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## **Participatory Form of Foreign Intervention in the North of Afghanistan: Opportunities and Challenges - A Comparative Case Study.**

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Participatory Form of Foreign Intervention in the North of Afghanistan:  
Opportunities and Challenges - A Comparative Case Study.

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## Introduction

The Global Data Lab provides detailed development data for several regions in Afghanistan. Of particular interest for this thesis are the Region Northeast comprising the provinces Badakshan, Kunduz, Baghlan, and Takhar and the Region North comprising the provinces Balkh, Faryab, Jawzjan, Sar-e-Pul, and Samangan.

Both regions have been relatively stable. The majority of people in the provinces are Uzbeks and Tadjiks, with the exception of Kunduz with a Pashtun majority (Piazza, 2012). Foreign military presence was mainly provided by European Nations. Their forces were under German Command since 2006, when the Regional Command North (RC North) was established.

Germany and Hungary provided the civilian component in three Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) in Region Northeast. In Region North the two Nordic Nations Sweden and Norway were leading two PRTs. The civilian representatives were generally under the lead of their respective capitals and not subject to military command (NATO, 2021).

Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) represented a broad range of concepts. Some were criticised as being created in response to funding programmes, competing with each other as private contractors and with private enterprises for foreign funds. Some documented Afghan voices in the regions suggested that that external actors in order to be beneficial should scale up their protective role, reconsider close alliances with armed and corrupt actors, reduce large volumes of aid and redirect support to local communities. (Kaldor & Theross, 2018). The longing for participation and ownership was generally high in the regions.

The research question - "Does a more participatory form of foreign intervention, in the context of a military intervention, lead to sustainably improved governance outcomes?" - is of particular interest if applied to the complex Afghan society with traditional elites, old fashioned rural structures and developing urban civil societies.

Data provided by the Global Data Lab show that indicators for governance outcomes improve at similar rates in Region North and Region Northeast until 2010. Stopping there would invite an easy answer to the research question. However, 2011 marks a significant change.

Indicators, continue to improve for Region North but start to flatten for Region Northeast (Global Data Lab). The Regional Command North with its five PRTs maintained the same posture (NATO, 2021). The NGO presence continued to increase as it did since the year 2000 in Region North and Region Northeast (Mitchell, 2017, p. 8). A potential explanation needs

to look at the shift of focus by the German military and civil forces, who followed a highly participatory approach, from Region Northeast to Region North.

### Definitions Concepts:

#### Participatory forms of foreign intervention:

Participatory forms of foreign intervention have thus far often been regarded in terms of developmental aid programmes. The foreign intervention in Afghanistan however, changed the focus to a new form of peace and stabilisation projects, in which combat missions and development programmes were supposed to go hand in hand through civil-military coordination, short CIMIC. Through CIMIC, civilian actors such as members of non-governmental organisation (NGOs), diplomats and experts cooperate with military actors in order to simultaneously impact the security environment as well as humanitarian aspects within Afghanistan (Goodhand, 2013). In a previous study a “participatory intervention model” has been proposed and defined as: “a process fostering the social construction of interventions and empowerment of participants” (Nastasi et al., 2000, p. 208).

In order to measure the level of participation by the Afghan population in reconstruction projects, *Responsibility for Projects* will be taken as an indicator. The amount of *Responsibility for Projects* held by the Afghan population, will be assessed primarily through qualitative analysis. In quantitative terms this research will consider the size of Afghan national army deployments in Region North and Region Northeast by 2012 (NATO, 2012).

Not directly representative of, but related to, the participatory degree of reconstruction projects, is the civilian – military balance within the PRTs. The degree to which Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRT) focused on a more civilian based approach determined whether the first aim in missions would have a higher chance of focusing on combat missions and projects directed at the enhancement of the security environment (military focus), or whether there would be higher emphasis on human development and aid projects (civilian focus) (Goodhand, 2013). In all cases there was cooperation between the military and the civilian sector. In cases with a stronger military focus, decisions on spending or projects would be largely influenced by the military which possessed a different set of priorities than the civilian sector. In balanced PRTs there were separate budgets available, making it easier for civilians

to conduct projects which focused on their strategic aim. A more balanced approach focused on development within the country is more likely to lead to participatory forms of intervention. A more military based approach is likely to have strong focus on upkeep of the security environment through foreign forces (Giegerich & Hlatky, 2020). Hence, the *form of intervention programmes conducted*, with a focus on the military- civil balance will serve as an indicator for the degree of participation achieved in missions. European Lead Nations in Region North and Region South followed in general a more balanced approach. However, this research analyses the Swedish and German approach in more detail.

Due to its possible effects on governance outcomes, it is important to control for *total force strength*. It is essential to note is that a heavier “footprint” (meaning more military troops) is not directly associated with a more military based approach. Whether the approach of a PRT is more military centric or more civilian centric is determined by the degree of interagency cooperation between the military and civilian actors, as well as the degree of self-determination that civilian personnel has in decision-making about the form of reconstruction projects conducted (Giegerich & Hlatky, 2020, p. 510). Nonetheless, it is important to consider *total force strength* in the analysis in order to control for any differences in governance outcomes that may be a result of larger or smaller sized Provincial Reconstruction Teams.

Lastly, this assessment will consider the presence of *Non-Governmental Organisations* (NGOs) in the North and Northeast of Afghanistan in order to determine the form and focus of the interventions. Furthermore, the assessment will be used to control for possible variations in governance outcomes related to higher or lower levels of NGO presence at any given time or between the two Regions (Mitchell, 2017, p. 8).

#### Governance outcomes:

There is no consensus regarding the “perfect” definition for the term *Good Governance*. In fact, authors have previously raised concerns about major social differences occurring in countries that were generally portrayed as showing “universal features of good governance”. Repeated calls have been made for an increased focus on context when trying to form a high-quality government (Andrews, 2010, p. 28). For the purpose of an internally and externally valid research, however, it will be necessary to work with more universal indicators for the measurement of good governance.

The World Bank regularly revises definitions and provides an abundance of indicators for the concept of “good governance”. Recent focus has been on the following three dimensions:

(1) *Voice and accountability* indicate the standard of human rights in civil as well as political terms (Kaufmann, Kraay & Mastruzzi, 2005, p. 2). Many researchers support this approach as it reflects their emphasises on the importance of policies that improve possibilities for, and quality of, education as a means to enhance the voice of the population and to increase chances of the population appealing towards their government for more accountability (Reinikka & Svensson, 2003, p. 267).

