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The Afghan family and the position of Afghan women in the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan

Rodzina afgańska i pozycja Afganek w Islamskim Emiracie Afganistanu

Abstract

Introduction. In August 2021, following the withdrawal of NATO troops from Afghanistan, the Taliban seized power in Kabul. Within a few weeks, this led to retalibanization, *i.e.*, a return to the methods of governing the country known from the 1990s. First, they closed schools to girls and banned women from returning to work, damaging the lives of millions of citizens, driving many of them into depression and suicidal thoughts.

Aim. The aim of the article is to show the reader that from the perspective of the feminist theory of social reproduction, the patriarchal system is the cause of gender oppression and is responsible for the reproduction and maintenance of social inequalities.

Materials and methods. The research was conducted based on the analysis of the literature on the subject and through interviews with Afghans and Afghan refugees. The research took place between December 2021, when I first had the opportunity to visit the Center

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for Foreigners in the Group and meet the Afghan refugees staying there, and November 2023. Respondents staying in Poland put me in touch with their compatriots and with refugees staying in Iran. Interview questions were semi-structured and responses were written in a journal or recorded.

Results and conclusion. Using the perspective of feminist theory of social reproduction refers to the human potential that allows us to meet all needs. The analytical tool was Martha Nussbaum's "Capability Perspective," which showed that the influence of the Taliban on Afghan families is enormous and leads to the inability to ensure a basic minimum existence for their members, especially women and girls.

Keywords: education, Taliban, Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, retalibanization, Afghan family, feminist theory of social reproduction.

Abstrakt

Wprowadzenie. W sierpniu 2021 roku, po wycofaniu się wojsk NATO z Afganistanu talibowie przejęli władzę w Kabulu. W przeciągu kilku tygodni doprowadzili do retalibanizacji, czyli powrotu do metod rządzenia krajem znanych z lat 90. W pierwszej kolejności zamknęli szkoły przed dziewczętami, zakazali powrotu do pracy kobietom, czym zniszczyli życie milionom obywateli poprzez wpędzenie ich w depresję i myśli samobójcze.

Cel. Celem artykułu jest pokazanie, że z perspektywy feministycznej teorii społecznej reprodukcji system patriarchalny jest przyczyną opresji płciowych i odpowiada za reprodukcję i podtrzymywanie nierówności społecznych.

Materiały i metody. Badania przeprowadzono na podstawie analizy literatury przedmiotu oraz za pomocą wywiadów z Afgańczykami oraz afgańskimi uchodźcami. Badania trwały od grudnia 2021 roku, kiedy po raz pierwszy miałam okazję odwiedzić Ośrodek dla Cudzoziemców w Grupie i poznać przebywających tam afgańskich uchodźców, do listopada 2023 roku. Respondenci przebywający w Polsce skontaktowali mnie ze swoimi rodzinami oraz z uciekinierami przebywającymi w Iranie. Pytania do wywiadu były częściowo ustrukturyzowane, a odpowiedzi zapisywane w dzienniku lub nagrywane.

Wyniki i wnioski. Wykorzystanie perspektywy feministycznej teorii społecznej reprodukcji odnosi się do ludzkiego potencjału, który pozwala zaspokoić wszystkie potrzeby. Narzędziem analitycznym była perspektywa zdolności Marthy Nussbaum, dzięki któremu wykazano, że wpływ talibów na rodziny afgańskie jest przeogromny i prowadzi do niemożności zapewnienia minimum egzystencji ich członkom, zwłaszcza kobietom i dziewczynom.

Słowa kluczowe: edukacja, talibowie, Islamski Emirat Afganistanu, retalibanizacja, rodzina afgańska, feministyczna teoria społecznej reprodukcji.

Introduction

Afghanistan is one of the poorest countries in the world, which has been tarnished by war for more than 40 years. The situation for women and girls in the Afghan family is extremely difficult, with a patriarchal society excluding them at every turn. In the Afghan family, it is the man who has the dominant role, making the most important decisions for all family members, and the woman has been marginalised to the role of housewife and caregiver. After the fall of the Taliban in 2001, a section of society began to demand change, with women seeing the need to equalise their rights with those of men. Proponents of reform never succeeded in moving from a patriarchal-type family to a partnership-type family due to resistance from conservative circles against emancipation processes. Since the Taliban took power again in August 2021, we have seen women's position degraded, isolated and marginalised.

