

Trust is the Coin of the Realm

Lessons from the Money Men in Afghanistan

By **Edwina A. Thompson**

"A fascinating foray down the alleys of the 'hawala' world, this book is as rich in its insights as it was daring in its research. There are lessons here for both policy makers and scholars, for the concerned citizen as well as the international expert. If we insist on behaving as 'ugly Westerners', Thompson leaves us without excuse."-- Os Guinness, Senior Fellow, EastWest Institute

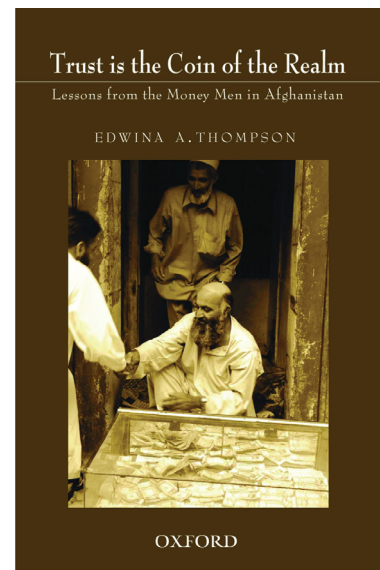
"Thompson's masterful approach has tapped into a crucial intellectual and very human component that we must draw upon in order to understand the nexus of terrorism, religion, the worlds of licit and illicit finance, corruption, government legitimacy, and insurgency. She has woven these strands together brilliantly in a manner that should inform the design and implementation of coherent peace-making and state-building strategies, not just in Afghanistan, but all around the world. A must read for policy makers, practitioners, and informed publics."-- Colonel Daniel S. Roper, U.S. Army (Retired), and former Director of U.S. Army Counterinsurgency Center, Fort Leavenworth, 2007-2011

"A remarkable piece of work."--John M. Hobson, Professor of Political Science, University of Sheffield

Trust is the Coin of the Realm shines a rare light into the labyrinth of Afghanistan's 'money men' and their influential informal economy that links the Islamic world. Hawala is the ancient financial system that predates Muhammad, and provides a vital key to engaging with many of the world's traditional cultures. Stereotyped as 'built for terrorism' and a dangerous pipeline for dirty money in the wake of 9/11, Thompson reveals it to be indispensable to the work and reach of humanitarians, donors, family members, and the business community. Outsiders striving to build states and peace in crisis countries will find this book invaluable for earning the trust that is essential if their efforts are to make a lasting difference.

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- **Easy, accessible style despite technical content**
- **Presents a fresh look at why state-building efforts have failed, and encourages more open dialogue between external reformers and the local institutions they seek to engage, and often disrupt**
- **Based on interviews that required a high degree of trust between author and subjects in the 'underworld'**

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