

Khost Province District Studies



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Khost Province Overview

Provincial Level Contextual Factors

The intent of the *District Level Contextual Factors Profiles* is to make the understated, complex socio-cultural environment of Khost Province more comprehensible and digestible for the warfighter. The Profiles can help put behavior in context by demonstrating what is not easily observed. This will enable informed dialogue while interacting with the diverse groups resident in Khost Province. The outcome of which will be expedited rapport building, developing an informed engagement strategy, and building a broader understanding of your operating environment. Understanding that social and cultural factors matter is not enough. The focus needs to be on how it matters when it does based on the perceptions of the local population.



Khost Province Overview

Provincial Level Contextual Factors



History

Historically, *Loya Paktya* (Greater Paktya) was far less penetrated by the state and has a history of past governments allowing a degree of tribal autonomy. *Loya Paktya* was split into Paktya and Paktika in 1964. Khost was created out of parts Paktya and Paktika in 1995. There are theories that *Loya Paktya* was broken up the way it was to try to weaken the historically strong tribes in the area.

Khost has always played an important and significant role in the turbulent history of Afghanistan, mostly because of its geographical location, terrain, and the independent nature and character of its people.

Khost remained semi-independent throughout history, in part due to the inaccessibility of much of the mountainous country, only being brought under partial subjection by Amir Abdur Rahman Khan in 1891. During this time Khost was a district of the large *Loya Paktya* province. Khost District was then broken into four sub-districts: Jaji Maidan, Zadran, Mangal, and Tani.

It was during the Third Anglo-Afghan War of 1919 that an important Afghan Commander, moving through Khost and receiving support and cooperation of its people, was able to successfully attack the important British cantonment of Tall – bordering North Waziristan and Kurram agencies.

In 1924, the Pashtun tribes in the vicinity of Khost, who were led by the Mangals, began to rebel against the king – King Amanullah – and the central government in Kabul. This rebellion is usually referred to as the Khost or Mangal Rebellion. One of the main reasons for this rebellion was a government centralization program that they perceived would threaten their historic autonomy. Another reason was based on the complaint that the new constitution did not conform to Islamic *shari'a* law by, for example, overturning strict dress codes for women. The main leaders of the rebellion were *ulema* (or religious scholars). During the year 1928, it was the area and people of Khost and Paktya that the famous Lawrence of Arabia had targeted for launching incriminating propaganda campaign against King Amanullah. Opposition to his rule increased and he was overthrown in 1929, becoming a lesson to future governments to be cautious when extending the reach of the state.

In 1929, the Jajis, as well as the Mangal, Zadran, and others, allied themselves with General Nadir Shah (1929-1933) while he attempted to regain control of Kabul from the Tajiks who occupied the capital in the vacuum created by Amanullah's departure. The strategy of Nadir Shah included the consolidation of opposition against the Tajik ruler by winning the support of the Pashtun frontier tribes and those of the Kabul-Kandahar-Jalalabad region. To do so, he circulated a weekly paper, which portrayed the Tajik control of Kabul as an insult to Pashtun honor and a defiance of the tribal code of conduct.

The greater reach of the state, in areas such as infrastructure, army and education, did not really gain force until the 1950s. During this period, the armed forces were also expanding. As the state became more encompassing, this led to a decrease in the government's dependence on the tribes. Local compromises with the tribes were still viewed as necessary to ensure stability. Because of the military power and autonomy of its tribes and services rendered to Nadir Shah that made him the new king, *Loya Paktya* benefited from a special tribal administrative status until the 1978 coup d'état that placed the communists in charge of Afghanistan.



Khost Province Overview

Provincial Level Contextual Factors

Up to that point in Afghanistan's history, state penetration of the region's Pashtun tribes proved more difficult and the central government was less successful in drawing tribal leaders away from their tribal base of support. While this special administrative status remained, it helped preserve the integrity of Pashtun tribal structures in the *Loya Paktya* region to an extent unseen in other parts of the country, giving these areas unique features such as the resilience of a functioning system of informal justice based primarily on *Pashtunwali*; the resilience of the *arbakai* system (tribal policing), as well as the preservation of signs of tribal identity that were severely damaged in other parts of the Pashtun-populated portions of Afghanistan. In many areas tribal structures and systems of governance were severely damaged, if not destroyed, by the role of Kabul's modernizing regimes and conservative Islamic elements.

The region was critical to the outcome of the war during the Soviet period as it is today. After the Communists take-over of Kabul in April 1978, the Communist government knew that the eventual success of the *mujahideen* lay in the consolidation of their position in Khost and transforming it into a launching pad for their further operations against Kabul. The *mujahideen* had also appreciated the importance of Khost and Paktya and had tried to make that area their stronghold for further operations.

A number of diverse *mujahideen* parties operated in the Sabari area from the 1970s onwards, sometimes cooperating, sometimes competing. These parties are referred to as *tanzims*. A *tanzim* is a political-military party composed of de-localized and de-tribalized combatants. Conceptually, *tanzims* are characterized by ideological socialization into the party and focus of primary loyalty is the party rather than tribe or family.

Throughout the war numerous campaigns were fought in and around Khost, on a scale and with an intensity that suggested whoever won would win not just the battle but the war as well. Khost, itself, was referred to as "Little Moscow" because of the general political orientation of the area. Khost was garrisoned by about 9,000 Afghan troops and was the headquarters of 25 Afghan Division and two Afghan Border Brigades. The *mujahideen* had their strongholds in the surrounding mountains, the important being Jaji in the north, Maidan, Tarin and Zhawar (Gurbuz) in the south.

During the Soviet-Afghan War (1979-1989), Khost was the front line of a siege that lasted for over eight years. Shortly following the incursion of Soviet troops, diverse Afghan *mujahideen* controlled the only land route between Khost and Gardez, thereby putting a stop to the Soviet advance. Shortly after Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan in 1989, Khost continued to be a battleground for *mujahideen* and regime elements, each vying to gain control while trying to manage infighting among their own increasingly fractional groups. For example, the *Maulvi* Jalaluddin Haqqani, after the Zhawar Operations in 1985-1986, tried to impose his authority over the commanders of other *mujahideen* parties participating in the Khost operations. This caused much infighting among the parties, with consequent setback in the operations as well.

The Communist regime and *mujahideen* were both trying to win-over the local tribal leaders by distributing a large amount of money and supplies for their support in disrupting their opponents' operations. When Khost was captured by the *mujahideen* it served as a harbinger regarding the eventual fate of Najibullah's communist government. In late 1987 and early 1988, the Kabul regime launched a major effort to relieve the city besieged by the *mujahideen* for several years. By 1991, enabled by CIA and the Pakistani intelligence service's provision of military and financial resources, *mujahideen* forces captured the first city from the Afghan communist regime – Khost. The *mujahideen* were able to take control of Khost due to the inability of the government to maintain a supply of goods. After finally overrunning the communist garrison, the *mujahideen* parties dissipated their common military victory in conflicts amongst the different *mujahideen* parties over booty and resources. The resistance leaders could not establish any stable government in Khost, which they dismantled rather than governed.

Khost Province Overview

Provincial Level Contextual Factors



The Taliban took Khost without a fight in January 1995. Khost was never a stronghold of the Taliban movement. In fact, when local Taliban authorities tried to tell manage traditional activities, for example, how to celebrate a marriage or stopping them from playing a traditional “egg fighting game” because it was un-Islamic, it led to frequent uprisings.

Geography

The physical terrain is characterized by rugged mountains in the west, south, north, and east, and extended centralized arid and semi-arid plains (the Khost “bowl”). Khost also shares important borders with the Pakistan tribal areas including North Waziristan and Kurram Agencies. Khost is a majority Pashtun province with many cultural, commercial and political ties with Pakistan.

The Shamal River rises from the Satti Kandow Montains and flows southeast. The Tangai River originates from the Tangai Mountain after passing the Tangai Valley, joining the Shamal River at Duamunda District. The river maintains the name Shamal. Running southeast through Khost, it merges with the Mangal River, and running south through Terezaï District into Pakistan. About fifteen years ago, 70% of Khost was fed by river-water from the Shamal River.

Civil Society

Khost City is not only the seat of the provincial government. It is also the heart of civil society in Khost Province. It is the seat of Sheikh Zayed University and numerous intra-provincial civil society organizations, including the *Mujahideen* Council, *Ulema* (religious scholars) Council, Tribal Unity Council, Peace Council, Urban Council, and multiple political parties, all which have varying degrees of influence over the population of Khost. Competition for population support among some civil society organizations is reported. Additionally, there is a place in Khost Bazaar called *Melmastun*, which is defined as an area for all tribes, where groups from all over Khost will converge to mediate disputes. Frequently, the mediators are from the Zadran or Mangal tribes, having been requested to mediate disputes between or among other tribal elements.

Identity Factors

Limits to Tribal Cohesion

Ultimately, the distribution of the population as refugees, infighting among the various communist and *mujahideen* parties, and insecurity led to the weakening of the tribal system. The divisions between those who left and those who stayed behind continue to this day, as does the damage to the tribal system. For example, until recently, many former communist military officers commanded U.S. organized militias, such as Afghan Security Guards and the Khost Provincial Force. This led to increased hostilities and suspicion by former *mujahideen* who perceived that these militia leaders were untouchable during disarmament campaigns.

Contemporary insecurity has further weakened the tribal and elder system, with the most significant social system frequently being the village or a collection of villages. The Provincial Government encourages the elders to settle conflicts at their level rather than escalating to the District Center. If a group is particularly weak, they will reach out to help from elders from another tribe for resolution of a problem.

When engaging with tribal representatives, it is important to note that, similar to much of the rest of Afghanistan, it is common for older “legitimate” elders to stand behind representatives due to fear of intimidation or to more easily work with different groups, such as the insurgents and the government. The younger representatives serve as an intermediary through which the “real” elders take action and make decisions.

Khost Province Overview

Provincial Level Contextual Factors



Religious Influence

The *ulema* (religious scholars) have historically been significant influencers in Khost, but not more so than tribal influencers. For example, even in the absence of a charismatic figure, the *ulema* were able to sustain a tribal revolt by declaring a *jihad*, as in 1924 during the Khost Rebellion. Any accord between the *ulema* and the tribes would be provisional, to the extent where one can speak of mutual instrumentality.

Many *ulema* and *mullah* (Islamic prayer leaders) in Khost were actively supporting the early Karzai government from 2001; however, their support waned, as did that of the people, as the prominent *ulema* were actively targeted by emboldened insurgents and treated with distrust by the government and international forces due to suspicions raised by any conservative Islamic element. According to the head of Khost City's *Ulema* Council, due to intimidation and perceived lack of engagement by the state, people in Khost complain that some *mullah* will not perform prayers at the funerals of dead Afghan soldiers, police, and private security. The phenomenon has become commonplace in Tani, Bak, Terezai, Sabari and some other remote areas, leading to reports of many people from these areas quitting the national security service.

Tor Gund – Spin Gund

The *tor gund* (black faction) and *spin gund* (white faction) comprise a socio-political moiety historically present in *Loya Paktya*, some of which attribute to being imposed by the British to create fissures that they could exploit among the population. Today this dichotomy has become practically obsolete, but many people can remember which tribe belongs to which *gund*. Interestingly, the Mandozai were reported to be with the *spin gund*, along with the Sabari, much of the Zadran, and Tani, while the Ismael Khel were reported to be with the *tor gund*, along with the Mangal and others.

The Role of Place

The *tallah* is a system of distribution of responsibility dependent on geography, not tribe, found throughout Paktya, Paktika and Khost Provinces. The intent is to ensure equal distribution of resources, responsibilities and loss among tribes and other groups that are different sizes in a given area. In concept, *puch* or *qura kashi* (similar to lottery) is used to allocate resources, advantages and losses in this system. Allocation is not distributed equally among all *tallah*, but through equal chance by means of lottery.

It is important to also note that influence isn't just tied to place. Villages do not exist in isolation. A village is often considered a bound thing and treated as such, but regional and even global dynamics impact the most seemingly isolated areas. In many villages, people of influence left due to intimidation and reside in another district, Kabul, or even Pakistan, yet they remain influential. As another example, there have been rural and urban demonstrations in Khost when Israel was bombing Gaza. Large portions of the population have access to radio and cell phone coverage.

Khost Province Overview

Provincial Level Contextual Factors



Arbakai

An indicator of strength of a group is whether they are able raise and govern an *arbakai* force. *Arbakai* are conceptually a tribal police force to be used for defending the people, land, and resources of an area. *Arbakai* make up a circulating force, rather than having a standing group of men that are always serving as *arbakai*. Each household gives different men at different times depending on the rotation cycle. Historically, elders provided oversight, tasking and management of *arbakai*. Although this is still the case in some areas, in some areas *arbakai* are managed by the community rather than elders. Within the last few years, the Mangal retained the largest *arbakai* force in Khost, with a single *arbakai* leader for the Mangal of Musa Khel and Qalandar Districts. Historically and in recent years, *arbakai* have been intermittently suppressed and co-opted by the government, international forces, and insurgent elements.

Tribal Treaties

Yet another indicator of strength in a group is the ability to uphold a *qawm-e taroon* (or tribal treaty). A tribal treaty might be based on village, area, district, clan, sub-tribe or tribe. It changes as conditions change. Tribal treaties are a set of rules and sanctions. If you do X, then Y. Sanctions include fines, burning homes, expulsion from the community and death. Some areas don't have tribal accords or no longer can uphold them. It is often an indicator for lack of unity and solidarity. Government centers, such as the District Center, might be used as a forum to enact tribal governance, completely separate from the government system. Frequently, they are registered with the District Center.

Strength of Tribes

Due to disunity and insecurity caused by the Soviet-Afghan conflict, ensuing civil war, dispersion of the population as refugees, and contemporary insecurity, tribes are not as cohesive or strong as they used to be in the past. Strength in tribe is described as, for example, "our elders being able to stand together," "elders listening to the people," "the young listening to the old, and "the *shura* meets."

Elders

Elders (*mashron*) are a social institution. They can quit, step down, or be removed from this position. The position is achieved, not ascribed. Elders are recognized as having a social obligation to the community and are elected representatives. An elder might be respected, but not considered powerful or able to take action for their community. On the other hand, an elder might be considered powerful, but might not be respected or liked by his community. Additionally, there are *spingari*. Generally, *spingari* are viewed as respected, but not necessarily viewed as having a social obligation. In areas where there are no standing elders, the community governs the area and makes decisions as a whole.

Khost Province Overview

Provincial Level Contextual Factors

Shuras

There are *shuras* (councils) based on the village, an area, tribe or sub-tribe, District Center, governing bazaars, based on trades, among *ulema*, among mullah, and many more structures in Khost. The *shura* might meet once a week or when an issue that needs to be addressed comes up, such as every few years or so. *Shura* is a consultative forum – whereas in democracy you have a chance to argue your case but a decision to the contrary might be made and there is nothing you can do about it; in a *shura*, if you don't agree, you can just walk away and not accept the resolution. When *shuras* have stopped meeting in an area that is indication of insecurity or lack of cohesion (one often dependent on the other).

People these days commonly use *shura* and *jirga* interchangeably. *Shura* is an Arabic word that started gaining more prominence in the local vocabulary during the *mujihdeen* and Taliban period. Historically, decisions coming out of a *jirga* were considered binding. The international community often misuses these terms when they hold onetime meetings. More common words for a onetime meeting might be *jwanda*, *jalsa* or *malakat*. The name of meeting often implies expectations of process and outcome.

Social Groups

Tribes in Khost

Khost is incredibly diverse. We discuss tribal breakdown and levels of cohesion in the *District Level Contextual Profiles*. Tribe translates as *qawm* or local level solidarity group. It can be any segment of society bound by solidarity ties, whether it an extended family, clan, occupational group, or village. It is a group of people that acts as a single unit. All of which are very dynamic, change, or be considered irrelevant for any group or individual. People often operate independent of these social structures.

In Khost, the prominent tribal identities (not to imply cohesion within these groups) are: Zadran, Mangal, Tani, Gurbuzi, Babakar Khel, Jaji, Sabari, Terezai, Mandozai, Moqbil, and Ismael Khel, as well as area based identities, such as Lakan, Kharisan, Matun, Shamal, Ali Sher, and Harun Khel to name a few. In Khost City, there are also small populations of tribes from throughout Afghanistan, as well as the Tajik, Sikh, and Shi'a Hazara.

Western Khost encompasses part of the “Zadran Arc.” The Zadran Arc encompasses:

- In Khost: Duamonda (Shamal), Nadir Shah Kot, and Spera
- In Paktya: Gerda Serai, Shawak, Wazi Zadran, eastern reaches of Zormat in the Arma area
- In Paktika: Ziork, Naika, Gayan, Arma

Although historically strong, the Zadran today throughout the Arc are factional, isolated, and uncoordinated, and rife with internal conflicts, some historic, others emerging. The Zadran have been described as ‘a loose tribe’, often engaging in violent conflicts among themselves. There are multiple political affiliations inside the tribe. The Zadran will be discussed in the Duamonda (Shamal), Nadir Shah Kot, and Spera *District Profiles*.



Khost Province Overview

Provincial Level Contextual Factors



Kuchi

Kuchi are often described as a tribe, but in fact the term refers to a lifestyle (migratory), a productive mode (livestock dependent), and a cultural identity (Pashtun). *Kuchi* might first and foremost identify as *kuchi*, but there are multiple tribes that are *kuchi*, to include the larger tribal groupings Ahmadzai and Niazi of the Afghan nationality. In the past 30 years, *kuchi* populations have been settling throughout the country more frequently. Khost is experiencing one of the highest scales of settling *kuchi*, leading to frequent disputes over land ownership.

In the nomadic *kuchis'* migratory cycle, the *kuchi* generally leave their winter camps (whether in Pakistan or Afghanistan, such as in Khost) in April or May, and move towards Paktya, Ghazni, Logar, Wardak, and (in the past) Bamiyan. Some *kuchi* are semi-nomadic. These *kuchi* own land and have built compounds, but decide year by year, primarily based on economic and social considerations, if they will migrate. Summer camps are also the focal point for social reunions and political and social decision-making. Advice on disputes with settled populations or resolutions to intra-*kuchi* disputes are often sought in the summer camps.

Musalyan

Another nomadic group, the *musalyan* (plural of *musali*), also passes through Khost en route to and from Pakistan. The *musalyan* are a nomadic people originally from the Punjab region of India and Pakistan and are more similar to the gypsy populations that are well known to most westerners. In southern Afghanistan, the *musalyan* are frequently called *jat*. In the north, they are referred to as *gujar*. *Musalyan* are distinguished from *kuchi* not by their nomadic lifestyle, but their lack of livestock and very different social norms. In contrast to most Afghans, the men tend to stay in the camps, but might cook or play music at weddings, while the women and children go out to beg or sell jewelry. Because the *musalyan* do not observe *pardah* (female seclusion), the women are often thought to be prostitutes.

Livelihoods

Khost is a major regional economic center. The province is a major transit hub for trade from Pakistan, such as from the important port in Karachi, and India. It is sometimes referred to as Little Dubai due to its customhouse in Gurbuz District.

It is common to find the Pakistani *Rupee* (PKR) (also called *kaldar*) used in economic transactions rather than Afghanistan's official currency - the *Afghani* - based on currency fluctuation, leaving the *rupee* worth more than the *Afghani*.

Additionally, there are reports of millions of PKR coming through Khost via *hawala* per day from business and remittances being sent from abroad. Khost City is one of the largest *hawala* centers in Afghanistan. The *hawala* system is a system of money transfer based on networks, historically informal, but more recently *hawaladars* (the people who operate or run the *hawala* business) are required to be licensed by the Afghan government; however there are still informal *hawaladars*. People who want to transfer money through the *hawala* system will approach a *hawaladar* and provide him with the sum they want to transfer in cash. In turn, the customer is provided with a *hawala* number that he or someone else will provide to the *hawaladar* in the area where he wants to transfer this money to. The *hawaladars* in each location will settle accounts, often through writing a check to an official bank account in Kabul or Azizi Banks, two of Afghanistan's largest, nationalized banks. Most *hawala* businesses also conduct *saraf*. *Saraf* is currency exchange. The most common currencies exchanged are *Darham* (a currency of United Arab Emirates and Gulf countries), PKR, and USD.

Khost Province Overview

Provincial Level Contextual Factors

In Khost, local wheat growing consumes 70% of all irrigated land but drought, soil composition, and a lack of water for irrigation have produced a wheat production deficit throughout the province in recent years. Land in Khost is incredibly expensive. For example, about an acre of land in Tani District is worth about \$40,000 USD, with an acre of prime real estate in Matun District being upwards of a million USD.

Landownership is characterized either by communal, tribal or private landholdings. Tribal land is distributed to private holdings or shares (*barkha*) among the tribe through a *vesh*. *Vesh* can be re-done if there is a conflict or if the need arises. The distribution can occur for a variety of reasons, such as to solve conflicts or to distribute government taxation on the land or mountains. Land is generally distributed according to how many males (both young and old) are in each family. The various *barkha* have been passed down through inheritance (in the male line). In each generation, the *barkha* is divided among the male heirs, but if someone dies, their *barkha* will be divided up among all the male relatives entitled to the original share. In this way, the size of a given *barkha* can increase or decrease, though the general trend will be towards a smaller *barkha* over time.

Another key livelihood (and prevalent source of tension between groups) is harvesting and selling timber. People use the forests for construction material, pine nuts and firewood, with some using these resources commercially and others for household use. Most of the forests are located in Qalandar, Sabari, Bak, Duamunda (Shamal), Tani, Musa Khel, and Spera districts of Khost. During the Soviet-Afghan War and civil war, forest exploitation and timber smuggling to internal and Pakistani timber markets peaked, but it continues today. Although in name government resources, Afghanistan's forests appear to have been reduced by nearly half since 1978 due to Russian bombardment, economic dependence on the forests due to lack of alternatives and, with the building of roads, increased ease of smuggling timber and access to markets within Khost, Afghanistan and abroad, especially in Pakistan. Agriculture officials in southeastern Khost province say that 65 percent of forests have been destroyed as a result of illegal logging. According to a survey conducted three decades ago, the region of Paktya, Paktika, and Khost originally had the second largest forest cover in Afghanistan. Deforestation has led to increasing disputes over resources and flooding.

The mountains of different regions in Khost province, such as the Jaji and Mangal areas in the northeast; the Zadran area in the northwest; and the Tani area in the southwest are rich in valuable minerals, such as chromite.

Analysts tend to focus on illicit drug production and trade in their discussion of criminality and funding for the insurgency in Afghanistan. What is typically omitted, however, is the illegal extraction of Afghanistan's natural resources. As a consequence, illegal deforestation and mineral extraction are directly linked to issues of governance and security sector reform.

Khost Province Overview

Provincial Level Contextual Factors



Critical Questions

- To assess unity and strength of leadership, ask if the elders stand together. Also, ask when do the people of X area come together. What drives them apart?
- To assess systems of governance, ask if the *tallah* system is important in the area and when, why, and how so.
- To assess whether local traditional governance is centralized, ask if there is a *qawm-e taroon* and whether it is applied.
- To assess influence, ask who has influence and why.
- To assess saliency of tribe, ask when tribe matters, under what conditions, and why.
- To assess village organization, ask how the village is broken up into different parts.
- To assess change, ask what has changed for the people in the past few years.

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Tani District, Khost Province

District Level Contextual Factors

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Tani District, Khost Province

District Level Contextual Factors



History

Khost was originally a district part of a larger province – *Loya Paktya* – that also incorporated the provinces of Paktya and Paktika. As of the 19th century, Khost was broken into four sub-districts, including one called Tani, which included what is today Tani, Mandozai, and Nadir Shah Kot Districts. *Loya Paktya* area was split into the provinces of Paktya and Paktika in 1964. Khost was created out of parts Paktya and Paktika in 1995.

In 1980, the communist Afghan Minister of Tribal and Frontier Affairs, Faiz Mohammed, succeeded in striking a deal with some clans of the Tani tribe, and later with sections of the Mangal and Jaji tribes, among others. Accordingly, the Tani would supply 7,000 militiamen to the Communist government. For the Communist regime, arming villagers who supported the government was an attempt to weaken the areas under the control of the *mujahideen* parties.

Faiz Muhammed was assassinated by the Zadran – his own tribe – before being able to implement the conditions of his deal. Although the Tani are generally discussed as “Marxist,” in 1982, two years after the failed agreement with the Communist state, the Tani established sanctions, such as imprisonment, fines or burning homes, in a *qawm-e taroon* (tribal treaty) for assisting the Soviet occupation forces and the Kabul regime. Similar accords were later adopted by most of the tribes of Khost. During this time, the communist Afghan government tended to control the plains, such as the Dragi area, while the *mujahideen* controlled the mountains. The majority of the inhabitants of Tani in the areas held by the *mujahideen* did not tend to flee as refugees to Pakistan. A military *shura* with representatives of the different *mujahideen* parties operating in the area provided security. Tribal problems were resolved by the Tani tribal *shura*.