This research uses for the measurement of “voice and accountability” the indicators “*mean years schooling males*” and “*mean years schooling females*” provided by the Global Data Lab for Region North and Region Northeast. These indicators show the average amount of years that men and women spend in school.

(2) *Political stability and Violence* measure the chances of the population being victim of terrorism or other acute threats to, or changes in, government (Kaufmann, Kraay & Mastruzzi, 2005 p. 267). Previous studies have found a direct correlation between increased opium production and higher levels of terrorism. Higher amounts of opium production led to increased rates of terrorism and not vice versa. This correlation was of high importance in Afghanistan. Poppy farmland covered larger parts of Afghanistan than cocoa cultivation in all Latin American countries together. Therefore, *opium production* (measured in hectares used for opium cultivation) will be used as an indicator for political stability and violence within Region North and Region Northeast (Piazza, 2012, p. 213).

(3) *Government effectiveness*. This research uses the indicator Gross National Income (GNI) per capita measured in US \$ per year. However, as seen in the example of China, governments can be economically and structurally efficient without being “good” in more normative terms. One should avoid the tautology calling “good governance” a result of “efficient governance”, which would be the same as arguing that efficiency is caused by efficiency (Rothstein & Teorell, 2012, p. 22). Therefore, it is important to consider governance effectiveness not by itself, but in relation to other indicators. Hence, this research also includes the *Human Development Index* (HDI) provided for Region North and Region Northeast by the Global Data Lab. It covers the sub indicators for life expectancy, per capita income, and education.

In order to shine light on a more ethical sphere of governance, this research will analyse *Impartiality* specifically in terms of gender equality. Gender equality is coined as especially important for this analysis due to the strong violations of female rights and equality within Afghanistan (Kandiyoti, 2005). The improvement of female life quality has been at the forefront of civilian efforts in the foreign intervention of Afghanistan (Government Offices of Sweden, 2017). Therefore, specific attention will be put on the difference between *mean years schooling females* and *mean years schooling males*. In order to complete the analysis, impartiality will be measured through the *Gender Development Index (GDI)*. The Gender Development Index measures gender related gaps in human development achievements through considering the differences between men and women in the dimensions considered by the Human Development Index. The Gender Development Index directly represents the gender gap by presentation of the HDI for women as a percentage of the HDI for men (UNDP, n.d.).

#### Case Selection:

The withdrawal of foreign forces and the end of foreign intervention in Afghanistan in August of this year raises many questions, Provincial Reconstruction Teams achieved varying outcomes throughout the country. None of these outcomes lived up to the expectations of the intervention forces at the beginning of the project (Giegerich & Hlatky, 2020, p. 496). In order to dive further into possible explanations for the low success rate, and to propose recommendations for future missions, this research builds on a comparative case study. It compares Region North and Region Northeast. The Global Data Lab provides some important indicators to measure governance outcomes in both regions for a period between 1990 and 2014 another group of indicators cover the period 2000 to 2014.

Region North and Region Northeast have many things in common. Therefore, changing indicator trends can be linked to a limited number of variables. The question, what influenced the governance indicators during that period, has important implications for our understanding of how participatory forms of foreign intervention can create sustainable positive trends for governance outcomes.





Map 1: Regional Commands Afghanistan (retrieved from UN DISPATCH, 2017)

The external influence was comparatively homogeneous. Military Command was provided for both regions by one foreign actor. Germany established Regional Command North (RC North) in 2006. It comprised Region North and Region South. European Nations, Germany, Sweden, Norway, and Hungary were lead nations for five PRTs. All had a balanced approach to their respective PRT and implemented a more or less participatory form of intervention (NATO, 2021).

The intra Afghan indicators are depicted in the table.

	Opium Cultivation (avg. Hec)	Terrorism Casualties	Population	Literacy Rate	Access to Drinking Water	Below minimum calories	Pashtun Majority
Faryab	816	7	833,7	18%	23%	27%	No
Sar-e Pol	595	4	442,3	11%	45%	46%	No
Jowzjan	727	5	427	27%	24%	19%	No
Balkh	2058	21	1123,9	37%	31%	33%	No
Samangan	559	2	378	13%	7%	12%	No
<b>North</b>	<b>4755</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>3204,9</b>	<b>24%</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>29%</b>	<b>No</b>

Table 1: Average Indicators 1994 – 2008 for Region **North** (Faryab, Sar-e Pol, Jowzjan, Balkh, Samangan) (adapted from Piazza, 2012, p. 220)

	Opium Cultivation (avg. Hec)	Terrorism Casualties	Population	Literacy Rate	Access to Drinking Water	Below minimum calories	Pashtun Majority
Kunduz	78	26	820	22%	25%	26%	Yes
Baghlan	784	193	741,7	20%	19%	33%	No
Takhar	542	4	830,3	12%	29%	26%	No
Badakshan	5733	50	739,4	25%	13%	40%	No
<b>North East</b>	<b>7137</b>	<b>273</b>	<b>3131,4</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>22%</b>	<b>31%</b>	<b>No</b>

Table 2: Average Indicators 1994 – 2008 **Northeast** (Kunduz, Baghlan, Takhar, Badakshan) (adapted from Piazza, 2012, p. 220)

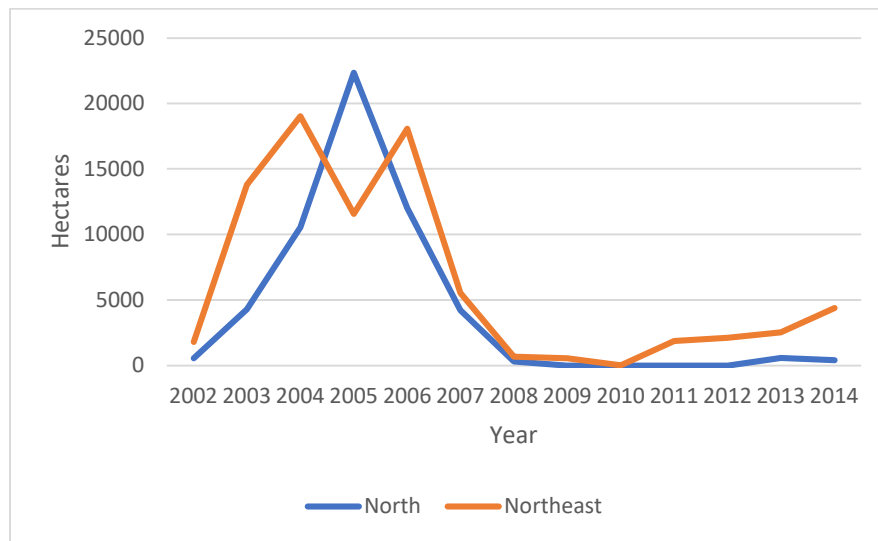
The tables 1 and 2 show average numbers for the years 1994-2008. Thus, this data is not a perfect representation of the precise numbers per year. As seen in the tables provided above, the North and the Northeast are comparable in several indicators. The simplest factor by which the two regions can be compared is in terms of *population count*. The North with a population of 3.205 Mio people. is just slightly more populated than the Northeast with a population of 3.131 Mio people (Piazza, 2012, p. 220). The literacy rate is another important factor to consider during case selection, as two regions with very different literacy rates in the beginning of the intervention might show very different development dynamics. A region with much lower literacy rate will likely take longer to improve governance indicators such as education and market opportunities which require reading and writing (Blaug, 1966, p. 393). Region North has a literacy rate of 24% of the population throughout the entire region.