Honour is a distinctive construct that reproduces and actualises past forms of violence and oppression against Afghan women. It is the axis of a man's responsibility and social control over a woman. The idea of honour has its origins in Islam, but it is not specific only to this religion, while the various ways of interpreting it are rather a socio-cultural construct (Koschenchuk, 2013). According to Najah Manasra

[...] male honour does not depend on a man's personal achievements, but is related to the appropriate, in the light of moral standards, behaviour of his wife, daughter and sister. Because of the close connection between the idea of honour and the relationship between a woman and her father, brother and husband, son, this relationship is called the "honour relationship" (Manasra, 1993, p. 8).

Pashtun family under the Taliban

Nowadays, as in the past, the reproduction and maintenance of specific oppressions of individual family members against women is observed in Afghanistan. These processes are governed by a peculiar Pashtun logic and reinforce resistance against emancipation processes. As Łukasz Jureńczyk states, the Afghan mores stemming from tradition and religion, espoused by conservative circles, significantly affect the social disempowerment of women in Afghanistan (Jureńczyk, 2019). According to Marcin Krzyżanowski, former Polish consul in Afghanistan, "[...] women are overwhelmingly second-class citizens viewed through the prism of male family

members – an Afghan woman is always someone's daughter, wife, sister or mother. In traditional circles, those who do not perform any of the above social roles are seen as lacking dignity' (Krzyżanowski, 2015, p. 353). This supports the stereotype of the Pashtun as the guardian of wives and daughters (Rzehak, 2009). The basic unit of Afghan society is the family. It is usually multi-child, patriarchal, patrilocal, multi-generational and poor. In the traditional Afghan family, regardless of ethnic group, the large family model prevails. It usually includes three to five generations of the male line, with cousin relationships preferred. It is headed by the eldest male, who rules over the entire family and is the administrator of the common property, which includes the house, farmland, livestock, agricultural tools and household utensils (Gawęcki, 1983).

It is worth noting that Afghanistan is a multi-ethnic country, but the Pashtuns predominate throughout the territory: a conservative ethnic group adhering to a specific code of honour called Pashtunwali. According to Jadwiga Pstrusińska, it contains personal patterns, rules of social and family life, which are a legacy of the ancient Arians (Pstrusińska, 2010). Characteristic of this is the collective duty of ancestral revenge for crimes committed by an individual (Głogowski, 2012). The Pashtuns were traditionally a tribal population engaged in pastoralism. In such a family, the position of women was always low and resulted from a conservative family model regulated by tribal rules. According to Piotr Łukasiewicz, the last Polish ambassador to Afghanistan, the lower position of women can be seen in the traditions related to marriage. Although it is officially accepted that it is the groom's family that has to buy out the bride (give the so-called "milk money"), in practice, however, the father of the bride is obliged to buy the bride's household furnishings, which means that he brings a much larger dowry than the groom's family. The privileged position of the man is also evident in the event of divorce (still rare among Pashtuns). It is sufficient for the husband to repeat the formula three times: "I divorce you" and he can already remarry. The woman must return to her parents for a minimum of three months. The most common causes of divorce include the woman's infertility or lack of a male offspring, the wife's bad temper and the lack of a dowry from her parents. With family values understood in this way, marriage is a tool for power struggles. Appropriate marriage determines the family's position in the tribe. Thus, the honour of the family depends on the conduct of the women, the ability to maintain chastity, and the social position of the whole family depends on the permanence of the marriage (Łukasiewicz, 2022).

For years, parents were reluctant to send their children to school. The exceptions were religious schools – madrassas. Girls rarely attended them, which meant that there was little opportunity to change their lifestyles. As Maria Amiri points out, through its attitude to centuries-old traditions and lack of modernisation, the society

has been going backwards rather than forward for years. Among the main forms of women's oppression, the researcher mentions absolute obedience to the elders, especially the father, which also results in the young living with the husband's parents after marriage and the woman's task is to serve the rest of the family. Homes are divided into male and female spaces (*pardah*) and children learn its rules from an early age. In the Afghan family, arranged marriages are normal, as are underage marriages. Unions are made within relatives, clans, tribes (Amiri, 2013). Child marriage, although declining, also remains a major obstacle to progress and reproduces systemic violence against women*.

