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TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1: PROFILE	1
Introduction.....	1
Geography.....	1
Area	1
Geographic Divisions and Climate.....	2
Rivers and Lakes	2
Major Cities	3
Kabul	3
Mazar-e Sharif	3
Ghazni.....	3
Herat	4
Kandahar.....	4
History	4
Government	5
Media	6
Economy	6
Ethnic Groups	7
Pashtuns.....	8
Tajiks	8
Uzbeks	8
Chapter 1 Assessment.....	10
CHAPTER 2: RELIGION	11
Overview.....	11
Islam	11
Islam in Afghanistan.....	12
Role of Religion in Government.....	13
Local Governance.....	14
Religion in Daily Life.....	14
Religious Holidays.....	15
Buildings of Worship.....	16
Behavior in Places of Worship	17
Chapter 2 Assessment.....	19
CHAPTER 3: TRADITIONS	20
Introduction.....	20
Codes of Politeness.....	20
Dining Customs	22
Dress Codes	24
Nonreligious Celebrations	24

Dos and Don'ts	25
Chapter 3 Assessment.....	26
CHAPTER 4: URBAN LIFE.....	27
Urbanization	27
Urban Work Issues	28
Daily Urban Life.....	28
Urban Healthcare	29
Education	31
Public Places	32
Restaurants	32
Marketplace	33
Urban Traffic and Transportation.....	35
Solicitations	37
Chapter 4 Assessment.....	38
CHAPTER 5: RURAL LIFE	39
Tribal Distribution and Leadership.....	39
Land Ownership.....	40
Rural Economy	41
Rural Transportation	42
Health and Education.....	42
Daily Life in the Countryside	43
Checkpoints	44
Landmines.....	46
Chapter 5 Assessment.....	47
CHAPTER 6: FAMILY LIFE	48
Typical Household and Family Structure	48
Status of Women, Elders, and Children.....	49
Married Life.....	49
Divorce	50
Family Events, Rites of Passage.....	51
Naming Practices	51
Chapter 6 Assessment.....	52
FINAL ASSESSMENT	53
FURTHER READING	56

CHAPTER 1: PROFILE

Introduction

The Hazaras of Afghanistan are unique among the country's diverse population. Ethnically, the Hazaras resemble East Asia's Mongols. The word "hazar," meaning "thousand," has led many to believe the Hazaras are descendants of Genghis Khan's warriors, who arrived by the thousands in the 13th century. Linguistically, Hazaras set themselves apart from other Afghans by speaking a unique form of Dari known as Hazaragi. Like Dari, Hazaragi is an Indo-Iranian language; however, it is marked by strong Mongol and Turkic influences.

Religiously, the Hazaras stand out from other Afghans because most follow the Shi'a branch of Islam.¹



© Nasim Fekrat
Hazara villagers

Of Afghanistan's nearly 30 million inhabitants, Hazaras number about 2.7 million, or 9%.² Small Hazara populations also exist in Pakistan and Iran.³ The central Afghanistan highlands have traditionally been the home of the Hazara. Despite significant Hazara populations in the cities of Kabul, Ghazni, and Mazar-e Sharif, most Hazaras still live in rural areas of central Afghanistan's Hazarajat.⁴

Geography

Area

Afghanistan is a landlocked country located in South Asia. Covering an area of approximately 650,000 sq km (250,000 sq mi), Afghanistan is nearly the size of Texas. Its longest borders are its 2,430 km (1,510 mi) southern and eastern border with Pakistan, its 1,206 km (749 mi) northeastern border with Tajikistan, and its 936 km (582 mi) western border with Iran. Afghanistan also borders Turkmenistan (744 km/462 mi) and Uzbekistan (137 km/85 mi) in the north and has a short border with China (just 76 km/47 mi) in the extreme northeast.⁵

¹ Martin Ewans, *Afghanistan: A Short History of Its People and Politics* (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 2002), 7–8.

² Central Intelligence Agency, "Afghanistan," in *The World Factbook*, 17 May 2011, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/af.html>

³ Paul M. Lewis, "Hazaragi," in *Ethnologue: Languages of the World*, 16th ed. (Dallas: SIL International, 2009), http://www.ethnologue.com/show_language.asp?code=haz

⁴ National Geographic Society, "Afghanistan Population Map," 2003, http://ngm.nationalgeographic.com/ngm/0311/feature2/images/mp_download.2.pdf

⁵ Central Intelligence Agency, "Afghanistan," in *The World Factbook*, 17 May 2011, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/af.html>

Geographic Divisions and Climate

Rugged mountains form the majority of Afghanistan's terrain and divide the country into three regions.^{6, 7} The Central Highlands cover roughly 64% of the country. They include the Hindu Kush mountain range, which is actually part of the greater Himalayan chain. High mountain peaks and strategic passes, such as the Khyber Pass, characterize the area. The Northern Plains are north of the highlands. Covering 16% of the country, the Northern Plains are Afghanistan's most fertile lands. Agriculture and mineral resources have made this region Afghanistan's most densely populated. The Southern Plateau, making up the remaining 20% of the country, is semi-arid. Soils are poor, and strong winds are common in the summer.^{8, 9}



© Afghanistan Matters / flickr.com
Afghanistan landscape

In general, Afghan summers are dry and most precipitation occurs in the winter. October–April are the wet months. Areas in the northeast have a subarctic climate, while regions near Pakistan may receive tropical air driven by Indian monsoons. Deserts may get less than 10cm (4 in) of rain a year, whereas the highlands can get as much as 100cm (40 in). Temperatures vary by region. Some parts of the country register temperatures as high as 120°F (49°C) while other areas average temperatures below freezing.^{10, 11}

Rivers and Lakes

Because of its arid climate, Afghanistan relies heavily on its rivers. Most major cities are built near rivers. Over 80% of the country's rivers originate in the Central Highlands, which collect significant snowfall.¹² Yet, lacking the necessary infrastructure, most of the country's water remains unharnessed or uncollected. Only 30–35% of the annual water supply is used domestically, with the remainder flowing into surrounding countries. In the absence of sufficient storage, management, and distribution systems, water shortages are common.¹³

The major Afghan rivers are the Amu Darya, the Kabul, the Helmand, and the Harirod. Forming a large section of the country's northern border, the Amu Darya is Afghanistan's only navigable river. The Kabul, the major waterway in eastern Afghanistan, flows from its source in the Central Highlands into the Indus River in Pakistan. The Helmand is the longest river in the country and

⁶ Central Intelligence Agency, "Afghanistan," in *The World Factbook*, 17 May 2011, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/af.html>

⁷ Nikki van der Gaag, *Focus on Afghanistan* (Stamford, CT: World Almanac Library, 2008), 15.

⁸ *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Afghanistan: Physiographic Regions," 2011, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/7798/Afghanistan/226121/Physiographic-regions?anchor=ref306570>

⁹ Nikki van der Gaag, *Focus on Afghanistan* (Stamford, CT: World Almanac Library, 2008), 14–16.

¹⁰ Nikki van der Gaag, *Focus on Afghanistan* (Stamford, CT: World Almanac Library, 2008), 14–15.

¹¹ Peter R. Blood, ed., "Chapter 2: The Society and Environment: The Natural Environment: Climate," in *Afghanistan: A Country Study*, (Washington, DC: Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, 1997).

¹² Asian Development Bank, "Afghanistan: Issues, Constraints and Objectives," 2005, <http://www.adb.org/Water/NARBO/2005/Training-Program/pres-AFG-grp1-NARBO-training.pdf>

¹³ Sayed Salahuddin, "With War and Neglect, Afghans Face Water Shortage," *Reuters*, 24 March 2010, <http://www.reuters.com/article/idUSTRE62N19Q20100324>

important for irrigation in the south. Flowing westward from the central mountains, the Harirud passes near the large western city of Herat and ultimately forms a portion of the Afghan–Iranian border. Afghanistan’s few lakes are mostly small; some are saline. Many of the country’s streams and lakes fill only after periods of rainfall or during the spring snowmelt.¹⁴

Major Cities

Kabul

Kabul is Afghanistan’s capital. Located along the Kabul River, it is the country’s cultural and economic heart. The city has a long history, due in large part to its strategic location near the Khyber Pass to Pakistan. Soviet forces controlled the city through much of the 1980s and, following their withdrawal, the city became a battleground for competing Afghan factions. By the time the Taliban won control of greater Afghanistan in 1996, Kabul was mostly destroyed. Because of Kabul’s proximity to the traditional Hazara highlands the city’s population is one-quarter Hazara.^{15, 16}



© Rob Bakker
Kabul

Mazar-e Sharif

Mazar-e Sharif is an important religious site for Shi’ite Muslims, and as such has a sizable Hazara population. The city is known for its Blue Mosque, which is also a tomb devoted to the early Muslim leader Ali. Mazar-e Sharif is 56 km (35 mi) from Uzbekistan in Afghanistan’s Balkh Province and is in one of Afghanistan’s most fertile areas. Flour milling and textiles are the town’s chief industries.¹⁷ Today, approximately 10% of the city is Hazara.¹⁸

Ghazni

Ghazni is located in eastern Afghanistan just outside of Hazarajat (the traditional mountainous home region of the Hazaras). Hazaras account for 25% of the population.¹⁹ Ghazni is Afghanistan’s only remaining walled city and benefits from its location along the highway between Kabul and Kandahar.

¹⁴ *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, “Afghanistan: Drainage.” 2011, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/7798/Afghanistan/21416/Drainage>

¹⁵ *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, “Kabul,” 2011, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/309320/Kabul>

¹⁶ National Geographic Society, “Afghanistan Population Map,” 2003, http://ngm.nationalgeographic.com/ngm/0311/feature2/images/mp_download.2.pdf

¹⁷ *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, “Mazar-e Sharif,” 2011, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/371165/Mazar-e-Sharif>

¹⁸ National Geographic Society, “Afghanistan Population Map,” 2003, http://ngm.nationalgeographic.com/ngm/0311/feature2/images/mp_download.2.pdf

¹⁹ National Geographic Society, “Afghanistan Population Map,” 2003, http://ngm.nationalgeographic.com/ngm/0311/feature2/images/mp_download.2.pdf

Herat

Herat is located between Hazarajat (the traditional mountainous home region of the Hazaras) and Iran (the religious epicenter of Shi'a Islam practiced by most Hazaras). Only 2% of the city is Hazara.

Kandahar

Kandahar, Afghanistan's second largest city, lies in the traditionally Pashtun south. The city is 70% Pashtun and 6% Hazara. Thousands of years old, the city has long held a strategic importance as a major Central Asian crossroad. Alexander the Great, Genghis Khan, and Tamerlane all fought for control of the city. Today, Kandahar is a major exporter of fruit.²⁰

History

While Afghanistan's history extends thousands of years, recent history has largely shaped Afghanistan today. Many tribal ethnic groups have found homes in Afghanistan, as the country has long been a crossroads for surrounding empires from China, Mongolia, the Indian subcontinent, and Persia. By the 18th century C.E., fragmented Pashtun tribes began to come together. In 1747, a Pashtun named Ahmad Shah Abdali (later surnamed Durani) established rule in Kandahar and worked to unite disparate tribal communities. He is regarded as the founder of modern Afghanistan; his dynasty lasted until the 1820s, when Afghanistan became embroiled in British and Russian regional competition.^{21, 22}



Courtesy of Wikipedia
Abdur Rahman

Throughout much of the 19th century, Afghanistan was involved in several wars with Britain, as the United Kingdom tried to extend its empire from India. In 1880, a man named Abdur Rahman rose to power. He faced several tribal revolts in the late 1800s, including a revolt by the Hazaras of central Afghanistan's Hazarajat. He declared an anti-Shi'a jihad against the Hazarajat, forcing thousands of Hazaras into slavery.^{23, 24}

Afghanistan gained its independence in 1919. Shortly thereafter slavery was abolished and many Hazara were freed from bonded servitude. Hopes for independence largely failed by the end of the 20th century. In 1979, the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan after the assassination of the country's president in a coup the year before.^{25, 26} Many Afghans despised the occupying Soviets, and throughout the 1980s, resistance fighters (mostly Islamist mujahideen) gained

²⁰ *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Kandahar," n.d., <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/310899/Kandahar>

²¹ Hafizullah Emadi, *Culture and Customs of Afghanistan* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2005), 29.

²² Nikki van der Gaag, *Focus on Afghanistan* (Stamford, CT: World Almanac Library, 2008), 9.

²³ Martin Ewans, *Afghanistan: A Short History of Its People and Politics* (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 2002), 74.

²⁴ Paul Fitzgerald and Elizabeth Gould, *Invisible History: Afghanistan's Untold Story* (San Francisco: City Lights Books, 2009), 49.

²⁵ Nikki van der Gaag, *Focus on Afghanistan* (Stamford, CT: World Almanac Library, 2008), 10–11.

²⁶ Hafizullah Emadi, *Culture and Customs of Afghanistan* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2005), 31, 42–45.

popular support. Afghanistan struggled through the early 1990s as various factions fought for control after the Soviets left in 1989. The Taliban, a group of oppressive Islamist militants, gained control of Afghanistan in stages. They first seized Kandahar in 1994 and Kabul in 1996, thereby becoming the country's acting government.²⁷ The Taliban despised the Hazara for both their ethnic heritage and adherence to the Shi'a branch of Islam. This animosity reached its peak when the Taliban occupied the northern city of Mazar-e Sharif in 1998, killing as many as 6,000 Hazaras in the process.²⁸

Government

Following the overthrow of the Taliban in 2001, a parliamentary system was created. According to the country's 2004 constitution, Afghanistan is an Islamic republic with a president, two parliamentary houses, and an independent judiciary.²⁹ The president since 2004—Hamid Karzai—is the chief of state and head of the government. He appoints his cabinet, which consists of 25 ministers. The two legislative houses are known as the House of Elders (*Meshrano Jirga*) and the House of the People (*Wolesi Jirga*). Voters elect the members of parliament from each of Afghanistan's 34 provinces.³⁰



© BlatantWorld / flickr.com
Hamid Karzai being sworn in

Hazarajat, the traditional home of the Hazaras in Afghanistan's western Hindu Kush, is not one of the country's legal provinces. The traditional boundaries of Hazarajat cover several provinces; Bamyan and Daykundi are the provinces most centrally located in Hazarajat and therefore the most Hazara-populated. Large numbers of Hazaras also live in Kabul (Kabul Province) and Mazar-e Sharif (Balkh Province).

There are several political parties tied to Hazara and Shi'a identity. The Unity Party (*Hizb-e Wahadat*) and the Movement (*Harakat*) both have strong Hazara identities, especially the Unity Party. Since the removal of the Taliban, Hazaras have gained a more significant foothold in government than ever before. Afghanistan has two vice presidents, and a Hazara named Karim Khalili has been the Second Vice President since 2004 (the year of the country's first post-Taliban elections).³¹ Khalili is also the head of the Unity Party. Other Hazaras have held key positions, including Minister of Women's Affairs and Minister of Planning.³²

²⁷ Hafizullah Emadi, *Culture and Customs of Afghanistan* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2005), 46–48.

²⁸ Martin Ewans, *Afghanistan: A Short History of Its People and Politics* (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 2002), 189.

