



One of Afghanistan's favorite sayings is:  
"Women are for children,  
boys are for pleasure."

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sammanställning av ett urval citat ur artiklar och rapporter om Afghanistan,  
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till alla källor som använts och som hänvisas till.

## One of Afghanistan's favorite sayings is: "Women are for children, boys are for pleasure."



Det har kommit väldigt många afghaner till Sverige de senaste åren. Långt ifrån alla torde ha anledning att få uppehållstillstånd här, men många har fått - och får - det. Märkligt nog vet Sverige och svenskarna ändå väldigt lite om afghanernas bakgrund och kultur.

Alla, som i olika sammanhang kommer i kontakt med afghaner av varierande etniciteter och från olika klaner, borde bemöda sig om att ta del av rapporter och berättelser från det här landet som är lika annorlunda jämfört med Sverige som den ljusaste ljusa sommardag är annorlunda än den mörkaste mörka vinternatt.

Det finns alltid många berättelser om ett land, dess folk och folkslag, dess kulturella och religiösa seder och traditioner beroende på vem som berättar och i vilket syfte etc.

De exempel jag här tar upp på hur just Afghanistan beskrivs från olika håll (också av afghaner själva) får var och en själv förhålla sig till. Och söka ytterligare kunskap om intresse finns att veta mer. Här följer blandad information och ett antal citat ur olika rapporter - alltid med källhänvisningar så att läsaren själv kan värdera informationen. För alla intresserade går det också alldeles utmärkt att googla sig fram till mer information.

Först en del ur några lite äldre rapporter. **OBS!** De flesta texterna är på engelska!  
Länkar till artiklar och rapporter finns i slutet av denna sammanställning.

U.S. ARMY Afghanistan Human Terrain Team Pashtun  
Homosexuality Report: Human Terrain Team (HTT)  
AF-6 Research Update and Findings, 2009 och 2011:

... a long-standing cultural tradition in which boys are appreciated for physical beauty and apprenticed to older men for their sexual initiation. The fallout of this pattern of behavior over generations has a profound impact on Pashtun society and culture.

Homosexuality is strictly prohibited in Islam, but cultural interpretations of Islamic teaching prevalent in Pashtun areas of southern Afghanistan tacitly condone it in comparison to heterosexual relationships in several contexts.

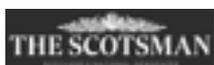
Pashtun men are freer with companionship, affection, emotional and artistic expression, and the trust bred of familiarity with other men. They often lack the experience of these aspects of life with women.

Det berättas om den långvariga traditionen där pojkar uppskattas för sin fysiska skönhet och initieras sexuellt av äldre män. Män har sexuella relationer med andra män/pojkar, men eftersom homosexualitet är förbjuden enligt Koranen så kallas det inte "homosexualitet". Och män - pashtunerna, den största folkgruppen, talas det om i det här dokumentet - är friare, kreativare, känsligare och mer familjära i sällskap med andra män; de saknar erfarenhet av dessa aspekter av livet med kvinnor.

One of the country's favorite sayings is "women are for children, boys are for pleasure.

Ett favorituttryck är alltså att "kvinnor är för (att föda) barn, pojkar är för nöje." Något för svenskarna att försöka förstå och förhålla sig till när afghaner kommer hit, att det här är djupt rotat kulturellt, uppblandat med religion, tradition och seder.

## The Scotsman: Startled marines find Afghan men all made up to see them, 2002.



I artikeln berättas om chockerade brittiska marinsoldater som fick skamliga förslag av svärmar av homosexuella bönder:

British marines returning from an operation deep in the Afghan mountains spoke last night of an alarming new threat - being propositioned by swarms of gay local farmers. *"We were pretty shocked,"* Marine Fletcher said. *"We discovered from the Afghan soldiers we had with us that a lot of men in this country have the same philosophy as ancient Greeks: 'a woman for babies, a man for pleasure'."*

*"It was hell,"* said Corporal Paul Richard, 20. *"Every village we went into we got a group of men wearing make-up coming up, stroking our hair and cheeks and making kissing noises."*

Den brittiska militära och den lokala afghanska, pashtunska, kulturen kolliderade alltså riktigt rejält. En av marinsoldaterna sa:

*"I think a lot of the problem is that they don't have the women around a lot,"* said another marine, Vaz Pickles. *"We only saw about two women in the whole six days. It was all very disconcerting."*

På sex dagar såg britterna alltså inte mer än två kvinnor.