Region Northeast has a literacy rate of 20% of the population throughout the entire region. Overall, the two regions do not show a significant difference in literacy rate.

In a similar manner as above, the *access to drinking water* in each region as well as the percentage of population *below minimum calories* have been assessed. Control for these variables served the exclusion of second explanations for changes in indicators such as *the Human Development Index*. Too little food and water has clear effects on life expectancy and impact the health of citizens in way that makes it difficult or impossible to go to school or work. Thus, large variation at the beginning of the intervention would serve as an alternative explanation for differences in developmental dynamics (Gani & Chand Prasad, 2007, pp. 310-311). As seen above Region North scores slightly higher with 27% of the population having access to drinking water in comparison to Region Northeast with 22% of the population having access to drinking water. Similarly, Region North scores slightly better in terms of access to food, with 29% of the population being below minimum calories per day. Region Northeast scores almost identically with 31% of the population being below minimum calories. Given that the available data is an estimated average of the years 1994-2008 and could therefore show slight variation to the exact data, the difference is not significant enough to explain fundamentally different developmental dynamics.

Ideology could influence outcomes in governance such as variations in the *gender development index*. Therefore, Pashtun Majorities were considered for the case selection. Pashtuns are strict in their ideology and have partially been in direct relation to the Taliban (Ahmed, 2014, pp. 83-85). Therefore, a Pashtun majority in one of these regions could influence levels of terrorism and hence have an influence on levels of terrorist activity. The tables 1 and 2 show that there was no Pashtun majority in any of the Northern provinces. The same holds true for the Northeast with the exception of Kunduz with a Pashtun majority. The Pashtun factor in Kunduz is not considered significant for the outcomes of this analysis as its population accounts for less than 25% of Region Northeast's population.

The largest variation between the two regions can be seen in regard to the factor *opium cultivation* and *terrorism causalities*. As explained under indicators for governance outcomes, this indicator is important to control in order to avoid alternative explanations for our observations. Region North cultivated on average 4.755 hectares of opium per year between 1994 and 2008. Region Northeast cultivated on average 7.137 hectares of opium per year in the same time period. While these numbers show stronger variations, Graphic 1 shows similar trends for Region North and Region Northeast.



Graphic 1: Opium Poppy Cultivation (Hectares) (adapted from (UNODC, 2017))

Terrorism casualties differ by the factor 6. In the period 1994-2008 Region North suffered 39 casualties and Region Northeast 273 casualties. However, in comparison to the rest of the country, the two regions have the lowest number of terrorism casualties. The Germans had based their decisions to take as a first step the lead of PRT Kunduz located in Region Northeast on the assessment that the security situation was rather stable, requirements for reconstruction were already known and the local population welcomed German soldiers, (Brandstetter, n.d.). Due to this and the positive trends of government outcome indicators for Region Northeast discussed later, this analysis does not consider the difference in terrorism casualties as an alternative explanation for trends in governance outcome indicators for Region North and Northeast.

Western military Presence in Region North and Northeast Afghanistan a timeline:

As a response to the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Centre on September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001, The US launched the foreign intervention campaign through deployment of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) on September 26<sup>th</sup>, 2001. The original intend was to avoid deploying a large force to Afghanistan by partnering with Afghan anti-Taliban Allies. The primary partners was the Northern Alliance, led by the Tajik Mohammed Fahim, and the Uzbek Abdul Rashid Dostum. (Witte, 2021)

In early 2002 the United States set up Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs). In the beginning there were small outposts run by 5-10 army civil affairs officers of coalition forces that were working in the cause of “Operation Enduring Freedom” (OEF). Their mission was to extend the influence of the coalition forces and the Afghan Government through development and reconstruction; funded by the US Department of Defence, the outposts grew rapidly as a result of added security forces and representatives of other US government departments throughout 2002. In late 2003, Britain took lead of the PRT in Mazar-e-Sharif (Balkh), while the Germans took over the PRT in Kunduz. Depending on the lead nation PRTs differed in size, structure, and the approach to mission implementation. British PRTs followed the US model with a staff of 50 to 100 people standing under military command. The German model on the other hand strictly separates the military and civilian functions of the team (ISW, n.d.).

In August 2003 NATO took lead of the International Security Force (ISAF) which was a security and reconstruction project. At the Istanbul Summit in June 2004 NATO announced the establishment of four other PRTs in the North of Afghanistan. By October 2004, five PRTs were established in Mazar-e-Sharif (Sweden had taken over from the United Kingdom in 2006), Kunduz (Germany), Faizabad (Germany), Meymanah (Norway) and Pol-e-Khomri (Hungary). Expansion to the North was completed (NATO, 21).

In June 2006 Germany took the lead of the Regional Command North (RC North) in Mazar-e-Sharif. Hence, all ISAF military units in the Regions North and Northeast were under German Command. Norway, Hungary, and Sweden contributed own troops but operated in accordance with German strategy (Bundeswehr). Map 1, derived from the NATO website, provides a visual representation of the RC NORTH (coloured in blue), with the locations of each PRT represented by the countries flag.



## International Security Assistance Force



Map 1: ISAF Placemat January 2007 (NATO, 2007)

In February 2009 the then-new US president Obama, assessed Afghanistan to be the most important front for a successful fight against terrorism, effectively rebalancing US military engagement from Iraq to Afghanistan. In December 2009, he announced a large troop deployment to Afghanistan (the Obama Afghan Surge), with the intend to fight terrorism with a strong push while training Afghan Security Forces to be able to support the fight against growing insurgency before finally taking over security responsibility. At the same time Obama set July 2011 as the date where the US would start a slow drawdown of US forces, with the expectation that Afghan Security Forces would be increasingly enabled to take over security responsibilities (CFR, 2021).

