

WHY TO VOTE? ELECTORAL PARTICIPATION IN GENERAL ELECTION (A CASE STUDY OF AFGHANISTAN 2010 AND 2018 PARLIAMENTARY ELECTION)

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ABSTRACT

Democracy in Afghanistan like many other developing countries has gone through several ups and downs. The process of democracy initiated by king Amanullah khan in 1919 when he articulated the first constitution of Afghanistan. However, this process has stopped many times in the 20th century. But after the American invasion of Afghanistan this process became a broader issue in Afghanistan. The Bonn conference made a political road map for the future of the country. The constitution was articulated in 2004 which created a way for electing people representation to the parliament. These three rounds of parliamentary election particularly election for the lower house of the parliament faced several issues which questioned its representation in Afghanistan. Besides, the 20 years old democracy came to an end in 2021 unpredictably and it was claiming that people in Afghanistan haven't wanted to have a democratic government. It was also thought that the political and social arena of Afghanistan does not suit this kind of government. Beside these ideas the people of Afghanistan have participated in three round parliamentary elections and four times they came together to elect their president. In view of these equations too many questions arise. For instance, if people don't want to have a democratic government so why they are participating in these kind of democratic process. So this qualitative research focused to determine the main reason that motivated people to participate in general elections in a society that have faced too many challenges in implementing democracy in the last twenty years.(Andrea,2009). Through semi-structured interview with politicians, Journalists, academician and voter in this we understand various factor which resulted to lead people come to the polling centers and use their votes. According to the rational choice theory used in this research we find that political awareness, people self-interest, believing in democracy as great system of government, the power of each vote, the hate that people had from the last few years war in Afghanistan, unregulated in changing governmental system, dictatorship and so many other were the main motivation for casting votes in Walasi Jirga election in Afghanistan. By examining the two round (2010 and 2018) parliamentary election in Afghanistan we understand that the process of democratizing Afghanistan is facing several ups and downs. Believing in voting has always effected the turn out in electoral participation. Comparison between the last two round elections shows that participation in general election is getting down in Afghanistan. This article is mainly focusing to find out the main motivation behind participation in parliamentary elections.

Key Words: Elections, turn out, parliament, democracy, Afghanistan

INTRODUCTION

Anthony M. Birch says “democracy means a system of representative government in which the representative is chosen by free competitive elections through universal suffrage” (Hasan, 2013). In democratic system, supreme power is vested in the hands of people and they use it directly or indirectly through their chosen representatives (Madani, 2021). In ancient time when there were less populated states people directly expressed their will on public affairs and there was no need for deputies to represent the people. This type of democracy was practiced in the Greek city-states (Runciman, 2018)

In modern populated states people will is expressed through their elected representative. Powers are delegated to representatives for decision making and deliberation. This system of democratic representation is adopted in different countries throughout the world. For instance, United States of America, New Zealand, Australia, West Germany, Italy, India, Japan and Bangladesh. Election is the most important element in democracy. It implies the process through which the people (voters) elect their representatives to act on their behalf in public interest (Lee Morgenbesser and Thomas B. Pepinsky, 2019). Historically, parliament is considered as the biggest representative and elected body which acts in public interest and represent people. Parliament functions three basic responsibilities: representing people, making of laws and regulations and examining of governmental activities (Danish, 2015). The power was shifted in favor of parliament in 1215 through Magna Carta. John the king of England gave his assent to Magna Carta and agreed to transfer some of his power to parliament, representative body (James F. Barnes, Marshal Carter, Max J. skidmore, 1980).

Before 1215, there were some subjects of public affairs in which particular people were called upon by the ruler to share their views. They expressed their views on the issues in specific assemblies and councils which existed in those societies. For instance, in some parts of East Africa kings took oath to do justice and the duty of councils was to insure that he did. Even in 930 there was an assembly in Iceland, which is known as the oldest legislative body in the world. But Magna Carta can be traced as an unbroken line for contemporary legislatures because the assemblies which were existed before Magna Carta had some limited responsibilities and

these assemblies were not that much similar to the contemporary parliament which has huge impact on political surface of the country (Jones, 2009).

The British parliament could be considered as mother parliament of majority of Asian countries specifically south Asia. As Britishers were the first who introduced representative democracy in this region. Representative government did not exist before the arrival of the Britishers in this region (Ahmed, 2001).

Introduction of representative democracies in this region starts with the Indian Council Act 1909, where people were given the right to elect their own representative from themselves (Lee Morgenbesser and Thomas B. Pepinsky, 2019). Representative democracy is practiced in most of south Asian and central Asian countries like: Pakistan, Bangladesh, Afghanistan, Sri Lanka, India, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan. The history of parliamentary democracy in Afghanistan is of recent age and is currently passing from its transitional phases.

