking MoI staff

	Jul-12	Jul-13	Jul-14
High level police education ¹²	5	6	6
Low level police education ¹³	4	3	2
University degree	1	1	3
High school	1	1	3
High level Military education	4	6	6
Low level military education		1	
Khad education	1	1	
Former jihadi	6	5	4
Not known	1	1	
TOTAL	23	25	24
%			

¹⁰ 'Reforming Afghan National Police', a joint report by of the Royal United Services Institute for Defence and Security Studies and the Foreign Policy Research Institute, 2009, www.rusi.org.

¹¹ Marina Caprini, 2004.

¹² Officer courses.

¹³ NCO and patrolmen courses.

High level police education	21.7	24.0	25.0
Low level police education	17.4	12.0	8.3
University degree	4.3	4.0	12.5
High school	4.3	4.0	12.5
High level Military education	17.4	24.0	25.0
Low level military education	0.0	4.0	0.0
Former jihadi	26.1	20.0	16.7
Khad education	4.3	4.0	0.0
Not known	4.3	4.0	0.0
TOTAL	100	100	100

Table 2: ethnic background of top level Mol staff

	Jul-12	Jul-13	Jul-14
Pashtun	8	9	11
Tajik	10	9	9
Hazara	1	1	1
Uzbek	1	1	1
Other	1	1	
Not Known	1	1	
TOTAL	22	22	22
%			
Pashtun	36.4	40.9	50.0
Tajik	45.5	40.9	40.9
Hazara	4.5	4.5	4.5
Uzbek	4.5	4.5	4.5
Other	4.5	4.5	0.0
Not Known	4.5	4.5	0.0
TOTAL	100.0	100.0	100.0

Table 3: regional background of top Mol staff

	Jul-12	Jul-13	Jul-14
North-east	4	4	2
North			1
Central region	10	7	13
Bamian-Daikundi	1	1	
East	2	3	2
South-east	1	2	2
South	1	1	2

West	3	3	
NK		1	
TOTAL	22	22	22
%			
North-east	18.2	18.2	9.1
North	0.0	0.0	4.5
Central region	45.5	31.8	59.1
Bamian-Daikundi	4.5	4.5	0.0
East	9.1	13.6	9.1
South-east	4.5	9.1	9.1
South	4.5	4.5	9.1
West	13.6	13.6	0.0
Not Known	0.0	4.5	0.0
TOTAL	100.0	100.0	100.0

Appointments in the periphery

As already found with regard to top level MoI staff, between mid-2012 and mid-2014 the professional level of Provincial Chiefs of Police (PCoP) improved considerably, with their number increasing from 7 to 15 (44% compared to 21%) (Table 4, Figures 1-3). The main difference compared to the MoI, however, is the timing of the change: in this case it did not occur under Patang's tenure, but under Daudzai's. It was mainly CoPs with an army background who were replaced, whose share of all PCoPs collapsed by two thirds (Table 5, Figures 4-6).

Ethnic and regional representation of the ANP has been one of the main objectives of the police reform since ethnic or regional imbalances undermine the accountability and legitimacy of the police.¹⁴ In terms of where the PCoPs were coming from there were disparities compared to the MoI. Pashtuns were already well represented in 2012 and came down from 56% to 44% in 2013, staying there in 2014 as well. The representations of other ethnic groups fluctuated but Tajiks were still over-represented in 2014 (41%). However, and perhaps more importantly, even in the case of PCoPs the large majority came from the Central Region in 2013 and 2014 (41%). The next best represented region, the South-east, accounted for just 15% (Table 6, Figures 7-9).

Table 4: provincial chiefs of police by professionalism (actuals)

	Professional police	Army	University	High school	Jihadi	Jihadi with high school	No education	TOTAL
Jul-14	15	3	1	1	12	2		34
Jul-13	6	9	0	1	17	1		34
Jul-12	7	11			13	2	1	34

¹⁴ 'Reforming the Afghan National Police', a joint report by Royal United Services Institute for Defense and Security Studies and the Foreign Policy Research Institute, www.rusi.org.

Figure 1: provincial chiefs of police by professionalism in 2012, %

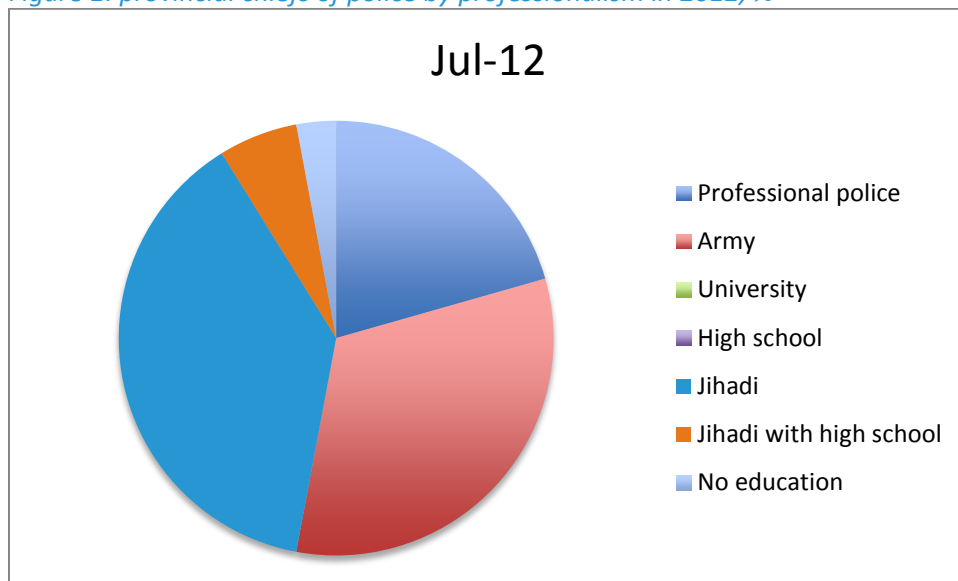


Figure 2: provincial chiefs of police by professionalism in 2013, %

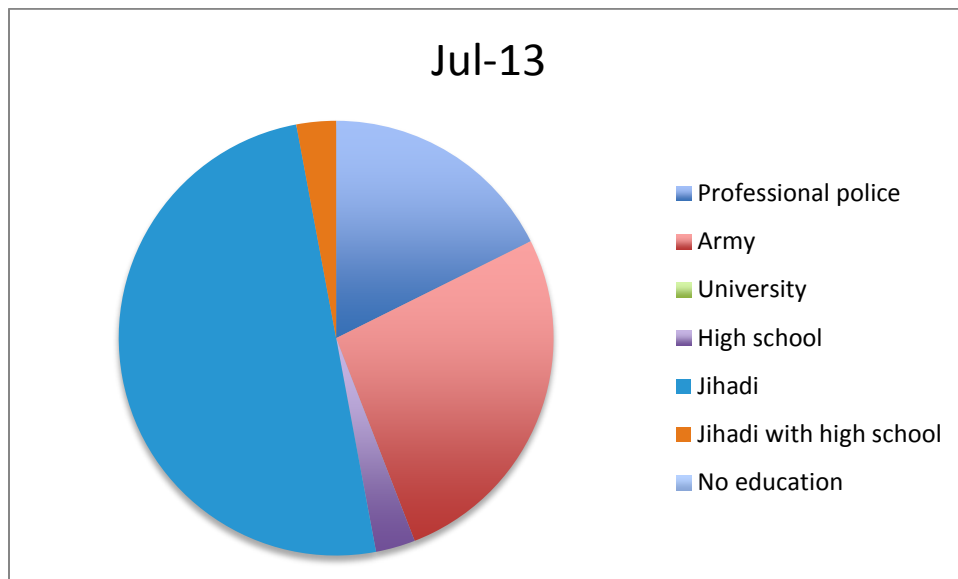


Figure 3: provincial chiefs of police by professionalism in 2014, %

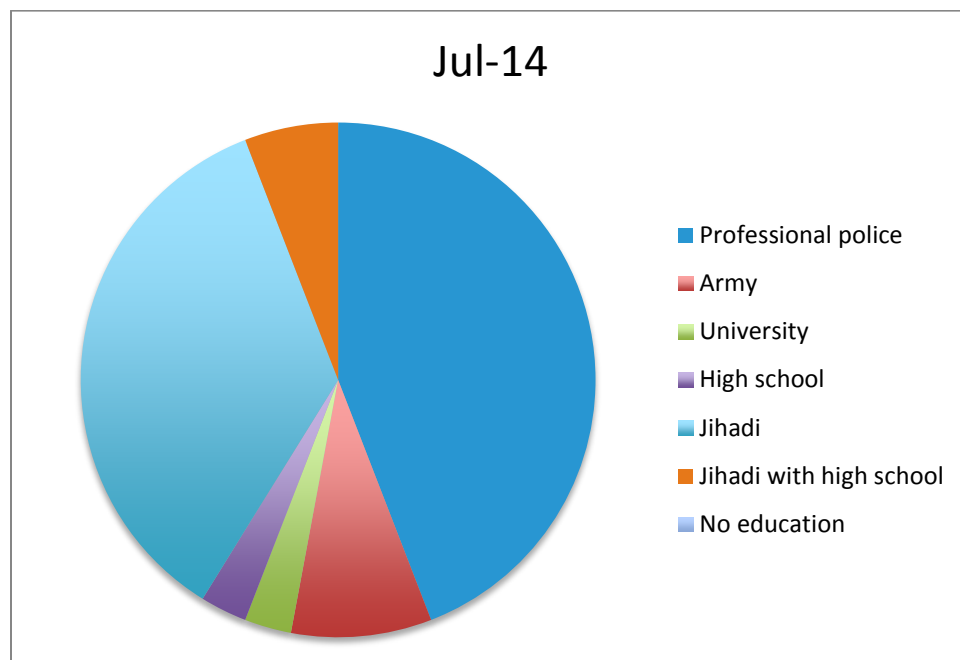


Table 5: Provincial Chief of Police by ethnicity, actuals

	Pashtun	Tajik	Hazara	Uzbek	Other
Jul-14	15	14	3		2
Jul-13	15	16	0	2	1
Jul-12	19	11	0	3	1