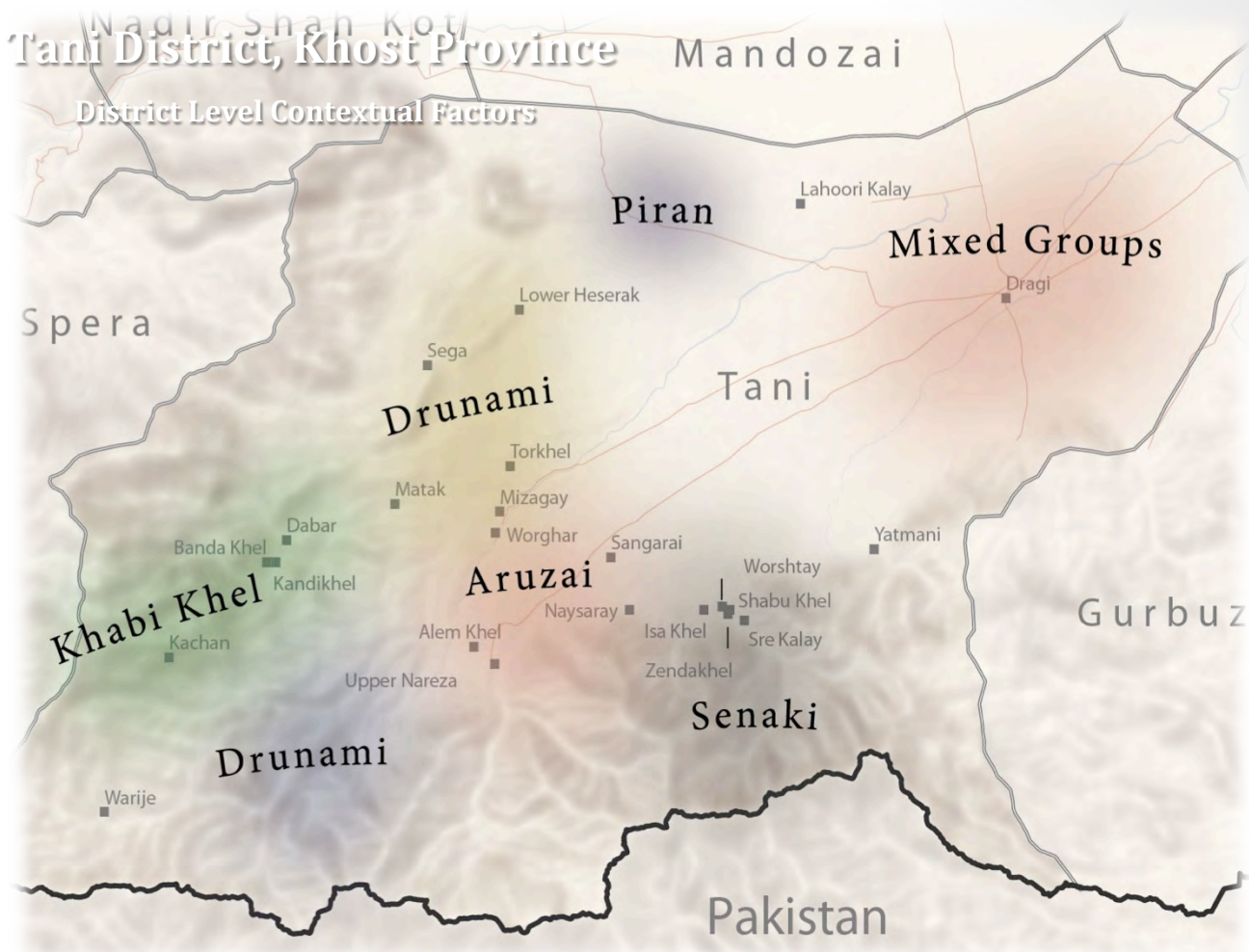
Geography

Tani District is commonly referred to as Dragi by the local population, due to the fact that the District Center is located in the Dragi area of Tani.

There are high, wooded mountains to the west, south, and east. The mountains are mineral rich and covered with forests, although illegal mining and destructive deforestation is prevalent. Over half of Tani’s forests have been destroyed as a result of illegal logging. To the center of the district is a wide flat plain. The flat land around in the center of the district and into the lower slopes of the mountains support irrigation, while most of the mountains only support rain fed agriculture.

Identity Factors

The majority of the population of Tani District consists of members of the Tani tribe. The Tani tribe is broken down into four sub-tribes: Khabi Khel, Senaki, Aruzai, and Drunami. The four Tani sub-tribes are in turn broken into various clans. Besides the Tani tribe, there are pockets of Mangal tribe that purchased government land in the northeast on the border with Matun District, and nomadic *kuchi* that migrate through the district, as well as groups that don’t identify with tribe at all. With the exception of Dragi area, which is a mixed tribal area, most villages are composed of a single Tani sub-tribe, with multiple clans residing in the same villages in some areas. The Mada Khel/ Kharsin Waziri tribe is situated directly across the border in Pakistan and has multiple, distinct conflicts with different factions of the Tani tribe. During periods of PAKMIL operations, however, there is an influx of Waziri refugees into Tani and other neighboring districts.



Historically, the Tani consider themselves to be a strong tribe. The Tani tribe, however, became disunited during the Soviet-Afghan conflict and civil war. Disunity was attributed to mass immigration during the fighting, multiple *mujahideen* parties coming into the area during the Soviet-Afghan conflict and ensuing civil war, and elders engaging in predatory behavior during these periods, which lead to the divisions that currently among exist among the people of Tani. Although the social groups of Tani are disunited at the tribal and district level, though seemingly relatively united at the village level. Despite repeated reports of disunity among the Tani tribe, different sub-tribes support each other against others when there are intra-Tani tribal disputes. The Drunami and Aruzai support one another, and Senaki and Khabi Khel support one another.

The role of elders varies according to place. Over time the Tani tribe has become disunited, having no clear leadership at the supra-tribal level. While some villages still seek out and react to elder guidance at the village-level, due to elder inaction, dislocation and past predatory behavior, elders are commonly viewed as not important. Many communities manage their area through community discussion, rather than through distinct leadership. Due to a weak tribal system, the Tani often have a difficult time solving intra-Tani disputes. The Tani reach out to external mediators for resolutions of intra-Tani disputes that they cannot resolve amongst themselves. Piran, Mangal, Ismael Khel and Zadrán elders are sought out as mediators. More often than not, mediators from the Nadir Shah Kot District's Zadrán Zini Khel sub-tribe are sought out, this is despite an ongoing Zadrán Bur Khel dispute with one Tani sub-tribe. The Zini Khel is not involved in the Bur Khel – Tani dispute.

Tani District, Khost Province

District Level Contextual Factors



The four sub-tribes of Tani are broken up into five *tallah* (distribution of responsibility by geography, not tribe): Ter Khel (a Drunami sub-tribe) and Aruzai, Khabi Khel, Drunami with the exception of Ter Khel, Senaki, and the inter-tribal mixed Dragi area. An example of using the *tallah* system is evident when under King Zahir Shah (1933-1973), at his request, *qawm-e kandak* (tribal battalions) were built up to provide security along the Afghanistan-Pakistan border. In Tani, there were three hundred soldiers, with each of the five *tallah* in Tani providing sixty people to serve in the Tani *qawm-e kandak*.

In some areas, such as Nareza, the *tallah* is divided into even smaller sections based on geographic distribution of responsibility - *nikar*. For example, Aruzai as a tribe composes half a *tallah*, and thirty *nikar*. Reportedly, there are fifteen *nikar* in lower Nareza and fifteen in upper Nareza.

* For more information on the *tallah* system, reference the *Khost Province Overview*.

Social Groups

Lahoori Piran

There are social groups within Tani that are considered to be outside of the Tani tribal hierarchy, including the Lahoori-Piran. The *Piran* believe they are descendants of a famous *pir* – Pir Lahoori, not to be mistaken for the Lahore area of Pakistan. The *Piran* reside in one area of Tani – Lahoori Kalay, just north east of Hesarak Kalay. Similar to the *sadat*, people who are considered descendants of the Prophet Mohammed and thus closer to God, the *Piran* do not consider themselves as part of any secular tribal system. The *Piran* are highly respected due to their status as ‘holy people’. Much of the Tani tribe reaches out to the *Piran*, among other external populations, for assistance in mediating disputes when they are unable to come to a resolution within their communities or tribe.

Although generally a respected social group, the group does have some historic land disputes with particular villages of the Tani tribe, including the Drunami of Hesarak Kalay and the Khabi Khel.

Aruzai

The Aruzai reside predominately in the Nareza area, which is broken upper and lower Nareza, with at least three smaller parts, which are Sangarai, Kanday, and Heysary. The people of Upper Nareza belong to the Aruzai tribe’s Goyda Khel clan. The people of Lower Nareza belong to the Aruzai tribe’s Janga Khel clan.

Nareza conducted a *vesh* (distribution of tribal land to household responsibility) on their tribal mountains about five years ago. The *vesh* triggered a dispute among Upper and Lower Nareza over access to trees and chromite mines. The dispute was tempered due to internal negotiations and the fact the government issued a ban on the extraction and sale of chromite. Despite the ban, chromite extraction continues to be a problem and source of discontent between the two areas.

During the summer, families from the Nareza area move into *Narezi Ghar*, or the Nareza Mountain. These families only live in the mountains in the summer. They come back down in the fall and winter. These mountain camps are referred to as *mailay*. Families might camp in the mountains for a variety of reasons, such as to take care of their private holding of trees or to cut wood, to access better grazing for their animals, or even to escape the summer heat.



Tani District, Khost Province

District Level Contextual Factors

People from all over Khost and Tani visit the *Malung* Baba (aka Khatak Malung) Shrine in Upper Nareza. *Malung* are said to be incredibly influential throughout Afghanistan. They are described as poor men that are not interested in worldly possessions. They are said to exhibit spiritual and curative powers. People might go to a *malung* if they have a headache that will not go away, if they are having difficulty conceiving a child, or if they want a high-ranking position. *Malung* are often Sufi. *Malung* can be found all over Afghanistan, but there are more *malung* in the east where Sufism has maintained a significant presence. People frequent the shrines of deceased *malung* on holidays with family picnics, and there is a folk belief that prayers made at shrines of holy men will expedite their prayers.

Khabi Khel

The Khabi Khel sub-tribe is broken into approximately seven villages and clans. They refer to themselves as “mountain people,” often in direct contrast to the people that don’t live on the mountains. Each village in turn is broken into multiple parts. For example, the Banda Khel clan’s area is broken into eight parts – Dabar, Manza, Eneshpo, Kuz Kalay, Landi Manza, Hesaray, and Mydoot or Sur Kye Lita. They solve their problems through discussion among representatives from each part. Although the Banda Khel have three elders that live in Khost City, they claim that they don’t need elders and have sought no replacements. This is because the elders living in Khost City moved out of Banda Khel during the Taliban government due to the elders’ expropriating and selling tribal land during the civil war. To solve problems, representatives from each part usually meet at the school in Banda Khel to reach a solution through community dialogue, not through adjudication by any distinct leaders.

Khabi Khel – Zadran’s Bur Khel

The Khabi Khel have a land dispute over Sur Kaash Mountain with the Zadran Bur Khel sub-tribe in Spera District. The mountains are located between the Spera District and Tani District. This dispute has led to multiple deaths, including from firefights between the two parties outside of Tani District in Khost City Bazaar. The contemporary Afghan government received *wak* (authority) from both sides, according to the culture of Khost, to assign a *jirga* to adjudicate this dispute. The *jirga* decided, based on *nerkh* (tribal law) that the Zadran are the rightful owners of the mountain; however, the Khabi Khel do not accept this decision.

Ter Khel – Banda Khel

The Banda Khel clan of the Khabi Khel have a historic, violent dispute with the Drunami Ter Khel clan over a mountain. Over time, twenty to thirty people have been killed from the Ter Khel side and twenty to thirty from the Banda Khel side. Reportedly, the Drunami and Khabi Khel are together and support one another, and Aruzai and Senaki are together and support one another. Historically, the Banda Khel claim that that when they attempt to travel to Khost Bazaar the Ter Khel will block the roads and not let the Banda Khel go through their area. When the people of Banda Khel re-route and try to go through Nareza, the Aruzai will block their roads, in support of the Ter Khel.

Drunami

The Drunami sub-tribe is broken into five villages and clans: Hesarak, Ter Khel, Yetmoni, Orjalay, and Worghar. Ter Khel Kalay is described to house the “the Center of Tani” – the Khera Shiga area. The Khera Shiga area is not only famous for a large *madrassah* that shares the name of the area that is situated in Ter Khel, and the seat of the famous *Maluvi* (Islamic scholar) in Tani. A parcel of land adjacent to the *madrassah* is also referred to as Khera Shiga. On this land, people from all over Tani are reported to meet to hold *shuras* to settle any intra-Tani disputes and to address Tani-wide issues or concerns. Ter Khel Kalay is also famous for Malung Shrine, celebrating the life and achievements of deceased famous *malung*, and resident *malung*, both of which are visited by people from all over Khost and Tani.

Tani District, Khost Province

District Level Contextual Factors



Senaki

The Senaki sub-tribe is broken into five clans: Shabu Khel, Sra, Jzanda Khel, and Isa Khel.

Senaki – Mada Khel/Kharsin Waziri

The Jzanda Khel clan has a historic violent dispute straddling the border of Pakistan with the Mada Khel/Kharsin Waziri. The Shabu Khel support the Jzanda Khel in their claim. The Waziri have seized large tract of land in the Senaki area. The Senaki lived on the north side of Mast Yari and the Waziri lived on the south side. This conflict reportedly began over ten years ago when the Senaki sought to build homes in an area that the Waziri claim as their own. Both claim the contested area. In recent years, the Waziri approached the Senaki to negotiate a resolution. It was decided that neither party should access the contested area. The resolution soon fell apart with the Jzanda Khel in the Mast Yari area and some Shabu Khel in Worshtay, an area next to Mast Yari, being forced from the area. The conflict remains unresolved.

Dragi

Dragi is the seat of the District Center. Dragi is a mix of the four Tani sub-tribes: Drunami, Aruzai, Khabi Khel, and Senaki. The largest population in Dragi is Senaki. The smallest population in Dragi is Aruzai. Each tribe has their own village in the Dragi area. Dragi's center is a mixed location where all of the tribes live.

Reportedly, one hundred and fifty years ago, thirty families from each Tani sub-tribe descended from the mountains to live in the Dragi area. The Dragi area was originally populated by representatives from all four Tani tribes from the mountainous areas to provide a *badraga* (escort or security check point) in the plains in response to historic disputes with the Waziri, Ismael Khel and Gorbuzi. The narrative is that the "bravest people from all four sub-tribes" converged in Dragi to provide *badraga*.

Livelihoods

Tani District is generally economically oriented towards Khost, but is oriented towards Pakistan when it comes to illegal timber and chromite smuggling. The primary livelihoods in Tani are farming on dry and rain-fed land, with no historic *karez* systems, and selling timber derived from the mountains. There are two planting cycles in Tani. Wheat is planted in November-December and harvested during the early summer months.

Agricultural surplus that families can sell is no longer common, as it was reported to be a few years ago, with deficits always expected, preventing families from being able to support themselves on what they grow alone. Additional purchases of wheat and other staples are the norm. Animal husbandry for household benefit is also common, with chickens, turkeys, cattle, sheep, donkeys and goats. Most villages also rely on remittances sent from their family members working abroad, in particular the UAE.

Most villages sell wood (oak trees, cedar trees, and pine) as one of many diverse means to support their families. Businessmen go to Nareza to purchase wood; whereas, in Banda Khel, villagers sell their wood in Khost City and Duamunda Bazaars. Almonds are also cultivated throughout Tani. Pine nuts are also cultivated in the Ter Khel and Banda Khel areas.

Many people from Hesarak in particular have businesses in Khost Bazaar. They sell used cars purchased from Herat and sell wheat purchased in bulk from Khost Bazaar from businessmen who, in turn, purchase it from Tajikistan and Pakistan.

Tani District, Khost Province

District Level Contextual Factors



It is also common to have a family member working in the *campaign*, the local referent for security guards employed by the US forces. In recent years, approximately three hundred and three hundred and fifty people from Tani are employed as security guards. For example, the people of Orjalay Kalay (Drunami) provide security for themselves through their people joining the *campaign* posted on the border in the Orjalay area. Additionally, the Hesarak people working with the campaign are posted in Gurbuz DC in the Zhawar area and the Spilgeen and Mir Sapul Zai areas of Tani DC.

The first chromite deposits were found about 15 years ago. There are approximately 25 to 30 mines in Tani. Prior to a recent governmental ban on extraction of chromite from the mountains, people in Nareza, Hesarak, Banda Khel, Orjalay, Ter Khel, and Senaki areas mined chromite on a large scale to sell in Pakistan or to Pakistani businessmen. Many hoped would bring prosperity to the district, but the deposits have also fueled violence between tribes trying to establish control over the area. In recent years, a private security company, with approximately 300 guards, was hired by the government to stop the smuggling, but, reportedly, it has not been successful.

Authorities have failed to prevent the smuggling of chromite in Khost Province despite a government ban. Smuggling from mines in Tani District to Pakistan's port city of Karachi, as well as to China, has been continuing for several years. The Afghan government estimates that about 20,000 USD in revenues are lost every day to illegal chromite excavations in Khost. Further, the smuggling threatens stability, as criminal networks, corrupt government officials, and insurgents are cooperating in the business.

Analysts tend to focus on illicit drug production and trade in their discussion of criminality and funding for the insurgency in Afghanistan. What is typically omitted, however, is the illegal extraction of Afghanistan's natural resources. As a consequence, illegal deforestation and mineral extraction are directly linked to issues of governance and security sector reform.

Tani District, Khost Province

District Level Contextual Factors



Critical Questions

To assess unity and strength of leadership, ask if the elders stand together. Also, ask when do the people of X area come together. What drives them apart?

To assess systems of governance, ask if the *tallah* system is important in the area and when, why, and how so.

To assess whether local traditional governance is centralized, ask if there is a *qawm-e taroon* and whether it is applied.

To assess influence, ask who has influence and why.

To assess saliency of tribe, ask when tribe matters, under what conditions, and why.

To assess village organization, ask how the village is broken up into different parts.

To assess change, ask what has changed for the people in the past few years.

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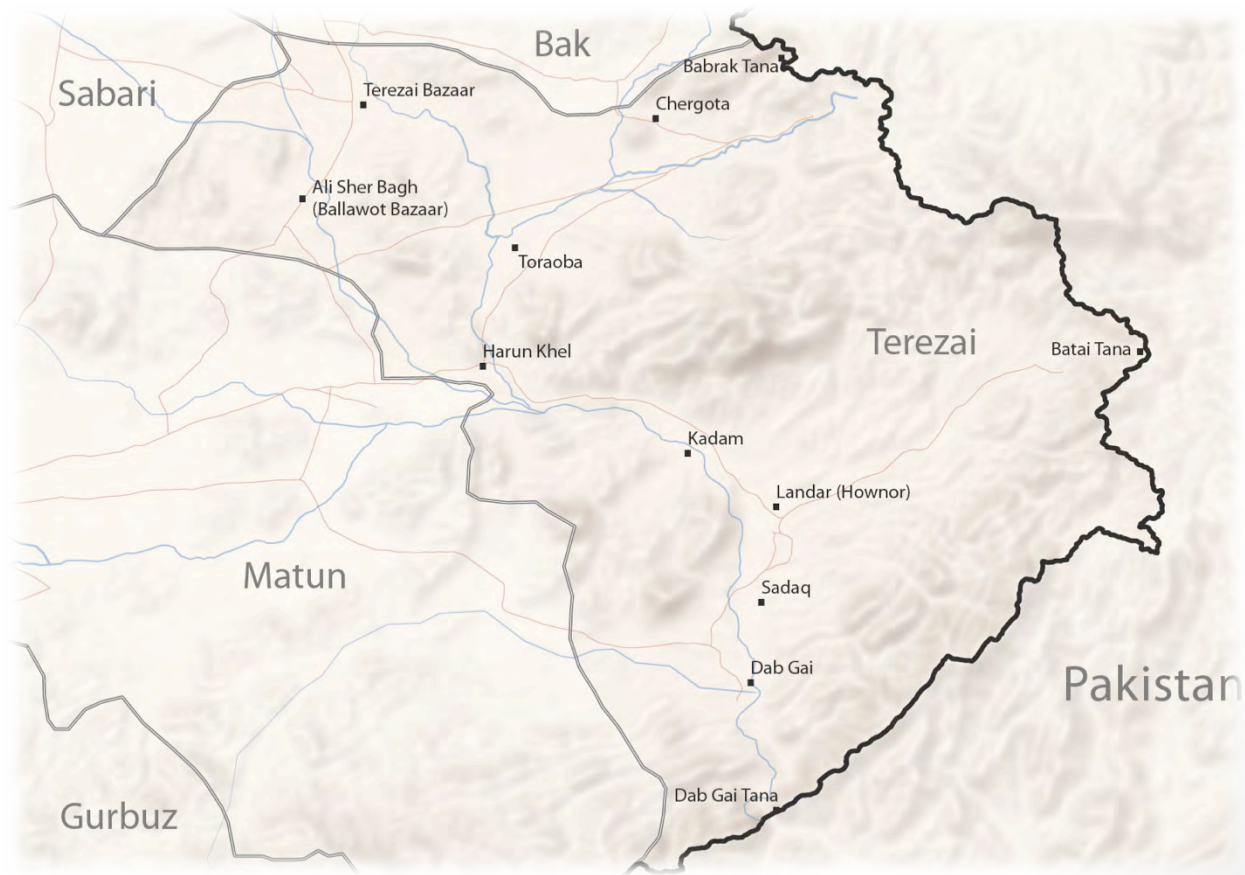


Terezai District, Khost Province

District Level Contextual Factors



The intent of the *District Level Contextual Factors Profiles* is to make the understated, complex socio-cultural environment of Khost Province more comprehensible and digestible for the warfighter. The Profiles can help put behavior in context by demonstrating what is not easily observed. This will enable informed dialogue while interacting with the diverse groups resident in Khost Province. The outcome of which will be expedited rapport building, developing an informed engagement strategy, and building a broader understanding of your operating environment. Understanding that social and cultural factors matter is not enough. The focus needs to be on how it matters when it does based on the perceptions of the local population.



Terezai District, Khost Province

District Level Contextual Factors



History

Khost was originally a district part of a larger province – *Loya Paktya* – that also incorporated the provinces of Paktya and Paktika. *Loya Paktya* area was split into the provinces of Paktya and Paktika in 1964. Khost was created out of parts Paktya and Paktika in 1995.

During the anti-Soviet war, *Hizb-e Islami Gulbuddin* was only of local importance in much of southeastern Afghanistan. The organization was geographically limited to small islands, with the most important areas of influence being Sabari, Bak, and Terezai. A *mujahideen* shura covered not only Bak, but also Sabari, Jaji Maidan, and Terezai, governed security in the area. The *shura* was actually based out of Terezai District.

Most *Hizb-e Islami* military operations took place in Bak, Sabari, Terezai up to 2009. With the Haqqani Network weakened due to drone attacks across the border close to neighboring Miram Shah, *Hizb-e Islami* gained strength during this period, particularly in its traditional strongholds of Bak, Sabari, Khost center, and now Terezai districts.

Within the past few hundred years, much of southern Terezai was founded by *kuchi* from Central Afghanistan, many of whom were moving due to escalating tensions with the Hazara in their place of origin. Historically, many of their ancestors seasonally migrated to Terezai to graze their herds during the winter. The settled populations in these areas no longer identify as *kuchi* or with *kuchi*, or any of their historic areas, or even empathize for *kuchi* for that matter. Their historic identities became meaningless. Their current identities are localized and area centric. No one tribe constitutes a majority in Terezai. It is one of the most heterogeneous district in Khost Province due to three phenomena:

- First, King Zahir Shah (1933-1973) provided five to six *jeribs* (1 *jerib* = approximately ½ acre) of government land in Terezai District to Mangal and Zadran that were uprooted in areas affected by the initial Khost to Gardez Road construction, fifty years prior to the contemporary construction.
- Second, many groups, especially the Zadran of Paktya Province from Shwak, Gerda Serai, and Wazi Zadran Districts, and those from Nadir Shah Kot and Duamunda (Shamal) Districts in Khost Province, purchased additional land from residents in Terezai District.
- Finally, there is a trend of *kuchi* settling on what was formerly their summer pasture over the past few hundred years.

Geography

The Terezai District Center (DC) is currently situated in the Terezai area. Formerly, the seat of the DC was in Ali Sher area, and the district was known as Ali Sher. Many Afghans continue to refer to the DC as Ali Sher for this reason.

Situated in south-eastern Khost Province, Terezai District has three border crossings and the longest border – 41 km – with Pakistan of any district in the province. The border abuts two agencies in Pakistan: Kurram and North Waziristan. There are three border crossings in Terezai District: Babrak Tana, Batai Tana (sometimes referred to as Kadam Tana), and Dob Gai Tana. Therefore, during periods of fighting between the Sunni and Shi'as in the areas of the lower Kurram Agency, there is an influx into Terezai and other neighboring districts.

Terezai can be divided into two broad geographical areas: the lowlands and highlands. The lowlands are characterized by irrigated, fertile agriculture. The highlands are characterized by rain-fed agriculture, thereby experiencing frequent drought. Due to extensive irrigation systems tapping into underground water resources converging from northern and north-western mountain ranges, the lowlands Terezai are better able to handle drier conditions than the highlands.