Monarchical structure of ruling has existed in Afghanistan from ancient times. (Weinbaum, 1972). Parliament as a representative body does not have huge history in Afghanistan. This process, was initiated by king Amanullah Khan in 1923. It was the first step towards the creation of first parliament in Afghanistan (Marwin, 1972). After Amanullah Khan's government, the role of parliament was considered as one of the momentous factors in decision making process in Afghanistan. Nadir Khan made it bi-cameral (National assembly and the House of Lords) in 1931. (Shah, 2004) After Nadir Khan this process was also supported by other kings but their approaches to the election of parliamentarian were different.

After the 9/11 attacks in the United States of America (USA) a huge change occurred in the political system of Afghanistan. The Bonn agreement of December 2001 built the foundation of political institutions in Afghanistan (Astri Suhrke, 2002). One of the outcome of the Bonn conference was the articulation of a new constitution of Afghanistan in 2004. This constitution paved the ways for creation of a new democratic system in Afghanistan (Danish, 2015). The constitution adopted presidential form of government for Afghanistan. The constitution has

given abundant of authorities to the president but has made him responsible to the nation through their representatives in the national assembly. It is mentioned in article 81 of Afghanistan constitution that the national assembly is the highest organ of legislation and symbol of unity. According to article 82 of the constitution parliament consists of two houses Lower house (Walesi Jirga) and Upper house (Meshrano Jirga). The election procedure for parliamentarians is based on universal suffrage, secret balloting and direct elections (article, 90).

The first parliamentary elections after Bonn conference were held on September 18, 2005. (Tookhy, 2020). These elections were to be held in 2004 but due to insecurity and militia threats it was delayed till September, 2005. In this election 2707 candidates, 328 females and 2379 male, contested for the 249 seats of lower house (Ghufran, 2006). 12,500,000 people were registered to vote in these elections but only 6400,000 cast the vote 5,882,867 votes was considered as valid for the 2005 Walesi Jirga elections results (Tookhy, 2020). As the constitution clearly determine five years interval for every elected candidates. The second general elections in Afghanistan were held on 18 September, 2010. In this election 2,583 candidates including 401 women contested for 249 seats of parliament. 9200000 people were registered for voting but almost half of them 4216594 mark themselves as voters. To the final result of 2010 Walesi Jirga election the elections commission marks only 4030227 votes as valid for the 249 seats of the lower house of the parliament (Tookhy, 2020) The next round of Walesi Jirga election was to be held in 2015 but because of economic and security threats it was delayed till 2018. The lowest numbers of parliamentary election since 2005 were saved in 2018. 8663531 people registered themselves for voting but less than half of them (3660529) participated and then 3,296643 votes were considered as valid for the result of 2018 Walesi Jirga elections (Staffan Darnolf and Scott S. Smith, 2019). In this Walesi Jirga elections 2,566 candidates including 415 women contested for the 249 seats of Walesi Jirga from 34 provinces (Ghufran, 2006).

Out of 31.6 million estimated populations in Afghanistan almost 15 million of them were eligible for the Walesi Jirga election in Afghanistan in 2018. Only 8.6 million Were registered to participate in

2018 election however 12,5 million were registered to vote in 2010 Walesi Jirga elections by the independent election commission which show a considerable decline of people participation in 2018 Walesi Jirga elections. Thus, the article will focus to determine that why the turnout in 2010 Walesi Jirga election in Afghanistan was greater than that of 2018 elections. It will also find out the main factors which motivated people to participate in Walesi Jirga elections in Afghanistan.. Furthermore, the research aims to determine the main reasons behind the lower participation of people in rural areas as compared to the urban areas.

Elections and Democracy:

The majority of definitions of elections consider them to be an essential component of democratic politics—a means of institutionalizing political equality by providing individuals with the opportunity to regularly cast equal votes for a potential representative of their choice or, for others, a venue for contestation for governmental office. In theory, elections are held to measure popular support for particular individuals in order to establish a government that is representative, or as representative as possible, and is held accountable by subsequent elections (Larson, Noah Coburn and Anna, 2013). According to some academics like Robert Dahl, is the only feasible strategy for expanding democratic politics to the national level. Elections are typically held on a regular basis to ensure that individuals are subject to the competitive gaining or regaining of public confidence through the popular vote. (Cookman,2022)

One of the basic component of democratic governance is elections. Democratic government must be carried out through representatives because direct democracy—a type of government in which political choices are made directly by the complete body of qualified citizens—is unworkable in the majority of contemporary cultures. Elections give citizens the opportunity to choose their leaders and hold them responsible for their actions while in government. Accountability can be harmed by elected officials who do not care if they are reelected or by a party or coalition that is so strong that voters have little to no choice among alternative candidates, parties, or policies due to historical factors or other factors. However, the ability to maintain control over

leaders by compelling them to participate in regular elections helps to address the issue of leadership succession and so supports the survival of democracy. Elections also act as platforms for the discussion of public issues and help promote the expression of public opinion where the electoral process is competitive and pushes candidates or parties to expose their histories and future intentions to public scrutiny. Citizens can learn about politics through elections, which also guarantee that democratic governments will act in accordance with the wishes of the populace. Additionally, they serve to legitimate the actions of individuals in positions of authority, a role that is partially filled even by noncompetitive elections (Heinz Eulau, Roger Gibbins and Paul David Webb, 2020).