Figure 4: Provincial Chief of Police by ethnicity, 2012 (%)

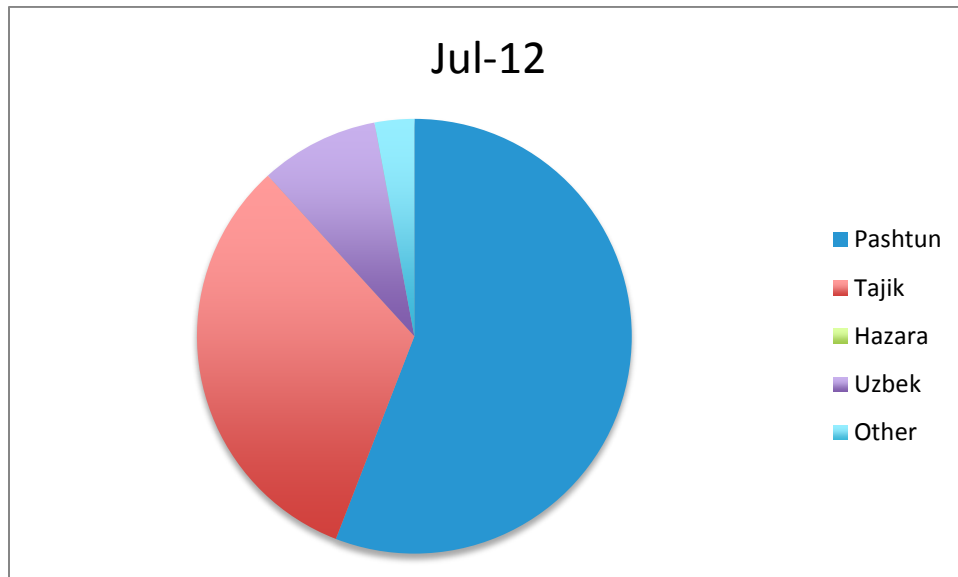


Figure 5: Provincial Chief of Police by ethnicity, 2013 (%)

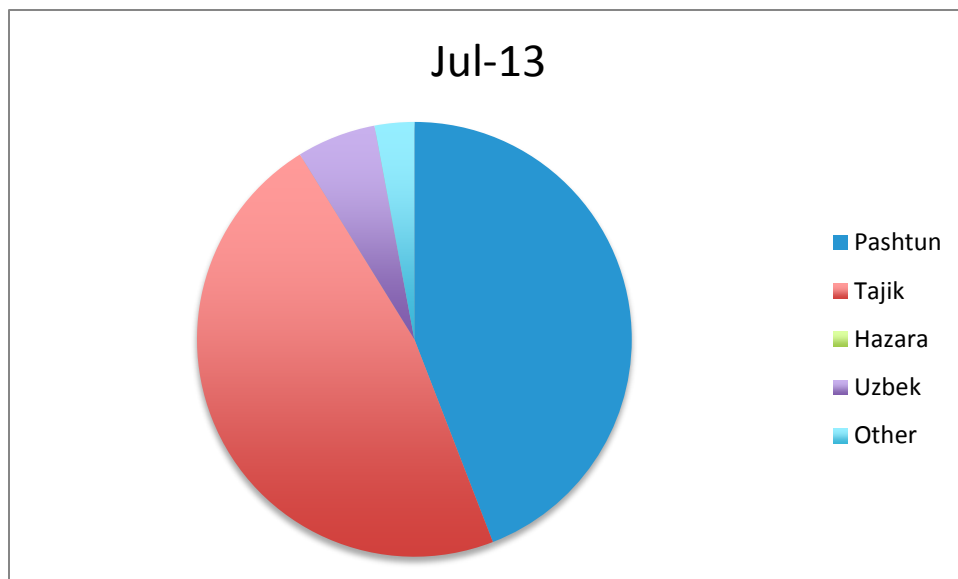


Figure 6: Provincial Chief of Police by ethnicity, 2014 (%)

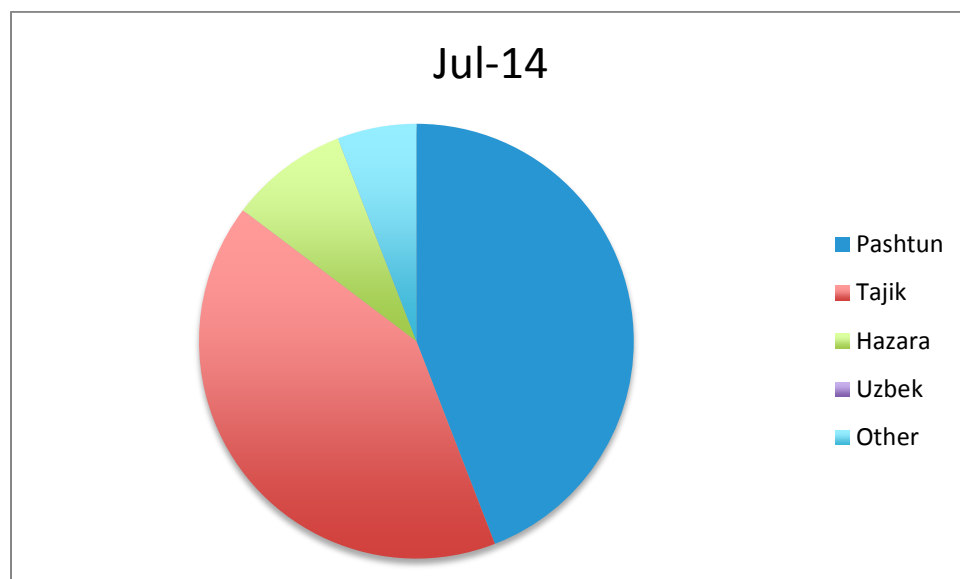


Table 6: provincial Chiefs of police by region

	2012	2013	2014
West	2	2	1
Central	7	15	14
East	3	1	3
South-east	4	3	5
Bamian	2	1	1
South	7	6	4
North	4	3	4
North-east	5	1	2

Figure 7: provincial Chiefs of police by region, 2012 (%)

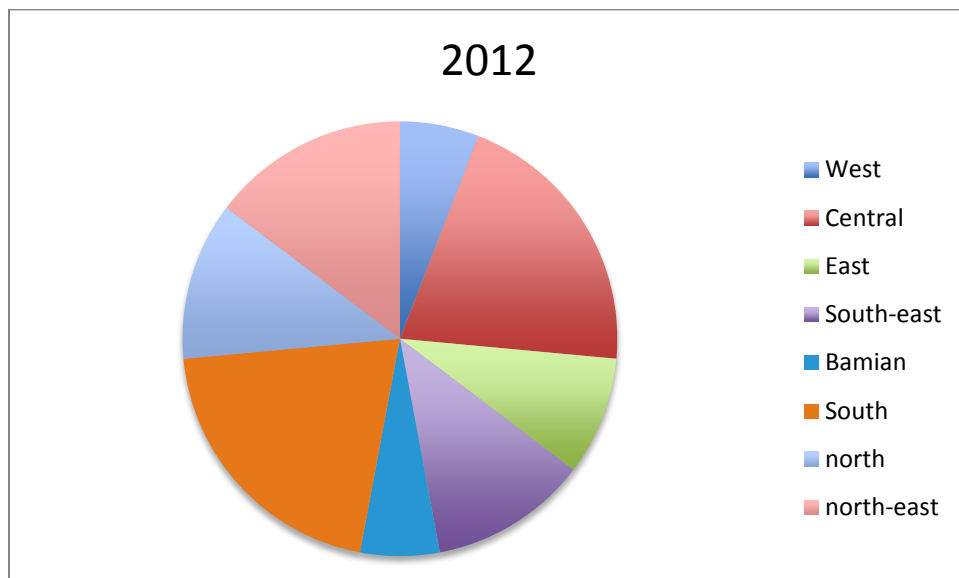


Figure 8: provincial Chiefs of police by region, 2013 (%)

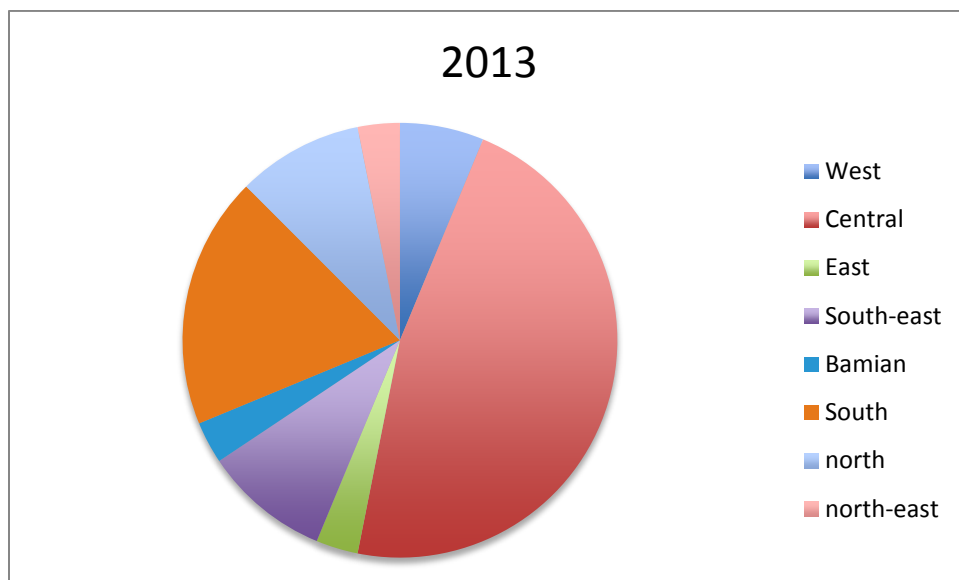


Figure 9: provincial Chiefs of police by region, 2014 (%)