Terezai District, Khost Province

District Level Contextual Factors

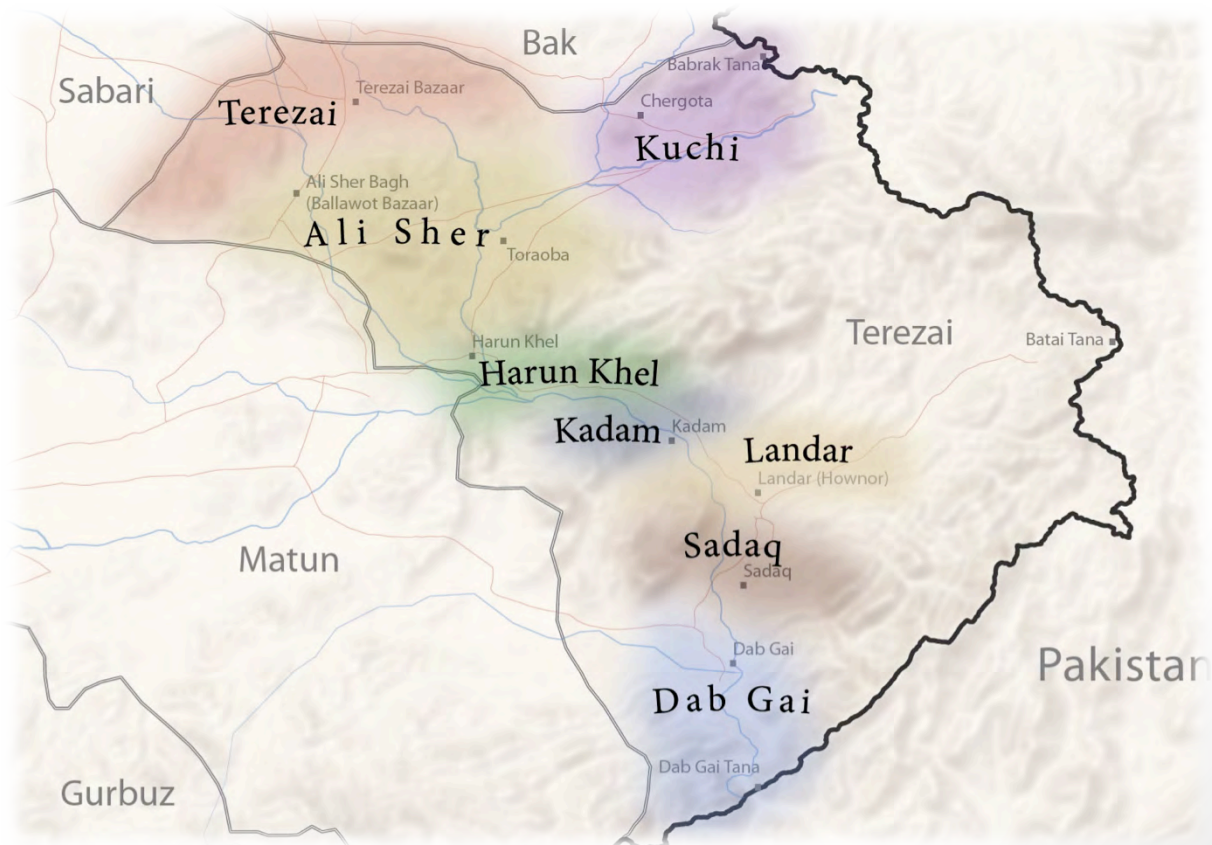


Identity Factors

For all of the groups in Terezai, tribe is a significant organizing factor only at the local level, with few groups identifying only a single level of sub-tribes as significant. Most groups only identify at one tribal level, with additional levels in the hierarchy as not known or influential. This identity does not necessarily equate to any unified or organized power structure or network. This became increasingly the case as security deteriorated throughout Terezai since the fall of the Taliban.

An alternative system of distribution of responsibility in Terezai District is the *tallah* system. It is based on geography, not tribe. The *kuchi* aren't incorporated into the *tallah* system.

For more on the *tallah* system, see the *Khost Provincial Overview*.



Terezai District, Khost Province

District Level Contextual Factors



Social Groups

Kuchi

Terezai District has the largest population of settled *kuchi* in Khost Province. *Kuchi* are often described as a tribe, but in fact the term refers to a migratory lifestyle, being livestock dependent, and Pashtun. *Kuchi* might first and foremost identify as *kuchi*, but there are multiple tribes that are *kuchi*, to include the larger tribal groupings Ahmadzai and Niazi. In the past 30 years, *kuchi* populations have been settling more frequently. Many *kuchi* are settled (non-migratory) and facing marginalization (economic, political and social).

Most *kuchi* reside in the Chergota, Babrak Tana, and Toraoba areas. The nomadic, settled, and semi-nomadic *kuchi* in Terezai are predominantly from the Ahmadzai tribe. They are predominantly from the Musa Khel, Dani, Sap Khel, Zamon Khel sub-tribes, Sultan Khel, and Gulmat Khel sub-tribes. Half are settled, and half are nomadic. The *kuchi* land in Chergota and Babrak Tana is not collective, tribal land. Approximately six years ago, the *kuchi* conducted a *vesh* (distribution of tribal land to private families). The *vesh* was conducted because of internal land disputes.

A lack of cohesion at the local level is prevalent. Both nomadic and settled *kuchi* believe their local elders to be ineffective and unable to help the people; therefore, tribe is not an important mobilizing factor. If they cannot solve a problem amongst themselves, the *kuchi* often reach out to mediators from the Zadrans or the Mangal tribes from other parts of the province to help them solve disputes. They frequently hold mediation in Khost Bazaar.

The Sabari residing in the Torabo area have an ongoing dispute with the *kuchi* over land rights.

The Musa Khel mentioned here are distinct from the Mangal tribe's Musa Khel sub-tribe found in Musa Khel District of Khost Province.

Terezai

In the Terezai area, many of the villages are broken up into parts, with each part having their own mosque and elders. The Terezai only identify as Terezai,, although historically there are references to existing sub-tribes. Among most of the Terezai, leadership tends to be diffuse and the villages are not unified. The Terezai's centralized leadership, unity of the tribe, and strength of the leadership decayed over time. Over time, intimidation and assassination, elders stepping down, and elders being unable to get the government to take action, led to the loss of faith in the elders and fragmentation of tribe. One result of a decayed tribal structure is that feuds tend to proliferate within the tribe and the lack of strong tribal leadership means that there is no one in a position of sufficient authority to successfully adjudicate disputes. The problem of weak tribal leadership is even more pronounced in feuds within and between different tribes, such as the historic Terezai-*kuchi* feud over the Chergota and Babrak Tana area. A minor dispute exists between some Zadrans and Terezai over an area called Spina Pal. The Zadrans claim that King Zahir Shah gave them this area when his government was building up the Khost-Gardez Road, and they only decided to move onto this area in 2007 or 2008. Also, Terezai has more feuds amongst themselves and other groups than observed in other areas of Terezai.

In order, bazaar preference is Kholbesat (Sabari DC), Khost City, and Pakistan. The Terezai has a small market that is used for daily use, but it is more expensive. *Chowkidars* (armed bazaar guards) from Terezai Village guard the bazaar in the evening. *Hawala* (Islamic money transfer) services in Khost City and Kholbesat are utilized.

In 2004 the Terezai were famous for supporting Karzai and being united with strong leadership. On September 22, 2004 representatives of the Terezai tribe in recorded a threatening announcement for local Khost radio in which a representative stated: "All Terezai tribes people should vote for Hamid Karzai . . . if any Terezai people vote for other candidates, the tribe will burn their houses." They added that those who refused to vote for Karzai would be prevented from attending the weddings and funerals of fellow tribesman. These threats are based on a qawm-e taroon (on a tribal treaty). In order to have tribal treaty, the tribe would require unity and strong leadership.

For more on hawala, see the Khost Provincial Overview.

Terezai District, Khost Province

District Level Contextual Factors



Terezai – Kuchi

The Terezai and *kuchi* have a major dispute over a large piece of land in the Chergota and Babrak Tana area. The dispute began approximately ten years ago. Both parties claim to have government documents granting them rights to the land. Currently, settled and nomadic *kuchi* have control of the area.

Although the dispute is often discussed in terms of Terezai versus *kuchi*, the dispute is more complicated than a dispute between two groups. The *kuchi* don't view the land as communally owned, but small pieces of land owned by private *kuchi* families.

The problem of weak tribal leadership is even more pronounced in feuds between different tribes, as demonstrated by the inability to establish a resolution of the Terezai-*kuchi* feud. *Kuchi* perception of government collaboration with the Terezai in the Terezai-*kuchi* dispute and the *kuchi*'s awareness that the district government blames them for insecurity has created distance between the *kuchi* and GIROA.

Ali Sher

The Ali Sher area is characterized by its heterogeneous nature, being composed of tribal groupings not indigenous to the area that moved in over the past fifty years. It is common for residents of this mixed area to refer to themselves by their area referent – Ali Sher. The Ali Sher area is tribally mixed primarily because of past governmental policies of distributing government land. Besides large populations of Mangal, Khostwal (such as Lakan), and Zadran, Ali Sher is also composed of smaller populations of settled *kuchi*, Gurbuz, Sabari, and Tani, with some Jaji commuting from Jaji Maidan District to work in the area as laborers or to rent shops in Ali Sher Bazaar. The Khostwal have the largest population in the Ali Sher area.

In the Ali Sher area, besides each village having elders, each small tribal grouping has their own tribal elders and *shura*. Where villages are tribally mixed (i.e. Ballawot Village), the elders of the different tribes might be sought out by any of the tribal groupings of the village.

Ali Sher is reported to have more personal hostilities, rather than tribal hostilities than the other areas in Terezai.

The Ali Sher have no problems with the *kuchi*. The *kuchi* settling in their area are purchasing land and building homes, rather than forcibly taking land, as seen in the Terezai area.

Harun Khel

The Harun Khel area, which is comprised of five villages, retains relative unity and centralized leadership. The Harun Khel area is composed of five villages: Hajiyon (aka Haji Gulam Hussein), Chergano, Tataron, Shagay, and Mullah Wanon. A popular *zirat* (shrine) is nearby at Gorgorai Baba.

This area was founded by *kuchi* of the Harun Khel tribe from Logar Province. Families from all over Khost also settled in the area over time. The people in the area no longer identify with the tribes that they originally were part of, but now identify as only Harun Khel.

Each village has their own elders and *shura*, but there is also a Harun Khel tribal *shura*. In recent years, another indicator of their unity is the existence of a *qawm-e taroon* (treaty), suggesting they are relatively centralized. If someone breaks the *taroon*, sanctions are imposed, such as people not attending their weddings and funerals and taking away their portion of tribal land. The *qawm-e taroon* changes depending on conditions of the time.

Terezai District, Khost Province

District Level Contextual Factors



Kadam

The Kadam area is composed of five villages: Kadam, Meleh, Haleh; Jareh, and Madeq. The villages do not reside on tribal land, but on private landholdings. In 2008, a tribal *vesh* (distribution) of tribal land divided up the land into private landholdings. The Kadam call themselves a border people, meaning they about the Lakan (Matun District), Landar, and Arni Khel (E. of Kadam) areas, not in reference to the Afghanistan-Pakistan border.

The Kadam tribe resides in Kadam village. They do not identify as being part of any sub-tribes or clans within a tribal hierarchy. They only identify as being Kadam. Within the Kadam tribe, however, they identified eight distinct parts that are part of a *qawm-e tallah* (tribal *tallah*) based on geographic dispersion of the tribe. The eight *tallah* are said to be divided among the five villages. Each *tallah* has an elder. The *tallah* elders meet together, but there is no elder that is the Kadam elder.

Similar to Harun Khel, the Kadam are relatively united, but more decentralized than the Harun Khel. There were no reports of a historic or contemporary *qawm-e taroon* (set of tribal rules and sanctions) because the elders consult the people rather than the elders leading through direct rule. For example, unlike the Harun Khel, the Kadam vote in elections based on individual decision, with no pressure from the tribe.

Landar

The Landar tribe resides in the Landar area, with four sub-tribes living interspersed throughout the area: Shahil Khel, Lenki Khel, Khoni Khel, and Mulli Khel. There is no single Landar elder. Each of the Landar sub-tribes has a tribal elder. Approximately one hundred years ago, the village was founded by settled *kuchi* from Logar, Bamiyan, Hazarajat, and Azra area of Logar. The people of Landar no longer identify as *kuchi* or with any of their historic areas.

Sadaq

The Sadaq area became disunited after the fall of the Taliban. Reportedly, Sadaq usually has four elders, with two supporting GIROA, and two supporting the anti-government elements. The elders became disunited after the Taliban Government's fall.

Dob Gai

Dob Gai is described as having no elders. Their leader in the past was Pir Maktada. His *zirat* (shrine) is in Dob Gai. He is a well-regarded figure throughout Harun Khel, Kadam, Sadaq, and Landar, with his shrine being quite popular. His family is still respected, but has no influence because most of his family currently resides in Pakistan. When people have problems in Dob Gai, they will approach the elders of Kadam, Landar, and Sadaq for assistance. A border control point – Dob Gai Tana – is situated within the Dob Gai area, but has been closed frequently over the past few years due to insecurity.

Terezai District, Khost Province

District Level Contextual Factors



Livelihoods

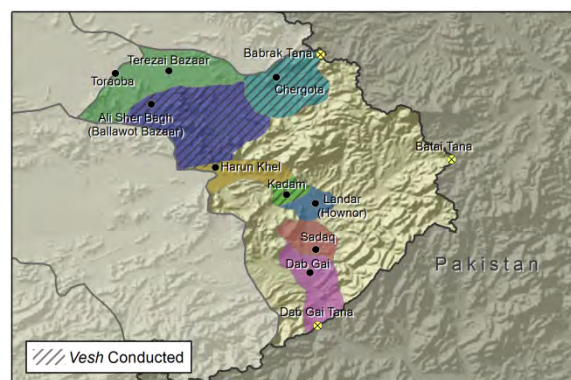
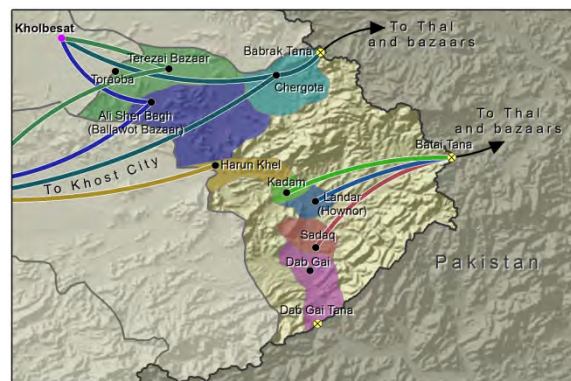
In the lowlands, residents primarily cultivate irrigated land and are usually able to grow two crops per year (wheat in the summer, followed by peas, squash, okra, cucumber, tomatoes, rice, and/or corn, as well as clover for fodder in the winter). Livestock, such as cattle, goats, and chickens, is kept for household use. Harvests are supplemented by purchase of additional core staples, vegetables, and meat from bazaars. In addition to agriculture and animal husbandry are a number of alternative economic strategies, including business, wage labor, and migratory labor (primarily in the UAE).

The last strategy – migratory labor – is especially important and most families in Terezai, Ali Sher, Harun Khel, and the rest of southern Terezai have between 1-3 males working abroad, returning home on average once every two years. Remittances of migrant laborers in UAE are sent through the two *hawaladars* in Kadam or numerous *hawaladars* in Khost City, or through transfer to accounts at Azizi Bank (Khost City).

Additionally, in recent years, the Sadaq, Kadam, and Landar have had numerous men working with *campaign* (the local referent for these forces) or US sponsored private security. This has contributed to both livelihoods and security patrols. Additionally, in recent years, the people felt safer crossing the border into Pakistan for medical attention or while going to the market because “there own people” were at the border control checkpoint in Batai Tana.

The people of Kadam, Landar and Sadaq areas travel to Pakistan through Batai Tana to access Thal and bazaars right across the border, in particular to access cooking oil and fuel that tends to be cheaper there than in Khost City. Families either drive themselves through Batai Tana or take a bus from the Arni Khel area into Pakistan through Batai Tana.

In the highland areas, rain-fed, un-irrigated land predominates and agriculture is not especially productive. Some settled *kuchi* also rely on remittances sent from family members working abroad, but this is not the norm due to the high initial costs of migrating abroad. Many settled *kuchi* sold most of their livestock when they settled, so animal husbandry has very limited returns. Whether practicing a mixed subsistence strategy split between farming and animal husbandry or solely dependent on livestock, the *kuchi* have relatively few alternative economic strategies and, for the settled *kuchi*, the traditional response of migrating to better areas is no longer viable. The most common form of funding for development activities, such as well or mosque construction, is pooling community resources. The *kuchi* are more oriented towards Kholbesat Bazaar in Sabari District and Pakistan, usually via *Babrak Tana*, for market access and medical attention rather than Khost City.



Terezai District, Khost Province

District Level Contextual Factors



Critical Questions

To assess unity and strength of leadership, ask if the elders stand together. Also, ask when do the people of X area come together. What drives them apart?

To assess systems of governance, ask if the *tallah* system is important in the area and when, why, and how so.

To assess whether local traditional governance is centralized, ask if there is a *qawm-e taroon* and whether it is applied.

To assess influence, ask who has influence and why.

To assess saliency of tribe, ask when tribe matters, under what conditions, and why.

To assess village organization, ask how the village is broken up into different parts.

To assess change, ask what has changed for the people in the past few years.

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Sabari District, Khost Province

District Level Contextual Factors

The intent of the *District Level Contextual Factors Profiles* is to make the understated, complex socio-cultural environment of Khost Province more comprehensible and digestible for the warfighter. The Profiles can help put behavior in context by demonstrating what is not easily observed. This will enable informed dialogue while interacting with the diverse groups resident in Khost Province. The outcome of which will be expedited rapport building, developing an informed engagement strategy, and building a broader understanding of your operating environment. Understanding that social and cultural factors matter is not enough. The focus needs to be on how it matters when it does based on the perceptions of the local population.



Sabari District, Khost Province

District Level Contextual Factors



History

Khost was originally a district part of a larger province – *Loya Paktya* – that also incorporated the provinces of Paktya and Paktika. As of the 19th century, Khost, then a district of *Loya Paktya*, was broken into four sub-districts: Jaji, Mangal, Zadran, and Tani. Mandozai District was included in Tani. *Loya Paktya* area was split into the provinces of Paktya and Paktika in 1964. Khost was created out of parts Paktya and Paktika in 1995.

Although the majority of the Sabari tribe did not take sides in the 1978-79 uprising, which accompanied the Soviet-backed Communist coup d'etat, they fragmented in the spring of 1981. The majority of the Sabari tribe left for Pakistan and/or joined different *mujahideen* politico-military parties at this time. A number of diverse *mujahideen* parties operated in the Sabari area from the 1970s onwards, sometimes cooperating, sometimes competing. Both the extended periods with a large portion of the population residing as refugees in Pakistan and infighting among the parties during the civil war are largely credited for creating divisions among the Sabari. Approximately, 5,000 "Marxist" Sabari opted to side with the Soviet-installed Communist government.

During the Soviet invasion, it is generally accepted that it was a Sabari elder – Mamoor Ali Jan – who decided the tribe would go into exile in the Kurram Agency in Pakistan. It has been reported that the vast majority of Sabari went with him. While the elder Mamoor Ali Jan was supposedly responsible for the decision, not all of the tribe followed, creating a fissure in the tribe. As noted above, those that remained joined diverse *mujahideen* parties, fracturing the tribe along political lines.

During the anti-Soviet war, *Hizb-e Islami Gulbuddin* was only of local importance in the Khost. There were a handful of commanders in Sabari. Though Jalaluddin Haqqani, nominally with the *Hezb-e Islami Khalis* faction during the Soviet invasion, became the first *mujahid* to take an Afghan city from the Communist government when he captured Khost in 1991, Haqqani wasn't the dominant presence in Sabari during the *mujahideen* period. Sabari's security was governed by a *mujahideen* military shura based out of Terezai. The military shura was composed of commanders from Bak, Jaji Maidan, Terezai, and Sabari.

When the Sabari returned from Pakistan, they found that much of their land had been occupied by other groups. Some previous agreements regarding land rights had been nullified by the prevailing *mujahideen* parties, creating new land disputes.

Geography

The Sabari District Center (DC) is currently situated in the Sabari area. Formerly, the seat of the DC was the Zambaar and, more recently, in the Yaqubi areas. Afghans continue to refer to the DC as Yaqubi, and less so as Zambaar, for this reason.

Broadly, the Sabari can be broken down in to three main geographic divisions: the Zambaar in the north, the Tangai in the south east of the district, and the Rugha in the southwest. These are local area referents more than tribal names.

Three main bazaars were identified in Sabari: Kholbesat in the central part of the district and next to the district center, Yaqubi in the south, and Maktab in the north.

Sabari District, Khost Province

District Level Contextual Factors

Identity Factors

Sabari is dominated by the Khostwal (literally “people of Khost”) Sabari tribe. Minority groups include the Babakar Khel, Mangal, and settled and nomadic *kuchi*. The most significant minority grouping is the Mangal’s Bal Khel, residing in the border region, straddling the border, between Sabari District and Jani Khel District in Paktya. Sabari also reside in the Toraoba area of Terezaï District.

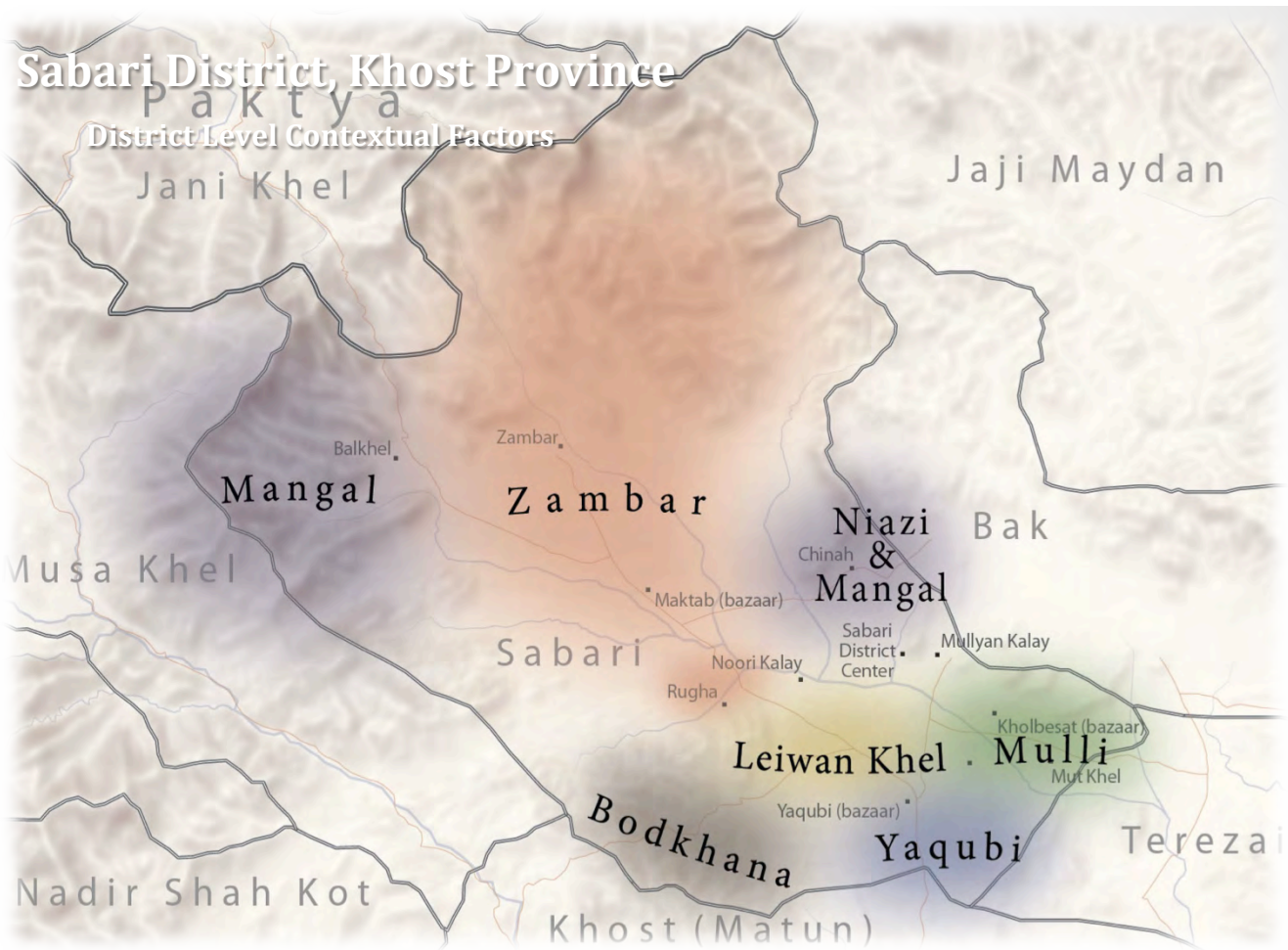
For all of these groups, tribe is a significant organizing factor only at the local, village level, with few groups identifying only a single level of sub-tribes as significant. Most groups only identify at one tribal level, with additional levels in the hierarchy as not known or influential. This identity does not necessarily equate to any unified or organized power structure or network.

Whereas in the past there were strong elders who had influence over large swaths of Sabari, this is no longer the case. For the Zambar, one key elder was Mamoor Ali Jan, described as the pre-eminent elder by his tribesmen, not only among the Zambar but among the larger Sabari tribe as well. *Qawm-e taroon* (tribal treaty) played a large part in keeping the area united and autonomous. Elders had the power to enforce these agreements. Although there are commonly village level elders, there don’t seem to be any clear elders to represent any one area, tribe, or sub-tribe. Village, therefore, is broadly considered much more important than tribe. This lack of permanent elders makes it extremely difficult for villages and tribes to resolve issues.