This move by the US president led to the London Conference in January 2010, which welcomed the idea to pass security responsibility province by province to Afghan Authorities (Afghanistan: the London Conference, 2010, p. 2).

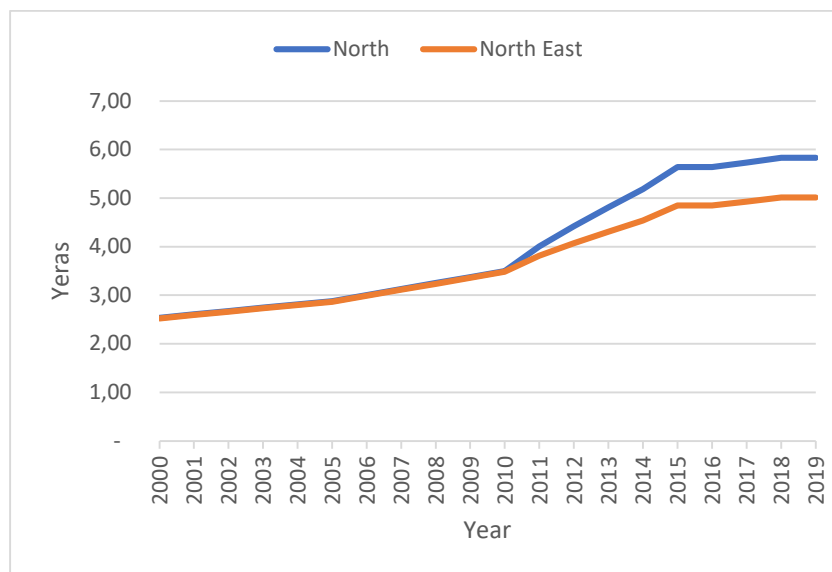
The Kabul Conference in July 2010 supported the objective of Afghan President Karzai, that Afghan National Security Forces should be in lead of all military operations by the end of 2014. All nations were encouraged to announce the planned transition process by the end of 2010 (Kabul Conference, 2010, pp. 6-7).

### Data Analysis of Governance Outcomes:

The following part will display trends for relevant indicators for the dependent variable: *governance outcomes*.

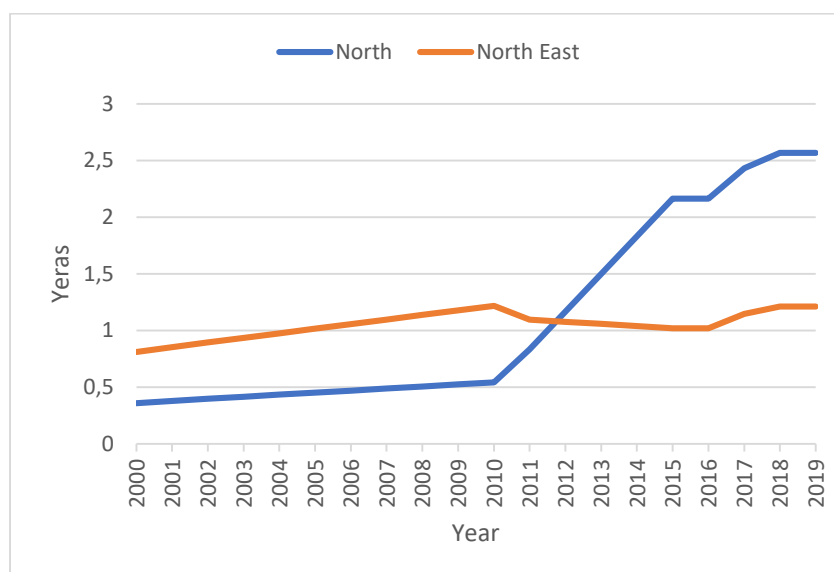
#### Voice and Accountability:

Several graphs serve to gain better insight into the development of the governance indicator *voice and accountability*. Graphic 2 depicts the development of the indicator *mean years schooling males* for the years 2000 – 2019. Real data are available for the years 2000, 2005 and from 2009 onwards. Gaps have been filled by Global Data Lab by estimates. The regions show the same trend until approximately 2010 when the indicator for Region North starts to increase at a higher rate than for Region Northeast. From 2010 onwards, the indicator for Region Northeast still increases but at a lower rate. The interesting differences emerge from 2010 onwards, so that the mentioned data gaps are not relevant for this analysis.



Graphic 2: Mean Years Schooling Males 2000 – 2019 (adapted from Global Data Lab)

A similar development can be observed in Graphic 3 which describes *mean years schooling for female* for the same period. The indicator for *mean years schooling for females* in Region North stays below the indicator for Region Northeast and show a similar trend until 2010. In 2011 Region North surpasses Region Northeast, further increasing until 2019 when the measurement ends. In 2011 Region Northeast experiences a light drop of the indicator, which remains fairly constant and recovers to the 2010 level in 2016.

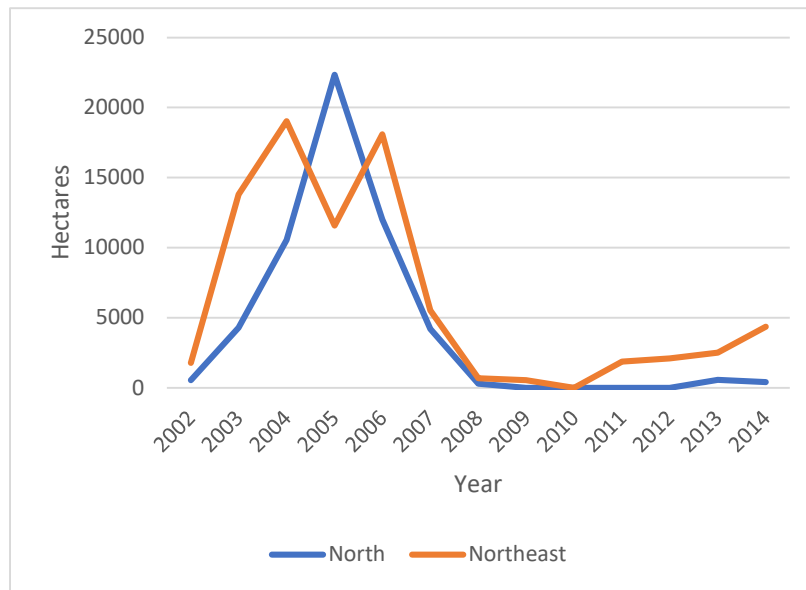


Graphic 3: Mean Years Schooling Females 2000 – 2019 (adapted from Global Data Lab)

### Political Stability:

Graph 4 represents opium cultivation in hectares from 2002-2014 (*Afghanistan: Opium Survey 2014 Cultivation and Production*). The trend is generally similar in both regions with the exception of the year 2005 that sees a drop in Region Northeast and a peak in Region North. There is no explanation for the *2005 singularity*. However, other indicators show that trends from 2010 onwards are more important for this analysis. Opium cultivation started to increase again in 2011 in Region Northeast, while it remained close to zero for Region North until 2014.