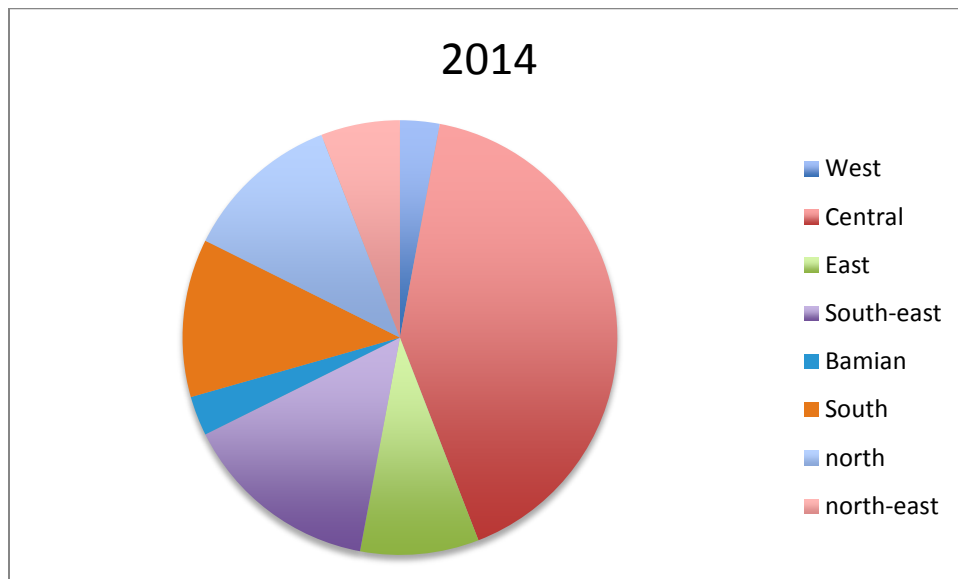


Table 7: provincial chiefs of police: average time in office (in days)

Total:	
2002-2014	461
2014	425
2013	479
2012	497
By region:	
Central	430
East	440
West	443
North-east	457
South	470
North	485
South-east	514
Bamian-Daikundi	518

Table 7 shows the average time the provincial police chiefs have been serving in office, which is an important indicator of police professionalism. The MoI official procedures recommends, similar to the practices in the West, rotating police chiefs every three years. On the one hand, Serving in office for shorter period of time would preclude them from gaining sufficient experience in the district for optimal performance and release of their duties. On the other hand, serving in a district for too long would

undermine innovation and accountability. As Table 7 shows, the average time that PCoPs have spent in office is almost one and half years, which shows too quick turnover of police chiefs in the districts.

At the district level a different picture emerges, with a strong preponderance of Pashtun CoPs (56%). The general rule seemed to be that while in Pashtun districts a Pashtun CoP would serve, non-Pashtun districts were under the command of mixed ethnicity CoP, including relatively often Pashtuns (Table 8).

As shown in Table 8, the major disparities were observed in Kunduz and Balkh, among the eight provinces we surveyed. In Kunduz Tajiks were overrepresented at the expense of Pashtuns and minorities, such as Turkmen and Arabs. In Balkh Pashtuns and Tajiks were overrepresented at the expense of minorities in the province, such as Hazaras and Turkmen. A less severe imbalance is also observed in Faryab, with underrepresentation of Uzbeks, while overrepresentation of Pashtuns is observed in Herat. In other provinces, however, the distribution of District CoPs positions seem to be fairly proportional with the ethnic distribution of the province population.

Table 8: Ethnic Distribution of District Police Chiefs and Population in Selected Provinces (%)

	Ghazni		Nangarhar		Kunduz		Balkh	
	Police	Population	Police	Population	Police	Population	Police	Population
Ethnicity								
Pashtun	50.0	46.4	90.9	97.0	16.7	35.5	46.2	14.9
Tajik	5.6	8.3	9.1	1.0	66.7	22.7	38.5	45.6
Hazara	33.3	45.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	15.4	18.3
Uzbek	5.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	16.7	19.2	0.0	5.5
Turkmen	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	8.3	0.0	11.4
Others	5.6	0.0	0.0	2.0	0.0	14.3	0.0	4.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
	Faryab		Kandahar		Bamyan		Herat	
	Police	Population	Police	Population	Police	Population	Police	Population
Ethnicity								
Pashtun	21.4	16.5	93.3	99.1	0.0	0.0	53.3	39.8
Tajik	21.4	7.2	0.0	0.0	33.3	14.9	46.7	54.6
Hazara	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	66.7	84.9	0.0	1.0
Uzbek	35.7	52.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Turkmen	7.1	13.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.0
Others	14.3	10.8	6.7	0.9	0.0	0.2	0.0	2.6
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Note: Police data collected through this study while population estimates based on Asia Foundation survey, 'Afghanistan in 2013: A Survey of the Afghan People'.

Judging from the Asia Foundation survey, it cannot be taken for granted that appointing police chiefs from other ethnic groups in a district necessarily leads to popular dissatisfaction or discontent with the

police. Table 9 shows public perception of the police in the selected provinces. While this type of surveys tend to show a pro-authority bias,¹⁵ the variation between provinces does not match the discrepancies between population and DCoPs highlighted above. As highlighted in the table, ANP received favourable responses in Kunduz and Balkh in spite of unbalanced ethnic representation of District CoPs in these provinces. On the contrary, in Kandahar and Ghazni, with more balanced ethnic representation, the police still received less favourable rating of their performance.

Table 9: Ethnicity and Public Perception of ANP (% of respondent approving the statement)

	ANP is	Bamyan	Nangarhar	Kunduz	Balkh	Herat	Faryab	Kandahar	Ghazni
Public Perception of ANP	Honest and fair	90.8	91	96	89.7	81.1	79	85.4	77.7
	Improves security	92.2	87.1	96.1	96	79.1	81.4	78.5	79.1
	Enforces law	88.1	83.7	92.5	88.7	81.4	76.1	79.5	75
Ethnic Background of District Police Chiefs	Pashtun	0.0	90.9	16.7	46.2	53.3	21.4	93.3	50.0
	Tajik	33.3	9.1	66.7	38.5	46.7	21.4	0.0	5.6
	Hazara	66.7	0.0	0.0	15.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	33.3
	Uzbek	0.0	0.0	16.7	0.0	0.0	35.7	0.0	5.6
	Turkmen	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	7.1	0.0	0.0
	Others	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	14.3	6.7	5.6

Note: Police data collected through this study and public perception of ANP based on Asia Foundation survey, 'Afghanistan in 2013: A Survey of the Afghan People'.

In terms of professionalism, the qualitative level of District CoPs is unsurprisingly lower than that of PCoPs. Almost two thirds of those surveyed (over a quarter of all of Afghanistan's districts) did not go further than high school in their education and just 20% had gone through the police academy (Table 10). There were significant fluctuations from province to province, with Nangarhar showing off the highest percentage of professional DCoPs in the sample (45%). This might be due to the presence of large number of professional police trained in the past in Nangarhar – rarely DCoPs will serve far away from their home district (see Table 13). Still almost a quarter of DCoPs surveyed had been trained in 1978-1991 and in some provinces they were the absolute majority, as in Faryab (Table 12).

¹⁵ See A. Giustozzi, 'Justice and state-building in Afghanistan', Kabul : The Asia Foundation, 2012.

Table 10: District level CoPs (sample of 8 provinces), by education, July 2014

Education	Ghazni	Nangarhar	Kunduz	Balkh	Herat	Faryab	Kandahar	Bamyan	TOTAL
Police academy	1	10	1	1	3	3	1	2	22
High school	14	10	4	12	12	8	6	3	69
Army academy			1			2		1	4
University	1	1							2
Army	1					1			2
Primary school							5		5
None							2		2
Not Known		1							1
TOTAL	17	22	6	13	15	14	14	6	107
%									
Police academy	5.9	45.5	16.7	7.7	20.0	21.4	7.1	33.3	20.6
High school	82.4	45.5	66.7	92.3	80.0	57.1	42.9	50.0	64.5
Army academy	0.0	0.0	16.7	0.0	0.0	14.3	0.0	16.7	3.7
University	5.9	4.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.9
Army	5.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	7.1	0.0	0.0	1.9
Primary school	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	35.7	0.0	4.7
None	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	14.3	0.0	1.9
Not Known	0.0	4.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.9
TOTAL	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Table 11: time in office, district CoPs, in months

	Ghazni	Nangarhar	Kunduz	Balkh	Herat	Faryab	Kandahar	Bamyan
Time elapsed since joining Mol (months)	101.3	234.0	180.0	126.5	256.8	343.7	207.7	164.0
Months spent in current position (months)	42.7	29.6	20.5	30.0	7.6	18.4	31.0	23.0

Table 12: district CoPs, time of recruitment

Time of recruitment	Ghazni	Nangarhar	Kunduz	Balkh	Herat	Faryab	Kandahar	Bamyan	TOTAL
pre 1978						1			1
1978-1991		5	1	1	7	10	1	1	26
1992-2001		14	2	1	4	2		1	24
2001-	18	3	2	11	4	1	14	4	57

Table 13: district CoPs, place of recruitment

Place of origins	Ghazni	Nangarhar	Kunduz	Balkh	Herat	Faryab	Kandahar	Bamyan
Province	12	14	6	10	14	11	14	4
Outside province	6	8		3	1	3	1	2

Table 13 shows the origins of district CoPs in the selected provinces. Only 22% of them are originally from outside the districts where they serve, which does not correspond with cyclical rotation policy of the MoI. Based on this policy, police chiefs are supposed to rotate to a new position every three years, outside their districts of origin, in order to reduce the likelihood of corruption and the potential for collusion with local networks.

Part II: The perceptions of Police Professionalism

The data discussed above offer contrasting indications with regard to the advance of police professionalism in Afghanistan. On the one hand it is uncontroversial that there are more professionally trained police officers in senior positions; on the other it is also clear that the Central Region gets the lion's share of appointments. The data however does not tell us why these trends are taking place. The opinions expressed by the interviewees varied greatly with regard to the type of non-meritocratic appointments on the rise. For example, some argue that political appointments are in decline to the advantage of cash purchases of positions, and others argue exactly the contrary:

Political appointments were a lot in the past but they are not very common now and could count for 15% [of appointments] since even with political appointments, you need to pay [to secure a position]. [Int. 7]

The impending foreign withdrawal appears to have further strengthened the desire of political groups and factions to re-establish as much control as possible over a powerful ministry such as the MoI. In particular, the powerful political parties were reported to have undertaken tough negotiations in autumn 2013 over MoI appointments. [Int. 4]

In the following sections the report will discuss perceptions within the MoI of how far professionalization has gone and of which factors have been driving professionalisation or have impeded it.