²⁹ Nikki van der Gaag, *Focus on Afghanistan* (Stamford, CT: World Almanac Library, 2008), 22–23.

³⁰ Central Intelligence Agency, "Afghanistan," in *The World Factbook*, 17 May 2011, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/af.html>

³¹ At the time of this writing, 2011, Karim Khalili is still the Second Vice President.

³² Ehsan M. Entezar, *Afghanistan 101: Understanding Afghan Culture* (Bloomington, IN: Xlibris, 2007), 162.

Media

Afghanistan has a long history of government-controlled media. Afghanistan's first newspapers were printed in 1875, and by the 1950s, the government controlled 95% of the media in the country. After the 1978 coup, the media were greatly suppressed. When the Taliban gained control in the mid-1990s, they allowed only official government and religious information in the media. Radio Kabul, which began transmitting in 1940, broadcasted only Taliban messages under the name "Radio Voice of Sharia."³³



© Internews Network / flickr.com
Radio Sada'i Adalat

Since the Taliban's ousting in 2001, Afghanistan's media industry has begun to grow once again. Radio is the primary medium, reaching 85% of all Afghans. Although government restrictions still hamper a free press, and criticism of Islam is strictly forbidden, media in the country have much more room to negotiate than in previous decades. The country now has dozens of TV stations, though they broadcast primarily to urban areas. Newspapers have seen a resurgence since the end of Taliban rule, and radio continues to thrive. Some media outlets are private enterprises while others are state owned. Internet access is limited; only about 1 million Afghans (less than 4% of the country) had access to internet in 2010.^{34, 35, 36}

Economy

Despite economic progress since the fall of the Taliban in 2001, Afghanistan remains one of the world's poorest countries. Only a handful of countries, almost all in sub-Saharan Africa, have a lower per capita GDP. Nearly half of the country lives in poverty and two-thirds live on less than USD 2 a day.^{37, 38} Afghanistan has some mineral and natural gas reserves but these are largely unexploited.³⁹

Besides foreign aid, which accounts for nearly half of the country's GDP, agriculture is the most important contributor to Afghanistan's economy. Most families farm at subsistence levels. Corn,

³³ Nikki van der Gaag, *Focus on Afghanistan* (Stamford, CT: World Almanac Library, 2008), 40.

³⁴ Central Intelligence Agency, "Afghanistan," in *The World Factbook*, 17 May 2011, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/af.html>

³⁵ Nikki van der Gaag, *Focus on Afghanistan* (Stamford, CT: World Almanac Library, 2008), 40.

³⁶ BBC News, "Afghanistan Country Profile: Media," 15 March 2011, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/country_profiles/1162668.stm

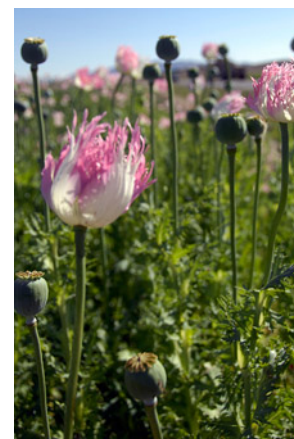
³⁷ Central Intelligence Agency, "Afghanistan," in *The World Factbook*, 17 May 2011, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/af.html>

³⁸ Nikki van der Gaag, *Focus on Afghanistan* (Stamford, CT: World Almanac Library, 2008), 30.

³⁹ James Risen, "U.S. Identifies Vast Mineral Riches in Afghanistan," *New York Times*, 13 June 2010, <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/06/14/world/asia/14minerals.html>

rice, barley, and cotton are important crops, as are fruit and nuts. Animals, including sheep, cattle, goats, horses, donkeys, and camels, are important for meat, milk, and hides.⁴⁰

Among Afghanistan's crops, the poppy is king. Opium, derived from the poppy, is the country's chief product, and Afghanistan is the world's largest supplier.⁴¹ Even years after the Taliban's fall, the terrorist organization continues to receive funds from opium sales. In 2009, it was estimated that the Taliban received as much as USD 300 million a year from Afghanistan's opium trade.⁴² The United States ceased supporting poppy eradication in 2009. The U.S. cited concerns that destroying crops greatly hurts local farmers, driving them to join insurgents. In addition, crop eradication has little to no impact on the drug money earned by the Taliban. Since then, U.S. policy has been to encourage farmers to grow alternative crops.⁴³



© Isafmedia / flickr.com
Opium ready for harvesting

The Hazara are among Afghanistan's least economically developed ethnic groups. This lack of economic progress is a result of a traditional rural life in Afghanistan's central highlands and years of discrimination from other ethnic groups.⁴⁴ Breeding sheep is the chief occupation for rural Hazaras, and menial work is often all they can find in Afghanistan's cities.⁴⁵

Ethnic Groups

Hazaras are only one of many ethnic groups in Afghanistan. The country's diverse geography and long history as a cultural crossroads have allowed many ethnic groups and languages to thrive. As many as 50 languages are spoken throughout Afghanistan.⁴⁶ Pashtuns, Tajiks, and Uzbeks are the major ethnic groups in Afghanistan, but there are many smaller groups including Aimak, Turkmen, Baluchi, Kyrgyz, and Nuristani.^{47, 48}

⁴⁰ *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Afghanistan," 2011, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/7798/Afghanistan>

⁴¹ Hafizullah Emadi, *Culture and Customs of Afghanistan* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2005), 32.

⁴² Dexter Filkins, "Poppies a Target in Fight Against Taliban," *New York Times*, 28 April 2009, <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/04/29/world/asia/29afghan.html>

⁴³ Ben Farmer, "Britain to Continue Poppy Eradication in Afghanistan Despite US Reversal," *The Telegraph*, 18 June 2009, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/afghanistan/5674309/Britain-to-continue-poppy-eradication-in-Afghanistan-despite-US-reversal.html>

⁴⁴ Ehsan M. Entezar, *Afghanistan 101: Understanding Afghan Culture* (Bloomington, IN: Xlibris, 2007), 161.

⁴⁵ Martin Ewans, *Afghanistan: A Short History of Its People and Politics* (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 2002), 8.

⁴⁶ Hafizullah Emadi, *Culture and Customs of Afghanistan* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2005), 7.

⁴⁷ Central Intelligence Agency, "Afghanistan," in *The World Factbook*, 17 May 2011, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/af.html>

⁴⁸ Hafizullah Emadi, *Culture and Customs of Afghanistan* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2005), 9–10.

Pashtuns

Pashtuns make up the largest ethnic group in Afghanistan and account for 42% of the population. Pashtuns have been the major political players in Afghanistan since Ahmad Shah Durani came to power in 1747. Pashtuns have been at the head of Afghanistan's government throughout many different periods; the kings of the 20th century, the Taliban's Mullah Omar, and Hamid Karzai, the country's first elected president of the 21st century, were (or are) all Pashtuns. Pashtuns have traditionally settled in the south and southeast of the country and are primarily Sunni Muslim. Their language, Pashto, is one of Afghanistan's two official languages (the other being Dari).^{49, 50} Their tribal code, known as *Pashtunwali*, values honor above all and has played a significant role in the formation of modern Afghanistan.^{51, 52} Pashtuns are often known simply as Afghans, both inside and outside the country.⁵³



© Jeremy Weate
Pashtun man

Tajiks

After Pashtuns, Tajiks form the second-largest ethnic group in Afghanistan. Many tribal groups, often with their own distinct dialects, form the larger Tajik group that accounts for 27% of Afghanistan's population.⁵⁴ Tajiks speak various forms of Dari and are often referred to as *Farsiwans* (Persian-Farsi speakers).⁵⁵ Like Hazaragi, their dialects are largely regional. For example, Wakhi and Shugni are forms of Dari spoken by Wakhi Tajik tribes and Tajiks in Shugnan, respectively. Tajiks live primarily in northeastern Afghanistan in the region that borders Tajikistan, a country that is 80% Tajik. Like Pashtuns, most Tajiks are Sunni Muslim.^{56, 57, 58}

Uzbeks

Uzbeks live in both Afghanistan and neighboring Uzbekistan. Their language, Uzbeki, is a Turkic language, although many understand Dari and Pashto as well. They inhabit areas in

⁴⁹ Central Intelligence Agency, "Afghanistan," in *The World Factbook*, 17 May 2011, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/af.html>

⁵⁰ Hafizullah Emadi, *Culture and Customs of Afghanistan* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2005), 7–9.

⁵¹ Nikki van der Gaag, *Focus on Afghanistan* (Stamford, CT: World Almanac Library, 2008), 18.

⁵² Palwasha Kakar, "Tribal Law of Pashtunwali and Women's Legislative Authority," Afghan Legal History Project, Harvard Law School, n.d., <http://www.law.harvard.edu/programs/ilsp/research/kakar.pdf>

⁵³ Hafizullah Emadi, *Culture and Customs of Afghanistan* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2005), 7.

⁵⁴ Central Intelligence Agency, "Afghanistan," in *The World Factbook*, 17 May 2011, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/af.html>

⁵⁵ Thomas H. Johnson, "The Loyal Jirga, Ethnic Rivalries and Future Afghan Stability," *Strategic Insights* 1, no 6 (August 2002), Center for Contemporary Conflict, Naval Postgraduate School.

⁵⁶ Hafizullah Emadi, *Culture and Customs of Afghanistan* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2005), 9.

⁵⁷ Nikki van der Gaag, *Focus on Afghanistan* (Stamford, CT: World Almanac Library, 2008), 19.

⁵⁸ Central Intelligence Agency, "Tajikistan," in *The World Factbook*, 26 May 2011, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ti.html>

northern Afghanistan near the Amu Darya River. Like the Hazaras, they make up 9% of the country's total population. Unlike the Hazaras, Uzbeks are predominantly Sunni.^{59, 60, 61}

⁵⁹ Central Intelligence Agency, "Afghanistan," in *The World Factbook*, 17 May 2011, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/af.html>

⁶⁰ Hafizullah Emadi, *Culture and Customs of Afghanistan* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2005), 9.

⁶¹ Nikki van der Gaag, *Focus on Afghanistan* (Stamford, CT: World Almanac Library, 2008), 19.

Chapter 1 Assessment

1. Hazaras make up roughly 9% of Afghanistan's population

True

Afghanistan is an ethnically diverse country. Pashtuns account for 42% of the people, Tajiks 27%, and Hazaras and Uzbeks account for 9% each. Other ethnic groups include the Aimak, Turkmen, Baluchi, Kyrgyz, and Nuristani.

2. Despite ethnic and linguistic differences, Hazaras are Sunni Muslim, along with most Pashtuns and Tajiks.

False

Hazaras are predominantly Shi'ite Muslim. As such, they have faced significant discrimination.

3. Although Afghanistan's border with Pakistan is strategically important, it is one of the country's shortest borders.

False

The border with Pakistan is Afghanistan's longest at 2,430 km (1,510 mi). Afghanistan also borders Iran, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and China.

4. In 1998, Mazar-e Sharif was the site of a Taliban massacre of Hazaras.

True

The northern city is an important site for Shi'ite Muslims. After the Taliban took the city, they killed as many as 6,000 Hazaras.

5. Pashtuns have been the major political players in Afghanistan since 1747.

True

The kings of the 19th and 20th century, the Taliban's Mullah Omar, and Hamid Karzai (the country's first elected president of the 21st century), were all Pashtuns.

CHAPTER 2: RELIGION

Overview

Religion, a significant part of Hazara history and identity, permeates Afghan society. Afghanistan is 99% Muslim. The majority, 80% of the population, is Sunni Muslim while 19% is Shi'ite. The country's Hazara population is predominantly Shi'ite.⁶² Hazaras have been traditionally considered outsiders because of their religious beliefs and have faced significant discrimination over the last century. There are also a large number of Sufis among both Afghanistan's Sunni and Shi'ite sects. Sufis practice a form of Islamic mysticism. Sufis are especially prevalent around the western city of Herat and in the Pashtun-dominated south and east.⁶³ The remaining 1% of the country is Hindu, Sikh, and Christian. Under the Taliban, non-Muslim religious minorities were forced to wear a yellow badge on their clothing to distinguish themselves from the rest of the population.⁶⁴



© Canada in Afghanistan / flickr.com
Two Muslim women

Islam

Islam is the world's second-largest religion.^{65, 66} It dates back to the early seventh century C.E. on the Arabian Peninsula. The Prophet Muhammad (570–632 C.E.), a trader from Mecca, is believed to have been visited by the angel Jibril (Gabriel), from whom he received a series of revelations that were eventually written as the Quran.⁶⁷ Muhammad gradually gained support for his new teachings, which eventually supplanted the polytheistic beliefs of the time. However, Muslims do not see their faith as new, but as a continuation of the



© Nathan Derrick
Building a Mosque

⁶² Central Intelligence Agency, "Afghanistan," in *The World Factbook*, 17 May 2011, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/af.html>

⁶³ Nancy Hatch Dupree and Thomas E. Gouttierre, "Chapter 2: The Society and Environment: Religion: Sufis," in *Afghanistan: A Country Study*, ed. Peter R. Blood, Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, 1997, [http://lcweb2.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?frd/cstdy:@field\(DOCID+af0066\)](http://lcweb2.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?frd/cstdy:@field(DOCID+af0066))

⁶⁴ Hafizullah Emadi, *Culture and Customs of Afghanistan* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2005), 62.

⁶⁵ BBC Religions, "Islam at a Glance," 30 June 2009, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/islam/ata glance/glance.shtml>

⁶⁶ John L. Esposito and Dalia Mogahed, *Who Speaks for Islam? What a Billion Muslims Really Think* (New York: Gallup Press, 2007), 3.

⁶⁷ Albert Hourani, *A History of the Arab Peoples* (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1991), 16–18.

religious tradition of Abraham. Abraham (Ibrahim), Moses (Musa), and Jesus (Isa) are considered prophets who preceded Muhammad.⁶⁸

Muhammad died without naming a successor, an issue that influenced Islamic history. A group of Muhammad's close associates chose one of his early companions, Abu Bakr, to be the new leader (caliph) of the Muslim community.⁶⁹ Although not regarded as a prophet, Abu Bakr secured authority over the community. Election of the community's next leaders became more contentious. The next two caliphs, Umar and Uthman, both died violently. Ali, Muhammad's cousin and son-in-law, claimed leadership authority but was never fully recognized. Within 5 years, he was also killed and leadership passed to a kinsman of Uthman.⁷⁰ These events are important because they form the basis of a great doctrinal schism in Islam, one that has largely defined Afghanistan's Hazaras in opposition to the rest of the population. Supporters of Ali and his family formed what was to become a minority sect known as the Shi'ites (*shiat Ali* in Arabic, meaning the party or sect of Ali). They have long felt abused and mistreated by Islam's majority sect, the Sunni. Roughly 85% of the world's Muslims are Sunni; Shi'ites live primarily in Iran and Iraq, with a notable presence in Lebanon.⁷¹

Sectarian differences between Afghanistan's Sunni majority and Shi'ite minority have been a source of tension and aggression. Sunni Pashtuns may associate Hazara Shi'ites with the Shi'ites of Iran, an assumption bolstered by the fact that many Hazara clerics have studied in Iran.^{72, 73}

Islam in Afghanistan

The conversion of Afghanistan to Islam occurred in stages. The religion first reached modern-day Afghanistan 20 years after the death of Muhammad. The army that entered Afghanistan's western region was part of a large expansive wave that carried Islam into South Asia and across North Africa in the first century after Muhammad's death. Religious conversion often occurred after initial conquests; non-Muslims were subject to higher taxes than Muslims, thus adding an economic incentive for embracing Islam. Parts of central and eastern Afghanistan did not convert to Islam until the 9th and 11th centuries and Nuristan, in the far east of the country, did not embrace Islam until the turn of the 20th century. (Prior to Nuristan's conversion, the region was known as Kafiristan, land of the infidels).⁷⁴

The origin of Shi'ism among the Hazaras is contested. Some argue that the original inhabitants of Afghanistan, the Tajiks, were originally Shi'ite and that the Hazaras adopted their beliefs. Others hold that Shi'ism was imposed on the Hazaras under the rule of Shah Abbas Safavid

⁶⁸ John L. Esposito and Dalia Mogahed, *Who Speaks for Islam? What a Billion Muslims Really Think* (New York: Gallup Press, 2007), 8.