The perspective of feminist reproductive theory is to expose relationships within the family based on domination. In Afghanistan, the idea of honour also boils down to an unequal distribution of power between man and woman, where it is the head of the family who is obliged to control and correct the woman's behaviour and choices. Social norms, tradition and religious beliefs prohibit many girls from accessing secular education. According to research conducted as part of the "Afghanistan Living Conditions Survey (ACLS) 2013–14 National Risk and Vulnerability Assessment project," family disapproval is one of the top three reasons why girls and boys aged 6–24 drop out of school (31% of girls compared to 1% of boys). Furthermore, family disapproval of going to school is also a greater problem for girls than boys (40% compared to 3%) (Central Statistics Organisation, 2016). When discussing the practice of Afghan family life, it is impossible not to mention its violent side. In Afghanistan, the word "danger" is taken very literally. Intimidation, beatings, kidnappings, killings, bombings and other forms of violence are the order of the day, with women being the main victims (Krzyzanowski, 2015). Insecurity (real or perceived), including potential attacks by terrorists and harassment by strange men, is another important barrier that affects girls much more than boys. During Taliban rule in the 1990s, girls and women were banned from going to school, often because of an ideology that supported chastity for women. Although Taliban rule ended in 2001 and girls were later allowed to return to school, many families continued these oppressive practices against girls and banned them from attending school, even of the religious type (Human Rights Watch, 2017). Honour relations have to do with the symbolic power of the subject over the object. According to Pernilla Ouis, an important factor behind the spreading of this type of control over girls is economic oppression and the need to provide the community with symbolic control and power, an indication of the stronger and weaker group

* The number of child marriages in Afghanistan is declining, but they are still common: 9% of women aged 20–24 say they married before the age of 15, and 35% by the age of 18 (Amiri, 2013, pp. 120–123).

(Ouis, 2009). Due to the patriarchal structure of society, Afghan women rarely have the opportunity to accumulate resources (Krzyżanowski, 2015). The mechanism of social control over them is used, scaring them with threats of sexual harassment, abuse, rape and extramarital pregnancies. These are particularly important deterrent for parents to send their daughters to school, thereby failing to meet their need to get an education and become independent from men (Shayan, 2015). Religious beliefs, which assume that girls are to be protected only at home, also discourage some families from sending their daughters to school. It is traditionally believed that women should become housewives, and educated women have very few employment opportunities. In addition, cultural norms dictate that women should live with their husbands and in-laws after marriage (United Nations Children’s Fund, 2019, p. 10). This fits in with the perspective of feminist social reproduction theory, which assumes that a woman’s work, not only in economic and wage-earning terms, but also understood as any of her activities, remains under strict control by men. One can quote the words spoken by Catherine Szopa: “Every uniquely constituted body participates in the reproduction of a shared social reality and is an expression of this social totality. Sexism has long been used to justify inequality and male domination over women and perpetuates further exploitation” (Szopa, 2023, p. 7). Afghan women have limited access to education and few opportunities to acquire property. In addition to this, the already described isolation of women from the outside world (*pardah*) and far-reaching restrictions on their freedom of movement, especially in rural areas, are commonplace. In this regard, the former consul was tempted to state: “that in the case of Afghan women, the ‘glass ceiling’ is at the very bottom” (Krzyżanowski, 2015, p. 355).

As Wojciech Stankiewicz points out, according to the oppressive conception of conservative Muslims reproducing historical forms of violence against women, the restrictions on women’s dress and appearance derived from the Qur’anic provisions stem from a desire to protect them. “It is defending women from the evil influences of the outside world. Muslim women wear *burqas*, which are seen as a ‘positive’ law towards women. The veiled body gives them a sense of security and protects them from harassment and insult” (Stankiewicz, 2009, p. 216). Religion not only refers to rules on women’s dress, but also pays attention to her physical appearance. These rules are very meticulous and detailed. Women are not allowed to show any parts of their bodies to anyone except their own husbands. The use of any covering is a religious duty for every woman (Stankiewicz, 2009).