The political community's stability and legitimacy are also bolstered by elections. Elections connect citizens to one another, confirming the viability of the polity in the same way that national holidays commemorate experiences shared by all. Elections, as a result, aid in social and political integration.

Lastly, elections confirm the worth and dignity of individual citizens as human beings, which serves a purpose of self-actualization. Voters' self-esteem and self-respect are bolstered when they participate in an election, regardless of any other requirements they may have. People have the opportunity to express their opinions and satisfy their need to feel a sense of belonging by voting. Some people feel the need to express their alienation from the political community even if they don't vote. The long struggle for the right to vote and the demand for equal electoral participation can be seen as manifestations of a deep human desire for personal fulfillment precisely for these reasons (Katz, 1997).

A Short History of Elections in Afghanistan:

Although some analysts are of the opinion that the 2004 and 2005 elections as the first steps toward an Afghan democracy following the international intervention in 2001, precedents still existed: previous elections, in addition to a tradition of community consultation in the selection of leaders that influenced the outcome of the polls. Preceding 2004, generally, free parliamentary surveys had occurred in 1949, with the foundation of the purported Liberal Parliament (1949-1952). Later, in 1964 and again in 1969, under Zahir Shah's reforms

and a new constitution, parliamentary elections were held during what is sometimes referred to as the "decade of democracy" (1963–1973).

In 1973, a coup led by Mohammed Dawood Khan, a cousin of the king and former prime minister, ended the constitutional monarchy and declared the beginning of the Republic, ending this fledgling electoral cycle. Although the fully participatory election for a national leader in Afghanistan in 2004 was the first, it was not the first election for many older Afghans, as mentioned above (Larson, Noah Coburn and Anna, 2013).

A number of elections have been held since the middle of 2004 among Afghans: as presidential in 2004; In 2005, Walasi Jirga, the lower house of the National Assembly, and the Provincial Council, which represents 34 provinces, Walasi Jirga in 2010 and the Presidential and Provincial Council in 2009. Additionally, each of the 34 Provincial Councils elects two-thirds of the upper house of the National Assembly (the Meshrano Jirga) and the president appoints one-third as a result of the Provincial Council events. In 2004, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) conducted out-of-country voting (OCV) for Afghan refugees in Pakistan and Afghanistan for the presidential election; this did not occur again at any subsequent events (Campbell, 2018).

As a result of widespread mistrust of political parties associated with the Communist and civil war eras, a misunderstanding of the implications of having a single vote for individual candidates in large multi-member constituencies, and a possible executive strategy to limit the emergence of organized opposition, SNTV's birth in Afghanistan was initially something of an accident. A provincially based list PR system was proposed by the United Nations in 2004 as the best option for Afghan Walasi Jirga elections; however, the rules were reportedly not adopted correctly when they were presented to the cabinet. President Karzai changed the proposed provincially-based list PR system to SNTV by simply stating that voters would select a candidate rather than a party, list, or block, and that candidates could not show party affiliation on the ballot after the UN-crafted proportional electoral system was poorly explained by an Afghan cabinet minister. According to the 2004 electoral law, voters will still be able to choose between individual candidates rather than

parties in the multi-member provincial constituencies that were initially intended for use in the list-PR system (Andrew Reynolds and John Carey, 2012).

The constitution and the Electoral Law serve as the Independent Election Commission, Independent election commission legal foundation. Citizens "shall have the right to elect and be elected," according to Article 33, and the "Independent Election Commission shall be established to administer as well as supervise every kind of election" is spelled out in Article 156. Three electoral laws have been passed, all of which were made by presidential decree: 2004, 2005, and 2010 (when the ECC provisions were made). The INDEPENDENT ELECTION COMMISSION is also impacted by a number of additional decrees and adjunct laws, such as the Political Parties Law of 2009 (Campbell, 2018) Since 2004, the president has been elected through a two-round, direct, majoritarian process in which all voters cast a single vote for a single candidate who does not need to be a member of a party; Whoever receives "50 percent + 1" of the votes is the winner. A runoff between the two front-runners is called if no candidate succeeds. The single non-transferable vote (SNTV) electoral system was chosen for the first parliamentary and provincial council elections. In multimember constituencies (provinces), like in presidential elections, all voters cast one vote for a single candidate. Each province has a set number of seats based on population. The number of candidates who can put themselves forward is unlimited: Again, no candidate is required to run on a party ticket; the candidates who receive the most votes win the seats that are available (Larson, Democracy in Afghanistan: July, 2021).