The general consensus in Khost is that the Sabari tribe faces the most difficulties and is the most fragmented. The two primary reasons identified are: the diffusion of wealth due to corruption, and the splintering of the tribal structures that occurred during the Soviet invasion and ensuing civil war. Tribal disunity and insecurity in Sabari are generally considered to be mutually exclusive. Security in Sabari broke down more quickly than elsewhere in Khost after the fall of the Taliban. Early inroads of insurgent actors can be attributed to relatively weak tribal structures. The contemporary insurgent group *Hezb-e Islami Gulbuddin* made early inroads into Sabari, in large part due to affiliations from the Afghan-Soviet conflict and civil war, with the Haqqani Network making inroads only later. Their relations fluctuate between cooperation and competition. In Sabari, the conflict lines between *Hezb-e Islami* and *Haqqani* supporters are reported to be a key cause of insecurity.

An alternative system of distribution of responsibility among the Sabari tribe is the *tallah* system. It is based on geography, not tribe. This is a distinct identity and organization from the three geographic regions: Zambar, Tangai, and Rugha. It is generally accepted that there are twelve *tallah* in the Sabari tribe. There are five *tallah* in the Zambar area, four in the Rugha area, and three in the Tangai area, with one being Mulli and two being Yaqubi.

**For more on the tallah system, see the Khost Provincial Overview*



Social Groups

Zambar

Sabari's Zambar sub-tribe is split in two, with a large element in the north, and a smaller element that broke away and settled in Noori Village (*kalay*). Although situated in a traditionally Rugha area, the Noori Kalay inhabitants are Zambar that had come down from the northern Zambar area a few generations ago. Noori Kalay is sometimes referred to as *Kuz Noori*, or lower Noori. Noori Kalay has limited contemporary interaction with the Zambar in the northern portion of the district, who are also referred to as *Bar Noori*, or upper Noori. Noori Kalay has, however, sent *arbakai* to Zambar a few times when fighting erupts between the Zambar and the Mangal's Bal Khel. Despite this limited support, there is an unresolved dispute between the two Zambar communities over timber that started in the early 1990s when many Sabaris returned from Pakistan. Locally, the Noori Kalay Zambar have ongoing dispute disputes over land with Puri Kalay, Bodkhana, and settling *kuchi*, complaining that the district government sold their tribal land to the *kuchi*.

Noori Kalay is reported to have five Zambar clans: Maheh, Samanhan, Maloo, Sher Khan and Duri. The Maheh was stated to be the most influential because they are the largest. The two smallest clans were identified as the Maloo and the Sher Khan. Clans are mixed within the village, with no clan having their own part of the village.

Sabari District, Khost Province

District Level Contextual Factors



Bal Khel – Zambar

The Mangal Bal Khel and Sabari Zambar have a vicious land dispute over *Shin Goha Zambar* in an area called *Prata Gundai*. This conflict is the most significant dispute in Sabari, having implications for governance, security, and development. The conflict is often described as Mangal vs. Sabari, but in fact other Sabari and Mangal sub-tribes have only become involved in the dispute when the fighting has become exceptionally intense.

Generally, the most frequent account for the dispute is that the Zambar had originally leased the resource rich, partially mountainous area to the Bal Khel, but they ended up taking more than the share leased and stopped paying. As described by Zambar elders, this dispute was exacerbated during the Soviet-Afghan war when the Bal Khel built houses on land that the Zambar claim as their own after much of the Sabari tribe fled to Pakistan as refugees.

There were at least six efforts from the time of the monarchy (1926-1973) to attempts by the Taliban during the Islamic Emirate to end the dispute. The Zambar have documents from King Zahir Shah and President Daoud proving the Zambar claims to the land. During the Taliban time, according to the Zambar's perception, the government sided with the Bal Khel. During each attempt at resolution, even the threat of violence had no effect.

In 2005, the Governors of Paktya, Paktika, and Khost invited UNAMA and the Afghan civil society organization – The Tribal Liaison Office – to help broker a decision between the Zambar and the Bal Khel. To do so, UNAMA called together the elders of both tribes, and had them sign agreements binding them to respect the decision of the adjudicator. The adjudicator chosen was a *pir* (holy man) from Nangarhar named Pir Rahmatullah, who had no connection to the area and so was assumed to be impartial. His role was to draw the actual demarcation line between the tribes. What exactly took place is unclear, but the Zambar refused to honor the agreement, citing Rahmatullah with corruption. Both sides of the debate also acknowledged the allegations of corruption that surrounded the 2005 attempt by UNAMA to adjudicate the conflict. There have been attacks, killings, and destruction of property by the two sides ever since, with increasing loss of hope as various US forces and Afghanistan government interventions, each failed in turn to find resolution.

Yaqubi

Within the Tangai area, the predominately Yaqubi area is characterized not only the Yaqubi sub-tribe of the Sabari, but by the Yaqubi Bazaar and the minority Leiwankhel sub-tribe as well. The Yaqubi Bazaar forms a Y shape, with a mosque in the center. The bazaar is divided along tribal lines, between Laiwan Khel (Sabari), the Yaqubi (Sabari), and others. The northwest arm of the Y is mostly owned by Laiwan Khel, and the southern leg is mostly owned by Yaqubi. Although divided along tribal lines, the land has reportedly been distributed to private families within each tribe. This means that tribally owned land was distributed as private holdings among the tribe. Therefore, the tribe no longer retains responsibility for the land, the private landholder does.

Most of the wood in Yaqubi Bazaar is reported to come from the Bal Khel area. The Yaqubi area is generally not concerned with the dispute between the Bal Khel and Zambar. Further evidence that the dispute cannot be categorized as between the Sabari and Mangal is Mangal from Musa Khel District traveling to Yaqubi during the fall with wheat thresher services for sale. The wheat harvest in Musa Khel is reportedly two months later than in Yaqubi.

Sabari District, Khost Province

District Level Contextual Factors



Kholbesat Area

Kholbesat Bazaar is the main market for much of eastern Khost. It is composed of multiple distinct markets, mostly organized around type of wares the shopkeepers are selling. The shopkeepers are from all over the region, including members of the Taraki tribe from Ghazni that live in Yaqubi, Sabari, which have stores in the Kholbesat cattle market. The wood from the wood market reportedly comes from Jaji Maidan district and the Tangai area of Sabari. The Bal Khel Mangal of Sabari also sell the wood from their mountains, but they sell it through a third party due tensions from the Zambar-Bal Khel dispute.

It is common for the shopkeepers to standardize pricing to avoid conflict. Reportedly, Kholbesat Bazaar has three or four elders that walk around the bazaar every day to check on prices and ensure that there are no problems between the shopkeepers. Thursday is the busiest day, in large part because people come from all over Khost to sell livestock and their wares. Prices are generally cheaper on Thursdays. As in the rest of the province, the Pakistani *Rupee* (PKR), not the Afghani, is the dominant currency utilized.

There are on average about a dozen *chowkidars* (bazaar security guards) providing security for the bazaar 24 hours a day.

Sabari – Jaji

With local help, insurgents often turn the main road leading from the district to the provincial capital into a minefield, helping to isolate Jaji Maidan from the rest of the province. The Jaji generally blame the Babakar Khel and Sabari tribes for insecurity in their district and on the road to Khost City. In recent years, there have been frequent Jaji clashes with the Babakar Khel and Sabari over road security.

Livelihoods

There are massive disparities in land ownership. Amount of land owned per family in these areas ranged from no land to 5 *jeribs* (1 *jerib* = 0.5 acre) to 15 *jeribs* to 60 *jeribs* of land. In the lowlands, residents primarily cultivate unirrigated land. They cultivate irrigated land if they can afford it, but it is very expensive. They are usually able to grow two crops per year (wheat in the summer, followed by potato, onion, rice, and/or corn, as well as clover for fodder in the winter). Livestock, such as cattle, goats, and chickens, is kept for household use. Harvests are supplemented by purchase of additional core staples, vegetables, and meat from bazaars.

In addition to agriculture and animal husbandry are a number of alternative economic strategies, including business, wage labor, and migratory labor (primarily in the UAE). There is evidence of extensive community-based investment, much of which is based on remittances sent from abroad. The communities collect *zakat* (Islamic tax) to fund the salaries of *arbakai* (tribal police) and the building of the 7-10 *madrassahs* in Sabari and the salaries of the teachers.

In the highlands, the people of Sabari primarily produce pine nuts, which are famous for their large size and exported to Lahore, Pakistan. Another key livelihood (and prevalent source of tension between groups) is harvesting and selling timber. During the Soviet-Afghan War and civil war, forest exploitation and timber smuggling to internal and Pakistani timber markets peaked, but it continues today. There is also evidence of mineral extraction, such as chromite, from the highlands in Sabari. Analysts tend to focus on illicit drug production and trade in their discussion of criminality and funding for the insurgency in Afghanistan. What is typically omitted, however, is the illegal extraction of Afghanistan's natural resources. As a consequence, illegal deforestation and mineral extraction are directly linked to issues of governance and security sector reform.

Sabari District, Khost Province

District Level Contextual Factors



Critical Questions

To assess unity and strength of leadership, ask if the elders stand together. Also, ask when do the people of X area come together. What drives them apart?

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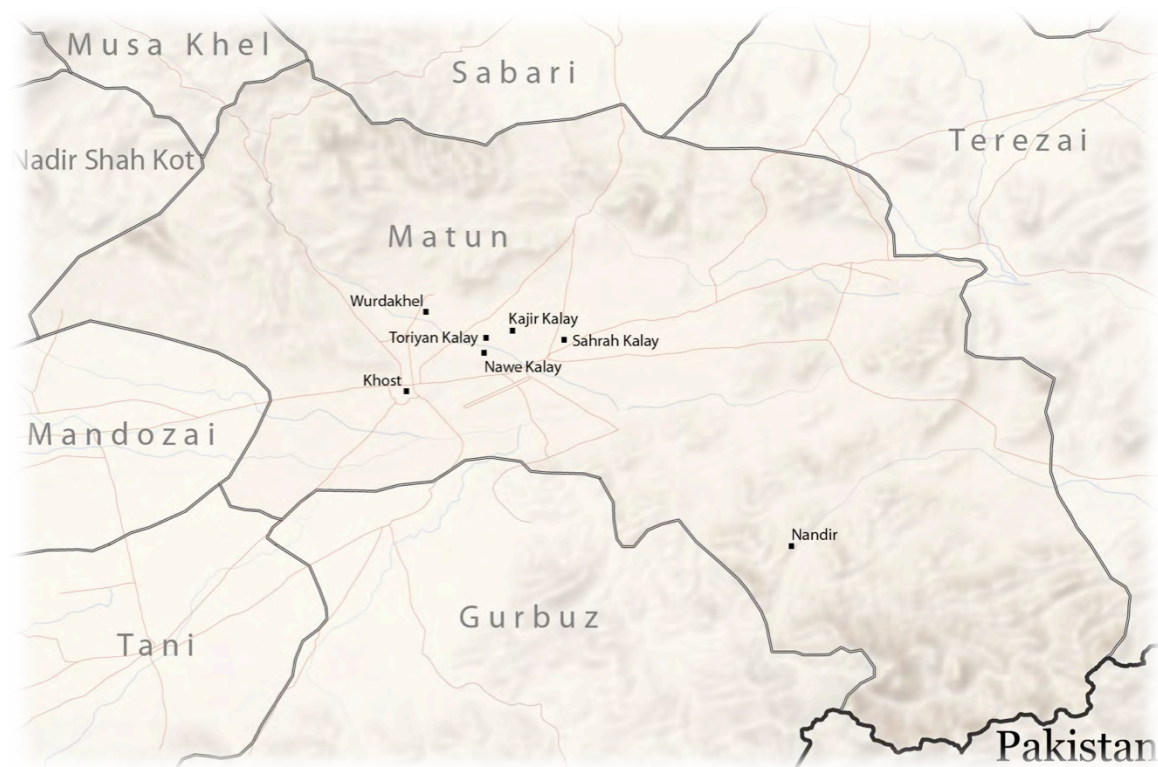
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Matun District, Khost Province

District Level Contextual Factors

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Matun District, Khost Province

District Level Contextual Factors



History

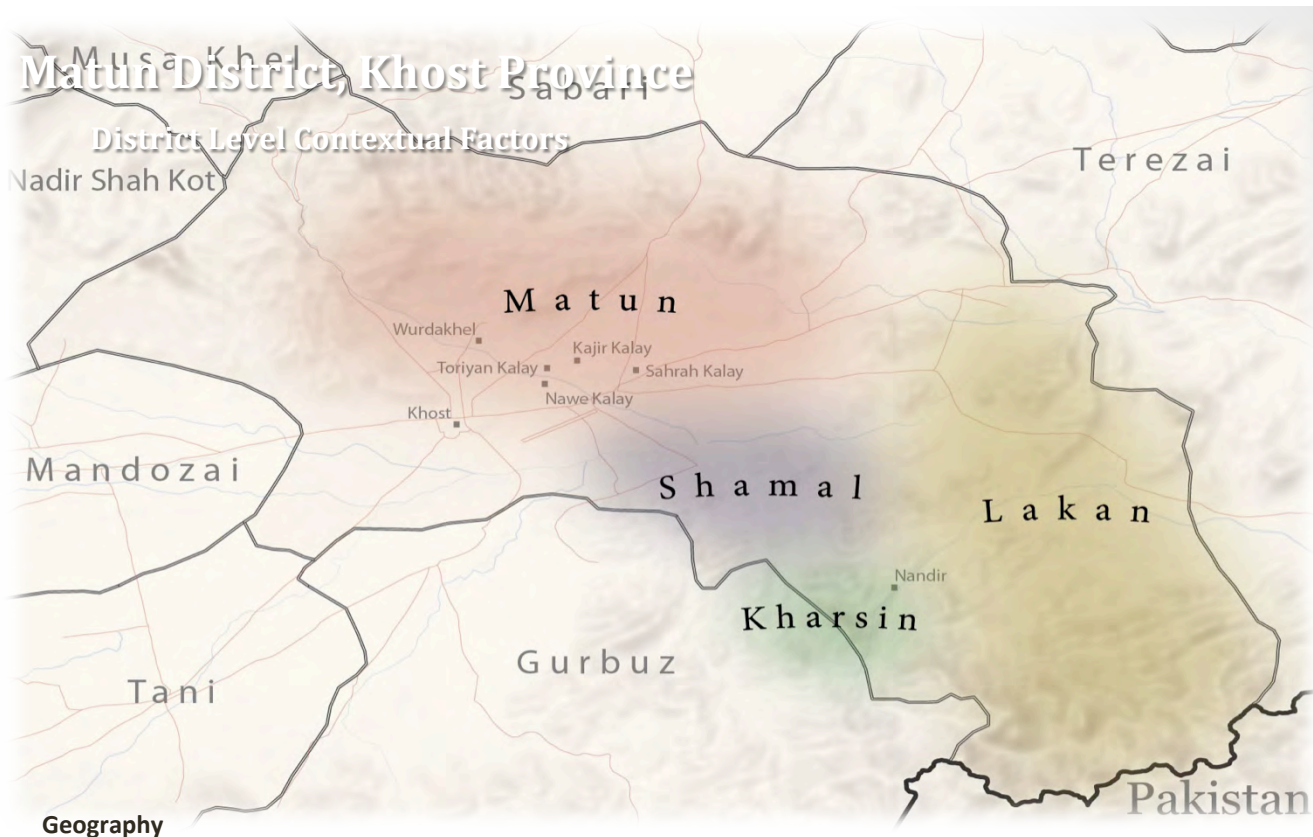
Historically, *Loya Paktya* was far less penetrated by the state and has a history of past governments allowing a degree of tribal autonomy. In the late 18th century, what is today Khost Province, then a district of *Loya Paktya*, was composed of four sub-districts: Jaji Maidan, Zadran, Mangal, and Tani. *Loya Paktya* was split into Paktya and Paktika in 1964. Khost Province was created out of parts Paktya and Paktika in 1995.

The capital of Khost Province is Khost City in Khost District, referred locally as Matun District. This is because the seat of the provincial government – Khost City – is in the Matun area. Matun is not the name of a tribe or clan. It was the name of a religious person and he is buried on the top of *Matun Ghundi*.

During the Soviet-Afghan War (1979-1989), Khost was the front line of a siege, which lasted for over eight years. Khost was referred to as “Little Moscow” because of the general political orientation of the area. Khost Province was garrisoned by about 9,000 Afghan troops and was the headquarters of 25th Afghan Division in Matun District and two additional Afghan Border Brigades. This Khost garrison was under the constant attacks from the *mujahideen*, who were based in the surrounding mountainous areas. Shortly following the incursion of Soviet troops, Afghan *mujahideen* controlled the only land routes between Khost and Kabul, thereby putting a stop to the Soviet advance. These were the main supply routes for the Khost garrison.

During 1985, the *mujahideen* planned to take Khost. The fighters mostly involved at this stage were those of *Maluvi* Jalaluddin Haqqani (of *Hezb-e Islami Khalis*) and Pir Gailani’s National Islamic Front of Afghanistan. By 1987, *mujahideen* operations reportedly experienced set backs due to Haqqani’s efforts to impose his authority onto commanders from other parties. Shortly after Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan in 1989, Khost continued to be a battleground for *mujahideen* and regime elements, each vying to gain control while trying to manage infighting among their own increasingly fractional groups. Additionally, the Communist regime and *mujahideen* were both trying to win-over the local tribal leaders by distributing a large amount of money and supplies for their support in disrupting their opponents’ operations. By 1991, enabled by CIA provision and ISI facilitation of military and financial resources, *mujahideen* forces captured the first city from the Afghan communist regime – Khost City, Matun District. The *mujahideen* were able to take control of Khost due to the inability of the government to maintain a supply of goods because the *mujahideen* retained control of the key supply routes. After finally overrunning the communist garrison, the *mujahideen* parties dissipated their common military victory in conflicts amongst the different *mujahideen* parties over booty and resources. The resistance leaders could not establish any stable government in Khost, which they dismantled rather than governed.

The Taliban took Khost without a fight in January 1995. Khost was never a stronghold of the Taliban movement. In fact, when local Taliban authorities tried to manage traditional activities, for example, how to celebrate a marriage or stopping them from playing a traditional “egg fighting game” because it was un-Islamic, it led to frequent uprisings.



Broadly, Matun District is broken up into four distinct geographic areas: Matun, Shamal, Kharsin, and Lakan. Lakan is to the east and south in the panhandle, bordering Terezai. The Kharsin reside east of Gurbuz in the western portion of the panhandle. Shamal is to the central part of the district, and the western part the panhandle, bordering Gurbuz District to the north. The Matun area is to the north of the district.

Southeastern Matun, much like the rest of the southeast of the province, is incredibly fertile due to the convergence of Shamal and Matun Rivers. Two roads lead out from Khost City, Matun District to Kabul. The Khost to Gardez Road goes through the Zadran Arc on to Gardez in Paktya Province before arriving in Kabul. The second road leads to Kabul via Jaji Maidan, and Chamkani and Jaji Ayoub in Paktya, which passes through a long mountain pass. A road to Miram Shah, Pakistan runs through Khost to Kabul. An unpaved road runs from Gurbuz District to the Lakan area of Matun District.

Identity Factors

Khost City is not only the seat of the provincial government. It is also the heart of civil society in Khost Province. It is the seat of Sheikh Zayed University and numerous intra-provincial civil society organizations, including the *Mujahideen* Council, *Ulema* (religious scholars) Councils, Tribal Unity Council, Peace Council, Urban Council, and the base of multiple political parties, all which have varying degrees of influence over the population of Khost. Competition for population support among some civil society organizations is reported. Additionally, reportedly, there is a place in Khost Bazaar called *Melmastun*, which is defined as an area for all tribes, where groups from all over Khost will converge to mediate disputes. Frequently, the mediators are from the Zadran or Mangal tribes, having been requested to mediate disputes between or among other tribal elements.

Matun is one the most tribally mixed area in Khost Province. Reportedly, people do not speak of Matun District as being divided into sub-tribes as much, but, because it is such a mixed population, the *tallah* system (geographic distribution of responsibility) is said to be more important. Matun District itself is characterized more by area-based identities – Matun, Shamal, Kharsin, and Lakan – than any tribe. These areas are sometimes classified as independent unofficial districts. The Shamal in the Shamal area are distinct from the Zadran population in Duamunda District (Shamal District) and distinct from the Shamali Zadran in Paktya, with no known lineage or connection to the Zadran. These areas come together in the Matun, Shamal, and Lakan *Shura* when there are district wide problems that need to be addressed. It is not clear if the Kharsin are also part of this *Shura*.

Matun District, Khost Province

District Level Contextual Factors



Social Groups

Matun District (aka Khost District) is populated by the Khostwal, which literally translates as “people from Khost.” Over the past few hundred years, people from all over Afghanistan have moved into the Khost area, which was historically government land, much of which has been distributed to these diverse groups. A select sample includes the Toriyani tribe (originally from Tera, Pakistan, having moved to the area a hundred years ago or so), Moqibul, Zadran, and Mangal. A common refrain in Matun is to describe the area like the United States: “The United States is characterized by immigrants from other places, but they are now all American. It is the same for Matun District.”

Matun

The Matun area of Matun District is broken into three *tallahs*: Puri Matun, War Puri Matun, and Matun. Each *tallah* has a representative. The Matun *tallah* representatives only come together if there is a dispute. Each village in the Matun area is fairly independent, distributing responsibilities and resources among the households. Reportedly, the Matun *tallah* representatives have only met three or four times in the past five years or so.

Many of the villages are inter-tribal, not just due to historic assimilation, but due to diverse tribal elements moving into the area more recently. Recent immigrants from other parts of Khost, such as an influx of Mangal, purchase land from the Matun. Other tribes are moving into the area because security is better than many other districts in the province. If there is a *qawm-e taroon* (tribal accord) among the Matun, the small, diverse tribal groupings living in Matun areas also support these accords. For example, the Mangal living in the area do not abide by Mangal *qawm-e taroons* in other parts of Khost or Paktya, but abide by agreements of which the village is part. They fall within the Matun *tallah* system.

Mediating Babakar Khel – Kuchi

One of the last times the Matun *tallah* elders came together was a few years ago to mediate a nomadic *kuchi* (Azra Khel sub-tribe from summer camps in Logar Province) and Babakar Khel (of Bak District) dispute. *Kuchi* are often described as a tribe, but in fact the term refers to a migratory lifestyle, being livestock dependent, and Pashtun. *Kuchi* might first and foremost identify as *kuchi*, but there are multiple tribes that are *kuchi*, to include the larger tribal groupings Ahmadzai and Niazi. In the past 30 years, *kuchi* populations have been settling more frequently. Many *kuchi* are settled (non-migratory) and facing marginalization (economic, political and social).

Some of the *kuchi* involved in this dispute settled on Matun land in the past few years. The Babakar Khel came to the Matun elders and told them that they were worried that the *kuchi* would attack them while they were traveling to Khost City. During this time, President Karzai asked the Governors of Paktya, Khost, and Logar, selected elders, including the Matun *tallah* representatives, and the Attorney General of Afghanistan to resolve this dispute. The Matun representatives invited the *kuchi* elders to discuss this issue. The Matun told the *kuchi* that they were not permitted to attack the Babakar Khel because they are currently residing on Matun land. The Matun permitted the *kuchi* to settle in their territory for a temporary period as guests. According to their culture, if the Babakar Khel passes through the Matun area, the *kuchi* can't attack them. The conflict is not solved, even after a government facilitated joint resolution in the past few years. At first, the Babakar Khel and *kuchi* both agreed to the resolution. The resolution stated that the *kuchi* were allowed to pass through the Bak area, but not allowed to build homes in Bak District. The government was unable to uphold this resolution, consequently it dissolved, but there was at least a brief ceasefire.



Matun District, Khost Province

District Level Contextual Factors

More recently, although the Matun invited the *kuchi* to stay on their land temporarily, the *kuchi* moved onto Matun land to an area, which was formerly used as Matun grazing land. Reportedly, the *kuchi* are settling and building compounds on this land.

Reportedly, most of the Matun, Bak, and the *kuchi*, do not want the government involved in this dispute because they believe that the government cannot uphold any of these resolutions, just as they believe that civil society organizations, such as the Tribal Solidarity Council (TSC) and Tribal Conflict Research Commission (TCRC) of Khost cannot uphold their resolutions. Only the people are believed to be able to uphold the resolutions.

Shamal

In the Shamal area, there are villages, but no sub-tribes. The Shamal area identifies first at the village level and then as Shamal. The Shamal will unite if a one of the other villages in the area asks for help. This has occurred in response to a conflict between the Millizee village and *kuchi* over land. Not all Shamal have a dispute with all *kuchi* in their area. For example, they reportedly have good relations with the semi-nomadic *kuchi* that have begun to settle near Ghodahara.

Shamal – Gurbuzi – Kuchi

Before going to Pakistan as refugees, fleeing the Soviet-Afghan war, the Shamal, Gurbuzi, and the then nomadic *kuchi* had stayed on their respective traditional territories and there had not been any conflict. The conflict started over a piece of desert, not well suited for agricultural land, in 1991 during the rise of the *mujahideen* government. As the population returned from Pakistan and grew, the tribes started to encroach into other areas and the *kuchi* began establishing themselves on their former winter camping grounds.

During the *mujahideen* government, the tribes fought for two days until commanders and tribal elders intervened. Commanders and tribal elders came together and forced both sides to halt fighting until the Government could reach a decision. However, the *mujahideen* government, the Taliban, and, at least within the last few years, the current Government have been unable to reach a decision among the three parties. The *kuchi* continue to encroach further onto the contested land.

Around six years ago, *kuchis* started settling in this area, which used to be land upon which they were permitted to graze their herds in the winter. When asked to leave the area, the *kuchi* refused. The Millizee asked the rest of the Shamal to come together to establish checkpoints to prevent *kuchi* and Gurbuzi from moving through the area. This action resulted in frequent skirmishes.