⁶⁹ Albert Hourani, *A History of the Arab Peoples* (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1991), 22–23.

⁷⁰ Albert Hourani, *A History of the Arab Peoples* (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1991), 24–25.

⁷¹ John Esposito and Dalia Mogahed, *Who Speaks for Islam? What a Billion Muslims Really Think* (New York: Gallup Press, 2007), 2–3.

⁷² Ehsan M. Entezar, *Afghanistan 101: Understanding Afghan Culture* (Bloomington, IN: Xlibris, 2007), 92–93.

⁷³ Angelo Rasanayagam, *Afghanistan: A Modern History* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2002), 130–131.

⁷⁴ Hafizullah Emadi, *Culture and Customs of Afghanistan* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2005), 54–56.

(1589–1629) of Persia. Still others contend that Hazara conversion has its roots in early Mongol support of Shi'a Islam under Ghazan Khan. It is likely that elements of all three theories are true and that Hazara conversion took place gradually.⁷⁵

Role of Religion in Government

The debate about religion's role in government has been a defining national discussion for Afghanistan, one that has cost many lives. When the Taliban came to power in the mid-1990s, they imposed a strict interpretation of Islam on the country. The Taliban confined women to their homes and banned television, music, dancing, and art.⁷⁶ Other religious strictures imposed by the Taliban included mandatory beard length for adult men, an approved list of Muslim names for new babies, and the abolition of secular holidays.⁷⁷

In 2001, the Taliban destroyed two massive sixth century statues of Buddha carved into the mountain walls of Bamiyan. For centuries, these Buddhas stood watch over part of Hazarajat, and many Hazaras believed their ancestors carved them.^{78, 79} Hazaras, considered outsiders by the Taliban because of both their Shi'ite identity and their non-Pashtun ethnicity, were heavily persecuted.⁸⁰



Courtesy of Wikipedia
Bamiyan Buddha

Since the fall of the Taliban and the rise of the current government, Afghanistan has retained its Islamic identity. The council system that prevails in government at the local and national level is, however, based upon the Afghan tribal *jirga* system rather than the Islamic *shura* council.^{81, 82} The country's constitution, adopted in 2004, declares Afghanistan an Islamic state and expressly prohibits laws that contradict Islam.⁸³ While religious minorities are allowed some liberties, they are subject to close governmental and societal scrutiny.⁸⁴

⁷⁵ Sayed Askar Mousavi, *The Hazaras of Afghanistan: An Historical, Cultural, Economic and Political Study* (Richmond, Surrey, UK: Curzon Press, 1998), 73–76.

⁷⁶ Nikki van der Gaag, *Focus on Afghanistan* (Stamford, CT: World Library Almanac, 2008), 12.

⁷⁷ Angelo Rasanayagam, *Afghanistan: A Modern History* (New York: I.B. Taurus, 2003), 198.

⁷⁸ Paul Fitzgerald and Elizabeth Gould, *Invisible History: Afghanistan's Untold Story* (San Francisco: City Lights Books, 2009), 243.

⁷⁹ Phil Zabriskie, "Hazaras: Afghanistan's Outsiders," *National Geographic*, February 2008, 116, <http://ngm.nationalgeographic.com/2008/02/afghanistan-hazara/phil-zabriskie-text>

⁸⁰ Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs, U.S. Department of State, "Background Note: Afghanistan," 6 December 2010, <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/5380.htm>

⁸¹ Angelo Rasanayagam, *Afghanistan: A Modern History* (New York: I.B. Taurus, 2003), 191.

⁸² Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs, U.S. Department of State, "Background Note: Afghanistan," 6 December 2010, <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/5380.htm>

⁸³ *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Afghanistan," 2011, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/7798/Afghanistan>

⁸⁴ Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, U.S. Department of State, "Afghanistan," International Religious Freedom Report 2008, September 2008, <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2008/108497.htm>

Local Governance

The maxim that “all politics is local” is especially true in tribal Afghanistan; local governments are strongly controlled by village elders and the religious expectations of the *jirga* councils. As such, although Shi’a Islam plays no role in the national government, it influences the legal systems in Hazarajat. In Shi’ite communities, such as those among the Hazara, religious clerics play an important role and are ranked according to their training and influence. Mujtahid, Hujjat al-Islam, and Ayatollah are all clerical ranks in Shi’a Islam. For many years, Afghanistan’s Hazaras had no leaders with the rank of ayatollah and as a result looked to influential ayatollahs in Iraq and Iran. This trend has recently changed. Today several ayatollahs provide religious leadership for the Hazaras of central Afghanistan.⁸⁵

Religion in Daily Life

Islam is infused into nearly every aspect of life in Afghanistan. The practice of Islam involves following five fundamental duties, also known as the “Five Pillars of Islam.”⁸⁶

Shahada—The declaration of faith (*shahada*) that “there is no god but God (Allah) and Muhammad is God’s messenger,” is repeated in prayers throughout the day and in the call to prayer. It reminds Muslims not only of the polytheism of pre-Islamic Arabia but also that nothing (including money or ambition) should be worshipped except God.⁸⁷



© Canada in Afghanistan / flickr.com
Preparing to pray

Salat—Muslims are expected to pray (*salat*) five times a day. In many Muslim countries, including Afghanistan, the call to prayer can be heard throughout cities and towns. Crowds of people attend Friday prayers at noon in mosques across the country.

Exchange 1: When do you worship?

Soldier:	When do you pray?	kaay namaaz meeKhonee?
Local:	We pray at noon.	moo da chaasht namaaz meeKhoneem

Sawm—Ramadan is a time for physical discipline and spiritual reflection. In addition to fasting (*sawm*), Muslims also abstain from sexual intercourse and smoking from sunrise to sunset for the entire month.

⁸⁵ Hafizullah Emadi, *Culture and Customs of Afghanistan* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2005), 58.

⁸⁶ Thomas Barfield, *Afghanistan: A Cultural and Political History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), 40–41.

⁸⁷ John L. Esposito and Dalia Mogahed, *Who Speaks for Islam? What a Billion Muslims Really Think* (New York: Gallup, Inc., 2007), 12–13.

Zakat—Muslims are expected to give alms (*zakat*) to share the wealth they have received from God. Sharing 2.5% of all assets is customary.

Hajj—A pilgrimage (*hajj*) to Mecca is the final pillar of Islam. Once every year, pilgrims come from all over the world for the 5-day ritual. It is expected that every Muslim go once in a lifetime, although if they are physically unable or lack financial means, another may go on their behalf.

A common practice among Afghanistan's Shi'ite Hazaras is a religious custom known as *Manqabat Khani*. The faithful meet weekly, either in the home or in a special building called a *takyakhana*, and take turns reciting from memory poetry that praises God, Muhammad, Ali, and Ali's sons. The speaker often carries a cane or stick and walks among the other attendants while reciting any of thousands of memorized lines to a variety of tunes. The practice is likely inspired by Sufi poets but has resulted in the preservation of Farsi literature among a population that is largely illiterate.⁸⁸

Religious Holidays

Afghanistan's Muslims, like Muslims across the world, celebrate a number of festivals and religious holidays. Chief among these celebrations is *Eid e-Qurban*. Known throughout much of the Muslim world as Eid al-Adha, *Eid e-Qurban* is a commemoration of Abraham's willingness to sacrifice his son Isma'il (or Ishmael, rather than Isaac in the Judeo-Christian tradition). God spared Isma'il by providing a lamb for Abraham to sacrifice instead. Muslims celebrate this act by sacrificing an animal and dividing the meat into three parts. The family keeps one-third, gives one-third to relatives, and distributes the last third to the poor. *Eid e-Qurban* is observed every year during the month of the pilgrimage to Mecca.⁸⁹

The month of Ramadan, during which Muslims fast during daylight hours, is important in Afghanistan as is the feast at the end of the month (Eid al-Fitr or *Eid e-Ramazan*). Families visit relatives and some exchange gifts. During either of the two Eids people greet each with "*Eid Mubarak*."⁹⁰

There are several other holidays important to Shi'ites, including Afghanistan's Hazara population. Shi'ites mourn the death of Husayn, the son of Ali and grandson of Muhammad, on the 10th day of the month of *Muharram*. On that day in 680 C.E, a rival leader killed Husayn and his companions. Today, Shi'ites across the world mourn Ali's death on *Ashura* (meaning "ten").⁹¹ Afghan Shi'ites mourn Ali by publicly whipping



Courtesy of Wikipedia
Shi'ites mourn Ali

⁸⁸ Sayed Askar Mousavi, *The Hazaras of Afghanistan: An Historical, Cultural, Economic and Political Study* (Richmond, Surrey, UK: Curzon Press, 1998), 81.

⁸⁹ Hafizullah Emadi, *Culture and Customs of Afghanistan* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2005), 151–152.

⁹⁰ Hafizullah Emadi, *Culture and Customs of Afghanistan* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2005), 151–153.

⁹¹ Hafizullah Emadi, *Culture and Customs of Afghanistan* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2005), 153.

themselves.⁹² Later in the Muslim calendar year, Shi'ites commemorate *Eid e-Ghadir* on the 18th day of the Islamic lunar month of *Zul al-Hijja*. Shi'ites believe that on this day Muhammad returned from a pilgrimage in Mecca and designated his cousin and son-in-law Ali as the next leader. Shi'ites, believing that Ali was wrongfully supplanted, give great importance to this day.⁹³

Buildings of Worship

The central place of worship in Islam is the mosque. Mosques host daily worship services and are the centers for legal and marital matters as well as decision-making.⁹⁴ Most mosques consist of a large room where a prayer-leader (known as the *imam*) directs long rows of worshippers. The direction to Mecca is marked in a niche (*mihrab*) in the wall so worshippers will know in which direction to pray. A pulpit (*minbar*) is often near the *mihrab* and offers a place for sermons to be delivered during Friday prayers. Towers, known as minarets, attached to or directly adjacent to the mosque allow the *muezzin* to call worshippers to prayer throughout the day.⁹⁵



© Juliet-Foxtrout / flickr.com
Blue Mosque of Mazar e-Sharif

Mosques are common throughout Afghanistan among both Shi'ites and Sunnis. Large Afghan mosques in cities typically have an architectural style that uses elements from Iranian mosques to the west and Indian mosques to the east. Large peaked arches often mark entrances and onion domes are common. The Blue Mosque of Mazar e-Sharif is one of the country's most famous and shows some of these styles. The Blue Mosque is one of several places traditionally believed to be the burial site of Ali and is highly revered by the Shi'ite Hazara community.⁹⁶ Village mosques may be little more than mud and brick buildings.

Shi'ites, including Hazaras, also worship at *takyakhana*s.⁹⁷ These are shrines dedicated to Imam Husayn, the son of Ali and grandson of Muhammad. During commemorations of Husayn's death, Afghanistan's Shi'ites mourn at the *takyakhana*, which are often decorated with a black flag.⁹⁸ Hazaras have two other places of worship, the *ziyaratgah* and the *nazargah*. A *ziyaratgah* is the burial site of a renowned religious man or sayyed (a descendent of Muhammad). In contrast to other Muslim countries, Iran in particular, few Imams travelled as far east as

⁹² Adam B. Ellick, "Ashura in Afghanistan," *The New York Times* video, 29 December 2009, <http://video.nytimes.com/video/2009/12/29/world/1247466318663/ashura-in-afghanistan.html>

⁹³ Hafizullah Emadi, *Culture and Customs of Afghanistan* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2005), 153.

⁹⁴ Sayed Askar Mousavi, *The Hazaras of Afghanistan: An Historical, Cultural, Economic and Political Study* (Richmond, Surrey, UK: Curzon Press, 1998), 79.

⁹⁵ Albert Hourani, *A History of the Arab Peoples*, (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1991), 28.

⁹⁶ *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Mazar-e Sharif," 2011, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/371165/Mazar-e-Sharif>

⁹⁷ Ehsan M. Entezar, *Afghanistan 101: Understanding Afghan Culture* (Bloomington, IN: Xlibris, 2007), 160.

⁹⁸ Hafizullah Emadi, *Culture and Customs of Afghanistan* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2005), 75, 153.

Afghanistan. Therefore there are few *ziyaratgahs* for Afghan Hazaras. A *nazargah* is a site believed to have been visited by an Imam's descendant.⁹⁹

Behavior in Places of Worship

Because of the volatility and instability in Afghanistan, areas near mosques can be dangerous places for military personnel.¹⁰⁰

Visitors to mosques should always ask permission to enter and should dress modestly. Mosques in Afghanistan are usually for men only; however, when women are permitted to enter, they must wear a head covering.¹⁰¹

Exchange 2: May I enter the mosque?

Soldier:	May I enter the mosque?	meetnom daaKheley maa jeed showam?
Local:	Yes.	aRey



© United Nationst / flickr.com
Afghan man praying

Exchange 3: Do I need to cover my head?

Soldier:	Do I need to cover my head?	maa Raroo Raat daRoom Keh boyad saR Khoda bopash noom ?
Local:	Yes.	aRey

Shoes are never worn in the mosque and must be removed before entering.¹⁰²

⁹⁹ Sayed Askar Mousavi, *The Hazaras of Afghanistan: An Historical, Cultural, Economic and Political Study* (Richmond, Surrey, UK: Curzon Press, 1998), 79.

¹⁰⁰ *The Telegraph*, "British Soldiers Attacked During Afghanistan Mosque Visit," 11 November 2009, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/afghanistan/6542030/British-soldiers-attacked-during-Afghanistan-mosque-visit.html>

¹⁰¹ Center for Information Dominance: Center for Language, Regional Expertise and Culture, United States Department of the Navy, "Religious Influences—Descriptions of Core Beliefs, Rites and Rituals: Mosque Etiquette," University of West Florida, 2009–2010, <http://uwf.edu/atcdev/Afghanistan/Religious/Lesson5MosquesEtiquette.html>

¹⁰² Center for Information Dominance: Center for Language, Regional Expertise and Culture, United States Department of the Navy, "Religious Influences—Descriptions of Core Beliefs, Rites and Rituals: Mosque Etiquette," University of West Florida, 2009–2010, <http://uwf.edu/atcdev/Afghanistan/Religious/Lesson5MosquesEtiquette.html>

Exchange 4: Must I take off my shoes inside the mosque?

