



Women's markets: The everyday affective dimensions of Taliban's violence in Swat, Pakistan

Muhammad Salman Khan^{*}

Department of Geography, Faculty of Social Science and Public Policy, Kings College London, UK

ARTICLE INFO

Keywords:

Women's markets
Violence
Affect
Affective atmosphere
Gender
Swat

ABSTRACT

This paper explores the affective dimensions of the Taliban's violence in the Swat Valley of Pakistan, with a particular focus on the affective atmosphere of women's markets there. This paper explores: How is the affective atmosphere of women's markets in Swat embedded in the structure of feelings that forms the gendered geography of these markets in Swat? How were these culturally embedded places of sociality affected by Taliban's violence? What effect did Taliban's violence against women's markets create in the broader affective economy of fear and violence in Swat? How have these markets revived in the post-conflict Swat? Instead of top-down theorizing of these everyday affective dimensions of the gendered perspective on violence, the paper relies on local voices to explain how women's markets are perceived and lived during and after violent conflicts in the Swat Valley.

1. Introduction

One cannot even begin to apprehend women's subjectivities, experiences, and struggles, without situating them in specific spaces and geographies from where they derive their resources, meanings, social connections, visions, and limitations (Nagar, 2000). Marketplaces and bazaars (in the South Asian context) are one such space, the gender dimension of which has remarkably attracted limited attention from geographers and sociologists with a few exceptions (e.g., see Amirali, 2017; Khan, 2020; Gandhi, 2016). The affective space of bazaars, especially women's markets in the Global South in general and Pakistan in particular, is pregnant with analytical possibilities, not just because they are emblematic public spaces of commerce and exchange, but more so of appearance and sociability where embodied gendered experiences and their affective dimensions at the discursive and quotidian level are manifested. Against this backdrop, marketplaces occupy a central place in the "affective economy" (Ahmed, 2004) of the war on terror for which women and the public spaces associated with them were a major front.

I analyses affective dimensions of women's marketplaces in one major front of the war on terror, the Swat Valley (Swat hereafter) of Pakistan (Caron and Khan, 2022). Swat was the centre of conflict between Taliban and the Pakistan's army in 2007–2009 until the military regained control and drove out Taliban from the valley. As a consequence, around 2.5 million people were displaced, countless lives

destroyed, and huge infrastructural damage was inflicted on the region (Rahi, 2010). Within Swat conflict like the global war on terror, both Taliban and the military targeted the body as the ultimate site for materializing their power, each drawing on discourses of gender, sexuality, and Islam to draw support through manipulating affect (Khoja-Moolji, 2021:4). In Swat, people felt lost and a sense of meaninglessness prevailed, within which the discursive and the visceral could no longer fitted with existing registers of known feelings, and many emotions no longer made sense (Caron and Khan, 2022:8). Swati people viewed their environment as trauma, anxiety, distrust, uncertainty, alienation, feelings generated by the unfolding of the war on terror in their homeland. Reflecting on the memories of this conflict, Swati people expressed distrust, helplessness, exploitation, humiliation and anger. The sense of domestic security was displaced with Taliban and military squads searching local houses (Caron and Khan, 2022: 9). Moreover, Existing patterns of women's visibility and mobility in the public space got destroyed by Taliban's imposition of a stricter veil and "unveiling of Pakhtun women" experienced by locals due to mass displacement. This is not to say that gender-repression and patriarchal control over women's mobility in the public space was new in either Swat (Haroon, 2013), Pakistan (Noor et al, 2021), or many parts of South Asia (Nazneen et al, 2019), but these debates have got new currence within the gender dynamics of the war on terror unfolding in Swat.

The gendered spatiality of women's markets in the present-day Swat

^{*} Address at: Room 6.2, 30 Aldwych, Bush House (NE), Department of Geography, Kings College London, UK.

E-mail address: Muhammad_salman.khan@kcl.ac.uk.