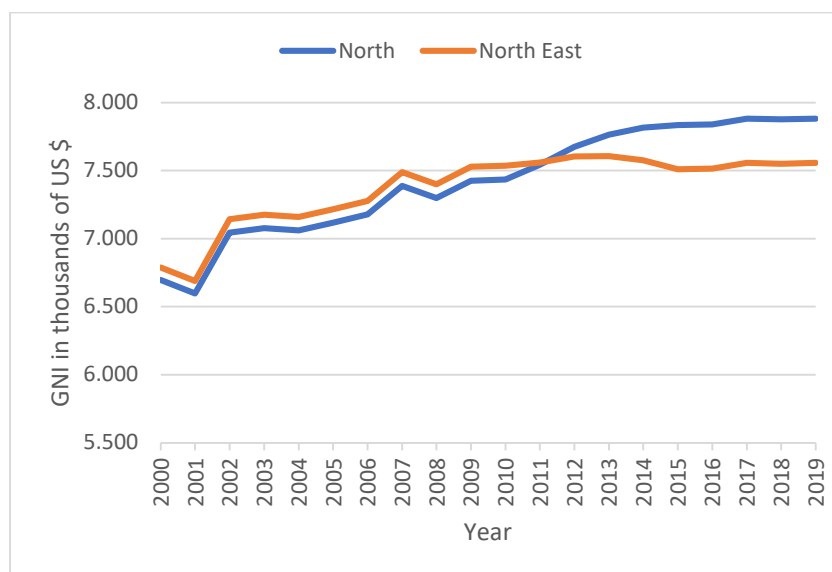




Graphic 4: Opium Poppy Cultivation (Hectares) (adapted from UNODC, 2017)

Government effectiveness:

Graphic 5 presents the indicator for the *GNI per capita* between 2000-2019 in Region North and Region Northeast. From 2000 to 2011 both graphs follow the same trend, with Region North scoring just a bit below Region Northeast. However, between 2011-2012 the trend reverses and the indicator for Region North and Region Northeast show a growing gap. Region Northeast first experiences a minimal decrease before stagnating around a gross national income of \$ 7.550 - \$7.600, while Region North continues to increase to \$ 7.800 in 2014.



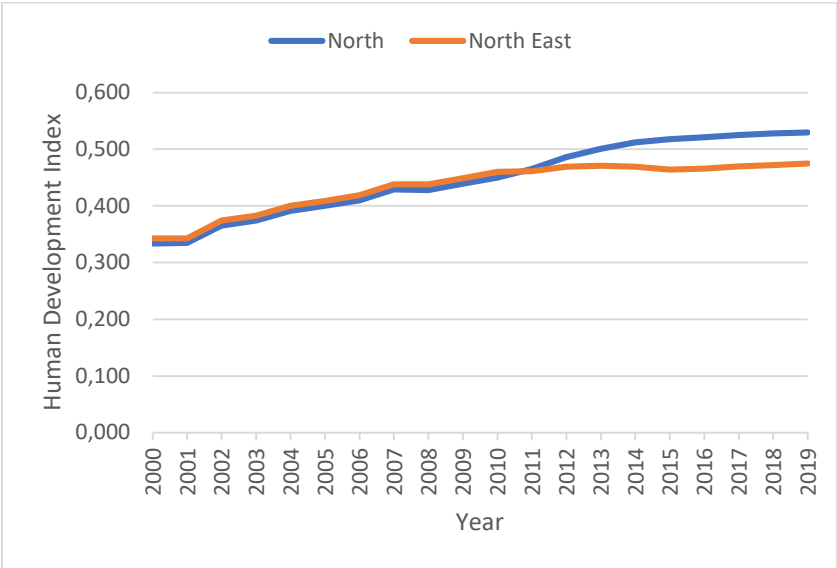
Graphic 5: GNI per capita in thousands of US\$ (2011 PPP) 2000 – 2019 (adapted from Global Data Lab)

Table 3 depicts the exact values from 2010 to 2014 covering the time in which the trend reverses.

Year	North	North East
2010	7.434	7.537
2011	7.543	7.560
2012	7.675	7.605
2013	7.765	7.608
2014	7.817	7.575

Table 3: GNI per capita in thousands of US\$ (2011 PPP) 2010 – 2014 (adapted from Global Data Lab)

Graph 6 visualises the trend for the *Human development Index* in Region North and Region Northeast between 2000-2019. As in some previous graphs we see that Region North and Region Northeast show same trends *for the indicator* from 2000 until around 2011. Afterwards the graph shows the same development as for the *gross national income* with Region Northeast stagnating at around 0.470, while Region North continues its trend. Numbers used for the graph and table are based on exact measurements found on the global data lab.



Graphic 6: Human Development Index (adapted from Global Data Lab)

Table 4 depicts the exact values from 2010 to 2014 covering the time in which the trend reverses.