Soldier:	Must I take off my shoes inside the mosque?	maa boyad posh Khod daRmaa jeed bikshoom?
Local:	Yes.	aRey

The interior of a mosque may be decorated with elaborate calligraphy or carvings. Taking photographs may be considered inappropriate.¹⁰³

Visitors passing through Hazara villages may be invited to stay the night in the local mosque, which acts as a guest house in the absence of other lodging.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰³ Center for Information Dominance: Center for Language, Regional Expertise and Culture, United States Department of the Navy, "Religious Influences—Descriptions of Core Beliefs, Rites and Rituals: Mosque Etiquette," University of West Florida, 2009–2010, <http://uwf.edu/atcdev/Afghanistan/Religious/Lesson5MosquesEtiquette.html>

¹⁰⁴ Sayed Askar Mousavi, *The Hazaras of Afghanistan: An Historical, Cultural, Economic and Political Study* (Richmond, Surrey, UK: Curzon Press, 1998), 79.

Chapter 2 Assessment

1. Afghanistan's conversion to Islam occurred in stages over many centuries.

True

The religion first reached Afghanistan just 20 years after Muhammad's death but parts of eastern Afghanistan did not convert for several hundred years. The eastern region of Nuristan did not convert until the turn of the 20th century.

2. There are several competing theories regarding the origins of Hazara Shi'ism.

True

It is unclear how exactly the Hazaras of central Afghanistan were largely converted to Shi'ism but the process likely happened in stages through several different influences.

3. The *Manqabat Khani* is a form of ritual prayer performed during Ramadan.

False

The *Manqabat Khani* is a weekly practice among Afghanistan's Shi'ite. At the meetings the faithful recite and sing poetry praising God, Muhammad, Ali, and Ali's sons.

4. *Eid e-Qurban* is the commemoration of Abraham's willingness to sacrifice his son.

True

Known in other parts of the world as Eid al-Adha, *Eid e-Qurban* is celebrated every year by sacrificing an animal and dividing the meat into three parts. The holiday occurs concurrently with the early pilgrimage to Mecca.

5. Hazara Shi'ites do not use mosques but rather *takyakhanas*.

False

Both mosques and *takyakhanas* are common among Shi'ite Hazaras. *Takyakhanas* are shrines dedicated to Ali's son Husayn.

CHAPTER 3: TRADITIONS

Introduction

Afghan identity extends beyond the individual, especially in rural areas. Ethnic and tribal groups are more important than the individual and have held primacy in Afghan culture for centuries. They frame nearly every aspect of social organization and daily life.¹⁰⁵ Honor, therefore, is tied closely to the concept of the family and governs an individual's code of conduct.¹⁰⁶ When one acts in a manner that reflects positively on the group, that act is valued. Conversely, an individual's acts that are viewed negatively not only shame that person, but the family and tribe as well.¹⁰⁷



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Tribal leaders meet

Contrasting cultural norms and expectations have been openly promoted and enforced under different Afghan authorities. Under the Taliban, strict conformity to a narrow interpretation of fundamentalist Islam was expected. The Taliban's religious police enforced everything from clothing to morality. In the process, the religious police ignored the established culture and traditions of the areas they ruled.¹⁰⁸ Afghan society was turned upside down, a situation that was compounded by previous decades of war. Since the fall of the Taliban, new social reforms have been implemented that allow, once again, for the practice of Afghan traditions. Music and dance, strictly prohibited under the Taliban, are once again present in Afghanistan.

Codes of Politeness

Codes of conduct are very important in Afghanistan and among the country's Hazara population. Strict social norms govern interactions, especially concerning men's public dealings with women. People greet each other, including strangers, with handshakes and by saying *Salaam* (although men do not shake hands with women). Close male friends may hold hands while walking. Friends greet each other with an embrace and a kiss on the cheek.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁵ Thomas Barfield, *Afghanistan: A Cultural and Political History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), 17–18.

¹⁰⁶ Hafizullah Emadi, *Culture and Customs in Afghanistan* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2005), 166.

¹⁰⁷ Thomas Barfield, *Afghanistan: A Cultural and Political History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), 58–59.

¹⁰⁸ Ahmed Rashid, *Taliban: Militant Islam, Oil, and Fundamentalism in Central Asia* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2000), 113.

¹⁰⁹ Hafizullah Emadi, *Culture and Customs in Afghanistan* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2005), 136.

Exchange 5: Good morning.

Soldier:	Good morning.	sub too baKhayR
Local:	Good morning.	sub too baKhayR

Exchange 6: Good afternoon.

Soldier:	Good afternoon.	baadey chaashtoo baKhayR
Local:	Good afternoon.	baadey chaashtoo baKhayR

When interacting with the opposite sex, Afghans are especially cautious. Although Afghans typically have a smaller sense of personal space than Westerners, men and women still keep a respectful distance. Likewise, members of the opposite sex avoid direct eye contact, sometimes even within the same family.¹¹⁰

Exchange 7: How are you?

Soldier:	How are you?	chee zad aaste?
Local:	Fine, very well.	maa Kheylee Khubom



© Afghanistan Matters / flickr.com
Friends

Interpersonal relations are central to Afghan life. Friendship is held in high regard. This possibly harkens back to Afghanistan's nomadic history when people relied heavily on each other. Once a friend is made, loyalty is vital and the integrity of one's word is cherished. Hospitality should be extended not only to friends, but also to strangers. Honesty is the foundation for all interactions.¹¹¹

¹¹⁰ Centre for Intercultural Learning, Foreign Affairs and International Trade, Canada, "Country Insights: Cultural Information: Afghanistan: Communication Styles," 15 October 2009, <http://www.intercultures.ca/cil-cai/ci-ic-eng.asp?iso=af#cn-2>

¹¹¹ Hafizullah Emadi, *Culture and Customs in Afghanistan* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2005), 136.

Hospitality

Hospitality is highly valued in Afghanistan. The country's long history as a crossroads has encouraged Afghans to open their doors to strangers. The harsh environment and terrain has created a sense of responsibility to watch over travelers. *Ehman Nawazi* means extending hospitality to strangers. This ideal, like many others in Afghanistan, is common among all ethnic groups, including the Hazara.¹¹² Generosity and hospitality are so important that poor families may offer more to strangers than is financially feasible for them.¹¹³



Exchange 8: I really appreciate your hospitality.

Soldier:	I really appreciate your hospitality.	aaz meymoon nawazee shoomoo tashakuR
Local:	It is nothing.	ee eycheez neeyeh

As important as hospitality is in Afghanistan, so too is being a good guest. Guests should express sincere thanks for any kindness shown to them and acknowledge the sacrifice a family may make when offering food or shelter.¹¹⁴

Afghanistan's Hazara population follows national norms for hospitality. The Hazarajat in central Afghanistan has preserved many traditional codes of hospitality because of the harsh environment that proves difficult for travelers without assistance. Among the Hazara, a guest at a dinner table is offered the seat of honor.¹¹⁵

Dining Customs

Food is an important part of social interaction in Afghanistan. Tea is commonly offered to guests, and meals are a way for friends to meet and a means of resolving disputes. Sharing food can help seal an agreement, be a symbol of hospitality, or simply provide a reason for families to come together.¹¹⁶

¹¹² Hafizullah Emadi, *Culture and Customs in Afghanistan* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2005), 136.

¹¹³ Hafizullah Emadi, *Culture and Customs in Afghanistan* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2005), 138.

¹¹⁴ Hafizullah Emadi, *Culture and Customs in Afghanistan* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2005), 136.

¹¹⁵ Everyculture, "Hazara," n.d., <http://www.everyculture.com/wc/Afghanistan-to-Bosnia-Herzegovina/Hazaras.html>

¹¹⁶ Hafizullah Emadi, *Culture and Customs in Afghanistan* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2005), 137–141.

Meals are often family affairs. Women in the household cook the meals, and young girls often learn to cook as early as age 10. Families sit together when eating; men and women dine separately only when male visitors who are not relatives attend. Food is served “family style,” and individual table settings are rarely used. When a host invites a guest to join his family for a meal, the guest may often bring additional visitors. Typical meals include tea, flat bread, rice, and a meat dish.¹¹⁷



© Isafmedia / flickr.com
Dinner has arrived

Exchange 9: The food tastes so good.

Soldier:	The food tastes so good.	ee non Khoob maa zadaRa aasta
Local:	Thank you.	juR bashee

Meat must be *halal*, meaning it conforms to Islamic law. Animals must be slaughtered properly and some animals, chief among them pigs, are considered unclean. Cattle, sheep, goats, and poultry are commonly raised for meat, with chicken being the most abundant.¹¹⁸

One of Afghanistan’s most popular dishes is *Qabili Palaw*, which usually consists of meat, rice, and vegetables. *Qabili Palaw* includes carrots, raisins, and pistachios.¹¹⁹

Exchange 10: What is the name of this dish?

Soldier:	What is the name of this dish?	nomey ee non chee aasta?
Local:	This is a <i>Paluo</i> dish.	ee palaaw aasta

High protein foods like meat and dairy products are popular among the Hazara. Except among wealthy Hazaras, meals consist of multiple dishes only when entertaining guests or during celebrations.¹²⁰

¹¹⁷ Hafizullah Emadi, *Culture and Customs in Afghanistan* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2005), 138–141.

¹¹⁸ Hafizullah Emadi, *Culture and Customs in Afghanistan* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2005), 139, 141.

¹¹⁹ Hafizullah Emadi, *Culture and Customs in Afghanistan* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2005), 143, 144.

¹²⁰ Everyculture, “Hazara,” n.d., <http://www.everyculture.com/wc/Afghanistan-to-Bosnia-Herzegovina/Hazaras.html>

Dress Codes

Some items of clothing are common among all of Afghanistan's peoples, including the Hazaras. Other items are unique to certain communities. Common throughout the country is the *peerhan-toonban*, worn by men and women. *Peerhan* refers to a loose-fitting, slipover shirt that extends to the knees; the *toonban* is a pair of baggy pants tied with a drawstring.¹²¹ Hazara men, like other Afghans, will wear vests, sweaters, and overcoats over a *peerhan*.¹²² Women wear a *chadar*, a long headscarf or shawl, which is draped over the head with an end looped on the shoulder. While the *chadar* does not cover the face at all times, a woman may cover her face when in public or among strangers.^{123, 124}



© The Advocacy Project / flickr.com
Hazara man

Exchange 11: Is this acceptable to wear?

Soldier:	Is this acceptable to wear?	ee saa-eeya keh bupshoom?
Local:	Yes.	aRey

A large majority of the Hazara community is Shi'ite, and among Shi'ite religious leaders, a black turban is popular (as opposed to white turbans worn by Sunnis). A popular style among all Hazaras, including religious leaders, is wearing the end of the turban (*shamlah*) hanging on the left side behind the ear. While some other ethnic groups also leave the *shamlah* hanging, the consistency with which the Hazaras wear the *shamlah* on the left sets them apart.¹²⁵ Skullcaps, common in other ethnic groups, are not popular among the Hazara.

Women in rural areas, including rural Hazarajat, are less likely to wear formal headwear and usually keep their hair long. Hazara women will sometimes part their hair down the middle and wear two long braids down their back. Among Hazara women embroidered red and green dresses worn over trousers are popular.^{126, 127}

Nonreligious Celebrations

¹²¹ Hafizullah Emadi, *Culture and Customs in Afghanistan* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2005), 145–146.

¹²² Everyculture, "Hazara," n.d., <http://www.everyculture.com/wc/Afghanistan-to-Bosnia-Herzegovina/Hazaras.html>

¹²³ Hafizullah Emadi, *Culture and Customs in Afghanistan* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2005), 147, 148.

¹²⁴ Nikki van der Gaag, *Focus on Afghanistan* (Stamford, CT: World Almanac Library, 2008), 48.

¹²⁵ Hafizullah Emadi, *Culture and Customs in Afghanistan* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2005), 147.

¹²⁶ Hafizullah Emadi, *Culture and Customs in Afghanistan* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2005), 150.

¹²⁷ Nikki van der Gaag, *Focus on Afghanistan* (Stamford, CT: World Almanac Library, 2008), 48.

Afghanistan observes several non-religious celebrations, the most prominent of which is the New Year known as *Naw Rooz*. The celebration has roots in agrarian culture and celebrates the first day of spring. Families decorate their homes and buy new clothes. Women prepare dishes that are especially elaborate, and most people celebrate with extended families and friends. A common greeting on this day is *Naw Rooz Mubarak*, “Happy New Year.”¹²⁸ *Naw Rooz* is a popular celebration among the Hazara.¹²⁹



© Isafmedia / flickr.com
Independence Day celebration

On August 9 Afghans celebrate their 1919 independence from British rule. *Jashn*, as Independence Day is known, is a major celebration during which schools and business usually close for the three days of festivities.¹³⁰

Dos and Don'ts

Dos

Do use your whole hand to summon someone to you.

Do keep the soles of your shoes out of sight when seated.

Do place your right hand on your chest when greeting someone.

Do accept tea if offered.

Don'ts

Don't use the OK sign, it is an obscene gesture in Afghanistan.

Don't summon others with a single finger.

Don't point at others.

Don't shake hands with members of the opposite sex.



DoD Photo / Michael L. Casteel
Enjoying a cup of tea

¹²⁸ Hafizullah Emadi, *Culture and Customs in Afghanistan* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2005), 154–155.

¹²⁹ Everyculture, “Hazara,” n.d., <http://www.everyculture.com/wc/Afghanistan-to-Bosnia-Herzegovina/Hazaras.html>

¹³⁰ Hafizullah Emadi, *Culture and Customs in Afghanistan* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2005), 155.

Chapter 3 Assessment

1. The Taliban took regional cultural traditions into account when they ruled.

False

As the Taliban's authority spread throughout the country, they enforced a strict fundamentalist ideology that disregarded the cultural traditions of different areas of Afghanistan.

2. Shaking hands is common, but not between men and women.

True

Social interaction between men and women, even after Taliban rule, is highly regulated by societal expectations. In addition to avoiding physical contact, men should avoid direct eye contact with women.

3. Guests at a meal will receive their own table setting.

False

Food is served on many central dishes and individuals rarely have their own table setting. Families sit together when eating, but genders will segregate when a guest is present.

4. Hazara meals always include multiple dishes.

False

Except among wealthy Hazaras, meals only consist of multiple dishes when guests are present or during times of celebrations. High protein foods including meat and dairy are popular for the Hazara.

5. Hazara men often leave the end of their turban hanging.

True

For Hazaras the end of the turban, called the *shamlah*, is often left hanging behind the left ear. Some other ethnic groups also do the same but it is especially common among the Hazara.