## Afghanistan Human Terrain Team Pashtun Homosexuality Report

*One of the primary and obvious causes of this cultural tendency toward sexual expression between males is Pashtun society's extremely limited access to women. Heterosexual relationships are only allowable within the bounds of marriage.*

The social circumstance that has made women foreign and unavailable (excessive veiling, segregation, and exclusion from public life) is generally also attributed to Islam in Pashtun communities, but is in itself a cultural construct, passed and exaggerated through local tradition. Another example of cultural misinterpretations of Islamic tenants, bent to support homosexuality over heterosexuality, comes from a U.S. Army medic completing a year-long tour in a rural area of Kandahar province. She and her male colleagues were approached by a local gentleman seeking advice on how his wife could become pregnant. When it was explained to him what was necessary, he reacted with disgust and asked "How could one feel desire to be with a woman, who God has made unclean, when one could be with a man, who is clean? Surely this must be wrong."

Här berättar alltså en kvinnlig arméläkare som tillbringat ett år på landsbygden i Kandahar-provinsen om hur en man vände sig till henne och hennes manliga kolleger för att få råd om hur hans fru skulle kunna bli gravid. När han fick förklarat för sig vad som krävdes reagerade han med avsky och frågade: "Hur kan man känna åtrå efter en kvinna, som Gud har skapat oren, när man kan vara tillsammans med en man som är ren? Det måste ju vara fel."

Det onaturliga i att man inte träffar och umgås med kvinnor gör helt uppenbart att sexuella uttryck mellan män uppstår i det pashtunska samhället. I en kontroversiell artikel [Kandahar's Lightly Veiled Homosexual Habits](#) i Los Angeles Times den 3 april 2002, berättades följande:

**Los Angeles Times** *In his 29 years, Mohammed Daud has seen the faces of perhaps 200 women. A few dozen were family members. The rest were glimpses stolen when he should not have been looking and the women were caught without their face-shrouding burkas. "How can you fall in love with a girl if you can't see her face?" he asks.*

*Daud is unmarried and has sex only with men and boys. But he does not consider himself homosexual, at least not in the Western sense. "I like boys, but I like girls better," he says. "It's just that we can't see the women to see if they are beautiful. But we can see the boys, and so we can tell which of them is beautiful."*

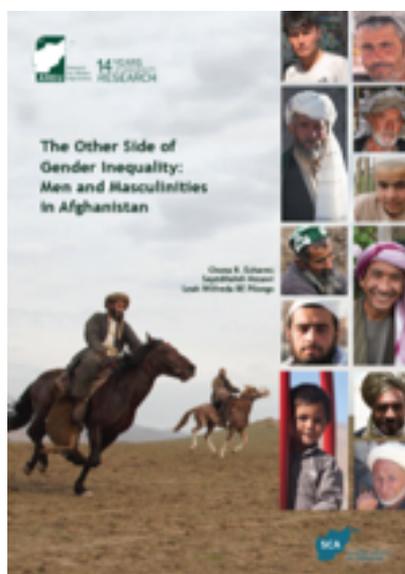
*Daud's insistence that his behavior should not label him as homosexual is the next important point in understanding the nature of this dynamic, and opens the doors to a complex interrelationship between Islam and its cultural interpretations. Even men who practice homosexuality exclusively are not labeled by themselves or their counterparts as homosexual.*

Att vara en 29 år gammal man och i hela sitt liv ha sett endast ca 200 kvinnor; det går inte riktigt att föreställa sig hur det är. Att Mohammed Daud säger: "Hur kan du bli förelskad i en flicka om du inte kan se hennes ansikte?" är ju självklart. En märklig falskhet har utvecklats, där man inte kallar sexuella relationer mellan män för "homosexualitet", vilket det ju de facto handlar om.