Eventually, the US forces and the Afghan government intervened. The government ended up splitting land between *kuchi* and Shamal, with the Shamal further dividing the land between the Millizee and the rest of the Shamal. The land was divided by a road. After a tenuous, fragile resolution with the *kuchi*, then the Gurbuzi claimed the land on the west side of the road, which belonged to the Shamal tribe according to the government resolution. The Gurbuzi didn't accept the resolution between the Shamal and *kuchi*, and they too established checkpoints in the area.

The Gurbuzi and Shamal dispute has been particularly violent, with young men from both parties leaving their studies for fear that they would be targeted. Due to this dispute, many of the Shamal of Matun District and Gurbuzi of Gurbuz district would not disarm voluntarily when the Khost government decided to disarm many of the *arbakai* (tribal police) in the province. They were forced to disarm in 2011.

Reportedly, the dispute remains unresolved.

Matun District, Khost Province

District Level Contextual Factors



Lakan

The Lakan area shares the only border with Pakistan in Matun District. Even the Afghan Ministry of Rural, Rehabilitation, and Development refers to it as its own district. The Lakan area is considered one of the most fertile areas of Khost Province.

The Lakan area abuts the Harun Khel area of Terezai District. They have good relations with the Harun Khel.

Lakan - Kuchi

The Lakan and *kuchi* settling on what they perceive to be their land have a dispute over this land.

Khost Bazaar

In the Matun area, Khost City has several independent markets that make up Khost City Bazaar. It is the biggest bazaar in both the province and the region. It is estimated there are over 10,000 shops. The city has about 86 different business associations. The bazaar has slightly cheaper prices (mainly flour and tea) than elsewhere in Khost Province. This can be attributed to Khost being an economic center where competition is greater among different traders and shopkeepers. Most of the goods are imported from Pakistan. Cosmetics, cooking fat, and Chinese and Iranian made goods are mostly imported from Kabul or Ghazni Provinces. As in the rest of the province, the Pakistani *Rupee* (PKR), not the *Afghani*, is the dominant currency utilized.

Livelihoods

Matun District is characterized by some of the largest land holdings in Khost Province. It retains the highest land prices in the Province. More and more people seem to be moving into the villages around the Matun area, and land value is increasing because of this. Additionally, the influence of remittances is considerable throughout Matun District, as many people from this district have family members working abroad, especially in the UAE.

The largest military base in Khost Province – Forward Operating Base Salerno – is situated in the Matun area. The area on which it is situated is frequently referred to as *saharaba* (or desert). When Salerno was built, many of the surrounding villages were no longer able to graze as many animals as they were able to prior to the construction. The construction forced them to find different ways to earn money outside of their traditional agriculture and animal husbandry. Many people work as day laborers or conduct business in Khost City or on the military base. Some villagers are being forced to sell some of their land, even though this is part of their *namus* (or honor). A common Pashtun refrain about land is: “It is their respect.”

In the Matun area, much of the farming areas are rain-fed. Agricultural output has been negatively impacted by drought and fluctuating diesel prices. During periods of high diesel prices, there is an increasing incidence of fuel being smuggled into Khost from Pakistan.

In the Shamal area, the land is so fertile that sugar is harvested in addition to wheat. There is generally only one harvest per year. The main harvest season is fall when the wheat is cut. Rice and corn is also grown in the area.

Lakan is one of the most fertile areas of Khost Province. In addition to agriculture, the Lakan area engages in the timber trade.

Matun District, Khost Province

District Level Contextual Factors

Critical Questions

To assess unity and strength of leadership, ask if the elders stand together. Also, ask when do the people of X area come together. What drives them apart?

To assess systems of governance, ask if the *tallah* system is important in the area and when, why, and how so.

To assess whether local traditional governance is centralized, ask if there is a *qawm-e taroon* and whether it is applied.

To assess influence, ask who has influence and why.

To assess saliency of tribe, ask when tribe matters, under what conditions, and why.

To assess village organization, ask how the village is broken up into different parts.

To assess change, ask what has changed for the people in the past few years.

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Spera District, Khost Province

District Level Contextual Factors

The intent of the *District Level Contextual Factors Profiles* is to make the understated, complex socio-cultural environment of Khost Province more comprehensible and digestible for the warfighter. The Profiles can help put behavior in context by demonstrating what is not easily observed. This will enable informed dialogue while interacting with the diverse groups resident in Khost Province. The outcome of which will be expedited rapport building, developing an informed engagement strategy, and building a broader understanding of your operating environment. Understanding that social and cultural factors matter is not enough. The focus needs to be on how it matters when it does based on the perceptions of the local population.



Spera District, Khost Province

District Level Contextual Factors



History

Khost was originally a district part of a larger province – *Loya Paktya* – that also incorporated the provinces of Paktya and Paktika. As of the 19th century, Khost was broken into four sub-districts, including one called Zadran, which included what is today Spera District. *Loya Paktya* area was split into the provinces of Paktya and Paktika in 1964. Khost was created out of parts Paktya and Paktika in 1995. There are theories that *Loya Paktya* was broken up the way it was to try to weaken the historically strong Zadran tribe in the area, which constitute the majority in Spera District.

The Zadran Arc encompasses:

In Khost: Duamonda, Nadir Shah Kot, and Spera

In Paktya: Gerda Serai, Shawak, Wazi Zadran, eastern reaches of Zormat in the Arma area

In Paktika: Ziork, Naika, Gayan, northern Urgan



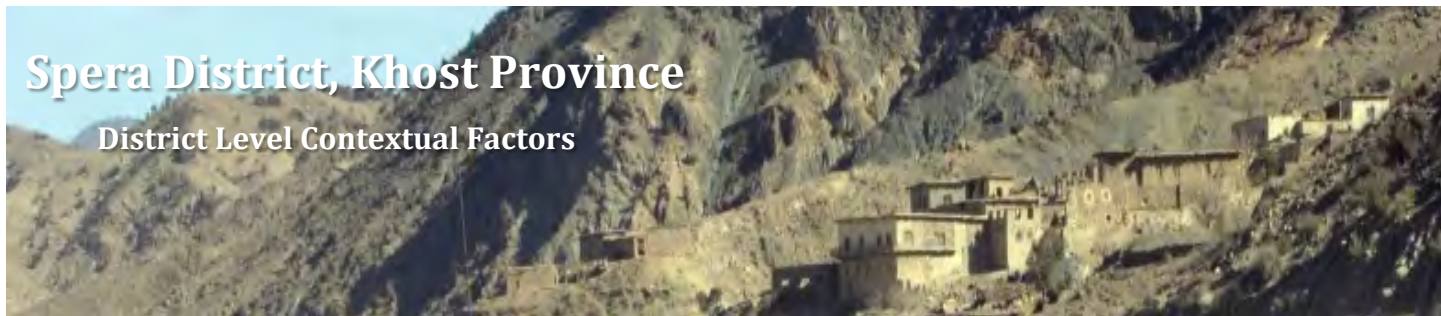
Historically, *Loya Paktya* was far less penetrated by the state and has a history of past governments allowing a degree of tribal autonomy. The Zadran Arc remained semi-independent, in part due to the inaccessibility of their mountainous country, only being brought under partial subjection by Amir Abdur Rahman in 1891. During 1892, there is fighting reported between the Zadran and the Amir's troops. The reporting is not detailed, however, it is suggested the Zadran were beaten, and three Afghan government posts were established in their tribal region.

The Zadran provided formidable opposition to the Soviets and Communist Afghan government. The Zadran virtually surrounded the mostly pro-Kabul Tanis, who controlled a pocket on the southeastern border. The Zadran Arc area developed a general resistance to the Communist authorities in Kabul following the 1978 coup against President Daoud. Knowing the importance of the tribes, particularly on the border, Kabul's Minister of Tribal Affairs, a Zadran named Mohammad Faiz, brought large sums of money and fattened sheep to celebrate the conclusion of lengthy peace negotiations with his own Zadran tribe. The tribal elders feasted on the fattened sheep and then shot Faiz dead.

As a result of the killing of Faiz Mohammad, some of the Zadran tribe seemed to have reconciled with the communist government, given the presence of key Zadrans in the Kabul government. Following the killing of President Daoud and his family, most of the Zadran population fled eastward into Pakistan's North and South Waziristan, important components of today's Federally Administered Tribal Agency. In Miram Shah, many of them connected with an important religious leader, *Maluvi* Jalaluddin Haqqani. Haqqani, a Zadran Pushtun, headed the *Hezb-e Islami Khalis mujahideen* party in the Paktya and Khost, and lead broader coalitions in the fight against Soviet offensives. During the closing years of the Soviet-Afghan conflict, Haqqani expanded his domain to command the *mujahideen* throughout most of Khost, not just Zadran forces. His efforts to expand his control to other political parties produced some set backs due to infighting it created among the *mujahideen* coalition fighting the Communists in Khost.

Spera District, Khost Province

District Level Contextual Factors



In 1987, after several attempts at a political solution to open the route through Khost to Pakistan, a Soviet backed Afghan force began a military offensive – Operation Magistral – against the Zadran force of approximately 9,000 fighters, but it was too late. By 1991, enabled by CIA and the Pakistani intelligence service’s provision of military and financial resources, *mujahideen* forces captured the first city from the Afghan communist regime – Khost.

Haqqani’s son, Serajudin, who took up the *jihad* against the current Afghan government and international forces, is reported to not be as widely respected as his father.

It appears that a meeting involving numerous Zadran elders from different areas and sub-tribes was held in 2008. The idea of unifying and seeking a province status for the Zadran Arc was discussed, but no tangible action ever resulted. By all appearances, the Zadran remain as fractious as ever.

Geography

The principal area of Spera is taken up with a long valley, which reaches in the north to Nadir Shah Kot District and in the south to the district of Naka in Paktika Province. It is heavily forested. Broadly, the northern and western halves of Spera are Zadran areas, whereas the southern and eastern border areas are inhabited primarily by the Waziri.



Identity Factors

Although a district within the “Zadran Arc”, there is a historic presence of Waziri in addition to Zadran in the district. Zadran-Waziri interrelations are generally reported to be good, with frequent intermarriage.

Spera District is characterized by the majority Zadran population. Although the Zadran are broadly organized into two sub-tribes – Supeer and Mizai – they are separated geographically into the Tangai and Shamal Zadran. The Zadran tribe, straddling the intersection of Khost, Paktiya, and Paktika, are divided by the Shamal Valley in Shamal District of Khost and Tangai Valley in Wazi Zadran District in Paktiya. The Zadran of these distinct geographic areas are commonly referred to by a geo-referent. The Tangai Zadran, more populous than the Shamal, reside in Duamonda, Spera, Nadir Shah Kot, and Spera in Khost, and Zerok, Naka, and Gayan in Paktika. The Shamal Zadran resides in Paktiya Province. The Tangai Zadran of Khost are all of the Supeer sub-tribe, but more commonly identify as Tangai or at the clan level.

Reportedly, the Shamal branch (or at least the Mizai sub-tribe) belonged to the *tor gund* (along with the Mangal) and the Tangai branch was part of the *spin gund*. The *tor gund* (black faction) and *spin gund* (white faction) comprise a socio-political moiety historically present in *Loya Paktiya*, some of which attribute to being imposed by the British to create fissures that they could exploit among the population. Today this dichotomy has become practically obsolete, but many people can remember which tribe belongs to which *gund*.

Spera District, Khost Province

District Level Contextual Factors



Although historically strong, the Zadran today throughout the Arc are factional, isolated, and uncoordinated, and rife with internal conflicts, some historic, others emerging. The Zadran have been described as ‘a loose tribe’, often engaging in violent conflicts among themselves. There are multiple political affiliations inside the tribe. There is a Zadran Shura that covers this area, but there are mixed feelings about how representative it is. Some clans might have different political or personal motivations and interests and act against the tribal leadership.

There clearly is a broader Zadran identity, expressed, for example, in great pride for the important role Zadran fighters played in defeating the Soviets, but, as with many isolated highland communities, collective action remains more of an ideal and local, day-to-day issue trump most other concerns.

The Haqqanis and Pacha Khan Zadran feuded for years over the allegiance of the Zadrans. The Haqqanis belong to the Sultan Khel of the Supeer tribe while other influential notables such as Abdul Wali Zadran and his father, Pacha Khan Zadran, belong to the Dari Khel of the Mezai. Haqqani’s actual tribal membership is often dependent upon local claims rather than a universally agreed upon fact. Both the Suri Khel and Sultan Khel have claimed Haqqani as one of their own, likely for reasons of prestige.

With the end of the Soviet-Afghan conflict, both former *mujahid* took different paths. Pacha Khan Zadran fought the Taliban, while Jalaluddin Haqqani joined the Taliban government, becoming their Minister for Tribal Affairs. The Haqqanis have generally aligned with the contemporary insurgency and extended their influence outside of the Zadran tribe. Despite some initial discontent with the Karzai government, The Haqqanis have generally aligned with the contemporary insurgency and extended their influence outside of the Zadran tribe. Pacha Khan Zadran reconciled with the contemporary government, holding Parliamentary positions while his son served as the District Chief in Wazi Zadran in Paktya Province. His influence was always limited to some factions of the Zadran. Despite reconciling, Pacha Khan Zadran remained a fringe figure. He seems to have lost some influence among the Zadran, but in the recent years owned private security escort companies that provide security for Afghan truck drivers driving from Khost on to Gardez through the mountainous Zadran region.

Social Groups

Zadran

There are at least eight Zadran clans of the Tangai sub-tribe (technically an area reference) in Spera: Zini Khel, Bur Khel, Asa Khel, Ayu Khel, Bir Khel, Peroz Khel, Bilai (Boli) Khel, and Mohasan Khel.

Intra- Zadran: Gayan Khel – Bur Khel

The conflict is over a forest on a mountain called Du Wey, as well as over the agricultural land at the foot of the mountain located on the border of Khost and Paktika. Initially the mountain had been divided between the two tribes, but supposedly, population growth amongst the Gayan Khel forced them to begin crossing over into the Bur Khel side of the mountain in search for land to accommodate their growing tribe.

During the time of King Zahir Shah (1933-1973), the Afghan government intervened several times and selected tribal elders to resolve the issue. The elders of these tribes involved in the conflict told the Afghan government they would attempt to solve the problem and included elders from other tribes to assist in the resolution. They made a decision about a ceasefire and how the forest should be used. The tribes accepted the solution for some time. It was decided that each tribe should stay on their side of the mountain and use the forest there. This worked for some time, but then they started crossing into the other tribe’s territory again. The Government put several elders from both sides in jail for failing to uphold the resolution, but the fighting continued on and off until periods of relative calm during the Soviet-Afghan conflict and ensuing civil war.



Spera District, Khost Province

District Level Contextual Factors

Renewed fighting broke out during the Taliban time when many refugees returned from Pakistan and *mujahideen* brought their heavy weapons with them (BM 12, 150mm Artillery). During the Taliban Government, Haqqani, also a Zadran, even though he was not from either of the fighting sub-tribes, was able to use his influence to stop the fighting. Together with another Taliban leader and tribal elders he was able to broker a cease-fire. Despite the cease-fire, however, the conflict remains unresolved.

Intra-Zadran: Bilai (Boli) Khel – Mohasan Khel

The Bilai (Boli) Khel and Mohasan Khel Zadran clans have fought over the ownership of a mountain range in Spera for decades.

Zadran's Bur Khel – Tani's Khabi Khel

The tensions between the Zadran's Bur Khel and Tani's Khabi Khel sub-tribes persist over agricultural land and forests in the Sur Kaash mountain range, which is located between Spera and Tani Districts. Both groups claim ownership of the mountain. This dispute has led to multiple deaths, including from firefights between the two parties outside of Tani District in Khost City Bazaar. The contemporary Afghan government received *wak* (authority) from both sides, according to the culture of Khost, to assign a *jirga* to adjudicate this dispute. The *jirga* decided, based on *nerkh* (tribal law) that the Zadran are the rightful owners of the mountain; however, the Khabi Khel do not accept this decision. Much of the insecurity in Tani has been attributed to fighting among the Bur Khel and Khabi Khel.

Waziri

All of the Waziri in Spera belong to the Uthmanzai sub-tribe, which also predominates in North Waziristan (called Shamali Waziri, home to the Uthmanzai Waziris). There are at least five Waziri clans (all Uthmanzai) represented in Spera:

- Madda Khel
- Tanai Khel
- Junbeh Khel
- Bashi Khel
- Nazir Khel

During PAKMIL operations around North Waziristan, Waziri refugees frequently flee to Afghanistan from North Waziristan. There are regular reports of anywhere between 600 – 1,500 refugee families in Spera during military operations. Other refugee families end up located on the Pakistani side of the border, where they are prevented from crossing by PAKMIL when the border is closed. Some of these refugees are Waziri actually originally from Spera, choosing to return due to the military operations in Pakistan. Many Waziri (non-*kuchi*) seasonally migrate from Afghanistan to Pakistan, and then back. Another important population flow pattern is in summer, many Waziri come from Pakistan to Afghanistan to escape the heat, and then return to the more temperate areas of Pakistan for the winter.

The role of elders varies by area. In southern Spera, such as in Harawara, Shnawara, Patseh Melah, and Pawere, there are no clear village elders because the village is comprised of a mix of Waziri clans. It is not uncommon for communities to not agree on leadership. Instead, when there is an issue, all of the villagers get together and reach a solution through discussion. On the other hand, however, there appears to be centralized leadership among at least the Madda Khel clan.

Spera District, Khost Province

District Level Contextual Factors



Livelihoods

Cutting timber is the regional economic mainstay in Spera District. The forested lands have been divided by *vesh* into a number of shares (*barkha*) given to each family. Commercial timber harvesting is illegal in Afghanistan — which leaves a massive smuggling industry to satisfy demand. The majority is sold in Duamunda at the timber bazaars along the Khost-Gardez road. The wood gets to market in one of two ways: a few wealthier villagers own (or rent) jingle trucks and transport it to Duamunda themselves. Others rely upon merchants (mostly Zadran) who drive down to Spera regularly, purchase wood, and then drive it back to Duamunda. From Duamunda, which appears to be a timber hub of the southeast, as is Gardez, the wood is purchased and transported by merchants from larger urban markets such as Kabul, Gardez, and Kandahar.

Three types of wood are predominately for sale:

manza (a species of pine)

serei (a type of oak)

jhalgoza (aka chalgoza) – these trees aren't cut but dead or dying branches are stripped off and sold

The main season for harvesting wood is the fall, not only because of favorable weather but also because this allows the villagers to stockpile the wood and then sell it during the winter, when prices are higher. The other main wood cutting seasons are the second half of spring and the summer; very little wood is cut during winter and the first half of spring and the villagers are rarely in the mountains during this period. So, the season is roughly six months on, six months off (approximately mid-April to mid-October on, and mid-October to mid-April off).

The Waziris also heavily depend on gathering pine nuts, which are typically harvested in (September - November) and then sold to regional markets. Pine nuts are transported to Pakistan for sale.

Spera is characterized by very small land holdings. Agricultural land is not very productive. It is uncommon to meet all subsistence needs through agriculture. Poppy was grown for the opium industry in Spera from about 2001 – 2007, at which time it was eradicated throughout Khost.

Chromite is mined around Spera. It is a mineral used to harden steel. It is often extracted using machinery, and transported/smuggled into Pakistan, and on to China, which is the world's largest importer of chromite. The chromite business was until recently profitable but now the market in Pakistan appears glutted and prices have fallen. As a result, efforts to extract chromite have slowed, although people are still mining it in Spera. Usually, local businessmen drive to chromite extraction/collection sites, fill up a jingle truck, and then drive to Pakistan (crossing from Spera into Pakistan). A common strategic crossing to and from Pakistan is an old mujahidin supply route that starts in Khama Ghar (Pakistan) and leads through Nika, Ziruk, Gayan and Spera districts to Shahikot and further on to Ghazni and Zabul areas.

The local rule is that you can only mine on lands that you own (usually lands that have been previously divided according to a system called *vesh* and which are inherited). Chromite is mined in a valley close to Srah Gandah (the valley runs east from Srah Gandah to the village of Kruchin. The mines are located NE of Srah Ganda and are linked to the villages by a road.

Analysts tend to focus on illicit drug production and trade in their discussion of criminality and funding for the insurgency in Afghanistan. What is typically omitted, however, is the illegal extraction of Afghanistan's natural resources. As a consequence, illegal deforestation and mineral extraction are directly linked to issues of governance and security sector reform.

Spera District, Khost Province

District Level Contextual Factors

Critical Questions

To assess unity and strength of leadership, ask if the elders stand together. Also, ask when do the people of X area come together. What drives them apart?

To assess systems of governance, ask if the *tallah* system is important in the area and when, why, and how so.

To assess whether local traditional governance is centralized, ask if there is a *qawm-e taroon* and whether it is applied.

To assess influence, ask who has influence and why.

To assess saliency of tribe, ask when tribe matters, under what conditions, and why.

To assess village organization, ask how the village is broken up into different parts.

To assess change, ask what has changed for the people in the past few years.

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Nadir Shah Kot District, Khost Province

District Level Contextual Factors

The intent of the *District Level Contextual Factors Profiles* is to make the understated, complex socio-cultural environment of Khost Province more comprehensible and digestible for the warfighter. The Profiles can help put behavior in context by demonstrating what is not easily observed. This will enable informed dialogue while interacting with the diverse groups resident in Khost Province. The outcome of which will be expedited rapport building, developing an informed engagement strategy, and building a broader understanding of your operating environment. Understanding that social and cultural factors matter is not enough. The focus needs to be on how it matters when it does based on the perceptions of the local population.



NSK District, Khost Province

District Level Contextual Factors



History

Khost was originally a district part of a larger province – *Loya Paktya* – that also incorporated the provinces of Paktya and Paktika. As of the 19th century, Khost was broken into four sub-districts: Jaji, Mangal, Zadran, and Tani. Nadir Shah Kot was part of the Tani sub-district. *Loya Paktya* area was split into the provinces of Paktya and Paktika in 1964. Khost was created out of parts Paktya and Paktika in 1995. There are theories that *Loya Paktya* was broken up the way it was to try to weaken the historically strong Zadran tribe in the area, which constitute the majority in Spera District.



The Zadran Arc encompasses:

In Khost: Duamonda, Nadir Shah Kot, and Spera

In Paktya: Gerda Serai, Shawak, Wazi Zadran, eastern reaches of Zormat in the Arma area

In Paktika: Ziork, Naika, Gayan, northern Urgan

Historically, *Loya Paktya* was far less penetrated by the state and has a history of past governments allowing a degree of tribal autonomy. The Zadran Arc remained semi-independent, in part due to the inaccessibility of their mountainous country, only being brought under partial subjection by Amir Abdur Rahman in 1891. During 1892, there is fighting reported between the Zadran and the Amir's troops. The reporting is not detailed, however, it is suggested the Zadran were beaten, and three Afghan government posts were established in their tribal region.

The Zadran provided formidable opposition to the Soviets and Communist Afghan government. The Zadran virtually surrounded the mostly pro-Kabul Tanis, who controlled a pocket on the southeastern border. The Zadran Arc area developed a general resistance to the Communist authorities in Kabul following the 1978 coup against President Daoud. Knowing the importance of the tribes, particularly on the border, Kabul's Minister of Tribal Affairs, a Zadran named Mohammad Faiz, brought large sums of money and fattened sheep to celebrate the conclusion of lengthy peace negotiations with his own Zadran tribe. The tribal elders feasted on the fattened sheep and then shot Faiz dead.

As a result of the killing of Faiz Mohammad, some of the Zadran tribe seemed to have reconciled with the communist government, given the presence of key Zadrans in the Kabul government. Following the killing of President Daoud and his family, most of the Zadran population fled eastward into Pakistan's North and South Waziristan, important components of today's Federally Administered Tribal Agency. In Miram Shah, many of them connected with an important religious leader, *Maluvi* Jalaluddin Haqqani. Haqqani, a Zadran Pashtun, headed the *Hezb-e Islami Khalis mujahideen* party in the Paktya and Khost, and lead broader coalitions in the fight against Soviet offensives.

In early 1983 an outlying post, belonging to the 59th Brigade ex-25th Division, in Nader Shah Kot, fell to the *mujahideen* and 130 government troops were killed or surrendered in this action. Some soldiers before their surrender had killed their officers. Emboldened, the *mujahideen* started tightening their ring around the Khost garrison.



NSK District, Khost Province

District Level Contextual Factors

During the closing years of the Soviet-Afghan conflict, Haqqani expanded his domain to command the *mujahideen* throughout most of Khost, not just Zadran forces. His efforts to expand his control to other political parties produced some set backs due to infighting it created among the *mujahideen* coalition fighting the Communists in Khost.

In 1987, after several attempts at a political solution to open the route through Khost to Pakistan, a Soviet backed Afghan force began a military offensive – Operation Magistral – against the Zadran force of approximately 9,000 fighters, but it was too late. By 1991, enabled by CIA and the Pakistani intelligence service’s provision of military and financial resources, *mujahideen* forces captured the first city from the Afghan communist regime – Khost.

Haqqani’s son, Serajudin, who took up the *jihad* against the current Afghan government and international forces, is reported to not be as widely respected as his father.

It appears that a meeting involving numerous Zadran elders from different areas and sub-tribes was held in 2008. The idea of unifying and seeking a province status for the Zadran Arc was discussed, but no tangible action ever resulted. By all appearances, the Zadran remain as fractious as ever.