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.geoforum.2022.103674>

Received 10 November 2021; Received in revised form 14 September 2022; Accepted 21 December 2022

Available online 6 January 2023

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Valley of Pakistan is complex. The types of women's markets include women-only markets (with women sellers and women customers); few and far-between instances of individual women shopkeepers in villages (mostly necessity-driven); and traditional women's markets with men as sellers and predominantly women as buyers. The women-only markets and few and far-between women shopkeepers are similar in terms of their gendered interaction—that is, their sellers and customers are women only. This paper focuses only on the affective atmosphere of women's markets with men sellers and women customers and the embeddedness of these markets in the structure of feelings of the Swati Society (Khan and De Nardi, 2022). The Taliban's systematic eradication of women from public space was also a project of "countering modernity" both global and native (Cole, 2003). Girls education, or women's participation in non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are the dominant focus of the gender discourse on terrorism and place destruction, whereas equally important public spaces of cultural production (Caron and Khan, 2022), and economic participation are absent within this discourse. More importantly, understanding the everyday affective dimension of violent conflict in specific relation to marketplaces is especially underdeveloped in gender and terrorism, and affect literatures respectively. Therefore, this paper argues that the public space of women's markets as an important object of Taliban's violence enables better understanding of the everyday affective dimension of the gendered dynamics of place destruction in Swat. The culturally embedded gendered organization of women's markets is a critical entry point for understanding the impact of Taliban violence on what Lindholm (2003) characterizes as hierarchically structured gendered order of Swati society. Since Taliban's violence was targeted against both men and women participating in the public space of women's markets, focus on these markets is critical to unpack the everyday of Taliban's violence against women. Women's markets provide a unique entrée into the everyday of how affects are lived (Ahmed, 2010, p. 15).

The affective dimensions of women's markets in conflict-affected Swat Valley is an important but overlooked local aspect of the global war on terror. Methodologically, this paper will advance the gendered geography of research of the war on terror which according to Berry (2003) uncritically glorifies women's victimhood for its strategic objectives, or even dehumanizes Swati men as perpetrators of terrorism which is one of the vivid examples of how local Swati voices have been ignored or overlooked (Chaudhry, 2013). While avoiding this epistemic violence in understanding affective dimensions of Taliban's violence in Swat, this paper emphasizes the significance of local voices in theorizing affect and its everyday dimensions in relation to marketplaces. This "situated knowledge recognizes perspectives and positions as significant factors in determining knowledge claims" (Fluri, 2009, p. 260). It is noteworthy that geographically, Swat is located in what can be called a 'patriarchal belt' where gender relations are characterized as classic patriarchy (Moghadam, 2002). Swat also occupies a central place in the gender and body politics of the war on terror for which public spaces were a major front (Khoja-Moolji, 2021; Fluri and Lehr, 2017). Taliban's terror was inflicted through the control of public spaces, and restrictions upon culturally permitted activities to be carried out within those spaces (Khan, 2022). The destruction and transformation of these spaces was neither irrational nor random, instead, it was a deliberate strategy to spread terror through place destruction (Mustafa and Brown, 2010, pp. 497-498).

Against this backdrop, this paper asks how is the affective atmosphere of women's markets in Swat embedded in the structure of feelings that forms the gendered geography of these markets in Swat? How were these culturally embedded places of sociality affected by Taliban's violence? What affect did Taliban's violence against women's markets create in the broader affective economy of fear and violence in Swat? How have these markets revived in the post-conflict Swat? To answer these questions, interviews were conducted with Swati women who have been frequenting these markets at the time of and after the Taliban crises in Swat, and male traders trading in these markets pre- and post-

conflict. These semi-structured interviews are complemented by informal conversations and extensive field notes of the author from field visits between 2020 and 2022.

In what follows, section two Offers a theoretical background to understand affective dimensions of marketplaces and their affective atmosphere in the context of Taliban's violence in Swat. It also highlights the gender-affective geography of women's markets. Section three explains data generation methods followed by an outline of empirical settings of women's markets in section 4. Section five presents a detailed empirical analysis of how women's markets, associated with the materiality of women's bodies in the Swat Valley were objectified by Taliban in the local and global economy of fear. It also traces the post-conflict revival of women's markets in Swat with an emphasis on the long-term impact, both in terms of women's mobility and affective dimension of conflict related to women's markets. Section six concludes.