There are Thirty-four provinces and a nationwide constituency for the country's nomadic communities, the kuchis, are the thirty-five multimember electoral constituencies in which each voter casts a single vote for a single candidate to elect their representatives for Walasi Jirga. Article 83 of the constitution stipulates that at least one seat must be reserved for female candidates in each constituency (for a total of at least sixty-eight seats nationwide)—an exception to this general rule that allows female candidates to win seats with fewer votes than their male counterparts. Afghanistan's elections are managed by the Independent election commission. In 2009, strong

allegations were made about the Independent election commission lack of impartiality, and this became a common and prevalent belief, particularly after reports about "extensive" election fraud committed by Independent election commission staff were made public. It was anticipated that the Afghan-led Commission would instill a sense of Afghan ownership of the process; however, due to their ethnicity, many Afghans lacked faith in the commissioners' impartiality.

In the months leading up to the elections in 2010, the Independent election commission expended a significant amount of time and effort responding to such allegations and defending its reputation; however, it was unable to effectively respond to all demands because some of them were beyond the independent election commission means and/or authority (ensuring security, registering emigrant Afghans for elections).

Another arbitrator was brought in because of the ECC's weakness and inability to act as a watchdog: the Attorney General's Office, which was contacted by a lot of candidates who felt powerless and were encouraged to get involved by the president, who was unhappy with the results of the parliamentary elections. The Principal legal officer's Office subsequently began exploring independent election commission and ECC staff. The main issue is that there is no body with the authority and credibility to mediate or make the final decision in the dispute, which is still ongoing.

National observers were also important players because they could travel to areas that were more dangerous than international observers could. These were the candidates' representatives. One issue was that there was no limit on the number of such agents, so candidates with more money had more people on the ground. On Election Day there were arguments because the polling stations in some urban centers did not have enough space for all of the agents. FEFA was the main independent national observation group, and it covered about 60% of all polling locations. In terms of observing the process, FEFA played an important and courageous role. However, it cannot be ignored that some FEFA employees were either bought out or replaced by powerful candidates (Shaharзад Akbar and Zubaida Akbar, 2011).

Theoretical background of casting vote:

The rational choice theory is the main theory used in this article. In this section I discuss some important assumptions regarding voting turnout. We show that if people care about social welfare and have "social" preferences, they can vote rationally even in large elections. The expected utility benefit of voting to an individual with social preferences can be significant given the large social benefits at stake in a large election and the low probability that a vote will be decisive. The fact that the expected value of the social benefit does not approach zero or even decrease as the number of voter's increases is perhaps surprising. It is typically assumed that agents in rational-choice models have "selfish" preferences. Separating the rationality assumption from the selfishness assumption, we argue, reveals that (a) voting can be rational, and (b) a rational voter will choose a candidate or option based on their assessment of the expected social consequences of the election outcome as opposed to the direct consequences for that voter.

This is demonstrated for a straightforward model in which voters choose whether to vote and how to vote on the basis of maximizing an expected utility in terms of both social and selfish considerations.

Our observation that, for the very reasons it is rational to vote in a large election, even a mostly selfish person who votes should as a descriptive matter vote for what he or she perceives to be the common good, or at least the good of a large affinity group, but not for direct individual gain is more important than explaining that it is rational for people to vote (if they have social preferences). As a result, not only does our model explain why people vote rationally but also how they vote. Social rather than egotistical utility functions should be used in this voting theory's models of rational decision-making.

In close elections, or, to be more specific, in elections that are anticipated to be close, turnout is typically higher, and there is some evidence to suggest that potential voters who perceive an election to be close are more likely to vote. The decision-theoretic motivation for voting has been supported by extensive research on these effects. However, proponents and detractors of the rational-choice model have both pointed out that even in close elections, the probability of a single vote being decisive in large elections is extremely low.

In addition, it is unclear why voting should provide more satisfaction or fulfill more civic duty in close elections if it is motivated by personal satisfaction.

In contrast, the social-benefit theory, in which even small probabilities of decisiveness are significant when multiplied by the social benefits, makes perfect sense of the increased turnout that results from closer elections.

The fact that voters sometimes act strategically is strong evidence that vote choices are perceived as consequential and, as a result, suitable for decision-analytic analysis.

In surveys, many voters say that their vote choices are strongly influenced by non-economic issues that do not directly affect them (for example, if you oppose abortion, you will not be directly affected by abortion laws). This is another indication that voting is motivated by social benefit.

While it is true that some contentious issues, such as social security benefits, do involve instrumental benefits for voters, the fact that these are not the only issues of importance to voters is crucial to our model (Greene 2009). Citizens can have their voices heard and be respected by voting. Surveys of potential voters provide solid support for our model.

Views of what would be ideal for the nation are strongly correlated with voters' preferences for national candidates and issues, whereas opinions of personal gain are more weakly correlated. Consequently, the prevalent viewpoint in political science—to which we adhere—is that voters' preferences are socially motivated. The concept of social-benefit motivations is extended to public opinion by Funk (2000). It is reasonable for any decision-theoretic model of voting to include anticipated social benefit in the utility function if your vote choice is determined by social-benefit concerns. However, these findings address who you might vote for and not whether you turn out to vote.