Geography

Nadir Shah Kot (hereafter NSK) is alternately referred to as Bati Kot or Shembowat, the name of the district’s center and a large bazaar. NSK can generally be broken up into a distinct north and south. The wealthier and flatter southern NSK is generally more stable than the poorer, mountainous Shembowat region of northern NSK. There had been talk in early 2011 of separating northern and southern NSK and forming a new district in northern NSK with its District Center in Shembowat. That initiative was met with little progress.

The Shamal River rises from the Satti Kandow Mountains and flows southeast. The Tangai River originates from the Tangai Mountain after passing the Tangai Valley, joining the Shamal River at Duamunda (Shamal) District and moving through to NSK, much of it forming underground streams. Running southeast through Khost, it merges with the Mangal River, and running south through Tereza District into Pakistan. About fifteen years ago, 70% of Khost was fed by river-water from the Shamal River.

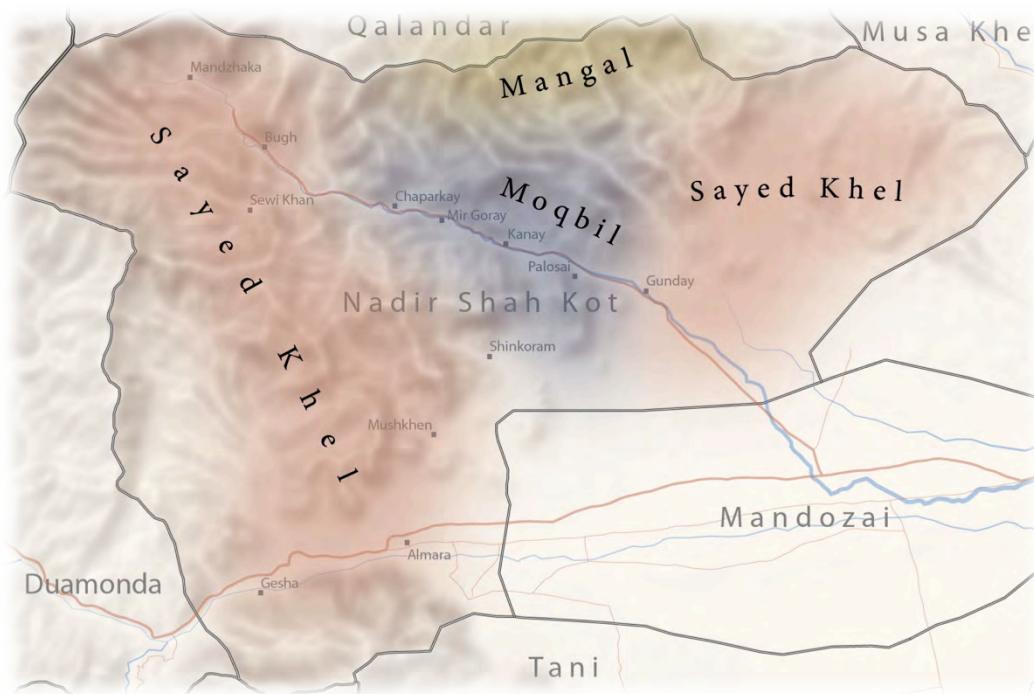
One of the two key roads leading from Khost to Kabul is the Khost to Gardez Road, which traverses the northern portion of the district, moving through Paktya to Gardez and on to Kabul. The local referent for the mountainous area through which the Khost-Gardez Road traverses from Khost into Paktya Province is Satti Kandow.

NSK District, Khost Province

District Level Contextual Factors



NSK District is characterized by the majority Zadrans population and minority Moqbil, Mangal, and Piran. The Moqbil have been mistaken for a Zadrans sub-tribe because they frequently have close alliances and cooperation with the stronger Zadrans tribe. It is common for a minority group that is residing in a majority-dominated area to take on the majority identity and to look to the majority's governance structures and elders.



Although the Zadrans are broadly organized into two sub-tribes – Supeer and Mizai – they are separated geographically into the Tangai and Shamal Zadrans. The Zadrans tribe, straddling the intersection of Khost, Paktya, and Paktika, are divided by the Shamal Valley in Shamal District of Khost and Tangai Valley in Wazi Zadrans District in Paktya. The Zadrans of these distinct geographic areas are commonly referred to by a georeferent. The Tangai Zadrans, more populous than the Shamal, reside in Duamunda, NSK, and Spera in Khost, and Zerok, Naka, and Gayan in Paktika. The Shamal Zadrans reside in Paktya Province. The Tangai Zadrans of Khost, including those in NSK, are all of the Supeer sub-tribe, but more commonly identify as Tangai or at the clan level.

Reportedly, the Shamal branch (or at least the Mizai sub-tribe) belonged to the *tor gund* (along with the Mangal) and the Tangai branch was part of the *spin gund*. The *tor gund* (black faction) and *spin gund* (white faction) comprise a socio-political moiety historically present in Loya Paktya, some of which attribute to being imposed by the British to create fissures that they could exploit among the population. Today this dichotomy has become practically obsolete, but many people can remember which tribe belongs to which *gund*.



NSK District, Khost Province

District Level Contextual Factors

There clearly is a broader Zadran identity, expressed, for example, in great pride for the important role Zadran fighters played in defeating the Soviets, but, as with many isolated highland communities, collective action remains more of an ideal and local, day-to-day issue trump most other concerns. Although historically strong, the Zadran today throughout the Arc are factional, isolated, and uncoordinated, and rife with internal conflicts, some historic, others emerging. The Zadran have been described as ‘a loose tribe’, often engaging in violent conflicts among themselves. There are multiple political affiliations inside the tribe. There is a Zadran *Shura* that covers this area, but there are mixed feelings about how representative it is. Some clans might have different political or personal motivations and interests and act against the tribal leadership.

The Haqqanis and Pacha Khan Zadran feuded for years over the allegiance of the Zadrans. The Haqqanis belong to the Sultan Khel of the Supeer tribe while other influential notables such as Abdul Wali Zadran and his father, Pacha Khan Zadran, belong to the Dari Khel of the Mezai. Haqqani’s actual tribal membership is often dependent upon local claims rather than a universally agreed upon fact. Both the Suri Khel and Sultan Khel have claimed Haqqani as one of their own, likely for reasons of prestige.

With the end of the Soviet-Afghan conflict, both former *mujahid* took different paths. Pacha Khan Zadran fought the Taliban, while Jalaluddin Haqqani joined the Taliban government, becoming their Minister for Tribal Affairs.

The Haqqanis have generally aligned with the contemporary insurgency and extended their influence outside of the Zadran tribe. Despite some initial discontent with the Karzai government, Pacha Khan Zadran reconciled with the contemporary government, holding Parliamentary positions while his son served as the District Chief in Paktya Province. His influence was always limited to some factions of the Zadran. Despite reconciling, Pacha Khan Zadran remained a fringe figure. He seems to have lost some influence among the Zadran, but in the recent years owned private security escort companies that provide security for Afghan truck drivers, driving from Khost on to Gardez through the mountainous Zadran region.

Social Groups

Zadran

The Zini Khel sub-tribe is the majority social group in NSK. The people of the Zini Khel tribe are generally considered to be united.

Zini Khel is broken down into the following clans:

- Mandal Khel (*most powerful, largest*)
- Anik Khel
- Koodar Khel
- Bola Khel
- Gorzi Khel
- Khranzi Khel
- Bakhki Khel
- (Shamshi Khel (Soway))

Each clan has tribal representatives of their own. The Zini Khel representatives were chosen by their clans to represent them. The selection process varied from lottery, to coin toss, to nomination and voting—each handling it differently.

NSK District, Khost Province

District Level Contextual Factors



The Zini Khel clans are also organized into three coalitions: Mul Khel, All Khel, and Darnami.

Mul Khel, the largest grouping, is composed of:

- Anik Khel
- Mandal Khel
- Koodar Khel
- Shamshi Khel

Technically, the Shamshi Khel is part of Mul Khel, but also recognized as somewhat separate. It is also reported to be the smallest clan.

All Khel is composed of:

- Bakhiki Khel
- Khranzi Khel
- Darnami is composed of:
- Gorzi Khel
- Bola Khel
- Bilal Khel*

Reportedly, the Bilal Khel (v. Boolal Khel) left the Zini Khel tribal area and moved to Mandozai a few generations ago so they are now counted in Mandozai, not NSK, and thus do not participate in contemporary Zini Khel affairs.

Zini Khel – Mangal

The Zini Khel has an alliance with the Moqbil against the Mangal. The conflict is predominantly between the Moqbil and Mangal, but each side regularly seeks tribal alliances in this conflict. For example, in 2009, a Zini Khel elder from NSK had approached elders in Zirok District in Paktika Province and “slaughtered a sheep” as a demonstration of his desire to ally against the Mangal. Reportedly, the elders agreed to support the Zini Khel against the Mangal, but had not mobilized any fighters in recent years. While professing to “feel sorry for such a small, weak group” as the Moqbil, sympathy seems to be the extent of many Zadrans’ support, with many allies pulling their support during periods when it was reported that the Mangal created an alliance with anti-government elements.

Zini Khel – Mandozai

There is reportedly a dispute between Zini Khel and the Mandozai over land that Camp Clark was constructed on.

Zadran – Ismael Khel

Historically, the Ismael Khel engaged in a vicious dispute with the Zadrans of NSK. This historic dispute allegedly subsided when a group of *sadat* settled in the area between the conflicting parties and mediated the dispute. Conflicts were significantly reduced between these parties. *Sadat* are a respected social class of people who are considered descendants of the Prophet Mohammed and thus closer to God.

NSK District, Khost Province

District Level Contextual Factors

Moqbil

Although the Moqbil are populous in central and eastern Paktya, there are relatively few in Khost province, perhaps only 600-700 families. The Moqbil in NSK frequently describe themselves as a Zadran tribe, suggesting they feel under the Zadran's protection, as described above.

Moqbil – Mangal

In recent years, the Moqbil in NSK have an ongoing dispute with the Mangal in Musa Khel and Qalandar Districts. Musa Khel and Qalandar are collectively referred locally as Mangal. Reportedly, the Mangal in Khost Province are divided into five sub-tribes (or clans):

- Musa Khel
- Ayoubi
- Khajouri
- Miral Khel
- Ayou/Ayoub Khel
- Mugai or Kamal Khel

Supposedly, the Khajouri are the most populous of the sub-tribes, though all five sub-tribes are found in Musa Khel and extend northwest through Jani Khel to Sayyed Karram in Paktya. In Qalandar, only two Mangal sub-tribes are reported to be present: the Mugai/Kaman Khel and the Ayu Khel.

The Mangal are consistently reported to be a united tribe, one which works collectively and makes collective decisions. As such, the Mangal are able to translate their cohesiveness into power, and the example of *arbakai* is given as support of this claim. However, despite their purported unity, there is no overall, centralized leadership and each sub-tribe has its own elders, who, among other things, are responsible for adjudicating disputes.

The conflict between the Mangal and Moqbil tribes in Khost is driven by a combination of war-time tribal displacement, resource scarcity (pine trees), lack of GIROA security and government presence in northern NSK, Qalandar, and Musa Khel districts, and manipulation by outside actors.

The root of the conflict goes back 80 years, stemming from a dispute over a mountain and the timber on it. The Mangal, together with the Zadran, control much of the timber industry in Khost, and new roads through Musa Khel will facilitate the transfer of firewood and lumber, as well as pine nuts and walnuts, from the forested mountain regions of western Musa Khel to the markets IVO Khost City and Gardez. In Gardez, there seems to be a disproportionate number of Gardez-based Mangal businessmen originally from Musa Khel District in Khost Province. For the most part, the businessmen transfer the wood that they buy in bulk to wood selling markets in Kabul, but the forests in the Mangal area are quickly becoming more and more depleted.

Both parties have legal documents (from different political periods in recent Afghan history) showing legal title to the land. For much of that time, this dispute was kept under control through negotiations between the tribes. The Moqbil had allied with the Zadran, Mandozai, Tanai, and Gurbuz tribes, and sheep were slaughtered with each tribe as a sign of their alliance.

The agreement between the Mangal and Moqbil stuck not just because of tribal alliances, but also because, at least until the 1980s, the tribal elders held greater power and enjoyed greater respect than they do today. Accordingly, they enforced any decisions that the tribe had made collectively. Today, however, the tribal system is much weakened and because of corruption the elders are no longer trusted to put tribal interests ahead of personal ones.

NSK District, Khost Province

District Level Contextual Factors



Since 2001, the Mangal have been ascendant in Khost and Paktya, having been rewarded for their pro-GIRoA leanings with various forms of political and economic patronage. The greater influence enjoyed by the Mangal seems to have emboldened them and they have increasingly encroached past the demarcation line in NSK and into the territory of the Moqbil.

Contemporary open fighting began in 2009 when Mangals came over the border from Qalandar to encroach on Moqbil land in NSK. Mangal fighters acquired access to heavy weapons. In recent years, the government had held over a dozen meetings with elders from both tribes, including one in which 350 elders are reported to have attended a five-day *jirga*, but no lasting resolution has ever been achieved. A short-lived resolution occurred in 2009, but fighting quickly resumed, with Moqbils claiming the resolution favored the Mangals because they had bribed government officials. For at least a short period in recent years, however, the Mangal and Moqbil lived peacefully in the region that was at the time controlled by a Moqbil elder named Adjib Deen, spanning the area from Badal Kalay to Shel Ghar, NSK. This is along the tribes' established tribal boundaries in NSK.

In 2012, fighting broke out again with both sides used heavy weapons against one another. Additionally, several Moqbil homes were torched by a group of Mangal. The Moqbil claimed that they received indirect fire from Mangal fighting positions and as a result abandoned several villages close to these ridgelines. At this time, there was single *arbakai* lead for the Mangal of Qalandar and Musa Khel. The Mangal tribe was the only tribe in NSK with a standing, government-sanctioned *arbakai* of over 300 fighters serving as a tribal defense force in 2012. This incident raised questions of whether the *arbakai* serve as a source of instability fueling the conflict, or a source of stability as a necessary tribal defense mechanism.

Lewan Khel

The Lewan Khel is a small *Piran* tribe in this area. They inhabit the area around the mixed village of Wurzi on the border with Matun District. They seem to be staying neutral in any conflicts that arise in SNAK in the district.

Similar to the *sadat*, people who are considered descendants of the Prophet Mohammed and thus closer to God, the Piran do not consider themselves as part of any secular tribal system. The *Piran* are highly respected due to their status as 'holy people'.

Livelihoods

The primary livelihoods in NSK are based mostly on timber. Most timber is transported south to Shembowat Bazaar in NSK and to the west to Duamunda District. In addition to timber, the forests also provide pine nuts. Each year the thousands of pine trees that grow at higher elevations in the border areas yield a valuable amount of pine nuts that can be processed and sold to Pakistan. The harvest and sale of pine nuts has been an informal activity for hundreds of years and provides seasonal work that supports increasing numbers of pine nut laborers.

Agriculture is of secondary importance, but lack of irrigation is an issue in some areas. In the Zadrán area, land has mostly been broken into private shares through *vesh*. Ownership of land is by nuclear or extended family. The only estates owned by the members of the sub-tribes are the mountains. Very often several lineages own one mountain or a part of it jointly.

NSK District, Khost Province

District Level Contextual Factors

Critical Questions

To assess unity and strength of leadership, ask if the elders stand together. Also, ask when do the people of X area come together. What drives them apart?

To assess systems of governance, ask if the *tallah* system is important in the area and when, why, and how so.

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Duamunda District, Khost Province

District Level Contextual Factors

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Duamunda District, Khost Province

District Level Contextual Factors



History

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In Paktika: Ziork, Naika, Gayan, northern Urgan

Historically, *Loya Paktya* was far less penetrated by the state and has a history of past governments allowing a degree of tribal autonomy. The Zadran Arc remained semi-independent, in part due to the inaccessibility of their mountainous country, only being brought under partial subjection by Amir Abdur Rahman in 1891. During 1892, there is fighting reported between the Zadran and the Amir's troops. The reporting is not detailed, however, it is suggested the Zadran were beaten, and three Afghan government posts were established in their tribal region.

The Zadran provided formidable opposition to the Soviets and Communist Afghan government. The Zadran virtually surrounded the mostly pro-Kabul Tanis, who controlled a pocket on the southeastern border. The Zadran Arc area developed a general resistance to the Communist authorities in Kabul following the 1978 coup against President Daoud. Knowing the importance of the tribes, particularly on the border, Kabul's Minister of Tribal Affairs, a Zadran named Mohammad Faiz, brought large sums of money and fattened sheep to celebrate the conclusion of lengthy peace negotiations with his own Zadran tribe. The tribal elders feasted on the fattened sheep and then shot Faiz dead.

As a result of the killing of Faiz Mohammad, some of the Zadran tribe seemed to have reconciled with the communist government, given the presence of key Zadrans in the Kabul government. Following the killing of President Daoud and his family, most of the Zadran population fled eastward into Pakistan's North and South Waziristan, important components of today's Federally Administered Tribal Agency. In Miram Shah, many of them connected with an important religious leader, *Maluvi* Jalaluddin Haqqani. Haqqani, a Zadran Pushtun, headed the *Hezb-e Islami Khalis mujahideen* party in the Paktya and Khost, and lead broader coalitions in the fight against Soviet offensives. During the closing years of the Soviet-Afghan conflict, Haqqani expanded his domain to command the *mujahideen* throughout most of Khost, not just Zadran forces. His efforts to expand his control to other political parties produced some set backs due to infighting it created among the *mujahideen* coalition fighting the Communists in Khost.



Duamunda District, Khost Province

District Level Contextual Factors

In 1987, after several attempts at a political solution to open the route through Khost to Pakistan, a Soviet backed Afghan force began a military offensive – Operation Magistral – against the Zadran force of approximately 9,000 fighters, but it was too late. By 1991, enabled by CIA and the Pakistani intelligence service's provision of military and financial resources, *mujahideen* forces captured the first city from the Afghan communist regime – Khost.

Haqqani's son, Serajudin, who took up the *jihad* against the current Afghan government and international forces, is reported to not be as widely respected as his father.

It appears that a meeting involving numerous Zadran elders from different areas and sub-tribes was held in 2008. The idea of unifying and seeking a province status for the Zadran Arc was discussed, but no tangible action ever resulted. By all appearances, the Zadran remain as fractious as ever.

Geography

Identified at different times by different actors as Besmil, Shamal, and Duamunda, this district is located on Khost province's western edge on the shared border with Paktya Province. It is commonly called Shamal by the local population, in reference to the Shamal Mountains and Shamal River, which is fed by run-off from the Shamal Mountains.

The Shamal River rises from the Satti Kandow Mountains and flows southeast. The Tangai River originates from the Tangai Mountain after passing the Tangai Valley, joining the Shamal River at Duamunda District. The river maintains the name Shamal. Running southeast through Khost, it merges with the Mangal River, and running south through Terezaï District into Pakistan. About fifteen years ago, 70% of Khost was fed by river-water from the Shamal River.

One of the two key roads leading from Khost to Kabul is the Khost to Gardez Road, which traverses the northern portion of the district, moving through Paktya to Gardez and on to Kabul. The local referent for the mountainous area through which the Khost-Gardez Road traverses from Khost into Paktya Province is Satti Kandow.

Identity Factors

Duamunda District is characterized by the majority Zadran population. Although the Zadran are broadly organized into two sub-tribes – Supeer and Mizai – they are separated geographically into the Tangai and Shamal Zadran. The Zadran tribe, straddling the intersection of Khost, Paktya, and Paktika, are divided by the Shamal Valley in Shamal District of Khost and Tangai Valley in Wazi Zadran District in Paktya. The Zadran of these distinct geographic areas are commonly referred to by a geo-referent. The Tangai Zadran, more populous than the Shamal, reside in Duamunda, Spera, Nadir Shah Kot, and Spera in Khost, and Zerok, Naka, and Gayan in Paktika. The Shamal Zadran resides in Paktya Province. The Tangai Zadran of Khost are all of the Supeer sub-tribe, but more commonly identify as Tangai or at the clan level.

Reportedly, the Shamal branch (or at least the Mizai sub-tribe) belonged to the *tor gund* (along with the Mangal) and the Tangai branch was part of the *spin gund*. The *tor gund* (black faction) and *spin gund* (white faction) comprise a socio-political moiety historically present in Loya Paktya, some of which attribute to being imposed by the British to create fissures that they could exploit among the population. Today this dichotomy has become practically obsolete, but many people can remember which tribe belongs to which *gund*.

Duamunda District, Khost Province

District Level Contextual Factors



Although historically strong, the Zadran today throughout the Arc are factional, isolated, uncoordinated, and rife with internal conflicts, some historic, others emerging. The Zadran have been described as ‘a loose tribe’, often engaging in violent conflicts among themselves. There are multiple political affiliations inside the tribe. There is a Zadran *Shura* (Council) that covers this area, but there are mixed feelings about how representative it is. Some clans might have different political or personal motivations and interests and act against the tribal leadership.

There clearly is a broader Zadran identity, expressed, for example, in great pride for the important role Zadran fighters played in defeating the Soviets, but, as with many isolated highland communities, collective action remains more of an ideal and local, day-to-day issues trump most other concerns.

The Haqqanis and Pacha Khan Zadran feuded for years over the allegiance of the Zadrans. The Haqqanis belong to the Sultan Khel of the Supeer tribe while other influential notables such as Abdul Wali Zadran and his father, Pacha Khan Zadran, belong to the Dari Khel of the Mezai. Haqqani’s actual tribal membership is often dependent upon local claims rather than a universally agreed upon fact. Both the Suri Khel and Sultan Khel have claimed Haqqani as one of their own, likely for reasons of prestige.

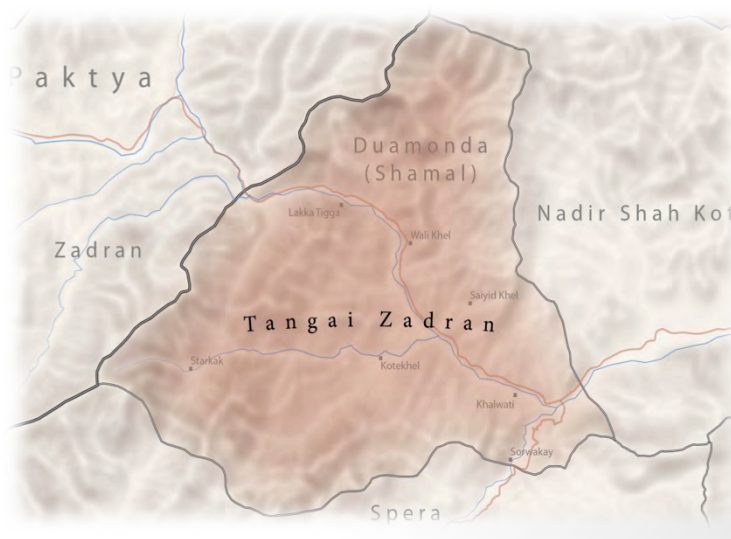
With the end of the Soviet-Afghan conflict, both former *mujahid* took different paths. Pacha Khan Zadran fought the Taliban, fled to Pakistan, and returned in 2001 to again fight the Taliban, while Jalaluddin Haqqani joined the Taliban government, becoming their Minister for Tribal Affairs.

The Haqqanis have generally aligned with the contemporary insurgency and extended their influence outside of the Zadran tribe. Pacha Khan Zadran reconciled with the contemporary government, holding Parliamentary positions while his son served as the District Chief in Wazi Zadran in Paktya Province. His influence was always limited to some factions of the Zadran. Despite reconciling, Pacha Khan Zadran remained a fringe figure. He seems to have lost some influence among the Zadran, but in the recent years owned private security escort companies that provided security for Afghan truck drivers, driving from Khost on to Gardez through the mountainous Zadran region.

Social Groups

The majority Tangai Zadran clan in Duamunda is the Sayed Khel, but there are also reports of the following Zadran elements: Bika, Dwoya Khel, Sher Khel, Kota Khel, Kamal Khel, Alo Khel, and Khoi Khel. There are also elements of Tani, Mangal, Ismael Khel, and Mandozai.

If settled or nomadic *kuchi* in N. Terezai (Babrak Tana/Chergota) cannot solve a problem amongst themselves, and their elders in Kabul [Haji Naim Kuchi] are unable to take action, they often reach out to the Mangal or Zadran tribe from Nadir Shah Kot and Duamunda to help them solve disputes. Reportedly, there is a place in Khost Bazaar called *Melmastun*, which is defined as an area for all tribes, where they will arrange a *jirga* with Zadran or Mangal to discuss issues.



Duamunda District, Khost Province

District Level Contextual Factors

Tangai Zadrان – Terezai

King Zahir Shah (1933-1973) provided five to six *jeribs* (1 *jerib* = approximately ½ acre) of government land in Terezai to Tangai Zadrان families from Duamunda that were uprooted in areas affected by the initial Khost to Gardez Road construction, fifty years prior to the contemporary construction. A dispute exists between some Zadrان and Terezai over an area called *Spina Pal*. The Zadrان claim that King Zahir Shah gave them this area when his government was initially building up the Khost-Gardez Road, and they only decided to move onto this area in 2007 or 2008. There are other cases, however, where Tangai Zadrان and other groups, such as Shamal Zadrان and Mangal, purchased additional land from residents in Terezai District, particularly in the Ali Sher area. There are no reported tribal conflicts among the residents of Ali Sher and the resident Tangai Zadrان in Ali Sher. The Tangai Zadrان that live in Ali Sher do not seem involved in the dispute between the Tangai Zadrان and Terezai tribe.

Tangai Zadrان – Tani

The Tangai Zadrان accuse the Tani of encroaching on Zadrان forests in Duamunda and Spera Districts.