2. Theoretical understanding of affective atmosphere of markets in the context of Taliban's violence

Multiple conceptualizations of affect abound in humanities and social sciences. This paper views affect as a pre-personal intensity corresponding to the passage of one experiential state of the body to another (Shouse, 2005). "Affect arises in the state of in-betweenness, a capacity to act and to be acted upon" (Gregg, Seigworth and Ahmed, 2010, p. 1). Along this in-betweenness, affect is what sticks, or what sustains or preserves the connection between ideas, values, and objects (Ahmed, 2010, p. 29). As a latent potentiality, affect operates within the structure of feelings or social experience within which subjects circulate (Anderson, 2009; Richard and Rudnycky, 2009). In this sense, affect is the bodily capacity to sense and act, more a duration than a fixed state, affect is the event potential activated in and through the passage from one state to another (Rai, 2015, p. 988). The spatial dimension of affect is significant here, as diverging emotional patterns emerge in distinct spaces (Gammerl, 2012, p. 164). The movement of affect is not simply received by a blank body "in" space or "in" time". (Anderson, 2006, p. 736).

Feelings, as background habits and postures, imply the presence of affecting and affected bodies. Feelings serve as instantaneous assessment of affect that are dependent upon the affected body's existing condition to be affected (Anderson, 2006, p. 736). Affect describes an array of feeling states characteristic of everyday life, with its constant shifts in mood and emotional resonance (Thrift, 2004, p. 59). Affect plays a vital role in the production of women's market as a place (Anderson, 2009). Affect, in this sense, "is not only indicative of the subjective mood of certain places; they also frame the array of activities and practices potentially enactable within that place." (Duff, 2010, p. 883).

It follows that the body's encounters in place involve affective resonances far beyond discreet individuals. Therefore, just as bodies affect one another in place, bodies are inevitably affected by place such that place seems to be a vital element in the constitution of affect (Duff, 2010, p. 885). From this perspective, marketplaces and their affective atmospheres are thus linked always already to a specific geopolitical and cultural sensitivity and attentiveness on the part of the carriers of practices, a specific sensitivity for perceptions, impressions, and affections (Duff, 2010, p. 254). As Sumartojo and Pink (2018, p. 6) argue, "atmosphere is a quality of specific configuration of sensations, temporality, movement, memory, our material and immaterial surroundings and other people, with qualities that affect how places and event feel and what they mean to people who participate in them."

Affective atmospheres literature in geography offers a useful starting point for conceptualizing marketplaces as gendered spaces and their affective atmosphere. Space, with its materiality and discursive attributes resonates with individuals differently, depending on their subjective view on the space. However, individuals' subjective viewpoints do not only shape the space and its affective qualities, they are affected by a materially modulated environment (Michels and Steyaert, 2017:

260). Affective atmospheres are generated by bodies - of multiple types - affecting one another as some form of envelopment is produced (Shaw, 2014:88). Rather than being inert, background, or ephemeral phenomena, atmospheres are forceful and affect the ways in which we inhabit these spaces. As such, affective atmospheres are central to everyday conduct whilst on the move since different atmospheres facilitate and restrict particular practices and, in doing so, precipitate particular structures of feeling (Bissell, 2010: 272).

The differential susceptibility of individual bodies to be affected is conditioned by the particular person's imbrication into other relations of practice and performance (Bissell, 2010: 278). In this sense, affect might be understood as the energetic outcome of encounters between bodies in particular places (Bissell, 2010:272). But these places do not reside in a discursive vacuum, and hence bodies may be affected at their arrival into these spaces (Brennon, 2004:1), or affect the space through the angle of their arrival into the space (Ahmed, 2010a). Nonrepresentational thinking in geography on affect and affective atmospheres recognizes the differential susceptibility of bodies to the affective atmospheres (Anderson, 2009; Bissell, 2010; Adey et al, 2013; Shaw, 2014), however, the unmarked and undifferentiated bodies within this literature overlooks gender in the constitution of affective atmosphere and the transmission of affect within it (Wetherell, 2013).