Mohammed Baud säger visserligen att han "gillar flickor bättre", men vad vet han, han har bara sett 200 kvinnor i sitt liv och aldrig haft någon nära relation med en kvinna. Däremot har han sex med pojkar/män, som han ju kan se och därför kan se "om de är vackra". Orsaken till att männen i den här kulturen, som idkar sexuellt umgänge med andra män inte erkänner att det är homosexuella akter de utför, är förstås att homosexualitet (om det uttrycks så) är belagt med dödsstraff inom Islam.

## The Other Side of Gender Inequality: Men and Masculinities in Afghanistan

(AREU - Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit och Swedish Committee for Afghanistan)



*Our talks and discussions about women's rights are all as slogans but nothing in action. Why? It is because our masculine honour and bravery are more than their rights. The life in the village is different from the city. Here, if a stranger bothers my wife or sister as he stares at them on their way home, I cannot tolerate that; I would have to kill him, or else I am not called a man in my community...*

*(Baf, Mature Man, Kabul Rural - FGD)*

During the last century, Afghanistan might be considered as the only country that still struggles with the matter of women's status among its kings and politicians. It is also part of the "belt of classic patriarchy," in which men are greatly supported by a set of social structures to be dominant over women.

While there are some efforts toward a more equitable sharing of power, classic patriarchy still retains all the elements of the totalitarian authority of senior male figures (father, grandfather, uncle/s, elder male cousins and brothers). Ethnicity and kinship norms, along with religion, forge collective male identities in Afghanistan.

### **Respect and authority in the family**

*When a man gets angry, he will hate the women so the women should always respect him.*

*(F3, Young Woman, Kabul, Urban – FGD)*

*Women cannot do anything without permission because we are women, and we should obey our family; Allah says that women should obey their husband.*

*(M, Mature Woman, Nangarhar – KII)*

*As they said, a woman should respect elders and her husband and try to encourage her children to pray to Allah and respect elders.*

*(F3, Young Woman, Nangarhar – FGD)*

*She should respect her husband and not fight with him, and, vice-versa, a man should respect his woman.*

*(Mature Woman, Kabul, Urban –KII)*

*The good woman should respect the man and treat him well when he comes home after his hard work, like she should bring him a pillow, tea, and smile. She should not complain if there is no food sometimes at home; she should not swear at the man. She should bear with it. She should even borrow from the neighbour and inform the man.*

*Moreover, if the man is a good one, he would be ashamed and should work harder.*

*(Fa, Mature Woman, Bamyan – KII)*

*First of all, a woman should respect her husband; then, her children should respect her as well. When there is mutual respect in a family, everything will run smoothly.*

*(Ha, Young Woman, Bamyan – KII)*

*It is a responsibility of a woman to respect her husband. and not do anything against her husband's will.*

*(F1, Young Woman, Takhar – FGD)*

### **Roles of men: A closer look at the qualitative findings**

*Man is the head of the family, he furthers the life of family, he is like the father of the house.*

*(F8, Mature Woman, Takhar-FGD)*

*Man is the head of the family; all the family members are expecting so much from him. He prepares all the expenses of his family members.*

*(Ha, Young Woman, Bamyan – FGD)*

The common theme among the various provinces is men losing a sense of integrity and worth when they cannot live up to the expectations set upon them. They believed that such men were putting themselves in great dishonour/be-ghairat-i and shame:

*If a man does not fulfil these expectations at home, then he loses his value to family members. For example, a wife expects good food from her husband, she expects to have guests and all, but when her expectations are not met as her husband did not bring food at home...*

*His brothers who were the closest people to him used to say that he is useless, and his wife used to complain too and these are the type of situations that men have to bear when they cannot live up to those expectations.*