Livelihoods

Farming is practiced, but on a small scale since plots of land are small. Timber harvesting is the most important part of the Duamunda economy, as well as the source of tribal tensions. In fact, Duamunda is the timber hub of Southeastern Afghanistan, where merchants from all over Eastern Afghanistan (Kandahar, Gardez, Kabul) come to purchase wood (firewood and lumber). People from Khost usually sell their wood at the big wood markets in Duamunda District or Khost City. From there, the wood is taken to Kabul. Musa Khel District's Mangal choose to conduct business primarily in Gardez and not Khost City or Duamunda because they can get more money for their wood in Gardez than in Khost. Reportedly, there is a more competitive market in Gardez than in Khost City or Duamunda.

In addition to timber, the forests also provide pine nuts. Each year the thousands of pine trees that grow at higher elevations in the border areas yield a valuable amount of pine nuts that can be processed and sold to Pakistan. The harvest and sale of pine nuts has been an informal activity for hundreds of years and provides seasonal work that supports increasing numbers of pine-nut laborers. September and early October are pine nut season. Much of the able-bodied population in rural villages is busy gathering pinecones from forests on mountain slopes for about three weeks, using long poles that end in hooks to pluck each cone, local men filled sacks with their harvest and brought them down the hills for sale in Orgun District of Paktika, Duamunda, Khost City, or to Afghan buyers who canvass the harvesters in their villages.

There is also evidence of mineral extraction, such as chromite, in Duamunda. Chromite is a mineral used to harden steel. It is often extracted using machinery, and transported/smuggled into Pakistan, and on to China, which is the world's largest importer of chromite. The chromite business was until recently profitable but now the market in Pakistan appears glutted and prices have fallen. As a result, efforts to extract chromite have slowed, although people are reportedly still mining it in Duamunda on a small scale. These mines are commonly guarded by *arbakai* (tribal police). Disputes surrounding chromite common. Ayitah village (IVO the District Center) claims ownership of many of the chromite mines. In the past few years, Ayitah village has rejected commercial claims to the mines. There have been incidents where their *arbakai* attacked a commercial company – Ghanja Khozur – granted extraction rights by the government. This is despite the company offering them jobs.

Analysts tend to focus on illicit drug production and trade in their discussion of criminality and funding for the insurgency in Afghanistan. What is typically omitted, however, is the illegal extraction of Afghanistan's natural resources. As a consequence, illegal deforestation and mineral extraction are directly linked to issues of governance and security sector reform.

Duamunda District, Khost Province

District Level Contextual Factors



Critical Questions

To assess unity and strength of leadership, ask if the elders stand together. Also, ask when do the people of X area come together. What drives them apart?

To assess systems of governance, ask if the *tallah* system is important in the area and when, why, and how so.

To assess whether local traditional governance is centralized, ask if there is a *qawm-e taroon* and whether it is applied.

To assess influence, ask who has influence and why.

To assess saliency of tribe, ask when tribe matters, under what conditions, and why.

To assess village organization, ask how the village is broken up into different parts.

To assess change, ask what has changed for the people in the past few years.

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Mandozai District, Khost Province

District Level Contextual Factors

The intent of the *District Level Contextual Factors Profiles* is to make the understated, complex socio-cultural environment of Khost Province more comprehensible and digestible for the warfighter. The Profiles can help put behavior in context by demonstrating what is not easily observed. This will enable informed dialogue while interacting with the diverse groups resident in Khost Province. The outcome of which will be expedited rapport building, developing an informed engagement strategy, and building a broader understanding of your operating environment. Understanding that social and cultural factors matter is not enough. The focus needs to be on how it matters when it does based on the perceptions of the local population.



Mandozai District, Khost Province

District Level Contextual Factors



History

Khost was originally a district part of a larger province – *Loya Paktya* – that also incorporated the provinces of Paktya and Paktika. As of the 19th century, Khost, then a district of *Loya Paktya*, was broken into four sub-districts: Jaji, Mangal, Zadran, and Tani. Mandozai District was included in Tani. *Loya Paktya* area was split into the provinces of Paktya and Paktika in 1964. Khost was created out of parts Paktya and Paktika in 1995.

Mandozai District, also known as Mando Zayi, Mandozayi, Ismael Khel-Mandozai, and Ismael Khel, is situated in the central part of Khost Province. Mandozai District was formerly part of Matun District (Khost District), which is the provincial center for Khost Province.

The Mandozai and Ismael Khel of Mandozai District were initially neutral and even cooperative with the newly installed Soviet-backed government in Kabul in the late 1970s. In large part this is due to these tribal groupings never being particularly politically or economically dominant, as well as proximity to the provincial center. Khost was referred to as “Little Moscow” because of the general political orientation of the area. Khost Province was garrisoned by about 9,000 Afghan troops and was the headquarters of 25th Afghan Division in Matun District and two additional Afghan Border Brigades.

Some Ismael Khel and Mandozai tribesmen were organized into pro-government militias, though they often received little support from either the government or Soviet forces. In one instance in the summer of 1983, increasing attacks by the *mujahideen* compelled Ismael Khel and Mandozai militiamen in Khost to defect to the *mujahideen*.

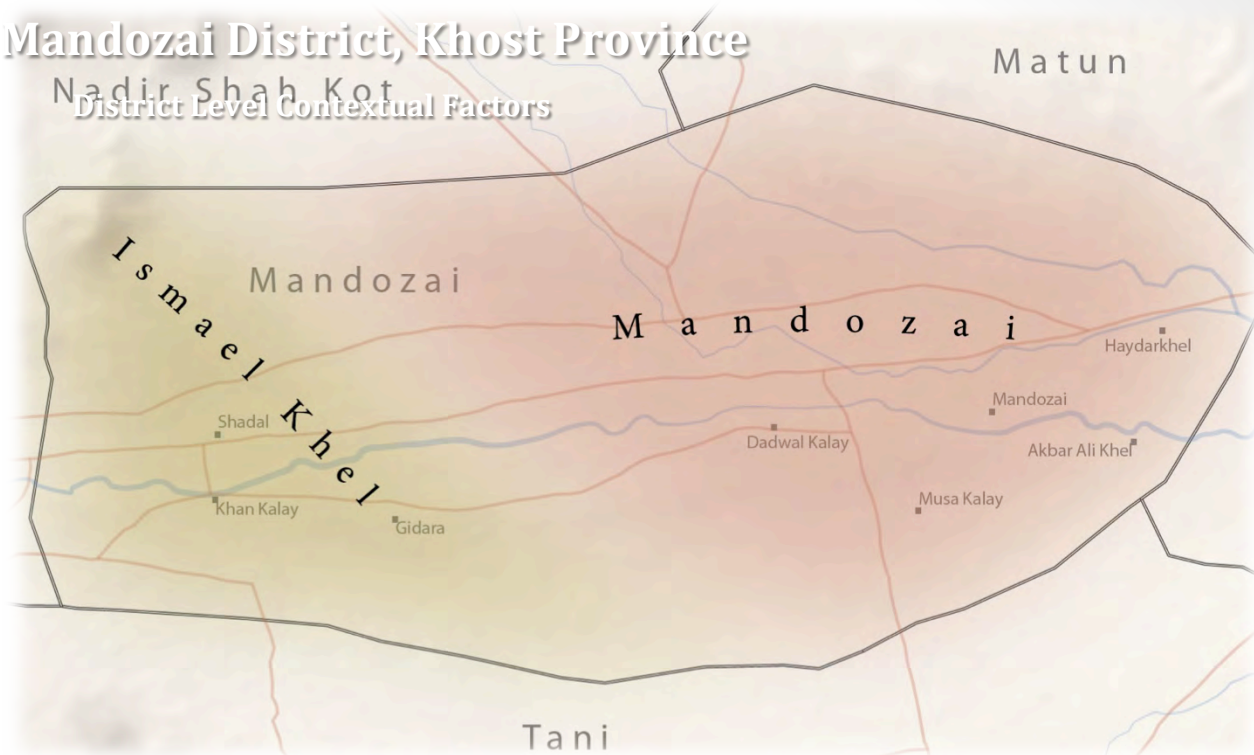
Geography

Mandozai District is essentially a suburb of Khost City.

The Shamal River runs from the Shamal Mountains (aka Zadran Mountains aka Satti Kandow) in southeast Paktya through Duamonda and Mandzoai, running south-east through Khost and south through Terezaye into Pakistan. The Shamal River rises from the Shamal and flows southeast, making Mandozai’s valleys incredible fertile. The Tangai River originates from the Tangai Ghar after passing the Tangai valley, joining the Shamal River at Duamunda.

One of the two roads leading out of Khost Province to Kabul passes west to east through the length of Mandozai District - the Khost to Gardez Road. The 64-mile road was originally constructed during the reign of King Zahir Shah (1933 - 1973). It was then destroyed during Soviet-Afghan conflict to limit Soviet movement, with asphalt sold to Pakistan for profit. Re-construction of the road began in 2007, resulting in one of the most costly and troubled transportation projects in Afghanistan.

Mandozai District, Khost Province



Identity Factors

The Ismael Khel and Mandozai tribes characterize Mandozai District.

The Mandozai and Ismael Khel tribes regard themselves as strong tribes in the province (as do the Jaji, Mangal and Tani tribes) and support their claim by explaining that in case of any internal disputes, the heads of each sub-tribe come together to resolve the issue.

The *tor gund* (black faction) and *spin gund* (white faction) comprise a socio-political moiety historically present in Loya Paktya, some of which attribute to being imposed by the British to create fissures that they could exploit among the population. Today this dichotomy has become practically obsolete, but many people can remember which tribe belongs to which *gund*. Interestingly, the Mandozai were reported to be with the *spin gund*, along with the Sabari, much of the Zadrán, and Tani, while the Ismael Khel were reported to be with the *tor gund*, along with the Mangal and others.

Despite some localized disputes, the Mandozai and Ismael Khel have good relations and at times act collectively. For example, in 1991 they aligned to identify representatives to send to Peshawar to appeal for international assistance for the two tribes in the district.

Social Groups

Both Ismael Khel and Mandozai are Khostwal, which translates into “people from Khost.” If Mandozai was divided into quadrants, the majority of the southwest population would be Ismael Khel. Mandozai and Ismael Khel aren’t just used interchangeably to refer to the district, but also to their respective areas within the district.

Mandozai District, Khost Province

District Level Contextual Factors



There is also a minority of Zadran, including the Bilal Khel (v. Boolal Khel), residing in the district. Reportedly, they left the Zini Khel tribe in Nadir Shah Kot area and moved to Mandozai a few generations ago. They do not participate in Zini Khel affairs, in large part because they are now resident in Mandozai; therefore, they participate in the affairs of that district.

Mandozai

One reported Mandozai sub-tribe is Haider Khel (or Haider Khan).

Mandozai sub-tribes also are reported in the Barech and Mahmand tribes, but these are probably unrelated to the Mandozai Khostwals. Migrations and scattering, however, could account for the duplication of names since smaller groups are often assimilated into larger ones for their protection. The Barech Pashtuns participated in the large migration into India during the latter days of the Mughal Empire where one of their leaders was a significant regional actor. The “scattering” of the tribal groups as they were forced out of India by the British and their allied tribes may account for “Mandozai” groups now associated with other tribes into which they may have assimilated, leaving the Barech tribe remaining in southern Afghanistan small and weakened when compared to its probable power at the time of the migration into India where its leader, Hafiz Rahmat Khan, assumed a key role over most of the Pashtun settlers.

Haider Khel –Warza Leiwan Khel

A violent dispute over land ownership exists between – the Warza Leiwan Khel – and a sub-tribe of Mandozai – Haider Khel. The Lewan Khel, a small *Piran* tribe inhabiting the mixed village of Warza, reside on the border between Matun and Nadir Shah Kot Districts.

Similar to the *sadat*, people who are considered descendants of the Prophet Mohammed and thus closer to God, the *Piran* do not consider themselves as part of any secular tribal system. The *Piran* are highly respected due to their status as ‘holy people’.

Due to this dispute, many of the Haider Khel and Warza would not disarm voluntarily when the Khost government decided to disarm many of the *arbakai* in the province. They were forced to disarm in 2011.

Mandozai – Zadran’s Zini Khel

There is reportedly a dispute between Zadran Zini Khel of Nadir Shah Kot District and the Mandozai over land that Camp Clark was constructed on.

Ismail Khel

The origin of the area’s name is related to “the settlement belonging to the Ismail Khan.”

The Ismael Khel are said to be divided into six sub-tribes. One of which is Bahram Khel. Reportedly, each clan has five to six tribal leaders, who convene when there is a problem.

About 30 years ago, the Bahram Khel sub-tribe decided to conduct a *vesh* (distribution of tribal land) on a piece of tribal land, not on all Bahram Khel tribal land.

Mandozai District, Khost Province

District Level Contextual Factors

Ismael Khel – Tani

There is an historic dispute between the Tani and Ismael Khel over land. This situation was exacerbated with Karzai's 2002 appointment of Taniwal (a Tani) as Governor of Khost due to perception that the Tanai were gaining too much power. This sentiment was shared by the Zadran and Gurbuz at the time as well.

Despite reports of this dispute, the Tani tend to seek out Ismael Khel, as well as Piran, Mangal, and Zadran, mediators when they have disputes amongst themselves that they cannot resolve on their own.

Ismael Khel – Zadran

Historically, the Ismael Khel engaged in a vicious dispute with the Zadran of Nadir Shah Kot District. This historic dispute allegedly subsided when a group of *sadat* settled in an area between the conflicting parties and mediated the dispute. Conflicts were significantly reduced between these parties. *Sadat* are a respected social class of people who are considered descendants of the Prophet Mohammed and thus closer to God.

Livelihoods

Snowmelt from the Zadran Mountains is no longer enough to irrigate the land from Duamunda to Mandozai. A decade ago the populace in Mandozai grew rice, but due to lack of water can no longer do so. Residents in Mandozai District continue to grow wheat, corn and beans, among other crops, using irrigation from run off from the Shamal Mountains. During pine nut season (September-November), when the Mangal and Zadran bring their pine nuts down from the mountains, many residents of Mandozai and elsewhere take up the job of extracting the pine nuts from the dried pinecones.

The residents of Mandozai diversify by joining the Afghan National Security Forces, engaging in labor, and working abroad to send back remittances.

Mandozai District, Khost Province

District Level Contextual Factors



Critical Questions

To assess unity and strength of leadership, ask if the elders stand together. Also, ask when do the people of X area come together. What drives them apart?

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Gurbuz District, Khost Province

District Level Contextual Factors

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Gurbuz District, Khost Province

District Level Contextual Factors



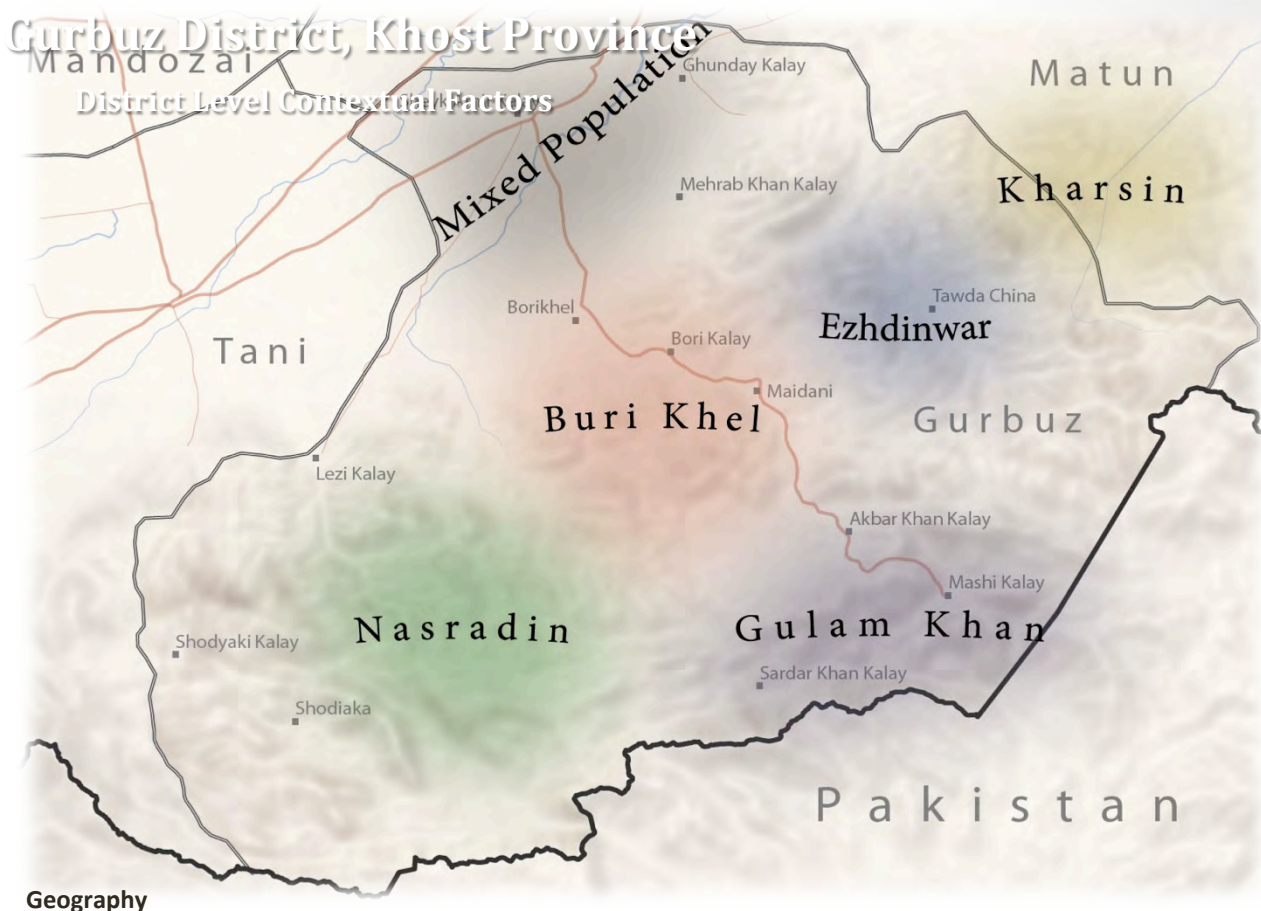
History

Although classed among the Waziri, the Gurbuzi are actually a distinct people. Historically, they separated entirely with the Uthmanzai Waziri. After a generation of being forced out of different valleys in North Waziristan where they sought refuge, greatly reduced in strength, they retired to the hills bordering Khost in what is today Gurbuz District. In the early years of Afghanistan's existence as a country, they paid a sum to work the land to the Durrani government. As of the 19th century, Khost was broken into four sub-districts: Jaji, Mangal, Zadran, and Tani. Gurbuz was part of the Tani sub-district.

Early in the Soviet-Afghan conflict the *mujahideen* relied on the rural population to provide food and housing. After the Soviet's air campaigns devastated irrigation systems, agriculture, livestock herds, and village infrastructure. In response, the *mujahideen* had to construct and defend the logistics bases. There was a *Jihadwal* garrison of *Hezbe Islami – Gulbaddin* at Buri Khel, from which the *mujahideen* built a road to Zhawar. Famously, during the Soviet-Afghan conflict, Commander Jalaluddin Haqqani (*Hezbi-e Islami - Khalis*) met with Osama bin Laden in Gurbuz during the construction of the Zhawar *mujahideen* logistics base – the gates bearing a sign which read, "Faith, piety and war in Allah's path." Reportedly, the construction was carried out by Osama bin Laden and his company. This laid the groundwork for Haqqani's extremely close relationship with Arab sponsors.

Zhawar began as a training base and later expanded to be an important base for supply, training, and staging. The base was located inside a canyon surrounded by mountains, just 15 kilometers from the major Pakistani forward supply base at Miram Shah. The base was characterized by huge tunnels, which contained a hotel, a mosque, arms depots and repair shops, a garage, a medical point, a radio center, and a kitchen. The *mujahideen* "Zhawar Regiment" was permanently based there. At 500 strong, this regiment was primarily responsible for logistics support for *mujahideen* groups fighting in the area and other provinces in Afghanistan. Approximately 20% of *mujahideen* supplies came through Zhawar. In at least 1998 and 2002, this base was suspected to serve as a logistics hub for the Taliban and Al Qaeda. Ensuing US bombing campaigns reportedly led to mass civilian casualties.

The Gurbuzi tribe, which had backed the Taliban when they worked to capture Khost province from the *mujahideen* (1992-1996), later announced withdrawal of its support to the Islamic Emirate's administration. In large part this was because the villagers fought back when local Taliban authorities tried to tell them, for example, how to celebrate a marriage or stopping them from playing a traditional "egg fighting game" because it was un-Islamic. Despite the Taliban sending a team of Pakistani religious scholars and Afghan elders to the Gurbuzi tribe for resolution of the dispute, they failed to reconcile with them.



Gurbuz District is characterized by low hills with a network of valleys. There are three border crossings in Gurbuz, one of them an official customs house where taxes are levied, and the other two unofficial. Khost Province is commonly referred to as “Little Dubai” due to the revenue generated from its customs house at Gulam Khan in Gurbuz. Reportedly, It is the third most important border crossing point between Pakistan and Afghanistan.

Identity Factors

With the exception of small pockets of Khostwal Shamal, Tani, and Kharsin, the district is predominately composed of the Gurbuzi tribe. Each sub-tribe has its own elders and *shura*. Generally, the perception of the Gurbuzi among themselves and other tribes in Khost is that the Gurbuzi tribe isn’t strong and is not very united, with each sub-tribe operating fairly independently. During the initial expansion of the insurgency in the southeast, early inroads were made in Gurbuz, which can be attributed to the relatively weak tribal structures in the district.

Social Groups

Gurbuzi

The Gurbuzi straddle the Afghanistan – Pakistan border. The Gurbuzi of Gurbuz should not to be confused with the Gurbuz sub-tribe of the Safi in Kunar Province. They are distinct.

Reportedly, the district is comprised of three main Gurbuzi sub-tribes: Ezhdinwar, Buri Khel, and Nasradin. The people in the Gulnam Khan area seem to use an area referent – Gulnam Khan – rather than a traditional tribal identity. The three largest population centers in the district are Bori Khel, occupied by the Bori Khel, Towda Chinah, occupied by the Ezhdinwar, and the village of Shahamir, near the District Center, is inhabited by a mix of Gurbuzi sub-tribes.

Gurbuz District, Khost Province

District Level Contextual Factors



Most intra-Gurbuzi disputes are private disputes, not between the sub-tribes. Each sub-tribe is located geographically far away from one another. The Buri Khel is concentrated in the center of the province, but the other groups far from the center of the district. This has led to a tendency for NGOs and other aid organizations to only deal with the Buri Khel in the center of the district, ignoring the other than groups. More often than not, this neglect led to discontent.

As discussed above, the Gurbuzi have been considered distinct from the Waziri for generations. The Gurbuzi in Pakistan, however, have recently allied with the Uthmanzai Wazirs and the Dauris - an important minor tribe in North Waziristan, Pakistan, allied with the Uthmanzai. In 2005, a *jirga* of the Uthmanzai held in Miram Shah decided the Gurbuzi should be treated as part of Uthmanzai. It was not clear whether this determination was limited to Gurbuzi in North Waziristan, or if it also included Gurbuzi living in Afghanistan. It is not uncommon for a smaller tribe to be absorbed into a larger tribe.

Gurbuzi - Shamal (Khostwal sub tribe) - Musa Khel (Ahmadzai) Kuchi

Before going to Pakistan as refugees, fleeing the Soviet-Afghan war, the Shamal, Gurbuzi, and the then nomadic *kuchi* had stayed on their respective traditional territories and there had not been any conflict. The conflict started over a piece of desert, not well suited for agricultural land, in 1991 during the rise of the *mujahideen* government. As the population returned from Pakistan and grew, the tribes started to encroach into other areas and the *kuchi* began establishing themselves on their former winter camping grounds. During the *mujahideen* government the tribes fought for two days until commanders and tribal elders intervened. Commanders and tribal elders came together and forced both sides to halt fighting until the Government could reach a decision. However, the *mujahideen* government, the Taliban and the current Government have been unable to reach a decision among the three parties. The *kuchi* continue to encroach further onto at least the Gurbuzi land (such as in the vicinity of Musa Khan).

The Gurbuzi and Shamal dispute has been particularly violent, with young men from both parties leaving dropping out of school for fear that they would be targeted. Due to this dispute, many of the Shamal of Matun District and Gurbuzi of Gurbuz district were forced to disarm in 2011 when the Khost provincial government decided to disarm many of the *arbakai*.

Nasradin – Buri Khel

For more than 100 years, the Nasradin and Buri Khel tribes have been fighting over rights for occupancy and ownership of the Natgul Village. With multiple regime changes throughout the past century, each tribe holds some type of legal documentation that says the village is theirs.

Multiple people have been killed from each side due to this dispute. In 2011, provincial government began to work negotiations. After much debate, each side partially agreed to a set of conditions. The first condition was to bring their fighters out of the mountains and relinquish their fighting positions. The second condition included each tribe turning in their weapons in provincial government. The land dispute was set to be determined through the Khost court system; both tribes are willing to allow the judicial system to determine rightful ownership. The two tribes swore they would accept all the resolutions of the mediators and would live in peace. It is unclear if this resolution was upheld.