Extent of professionalization

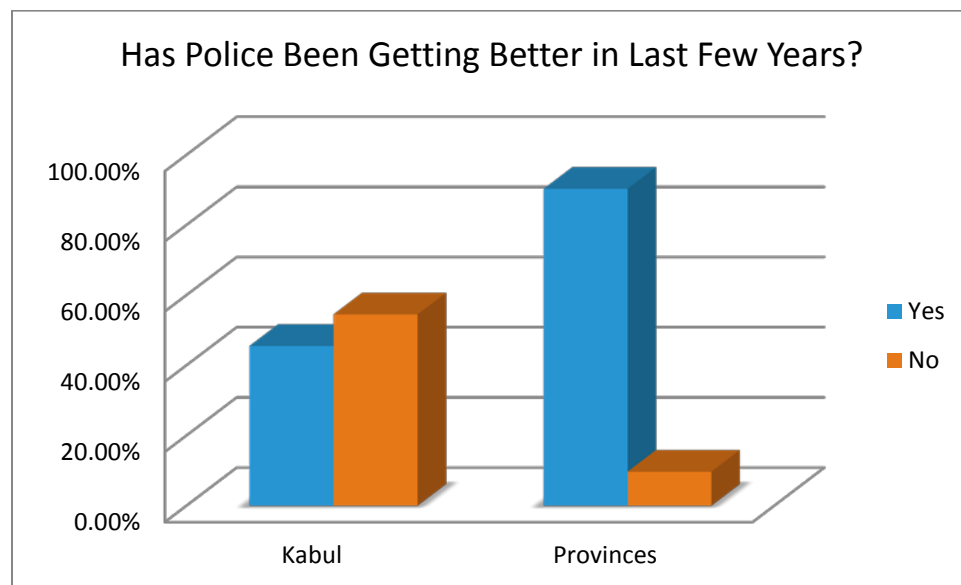
Almost all interviewees believed that the police of 2014 was significantly more professional than that of 2002-3 (Table 13). This was the result of more professional police officers being appointed and also of professional knowledge being imparted to all police officers (professionally educated and not) in fields such as human rights, behaviour with Afghan citizens and with suspects, etc. Tactical training and weapons handling also improved dramatically [Int. 8]. The growth in professionalism meant that more police officers had leadership, management and other skills, while corruption and nepotism continued [Int. 4].

One indicator of professionalization is the use of uniforms by the police; in the first few years of the post-Taliban Emirate era, this was rare even in the cities. Figure 12 shows that in 2014 the police officers interviewed for this study believed the use of uniforms was almost universal in the provincial capitals and predominant in the district centres as well.

However, almost none of the interviewees denied that progress has been slow and patchy:

Now in Afghanistan the system of appointment is slowly changing; appointments are slowly happening according to professionalism and police skills and training. But still the personal connection, political connection or paying cash have the top role in making appointments. [Int. 9]

Figure 10: Perception of Improvement of police over last few years



Indeed many interviewees believed that over the last year progress had slowed (60% of the interviewees). There was some polarisation in the answers provided between a group of optimists, who asserted that nepotism and venality did not affect MoI appointments, and other respondents, who tended to be very negative, portraying appointments as leaving little space to meritocracy. For example:

In my view the foundation of MoI was put in the wrong way from the start of Karzai's government, so improvement in this ministry is impossible. For example corruption reaches to the top in this ministry, the connection reaches to the peak in this ministry. Only in one situation reform is possible, and that is if those people who are not professional and they are working in senior positions are retired and sent home. [Int. 4]

Few interviewees provided a more mixed view and even these tended to lean towards a pessimistic understanding. For example:

I should tell you that money, personal connections, political connections and intermediaries have greatest roles in the appointments to important positions. In Ghazni Province more than 70% appointments of officers are based on cash, political connection and personal connections and the rest 30% are according to professionalism and police skills. [Int. 9]

I believe that more than 60% of the appointments in our province are now according to merit (professionalism) and the rest 40% are according to personal connection, party connection and cash. . [Int. 10]

In simple words I can say that 80% of the senior positions are captured by those people who belong to big parties, have personal connections or buy these position. And 20 % of these positions are captured by the people who have the merit and ability to work in those positions. [Int. 11]

Apart from those interviewees who held completely negative views of the Mol, a majority indicated however that professionalization has affected in particular the junior officer ranks, with little or no impact at the top levels of the Mol:

The top appointments, such as Deputy ministers, are made based on political relationships, relations with President and Ministers or MPs. These are all high-profile positions, and appointment to these positions requires political connections and money is rarely needed for securing these positions. Police chiefs, like provincial and district police chiefs, 50% of them are political appointments—based on connections with Ministers, President and senior politicians. Remaining 50% of these positions is based on buying position. Provincial and district police chiefs in the border provinces are sold for very high prices but similar positions in the provinces with less revenue is sold for less. The price of each position depends on how lucrative it is and what is people's expectation of making money in these positions. In terms of lower positions, I would say that 40% of them is based on professionalism, especially if qualifications are important for these lower positions. The remaining 60% of these positions are secured based on connections. [Int. 12]

These unprofessional ones have been appointed in high positions, because they have money and party and personal connections. As I said, we have some professional police officers who are working in low-positions for Ministry of Interior, but they are useless because they have nothing. In our province also there are many professional police officers but since they are working under control of unprofessional officers then they cannot do anything. [Int. 13]

Police became professional in the low level of the police; the high-ranking officials didn't change. But the low level of the police mostly graduated from the Police Academy and have better knowledge of Police. However because they don't have connections and money they were kept in the low level of the Police. I agree that the police have changed regarding professionalism, good behaviour with villagers, and they have learned very good tactics of fighting, that's why now they can control the country but corruption and importance of connection and cash in making appointments is still important for the top level positions. [Int. 14]

Table 14 shows how the interviewees have rated a number of factors affecting appointments in the Mol. The numerical rating is based on coding applied by the authors of this study, but it shows nonetheless how nepotism and personal connections were rated as the most important factors, followed closely by political connections and money. The professional background of the appointees lagged significantly behind and even more so foreign influence. It is worth noting that respondents based in Kabul, all interviewed through the personal contacts of the members of the research team, tended to rate the importance of the professional background much lower than respondents in the provinces, who were mostly approached without any personal introduction.¹⁶

Several respondents indicated that the Border Police is one of the most professional sections of the police. [Int. 11] This is worth mentioning because the Border Police was also considered to be one of the

¹⁶ Perhaps the respondents in Kabul felt more secure and comfortable expressing negative views about the police as they were approached through personal contacts.

most corrupt branches of the police, at least until 2013.¹⁷ Professionalization also made some progress in departments such as administration, where technical competencies are required for officers to be able to run it, particularly after it was computerised some years ago. Attempts to keep appointing unqualified people continued after the computerisation, but had to be abandoned soon. [Int. 15] Still professionalization was not without questions marks even here:

Because I have graduated from high school, I know English and Computer. Furthermore I studied Academy as well but I am given the job of gatekeeper. Instead I should be appointed to an administration position because I know it and I studied it but I am given the job of the person who does not know any thing. Those people are given administration position who do not have any education, so I can say there is no improvement. [Int. 16]

There is little belief or understanding in the MoI for the role that strong institutions might play in advancing the role of professionalism. The focus is on the role of individuals in senior leadership positions since they act as role models and can keep their subordinates accountable:

If the head of any section of MoI is hardworking and honest, so the whole section will improve. But if the head is not honest and professional then the whole section will not be good. [Int. 11]

If we look at some provincial examples, mixed pictures emerge. In Kunduz we find that some police officers had been appointed exclusively on the basis of venality and recommendations: the chief of traffic department, the Deputy of security of police HQ, the Head of administration department [...]. By contrast the PCoP was a respected professional, but he too was believed to have benefited from a political recommendation. One of the key powerbrokers in the province, was believed to be behind several appointments to police positions. [Int. 8] Similarly in another northern province, the PCoP was also a respected and proactive individual, despite having been appointed on the basis of ethnic and political connections; these connections however prevented him from bringing any changes after his appointment. [Int. 17] In the same province province, the logistics commander, the finance officer and the maintenance manager were believed to have bought their positions, the security officer was appointed on recommendation of the minister of commerce, and the administrative assistant was appointed due to party connections. [Int. 19, Int. 17. Int. 18]

¹⁷ Antonio Giustozzi and Mohammad Isaqzadeh, *Policing Afghanistan: The Politics of The Lame Leviathan*, 2013, London: Hurst.

Figure 12: Wearing Uniform in Provincial and District Centers

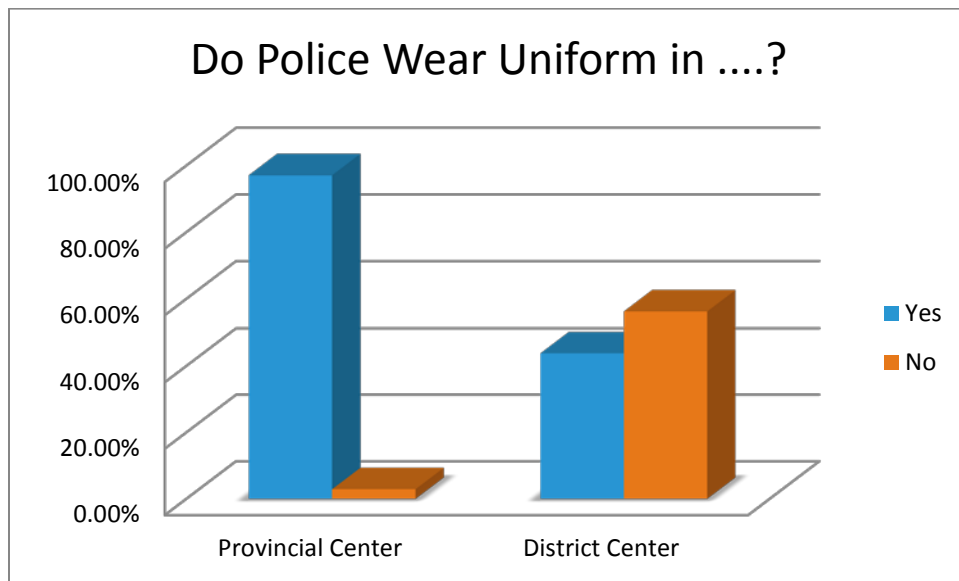


Table 14: Rating of main factors affecting police appointment, based on coding of answers by police officers

Rating 1 to 4 (maximum) based on coding of interviews						
	Money	Nepotism	Professionalism	Political connections	Personal connections	foreign pressure
All	3.36	3.48	2.84	3.42	3.49	2.05
Kabul	3.70	3.40	2.38	3.13	3.33	2.17
Provinces	3.35	3.39	2.77	3.49	3.53	1.40

Respondents in Kabul ranked money as the most important factor affecting police appointments, followed by nepotism (Table 14). Respondents in the provinces viewed personal connections as the most important factor, followed by political connections. Both groups, however, agreed that the foreigners have the least effect on appointments.