In Afghanistan, under the Taliban, the only clothing allowed was the *burqa*, also known as the *chadori*, treated by them as a symbol of the Afghan woman. At the same time, it was one of the most radical forms of body covering in the world, meant to maintain discipline and etiquette, to protect an extremely oppressive

and unjust social system. A woman dressed in this way was no longer an object of sexual desire (Stankiewicz, 2009). In 1997, an order was issued in Afghanistan, according to which women were forbidden to wear high-heeled shoes in order not to make a sound with them, and cosmetics were banned (the only cosmetic allowed was black eye powder – *khol*). According to V. Stankiewicz, for example, the penalty for painting one's lips was to have one's lips cut off. Further bans concerned wearing earrings, waxing eyebrows and adding artificial hair, while hair dyeing was allowed. Completely forbidden were seductive movements, gestures, speech and ringing ornaments to stimulate the male sexual imagination (Stankiewicz, 2009).

Belquis Ahmadi and Mohammad Osman Tariqa believe that the Taliban's decree on the hijab not only contradicts Afghan history and culture, but also demonstrates the Taliban's own narrow understanding of Islam. In their work, the aforementioned researchers categorically reject the narrative that the burqa is part of traditional Afghan women's dress (Ahmadi, Osman Tariq, 2022). This shows that the Taliban created their own system responsible for limiting women's rights and then reproduce it after taking power in 2021. It is therefore not true that the Taliban seek to reproduce historical forms of oppression, but create ever newer ones, which then become an integral part of society. However, Mr Łukasiewicz stresses that the burqa can be perceived as a tool of oppression against women, whereas according to him it is a barrier against violence by men. It provides protection under which they can wear normal clothes, jewellery and make-up, and its donning is a shield against rape, taunts and assaults from not only the Taliban but also ordinary men (Łukasiewicz, 2022). According to Ł. Jureńczyk (2019), Amnesty International has recorded thousands of cases of violence against women, such as acid dousing and honour killings. However, most such cases are not reported to the police. Among the main reasons for this inaction are the inaction of the authorities in bringing the perpetrators to justice, traditional customs that place men above the law, intimidation, stigmatisation of victims and their fear of negative consequences in the future (Jureńczyk, 2019).

As late as the 1990s, the Taliban's policy towards women's work was no less strict. For the Taliban, women represented no economic potential and were therefore not allowed to work alongside men. In order to give credence to this oppressive rule, which was incompatible with Afghan tradition, the Taliban considered women's work a sin in order to uphold rules sanctioned by Islam. For this reason, women were banned from showing up at their existing jobs, which significantly reduced or even deprived entire families of income. The financial situation deteriorated significantly throughout the country. Single women and widows were the hardest hit. When women were pushed out of work, there was paralysis mainly in the ad-

ministration and in many other institutions where a significant proportion of the employees were women (Stankiewicz, 2009).

Retalibanisation of Afghanistan in 2021

On 31 August 2021, the US ended its two-decade-long mission in Afghanistan. Donald Trump's administration signed an agreement with the Taliban and President Joe Biden upheld the decision to withdraw US troops and international forces. In such a situation, NATO, which had been in command of the mission in Afghanistan since 2003, also decided to end it. In view of the Taliban-led offensive, the allies reckoned that security would deteriorate and announced support for Afghanistan to make it more difficult for the Taliban to take power and force them to negotiate with the government. The rapid collapse of state structures took NATO by surprise. As the Taliban entered the capital on 15 August 2021, the allies had to start a hasty evacuation of their citizens and former collaborators at risk of repression (Lorenz, 2021a). As analyst Wojciech Lorenz of the Polish Institute of International Affairs points out, it was predicted that Afghan security forces deprived of US support would be less effective, but their complete collapse was not expected. This was only to some extent due to the lack of US military support. The Taliban were well prepared for the offensive. They effectively intimidated the population and, through a series of coordinated attacks on major cities, quickly took control of Afghanistan (Lorenz, 2021b).

Patrick Kugiel points out that back in August 2021, the Taliban rejected a democratic constitution and re-established the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, based on Sharia laws (as interpreted by the less strict Hanafi school). The supreme authority is held by spiritual leader Emir Hibatullah Akhundzada residing in Kandahar, while the government in Kabul, headed by Mullah Hasan Akhund, handles the governance of the country. Despite calls for a government that is inclusive and representative of the multi-ethnic state, the new government consists almost exclusively of mullahs and Pashtuns, and marginalises other minorities (including Hazaras, Tajiks, Uzbeks) and completely ignores women. In recent months, women's rights to work, education and movement have been increasingly curtailed. The end of democracy in Afghanistan also means severe restrictions on freedom of media and expression and the right to peaceful protest. Demonstrations are violently dispersed and activists persecuted. As of August 2021, around 200 NGOs have ceased operations and around 7,000 media workers have lost their jobs (Kugiel, 2022).