CHAPTER 4: URBAN LIFE

Urbanization

Hazaras began to migrate from the Hazarajat of central Afghanistan to the country's major cities in the mid-20th century. Economic development, especially in Kabul, was a major draw for Hazaras who faced harsh living conditions and a difficult life in their native Hazarajat. The lack of educational opportunities and access to hospitals in rural Afghanistan became deciding factors for some Hazaras. The social pressure of an oppressive government and hostile relations with Pashtuns to the south compounded these problems. In 1963, political space opened for Hazaras when the country became a constitutional monarchy. As a result, Hazaras in Afghanistan's cities found some new avenues for success.¹³¹



© Lauras Eye / flickr.com
Kabul hillside homes

Hazaras made some economic gains in the 1960s and 1970s and found success in other facets of urban life. Several Hazaras secured positions at the University of Kabul, while others found media jobs. Political gains during these years were largely token appointments; Hazaras never held more than 1% of all government posts.¹³²

Conflicts in the 1980s and 1990s largely destroyed previous Hazara progress, culminating in the steep decline in the population of urban Hazaras in the 1990s. West Kabul, for example, housed the city's highest concentration of Hazaras (some estimates show that Kabul was as much as 50% Hazara in the early 1990s) and was the site of a lengthy conflict between government forces and resistance fighters. The area saw 27 battles between May 1992 and March 1995, the most notorious being the Afshar massacre of hundreds of Hazaras in February 1993.¹³³ When West Kabul fell to the Taliban in 1995, some of the Hazara population migrated to other cities, including Ghanzi and Mazar-e Sharif.¹³⁴ The northern city of Mazar-e Sharif was the site of brutal fighting between the Taliban and Hazara in 1997 and 1998, ending with the massacre of Hazaras.^{135, 136}

¹³¹ Sayed Askar Mousavi, *The Hazaras of Afghanistan: An Historical, Cultural, Economic and Political Study* (Richmond, Surrey, UK: Curzon Press, 1998), 171–172.

¹³² Sayed Askar Mousavi, *The Hazaras of Afghanistan: An Historical, Cultural, Economic and Political Study* (Richmond, Surrey, UK: Curzon Press, 1998), 171–174.

¹³³ Sayed Askar Mousavi, *The Hazaras of Afghanistan: An Historical, Cultural, Economic and Political Study* (Richmond, Surrey, UK: Curzon Press, 1998), 197–199.

¹³⁴ Sayed Askar Mousavi, *The Hazaras of Afghanistan: An Historical, Cultural, Economic and Political Study* (Richmond, Surrey, UK: Curzon Press, 1998), 201–202.

¹³⁵ Ahmed Rashid, *Taliban: Militant Islam, Oil, and Fundamentalism in Central Asia* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2000), 83.

¹³⁶ Alessandro Monsutti, *War and Migration: Social Networks and Economic Strategies of the Hazaras of Afghanistan* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 148.

Urban Work Issues

The 1960s and 1970s provided economic opportunities for some urban Hazaras. By the end of the 1970s, a Hazara middle class developed in Kabul. This development was led primarily by Hazara sales of second-hand American and European cars and parts. Hazara merchants also gained a strong foothold in urban society during these years. They did not constitute the majority of urban Hazaras, and eventually lost their economic gains in decades of conflict that followed. Still, these successes demonstrated an economic opening for urban Hazaras before conditions began to worsen at the start of 1978.¹³⁷



© Peretz Partensky
Hazara men in Kabul

Hazaras have traditionally been treated as second-class citizens throughout Afghanistan, a fact reflected in their work opportunities in the cities today. Hazaras working in Kabul and other major cities are typically relegated to menial positions.¹³⁸ Although some are shop owners or tailors, most are part of an underclass of manual laborers. More than 80% of Kabul's Hazara population work in jobs that are the most difficult and pay the least.¹³⁹ Hazara cart pullers are the most recognizable of these workers. They wait with their carts in the cities' thoroughfares in all weather conditions, hoping to be hired. They transport materials ranging from lumber and building materials to food supplies, earning several dollars a day at most.¹⁴⁰

Some Hazaras in cities other than Kabul have fared slightly better. Behsud has a large Hazara population working as bakers or sellers of second-hand clothes. In Ghazni, a city near the Hazarajat, Hazaras fill the ranks of civil servants.¹⁴¹

Daily Urban Life

The primary concern for those living in Afghanistan's cities is security. Taliban insurgents periodically launch attacks on roads leading into major cities, causing severe supply disruptions. Violence in the cities is common, including targeted assassinations and random murders and attacks. Checkpoints and security walls now block streets that were once easily accessed. Throughout the cities, especially Kabul, half-destroyed buildings stand as evidence of the decades of war. Some parts of Kabul enjoy as much as 20 hours of electricity a day, but most

¹³⁷ Sayed Askar Mousavi, *The Hazaras of Afghanistan: An Historical, Cultural, Economic and Political Study* (Richmond, Surrey, UK: Curzon Press, 1998), 171–174.

¹³⁸ Martin Ewans, *Afghanistan: A Short History of Its People and Politics* (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 2002), 8.

¹³⁹ Sayed Askar Mousavi, *The Hazaras of Afghanistan: An Historical, Cultural, Economic and Political Study* (Richmond, Surrey, UK: Curzon Press, 1998), 172.

¹⁴⁰ Phil Zabriskie, "Hazaras: Afghanistan's Outsiders," *National Geographic*, February 2008, 130, <http://ngm.nationalgeographic.com/2008/02/afghanistan-hazara/phil-zabriskie-text>

¹⁴¹ Sayed Askar Mousavi, *The Hazaras of Afghanistan: An Historical, Cultural, Economic and Political Study* (Richmond, Surrey, UK: Curzon Press, 1998), 172.

cities in Afghanistan subsist on much less.¹⁴² Rubble and debris piles are common sights. Some residents even say that the totalitarianism of the Taliban, despite its horrors, was preferable to the current anarchy.^{143, 144}

Because of security concerns and the harsh economic reality, life in Afghanistan's cities is difficult. Despite these concerns, cities are growing, and expatriates that were driven out during 1980s and 1990s have returned to help rebuild their country.¹⁴⁵

Relief from the pressures of daily life is hard to find, but a once-popular activity has recently returned. Kite flying is popular among urban youth and, for some, has become a symbol of Afghanistan's continuing struggle to rise above its violence.¹⁴⁶ Kites are made of thin, brightly colored paper in several sizes and have strings coated with crushed glass. This gives the strings a sharp edge capable of cutting the strings of other kites. Kite flying became a competitive pastime, and festivals were common before being outlawed by the Taliban. Since the Taliban's fall, kite flying contests have made a resurgence.^{147, 148}



© Afghanistan Matters / flickr.com
Kite flying

Urban Healthcare

Healthcare in rural Afghanistan is very poor and only slightly better in the cities. Afghanistan's urban dwellers must deal with a daily lack of sanitation, inadequate shelter, and pollution, especially in slums.¹⁴⁹ As of 2006, only 29% of Kabul's residents have access to clean water.¹⁵⁰ Recent rapid urbanization has put a considerable strain on an already weak healthcare system.

¹⁴² Bilal Sarwary, "Electricity Transforms Kabul Living," *BBC News*, 14 June 2009, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/8097865.stm

¹⁴³ Peter Osborne, "Back to the Dark Ages: How Life in Kabul is Still Punctuated with Shootings, Assassinations, Kidnappings and Bombings," *The Daily Mail*, 29 April 2009, <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/debate/article-1174647/PETER-OBORNE-Back-dark-ages-How-life-Kabul-punctuated-shootings-assassinations-kidnappings-bombings.html>

¹⁴⁴ Matthew Green, "Gold Trade Woes Reflect Struggle in Kabul's Daily Life," *Financial Times*, 19 December 2009, <http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/5963f066-ec3d-11de-8070-00144feab49a.html#axzz1SeMAoqtQ>

¹⁴⁵ Mirwais Shinwary, "Living, Working and Raising Kids in Kabul (Staff Profile)," World Food Programme, 27 July 2010, <http://www.wfp.org/stories/living-working-and-raising-kids-kabul-staff-profile>

¹⁴⁶ Khaled Hosseini's 2003 novel *The Kite Runner* captured the attention of Western audiences in its description of life in Afghanistan before and during the reign of the Taliban. See Edward Hower, "The Servant," *New York Times*, 3 August 2003, <http://www.nytimes.com/2003/08/03/books/the-servant.html?src=pm>

¹⁴⁷ Nikki van der Gaag, *Focus on Afghanistan* (Stamford, CT: World Almanac Library, 2008), 51.

¹⁴⁸ Kathy Gannon, "Post-Taliban Kabul Blossoms for the Rich," *Washington Post*, 11 November 2006, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/11/11/AR2006111100615.html>

¹⁴⁹ Post Conflict and Disaster Management Branch, United Nations Environment Programme, "Afghanistan's Environment 2008," 22–24, http://postconflict.unep.ch/publications/afg_so_e.pdf

¹⁵⁰ Jo Beall and Stefan Schütte, "Urban Livelihoods in Afghanistan" (paper, Afghanistan Research Evaluation Unit, August 2006), 26–28, <http://www.areu.org.af/Uploads/EditionPdfs/626E-Urban%20Livelihoods%20in%20Afghanistan-SP-web.pdf>

Consequently, healthcare in Afghanistan is one of the world's worst, with little likelihood of improving in the immediate future. The infant mortality rate (149.2 deaths per 1,000 live births) is the second highest in the world, and life expectancy is just 45 years.¹⁵¹ Disease and sickness easily managed in other parts of the world run rampant in Afghanistan.¹⁵²



© Canada in Afghanistan / flickr.com
Hospital in Bamyan

Government-run clinics offer free services and are the major source of healthcare for the urban poor, but they lack resources like basic medicines. Private hospitals and clinics run by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) provide better services but are too costly for many.¹⁵³ Hospitals and private clinics require payment in advance of medical services, and are often staffed with workers who do not have licenses or medical degrees.¹⁵⁴ For poor urban Hazaras, good healthcare is often unavailable.

Exchange 12: Is there a hospital nearby?

Soldier:	Is there a hospital nearby?	shofa Khonaa dah nezdeekaa aasta?
Local:	Yes, in the center of town.	aRey, dah maRkazey shaaR

Since the fall of the Taliban, Afghanistan's healthcare sector has received much needed attention, but with difficulty. In 2003, there were only 11 physicians and 18 nurses per 100,000 people in Afghanistan (compared with 230 physicians and 790 nurses per 100,000 people in the United States in 2002).^{155, 156}

¹⁵¹ Central Intelligence Agency, "Afghanistan," in *The World Factbook*, 17 May 2011, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/af.html>

¹⁵² Nikki van der Gaag, *Focus on Afghanistan* (Stamford, CT: World Almanac Library, 2008), 44–45.

¹⁵³ Jo Beall and Stefan Schütte, "Urban Livelihoods in Afghanistan" (paper, Afghanistan Research Evaluation Unit, August 2006), 29, <http://www.areu.org.af/Uploads/EditionPdfs/626E-Urban%20Livelihoods%20in%20Afghanistan-SP-web.pdf>

¹⁵⁴ Bureau of Consular Affairs, U.S. Department of State, "Afghanistan: Country Specific Information," 16 June 2008, http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_1056.html

¹⁵⁵ Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, "Country Profile: Afghanistan," August 2008, <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/profiles/Afghanistan.pdf>

¹⁵⁶ Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, "OECD Health Data 2005: How Does the United States Compare," n.d., 1, www.oecd.org/dataoecd/15/23/34970246.pdf

Preventative healthcare is uncommon in Afghanistan. Generally, people act in response to new or lingering health problems.¹⁵⁷ Illnesses and disease carried by water or food (such as diarrhea, hepatitis A, and typhoid fever) are common.¹⁵⁸ Malaria, rabies and tuberculosis are also prevalent.^{159, 160} Although the number of individuals infected with HIV/AIDS has traditionally been small in Afghanistan, it is rising because of the growing number of intravenous heroin users.¹⁶¹ Heroin addiction is especially commonplace in Afghanistan's cities.¹⁶²



© Isafmedia / flickr.com
Afghan doctor

Exchange 13: Do you know what is wrong?

Soldier:	Do you know what is wrong?	too mofomee chee shudah?
Local:	No.	Nah

Exchange 14: My arm is broken, can you help me?

Soldier:	My arm is broken, can you help me?	boyzooy mah maydah shudah mit nee maRa kumak konee?
Local:	Yes, I can help you.	aRey, mah mitnoom too Rah koomak

Education

Decades of war has largely destroyed Afghanistan's education system. Nearly 90% of the population was illiterate in 1979. By 2006, the literacy rate improved, but the numbers remain dismal, especially among women—57% of men and 87% of women cannot read or write. Years of Taliban rule were especially destructive to the education system because women were banned from receiving an education and religious schools became the main source of learning. The situation has improved since the fall of the Taliban, but serious challenges remain.¹⁶³

¹⁵⁷ Jo Beall and Stefan Schütte, "Urban Livelihoods in Afghanistan" (paper, Afghanistan Research Evaluation Unit, August 2006), 30, <http://www.areu.org.af/Uploads/EditionPdfs/626E-Urban%20Livelihoods%20in%20Afghanistan-SP-web.pdf>

¹⁵⁸ Bureau of Consular Affairs, U.S. Department of State, "Afghanistan: Country Specific Information," 16 June 2008, http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_1056.html

¹⁵⁹ Nikki van der Gaag, *Focus on Afghanistan* (Stamford, CT: World Almanac Library, 2008), 44–45.

¹⁶⁰ Central Intelligence Agency, "Afghanistan," in *The World Factbook*, 17 May 2011, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/af.html>

¹⁶¹ Leslie Knott, "Children at Risk of Contracting HIV/AIDS in Afghanistan," UNICEF, 2 December 2008, http://www.unicef.org/aids/afghanistan_46717.html

¹⁶² Aryn Baker, "A New Afghan Evil: Drug Addiction," *Time*, 14 February 2007, <http://www.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,1589645,00.html>

¹⁶³ Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, "Country Profile: Afghanistan," August 2008, <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/profiles/Afghanistan.pdf>

A number of factors influence the likelihood of an urban child attending school. Although schooling is free, poorer families are less likely to send their children in the face of losing income; many families would simply not have enough money if their children were to attend school. Younger siblings are more likely to attend because their older siblings work. Girls in poor urban areas are also less likely to enroll in school, especially after reaching puberty. In Afghanistan's suburbs, where households are not near schools, enrollment is also low.¹⁶⁴



© Colleen Taugher
Kabul medical students and staff

With both universities and technical schools, Kabul is the country's educational center. Kabul University reopened in 2002, with other universities taking longer to again become open to enrollment. By 2007, 7 universities were open, but only 22,700 students were actively enrolled. Although these schools are now open to women, few women are qualified to attend because of missed education under Taliban rule.^{165, 166}

For many years, Hazaras had little or no access to higher education. Viewed by many as second-class citizens, they were actively persecuted by the Taliban. Since the fall of the Taliban, many avenues have opened to the Hazaras, including higher education. Under the new government founded early in the 21st century, Hazaras have greater access to higher education and civil service jobs than ever before.¹⁶⁷ Because of a strong emphasis on education in their homes, Hazara high school students now account for one-third of all those taking the university entrance examinations.¹⁶⁸

Public Places

Restaurants

Eating at home is far more popular than dining in restaurants, although restaurants are used as a place to conduct business.¹⁶⁹ Restaurants serving a variety of



© Isafmedia / flickr.com
Soup lunch

¹⁶⁴ Jo Beall and Stefan Schütte, "Urban Livelihoods in Afghanistan" (paper, Afghanistan Research Evaluation Unit, August 2006), 31–32, <http://www.areu.org.af/Uploads/EditionPdfs/626E-Urban%20Livelihoods%20in%20Afghanistan-SP-web.pdf>

¹⁶⁵ Nikki van der Gaag, *Focus on Afghanistan* (Stamford, CT: World Almanac Library, 2008), 42.