Understanding Taliban's gender violence and its affective dimension related to women's markets is incomplete without delving into socio-political context of affect (Khoja-Moolji, 2015). The entire journey of an average woman in Swat, starting from house to the market, navigating within the marketplace and negotiating its social space and returning home is embedded in what Williams (1977) identifies as "the structure of feelings". This structure of feelings, as a context-specific social experience (Filmer, 2003), affects and is affected by cultural expectations associated with women bodies, space of market and mobility (Khan, 2020).

Increasing exclusion of women from public space in Swat and broader Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) province of Pakistan was well underway amid the discourses of enlightened moderation of Pakistani government and 'lifting the veil' liberationist policies of the US and its allies in the war on terror. In KP, the government (between 2002 and 07) of Mutahida-Majlis-e-Amal (an alliance of six religious political parties), was actively cleansing the public space of women which was tolerated by Pakistani government and allied forces. This government blackened women's faces on hoardings and issued an edict forbidding women patients visiting male doctors for treatment (Brohi, 2008, p. 142). Tolerating such public acts of religious fundamentalists by the US and Pakistani government was not unusual (Moghadam, 2002). In 1992, Taliban operating out of Afghan refugee camps in Pakistan issued an edict: "Women without necessity do not have the right to go out in public or in schools. We ask all leaders to forbid Muslim women, according to Sharia text, no perfume, no beautiful eye-catching attire, no soft, clinging or tight clothes, no men like attire, no infidel style clothing, no anklets should jingle, no provocative walking, no going out without permission of her man, no laughing, no looking at strangers with passion, and no association with men." (Brohi, 2008, p. 136).

In this discursive public sphere, both at the international level and Particularly in Swat, women's body was objectified by both the sides of the war on terror (Zaidi, 2014; Wagha, 2014). Within this context, an important building block in the conceptualization of socio-spatial, material, and affective connections between conflict/Taliban's violence and women's markets is Sara Ahmad's notion of affective economies (Ahmad, 2004). Women's markets were one of those critical signs (like girl's schools and spaces of cultural production (Khan, 2022), archaeological sites (Khan and De Nardi, 2022), green squares and Nishat Chowk) from which Taliban could derive greater emotional value (in the global economy of fear) by creating fear (Caron and Khan, 2022). As Ahmed notes, "affect does not reside in an object or sign but is an affect of the circulation between objects and sign (=the accumulation of affective value over time). Some signs, that is, increase in affective value

as an effect of movement between signs: the more they circulate, the more affective they become, and the more they appear to contain affect." (Ahmed, 2004, p. 120). Here, emotions play a crucial role in the surfacing of the individual and collective bodies through the ways in which emotions circulate between bodies and signs. Thus, emotions are not simply "within" or "without" but that they create the very affect of the surfaces or boundaries of bodies and worlds (Ahmed, 2004, p. 117).

Manipulation of affect by the powerful to achieve their political ends is not unusual (Thrift, 2004, p. 58). Taliban in Swat manipulated affects by re-coding women's bodies through sticking spaces together that needed to be cleansed of women (Cole, 2003; Mustafa and Brown, 2010). Indubitably, each type of space has its distinct affective atmosphere (Duff, 2010; Leaney, 2019). These atmospheres are always already connected to a specific cultural sensitivity and attentiveness on the part of the carriers of practices, a specific sensitivity for perception, impression, and affection. In this context, affective atmospheres form when space is appropriated by its users (Reckwitz, 2012, p. 254). In Swat, Taliban appropriated various spaces associated with women's bodies through capitalizing upon cultural tensions surrounding women's physical access to public spaces (Cole, 2003, p. 804). Taliban aimed to gain international attention through cleansing public spaces of women by targeting girls' schools, restricting women's mobility in the markets, and working spaces. The local aims of Taliban's calculated strategy were to enlist women's moral and material support to create attachment with Taliban and aloofness from the state (Khoja-Moolji, 2021). In this process, Taliban generated fear of punishment for non-compliance. Taliban's violence in Swat along with its gendered politics resulted in fear, trauma, and stress (Weiss, 2013, pp. 179-180).