The majority of the electorate is motivated to vote by a combination of personal appeals and media encouragement, according to psychological explanations of voter turnout. You are more likely to vote if a particular election becomes particularly "salient" to you due to publicity and possibly a connection to an issue of personal interest. Similar to how people get excited about the World Series, the Academy Awards, and other events, interest in elections grows closer to the election.

Because they receive the most publicity, presidential elections have a higher turnout. Similarly, for close elections, where voting receives more favorable pre-election coverage. Voting is a good way to get involved in the political process, especially if the election seems important, gets a lot of attention, and is talked about a lot (Aaron Elin, Andrew Gellman, and Noah Kaplan, 2007).

We must provide some kind of consumption benefit for voting in order to increase voter participation in costly elections. There are two formally similar but conceptually distinct approaches that can both explain turnout and provide comparative stats consistent with strategic behavior within the rational choice research agenda. In both approaches, it is assumed that potential voters are members of similar groups with similar preferences for the candidates. The probability that a particular vote is pivotal is irrelevant in either approach—voters only vote if and only if they receive consumption benefits. Instead, the explanation of changes in consumption benefits is the primary focus. (Oppenheimer, 2006).

There is a lot of evidence to suggest that a sense of civic duty motivates voters to vote. A calculation of civic duty is provided by ethical voter models. Each voter has preferences regarding election outcomes in group-based ethical voter models, where election outcomes are broadly defined to include not only which candidate wins the election but also how many people vote. Voter preferences are assumed to be explicitly socio-political in some models, but the degree to which preferences are "ethical" is not determined in others. However, the fact that voter preferences over outcomes satisfy some normative criteria is not the reason why these models are given the label "ethical." Instead, there are two reasons why agents are considered ethical. First, ethical agents compare the outcomes that would occur if everyone who shares their preferences were to act in accordance with the same rule to evaluate alternative behavioral rules in a Kantian manner. Second, they get a positive reward for following a behavioral rule they think is best for them based on their preferences and evaluation of other rules (Pedersen, 2004).

According to Downs (1957), the democratic system will fail if no one votes. As a result, some individuals may vote to ensure the continuation of democracy and derive a "consumption" benefit equivalent to the

increased value of democracy's survival (Downs, 1957).

Scholars have looked to social networks to explain voter turnout in response to Aristotle's theory that man is a social animal. Because the anticipated benefits may outweigh the voting costs at the group level, the argument suggests that voting might be rational for a group of individuals. First, political participation is likely to benefit more groups than individuals. The reason for this is that politicians may offer groups additional benefits in the form of policies that are closer to the group's ideals in order to garner their support. Second, because a social group's political influence is thought to be inversely proportional to its size, the group as a whole is more likely to have a non-negligible effect on the outcome of an election (Gays, 2006).

Positive turnout can be beneficial to the group as a whole, according to models of turnout that incorporate group behavior. However, since free riding on the efforts of other members of the group is best for each person, a good theoretical explanation for why people wouldn't do that is essential.

The earlier work lacks this. For instance, Ulmer (1989) specifically relies on "selective incentives" to explain why individual group members vote, such as sharing a sense of group identity or loyalty. These are nothing more than the impromptu addition of personal psychological advantages, rendering the model useless as a predictive tool.

People are constrained not only because they lack knowledge of the various consequences of their decisions, but also because they lack the intellectual capacity to evaluate each option. To put it another way, the population's level of knowledge is probably not nearly enough. The theory of "bounded rationality" proposed by Simon in 1957 was the first to present this viewpoint. It implies that people are best described as "satisfiers" rather than utility maximizers, as neither can be. They can't pick the best option, so they have to settle for the one that works best for them.

This concept of limited information was incorporated into a theory of voter turnout by Matsusaka (1995). He argues that a person's likelihood of voting increases with their level of information, starting with the presumption that people naturally vote. The reason for this is that "when the voter is more confident that she is voting for the right candidate,

the value of changing the election outcome is higher." According to him, a voter's ideological preference influences their decision to gather information. He demonstrated that non-partisan citizens are the most likely to acquire information and, as a result, cast ballots (Matusaka, 1995).

The Main Motivational Causes of Voting in Afghanistan:

Before the election of 2010, (Fredrik Carlsson and Olof Johansson-Stenman, 2010) conducted a survey and stated that 'the good news in our study was that 69 percent of respondents intended to vote in next elections, indicating that some people still had faith in the system. Additionally, 55% of respondents said they supported the majoritarian way of voting, indicating that "elections culture" may be gradually influencing people's choices.' All these reasons have been found during semi structured interview with various categories of people during the research. It has to be mentioned that due to some personal and security problems we don't use their original names and some other kinds of information's.

Elections have repercussions. Each vote counts.