Part III: Drivers of Corruption

1. Nepotism and political deal making

Establishing the drivers of these partial process of professionalization is not easy. Among the 47 police officers interviewed in Kabul and in the provinces, opinions varied greatly with regard to which minister promoted professionalism more assertively. Of past ministers, Hanif Atmar was the only one to receive more than a single mention for his attempts to professionalise the Mol:

He tried to establish systems, such as cyclical rotation of appointments whereas senior officers were rotated from less secure to more secure regions. He did not want the police personnel to serve in their place of residence, which would help them engage in corruption. But his plan has not been implemented yet. [Int. 7]

A single interviewee praised Bismillah Mohammadi in the first few months of his tenure as minister [Int. 1]. Patang was also praised by a single interviewee as a professional person [Int. 20]. A number of interviewees indicated their appreciation for the efforts of current minister, Daudzai, while the majority did not assess the role of any minister past and present as positive in any way. Particularly in his early days, Daudzai impressed several with a series of shift changes of personnel, but appointments seemed to resume a more familiar path afterwards.

The majority of interviewees instead perceived the various ministers as having brought into the Mol their own people. In fact many police officers hold a completely cynical view of appointments within the Mol:

It is a game played by senior officials/politicians and state leaders. They change and place their figures and agents in different positions. No one cares about improving police and Mol. All the powerful actors care about is placing their agents and cronies in the best place in this chess game. [Int. 12]

Ethnicity itself does not appear to be a major factor in appointments; what matters is being connected to the right people and groups, a fact that in turn is likely to lead to ethnic imbalance. In addition, it shows that corrupt relations have become more important than ethnic ties for appointments.

2. International pressure

Very few of the interviewees attribute any role to foreign advisers in determining appointments anymore. Still most interviewees seemed to consider the role of foreign advisers as positive, particularly at the police academy:

I think it's all because of the foreign pressure and I have been to the Police courses and we had foreign teachers too, on the lesson the foreign teachers were working very hard on us, more than our Afghan teachers. The foreign teachers wanted to educate real and academic police officers, but the Afghan teachers only tried to complete the courses and grant degrees to students. I think the foreign countries brought pressure on the Afghan government and the Police Academy to make students study hard at the Academy. [Int. 9]

Indeed almost all the interviewees appreciated the quality of the training imparted by the Police Academy, despite allegations of rules being broken in admissions.

Yes, the new police officers are being sent to their province to work for their people once they are done with training of the police academy. They have good and nice behaviour toward local people. They are refraining from discriminatory and also showing their efforts to do their jobs according to law. [Int. 22]

The short-term courses were instead almost unanimously dismissed by police professionals as ineffective.

Only weekly trainings, monthly trainings and seminars are not good enough to provide a competent, honest and trustworthy police for people. It takes years to prepare and train professionally police. Now, if we say the truth, with all due respects, half of our Police in our Province are like cows which have horn, but no wisdom. [Int. 9]

Nonetheless some interviewees saw positive outcomes even from these courses:

Before, police officers were not servants of the people, but rulers over the people. They had been acting violently against the people especially criminals. They have been beating the criminal people a lot. But now, the current police are not like before and have no right to beat any person. This is what short-term courses helped about. [Int. 2]

The sore point however is that for now genuine fresh police academy graduates are still only found at the bottom of the police hierarchy:

Yes, it's worth to say that the importance of professionalism and merit has been increased within the police in our province. However, I should mention that educated-police officers are not working for high positions and their knowledge and education is not used enough, because they don't have any kind of connections this is why they can't get appointed to the high positions. [Int. 23]

Last years, most of new police officers have been professionally trained at the training courses, but lack of good management in police chief department have caused that they have not been appointed in good positions. [Int. 17]

we can see some changes in our young generation who joined to police, they are mostly graduated from the police academic but they are working in the low position or low level in Police. [Int. 14]

The people who grabbed the high positions have been appointed according to the personal and political connections, and the people who appointed to the medium positions have bought the positions by cash and the people who achieve the low positions are being appointed according to the professionalism and merit. [Int. 23]

One interviewee pointed out the contradiction between the efforts of NTM-A, EUPOL and the German mission to train professional police officers, and the fact that many of the non-professionals in positions of power were closely connected to the western embassies:

Most of these uneducated people who are working in the high-ranking positions of the Police, because they have connection with the foreign troops and foreign troops are supporting them. I am sure that if the foreign troops leave Afghanistan, these commanders will not have any more supporters and it would be easily to replace them with professional police. [Int. 13]

In any case, whatever the 'gains' brought by international pressure, these are now seen as at risk because of the withdrawal:

The withdrawal of foreigners has already affected the moral of Afghan forces, they think that if the foreign troops leave Afghanistan uncertainly one day then hundreds thousands of Afghan forces will be workless, because the Afghan government cannot pay the salary of the police and army. That's why from now some officers and police soldiers are thinking of new job in case if the foreign troops leave Afghanistan. The recent electoral crises have divided them in two parts because of two candidates the crisis of these two candidates again increase the ethnic problem issue in Afghanistan. [Int. 8]

3. The on-going conflict

Opinion was divided over whether the on-going conflict represents a major impediment to the affirmation of police professionalism or not. The majority answered positively:

I don't think the police are kept accountable as long as the police continue fighting the insurgency in the province. Until the police fight the Taliban, the police personnel who abuse their power are not punished. This is because not every one would like to join the police and serve in such an insecure province. So the MoI cannot dismiss bad cops since it cannot replace them with good people. [Int. 24]

A commonly held view among the police was that the conflict was detrimental to the capability of the police to treat the people based on civilian policing and international norms:

It is not our duty to fight insurgency and it undermines police professionalism. For instance we study law enforcement, crowd control and arresting criminals, but when we go to the field we have to learn killing and using heavy weaponries. So the police become violent and do not know how to treat the people. And that is why people do not like the police. [Int. 49]

Only a few questioned this assumption:

There is one department by the name of planning and operation which is fighting against Taliban. It does not mean that police are fighting against Taliban and they are not becoming professional because of this. I can say the main reason why the ANP does not become professional is corruption. [Int. 21]

In reality even many of the interviewees, who were all professional police officers, were ready to recognise that Afghanistan's police needed capable fighters, even at the expense of professional police

skills.¹⁸ For example, all those asked about Col. Razzeq (CoP Kandahar) except one indicated that they wanted him to keep his job, despite his complete lack of education:

It is Abdul Razzeq who control the peace of Kandahar. If there is no Abdul Razzeq, Kandahar will be captured by Taliban. Even if he is not educated but he is good fighter and he is not involved in corruption. If we have 10 other such people, this country will promote. Not only us but the whole ministry and Afghanistan are supporting him. [Int. 15]

Yes he must be left in his post. If he is not educated but he is good fighter and he is honest. He does not take bribe. Therefore, it is necessary that he is left on his post. But other senior positions people like commanders affiliated with political parties are not educated and not good in fighting like Razzeq. [Int. 11]

4. Social mobilisation

Although here and then popular demonstrations by the Afghan population have taken place,¹⁹ none of the interviewees mentioned them. One of the few optimists however believed that social mobilisation in the future might play the role played up to now by international pressure:

There is no doubt that a number of changes occurred and we are witnessing that importance of professionalism is getting increased. It's been taking step for considering appointments based on professionalism and as well as professional abilities, and respect it. The changes are the result of several factors, including the pressure of people based on their intelligence to the government apparatus. I think if the pressure is much greater pressure, there will be more reforms and improvements. For instance; when a person gets appointed as police chief of a district by personal connections and actually not deserves it, then people must launch civil actions like demonstrations and keep complaining to the higher officials. In this case, it makes them to terminate these untalented people and start appointing within professionalism and merit. [Int. 22]

Part VI: Non-meritocratic professionalization and Police Performance

From the interviews it emerged a somewhat blurred picture, in which a degree of professionalization coexisted with non-meritocratic practices:

In terms of money and nepotism, I think they are intertwined. You cannot get appointed to senior positions either with money alone or nepotism alone. You need both. [Int. 25]

There is no doubt that the importance of professionalism and merit has increased within the police in our province. However, a qualified and professional person has less chance to get appointed to a position if he doesn't have connections and relationships, but if person doesn't

¹⁸For alternative views of Col. Razzeq see Matthieu Aikins, 'Our Man in Kandahar', *The Atlantic*, November 2011, and 'The Master of Spin Boldak', *Harper's*, December 2009.