2.1. Gendered-affective geography of women's markets in Swat

With the exception of Ridgway and Dawson (1989), the affect literature on consumer markets often employs the term "marketplace" in its abstract economic sense (Brown et al, 2016; Hutton, 2019). In contrast, marketplaces are defined here as "spatially bounded places for the production and exchange of goods and services, surrounded by a series of social relationships embedded in their respective institutional environments" (Khan, 2018, p. 2). The social embeddedness of the marketplace and everyday interactions and activities within it are pregnant with emotions of love, pity, envy, excitement, empathy, fear, discomfort, anger, frustration, to name but a few (Monteith, 2018; Rosenbaum et al, 2020). While analyzing these emotions in the everyday interactions and institutionally embedded social relations of the market, one should not lose sight of the historical cultural idioms that continue to provide meaning to the activities and relations of the inhabitants of cultural geographies where the marketplace is situated (Monteith, 2018). Within this definitional context, marketplaces are thick places that are "made in and of affect and practice" (Duff, 2010, p. 882).

Geographically, trading in local marketplaces can be culturally associated with femininity or masculinity. Unlike African marketplaces (and some markets in the Pacific region) where trading is associated with femininity (Thiel and Stasik, 2016; Barnett-Naghshineh, 2019), trading in Middle Eastern (Althalathini et al, 2020) and South Asian marketplaces is associated with masculinity (Acharya and Lund, 2002; Khan, 2020). In Pakistan and in Swat specifically, women traders (who are beyond the scope of this study) are culturally bound to the domestic space of home (Noor et al, 2021). In Swat, the development of designated places as women's markets (literally *da khazu* market) because of clustering together material objects in a physical space that is frequented by women is extraordinary. It outlines a story of the emergence of an organically developing public space in Pakhtun culture and in Swati society (a part of Pakhtun cultural geography) where historically, women were not allowed to access markets even as buyers (Tapper, 1977, p. 166; Ahmed, 1980, pp. 297-303). Within this cultural context, all socio-spatial activities can be seen as inherently geographic practices that are situated and legitimated in relation to specific social spaces

(Seligmann, 2000). To explore the gendered geography of women's markets and their affective atmosphere during and after the Swat conflict, one should heed seriously to Richa Nagar's observation that "affect connotes the visceral sense of social structures, ideologies, histories, policies and bodies that constructs their ongoing vitality, intensity and resonance in social life" (Nagar, 2014, p.13).

Context-specific shopping experiences, and institutionally embedded social interaction help define the function or distinctiveness of women's marketplaces, but the real power of these places is arguably derived from the affective atmospheres generated and supported by these places. "Such atmospheres are a complicated assemblage of social, material, and affective components, linked together in the sinews of practice, in the materiality of place and finally in the emergent 'co-presenting' of bodies, place, and self" (Duff, 2010, p. 892).

The present-day women's markets in Swat are important in terms of their gendered social construction and the multiple affects they generate not only at the quotidian level, but their discursive connection with Taliban's violence in the region. The linguistic term, "da khazu market" transliterated as women's markets translates the association of these spaces with women's bodies, while in actuality, these markets are frequented by both men and women as customers. Not only that, but traders in these markets are also only men (Khan, 2020). This implies that the affect created by the atmosphere of these markets depends upon the angle from which one enters them (Ahmed, 2010b, pp. 40-41). This may entail individual idiosyncrasies, class associations, gendered viewpoints, customer-buyer relations, ad infinitum (Monteith, 2018; Hutten, 2019). In other words, women may not view them as women's markets at all because of the heavy male presence and the stigma that men associate to these markets, whereas some men may visit these markets with the purpose of seeing women (Haroon, 2013). Nevertheless, women's bodies, and the performativity of gender within these markets characterized by violence of myriad forms is a world-wide phenomenon observed against women entrepreneurs (Hosseini, 2015), female workers (Khatana, 2019), and female customers (Rosenbaum et al, 2020). What perhaps makes violence against women interesting in the context of an Islamic patriarchy, Talibanization and Swat is the role of veil and its specific imposition by Taliban (Haroon, 2013).