"You have the authority, said by a social activist during interview in Nangarhar province, to decide what kind of life you want for your family, your community, and yourself. By exercising your right to vote, you can advocate for causes close to your heart, such as access to affordable housing, economic fairness, environmental protection, and high-quality education." (Abdullah, 2023)

As per the RCT, people look at the future while deciding and voting in a particular, and at a particular time. This futuristic approach is always for the maximization of benefits, based on the analysis of existing conditions, called objective conditions. Elections have always future repercussions and consequences. Man is a political animal, is a famous quote of Plato. It means that if you want or not, politics will knock at your door. You are influenced directly or indirectly by the political affairs going all around. Thus elections definitely influence people and they have consequences. These consequences are both collective and individualistic. On collective level, the government which comes into power through elections is expected to govern the whole society. On the other hand, collective processes have

individualistic consequences, which cannot be undone. In this case the people of Nangarhar voted based on their analysis of existing objective conditions, while perceiving the future of their country.

These people voted for economic development, fair education system to develop their country and innovate new things and environmental protections. These things are beneficial for their country and province.

Being part of the system:

"Everyone in our community, said Yaqoob, a lecturer at one of the public universities, and academician, pays taxes in one way or another. But most people are unaware of how that money is being used. Voting gives you the opportunity to decide how your tax funds are spent, for as by allocating more money for social and medical services. (Yaqoob, 2023) This occurs both as a result of your vote on certain proposals and ballot initiatives as well as the individuals we choose for leadership roles who agree to support important social services in our communities.

Whenever we are part of the system, we take benefits from its existence. All those who rule or are being part of this system always struggle to preserve it, as it is beneficial to him/her and the collectivity in which he/she live. Having stated that, we can argue that the people of Nangarhar were part of the system or at least that system was beneficial to them. They not only wanted to keep its existence but they wanted to preserve it by casting vote. The only vote was basically a well calculated strategy as they could use it to preserve and protect the system in which they lived.

Political Leaders, Parties, and Elites:

Powerful political figures and groups played a significant role in the most recent parliamentary election, as they have in the presidential and parliamentary elections in the past. The government or their ethnic group gave them authority to play a particular role. They made use of a variety of tools to secure a seat in the new parliament and utilized issues of ethnicity and religion to encourage participation. They also worked hard to get more people to join the Election Commission. Members of the Election and Complaints Commissions were occasionally "bought

out" by political figures and organizations in some instances. Because they were unable to travel to dangerously remote areas to campaign and distribute their posters, other candidates with less power, money, and support from the government had their campaigns hampered by the influential political groups and individuals. Female candidates were one of these candidates, but they had few opportunities to travel to far-off places to campaign.

At first glance, political parties do not appear to play a significant role in elections. Only 32 candidates, or 1.2% of the total number of candidates, declared their affiliation with a political party in the 2010 parliamentary elections. A new political party law was enacted in 2010, requiring the more than one hundred political parties to re-register, giving independent candidates a better chance because many parties discredited themselves during the 30 years of conflict and because they can gain support in a more flexible manner and thus be open to involvement in various alliances. When it came time to present candidates, only five parties were registered with the Ministry of Justice due to technical issues. But the most important thing is that the SNTV system prevents people from coming together to work toward the same goals now and in the future. "See how many candidates we have in Kabul, over 600," said one young observer. We do not see a clear process of democratization; rather, nobody trusts anyone.

However, to make matters even more complicated, the number of candidates with official affiliations does not accurately reflect their actual ties to parties, particularly the military-political factions that have evolved into parties and supported numerous candidates. The voters' level of trust in the party system was not increased by the secrecy surrounding who was supported by whom. According to the National Democratic Institute, potential Walasi Jirga members will be affiliated with a political party.

Despite all the issues and weaknesses, Political parties play an important role to provide political awareness to the masses. This awareness is then important for the democratic system to function. It is argued that political parties mobilize people for political activities, including elections. Political parties mobilized people for elections in Afghanistan, especially in Nangarhar. Another factor

which was important is that political leaders play an important role in this mobilization.

Change can be brought by one vote.

"Do you want to make a difference in your neighborhood? Asked Emal, a local journalist, you have that chance when you vote! Elections have an impact on a wide range of social issues, such as gay marriage, reproductive rights, environmental issues, public education, and others. Everyone is affected in some way by social issues. Voting is necessary in order to influence who sets social agendas." (Emal, 2023)

Elections are supposed to change the system with the passage of time or, at least to change the existing government ruling the people for a certain period of time. This is considered as a step towards a new dawn of future. It is considered important for the smooth functioning of the system and stability. The people of Nangarhar voted for the change they wanted. They wanted to change the government or reform the system to achieve what they wanted. Systems are supposed to fulfill the demands of people and they wanted exactly that from the system they were living in.

You are the community's only hope!

"Families, friends, loved ones, neighbors, and children, I was told by Baryalai, a local academic and teacher, make up our communities. Some may be unaware of the significance of voting, while others are unable to do so. Make the decision to vote in order to represent yourself and your community. He was optimistic; he wanted to fulfill his responsibility of voting. (Baryalai, 2023)

Ethical responsibility, according to the theory makes people to go and cast vote in elections. This was what the researcher felt when interviewing Azizi He was time and gain referring to the ethical responsibility of everyone to vote. Secondly, the theory is stressing the altruism of people when they cast their vote. He was altruist to the core. As mentioned above, he wanted to have a collective struggle in the community. He wanted to do something for the community and that is what these theorist argue that this type of altruism.