*(N, Young Man, Kabul, Urban – FGD)*

*The majority of men couldn't fulfil these expectations, only about 20 percent of them could while the remaining 80 percent couldn't. Most of the men in Bamyan could not cope with these expectations. There are some men who could not prepare the nafaqah of their wife and children; there are some other families where both man and woman could work together. In general, patriarchy exists, and most of the men could not cope with all these expectations.*

*SK, Young Woman, Bamyan –FGD)*

*Due to lots of pressure, some men do commit suicide. In our village, a man reportedly committed suicide for that reason.*

*(Ga, Young Man, Kabul, Rural-FGD)*

### **Roles of women and domestic tasks**

As to the roles of women, the majority of the participants and informants in all provinces stated in qualitative part of the research that their responsibility is to manage their homes:

*As is always the case, the males who are the heads of the family are always not at home. Women, in charge of the house management, will handle the household chores, rearing and caring for the children. The ideal women are those who readily take on those household responsibilities. They control the behaviour of their children, those who are in school and those who are not. Women will be considered ideal by the community members as well when they fulfil those tasks expected of them. We have women who do not control their children, and their children are always walking in the streets and bothering young girls and other people in the locality.*

*(Mature Man, Kabul-Urban – KII)*

*A woman should take care of the house and the wealth of her husband, and teach the children how to behave well while for the entire day, the father of the family is not present, so all responsibilities are on women in the house.*

*(MS, Mature Man, Kabul, Urban – FGD)*

*We do the tasks in our home, such as bake bread, cook the food for our family. We also wash clothes and other tasks like dairy, and others.*

*(Mature Woman, Nangarhar – KII)*

*I take his coat, and his room is already clean before his coming. I put his tea when he arrives, his heater is warm, if it is summer, so his fan is ready, and I followed all of his orders.*

*(F4, Mature Woman, Takhar-FGD)*

*Women have roles in their husband's house; they should have the management and leadership of the house, and they should handle disciplining their children.*

*(M1, Young Woman, Bamyan – FGD)*

### **The roles of religion and culture in the sexual division of labour**

*For example, in Islam, women have the right to education and work, but in some codes and norms women are not allowed to work; even most of them do not let their daughters go for education because their honour will be questioned. Some tribal codes and norms are also against the inheritance right of women. If a woman asks for her inheritance right from her brother/father, she has to accept to break all the relationships with her relatives. Girls do not have the right to choose when and whom to marry; it is the parents who decide when and to whom their daughters have to get married.*

*(Mature Man, Religious, Nangarhar – KII)*

*Men in our communities do not help their women because they think it is a very big shame if other men know that they help their wives in their house chores.*

*(Mature Man, Nangarhar–KII)*

## Leadership equality and gender

Worth mentioning are the explanations provided by a few FGD (Focus group discussions) respondents from the conservative province of Nangarhar, and less conservative group views in Bamyan:

*As I told you, we do not have an educated woman in Kama that has the potential to become a community leader; from the beginning, I told you that women are not allowed to go to school; that is why they are not selected to lead. No famous woman surfaced in our place; mostly men are famous. When a man allows his daughter, son or his wife attend school, then they can do something in the society.*

*As I told you before, women are not educated so they do not know that they can get their rights and can go out. Men decide who should go out and who should not.  
(Nar, Mature Female, Nangarhar – KII)*

*We cannot deny the fact that a woman can be a good manager because we have had great examples in Afghanistan; we have ministers, members of parliament, and other politicians. It is not right that we take out girls from schools and deprive them of higher education. I am sure that after ten years in this developing country with a population of 30 million, a person who is illiterate won't have a place to live whether a man or a woman. Afghanistan cannot go on like this forever. The problem has been within us; we are ignorant in that we do not allow our girls to go to school or allow them to attend universities.*

*(N, Young Man, Kabul, Urban – FGD)*

*Men have better ideas than a woman. Mostly men are exposed outside of the house, so they know of issues that women are not aware of them. Recently women have started to come out of their house, they are aware of the society and their rights so in the future they can be comparable to men, but for now, in Afghanistan, women are trying to improve their status. In the past, the women were not aware of their rights and they were accepting whatever their men imposed on them. The man is like a strong supporter of a family.*

*(SK, Young Woman, Bamyan – FGD)*

## Women and marriage: Decisions and harmful practices

Marriage in many traditional societies means the union not only of two individuals, but also of two families. In many cases, marriage in traditional societies is decided upon by the family rather than by the individuals who are about to be married. The couple who have no choice in mate selection will only have the option of how they work out the marriage to attain happiness.