Women in Afghanistan have been victims of the radical Taliban regime for many years – they have marginalised their position in society as a whole (Giustozzi, 2009). The policies that the Taliban have pursued have led to the displacement of women

from economic, social and, above all, political life. Women were not allowed to leave the house on their own, meet others, explore their education or even receive medical care (Tortajada, 2004). The role of a woman in Afghanistan is reduced to merely performing domestic duties. As Amnesty International highlights in its report:

In less than a year, the number of early, forced and child marriages has increased significantly in Afghan society, and women who dare to protest against the restrictions imposed have been harassed, intimidated, arrested, tortured or become victims of enforced disappearances. This surge is due to several interrelated factors – economic, humanitarian, lack of educational and career prospects for women and girls, the practice of women and girls being forced by their families to marry into the Taliban, or the Taliban forcing women and girls to marry them (Amnesty International, 2022, p. 5).

Methodology

The research was based on a literature analysis and through interviews with Afghans and Afghan refugees. The research lasted from December 2021, when I first had the opportunity to visit the Centre for Foreigners in Grupa and meet the Afghan refugees staying there, until November 2023. Resident respondents put me in touch with their compatriots and with refugees residing in Iran. The interview questions were semi-structured and the answers were written in a diary or recorded. More than 20 interviews lasting several hours were conducted in the Centre for Foreigners in Grupa and in the flats of refugees in Toruń and Warsaw. Participants were evacuated by the Polish government in August 2021 from Afghanistan to Poland and initially stayed at the centres before moving to rented flats. All agreed to participate in the research and were under the care of the Emic Foundation in Toruń, where the author is a volunteer and intercultural supervisor. The research was initially conducted in English and is now conducted in Polish and English. Interviews with Afghans residing in their country and in Iran were conducted using WhatsApp. The role of coding in the data analysis process was fundamental, as it allowed categories to emerge, which were then assigned to categories framed by Martha Nussbaum's (2000) human capabilities perspective.

Findings

As a result of the Taliban's rise to power and the introduction of conservative decrees that have had a negative impact not only on the functioning of women and girls, but also on the functioning of entire families, it can be said that all areas of women's

lives, and consequently families, have deteriorated. Through the inability to realise the aforementioned capacities, women in Afghan society are unable to achieve either justice or equality. As Katarzyna Szumlewicz writes:

[...] today, domestic feudalism continues at its best, blocking women from realising basic capabilities, such as education, the ability to work outside the home or to make reproductive choices. [...] This is compounded by the exploitation of domestic labour and the concentration of goods enabling development in the hands of men, as well as prohibitions and orders relating to sex, which deprive women of the possibility of individual expression and making independent decisions regarding erotic life (Szumlewicz, 2020, p. 147).

Thus, the human capability perspective is a certain minimum degree of realisation of each capability. As M. Nussbaum (2000) points out, in a society that blocks at least one of the abilities, there can be no justice. Each of the ten capacities presented relates to a certain dimension of family existence.

Table 1

*An analysis of the functioning of Afghan families based on M. Nussbaum's capability perspective**

Capacities	
Life	The Taliban's return to rule has led to a huge setback for families in Afghanistan. Above all, schools for girls over the age of 12 were closed, female teachers were dismissed from many schools or dismissed themselves in fear for their lives. Women were ordered to wear the chadori (burqa) and banned from travelling more than 75 kilometres, and were ordered to walk with a male guardian. Women who have been active so far have been confined to the home, activists, journalists, politicians fear an attempt on their lives and have been in hiding for many months. They do not feel safe, at any time the Taliban can accost them on the street and convict them of a trivial offence, such as wearing high-heeled shoes, using cosmetics, painting their lips, wearing earrings, waxing their eyebrows, accessorising with fake hair, seductive movement, gestures, speech. Even children are not allowed to dress in Western clothes with cartoon prints. Female silhouettes and faces have been painted over on street advertisements. The fear of losing their lives relentlessly affects all family members.

* The tool used for the analysis was the Central Human Functional Capabilities, in Polish functioning as M. Nussbaum's Human Capabilities Perspective [Perspektywa Zdolności Ludzkich – PZL]. It is a minimum of capabilities that allow equality and social justice to be achieved through their implementation (Nussbaum, 2000).