Awareness of people:

A person must know how to register when he must register, where and when he can vote, what he must bring with him to vote, and more in order to vote. It has been demonstrated that turnout levels are influenced by a variety of levels of political knowledge beyond the obvious and simple.

Because levels of political knowledge are dependent on a number of other variables and the effects of having knowledge promote civic actions, political knowledge serves as such a powerful predictor of turnout. Political knowledge's predictive power is greater than that of its individual components because it is a complex variable that arises from a number of other variables. "Political Knowledge boosts participation because it promotes understanding of why politics is relevant," to put it succinctly.

The people of Afghanistan suffered the world's most lethal weapons and extremely difficult times in their lives. "These difficulties, I was told by Farid, a journalist and activist, created a sort of political awareness in the people. This awareness led people to cast vote in elections and so I felt when I was going to cast my vote in elections." (Farid, 2023)

Awareness is something very important for political activities and politics. It is argued that political awareness is very important for democracy. Without political awareness democracy cannot prevail. This is what we have seen during 2010 elections. "Most of the people casted their vote who were politically aware", I was told by an activist.

Vote for peace and prosperity:

Afghan's went out of their homes to cast vote for the purpose to make the country more peaceful and prosperous.

Ahmad local activist and academician, mentioned above, is still hopeful, despite the continued violence and the sluggish progress. "I can clearly see the road to prosperity and peace, he said to me, for the first time in a very long time. Today we have many reasons to celebrate, even though we still have a long way to go." (Ahmad, 2023).

Hope of Democracy:

Many Afghan's cast their votes in order to strengthen democracy and to have a representative and democratic set up in Afghanistan.

"The majority of people are dissatisfied with the performance of their MPs and the independent election commission, and each phase of this election has thus far been tense. Razia, a Voter, stated, "Despite all this, we have witnessed a vibrant campaigning period, and Afghans are participating in the process to strengthen democracy." She added that Afghans continue to pay a high price for choosing our representatives, even though democracy is declining in our region.

"We went, said Nahida, a voter of Nangarhar, with the intention of voting for at least one of the primary reasons listed below: 1) Voting to strengthen democracy; 2) Voting to elect a representative with comparable social circumstances; and 3) Voting to bring about legislative reform. However, some people who have registered have done so for a variety of reasons, including the desire to work for the government or to avoid issues in government offices". (Razia, 2023)

Voting in Afghan elections is a brave act. We went back to the same polling place we went to in 2014, and this time there were even more people there. Male voters' lines kept getting longer because Afghan voters "demonstrated our resolve [for] democracy, [our support] for a system of [a] republic, and we hope that our partners could also trust in it as much as we do," Mohammad, academician, hopes that the country's partners, allies, and people will be patient with the electoral process. (Mohammad, 2023).

CONCLUSION

Since the establishment of a democratic government in Afghanistan parliamentary election were held in 2006, 2010, and 2018. Based on the result that were announced after each elections the matter of low participation was became broader. The statistics of the independent election commission of Afghanistan shows that among the last two rounds of parliamentary elections (specifically) Walasi Jirga election; 2018 election has the lower participation of people. Besides the lower participation of people on Walasi Jirga elections in Afghanistan the reason of casting voting is always important. So in this research we investigated to understand the reason that why people participate in general election and then to identify the secret behind the lower participation of 2018 election compare to the 2010.

According to the theory we applied, people calculate things and decide whether to vote or not. In other words, people do cost-benefit analysis before going to poll their votes. People look at the future while deciding and voting in a particular, and at a particular time.

These people voted for economic development, fair education system to develop their country and innovate new things and environmental protections. These things are beneficial for their country.

Whenever we are part of the system, we take benefits from its existence. All those who rule or are being part of this system always struggle to preserve it, as it is beneficial to him/her and the collectivity in which he/she live. Having stated that, we can argue that the people of Afghanistan were part of the system or at least that system was beneficial to them. They not only wanted to keep its existence but they wanted to preserve it by casting vote. The only vote was basically a well calculated strategy as they could use it to preserve and protect the system in which they lived.

Despite all the issues and weaknesses, Political parties play an important role to provide political awareness to the masses. This awareness is then important for the democratic system to function. It is argued that political parties mobilize people for political activities, including elections. Political parties mobilized people for elections in Afghanistan.

Elections are supposed to change the system with the passage of time or, at least to change the existing government ruling the people for a certain period of time. This is considered as a step towards a new dawn of future. It is considered important for the smooth functioning of the system and stability. The people of Nangarhar voted for the change they wanted. They wanted to change the government or reform the system to achieve what they wanted. Systems are supposed to fulfill the demands of people and they wanted exactly that from the system they were living in. there was also some reasons behind lower participation in 2018 elections that we shortly highlight it here.