Generally, gender-based violence against women in the marketplaces, as the literature on street harassment shows, generate emotions such as anger, anguish, pain, degradation, powerlessness, and humiliation (Rosenbaum et al, 2020). Markets may also generate the feelings of shame and care due to geographically specific cultural patterns of trading and interactions around these practices (Barnett-Naghshineh, 2019). Literature also captures fragments of gendered affective dimensions of markets such as pleasant or unpleasant affect associated with spending activities (Brown et al., 2017), "emotional injustice" for economically and socially marginalized women (Hutton, 2019, p. 529), or comfort and discomfort felt by women shoppers due to the presence of street-harassers in the retail markets (Rosenbaum et al, 2020). We expected that Taliban's violence generated additional affects including fear, anger, helplessness, attachment, and hate, along with pain, anguish, loss/deprivation etc (Caron and Khan, 2022; Khoja-Moolji, 2021).

Within this context, evolution of these spaces as women's markets is due to an assemblage of objects, bodies, affects, subjectivities, and the politics surrounding this assemblage. These markets represent sexual division of the Swati society in terms of their built environment and the objects traded within these markets. For instance, women as customers are entirely excluded from the wholesale grocery and electronic shops, bakeries, barbershops, car showrooms, automobile repair shops of all sorts, and sanitary fitting shops (Khan, 2019: chapter 4). Typically, a women's market includes goods such as women's clothes, artificial jewellery of all sorts, cosmetics and perfumes, women's undergarments, toys and clothes for children, housewares, and services for women such as cloth stitching, embroidery, dyeing and beauty parlours. Anthropological literature on Pakhtun society is silent on women's mobility in the

market except for Ahmed's (1980) and Tapper's (1977) passing reference to women's exclusion from the marketplace that is a men's public sphere. Ahmed (1980, pp. 297-303) also notes that in extreme cases, women appear behind the counters of what can be conceptualized as house markets in the contemporary marketplace literature (Busse and Sharp, 2019).

In Pakhtun society including Swat, women's markets are generally called Mina Bazaar, a derogatory term pregnant with stigma attached to these markets. Mina Bazaar literally means love market, but the word is emblematic of the feminine connection of material goods and their affective dimensions which simultaneously create and are created by the marketplace. In Swat, the very idea of women's markets entails multiple affective dimensions. The sight of material objects and ability of women to choose from those objects generate feelings of excitement, joy, discomfort and sometimes confusion. However, the cultural construction of women's markets as notorious place [badnam zai], frequented by 'rancid or corrupted women' [kharabi khazi] generate fear [of being seen by someone in the market], anguish [of being misperceived as a rancid or corrupted woman), aversion, insecurity [and discomfort of being touched, pinched, or verbally abused) by street harassers, resistance [visiting markets against all odds) and many more (Khan, 2022a). Women frequenting these marketplaces are often likened to prostitutes in some men's imagination (Haroon, 2012, p. 198). In this context, the felt atmosphere of women's markets is not subjective, in Anderson (2009, p. 80) terms, "they are subject-like, belong to subjects in that they are sense in bodily presence by human beings and this sensing is at the same time a bodily state of being of subjects in space." This complexity of emotions generated by and felt within women's markets have not been the focus of marketplace scholars, terrorism experts, and feminist authors.