*Yes, it is right, why the women cannot decide whom to marry? It is because the women are naqis-ul-aql and they are inferior. When a girl sees a fashionable young boy without consideration of his education, wealth and how she will be treated in the future, the girl chooses him, but his parents consider all these issues when they select a boy for their girl.  
(HDM, Mature Man, Kabul, Urban –FGD)*

*They will say that you are free to do anything and to go anywhere, if you want to marry, you can go, we do not accept you as our family member and don't call us father or mother.*

*(F2, Mature Woman, Takhar –FGD)*

*I was 18 years old when I got married to an old man, but I never wanted to marry him; I told them that I would commit suicide if they forced me. My father told me, if you do not want to marry, okay, get lost with your mom, I will divorce her too; so my mother told me to marry. I got married then.*

*(F3, Mature Woman, Takhar-FGD)*

*They made decisions for their women which are very painful, like sometimes they force the girls to get married, and say that I am your father and I am authorised to decide for you.*

*(ZA, Young Woman, Bamyan – FGD)*

*Yes, I told you about my life that I was just seven or eight years old when I got married, in our place most of our girls marry at the age of 14 or 15; if they get married later, people will talk behind their back and may come up with stories that they are sick or may have problems at home.*

*(Nar, Mature Woman, Nangarhar – KII)*

### **Power goes with being a man**

*One of the advantages of a man is his being [more] powerful than the women. The other advantage of the man is that the women are at his beck and call, and they serve the men.*

*(Hdm, Mature Man, Kabul, Urban – FGD)*

*Allah gave men more power than women that is why in this community people also do not give much opportunity to women.*

*(Mature Woman 2, Nangarhar – FGD)*

*They do these treatments against their family members to show how much their power stands in their home.*

*(B, Young Woman, Kabul, Rural – FGD)*

### **On men being more powerful**

*No, they are not equal, it is clear to all that the ability of the women is lesser than the men. Physically the men are powerful than women. In intelligence, the men are better than women.*

*(Mature Man 2, Nangarhar KII)*

*In our house, my husband makes every decision by himself.*

*(Mature Woman, Kabul, Urban – FGD)*

*Women also can have power. There are many women in parliament, they have power, and they can express their ideas there. In our village, we do not have any powerful woman because here, women had no opportunity to study. Only men had the opportunity to study here.*

*(F1, Young Women, Takhar – FGD)*

### **Masculinity and violence against women - wife beating**

Men being considered as the unquestionable ruler of the house, under whose purview events in the household are seen as private matters, contributes to domestic violence. This typically refers to traditional wife battery; other than that, women are also vulnerable to dowry crimes such as bride burning, kidnapping for prostitution, and honour killings.

### **Displaying aggressive behaviour at home**

*To be honest, most of the men in our community do raise their hands to their wives, sisters and children. It is something normal here.*

*(Man 1, Nangarhar – KII)*

*If women disobey their husbands' wishes for sure, they will push them to act violently. ... Men worked hard the whole day to fend for their families, and after work when they are at home, they are so tired and they see their wives disobeying their wishes. How would they feel? For sure after two or three times they would start beating their wives.*

*(ANZ, Mature Man, Nangarhar – KII)*

*As we told you, if I do not act on his wishes he will beat me.*

*(Young Woman, Nangarhar – KII)*

*Let me tell you about my experience: she was saying things, so I told her to shut up, and then I tried to talk seriously, but that did not work either, so I stood up and beat her up. I saw that she was trying to exert her influence on me... she said she wants to go to her father's house, which is in Kunduz, and I said very good, you can go. When her father arrived, he said that he wants to take her to his house for few days, and my wife asked me if she is allowed? So I replied yeah, you should go and stay there until you accept your mistakes.*