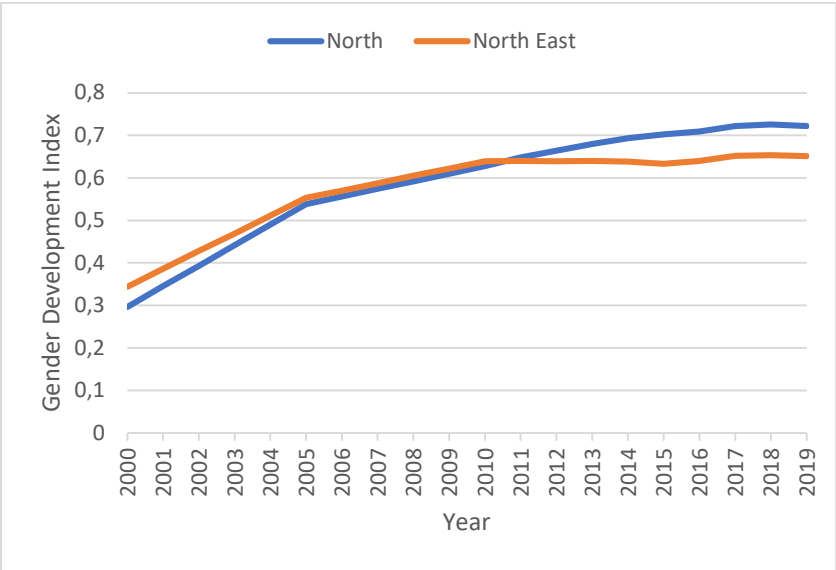
Year	North	North East
2010	0.450	0.460
2011	0.465	0.461
2012	0.486	0.469
2013	0.501	0.471
2014	0.512	0.469

Table 4: Human Development Index 2010 – 2014 (adapted from Global Data Lab)

Impartiality:

This research assesses *impartiality in governance* by comparing the trend shown above for *mean years schooling* of males and females. When looking at Graph 2 and 3 it is, unsurprisingly visible that the *mean years schooling female* are generally lower in both regions than the *mean years schooling male*. This was to be expected considering the cultural background of Afghanistan, where the basis for equal rights for women as citizens has only been constitutionalised as late as January 2004. Even with the development of 2004, formal rights for women in civic participation prove to have low practical meaning in a society, in which women remain largely as wards of their households, while still being denied equal access to education and health care (Kandiyoti, 2005). While the international community consistently fostered female equality, the implementation of equal women’s rights takes time. This is reflected in the graph representing schooling of females, especially in comparison to the graph representing men. Noteworthy is that the mean *for years schooling female* is only approximately half of the *mean years of schooling for men*. The North shows a lower rate of increase until about 2010. A possible explanation for this outcome is the implementation of cash for work (CFW) activities, which started in Region Northeast. The goal of such programmes was to promote of self-help capacity at state and society levels through ensured deliverance of public services. Investment for these projects was initially concentrated in the provinces Takhar and Badakshan in Region Northeast (Harvey, Lamade & Börgel, 2009). In 2010 the trend for mean years schooling female in the North changes drastically, reaching 4 times its value from 2010 by the year 2014. The Northeast in contrast, experiences a small drop in 2010, before remaining relatively constant.

Graph 7 displays the development of the Gender Development Index (GDI) for North and Northeast from 2000-2019. The North started off slightly lower around the year 2000 but had almost caught up relatively quickly by the year 2005. From 2005 until 2010 the graphs showed an almost identical trend, although it can be seen that increase of the indicator in Region North is only slightly steeper than in Region Northeast. After 2010, Region North increased at the same pace as before, while the indicator for Region Northeast remains at a GDI of approximately 0,64. Precise values from 2010-2014 can be seen in table 5 below. The Graph is based on exact measurements from the year 2000, 2005 and 2009 onwards. Due to reliable data in 2000 and 2005 and from 2010 onwards, it can be assumed that the estimated data for the years in between will not have a significant impact on the outcome of this research. It is unlikely that there were great outliers in the progress of this indicator in the years between 2000 and 2005 and between 2005 and 2009.



Graphic x: Gender Development Index 2000 – 2019 (adapted from Global Data Lab)

Year	North	North East
2010	0,628	0,639
2011	0,648	0,64
2012	0,664	0,639
2013	0,68	0,64
2014	0,693	0,638

Table 5: Gender Development Index 2010 – 2014 (adapted from Global Data Lab)

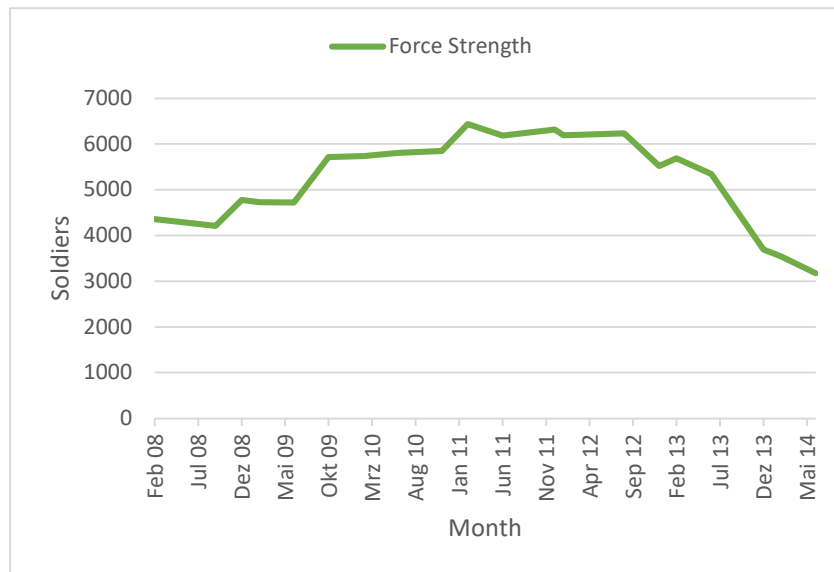
Interesting to note is that all Graphs share a similar development until around 2010, when all indicators in the Northeast either start remaining around the same level in following years (with slight variations) or see a decrease in their curve signifying slower progress in the indicators. Important to point out is as well that in all cases indicators for the north continue with a steeper increase. This observation leads to the question about what changed around 2010. The posture of foreign actors remained unchanged until 2012. However, discussions about handing over security responsibilities had already officially started at the London Conference in January 2010 (Afghanistan: The London Conference, 2010, p. 2). A possible explanation for this significant trend shift for key indicators could be that Afghans were already losing trust in the foreign intervention, its momentum and sustainability.

### Foreign Intervention

The analysis conducted above makes it evident that a similar change occurred throughout a number of governance indicators between 2010-2014. For the Northeast all indicators besides opium production remain around the same level or experience a slight decrease in their curve, signifying a slowed development as compared to the period before 2010. Important to point out is that in all cases indicators for the Northern Region show a steeper increase, signifying a faster development after 2010. This development is analysed on hand of the indicators for participatory forms of intervention presented above.