Capacities

Health	<p>Under the Taliban, it is impossible to talk about the welfare of entire families. Firstly, women cannot receive medical care unless they are examined by women. With female doctors dismissed, there is no one to take care of women and their children. Most of the vaccination programmes have been stopped, so that health promotion policies and prevention of childhood diseases have atrophied. There is currently a lack of health education towards women and mothers, they do not have hygiene habits and basic knowledge about diseases. Children are not treated due to lack of money, even diseases that are easily treatable so far cause high mortality rates among Afghans.</p> <p>In Afghanistan, health services were at a very low level, with private health facilities operating, which lost much of their staff, especially foreign workers, after the Taliban came to power. NGOs also stopped providing medicines and food. Wealthier Afghans travel to Iran and Pakistan for treatment if they can obtain a humanitarian visa, which costs a few hundred dollars.</p> <p>Men cannot get treatment because, as the sole breadwinner, they cannot afford to be absent from work or cannot afford it.</p>
Bodily integrity	<p>As many women do not have the opportunity to work, children are employed in jobs that can result in illness, injury and even death due to unsafe working conditions and failure to enforce health and safety standards. Children in Afghanistan typically work long hours for little or no pay. Paid work performed by them includes: domestic carpet making, embroidery or tailoring, slave labour in brick factories, in the metal industry as tinsmiths and welders, in mines, in agriculture, on the streets as vendors, shoe cleaners and beggars. Children help with household chores or on their families' land. Employers force them to leave school altogether, with the result that they are likely to remain illiterate for the rest of their lives. This was the situation during the previous Taliban rule. Many people, even from the upper echelons of society, cannot read and write, and do not know foreign languages, because they no longer felt the need to learn after the Taliban left.</p> <p>Lack of adequate food, poor access to medical and educational facilities, migration from rural to urban areas leading to an increase in urban poverty, children on the streets and children of beggars all cause family breakdown. This increases the vulnerability of children and exposes them to situations of violence and exploitation.</p> <p>In patriarchal Afghan society, parents have authority over the child. Both fathers and mothers treat children as their property. So not only do parents and teachers adopt harsh methods of disciplining children, but there is little opposition to this harshness.</p>

 Capacities

Senses,
imagination,
thinking

The Ministry of Women's Affairs, established in 2001, was abolished by the Taliban in September 2021 and replaced by the Ministry for the Propagation of Virtue and Prevention of Vice, responsible for implementing Islamic law in the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan as defined by the Taliban.

The Taliban have effectively banned girls from getting any education other than primary education by closing secondary schools to them. In September 2021, the Taliban's education minister announced that gender segregation and an Islamic dress code would be enforced at universities. They then closed universities to women.

All pupils, teachers and staff in primary schools must wear Islamic robes: the abaya and niqab, or in some extreme cases the burqa, which covers the hair, body and most of the face.

Emotions

Women are unable to function normally. They have no psychological care. Those who suffer the most are those who have experienced the benefits of westernization and now their position has been relegated to that of a "talking piece of furniture." Women from tribal communities, those living in rural areas, have not really felt the change in their situation after the Taliban came to power, in that their lives are as difficult as they were before 2021. Only women from the upper classes have felt the change in their situation, they are devastated by their inability to continue their education and work. For them, life is over. Many women cannot even object to an arranged marriage they did not have in their plans. It is increasingly common to hear about suicides among young women, although no one keeps statistics. Many of the young women set themselves on fire or drink corrosive substances just to take their own lives.

Practical reason

Afghan women have always had to obey their elders and submit to men. With the exception of a brief period when Afghanistan was ruled by the communists, women have never had any rights, and those that have been established have never been respected by men.

Association

Women and girls do not have the opportunity to engage in any form of social interaction. From the age of 12, with their departure from school, they are condemned to solitude. They are only allowed to perform household chores. They are not allowed to go far from home or meet their friends. In addition, for fear of losing their honour, they are not allowed to make any independent decisions and are condemned to be confined to the parda, the female part of the house. They are only allowed to communicate with each other over the phone. More and more women are becoming dependent on mobile phones, which they use *non-stop*. Among deprived Afghan women, Indian videos uploaded to Facebook, Shorts or YouTube are becoming increasingly popular. Of course, this is banned and dependent on internet access. Also, girls who cannot go to school become addicted to online content and spend days with their phones. Some of them try to continue their studies through the internet and offline programmes developed during the COVID-19 pandemic. Some girls attend illegal lessons taught secretly by female teachers. However, this is punishable by flogging if the Taliban discover them taking lessons.