¹⁹Antonio Giustozzi and Mohammad Isaqzadeh, 2013.

know anything but still he has connections with high officials then he could have more chances to get a position in the government. [Int. 2]

Look, it doesn't mean that when someone appointed in an important position through connections and relation they are not professional. Most of these officers who are being appointed through connections and relations to important positions of course at least they have studied police courses and Police Academy. [Int. 8]

There are lots of professional police in our province but unfortunately even now those professional police need to make connections and establish relations with political parties to use them for getting a good position. [Int. 6]

I cannot think of any appointment just based on professionalism. Even those senior officials who have studied in the police academy and have work experience, they cannot obtain senior positions without intermediaries. [Int. 25]

The growth in the number of professionals appointed therefore does not necessarily imply a decline in non-meritocratic practices. One by-product of international pressure to bring more professionals into the police was the practice of getting young relatives of powerful people into the police academy and after graduation quickly promote them to senior positions, or even before graduation:

There are many students who are still in the 3rd or 4th year of Police Academy. Since they are sons of ministers, MPs or politicians, they are already appointed to senior positions even before graduation. Their posts are already arranged for them. They will start from a very senior position right away once they graduate. At the same time, I know very talented students who were not even admitted to the Police Academy since they did not have connections. [Int. 12]

A good example of non-standard professionalization is Kandahar province under Abdul Razzaq, who brought in non educated police officers, whom he trusted as effective fighters. Although one cannot speak in this case of professional policing and widespread human rights abuses took place against suspect insurgents, under Razzaq the behaviour of the police on the streets and towards civilians was reportedly better than it had been under his predecessors [Int. 26].

The mechanisms

Although the 47 interviewees had different views about the appointment practices predominant in Afghanistan, it was possible during our research to establish some firm points. Several interviewees openly discussed the price list for Mol appointments (advance one off payment for buying posts):

- Provincial CoP: \$50-200,000
- District CoP: \$20-50,000
- Head of Passport unit Kabul : \$200,000
- Head of department in Mol: \$100,000
- Customs post commander: \$100,000

[Int. 7, Int. 20, Int. 4]

The most desirable provinces are in higher demand and more likely to be bought for cash or to be targeted for recommendations:

Those people who have no money and connections then they will be transferred to the neighbouring provinces like Ghor, Farah and Badghis provinces. And I know some people who introduced to inside of Mol in Kabul province then they got transferred to northern and southern provinces. [Int. 27]

Other positions that are in high demand reportedly include:

- Counter-narcotics;
- Traffic department;
- Planning;
- Administration;
- Crime;
- Support;
- Intelligence.

[Int. 11, Int. 17, Int. 4]

The corruption system rests on intermediaries who bring together offer and demand for Mol positions [Int. 7]. Typically an up-front payment is required, followed by regular monthly payments [Int. 1].

Let me give you an example. If you want to pay money to buy a position, you cannot buy since no one will sell it to you. So you need waseta (intermediaries) even for buying positions. On the other hand, nepotism alone is not sufficient for getting senior positions. Even with having waseta, you still need to pay money for securing those positions. There might be very few instances where waseta alone could secure senior positions. First, you need to know some senior officials and then spend money to secure good positions. [Int. 25]

However, not all positions are distributed on such venal bases:

- Some positions are considered not to be lucrative and therefore are not purchased:
 - Head of Staff college
 - Deputy for Policy and strategy
 - Commander of Police Academy.
- Some positions are 'presented' to MPs and other Kabul politicians in exchange for parliamentary and political support for the minister; [Int. 1, Int. 20, Int. 11]
- Some positions are assigned to political parties on the basis of negotiations over coalitions. When Daudzai got his parliamentary approval, the rumors in the Mol were that he had to appoint 16 police generals from various parties. [Int. 20];
- Some senior officials bring in their own relatives; the head of department in Kabul was explicitly mentioned [Int. 21]
- Provincial and regional powerbrokers trade support for Kabul politicians with local appointments:

- All the district chief commanders and important officers in Jalalabad Police HQ have connection or relation with local influential figures and all of them were appointed by these figures. [Int. 13]
- I can just say that most police chiefs of Balkh province are from one party [...]. It indicates that personal connections and party affiliations are clearly important in their appointments. This is nothing but corruption that we can see in our police system. [Int. 22]
- Two years ago, a person had been introduced as Manager for Passport Department of Balkh province from ministry of interior, but he couldn't get the position because he had no connections with high-officials of here. This is why he couldn't obtain the position. The former manager of this department was reappointed again because he had good personal and party connections in here. As I said, there are too many examples regarding this issue. [Int. 22]
- We were witness that one person brought his appointing letter from Kabul in one position while next week another person brought the same appointing letter for the same position. It shows that everyone who pays money, he can buy any position except the Provincial Police Chief Position, because this one need to be signed by Karzai. Even there are some people who buy the Provincial Police Chief from MoI. [Int. 28]
- Sometimes, professionals might be appointed without paying and without being recommended to sort out critical situations:
 - I am a resident of Herat province but my duty is at Farah province. The police chief of Farah province has been appointed a few months ago and I can surely say that he was appointed on the basis of professionalism and merit, and we are quite happy from the ministry of interior. However, the former police chief of Farah province had been appointed by his relationship with former interior minister and presidential palace, and he was unable to secure the security and also he appointed some police at the highway and they were extorting money from public vehicles, shops and others. Now, there is no such action in there anymore. [Int. 29]

Often venality and recommendations go together, as many positions are in high demand and there is competition – the support of powerful politicians can be a decisive factor. Political protection is also key for the police officer to stay in his job, a fact which favours the formation of networks centered around one individual [Int. 11, 15]. The need for recommendations and political protection applies even to reformers and anti-corruption figures. [Int 11].

A good example of a respected professional police officer who ended up not being immune from accusations of political bias is Zahir Zahir, the CoP of Kabul province, appointed in 2013. During the electoral campaign of 2014 Zahir, who is originally from Panjshir, came under pressure because of allegations that his police had adopted an excessively soft approach towards demonstrators from Panjshir, who came to the streets to protest against alleged fraud. [Int. 11]

Dynamics of Appointments and Police Performance

The slow progress in promoting meritocracy within the police also meant that the police performance and its interaction with citizens have improved to a very limited extent, according to opinion surveys. As Table 15 shows, public opinion about police capacity to provide security and enforce the law has improved to certain extent, but their relationship with citizens has not improved.

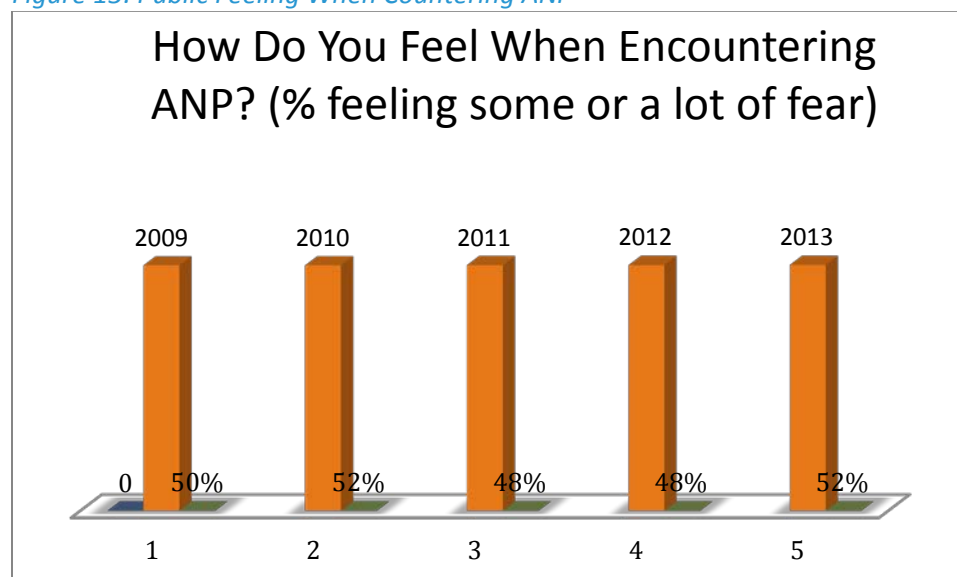
Although police training has been aimed at educating the ANP on treating citizens based on international norms and civilian policing principles (protecting the rights of citizens and obtaining their trust), nepotism and lack of meritocracy has undermined these efforts. As one of the interviewees put, 'the police are violent and do not know how to treat the people. And that is why the police are not liked by the people' (Int. 49). Figure 13 shows that half of the respondents have expressed to have some or a lot of fear when encountering the ANP. This common fear of the ANP, unfortunately, does not seem to have declined over the past five years although more police officers have become educated and police trainings have aimed at promoting civilian policing.

Table 15: Perception of ANP Performance (% of respondents agreeing with statement)

ANP is	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Honest and Fair	83%	84%	85%	85%	85%
Improves Security	82%	77%	82%	81%	86%
Enforces Law	71%	70%	75%	75%	80%

Source: Asia Foundation surveys 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 'Survey of the Afghan People'.

Figure 13: Public Feeling When Countering ANP



Source: Asia Foundation surveys 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 'Survey of the Afghan People'.

Dynamics of Corruption

Anti-corruption efforts

Discussing corruption is particularly slippery ground, in the absence of solid judicial investigations. In fact most cases of police officers dismissed and arrested involved junior officers and patrolmen:

The lower level people were arrested and sent to jail but not the senior level people. These lower level people were selling the fuel of their cars, or selling rice, woods and other supplies because they were working in the logistic department. But those people who were selling fuel by the tankers are not touched. [Int. 15]

Many Junior Police have been sacked, punished and prosecuted by the senior and attorney office on accusation of having stolen thousands Afs, but when the senior officials are stealing millions of Afs, they are not persecuted by anyone. [Int. 13]

Confirmed cases of relatively senior police officers removed from their position on allegation of misconduct are few:

Mohammad Issa, the district commander of Shindand district (Herat) was dismissed because he 'did not deserve the position'. [Int. 27]