### Total Force Strength:

The primary change that occurred is the announcement in 2010 by NATO Allies that full transition of security responsibility to the Afghan Authorities shall be completed by 2014 (The Kabul Conference, 2010, pp. 6-7. Graph 8 presented below gives insights into the development of total force strength of main troop contributors in RC North (Germany, Sweden, Norway, Finland, and Hungary). The table shows the trends from February 2008 until May 2014. It is visible that the overall force strength remained between 4.000 and 5.000 soldiers in the period from February 2008 until May 2009.



Graphic 8: **Total Force Strength** of Main Troop Contributors for Regional Command North (Germany, Hungary, Sweden, Norway, Finland) Feb 08 – May 14 (adapted from NATO)

Obama’s surge decisions, and the timeframe for transition of security responsibility developed during the London and Kabul conferences set the timetable for force adjustments in the Regional Command North (CFR, 2021).

In October 2009 force strength in the RC North surged beyond 5.000 soldiers, peaking in January 2011 with 6.320 soldiers and staying above 6000 soldiers until August 2012. As a precursor to the end of the ISAF mission the strength started to be tangibly decreased to 5522 soldiers in December 2012, going significantly down to 3695 soldiers by December 2013 (Source Graph). Precise numbers from 2010 until 2014 can be read in Table 6 below.

Month	Strength
Feb 10	5735
Jun 10	5805
Nov 10	5846
Feb 11	6440
Jun 11	6186
Dez 11	6320
Jan 12	6190
Aug 12	6232
Dez 12	5522
Feb 13	5687
Jun 13	5343
Dez 13	3695

Table x: **Total Force Strength** of Main Troop Contributors for Regional Command North (Germany, Hungary, Sweden, Norway, Finland) Feb 10 – Dec 13 (adapted from NATO)

The Provincial Reconstruction Teams were closed down one by one, when transition conditions were met. The foreign military presence in the Region Northeast ended when first the German PRT in Faizabad was closed in October 2012, and finally the PRT in Kunduz was closed by October 2013.

In comparison, the military presence in the Region North decreased but continued, with the final withdrawal from the RC North happening only in August 2021. Until then Germany concentrated its main activities for the support of training and operations of the Afghan Army Corps in Mazar-e-Sharif (Bundeswehr, 2021).

Comparison with the results of the Data Analysis shows that significant change in governance indicators happened directly after the announcement of 2010, that responsibility for security projects would be transferred to the Afghan Army Corps by 2014.

#### Form of Intervention Projects conducted:

The Northern Region around the PRT Mazar-e-Sharif, including the provinces Balkh, Jawzjan, Sar-e Pul and Samangan, was under lead of Sweden from 2006 (Government offices of Sweden, 2017, p. 5). Swedish intervention efforts have moved from stabilisation in the first phase of the intervention, to combat missions in face of the Northern insurgency, before finally arriving at security assistance. The original aim of Sweden was to provide a stabilising military presence in the area. This was supposed to be achieved by the deployment of Military Observation Teams (MOTs).

Over time the Swedish PRT took on a more civilian focused character. It moved from stabilisation in the first stage of intervention to combat before finally moving to security assistance. In 2010, Sweden established a “Senior Civilian Representative”. This date aligns with first changes seen in governance indicators which leads to the possible conclusion that a stronger civilian- based focus has impacted education, equality, human development, and income. In 2012 the PRT was handed over to civilian leadership. Nonetheless, the PRT Mazar-Sharif was long term primarily a military engagement (Government offices of Sweden, 2017, p. 5).

Programmes conducted were mainly focused on aid in the areas of education (with special attention to female education), healthcare projects, poverty reduction, the establishment of infrastructure, road networks and better access to transportation, and mine clearance. Aid was delivered largely through cash contributions and in cooperation with non-governmental organisations (Government offices of Sweden, 2017, p. 6).

Swedish troop strength peaked in 2011 with 570 soldiers deployed. Overall, Sweden sent 8.024 soldiers to Afghanistan throughout the entire mission.

While the Regional Command North was under German command, Germany focused primarily on Region Northeast. She was a main resource contributor during the Afghanistan Intervention (Brandstetter, n.d.).

The PRT in Kunduz was primarily supposed to support the Afghan Transitional Administration (ATA). Projects focussed on the promotion of democratic institutions, the development of administrative structures, and implementation of reconstruction measures with a medium to long term focus (Brandstetter, n.d.).

Germany had a strong focus on civil-military separation, ensuring a dual leadership structure through appointment of a civilian (sent by the Foreign Ministry) as well as a military PRT leader (German officer at the colonel rank), Furthermore, the ministry for development, and the interior ministry both sent senior representatives to control the workstream in Afghanistan (Giegerich & Hlatky, 2020, p. 502).

One of the German objectives was the increase of self-help capacity on state and society levels. Projects implemented focussed on improving the economy by providing income and work opportunities especially during lean seasons, to improve transportation and access to travel facilities, to increase food security and work on capacities for Community Development Councils (CDCs). (Harvey, Lamade, & Börgel, 2009)

By 2012 Germany started shifting its focus to Mazar-e-Sharif, while decreasing its presence in the Northeast and finally closing down by 2013 (Bundeswehr, 2021).

Both of the approaches described above are similar in respect to their goals, main differences can be seen in Germany having a much larger troop strength, and more resources for project work. Especially, the German dual leadership strategy and larger human and financial resources offered opportunities for successful projects (Brandstetter, n.d.). However, with regard to the sustainability of improved governance, it is visible in the development of the governance indicators presented above, that development did not continue at the same pace after Germany's focus was diverted away from the Northeast Region to the Northern Region. Progress in governance outcome did however not get lost in the years until the end of the observation period in 2019, In conclusion, German efforts in Region Northeast showed some long-term success.



### Responsibility for Projects:

Both Sweden and Germany provided training and advise to the Afghan Army Corps.

Sweden engaged in support of civil society through teaching independent analysis and handling of media. Generally, the approach was focused on the providence of Aid and Security as efficiently as possible with regard to available resources (Government offices of Sweden, 2017, p. 6).

Germany in contrast conducted its projects largely with help of Afghan partners and target groups. The “Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit” (GTZ), employed Afghan staff such as engineers and community workers, to supervise such projects with assistance of a small number of international staff. The whole approach emphasised Afghan ownership on every level (Harvey, Lamade, & Börgel, 2009).

Overall, while both nations aimed for consideration of civilian projects, Germany had a larger focus on Afghan ownership of projects. However, as Region North and Region Northeast showed similar development until 2010, with Swedish leadership in Mazar-e Sharif (Region North) and German leadership in Kunduz and Faizabad (Region Northeast) it cannot be proven that the more participatory German intervention had a more positive impact on governance outcomes.