¹⁶⁶ Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, "Country Profile: Afghanistan," August 2008, <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/profiles/Afghanistan.pdf>

¹⁶⁷ Phil Zabriskie, "Hazaras: Afghanistan's Outsiders," *National Geographic*, February 2008, 118, <http://ngm.nationalgeographic.com/2008/02/afghanistan-hazara/phil-zabriskie-text>

¹⁶⁸ Phil Zabriskie, "Hazaras: Afghanistan's Outsiders," *National Geographic*, February 2008, 130, <http://ngm.nationalgeographic.com/2008/02/afghanistan-hazara/phil-zabriskie-text>

¹⁶⁹ Hafizullah Emadi, *Culture and Customs in Afghanistan* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2005), 138.

international cuisine, banned by the Taliban, have once again become popular for those who can afford it.¹⁷⁰

Exchange 15: May I have a glass of water?

Soldier:	May I have a glass of water?	mitnoom mah yak beyla aw dashta bashum?
Local:	Yes, right away.	aRey aamaalee

Soups, known as *shoorba*, are very common. Afghans will typically use a flatbread for dipping in their soup.¹⁷¹

Exchange 16: I'd like some hot soup.

Soldier:	I'd like some hot soup.	shoR waayey gaRam Khosh daRom
Local:	Sure.	Khaw

In addition to restaurants and small street vendors, teahouses are common in urban areas. Tea is commonly served while waiting for a meal.¹⁷²

It is customary for one person to pay the bill when dining with a group. Asking to pay individually may be considered offensive.

Marketplace

Open-air markets, called bazaars, are common in Afghanistan's cities.¹⁷³

Exchange 17: Is the bazaar nearby?

Soldier:	Is the bazaar nearby?	daa eenjaa baazaaR nezdeek aasta?
Local:	Yes, over there on the right.	aRey, dah oonja taRafey Raast



© Peretz Partensky
Street vendor

¹⁷⁰ Kathy Gannon, "Post-Taliban Kabul Blossoms for the Rich," *Washington Post*, 11 November 2006, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/11/11/AR2006111100615.html>

¹⁷¹ Hafizullah Emadi, *Culture and Customs in Afghanistan* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2005), 142–144.

¹⁷² Hafizullah Emadi, *Culture and Customs in Afghanistan* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2005), 141.

¹⁷³ The Embassy of Afghanistan, "About Afghanistan: Travel Information: Shopping: Handicrafts and Shopping," 2006, <http://www.embassyofafghanistan.org/travel/travel8.html>

Items available at Afghan bazaars include jewelry, crafts, textiles, food, and other consumer goods.¹⁷⁴

Exchange 18: May I examine this?

Soldier:	May I examine this ?	mitnoom imtee-aan konum?
Local:	Sure.	aRey

Exchange 19: Do you have any more of these?

Soldier:	Do you have any more of these?	aaz ee deegah daRee?
Local:	No.	Nah

Carpets are especially popular among visitors and may be made of wool, silk, or a combination of the two.¹⁷⁵ Price negotiation is an expected practice between a vendor and customer. Customers should be aware of the general costs of an item and only bargain when they are ready to buy.

Exchange 20: Can I buy a carpet with this much money?

Soldier:	Can I buy a carpet with this much money?	mitnoom kadee peysah kolin biKhRoom?
Local:	No.	Nah

Exchange 21: How much longer will you be here?

Soldier:	How much longer will you be here?	taa chikadaR waakt too eenjah aastey?
Local:	Three more hours.	seh saa-at deygah

¹⁷⁴ Nathan Santamaria, "Seeking Rare Dyes in a Kabul Bazaar," *National Public Radio*, 13 June 2006, <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=5482955>

¹⁷⁵ The Embassy of Afghanistan, "About Afghanistan: Travel Information: Shopping: Handicrafts and Shopping," 2006, <http://www.embassyofafghanistan.org/travel/travel8.html>

Cash is the expected method of payment; credit cards are rarely accepted outside of areas such as international hotels. U.S. dollars are widely accepted. Afghanis are usually required for small sums, like restaurants and local transport.¹⁷⁶

Exchange 22: Do you accept U.S. currency?

Soldier:	Do you accept US currency?	shoomoo paaysey aaReekaa-ee kabool mookneen?
Local:	No we only accept Afghanis.	nah moo faakaat paaysey afghaane kabool mookneem



© imtft / flickr.com
Afghan currency

Exchange 23: Can you give me change for this?

Soldier:	Can you give me change for this?	mitnee mah Rah maydaa bitee?
Local:	No.	Nah

Urban Traffic and Transportation

One of the greatest casualties of the decades of war in Afghanistan is the country's infrastructure. Roads, even in Kabul, are generally in poor condition.¹⁷⁷

Reconstruction has improved these conditions only moderately since the fall of the Taliban. When roads are passable, traffic rules are lax and the accident rate is high.¹⁷⁸

In 2004, there were 340,000 registered vehicles in Kabul and another estimated 300,000 unregistered vehicles.¹⁷⁹

Most vehicles are old or salvaged and do not meet safety standards.¹⁸⁰

Despite a rapid increase in the number of cars in Afghanistan's cities, especially Kabul, carts and mules are still common in many urban neighborhoods.¹⁸¹



© Peretz Partensky
Directing traffic

¹⁷⁶ Lonely Planet, "Afghanistan: Money and Costs," 1 June 2009, <http://www.lonelyplanet.com/afghanistan/practical-information/money-costs>

¹⁷⁷ Nikki van der Gaag, *Focus on Afghanistan* (Stamford, CT: World Almanac Library, 2008), 38.

¹⁷⁸ Lonely Planet, "Afghanistan: Getting Around," 1 June 2009, <http://www.lonelyplanet.com/afghanistan/transport/getting-around>

¹⁷⁹ Asian Development Bank and the Clean Air Initiative for Asian Cities Center, "Country Synthesis Report on Urban Air Quality Management: Afghanistan," December 2006, <http://www.adb.org/Documents/Reports/Urban-Air-Quality-Management/afghanistan.pdf>

¹⁸⁰ Reuters, "Dodgy Cars Clogging Kabul's Roads," ABC News, 9 May 2009, <http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2009/05/09/2565599.htm>

Exchange 24: Is there a gas station nearby?

Soldier:	Is there a gas station nearby?	dah ee nezdeekey taank tel aasta?
Local:	Yes.	aRey

Afghanistan lacks a functioning railway, though several projects are planned.¹⁸² Chief among these is a line that runs through the northern city of Mazar-e Sharif into Uzbekistan. The line is intended to increase trade between the two countries.¹⁸³

Exchange 25: Is there a train station nearby?

Soldier:	Is there a train station nearby?	dah oonja kudaam esteyshah Reyl nezdek aasta?
Local:	No.	nah

Several airlines operate domestic flights within Afghanistan. Ariana is the country's national airline. In addition to offering domestic travel, Ariana also has flights to Islamabad, Tehran, Moscow, and New Delhi. Kam Air is a private airline that competes with Ariana and schedules both domestic and international flights.¹⁸⁴ In 2005, the European Union banned flights from both Ariana and Kam Air because of poor safety standards.¹⁸⁵ The U.S. government does not permit its personnel to travel on Afghan airlines because of safety concerns, although locals may deny that the airlines are unsafe.¹⁸⁶

Full size buses are less common than minibuses, which are really small vans that seat three to four passengers per row and operate without an established schedule or route.¹⁸⁷

Exchange 26: Will the bus be here soon?

Soldier:	Will the bus be here soon?	saRwees eenjeh zood Khaat amaat?
Local:	Yes.	aRey

¹⁸¹ Hafizullah Emadi, *Culture and Customs in Afghanistan* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2005), 14.

¹⁸² Nikki van der Gaag, *Focus on Afghanistan* (Stamford, CT: World Almanac Library, 2008), 38.

¹⁸³ Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs, U.S. Department of State, "Background Note: Afghanistan," 6 December 2010, <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/5380.htm>

¹⁸⁴ Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs, U.S. Department of State, "Background Note: Afghanistan," 6 December 2010, <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/5380.htm>

¹⁸⁵ Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, "Country Profile: Afghanistan," August 2008, <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/profiles/Afghanistan.pdf>

¹⁸⁶ Bureau of Consular Affairs, U.S. Department of State, "Afghanistan: Country Specific Information," June 16, 2008, http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_1056.html

¹⁸⁷ Lonely Planet, "Afghanistan: Getting Around," 1 June 2009, <http://www.lonelyplanet.com/afghanistan/transport/getting-around>

Solicitations

As a result of decades of war and economic stagnation, Afghanistan has high unemployment (35% in 2008) and many internally displaced persons (IDPs), widows, and orphans.¹⁸⁸ Begging is common in Afghanistan's cities, especially in the winter when food becomes scarce. The government responded to this condition in 2008 by outlawing street begging in Kabul. Despite hundreds of arrests, the law fails to address the root problem and begging persists. Begging is especially common among women and children, as well as young male drug addicts. The government framed its new law with the intent of protecting those who beg, who officials claim are targets of crime and exploitation. Children are said to be especially vulnerable to abuse from drug smugglers. Although there are no formal statistics on the numbers of the poor in Afghanistan's cities, the United Nations ranks the country as the world's fifth least developed country.^{189, 190}



© Peretz Partensky
Begger in traffic

Many of the poor set up small vending stations on the street, outside formal market places. Children may sell anything from newspapers to plastic bags. Often, street vendors persistently target foreign nationals.¹⁹¹

Exchange 27: Please, buy something from me.

Local:	Please, buy something from me.	aaz KhayR Kho yak cheez aaz mah beeKhaR
Soldier:	Sorry, I have no money left.	beebaKhsheed peysah baRa mah bokee naamondaa

¹⁸⁸ Central Intelligence Agency, "Afghanistan," in *The World Factbook*, 17 May 2011, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/af.html>

¹⁸⁹ IRIN, UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, "Afghanistan: Crackdown on Kabul Beggars Continues," 10 September 2009, <http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=86089>

¹⁹⁰ Martin Vannard, "Afghanistan Bans Street Begging," BBC News, 7 November 2008, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/7714735.stm>

¹⁹¹ Majid Malek and Jasmin Reimann, "Tough Life for Kabul's Street Children," *Deutsche Welle*, 13 April 2010, <http://www.dw-world.de/dw/article/0,,5462655,00.html>

Chapter 4 Assessment

1. Hazaras are Kabul's original inhabitants, Pashtuns having arrived in the 1950s.
False
Hazaras began migrating to Afghanistan's cities in the middle of the 20th century, driven by economic and social pressures. Some found economic success but much of that fell apart when conflict began in the late 1970s.
2. The majority of Kabul's residents have access to clean water since the fall of the Taliban.
False
Only 29% of Kabul's residents have access to clean water, leading to a high number of waterborne illnesses.
3. One-third of all students taking the university entrance examination are Hazara.
True
Hazaras typically place a high value on education. Since the fall of the Taliban, Hazaras have much more access to higher education and are applying accordingly.
4. Eating in restaurants is far more popular than dining in homes.
False
Eating in the home is more popular than dining out. Restaurants are too expensive for many Afghans although many meet at restaurants to conduct business.
5. Afghanistan lacks a functioning railway.
True
Despite railway lines in the past, today's Afghanistan has no functioning railway. Several projects, including one linking the northern city of Mazar-e Sharif with Uzbekistan, are currently in progress.

CHAPTER 5: RURAL LIFE

Tribal Distribution and Leadership

The extended family forms the “backbone of Hazara society.”¹⁹² Several families form a larger unit called a *tol*, headed by a chief who resolves family disputes. Several *tols* join together to form a larger unit called a *tayefa*, headed by a *khan* who governs the *tols* and works with their chiefs. The *khan*, also called an *arbab*, typically holds a position of respect and is an influential community elder.¹⁹³



© Isafmedia / flickr.com
Pashtun and Hazara elders gather

Exchange 28: Does your tribal elder live here?

Soldier:	Does your tribal elder live here?	maalik shomoo eenjah zendagee mooknah?
Local:	Yes.	aRey

Exchange 29: Can you take me to your elder?

Soldier:	Can you take me to your elder?	mitnee maRah peysheh maalik Khoo bobRee?
Local:	Yes.	aRey

Above the level of the *tayefa* is the *qaum*, or clan, made from several *tayefas* and led by a chief known by several names: *Beg*, *Mir*, or *Sultan*. Rivalry among the Hazara *qaums* historically led to the ethnic group becoming disjointed economically and politically. *Qaums* generally take the name of an influential ancestral family and are led by the direct descendents of original leaders.¹⁹⁴

At Hazara meetings, called *ulus*, decisions are made about significant social and personal topics. Prominent family elders head the *ulus*, which can vary in size and last hours or days. Village elders are important contacts who, according to tradition, are responsible for sheltering and feeding guests travelling through the area.¹⁹⁵

In addition to tribal leadership, Hazara Shi'ites have a unique religious hierarchy. Sayyeds, who claim descent from the Imam Ali and Muhammad, often hold positions of leadership.

¹⁹² Sayed Askar Mousavi, *The Hazaras of Afghanistan: An Historical, Cultural, Economic and Political Study* (Richmond, Surrey, UK: Curzon Press, 1998), 51.

¹⁹³ Sayed Askar Mousavi, *The Hazaras of Afghanistan: An Historical, Cultural, Economic and Political Study* (Richmond, Surrey, UK: Curzon Press, 1998), 46.

¹⁹⁴ Sayed Askar Mousavi, *The Hazaras of Afghanistan: An Historical, Cultural, Economic and Political Study* (Richmond, Surrey, UK: Curzon Press, 1998), 46–57.

¹⁹⁵ Sayed Askar Mousavi, *The Hazaras of Afghanistan: An Historical, Cultural, Economic and Political Study* (Richmond, Surrey, UK: Curzon Press, 1998), 49–50, 79.

Additionally, clerics that have often been trained in Iran are charged with political and religious responsibilities. These clerics may be involved in the *ulus*.^{196, 197}

Land Ownership

In addition to traditional government ownership of land, four different types of land ownership are common in Afghanistan among individuals and families. Private ownership occurs among those who can afford to purchase land and maintain it without outside assistance.¹⁹⁸

Exchange 30: Do you own this land?

Soldier:	Do you own this land?	too maalikee zameen aaste?
Local:	Yes.	aRey

Blood relatives may unite for joint ownership of land, thereby increasing each family's holdings and influence. In this arrangement, owners combine other resources, such as labor, tools, and animals, to more effectively work the land. Religious organizations may also own land under principles of the Islamic *waqf*. In this type of ownership, clerics control the land and its revenue. Families or tribes that have good relations with the clerics will benefit in their access to the land. Finally, public ownership allows the families in a tribal clan to work the land collectively according to their status in the clan.¹⁹⁹



© roblisameehant / flickr.com
Wealthy family compound

No matter the specifics of land ownerships, Afghans feel deeply connected to their land. Families typically live in the same area for generations and feel a close attachment to it, whether or not they have the property title.²⁰⁰ Some Hazara clans even take their name from the area in which they live, rather than use a family name. This practice represents the bond Hazaras feel between their family identity and the area in which they live.²⁰¹

¹⁹⁶ Sayed Askar Mousavi, *The Hazaras of Afghanistan: An Historical, Cultural, Economic and Political Study* (Richmond, Surrey, UK: Curzon Press, 1998), 79.

