

The Impact of Early Exposure to Discriminatory Institutions on Mortality and Later Life Outcomes in Afghanistan

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- How do “gender-based discriminatory institutions” affect individuals?
- In particular, how does “early” exposure to discriminatory laws and regulations affect children; and particularly women & men?
- Study this question in the context of the Taliban regime in Afghanistan.

A little bit of history

- Emergence of the Taliban as an important faction in the Afghan Civil War took place in 1994 with the attack and capture of the southern city of Kandahar.
- The Taliban successfully took control of Kabul in 1996 and established the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan.
- A totalitarian government was established based on the strict interpretation of the *Sharia* law.
- This included the implementation of highly discriminatory practices - particularly biased against women.

A little bit of history: Gender-based Discriminatory Institutions

- Some examples in the Afghan context:
 - Prohibition on seeking education and employment for women.
 - Prohibition on going out without a male relative for women.
 - Prohibition on women from appearing in the media.
 - Taking steps to ensure women would not be visible from the outside of their homes.
 - Strict dress-code for women (also men).
 - Renaming public places with feminine names to gender neutral or masculine names.
- Strict punishment on non-compliance.
- Concerns about women's issues still very much pertinent - in the context of the US-Taliban peace deal:
 - The BBC asked the National Security Adviser, Hamdullah Mohib that, "*A lot of Afghan women have particular concerns. What's your message to those women?*"
 - The National Security Adviser replied, "*They have an ally...in the president of Afghanistan. They're not going to be ignored in this. We are going to make sure that their issues are at the front of any negotiations we conduct.*".

A little bit of history

- Between 1996 and 2001: controlled roughly 75% of the country's territory, consisting of largely the western, central and southern parts of the country.
- The remaining parts of the country were controlled by warlords who were opposed to the Taliban.
- Together formed a unified military front against the Taliban commonly known as the Northern Alliance.
- Prominent leaders of the Northern Alliance include Ahmad Shah Massoud, Abdul Rashid Dostum.

Map of Afghanistan, Fall 1996



Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan: Map of the situation in Afghanistan in late 1996; Massoud (red), Dostum (green) and Taliban (yellow) territories.

Figure: Courtesy: Wikimedia Commons and CNN

This paper: Question, “Early” exposure, Outcomes

- How does “early” exposure to discriminatory laws and regulations affect children, women & men?
- What do we mean by “early” exposure?
 - For children: Around the time of birth.
 - For currently adult women & men: “Adolescence” - (12-16 years).
- What are the outcomes?
 - Mortality of children.
 - Attitudes to wife-beating among both women & men.
 - Experience of spousal violence among women.
 - Autonomy & labour market participation of women.
 - Age at first marriage and birth for women.

Related Literature

- Studies have linked the effect of early exposure to violence/conflict on later life outcomes.
- Later life outcomes include health; but also attitudes to domestic violence, experience of violence.
- Eg: La Mattina (2017), La Mattina and Shemyakina (2017), Akresh, Lucchetti and Thirumurthy (2012).
- Boko Haram (perhaps closest to the Islamic Emirate in terms of cultural perceptions) and its adverse effect on educational outcomes.
- Eg: Bertoni, Maio, Molini and Nistico (2019).
- Recent studies have also focused on how gender sensitive curriculum for adolescents can change gender attitudes.
- Eg: Dhar, Jain and Jayachandran (2018).
- Provides motivation to look at the impact of a highly discriminatory institution - the Taliban governance in Afghanistan - on a number of current outcomes relevant for women's well-being at present.

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- Compare individuals exposed to the Taliban rule when they were adolescents (12-16 years between 1996-2001) relative to those who were too young at that time between Taliban and Northern Alliance administered provinces.
- Currently, the proposed treatment group is aged 26-35 years and control group is younger than 26 years.
- Why choose adolescence?
- Adolescence is a time when one is young enough when one's attitudes are malleable; but old enough to reason/understand (Dhar, Jain and Jayachandran (2018)).

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- Are for years after 2001 - fall of the Taliban government.