3. Data generation and analyses

Collective identities such as gender (which is at the heart of my analysis) are missing as a concern of nonrepresentational thinking on affect (Cresswell, 2012, p. 103). This should not be taken as an argument that collective identity programs individual bodies to feel the affective atmosphere in the same way, but these collective identities shape the gendered potentialities of the bodies to affect and be affected in a particular atmosphere (Diaz-Fernandez and Evans, 2020). As Ahmed (2014) argues that a particular atmosphere may be intense, but it is never felt identically by the different people present in the situation because orientations matter (Ahmed, 2010b). Therefore, I have explored the affective atmosphere of women's marketplace through the accounts of my interviewees (Diaz-Fernandez and Evans, 2020, p. 745). 36 In-depth semi-structured interviews (both face-to-face and telephonic) were conducted with women customers (n = 18) and men sellers (n = 18) between November 2020-April 2022. Before conducting these interviews, the interview schedule was pre-tested in an informal focus-group with MPhil female students of the Faculty of Social Science, University of Malakand. Six Face-to-face interviews with women were conducted by a female research assistant, and six interviews with men by a male research assistant. Whereas I have conducted all the telephonic interviews with women (n = 12) and 12 face-to-face interviews with men traders.

I have the experience of growing up in the region and living there during the Taliban's conflict in 2007-9 (Caron & Khan, 2022). None of the interviewees (either male traders or women shoppers) were acquainted to me before the interview request was initiated either by my trusted contacts (in the case of women interviewees) or randomly (in the case of male interviewees). Feeling the affective atmosphere of women's markets, and interpreting their gendered affective dimensions through the narratives of interviewees is incomplete without what I call "embodied and embedded reflexivity". This method was developed through extensive field visits to the four selected sites where I had spent many days behind the counters of multiple shops in the women's

markets of Swat (Khan, 2022b). I arrived at these marketplaces “with the feeling that the question of affect occurs” (Mazzarella, forthcoming:6). Nevertheless, realization of the limits of my own gendered body in the gendered-constraint interaction between men and women and affects generated by these interactions affirmed the need for rejecting nonrepresentational in favour of phenomenological take on affect (Ahmed, 2010b).

My sample of women is purposive (Robinson, 2014), including women who were at least in their adolescence at the time of Taliban’s crises (2008–9) and were living in Swat. The sampling frame is based on the principle of maximum variation (Miles and Huberman, 1994, p. 17) including working women, uneducated housewives, university students, and domestic workers. The ages of my interviewees range between 25 and 70 years. The interviews with men shopkeepers were conducted in the bazaars of Barikot (Lower Swat), Cheena Market (Mingora city), Kabal (Upper Swat) and Hayat Market in Matta (upper Swat) (see Table 1. Whereas interviews with women interviewees were conducted in the localities surrounding these markets. All the interviews were conducted in Pashto, translated into English and transcribed. The research assistants transcribed the interviews they conducted. I have translated and transcribed all the interviews that I had conducted. This interview data is supplemented by my extensive field notes generated within this project (November 2020–April 2022). One field diary entry from my PhD fieldwork on marketplaces in the Malakand region, that was conducted in April 2015–September 2016 is included in the empirical settings section.

The interview schedule broadly asked the interviewees to identify types of women’s markets/shopping places, report their experiences with the marketplaces, identify emotions related to markets, recall any changes in the mobility to marketplaces in the interviewee’s lived memory, interviewee’s experiences with markets during Taliban crises and the emotional effects of those experiences. The everyday affective dimensions of women’s markets during and after Taliban’s crises were inductively developed from the interview transcripts. For ensuring anonymity of research participants, interview transcripts are stored with codes composed of letters and numerals: MW for women and MM for men respondents. These codes are used in the presentation of findings in the following sections.

4. Empirical settings

Women’s marketplaces in the post-Taliban Swat have a long pre-conflict history. For the purposes of our project (lived experiences of markets and their affective dimensions), we start from the 1960–70 s when existing anthropological studies on the region, mentioned in passing, exclude local women both as sellers and buyers from local

Table 1
Description of selected women’s markets.