¹⁹⁷ Hafizullah Emadi, *Culture and Customs of Afghanistan* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2005), 58.

¹⁹⁸ Hafizullah Emadi, *Culture and Customs of Afghanistan* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2005), 18.

¹⁹⁹ Hafizullah Emadi, *Culture and Customs of Afghanistan* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2005), 18.

²⁰⁰ Hafizullah Emadi, *Culture and Customs of Afghanistan* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2005), 18.

²⁰¹ Sayed Askar Mousavi, *The Hazaras of Afghanistan: An Historical, Cultural, Economic and Political Study* (Richmond, Surrey, UK: Curzon Press, 1998), 52.

Rural Economy

Agriculture drives the economy in rural Afghanistan, though the country's harsh environment creates water shortages and other challenges for growers.

Agriculture accounts for 31% of the country's gross domestic product (GDP), not including opium production.²⁰² Common crops include wheat, fruit, and cotton.²⁰³ In central Afghanistan's Hazarajat wheat, corn, lentils, and peas are commonly grown by the Hazara. Some Hazaras cultivate vegetables that were introduced to Afghanistan in the 20th



© United Nations / flickr.com
Hazara farmer gathers wheat

century, including carrots, cucumbers, and potatoes.²⁰⁴ Although poppy production for opium is a huge industry in Afghanistan, poppies are not a major crop in Hazarajat.²⁰⁵

Hazaras have three types of agricultural land: irrigated land (*abi*), rain-watered land (*lalmi*), and spring-watered land (*sard*). Irrigation is used on lands near rivers or streams, and while these lands tend to produce higher yields, rain-watered land produces crops of a higher quality. Hazaras work their land with tools that are basic by Western standards. Oxen or donkeys draw wooden plows, and crops are sown twice a year, in spring and autumn. Poor farmers may share their equipment or animals.^{206, 207}

Some Hazaras raise small herds of horses, cows, sheep, goats, donkeys, and mules. Hazarajat sheep have very soft wool and are sheared twice a year. This wool, along with goat hair, is used for clothes and carpets. Goat and cow's milk are commonly used to make yogurt. Hazaras slaughter animals used for meat in the autumn, storing the meat for winter and exporting leather to major cities.^{208, 209}

²⁰² Central Intelligence Agency, "Afghanistan," in *The World Factbook*, 8 July 2011, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/af.html>

²⁰³ Hafizullah Emadi, *Culture and Customs of Afghanistan* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2005), 16.

²⁰⁴ Sayed Askar Mousavi, *The Hazaras of Afghanistan: An Historical, Cultural, Economic and Political Study* (Richmond, Surrey, UK: Curzon Press, 1998), 98.

²⁰⁵ Phil Zabriskie, "Hazaras: Afghanistan's Outsiders," *National Geographic*, February 2008, 118, <http://ngm.nationalgeographic.com/2008/02/afghanistan-hazara-phil-zabriskie-text>

²⁰⁶ Sayed Askar Mousavi, *The Hazaras of Afghanistan: An Historical, Cultural, Economic and Political Study* (Richmond, Surrey, UK: Curzon Press, 1998), 98–101.

²⁰⁷ Hafizullah Emadi, *Culture and Customs of Afghanistan* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2005), 20.

²⁰⁸ Sayed Askar Mousavi, *The Hazaras of Afghanistan: An Historical, Cultural, Economic and Political Study* (Richmond, Surrey, UK: Curzon Press, 1998), 101–102.

²⁰⁹ Martin Ewans, *Afghanistan: A Short History of Its People and Politics* (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 2002), 8.

Many men have left the Hazarajat to work as day laborers in the cities or in neighboring Iran or Pakistan. Families are left behind, and women whose husbands have left home to find work commonly farm the fields in villages throughout Hazarajat.²¹⁰

Rural Transportation

Several highways run through rural areas, connecting Afghanistan's major cities. The highways connecting Shir Khan in the north with Kabul and then on to Kandahar are among the country's best roads. Despite their relative superiority to other roads in the country, these highways are narrow and easily disrupted.²¹¹ The Salang Tunnel, a 2.7 km (1.7 mi) tunnel connecting northern and southern Afghanistan, was closed during Taliban rule and finally reopened in 2004. With the tunnel open, it now takes roughly 10 hours to travel from Kabul to the north, but when the tunnel was closed, this trip took 72 hours.²¹²



© spangledrongo / flickr.com
Salang pass tunnel

Driving off-road can be dangerous because of landmines. Additionally, insurgents have targeted rural-traveling vehicles from government and non-governmental organizations (NGOs).²¹³

The roads throughout rural Hazarajat are poor in the best weather, and impassible during the worst. Both the Afghan government and international aid organizations have for years promised to improve Hazarajat's road network, but no work has been completed. The roads are essentially mule tracks that severely hamper farmers from getting their crops to markets. During the harsh winter months the roads are almost lost during inclement weather; during this season an above-normal number of women die in childbirth because medical help cannot reach them.^{214, 215}



© DFID / flickr.com
Rural health clinic

Health and Education

The isolation of Hazarajat has resulted in little or no access to health and educational services among the Hazara. A study conducted in 1970 showed that rural

²¹⁰ Phil Zabriskie, "Hazaras: Afghanistan's Outsiders," *National Geographic*, February 2008, 126, <http://ngm.nationalgeographic.com/2008/02/afghanistan-hazara/phil-zabriskie-text>

²¹¹ *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Afghanistan," 2011, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/7798/Afghanistan>

²¹² Nikki van der Gaag, *Focus on Afghanistan* (Stamford, CT: World Almanac Library, 2008), 39.

²¹³ Lonely Planet, "Afghanistan: Getting Around," 1 June 2009, <http://www.lonelyplanet.com/afghanistan/transport/getting-around>

²¹⁴ Phil Zabriskie, "Hazaras: Afghanistan's Outsiders," *National Geographic*, February 2008, 126, <http://ngm.nationalgeographic.com/2008/02/afghanistan-hazara/phil-zabriskie-text>

²¹⁵ The World Bank, "Ending Centuries of Isolation in Rural Afghanistan," 16 December 2010, <http://go.worldbank.org/I9JWHLPX10>

Hazaras suffered very poor health conditions. Malnutrition and intestinal parasites resulted in a death rate of young children as high as 56%, peaking at one year of age.²¹⁶ Although this study is now more than 40 years old, it concluded that healthcare among the Hazaras had changed little throughout the 20th century because of their isolation. The wars since the late 1970s have ensured that healthcare in the Hazarajat has not improved over the subsequent decades. Not until reconstruction began in the first decade of the 21st century were concentrated efforts made to improve healthcare in rural areas.

NGOs, such as the World Bank, have made considerable progress in establishing medical clinics in rural areas. Focusing on 11 rural provinces, the World Bank increased the number of health facilities from 148 in 2002 to 421 in 2008.²¹⁷

Exchange 31: Is there a medical clinic nearby?

Soldier:	Is there a medical clinic nearby?	kileenekey seehee dah oonjah aasta?
Local:	Yes, over there.	aRey, dah oonjah

Afghanistan's Hazara population is notable for the importance it places on education. Despite abysmal education attendance throughout the rest of rural Afghanistan, in the Hazarajat education is a priority. Schools are often little more than a tent or a windowless building, but parents desire to send their children to school.²¹⁸

Exchange 32: Is there a school nearby?

Soldier:	Is there a school nearby?	dah eenjah maaktaab nezdeek aasta?
Local:	Yes.	aRey

Exchange 33: Do your children go to school?

Soldier:	Do your children go to school?	aawlaad-aay too maaktaab moRah?
Local:	Yes.	aRey

Daily Life in the Countryside

Rural families often live in family compounds that are clusters of houses made with mud walls. In some areas, tents of wool or cotton, similar to yurts found in central Asia, are also popular. In the Bamiyan region of Hazarajat, some families live in homes carved out of



© james_gordon_los_angeles / flickr.com
Hazarajat, central Afghanistan

²¹⁶ Sayed Askar Mousavi, *The Hazaras of Afghanistan: An Historical, Cultural, Economic and Political Study* (Richmond, Surrey, UK: Curzon Press, 1998), 167.

²¹⁷ International Development Association, The World Bank, "IDA at Work: Afghanistan: Building on Basics in Health Care," June 2009, <http://go.worldbank.org/WL1E3BIPZ0>

²¹⁸ Phil Zabriskie, "Hazaras: Afghanistan's Outsiders," *National Geographic*, February 2008, 126, <http://ngm.nationalgeographic.com/2008/02/afghanistan-hazara/phil-zabriskie-text>

caves in the mountainside. Hazaras, especially in the north of the Hazarajat, live in small sub-villages known as an *aghil*. Several small mud homes built closely together and enclosed by a surrounding wall form each *aghil*. Several generations of a family may live under the same roof, or in the case of a Hazara *qala*, several families reside in one structure. A *qala* usually has a courtyard with a central gate and can be three stories tall.^{219, 220}

The day is filled primarily with work, including farming and animal husbandry. Recreational time is more abundant in the winter when the workday is not as demanding. Hazaras often use this time for storytelling and visiting others.²²¹

Unlike other ethnic groups in Afghanistan, Hazaras have remained relatively settled and are rarely nomadic, relying on agriculture to support themselves. Most of Afghanistan's nomads are Pashtuns in the south of the country. Other nomadic groups exist among the country's Kyrgyz, Turkmen, Baluchi, and Aimak ethnic groups, but rarely among the Hazaras of central Afghanistan's Hazarajat. Those Hazaras who are nomadic are found primarily in northwestern Afghanistan.^{222, 223}

Checkpoints

Checkpoints are common in Afghanistan and have been manned by International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) troops and members of the Afghanistan Security Forces. Immediately after the fall of the Taliban, competing factions set up checkpoints, each claiming its own administrative authority. These forces wore traditional clothes but since that time Afghan forces have become more uniform in their appearance.^{224, 225}



© Isafmedia / flickr.com
Afghan police checkpoint

²¹⁹ Hafizullah Emadi, *Culture and Customs of Afghanistan* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2005), 113–114.

²²⁰ Sayed Askar Mousavi, *The Hazaras of Afghanistan: An Historical, Cultural, Economic and Political Study* (Richmond, Surrey, UK: Curzon Press, 1998), 59.

²²¹ Countries and Their Cultures, “Hazaras,” n.d., <http://www.everyculture.com/wc/Afghanistan-to-Bosnia-Herzegovina/Hazaras.html>

²²² Hafizullah Emadi, *Culture and Customs of Afghanistan* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2005), 22–23.

²²³ Sayed Askar Mousavi, *The Hazaras of Afghanistan: An Historical, Cultural, Economic and Political Study* (Richmond, Surrey, UK: Curzon Press, 1998), 98.

²²⁴ Greg Bruno, “Afghanistan’s National Security Forces,” *Council on Foreign Relations*, 19 August 2010, <http://www.cfr.org/afghanistan/afghanistans-national-security-forces/p19122>

²²⁵ Carlotta Gall and Craig S. Smith, “A Nation Challenged: Warlords; Checkpoints as Flash Points: Rival Flags Stir Afghan Fear,” *New York Times*, 4 February 2002, <http://www.nytimes.com/2002/02/04/world/nation-challenged-warlords-checkpoints-flash-points-rival-flags-stir-afghan-fear.html?src=pm>

Exchange 34: Where is the nearest checkpoint?

Soldier:	Where is the nearest checkpoint?	kujaa nezdeek taRin postah talaashee aasta?
Local:	It's two kilometers.	ee doo keelomeeteR

Some checkpoints are heavily fortified, like the ring of 13 checkpoints that control the roads in and out of Kandahar. These checkpoints are designed to keep insurgents, weapons, and drugs from entering the city.²²⁶

Exchange 35: Are you carrying any guns?

Soldier:	Are you carrying any guns?	shoomo tofang hamal moKuneet?
Local:	Yes.	aRey

As the U.S. mission in Afghanistan shifted from counterterrorism operations to counterinsurgency and public protection, the safety of civilian noncombatants has become a central priority. Checkpoints are a concern for U.S. commanders because ISAF forces may wound or kill Afghans at checkpoints without having proof of a threat. While there have been fewer of these civilian casualties than civilian deaths in airstrikes and Special Forces operations, they remain a source of antagonism among local Afghans and a propaganda tool for the Taliban.²²⁷

Exchange 36: Please get out of the car.

Soldier:	Please get out of the car.	aaz KhayR Kho aaz motaR buRshoo
Local:	Okay.	Khaw

Although innocent Afghans have been killed at checkpoints, some significant threats exist. Insurgents have targeted checkpoints, putting ISAF forces in danger.²²⁸

²²⁶ Mandy Clark, "Afghan Checkpoints Key in Battle for Kandahar," CBS News, 3 August 2010, <http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2010/08/03/eveningnews/main6740702.shtml>

²²⁷ Richard A. Oppel, Jr., "Tighter Rules Fail to Stem Deaths of Innocent Afghans at Checkpoints," *New York Times*, 26 March 2010, <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/03/27/world/asia/27afghan.html>

²²⁸ Mandy Clark, "Afghan Checkpoints Key in Battle for Kandahar," CBS News, 3 August 2010, <http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2010/08/03/eveningnews/main6740702.shtml>

Landmines

Few countries in the world have suffered more injuries and deaths from landmines than Afghanistan. Years of conflict among internal factions and from foreign armies, including the Soviets and Russians, have made mines a problem in virtually every province in the country. The Hazarajat is no exception. In 2008, an average of 83 people a month died or were injured from landmines. In 2009, that number dropped to an average of 72 a month, but a quarter of those victims died. More than half of the landmine casualties in Afghanistan are children. While the human cost of landmines is by far the most tragic, these weapons also have significant economic implications. Heavy mining inhibits development, reconstruction, and stabilization. Additionally, many landmine survivors were left disabled by their injuries. It is estimated that between 52,000 and 60,000 landmine survivors live in Afghanistan.^{229, 230, 231}



© United Nations / flickr.com
landmine with metal scraps

Exchange 37: Is this area mined?

Soldier:	Is this area mined?	dah manteekah maayn aasta?
Local:	Yes.	aRey

Although the United States supports demining in Afghanistan, much of this support is indirect in the form of financial support to NGOs. These organizations have developed an innovative approach to the landmine problem, called “community-based demining.” Under this system, local Afghans are recruited and trained to survey the land and safely remove explosives. This approach lets people join the rebuilding of their communities in a way that supports local government. Since the early 1990s, the United States has given Afghanistan more than USD 165 million for local demining.²³²

Despite progress, as evidenced by the 13% drop in mining casualties from 2008 to 2009, the situation is still dire. At least 48 demining accidents occurred in 2008, but 82,000 antipersonnel mines were cleared, representing 20% of all those removed in the last 20 years. More than 2,120 communities remain threatened by the presence of landmines despite the 16 commercial companies and 8,000 demining personnel that continue the demining work. Continued instability in the country hampers demining progress.²³³

²²⁹ Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs, U.S. Department of State, “Background Note: Afghanistan,” 6 December 2010, <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/5380.htm>

²³⁰ Nikki van der Gaag, *Focus on Afghanistan* (Stamford, CT: World Almanac Library, 2008), 45.