- Source: Afghanistan Demographic and Health Surveys (AfDHS) 2015.
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- **Child mortality outcomes:** Computed from retrospective birth histories - child characteristics, including age of death (if child had died).
- Binary variables that assume value 1 if child died within the first month (*neonatal mortality*), year (*infant mortality*), five years (*under-five mortality*) of life.

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- Binary variables that assume value 1 if child died within the first month (*neonatal mortality*), year (*infant mortality*), five years (*under-five mortality*) of life.
- Limit sample to births upto 2000:
- At least a year of exposure to Taliban governance; but omitting the effect of new government (& health policy) post Taliban rule.

Summary Statistics: Child Mortality Outcomes

Table: Summary Statistics: Child Mortality Outcomes

Variable	Mean	SD	Obs
<i>Proportion of children dead within:</i>			
First Month of Life	0.04	0.20	34,007
First Year of Life	0.09	0.28	34,007
First Five Years of Life	0.11	0.31	34,007

Note: Data source is AfDHS (2015). "SD" refers to standard deviation; "Obs" refers to the number of observations. Births restricted upto the year 2000.

- Close to, but lower than the figure for under-five mortality among children in Afghanistan provided by the United Nations Population Division: 1 in 6-7 children for 1990-2000.
- Due to high female adult mortality, child mortality likely to be understated (DHS 2015).

- **Outcome variables:**
- **Attitude to Wife-beating outcomes:**
- Asked both women & men if wife-beating is justified if wife:
 - Goes out without asking.
 - She neglects children.
 - Argues.
 - Refuses Sex.
 - Burns Food.

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- **Autonomy variables:** If woman can herself decide to: seek healthcare for herself, make household purchases, visit friends/relatives.

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- **Labour Market participation:** If woman had worked during the past 12 months.

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- **Labour Market participation:** If woman had worked during the past 12 months.
- **Marriage & Child bearing:** Age at first cohabitation/marriage and age at first birth.

Summary Statistics: Attitude to Wife-Beating

Variable	Mean	SD	Obs
<i>Women:</i>			
Wife Beating Justified if She:			
Goes Out Without Asking	0.67	0.47	23,588
Neglects Children	0.49	0.50	23,588
Argues	0.61	0.49	23,588
Refuses Sex	0.35	0.48	23,588
Burns Food	0.20	0.40	23,588
<i>Men:</i>			
Wife Beating Justified if She:			
Goes Out Without Asking	0.62	0.48	10,760
Neglects Children	0.31	0.46	10,760
Argues	0.44	0.50	10,760
Refuses Sex	0.20	0.40	10,760
Burns Food	0.08	0.28	10,760

Note: Data source is AfDHS (2015). For wife-beating questions (both perceptions and actual violence faced) in the women's sample, the sample is restricted to include only those respondents for whom husband, other males and females from the household were not present when these questions were asked.

Summary Statistics: Spousal Violence and Autonomy for Women

Variable	Mean	SD	Obs
<i>Women:</i>			
Husband Had Pushed	0.36	0.48	17,539
Husband Had Strangled	0.03	0.18	17,524
Husband Used a Weapon	0.03	0.17	17,521
Husband Hurt During Pregnancy	0.15	0.36	16,666
Woman Herself Decides To:			
Seek healthcare for herself	0.44	0.50	29,461
Make large household purchases	0.42	0.49	29,461
Meet her friends/relatives	0.52	0.50	29,461

Note: Data source is AfDHS (2015). For wife-beating questions (both perceptions and actual violence faced) in the women's sample, the sample is restricted to include only those respondents for whom husband, other males and females from the household were not present when these questions were asked.

Summary Statistics: Work, Age at First Marriage & Birth for Women

Variable	Mean	SD	Obs
<i>Women:</i>			
Was Working in the Last 12 Months	0.13	0.34	29,461
Age at First Marriage/Cohabitation (Yrs.)	17.91	3.52	29,461
Age at First Birth (Yrs.)	19.28	3.52	26,598

Note: Data source is AfDHS (2015). For wife-beating questions (both perceptions and actual violence faced) in the women's sample, the sample is restricted to include only those respondents for whom husband, other males and females from the household were not present when these questions were asked.