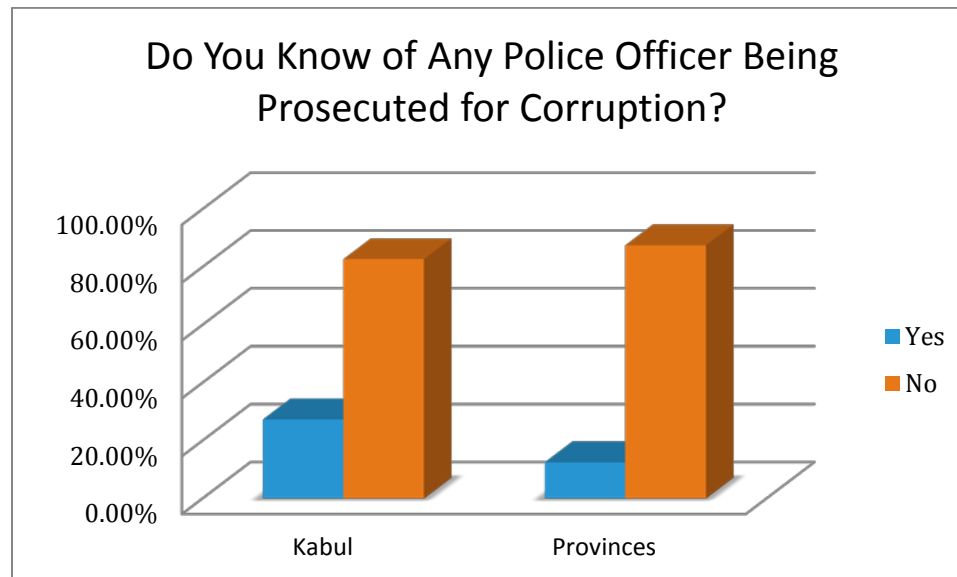
President Karzai sacked three senior officials in the provinces and asked the Military Attorney to prosecute them. But no one knows whether they were really prosecuted. [Int. 12]

'A few years ago, one of the police chiefs of Baghlan province, named Gen. Hashimi, raped a twenty years girl, and then forced her to escape and he escaped as well. However, [...] currently I heard that he is going to work as police chief of a province once again.' [Int. 27]

In Zabul province three officers took the salary of 64 policemen and run, so their guilt is self-evident. [Int. 15]

Kabir Andarabi, police chief of Nimruz, was arrested for drug trafficking. It is believed that he was arrested by the foreigners. [Int. 1]

Figure 14: Prosecution for Corruption: answers by police officers



In fact the large majority of interviewees did not know of any cases of corrupt police officers having been prosecuted (Figure 14). Most cases related to violations of the ethical code of the police, rather than to corruption. The system of political protection ensures that corrupt officials are not prosecuted:

We have reports of lots of corruption in our traffic department, passport department and logistic departments and etc. The district chief police gets lots of bribes from the people but due to all these officials are backed by the local influential figures, backing by MPs that's no one can follow their cases. [Int. 8]

There has been many district commanders and police commander of the districts inside the Kunduz city but because they had supports of the influential figures and MPs, they were not persecuted. [Int. 8]

It is clear that there is a complete lack of transparency concerning the sacking, arresting and prosecution of misbehaving police officers:

When there is a case of corruption against a senior official, he is just dismissed from his post and goes home. I have not heard of any prosecution. The bad thing is that those who are fired, it is not told why they are dismissed and no one knows why they were fired. They are then appointed to another position after spending some time at home. At the end, no one knows why he was dismissed in the first place and why reappointed again. [Int. 25]

This creates scope for false and genuine accusations to have the same impact. In Qarabagh district (Ghazni) an interviewee mentioned the case of one of the best local police officers, who ended up being accused of bribe-taking after rejecting some demands from one members of Ghazni's provincial council.

There is little faith that sackings and prosecutions are made for the right reasons, even when they happen:

I heard that ministry of interior has terminated some special forces and had introduced them to the court quite a while ago. I think ministry of interior has done this termination by pressure of Mr. President, because these people had been acting neutrally, and they were against Taliban. Therefore, the interior minister decided to get them out of scene. [Int. 32]

The prevalence of non-meritocratic appointments and the failure of prosecution of corrupt officials point to the emergence of a self-perpetuating system in which political connections and money ensures appointments and promotions along with protection (immunity from prosecution), which then allows the extortion and recycling of resources into this system and its continuous perpetuation. As delineated in Figure 15, it seems from the interviewee's narrative that police officers often have to rely on political connections and money for securing posts or promotions, while impunity is granted to them for corruption and collecting the resources that are then channelled back (in form of periodic payments or fees for buying the next post) to those who make the appointments and ensure job security for these officers. This is a self-perpetuating system since all actors depend on each other for the benefits that they receive and do not have incentives not to play with the rules of this system. In fact, police officers who engage more in corrupt practices seem more likely to secure better positions since they can afford buying it.

It is, therefore, not surprising that even advanced education and professional training do not seem to have reduced corrupt practices committed by the police. In other words, provinces that have more District CoPs with police academy education do not necessarily rank better than other provinces in terms of reducing bribery by the police. Table 16 shows the percentage of the population who reported to have paid bribes to the police in the selected provinces. The percentage of respondents who have reported to have paid bribes to the police is the same in Ghazni and Bamyan, despite the huge difference in the education background of district police chiefs in these provinces. Moreover, the respondents in Nangarhar reported having paid bribes three times as much as the respondents in Herat in spite of twice as many educated District CoPs serving in Nangarhar. It is clear that improving the education of police officers is not sufficient for reducing corruption committed by the police. In fact, in spite of the progress in terms of increased appointments of educated officers to senior positions within MoI and ANP, public perception of corruption within the ANP seem to have deteriorated over the past two years. While the police sector (ANP and MoI together) was viewed by the public to be the third most corrupt public institution in 2012, it fell to the rank of second most corrupt institution (after judiciary) in 2014.²⁰ In addition, collecting more bribes than any other public institution, police was seen as the top recipient of bribes in 2013.²¹ This is because corruption is an inevitable part of this system and even educated individuals may find it onerous not to play by the rules of the system.

²⁰ Mohammad Isaqzadeh, *Afghanistan National Corruption Survey 2014*, Integrity Watch Afghanistan, 2014.

²¹ *Ibid.*

Figure 15: Dynamics of Appointment and Protection

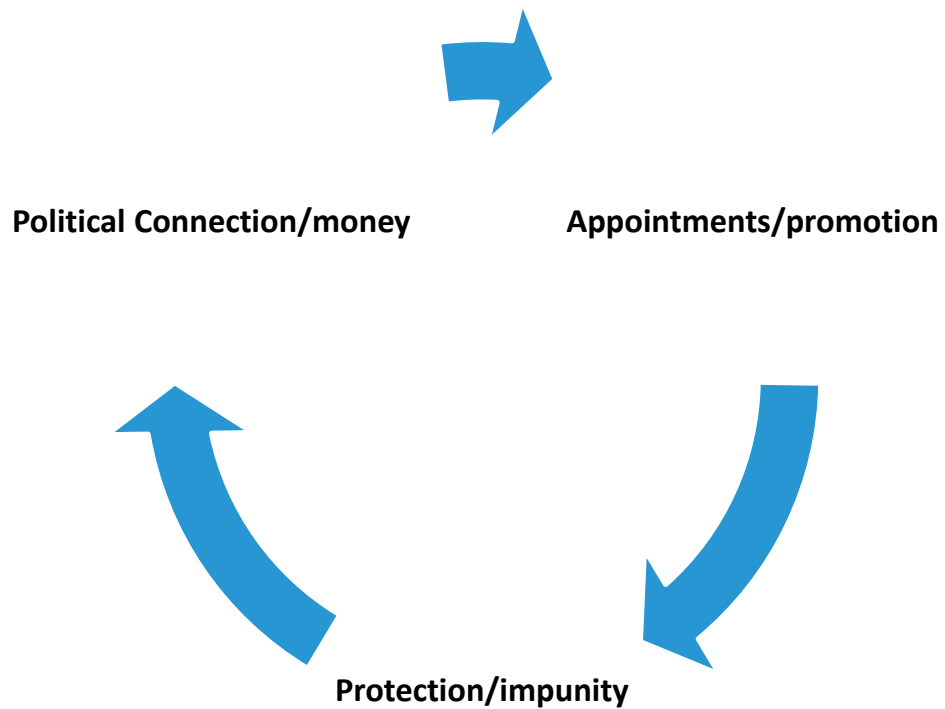


Table 16: Education Background of DCoPs and Perception of Corruption of ANP

Perception of ANP Corruption	Respondents who	Bamyan	Nangarhar	Kunduz	Balkh	Herat	Faryab	Kandahar	Ghazni
	% Not paid bribe	99	93.5	83.5	93.5	98	90.5	77.5	99
	% Paid bribe	1	6.5	16.5	6.5	2	9.5	22.5	1
Education Background of District Police Chiefs (%)	Police academy	33.3	45.5	16.7	7.7	20.0	21.4	7.1	5.9
	High school	50.0	45.5	66.7	92.3	80.0	57.1	42.9	82.4
	Army academy	16.7	0.0	16.7	0.0	0.0	14.3	0.0	0.0
	University	0.0	4.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	5.9
	Army	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	7.1	0.0	5.9
	Primary school	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	35.7	0.0
	None	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	14.3	0.0

Note: Police data collected through this study and public perception of ANP corruption based on Asia Foundation survey, 'Afghanistan in 2013: A Survey of the Afghan People'.

Corruption as described by police officers

The pervasive corruption discussed above also creates an environment in which bureaucratic inspections tend to lead to collusion between the inspectors and inspected, at least as perceived by police officers on the ground:

Some Inspector Generals of the Ministry of Interior are coming to our province. They don't investigate corruption because they would probably lose their rewards. They are benefiting from corruption. When they are coming to Province, they don't come for investigating the incomes and outgoings of the Police HQ in the Province, they are coming to fill their pockets with bribes by the Police thieves. When the investigation commission come from Kabul, they get some money from important departments and return back to Kabul with a clean hand. [Int. 9]

The inspector General and auditors of the ministry of interior have come here for investigation several times. They have found out some failures and problems, but they have received money as to not report these problems and hide the failures. [Int. 18Faryab]

Several parallel and partly integrated types of corruption are believed by police officers to exist within the MoI. The main one is systemic in character and is centered around the sale of police positions. This is important in terms of spread of corruption because of pyramidal character that the system has been taking. The reason why positions are bought for cash must clearly be that the appointees expect to raise money from their position. Checkpoints are at the bottom of a structure of fund raising, which usually develops in a pyramidal way. [Int. 31Kunduz] One of the interviewees admitted having bought his position for cash from a MP, who had relations with the minister. The police officer, a professional, stated that there was no other way he could be employed by the MoI or avoid being sent to a remote, dangerous post, and admitted also to be making regular monthly payments to the MP, at the tune of 20-30,000 Afs each week. In order to be able to afford such payments and to repay the debt contracted to purchase the position, the district CoP was asking his subordinates to collect money from drivers and market sellers. [Int. 20] Another police officer put 'Some of PD heads are appointed by buying their positions with cash. Once appointed as head of PD, you need to pay money to remain in power...' [Int. 49].