*(FR, Mature Man, Takhar – FGD)*

*Because in our village, the men do not let us go out of the house. Like one time, a woman went somewhere without seeking the permission of her husband; upon finding out, he hit her for two days and two nights.*

*(F2, Mature Woman, Takhar-FGD)*

*I can share with you the experience on one of my neighbours who had a daughter. She fell in love with a police officer. One day she eloped with that guy. However, after a few days the officer came back to the police department alone. The police brought her back to her family.*

*Her brothers and her father killed this girl, and no one knew about it until now. The police never asked them about her again.*

*(F7, Young Woman, Kabul, Urban-FGD)*

*As I have experienced, when men made up their mind they do not consult with their women and if the women resist their decisions, then they will ask, who is the man of the house? They will say that we know everything because we are men, and you do not know anything because you are just a woman. For example, my sister and her husband wanted to arrange the marriage of their daughter, but the daughter did not want to get married, and then her father beat her and broke her leg and hand.*

*(G, Young Woman, Bamyān – FGD)*

*When the woman goes out, do something or make a plan without permission of men who are head of the family, this causes men to be angry and beating incidents happen. When the family members do not obey them, then the men beat them.*

*(HWM, Mature Man, Kabul, Urban – FGD)*

*A man should be very tolerant of female members of the family, but whenever they do not obey the men, it is permissible for the men to be aggressive with the female member of the family.*

*(Young Man, Nangarhar – FGD)*

*If she is not sick, and she does not hear my orders, so I will hit her a bit, or I will bash her.*

*(M, Young Man, Takhar – FGD)*

*He has the right to beat you when women do not want to give in for sexual relationship, or women do not sleep with their husbands, just like if they are busy with their child, lack of sexual relationship gave husbands the right to hit women.*

*(F8, Mature Woman, Takhar - FGD)*

*No, it is not right, we have a proverb that says the people will face problems if they do not use their mind. When a person becomes angry, he beats his wife or other members of the family. However, lately, conditions have changed; husbands cannot beat their wives. If a husband wants to beat his wife, it might end up that he may be beaten by his wife instead.*

*(HFR, Mature Man, Kabul, Urban – FGD)*

Results show that acceptance of wife battery/wife-beating tendencies of men is widespread with the highest rate in Nangarhar and the lowest in Bamyān. Respondents subscribe to the traditional views about violence against women and children, finding wife-beating acceptable when women resist the opinion of men.

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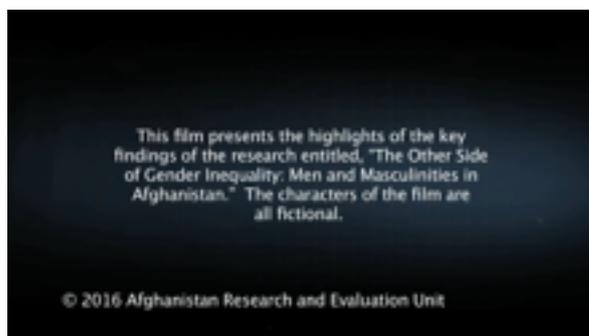
[Human Terrain Team Pashtun Homosexuality Report: Human Terrain Team \(HTT\) AF-6 Research Update and Findings](#) -U.S. ARMY Afghanistan, 2009, 2011

[Startled marines find Afghan men all made up to see them](#) - The Scotsman, 2002

[Kandahar's Lightly Veiled Homosexual Habits](#) - Los Angeles Times, 2002

[The Other Side of Gender Inequality: Men and Masculinities in Afghanistan](#) - Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit and Swedish Committee for Afghanistan, 2016

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The Other Side of Gender Inequality: Men and Masculinities in Afghanistan

## Förkortningar

FGD Focus Group Discussions

KII Key Informant Interview



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