From 2012-2013 responsibility for the security environment in the Region Northeast was transferred fully to the Afghan Army corps. A visual representation of the deployment area and size of the Afghan National Army from 2012 can be seen in Map 2 below, derived from the NATO website.

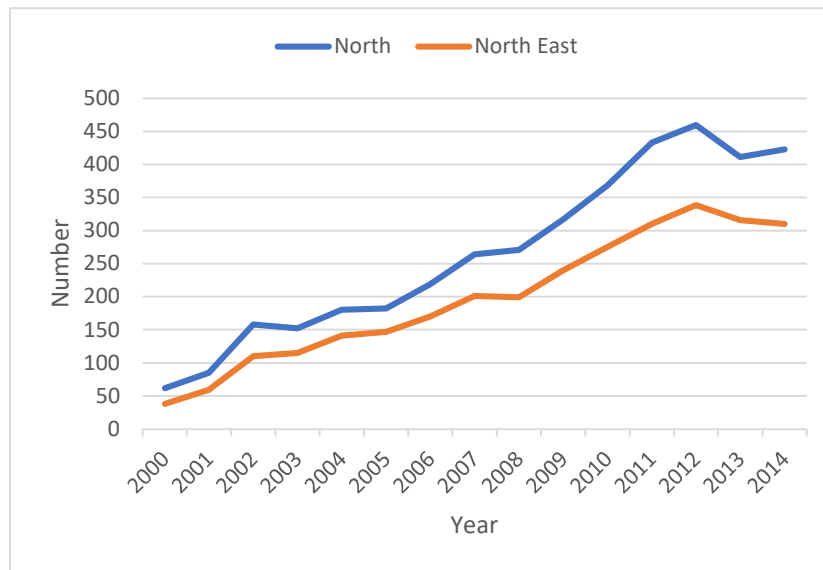


Map 2: **Afghan National Deployment** in May 2012 (derived from NATO, 2012)

It is visible that after 2012 around 3.000-4.000 soldiers of the Afghan Army remained in Kunduz after the Germans had moved their PRT from Kunduz to Balkh. In Balkh the Afghan Army Corps, the major Afghan unit in the North was mentored and trained by German Armed Forces. The Afghan Forces have not been in command until after 2012, making a correlation between their deployment and the change of governance indicators around 2010 unlikely (CFR, 2021).

NGO presence:

Graph 9 represents the total numbers of NGOs present throughout Region North and Region Northeast. It is visible that NGO presence has consistently increased from 2001 onwards until between 2012 and 2013. This development is in accordance with the withdrawal of troops that started in late 2012. It does however not fit the trends of governance indicators that changed already before troop and NGO withdrawal in 2010.



Graphic 9: Presence of Non-Governmental Organisations (NGO) (adapted from Mitchell, 2017, p. 8)

### Conclusion:

First it is important to state several weaknesses of this assessment. Due to the limited timeframe and resources available for this research, it was not possible to acquire precise data for all relevant control variables. It would have been helpful for this research to have had access to more data regarding terrorism trends in the Region North and Northeast. Available sources for the amount of terrorist attacks occurring during the researched period have primarily focused on the Southern Region or all of Afghanistan, making the data less useful for this analysis. Furthermore, due to the limited number of words allowed, it was not possible to control for all forms of ideological differences that may have an effect on the governance indicators presented in this assessment. With regard to the quality of the data presented, the research would have been more precise if all measurements were exact without any estimations, unfortunately such data was not available. Notable is as well that not all graphs show the exact same time period, optimally, if all data were available, all graphs should have reached from 2001-2019 in order to present the long-term development of the observed trends. The research does, however, consider all changes until at least 2014 which makes them significant enough due to the primary focus of this analysis being on the period from 2010 until 2014. Finally, due to the limited number of real-life cases (Provinces and Regions) available it was not possible to find two cases that were comparable in terms of their control factors and where the independent variable (form foreign intervention) was significantly different. Optimally, one PRT should have shown a clearer non-participatory form of foreign

intervention. In this case both PRTs had a rather civilian focused and participatory form of intervention, making it difficult answer the question, of what impact a less participatory approach would have had in Region North or Region Northeast.

The data analysis of governance indicators has shown a similar development in governance indicators for the Region North and Northeast between the years 2010 and 2011, when the pace of progress in the Northeast was reduced, while the pace of progress in the North increased. This research had expected to explain said variation by the withdrawal of German military and civilian personal from Region Northeast to Mazar-e-Sharif in Region North. The Germans had driven development with a highly participatory form of intervention. However, further analysis contradicted that expectation, due to the reason that Germany only started shifting its focus by 2012 and did not fully move to Mazar-e-Sharif before 2013. The same holds true for NGO presence in the Northeast which did not decrease before 2013 when it did in fact start to decrease for both regions. This observation rules out a reduced NGO presence in the Northeast around 2010 as an explanation for the change in governance indicators. Another factor that was controlled for was the total troop strength in the Regional Command North. Development of troop strength does not account for the change in government indicators. The increase of troop strength from 2009 and 2010 could have had an influence by itself, however, considering that the government indicators continued the trend they were following since 2010, even after troop size significantly dropped in 2013 makes it apparent that there was no direct correlation between the two factors.

Another important factor is that despite the German PRT concept presenting a more participatory form of foreign intervention than its Swedish counterpart, both concepts showed a similar rate of success until 2010, leading to question why Region North developed better after 2010. Here, analysis of other factors that have changed in 2010 would give basis for future research. One issue that deserves further study could be that the foreign military intervention in Region Northeast ended with the closure of all PRTs, while significant foreign forces remained in Region North until 2021.

One conclusion that can be drawn from this research is that while development in the Northeast slowed its pace in 2010, it did not make a significant drop until the end of the observation period in 2019. Meaning that German intervention projects had a long-term impact on governance indicators in the Northeast. Future research could be conducted to assess how strategies could be adjusted in order to foster more opportunities for consistent development improvement after intervention has ended. A possible factor impacting this

outcome could be the duration of the intervention as well as the pace and the communication with which the withdrawal was conducted.

An interesting observation is that the changes in indicators occurred directly after the transition to Afghan responsibility by 2014 was announced in 2010. Making room for a possible explanation for the change in governance indicators being found in the local Afghan perception of the future posture of foreign actors having an influence on behaviour. Further Research with considering the public perception in the context of foreign intervention and its possible impact on governance outcomes may lead to interesting findings.

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