Gurbuz District, Khost Provin

District Level Contextual Factors



Livelihoods

Prevalent livelihoods in Gurbuz include maintaining apricot and plum orchards, collecting firewood, truck driving, and collecting chromite. Agriculture is a supplemental subsistence for the local population. The main crops are wheat, corn, and other vegetables. There was a brief attempt to grow poppy in Gurbuz, but this effort ceased even before 2007, at which time it was eradicated throughout Khost. Most households maintain livestock for household use. There is also fishing in the vicinity in Gulnam Kalay. Only about 10% of the people go to UAE for work, but remittances remain important.

The first chromite deposits were found about 15 years ago. Many hoped would bring prosperity to the district, but the deposits have also fueled violence between tribes trying to establish control over the area. A private security company had been employed, with 300 guards, but has not been able to stop the smuggling.

Authorities have failed to prevent the smuggling chromite in Khost province despite a government ban. Smuggling to Pakistan's port city of Karachi, as well as to China, has been continuing for several years. The Afghan government estimates that about 20,000 dollars in revenues are lost every day to illegal chromite excavations in Khost. Further, the smuggling threatens stability, as criminal networks, corrupt government officials, and insurgents are cooperating in the business.

Gurbuz District, Khost Province

District Level Contextual Factors



Critical Questions

To assess unity and strength of leadership, ask if the elders stand together. Also, ask when do the people of X area come together. What drives them apart?

To assess systems of governance, ask if the *tallah* system is important in the area and when, why, and how so.

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To assess village organization, ask how the village is broken up into different parts.

To assess change, ask what has changed for the people in the past few years.

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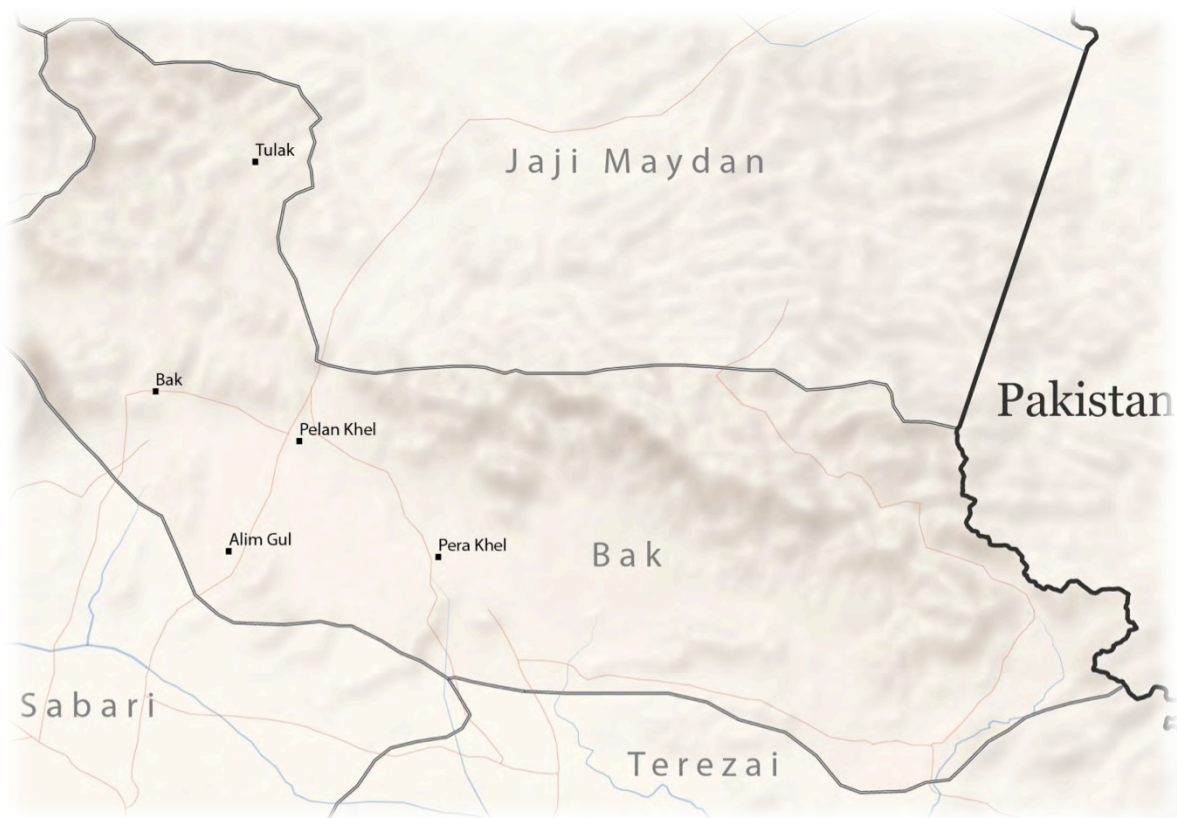
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Bak District, Khost Province

District Level Contextual Factors

The intent of the *District Level Contextual Factors Profiles* is to make the understated, complex socio-cultural environment of Khost Province more comprehensible and digestible for the warfighter. The Profiles can help put behavior in context by demonstrating what is not easily observed. This will enable informed dialogue while interacting with the diverse groups resident in Khost Province. The outcome of which will be expedited rapport building, developing an informed engagement strategy, and building a broader understanding of your operating environment. Understanding that social and cultural factors matter is not enough. The focus needs to be on how it matters when it does based on the perceptions of the local population.



Bak District, Khost Province

District Level Contextual Factors



History

Khost was originally a district part of a larger province – *Loya Paktya* – that also incorporated the provinces of Paktya and Paktika. *Loya Paktya* area was split into the provinces of Paktya and Paktika in 1964. Khost was created out of parts Paktya and Paktika in 1995.

During the anti-Soviet war, *Hizb-I Islami Gulbuddin* was only of local importance in much of southeastern Afghanistan. The organization was geographically limited to small islands, with the most important areas of influence being Sabari, Bak, and Terezai. A *mujahideen* shura covered not only Bak, but also Sabari, Jaji Maidan, and Terezai, governed security in the area. The *shura* was actually based out of Terezai District.

Most *Hizb-e Islami* military operations took place in Bak, Sabari, Terezai up to 2009. With the Haqqani Network weakened due to drone attacks across the border close to neighboring Miram Shah, *Hizb-e Islami* gained strength during this period, particularly in its traditional strongholds of Bak, Sabari, Khost center, and now Terezai districts. The conflict lines between *Hizb-e Islami* and Haqqani supporters are the greatest cause of insecurity.

Geography

Central Bak is situated in a large valley. Bak District is referred to as such in reference to the Babakar Khel (or Bakr Khel for short) tribe that represent the majority of residents. Historically, this area was referred to as Babakar Khel or Bakr Khel.

There is an unofficial border crossing at Khawana Tana. It is an unpaved road connecting Bak District to the Sadda area of Kurram Agency in Pakistan.

Identity Factors

Probably due to the intensity of the fighting, combined with a mass exodus of much of the population, during the Soviet period, in Bak, as well as Sabari, the tribal system is weaker and power relies somewhat more on *ex-jihadi* commanders.

Social Groups

The most significant social groups in Bak are the Babakar Khel and settling, nomadic, and semi-nomadic *kuchi* populations.





Bak District, Khost Province

District Level Contextual Factors

Babakar Khel

Bak District is characterized by the Babakar Khel tribe. Reportedly, there are at least ten sub-tribes resident in the district. The list includes the Tarakay Khel, Kundi Khel, Plain Khel, Shamal Khel, Gotaky Khel, Nar Khel, Tutak Khel, Mannu Khel, Sperki Khel, and Dadu Malek. The Tarakay retain the largest land holdings.

Kuchi

Bak District also has a large *kuchi* population. *Kuchis* are often described as a tribe, but the term actually refers to their migratory lifestyle, being livestock dependent, and Pashtun. *Kuchi* might first and foremost identify as *kuchi*, but there are multiple tribes that are *kuchi*, to include the larger tribal groupings Ahmadzai and Niazi. In the past 30 years, *kuchi* populations have been settling more frequently. Many *kuchi* are settled (non-migratory) and facing marginalization (economic, political and social).

Most of the *kuchis* in Bak District are from the Niazi tribe, including the Azar Khel sub-tribe. The clans of the Azar Khel include at least the Gulnam Khel, the Laiwan Khel, and the Abu Khel.

Babakar Khel – Azar Khel Niazi Kuchi

A violent dispute exists between the Babakar Khel and the Azar Khel Niazi *kuchi* over all the land from the Gurgari Vally and Mountain to Tatak Mountain in Bak District.

During the Afghan-Soviet conflict and ensuing civil war, there was no conflict between *kuchi* and Babakar Khel. At this time, most Niazi retained a nomadic lifestyle. Their typical migratory route was between Pakistan, Khost, and Gardez, with them spending the summer in Gardez. Under the *mujahideen* government during the civil war, they reportedly lived in a symbiotic relationship as the Babakar Khel grew poppy and some of the Niazi transported it across the border. The Niazi accumulated considerable wealth as they profited from the trade with illegal goods to Pakistan. Many Niazi also fled to Tal in the Kurram Agency as refugees to escape the fighting. They left their traditional land for Pakistan where they remained 25 years.

There was no serious conflict between *kuchi* and Babakar Khel until the Taliban regime. Approximately fifteen years ago, the *kuchi* started to return to Bak to settle. Many of them no longer retained the livestock that defined their migratory lifestyle. Therefore, there was no need to migrate seasonally.

As the Niazi started to settle down and build houses, they started to buy more land and allegedly cut down trees on land belonging to the Babakar Khel. The Babakar Khel tribe claims they own the land while the *kuchi* make the same claim that it is their land because they have been spending half of the year grazing their herds for hundreds of years.

In 2006, the dispute turned violent when the *kuchi* wanted to bury someone in a cemetery on Babakar Khel land. The Babakar Khel refused permission. The Babakar Khel tribe was afraid that the *kuchis* would use the cemetery to argue their right to the surrounding land, a tactic historically used by tribes to assert ownership. Heavy fighting broke out with both parties using heavy weapons, including rocket-propelled grenade launchers. The Babakar Khel burned down *kuchi* homes and a bazaar in Khesho Sar area that belonged to the *kuchi*, driving them from the area.

Bak District, Khost Province

District Level Contextual Factors



The *kuchi* requested that the Afghan government and the United Nations either solve their local problem or relocate them. Matun *tallah* elders came together to assist in this mediation. The Babakar Khel came to the Matun elders and told them that they were worried that the *kuchi* would attack them while they were traveling to Khost City. During this time, President Karzai asked the Governors of Paktya, Khost, and Logar, selected elders, including the Matun *tallah* representatives, and the Attorney General of Afghanistan to resolve this dispute. The Matun told the *kuchi* that they cannot attack Babakar Khel because they are currently residing on Matun land. The Matun permitted the *kuchi* to settle in their territory for a temporary period as guests. According to their culture, the Matun explained, if the Babakar Khel pass through the Matun area, they cannot be attacked.

The land dispute was settled briefly in late July 2006 with an agreement that the *kuchis* will leave the disputed area for seasonal camps. It was agreed that the Azar Khel would be allowed to stay in alternative locations in Bak for six months a year, but that they could not build homes in Bak District. At first, the Babakar Khel and *kuchi* both agreed to the resolution. The *kuchi* reportedly perceived that this resolution was in favor of the Babakar Khel. In the last few years, the government has been unable to uphold this resolution, consequently it dissolved, but there was at least a brief ceasefire.

Reportedly, the people of Matun, Bak, and the *kuchi*, do not want the government involved in this dispute because the government cannot uphold any of these resolutions, just as civil society organizations, such as the Tribal Solidarity Council (TSC) and Tribal Conflict Research Commission (TCRC) of Khost cannot uphold their resolutions. Only the people are believed to be able to uphold the resolutions.

Some of the *kuchi* involved in this dispute settled on Matun land in Matun District (Khost District) in the past few years. More recently, although the Matun invited the *kuchi* to stay on their land temporarily, the *kuchi* moved onto Matun land to an area that was formerly used as Matun grazing land. Reportedly, the *kuchi* were settling on this land and building compounds on this land, creating discontent among the Matun.

For more on the tallah system, see the Khost Provincial Overview.

Babakar Khel – Chinah Settled Kuchi in Sabari

A related dispute also exists between the settled Niazi *kuchi* of Chinah of Sabari District and Babakar Khel over the Gurgari Valley. The Niazi in Chinah reported that they have been unable to log the mountain in three or four years, having been forced from the area by the Babakar Khel.

Within the last few years, Babakar Khel *arbakai* were regularly observed on a hilltop above the Chinah area, the white of the cloth standing out in clear contrast to the blue of the sky. The Babakar Khel would occasionally shoot at the Niazi who wander too close.

Despite this conflict, most of the Niazi children from Chinah attend school in Bak District.

Terezai – Babakar Khel

A historic dispute exists between the Terezai tribe of Terezai District and Babakar Khel over an area called Mokhrum. Periodic violence also breaks out between the Niazi and these two parties over this area.



Bak District, Khost Province

District Level Contextual Factors

Jaji – Babakar Khel

The Jaji generally blame the Babakar Khel of Bak District and the Sabari of Sabari District for insecurity in their district and on the road to Khost City. In recent years, there have been frequent clashes between the Jaji and the Babakar Khel and Sabari over road security.

Livelihoods

Bak District is characterized by the largest land holdings in Khost Province. Tribal land holdings invariably show a regular system of allotment or division and it is probable that the division of land was apportioned originally according to a respected tribal elder or chief in the past and this system has been retained. In the case of Bak District, there are nine of these in the district. These shares are typically aligned along topographical features and each unique share is assigned to a sub-tribe. The largest share is in Tarakay territory since the Tarakay clans are the largest landowners in the district.

The majority of the population (65%) is working in agriculture. The Bak area sustains rain fed and intensively irrigated crops. Legal crops are wheat, corn, bean, pulse, barley, and even rice in rainy years. Although the Babakar Khel grew poppy during the civil war and during a brief stint between 2004 and 2006, it was eradicated throughout Khost by 2007. About 10% people are working with the Government in different positions and 5% are employed in the private sector. About 10% of the population work abroad, hence remittances are important. Forest resources also supplement their livelihoods.

Bak District, Khost Province

District Level Contextual Factors



Critical Questions

To assess unity and strength of leadership, ask if the elders stand together. Also, ask when do the people of X area come together. What drives them apart?

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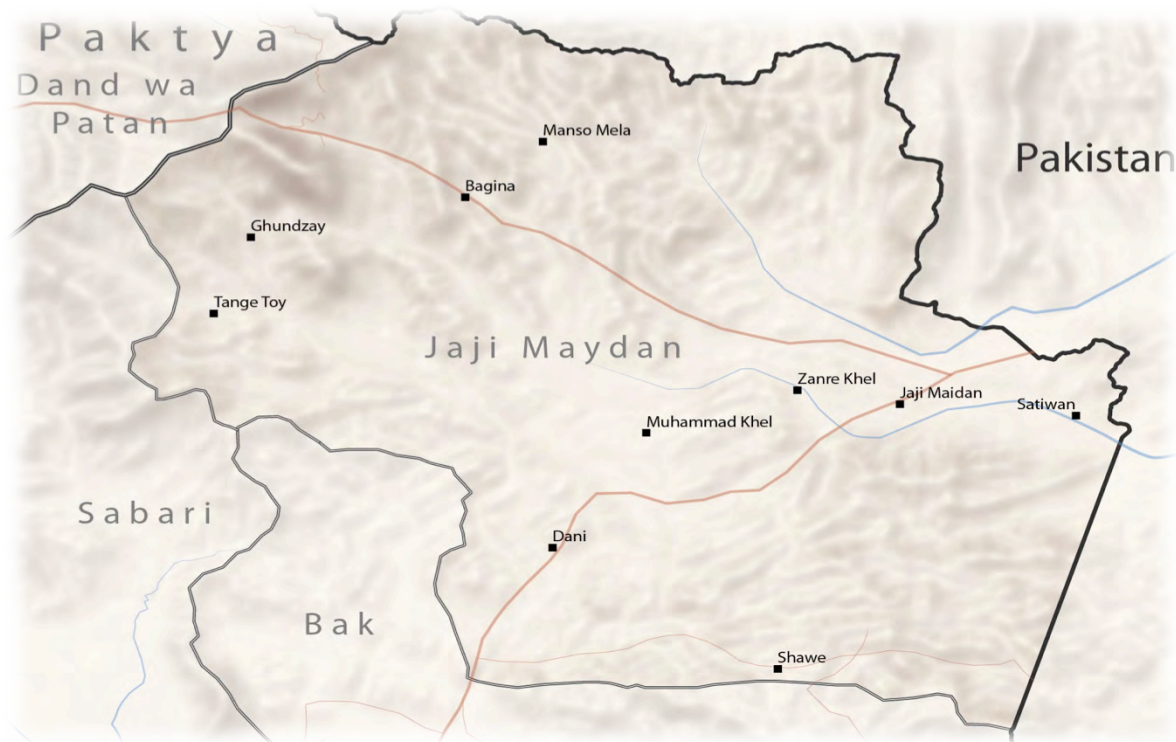
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Jaji Maidan District, Khost Province

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Jaji Maidan District, Khost Province

District Level Contextual Factors



The loyalties of the Jaji region were complex. The Jajis were reportedly badly split between pro-Kabul and pro-Resistance sub-tribes. During the Soviet invasion, the Jaji in Khost acquired the reputation of being more pro-government than many of their neighbors, although most of the population eventually fled to Pakistan to avoid the fighting. This is rumored to have caused divisions between the tribe and many of the other tribes in Khost that exist today. Despite many Jaji supporting the communist government, there was still inter-factional fighting that occurred in Jaji between *Hezb-e Islami Gulbuddin* (commonly referred locally to as just “Hezb-e”), *Ittihad* (Abdul Rasoul Sayyaf’s party), and Pir Gailani’s National Islamic Front of Afghanistan, during the Soviet-Afghan and civil war periods that followed the communist defeat.

Following the defeat of the communists, the Jaji militia groups that fought with Soviet and Afghan forces contacted National Islamic Front of Afghanistan leaders, particularly its leader, Pir Gailani whose political skills were stronger than his movement’s military capability, to arrange reconciliation *jirgas* with resistance groups.

Reportedly, Jaji Maidan was one of the biggest *mujahideen* bases, with a warren of over 500 caves and tunnels in the forested ranges of the Spin Gar mountains. Osama bin Laden’s construction company was reported to have built the camp. Reportedly, this was the location of his “Battle of Lion’s Den,” which was fought in this key district during the last stages of the anti-Soviet jihad. Later, *Hezb-e Islami Gulbuddin* controlled Jaji Maidan, but it was then taken over by the Taliban without any opposition. During the time of Taliban rule (1996-2001), it was reported that the Jaji were not allowed or not able to leave their area. Religious leaders did not have as much of a hold among the Jaji tribe as they do in other areas, mainly because the Jaji were not as prominent *mujaheddin* fighters as others.

Geography

Jaji Maidan is covered with forested mountains, making it fairly isolated from the rest of Khost.

Jaji Maidan is characterized by being very fertile. Jaji Maidan River is one of the principal rivers of Khost. It crosses into Pakistan joins the Kurram River below Parachinar. This river system was a key route for *mujahideen* supply caravans and some of the most fought over territory in the war was around Jaji Maidan.

One of the two roads leading out of Khost Province to Kabul passes along a long mountain defile through Jaji Maidan in Khost, and Chamkani and Jaji Ayoub in Paktya. There is an official border crossing in Pakistan at Shorangai and unofficial crossings are possible at Khogai and Showai passes.

Identity Factors

The Jaji are famous for working with past governments and the current government. Generally, they consider themselves to be a strong tribe. Historically and in recent years, Jaji have had a *qawm-e taroon* (or tribal treaty) amongst themselves to police their own area and cooperate with national security forces. In recent years, the treaty dictated that the tribe would punish anyone harboring Taliban or engaging in anti-government activities. An explanation could be that there are a higher than average proportion of Jaji in the national security forces. Unlike some Afghan security forces, the local militias trained by US Special Forces and border police in Jaji Maidan are reportedly judged extremely competent by US military officials and exhibit control of their areas. Another explanation shows that the Jaji tribe in northern Khost tended to join the government’s security organs as they were generally well educated, and subsequently given positions within the government.

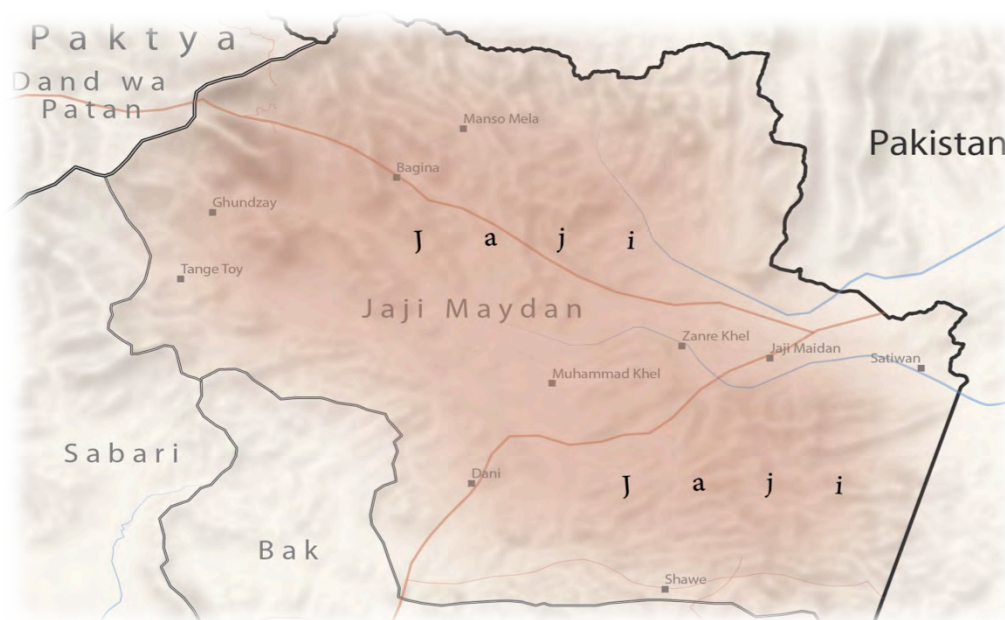
Jaji Maidan District, Khost Province

District Level Contextual Factors



Social Groups

The Jaji of Jaji Mайдan are frequently just referred to as “Maidan Jaji,” but multiple sub-tribes do reside in the district, to include the Hassan Khel, Aka Khel [Ada Khel], Bagan Khel, Derey Khel, Mata Khel, and Zani Khel. The predominant sub-tribe is reported to be the Aka Khel. A minority of Jaji also reside or commute to work in the Ali Sher area of Terezai and Khost City.



Jaji Mайдan also experiences an influx of refugees when there are outbreaks of fighting between the Sunni and Shi'a in the areas of the lower Kurram Agency of Pakistan.

There are no reported tribal disputes among the Jaji, but there tend to be a number of private property disputes. The Jajis of Jaji Mайдan seem to be relatively isolated and claim no relationships with neighboring districts in Khost province, though there are a few reported disputes with neighboring groups.

Jaji – Turi

Although historically aligned, the Jaji and the Turi have repeatedly engaged in cross-border hostilities. In recent years, a series of trans-border *jirgas* between Jaji and Turi elders had agreed to ‘fight terrorism together and live like brothers’, in the words of one of the Afghan participants. This accord, however, was not universally accepted.

Jaji – Babakar Khel and Jaji – Sabari

With local help, insurgents often turn the main road leading from the district to the provincial capital into a minefield, helping to isolate Jaji Mайдan from the rest of the province. The Jaji generally blame the Babakar Khel and Sabari tribes for insecurity in their district and on the road to Khost City. In recent years, there have been frequent Jaji clashes with the Babakar Khel and Sabari over road security.

Jaji Maidan District, Khost Province

District Level Contextual Factors

Livelihoods

Jaji Maidan is a relatively prosperous district. Much of their prosperity is not derived from the district itself, but from remittances from inside Afghanistan and abroad.

Jaji Maidan is fertile, yielding two crops per year. Principle crops are maize, rice, and wheat. Watermelons and other melons are also grown. Bee keeping is also common. Poppy was grown for the opium industry in Jaji Maidan from about 2001 – 2007, at which time it was eradicated throughout Khost.

Households generally rely on finding additional labor opportunities to diversify their livelihoods. Jaji commonly engage in labor during harvests in surrounding districts, as observed in Sabari and Terezai districts. A higher than average proportion of Jaji enter the national security forces.

Cutting timber is an important economic mainstay in Jaji Maidan District. Commercial timber harvesting is illegal in Afghanistan — which leaves a massive smuggling industry to satisfy demand. The mountains are also rich in valuable minerals, such as chromite. The mountains are also one of the main areas for walnut harvesting in Khost. Villagers or businessmen sell them in Khost City Bazaar.

Analysts tend to focus on illicit drug production and trade in their discussion of criminality and funding for the insurgency in Afghanistan. What is typically omitted, however, is the illegal extraction of Afghanistan's natural resources. As a consequence, illegal deforestation and mineral extraction are directly linked to issues of governance and security sector reform.

Jaji Maidan District, Khost Province

District Level Contextual Factors



Critical Questions

To assess unity and strength of leadership, ask if the elders stand together. Also, ask when do the people of X area come together. What drives them apart?

To assess systems of governance, ask if the *tallah* system is important in the area and when, why, and how so.

To assess whether local traditional governance is centralized, ask if there is a *qawm-e taroon* and whether it is applied.

To assess influence, ask who has influence and why.

To assess saliency of tribe, ask when tribe matters, under what conditions, and why.

To assess village organization, ask how the village is broken up into different parts.

To assess change, ask what has changed for the people in the past few years.

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Jaji Maidan District, Khost Province

District Level Contextual Factors

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