Estimation Equation: Children's Outcomes

$$y_{ipt} = \alpha + \beta_0 \text{Talib}P_{ip} + \beta_1 \text{Talib}Y_{it} + \beta_2 \text{Talib}P_{ip} * \text{Talib}Y_{it} + \gamma X_{ipt} + YOB_{it} + \delta_{ip} + \epsilon_{ipt}.$$

- y_{ipt} : 1 if the child i born in province p in year t is dead within the first month, year or five years of life.
- $\text{Talib}P_{ip} * \text{Talib}Y_{it}$: interested in the coefficient of this - β_2 .
- Controls - ethnicity, parental education, rural/urban, household wealth quintiles, mother's age at birth, sex of child, birth order, whether birth is singleton.

Results: Child Mortality

Outcome Variable:	Dead First Month of Life	Dead Within 5 years Of Life
<i>Panel A:</i>		
Born in Taliban Province * Taliban Years	0.006 (0.005)	0.016** (0.008)
<i>Panel B: Falsification Exercise</i>		
Born in Taliban Province * False Taliban Years	-0.003 (0.005)	-0.002 (0.008)
Observations	33,840	33,840
Other Controls	Yes	Yes
Province Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes
Ethnicity Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes
Year of Birth Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes

Note: Robust standard errors clustered at the PSU level are in parentheses. ***, ** and * indicate statistical significance at the 1% , 5% and 10% level of significance respectively.

Results: Child Mortality by Child Gender

Outcome Variable:	Dead First Month of Life	Dead Within 5 years Of Life
<i>Boys:</i>		
Born in Taliban Province * Taliban Years	0.006 (0.006)	0.016* (0.010)
Observations	18,362	18,362
<i>Girls:</i>		
Born in Taliban Province * Taliban Years	0.005 (0.007)	0.014 (0.012)
Observations	15,478	15,478
Other Controls	Yes	Yes
Province Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes
Ethnicity Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes
Year of Birth Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes

Note: Robust standard errors clustered at the PSU level are in parentheses. ***, ** and * indicate statistical significance at the 1% , 5% and 10% level of significance respectively.

Estimation Equation: Women's & Men's Outcomes

$$y_{ip} = \alpha + \beta_0 TalibP_p + \beta_1(26 - 35 Yrs)_i + \beta_2 TalibP_p * (26 - 35 Yrs)_i + \beta_3(Above35 Yrs)_i + \beta_4 TalibP_p * (Above35 Yrs)_i + \gamma X_{ip} + \delta_p + \epsilon_{ip}$$

- y_{ip} : 1 if the outcome for individual i in province p is true.
- $TalibP_p * (26 - 35 Yrs)_i$: interested in the coefficient of this - β_2 .
- Also, interested in seeing whether coefficient of $TalibP_p * (Above35 Yrs)_i$ - β_4 is significant.
- Controls - Own and partner's education, whether currently living with husband, rural/urban, household wealth quintiles, ethnicity, whether father ever beat mother (for women).

Attitude to Wife-Beating: Women & Men

Wife-Beating is Justified if:	Goes Out Without Asking	Neglects Child	Argues	Refuses Sex	Burns Food
<i>Women:</i>					
26-35 Yrs Old * Taliban Province	0.027* (0.015)	0.047*** (0.016)	0.017 (0.016)	0.010 (0.014)	0.021* (0.012)
Above 35 Yrs Old * Taliban Province	0.018 (0.016)	0.016 (0.017)	-0.008 (0.018)	0.011 (0.016)	0.019 (0.013)
Observations	22,776	22,776	22,776	22,776	22,776
<i>Men:</i>					
26-35 Yrs Old * Taliban Province	0.026 (0.026)	0.005 (0.026)	-0.021 (0.028)	-0.001 (0.021)	-0.026* (0.015)
Above 35 Yrs Old * Taliban Province	-0.007 (0.026)	0.025 (0.024)	-0.021 (0.028)	0.013 (0.022)	-0.039** (0.015)
Observations	10,743	10,743	10,743	10,743	10,743
Other Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Province Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Ethnicity Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Note: Omitted category are individuals aged below 26 years or in Northern Alliance dominated provinces. Robust standard errors clustered at the PSU level are in parentheses. ***, ** and * indicate statistical significance at the 1% , 5% and 10% level of significance respectively.