Capacities	
Proximity to nature	Since women have been banned from parks for several months, are not allowed to leave the house without a male guardian, and basically any time she leaves the house can end in an unpleasant encounter with the Taliban, women have restricted their activities. A similar situation occurred during the COVID-19 pandemic, so they are used to it.
Fun	It is one of the most important abilities. Girls are not given the conditions to play, to express themselves. In Afghanistan, from an early age, girls are trained to be mothers. Instead of going to school or doing homework, they have to take care of their younger siblings. This is the case even in the wealthiest families. Preparing meals, serving guests are the responsibilities of Afghan children. One of the boys' pastimes is flying kites. The Taliban have banned watching entertainment programmes on TV, including Bollywood from India, listening to music, holding wedding parties. Often Afghans put their lives at risk for some pleasure and listen to music on their smartphones or watch foreign films. They can be betrayed by their neighbours at any time. Even talking on the phone to a foreigner can end tragically for them.
Controlling one's own environment	The Taliban reinforces Afghanistan's patriarchal system where men decide on behalf of women, legitimising men's control over women, humiliation of women in public places, domestic violence, harassment and oppression of Afghan women and girls. Birth control is currently impossible due to the lack of women in the gynaecological profession. Family planning has become a utopia. According to the Qur'anic injunction, it is desirable to have as many children as possible. Unfortunately, due to the lack of medical care, the child mortality rate is very high. Also, the birth of girls in an impoverished society is increasingly greeted with indifference. Only sons, who are the parents' security for the future, count.

Source: Own elaboration based on interviews.

Following the withdrawal of US troops from Afghanistan and the Taliban takeover, we see a sudden deterioration in the situation of women and girls, which affects the functioning of the entire family. According to the systemic theory of the family, a change in the position of one family member affects the others. Thus, when the position of the Afghan woman deteriorates, which includes, for example, her inability to work, the men in the family also lose financial security, as women have been contributing to their livelihoods over the past two decades, especially in the cities. Besides, when girls have stopped attending school and have no prospects of improving their life situation in the future, the only way out of insecurity is to marry well. Families marry off girls who could normally continue their education. As researchers, however, we may ask

ourselves whether or not a return to the traditional family values of pre-2001 and pro-Western governments is a return to family homeostasis. It is important to remember that the majority of the population treated the culturally foreign American influence as contradictory to their values, and that emancipation only applied to a narrow group of women.

The functioning of Afghan families and the fulfilment of their roles is very much affected by the low level of security in the country and the notorious threat from the Taliban. This leads to an inability to move as much as is necessary to support the family. Many people, fearing for their lives, do not leave their homes. Consequently, the remaining members of the large family are forced to contribute to the upkeep of those in hiding. We are therefore faced with a specific economic dependence on other family members, not only the woman on her husband. The whole multigenerational family cannot accumulate capital. The inability of all the women in the family to enter education and work further exacerbates the impoverishment of the family. Unfortunately, women's emancipation is widely recognised as an alien element and therefore oppressive to the family values held by Afghans. This works against women and changes their position in the family.

Conclusion

As P. Kugiel, an expert from the Polish Institute of International Affairs, points out, the gradual erosion of women's rights and ignoring the appeals of the international community shows that, contrary to earlier predictions, the Taliban are recreating a radical version of their 1996–2001 rule. The lack of other significant military and political forces in the country means that the chance of the Taliban losing power in the future is low. Rather than inducing them to make concessions, international sanctions mainly hit the public (Kugiel, 2022). According to the feminist theory of social reproduction, it is unfortunately women and children, who have been treated as second-class citizens for years, who lose the most. The Taliban's approach to women's rights is most emotionally charged in the West, where it is forgotten that the position of women in Afghanistan has always been low, due not so much to religion as to the reproduced oppressive, conservative family model, regulated by tribal rules and the Pashtun code. This has failed to change over the past two decades because the resistance inherent in society has been stronger than the attempts by a handful of politicians and educators to equalise women's rights. All we can do is support the Afghan refugees and their families and hope that one day they will return to their country and start rebuilding it once again.

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