Another type of corruption is the capture of supply contracts to the MoI. This reportedly can happen in various ways. Officers report of heads of departments making deals with contractors to overbill purchases, for example.[Int. 21] Some heads of department are believed to be more amenable to this type of deal-making than others. In 2013 a former deputy minister was brought back to his position (after having been sacked on allegations of corruption), allegedly because contractors to the MoI polled efforts to buy his position for \$400,000, in the expectation of big gains to be made under his management.[Int. 1] One police officer admitted having shared into bribes taken from contractors by the head of logistics, who wanted to buy his silence. [Int. 21] There are reports of contracting seizure consisting of favouring firms linked to MoI officials, who are then rewarded in various ways, or their political groups are. One of the previous ministers was believed to be favouring businessmen from his own province, for example.[Int. 12] There were also strong rumours in the MoI that senior officials had taken bribes by the Onex Construction Company to avoid inspecting its building sites. [Int. 20]

A third type of corruption is probably more opportunistic, the syphoning off of salaries and other emoluments for the police. This practice used to be common, but has been brought under control to a degree through the growing reliance on electronic payments. It is still believed to occur in remote areas where electronic payments are not available, like Nuristan, Ghor and Zabul provinces, and/or to affect

allowances, benefits and prizes more than salaries, as by now policemen are well aware of what their entitlements are. In Nuristan the disappearance of several months’ worth of salaries gave rise to major complaints by the police. [Int. 25] [Int. 12] [Int. 7] [Int. 3] [Int. 4]/[Int. 11]

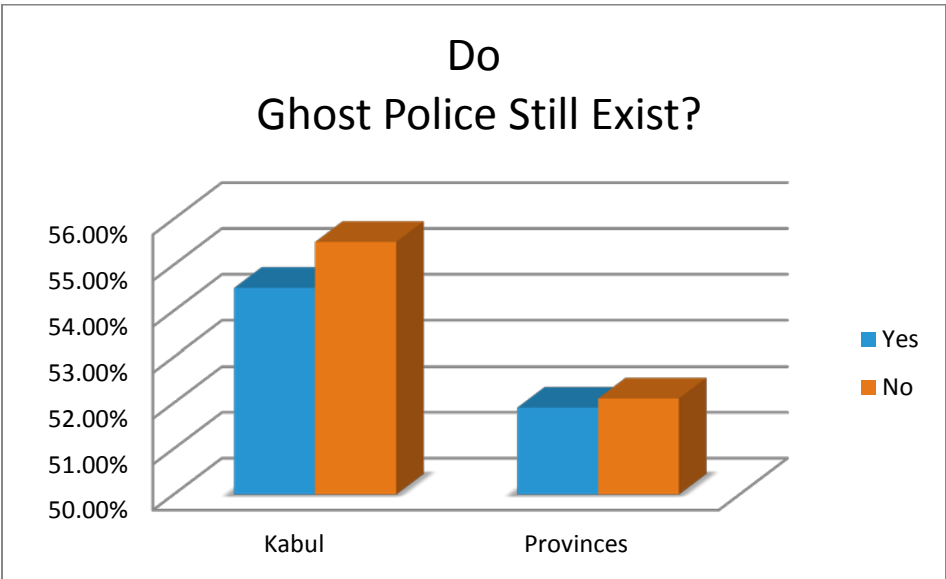
A fourth type of corruption is the so-called ‘ghost-policing’, where policemen exist on the personnel charts (Tashkil), but do not turn up to work. Ghost policing was reportedly widespread in Afghanistan until 2007-8, when it might have acquired a systemic character, but the introduction of electronic payments and the tightening of controls have considerably contained the problem. Today it might survive in a more opportunistic form, particularly in districts remote from the provincial centre, but there are exceptions. For example, there are allegations that a provincial chief of police’s main income is through ghost policing [Int. 33]. Overall a majority of the police officers interviewed believed ghost policing still existed in some form (Table 17). Many interviewees believed that some senior police officers were able, particularly in provinces seriously affected by the conflict but also to some extent in the Kabul MoI, to keep relatives and friends in the Tashkil and only mobilise them for inspections from the centre, pocketing most of their salaries. [Int. 20][Int. 9] [Int. 24] [Int. 4] [Int. 35] [Int. 15] [Int. 23] [Int. 2][Int. 19] [Int. 36]:

Because Ghazni Province is an insecure province and police suffers many casualties in this province every month, if any observer commission come to Ghazni they cannot go to the district to see if they have that number of officer and soldiers, which are registered in the Tashakil or some of these names are ghost police. [Int. 10]

For example XXX district Tashkel was 150 and there were 120 police. He takes the salary of the 30 who are not really there. [Int. 21]

The problem is believed to be particularly serious in the case of the Local Police, in whose case checks are very loose. [Int. 18]

Figure 16: Presence of Ghost Police As of 2014



A fifth type of corruption and abuse include the pilfering of vehicle fuel, which is mostly opportunistic in nature and involves stealing small amounts, but sometimes sees whole fuel tankers disappearing. There is also extensive reports of personal use by police officers and their relatives of official vehicles. It has been estimated that about a police car a day gets damaged by non-police drivers [Int. 11]:

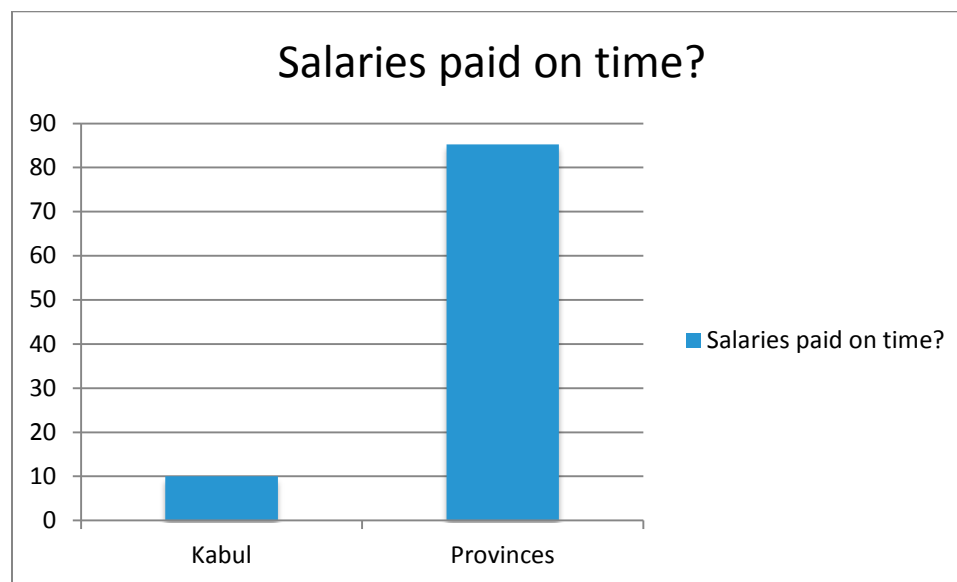
There are also some cases that they are using public resources for personal use such as using Rangers cars for house reconstruction like brining bricks, woods, and other things. [Int. 21]

A sixth type of corruption, often linked to the first type, is illegally taxing drivers:²²

When they are giving license they are not taking exams from drivers; instead they are taking money from drivers. When driver makes faults, the traffic police give wrong ticket and take money which money is not giving to traffic department. [Int. 4]

To the extent that corruption is not systemic, the low salaries of policemen are described as one of the factors driving corruption, as it is claimed that it is not possible to support a family. [Int. 13] The fact that salaries are in some cases paid months late compounds the situation (see Table 18). Just in June 60 policemen left their job and in some cases sold their weapons on the black market because of delays in salaries being paid. [Int. 15] In addition, low salaries or their late disbursement is viewed as encouraging the involvement of the police in illicit activities and with collusion with criminal networks in post-conflict societies.²³

Figure 17: Police salaries paid on time in Kabul and in the provinces, % of police officers answering “Yes”



²² See also Mohammad Isaqzadeh and Antonio Giustozzi, *Afghanistan's Roads: Extortion and Abuse Against Drivers*, Integrity Watch Afghanistan, 2013.

²³ Rachel Neild 2001.

CONCLUSION

Although senior appointments in MoI and ANP have been characterised by greater attention being paid to the professional background of appointees, connections and money continue to be predominant factors and undermine the success of police reforms in Afghanistan. There are more professional individuals in the senior management of the MoI and ANP than three years ago. Considerable progress in terms of professionalization of the police chiefs was reported in the provinces with less improvement in the background of MoI senior officials. The junior level positions also seem to have been benefitted more from reforms efforts and professionalization while the appointments to senior positions continue to be made based on nepotism, political corruption or outright purchase of positions. There also has been progress in police discipline (such as wearing uniforms by police and less common practice of ghost policing). This may have resulted in relatively more favourable public perception of police capacity to enforce rule of law and provide security. However, majority of Afghans still feel fearful when encountering the police. The ANP is viewed to be violent and the attempts to promote civilian policing seem to have had very limited success.

Corruption within police remains institutionalised and a major impediment to police professionalism. There is a cycle of corruption and impunity, in which police officers have strong incentives to engage in corrupt practices in order to secure their current positions and ensure their prospect of next posts. Therefore, the police became the top recipient of bribes as perceived by the public. Impunity that has emerged in this system also allowed corrupt practices to go unpunished and instances of prosecution rarely heard.

The international community and the Afghan government, which are interested in police reform, need to take meritocracy within MoI and ANP more seriously. Simply equipping the police or providing technical training does not change the police behaviour and their treatment of the public as long as their incentives are not changed. So far as police officers see connections and money as indispensable for appointments and promotion, expecting them to discharge their duties professionally and with integrity seems unrealistic. The need for promoting meritocracy within MoI and ANP is unavoidable, since without it real reform of the police is unattainable.

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