Results: Spousal Violence, Autonomy & Work for Women

<i>Panel A:</i>				
Woman's Husband Has:	Pushed Her	Strangled Her	Used Weapon	Hurt Her During Pregnancy
26-35 Yrs Old * Taliban Province	0.006 (0.017)	0.014** (0.006)	0.014** (0.006)	0.027** (0.012)
Above 35 Yrs Old * Taliban Province	-0.028 (0.018)	0.010 (0.006)	0.008 (0.007)	0.003 (0.014)
Observations	17,029	17,014	17,011	16,177
<i>Panel B:</i>				
	Can Decide To Seek Healthcare	Can Make HH Purchases	Can Decide To Visit Friends	Worked During Last 12 Months
26-35 Yrs Old * Taliban Province	-0.012 (0.014)	-0.006 (0.014)	0.007 (0.014)	-0.036*** (0.008)
Above 35 Yrs Old * Taliban Province	-0.039** (0.016)	-0.031** (0.016)	-0.015 (0.016)	-0.034*** (0.010)
Observations	28,436	28,436	28,436	28,436
Other Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Province Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Ethnicity Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Note: Robust standard errors clustered at the PSU level are in parentheses. ***, ** and * indicate statistical significance at the 1% , 5% and 10% level of significance respectively.

Results: Age at First Marriage & Birth for Women

Age at:	First Marriage	First Birth
26-35 Yrs Old * Taliban Province	-0.044 (0.098)	0.050 (0.099)
Above 35 Yrs Old * Taliban Province	0.411*** (0.121)	0.408*** (0.125)
Observations	28,436	25,665
Other Controls	Yes	Yes
Province Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes
Ethnicity Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes

Note: Robust standard errors clustered at the PSU level are in parentheses. ***, ** and * indicate statistical significance at the 1% , 5% and 10% level of significance respectively.

Heterogeneity in the Leadership of Northern Alliance

- Compare the Taliban administered provinces to those administered by Massoud.
- Instead of comparing Taliban governed provinces to all of Northern Alliance provinces.
- Massoud's leadership was uninterrupted.
- Possible that greater stability in policies, laws in Massoud's provinces relative to those under Dostum.

Heterogeneous Effects: Child Mortality

Outcome Variable:	Dead First Month of Life	Dead Within 5 years Of Life
<i>All Children:</i>		
Born in Taliban Province * Taliban Years	0.009 (0.006)	0.018* (0.010)
Born in Dostum Province * Taliban Years	0.009 (0.007)	0.004 (0.013)
Observations	33,840	33,840
<i>Boys:</i>		
Born in Taliban Province * Taliban Years	0.012* (0.007)	0.016 (0.012)
Born in Dostum Province * Taliban Years	0.015* (0.009)	0.0001 (0.015)
Observations	18,362	18,362
<i>Girls:</i>		
Born in Taliban Province * Taliban Years	0.006 (0.008)	0.018 (0.014)
Born in Dostum Province * Taliban Years	0.003 (0.011)	0.011 (0.019)
Observations	15,478	15,478

Note: Robust standard errors clustered at the PSU level are in parentheses. ***, ** and * indicate statistical significance at the 1% , 5% and 10% level of significance respectively.

Heterogeneous Effects: Attitudes to Wife-Beating

Wife-Beating is Justified if:	Goes Out Without Asking	Neglects Child	Argues	Refuses Sex	Burns Food
<i>Women</i>					
26-35 Yrs Old * Taliban Province	0.034* (0.018)	0.052*** (0.018)	0.006 (0.018)	0.016 (0.016)	0.024* (0.013)
Above 35 Yrs Old * Taliban Province	0.027 (0.019)	0.022 (0.019)	-0.013 (0.021)	0.013 (0.018)	0.022 (0.015)
26-35 Yrs Old * Dostum Province	0.021 (0.025)	0.016 (0.026)	-0.032 (0.025)	0.016 (0.022)	0.009 (0.018)
Above 35 Yrs Old * Dostum Province	0.024 (0.026)	0.017 (0.028)	-0.016 (0.030)	0.007 (0.024)	0.010 (0.019)
Observations	22,776	22,776	22,776	22,776	22,776
Other Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Province Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Ethnicity Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Note: Omitted category are individuals aged below 26 years or in provinces governed by Ahmad Shah Massoud.