²³¹ Landmine and Cluster Munition Monitor, “Afghanistan: Casualties and Victim Assistance,” 4 October 2010, http://www.the-monitor.org/index.php/cp/display/region_profiles/theme/754

²³² Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs, U.S. Department of State, “Background Note: Afghanistan,” 6 December 2010, <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/5380.htm>

²³³ Landmine and Cluster Munition Monitor, “Afghanistan: Mine Action,” 4 October 2010, http://www.the-monitor.org/index.php/cp/display/region_profiles/theme/752

Chapter 5 Assessment

1. Some Hazara clans take their name from the area where they live.

True

Afghans feel deeply rooted to their land and families often reside in the same area for generations. They feel closely attached to their land whether they own it or not.

2. Rural Afghans often live in family compounds.

True

Sub-villages, known as *aghils*, are made of mud homes built close together. They are common among the Hazaras of northern Hazarajat. Also popular among Hazaras are *qalas* in which several families join together in one structure.

3. The healthcare situation in the Hazarajat remained stagnant through the 20th century.

True

War and geographic isolation hampered Hazara access to medical facilities and expertise. Greater access to these services in Afghanistan's cities prompted urban migration beginning in the 1950s.

4. Religious clerics are influential in Hazara society.

True

Clerics generally hold a high station in Shi'ite communities, and this holds true among the Hazara. Sayyeds, who claim descent from Muhammad or Imam Ali, often hold positions of leadership and trained clerics may sit in leadership councils with tribal leaders.

5. Despite years of war, Afghanistan has few landmines in rural areas.

False

Few countries in the world have more problems with landmines than Afghanistan. In 2009, 72 people were killed or injured per month from landmines. Driving off-road in rural areas is dangerous because of landmines.

CHAPTER 6: FAMILY LIFE

Typical Household and Family Structure

Afghan society holds the family in high regard, and among the Hazara the family is the basic societal unit.²³⁴ Familial ties and kinship lines identify a person's place in life. The father of a family, or his eldest son after his death, is regarded as the family's head; family members defer to him in almost all matters. Women are expected to bear children, and marriage at a young age is highly valued. Afghans value the extended family and often live close to relatives. This close interaction is the basis for Afghanistan's tribal-based society. Family members live together, work together, and socialize together.²³⁵



© koldo / flickr.com
Elderly Hazara man

Most marriages in Afghanistan, including those among the Hazara, are monogamous. Polygamy is practiced by those men who can better afford the additional expense. Those men who take more than one wife often do so in hopes of ultimately having a son. Sons carry the family name, a facet of tribal society that is vitally important.²³⁶

Exchange 38: Is this your entire family?

Soldier:	Is this your entire family?	ee kulee fomeel shoomoo aasta?
Local:	Yes.	aRey

A Hazara household is often larger than a typical Afghan household in that several nuclear families often live together under one roof. It is common for multiple siblings to live together and to include the families of servants or landless peasants in the household. Several households may come together to form a *tol*, which has its own chief who settles family disputes. The next social level is formed by the uniting of several *tols* and is called a *tayefa*, a more complex network of relations. Finally, several *tayefas* form a *qaum*, the top of Hazara family-based hierarchy.²³⁷

²³⁴ Sayed Askar Mousavi, *The Hazaras of Afghanistan: An Historical, Cultural, Economic and Political Study* (Richmond, Surrey, UK: Curzon Press, 1998), 45.

²³⁵ Hafizullah Emadi, *Culture and Customs in Afghanistan* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2005), 165–166.

²³⁶ Hafizullah Emadi, *Culture and Customs in Afghanistan* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2005), 166.

²³⁷ Sayed Askar Mousavi, *The Hazaras of Afghanistan: An Historical, Cultural, Economic and Political Study* (Richmond, Surrey, UK: Curzon Press, 1998), 46.

Status of Women, Elders, and Children

Women have historically been denied opportunities for education and employment. During the years of Taliban rule, the status and treatment of women were especially alarming. Religious police publicly beat women for wearing the burka improperly or acting in defiance of other enforced norms.²³⁸ Since the fall of the Taliban, women's position in society has improved but inequality and gender separation still negatively affect Afghan women. Women are generally expected to seclude themselves and avoid contact with others who are not immediate family.²³⁹ Despite generally accepted gender roles throughout the country, Hazara women have more social flexibility than many other Afghan women. In particular, many Hazara women are able to socialize with people who are not family.²⁴⁰



© DVIDSHUB / flickr.com
Woman with children

The elderly in Afghanistan are treated with respect. When several generations live together, the family's patriarch resolves decisions about family matters. Although family members usually care for retired men, women continue to run the home, cook, and help with grandchildren.²⁴¹

Children learn the importance of authority from an early age. They are expected to respect their elders and help with the family chores. Girls will help with household chores including cooking and cleaning, while boys may seek outside work to help with the family's expenses. Within families, boys generally take precedence over girls, and mothers will often indulge their sons in hopes of creating a strong bond that will endure past their son's marriage.²⁴²

Married Life

Except among a small portion of society (usually educated urbanites), courtship and romantic love are foreign concepts. Arranged marriage is the norm for many Afghans and often occurs within the extended family. Marrying relatives is popular because property stays within the family. Arranged marriages are also a popular means to return a favor, to maintain ties between two families, or even as a peace offering between conflicting families.²⁴³



© DVIDSHUB / flickr.com
Arranged marriage

²³⁸ Ahmed Rashid, *Taliban: Militant Islam, Oil, and Fundamentalism in Central Asia* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2000), 106.

²³⁹ Hafizullah Emadi, *Cultures and Customs of Afghanistan* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2005), 170.

²⁴⁰ Hafizullah Emadi, *Cultures and Customs of Afghanistan* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2005), 170.

²⁴¹ Peter R. Blood, ed., "Family," in *Afghanistan: A Country Study*, Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, 2001, <http://countrystudies.us/afghanistan/57.htm>

²⁴² IRIN News, UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, "Afghanistan: Domestic Violence Against Children Widespread: Study," 26 February 2008, <http://www.irinnews.org/report.aspx?ReportID=76949>

²⁴³ Hafizullah Emadi, *Cultures and Customs of Afghanistan* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2005), 172.

People marry at a young age in Afghanistan. In rural areas, girls are often married by the age of 16 and men often in their late teenage years.²⁴⁴ In some Hazara areas, the emphasis on education has delayed marriage age until the young people have completed their studies.²⁴⁵

For many in Afghanistan there is a social stigma attached to marrying outside of one's ethnic group. This is especially problematic for the Hazara, who are viewed by many as ethnic "outsiders." It is common for non-Hazara parents of young women to deny Hazara suitors because of ethnic and religious differences.²⁴⁶ It is usually Hazara women who marry outside their ethnic group, and their children are not considered Hazara.²⁴⁷ In rural areas, Hazaras typically marry someone from their own village who is usually a first cousin.²⁴⁸

Unique to Shi'a Islam is the practice of temporary marriage. Known in Afghanistan as *sighah*, temporary marriage allows a couple to contract a marriage for a period as short as one day. In Afghanistan, temporary marriage is most common among Shi'ites who fled to Iran (a Shi'ite country that is tolerant of *sighah*), after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979. As they returned, these Shi'ites have brought the practice of temporary marriage with them.²⁴⁹

Divorce

Divorce in Afghanistan is treated as it is in other Islam-influenced countries. According to the law, women are allowed to seek a divorce if they are victims of abuse or no longer content with their marriage. However, the reality of the situation typically puts the power of granting a divorce in the hands of the husband. Even when women are in abusive or otherwise undesirable marriages, they will usually not seek a divorce because the alternative is not much better. Family members will likely not welcome a divorced woman back into the home. In general, society disapproves of divorced women. Mothers only receive custody of very young children; fathers are considered to be the most important influence on older children. For women, divorce carries a serious social stigma and often makes remarriage difficult. The legal system also creates impediments to women who want a divorce. It is incumbent upon these women to produce male witnesses in court and many women do not even have identification cards. Because of these factors, divorce rates in Afghanistan remain low.²⁵⁰



© Canada in Afghanistan / flickr.com
Afghan mother and daughter

²⁴⁴ Hafizullah Emadi, *Cultures and Customs of Afghanistan* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2005), 174.

²⁴⁵ Phil Zabriskie, "Hazaras: Afghanistan's Outsiders," *National Geographic*, February 2008, 13.
<http://ngm.nationalgeographic.com/2008/02/afghanistan-hazara/phil-zabriskie-text>

²⁴⁶ Phil Zabriskie, "Hazaras: Afghanistan's Outsiders," *National Geographic*, February 2008, 134.
<http://ngm.nationalgeographic.com/2008/02/afghanistan-hazara/phil-zabriskie-text>

²⁴⁷ Countries and Their Cultures, "Hazara," n.d., <http://www.everyculture.com/Africa-Middle-East/Hazara.html>

²⁴⁸ Countries and Their Cultures, "Hazara," n.d., <http://www.everyculture.com/Africa-Middle-East/Hazara.html>

²⁴⁹ Sayed Yaqub Ibrahimi, "Wife for a Night" Institute for War and Peace Reporting, 20 November 2005,
<http://iwpr.net/report-news/wife-night>

²⁵⁰ Hafizullah Emadi, *Cultures and Customs of Afghanistan* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2005), 179–181.

Family Events, Rites of Passage

Several celebrations observed by the Hazara mark the passage from one stage of life to the next. For example, young women are required to spend more time indoors and wear a head covering once they reach puberty.²⁵¹

Afghan weddings occur once the families of the bride and groom have agreed to the terms of the dowry and wedding preparations. On the day of the wedding, the groom arrives (either on horseback or in a car) with a procession at the house of the bride's parents. Men and women mingle in different rooms, and after a meal, a religious leader performs the ceremony. At first, the bride remains in a separate room, and the ceremony concludes with the couple sharing a cup of water that has been blessed. The party then goes to the groom's house to prepare another feast.²⁵² Poetry is read at the beginning and conclusion of the Hazara wedding ceremony.²⁵³



© Bruce MacRae
Negotiating the wedding terms

Funerals are conducted according to Islamic custom. The body is ritually washed and buried usually within 24 hours of death.

Exchange 39: I would like to give my condolences to you and your family.

Soldier:	I would like to give my condolences to you and your family.	maa mee Khoyum key tasleeyat Kho da too wa faameel too be toom
Local:	Thank you.	juR bashee

Naming Practices

Afghans, including Hazaras, traditionally use one given name in everyday life. In formal settings, their first name may be followed by their family's tribal name or simply by their father's given name. Among Hazaras, who are predominantly Shi'ite, names popular in Shi'a Islam, including Ali and Hussein, are popular. The respect Hazaras offer to their elders is represented in the naming of their children; grandparents who live in the home are often granted the honor of naming newborns.²⁵⁴

²⁵¹ Countries and Their Cultures, "Hazara," n.d., <http://www.everyculture.com/Africa-Middle-East/Hazara.html>

²⁵² Hafizullah Emadi, *Cultures and Customs of Afghanistan* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2005), 174–176.

²⁵³ Sayed Askar Mousavi, *The Hazaras of Afghanistan: An Historical, Cultural, Economic and Political Study* (Richmond, Surrey, UK: Curzon Press, 1998), 88.

²⁵⁴ Countries and Their Cultures, "Hazara," n.d., <http://www.everyculture.com/Africa-Middle-East/Hazara.html>

Chapter 6 Assessment

1. Polygamy is very common among all socio-economic groups in Afghanistan.

False

Most marriages in Afghanistan are monogamous. When polygamy does occur it usually exists among those who can easily afford the additional expense. Those who marry additional wives often do so in hopes of having a son.

2. Hazara women have more social flexibility than other Afghan women.

True

Although women throughout Afghanistan do not have equal access to education or employment, Hazara women have traditionally worked land, often while their husbands are away, and are not as secluded as other Afghan women.

3. The Hazara are known to marry at a younger age than other Afghans.

False

The Hazara emphasis on education has delayed young people's age of marriage until their studies are finished.

4. Some Hazara practice temporary marriage.

True

The concept of temporary marriage, known in Afghanistan as *sighah*, is unique to Shi'a Islam. Temporary marriage allows a couple to contract a marriage for periods as short as a day.

5. Poetry is included in Hazara wedding ceremonies.

True

Poetry is recited at the beginning and end of a Hazara wedding ceremony. Other wedding customs include large feasts and processions of the wedding party from one home to another.

FINAL ASSESSMENT

1. Hazaras are descendents from the Moghul Empire of India.
False/True
2. Although the Hazara homeland is rural, many live in Kabul and Mazar-e Sharif.
False/True
3. Some Hazaras have risen to high political office since the fall of the Taliban.
False/True
4. The United States has consistently enforced the eradication of poppy crops to curb opium trade.
False/True
5. Radio, television, and internet are all common throughout Afghanistan.
False/True
6. Afghanistan is 99% Muslim, all of whom are Sunni Muslim.
False/True
7. Hazaras destroyed two massive Buddha statues in protest of Taliban rule.
False/True
8. Shi'ite religious clerics have power at the local level in Hazara areas.
False/True
9. Shi'ites commemorate the death of Husayn by mourning publicly.
False/True
10. Despite the violence in Afghanistan, mosques are always safe havens for service members.
False/True
11. Honor and family are closely linked in Afghanistan.
False/True
12. Friendship and loyalty are closely tied to honor in Afghan culture.
False/True
13. Afghanistan's harsh terrain results in a culture of inhospitality and isolation.
False/True
14. A *peerhan* is a loose-fitting long slipover shirt.
False/True

15. Hazara women in rural areas are more likely to have a head scarf.
False/True
16. Today, Hazaras typically work menial jobs in Afghanistan's cities.
False/True
17. Afghan kites are characterized by the crushed glass coating on the kite strings.
False/True
18. Preventative healthcare, being cheaper than responsive healthcare, is common.
False/True
19. Afghan bazaars sell only food. Crafts and other goods are found elsewhere.
False/True
20. The government has outlawed begging in Kabul.
False/True
21. All agricultural land in the Hazarajat is rain-watered.
False/True
22. A majority of the Hazara population is nomadic or seminomadic.
False/True
23. Rural Hazaras traditionally have little interest in education.
False/True
24. Civilian casualties at checkpoints concern locals and U.S. military leadership.
False/True
25. Roads in the Hazarajat are impassible in bad weather conditions.
False/True
26. A Hazara household is often larger than other Afghan ethnic groups.
False/True
27. A person's ability to work is valued above all, leaving the elderly with little value or respect.
False/True
28. Arranged marriage is the norm in Afghanistan.
False/True
29. Since the fall of the Taliban, Afghanistan has a high divorce rate.
False/True

30. Hazaras are given multiple names that they use in everyday life.
False/True

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