One of the most important and initial issue people faced was that of registration. This was something structural and people could not do something on the day of election if they even wanted to cast their votes.

Most of the people in Nangarhar was not registered with the election commission.

Political systems prevail, it mobilizes support for itself through delivering those things people actually want. The parliament in Afghanistan was not delivering and that is why it became irrelevant with the passage of time. Elections are supposed to create parliaments but when parliament is not significant then people opt to remain at home on Election Day.

Having ID card is mandatory for the people of Afghanistan if they want to cast their votes. People have complaints about the tiring procedure of ID card making. They cannot go after the tiring procedure to urge officials to make them eligible for voting.

Bribes, threats, or both are frequently used to commit fraud and manipulation in Afghanistan elections. In Afghanistan, election fraud is widespread and occurs in a variety of ways: Election commissioners and their senior staff sell their services for monetary gain, and political leaders influence senior election officials and, through them, lower-level staff. As a result, senior election officials play a role that isn't clear. They can protect the process, commit fraud, work illegally with senior government officials, or suffer abuse from them. Local powerbrokers also commit fraud when they try to win candidates' favor by promising them government contracts, jobs, or other rewards. Both preventing and proving fraud are challenging endeavors. Anti-fraud measures are frequently used to commit additional fraud, and even successful fraud mitigation strategies have the potential to suppress legitimate votes in ways that favor one group over another.

The single, non-transferable vote system was another obstacle to accurate representation. Despite the fact that each region is given several seats and has a large number of candidates on the ballot, this system allows each voter in a region to select one candidate. People of Nangarhar city and districts face this issue frequently. The Independent Election Commission of Afghanistan has long had poor management, an underqualified staff, no responsibility for fraud and malpractice, and a system unsuited to decision-making, in Nangarhar. The independent election commission must possess specific attributes, both as an institution and at the employee level, that are in low supply in order to efficiently prepare for and run elections. First, the Independent election commission needs to have the proper institutional structure to deal

with difficult problems. Decision-making is currently hampered by the laws, rules, and conventions defining the Independent election commission functions, responsibilities, and internal communications. Second, the Independent election commission requires leaders with the vision and discipline to make long-term plans and swiftly respond to short-term developments.

People often feel irritated when they face the face of different state structures. Electoral institutions and the process of voting were irritating to the people. They were facing difficulties during and before the election, so that barred people to cast vote on the Election Day.

People choose their candidates while going to cast vote. And, when there is no candidate to vote for, people opt to ignore elections. The people of Nangarhar opted to be at homes. They had a bad experience with them and they didn't want to vote them again.

Legitimacy can be maintained even if no formal election is held, as numerous examples of local leaders and strongmen who have lost parliamentary elections across the nation demonstrate. Those elected to parliament who have lost their ties to their home constituencies also lose legitimacy in the eyes of voters because they have "disappeared" to Kabul and become wealthy. Even though the ballot box can help establish legitimacy, many other cultural and historical factors, such as a person's reputation, protection, service, religious piety, and the ability to unite opposing factions, can also help establish legitimacy in leadership. The people of Nangarhar felt they are not considering the Politian as legitimate and worthy of voting in 2018 elections.

A significant barrier to widespread political engagement was insecurity. Insurgent activity is closely correlated with lower registration and turnout rates; fear for one's personal safety and fear of voting are at record highs; there have been an increasing number of planned and unplanned polling center closures on Election Day due to insecurity since 2004, reflecting a deteriorating security environment.

Widespread insecurity during elections can disenfranchise voters, undermine the legitimacy of the process, and ultimately erode public support for elected officials. The use of violence and credible threats of violence can reduce support for the

government and foster greater instability. Poor security undermines elections in many ways, making it difficult to hold a national census, establish a voter registry, educate voters, and ensure the safety of election officials, observers, candidates, and voters. The people of Nangarhar, related to these issues when they were interviewed.

Since the beginning, election planning has been plagued by insecurity. Even in 2004, when threats of violence from the former warlords with militias posed a problem in many parts of the country. The demobilization, disarmament, and reintegration of fighters was behind schedule, and it became increasingly clear that the international community was supporting an election in an insecure environment but was unwilling to pay for the deployment of additional troops to improve security. Fear and violence have been fueled by elections themselves, as well as by candidates or their influential supporters using the insurgency as a cover for their own use of violence to undermine their opponents. In many of these instances, the mere threat of violence was sufficient to persuade individuals to cease their campaigns; Property was damaged in other cases; in yet other instances, candidates were assassinated either during the campaigns or before the results were released.

Insecurity and violence have also had an indirect effect on the political process, particularly by denying people who live in unsafe areas the right to vote. The risky journey from Kabul to their constituencies has prevented frequent contact with constituents for many parliamentarians. Militants have launched devastating attacks that have disrupted peaceful demonstrations.

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