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Wife-Beating is Justified if:	Goes Out Without Asking	Neglects Child	Argues	Refuses Sex	Burns Food
<i>Men</i>					
26-35 Yrs Old * Taliban Province	0.053* (0.031)	0.007 (0.032)	-0.011 (0.034)	-0.005 (0.025)	-0.053*** (0.019)
Above 35 Yrs Old * Taliban Province	0.031 (0.032)	0.015 (0.030)	-0.002 (0.034)	0.004 (0.026)	-0.060*** (0.018)
26-35 Yrs Old * Dostum Province	0.065 (0.044)	0.004 (0.042)	0.024 (0.045)	-0.009 (0.034)	-0.062*** (0.022)
Above 35 Yrs Old * Dostum Province	0.090** (0.044)	-0.022 (0.039)	0.045 (0.045)	-0.022 (0.035)	-0.050** (0.023)
Observations	10,743	10,743	10,743	10,743	10,743
Other Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Province Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Ethnicity Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Note: Omitted category are individuals aged below 26 years or in provinces governed by Ahmad Shah Massoud.

Heterogeneous Effects: Woman's Autonomy & Labour Market Participation

	Can Decide To Seek Healthcare	Can Make HH Purchases	Can Decide To Visit Friends	Worked During Last 12 Months
26-35 Yrs Old * Taliban Province	0.002 (0.016)	-0.002 (0.017)	0.025 (0.016)	-0.023*** (0.009)
Above 35 Yrs Old * Taliban Province	-0.038** (0.018)	-0.029 (0.018)	0.015 (0.018)	-0.017 (0.010)
26-35 Yrs Old * Dostum Province	0.041* (0.024)	0.010 (0.023)	0.054** (0.025)	0.039*** (0.014)
Above 35 Yrs Old * Dostum Province	0.004 (0.027)	0.007 (0.027)	0.090*** (0.028)	0.049** (0.019)
Observations	28,436	28,436	28,436	28,436
Other Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Province Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Ethnicity Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Note: Omitted category are individuals aged below 26 years or in provinces governed by Ahmad Shah Massoud.

Heterogeneous Effects: Age at First Marriage & Birth for Women

Age at:	First Marriage	First Birth
26-35 Yrs Old * Taliban Province	0.123 (0.111)	0.228** (0.109)
Above 35 Yrs Old * Taliban Province	0.505*** (0.137)	0.570*** (0.140)
26-35 Yrs Old * Dostum Province	0.488*** (0.172)	0.535*** (0.178)
Above 35 Yrs Old * Dostum Province	0.286 (0.206)	0.498** (0.208)
Observations	28,436	25,665
Other Controls	Yes	Yes
Province Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes
Ethnicity Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes

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Conclusion

- Effects of being exposed to the Taliban administration:
- Mortality is higher among children, however, mostly driven by male children.

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- Mortality is higher among children, however, mostly driven by male children.
- Greater justification of wife-beating under various circumstances and greater likelihood of experiencing some forms of spousal violence among women who were adolescents at that time.

Conclusion

- Effects of being exposed to the Taliban administration:
- Mortality is higher among children, however, mostly driven by male children.
- Greater justification of wife-beating under various circumstances and greater likelihood of experiencing some forms of spousal violence among women who were adolescents at that time.
- Overall men's attitude to wife-beating unaltered.

Conclusion

- Effects of being exposed to the Taliban administration:
- Mortality is higher among children, however, mostly driven by male children.
- Greater justification of wife-beating under various circumstances and greater likelihood of experiencing some forms of spousal violence among women who were adolescents at that time.
- Overall men's attitude to wife-beating unaltered.
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- Importance of institutions in shaping gender attitudes & how restrictions of rights and mobility of women can also have detrimental effect on the survival of children.