Name of the market	location	size	Year of formation	Market ownership
Cheena market	Mingora (Lower Swat)	6000 shops	1983	Privately owned by multiple families and traders rent their shops here
Mina bazaar	Barikot (Lower Swat)	1400 shops	1980 s	Privately owned by multiple families and traders rent their shops here
Kabal Market	Kabal (lower Swat)	400 shops	2012–2014	Privately owned by multiple families and traders rent their shops here
Hayat Market	Matta (upper Swat)	500 shops	1992–1993	Privately owned by a family and traders rent their shops here

Source: interview data and field notes.

marketplaces as men’s spaces. The present-day women’s markets, as culturally designated spaces for women buyers, are the translation of culturally recognized periodic festive markets into fixed markets for women. Traditionally, women would purchase from mobile vendors visiting door-to-door, both men and women (called Kochian). On the festive occasion of Eid, women could go out and purchase food, artificial jewellery, and clothes in women-specific periodic markets called da khazu maila/da khazu akhtar. In Mingora (the main urban town of Swat), tourist women would shop in the market. Mobility of local women to local markets was strictly prohibited. In the instances of utmost necessity, relatives having shops in the market would be asked to facilitate women in shopping. In such instances, as a 70-year-old female interviewee recounts, the relative shop owner would close the shutters so that women could choose what they want without the fear of being identified by their male relatives.

Up till early 2000 s, each shop in the women’s markets had a curtain at its entrance. At the arrival of women customers, the shopkeeper would draw out the curtain to provide her pardah (literally veil) for preventing women customers from being seen by passer-by men.

For most of our interviewees, visiting the market is a ‘tough’ experience [gran kar] (Mw3). Because the women’s market is perceived as a disreputable place [Badnam zai] (MW6), and women fear being identified by a male relative or acquaintance in the local market (MW5). Negative affects generated by street harassers are also an important feature of the affective atmosphere of women’s markets in Swat. Women fear of being touched by a stranger and they also report discomfort often caused by negative comments of some passer-by men. Encounters with respectable men were also reported which indicate the latent potentiality of pleasant experience in the women’s markets (see section 5.4). In addition, women either visit the market without the permission of their male family members or are allowed by their male family members to briefly visit the marketplace. The in-betweenness of the urgency of getting back home, and the desire to maximize their shopping experience generate stressful interactions between shopkeepers and the customers. Despite these challenges, women interviewees reported that visiting markets also cause fulfillment “because women are able to visit market personally”, excitement “of seeing and choosing the objects of one’s choice”, deprivation because of the inability to purchase due to financial constraints, and adventure for those who visit market to date their lovers (Informal FGD, November 4, 2020).

This affective atmosphere of women’s markets embedded within local gender norms was exploited by Taliban to cleanse public spaces of women by generating fear. Taliban aimed to exclude women from this organically developing, designated local spaces of women’s participation, whereas Pakistani military viewed restoration of women’s mobility to these markets as a way to counter Taliban’s fear. This is the reason why shutters of shops in some women markets in Swat were painted with Pakistani flags in the post-conflict Swat (see Fig. 1).

Nevertheless, like Swati society, or for that matter Pakhtun society in general, these markets were not immune to the familiar characterization (within the gendered analysis of the war on terror) of Taliban/Pakhtun men as oppressors and Pakhtun women as victims of that oppression (Chaudhry, 2013). Not only western media, but personnel of the Pakistani military also posted in Swat would buy into this perspective. The president of one of the women’s markets received nine letters from the Taliban on multiple occasions (for an example see Fig. 2). These letters included restrictions on selling modern/fashionable veils, refusal to serve women customers who are unaccompanied by their males or who do not wear Taliban-prescribed veil, and finally banning those women from entering the market who are not accompanied by their Mahram (father, brother, son or spouse). The president, unable to ban women’s entry into the market, but terrified of the consequences of not satisfying the Taliban, decided to install a banner at each entrance of the market. The banner read: “God is great! All women are requested to wear burqas [the head-to-toe veil] and enter the market with their male family members”. The president who installed the banners was called in by the



Fig. 1. A series of shop shutters painted in the Pakistan flag in Swat_V2.

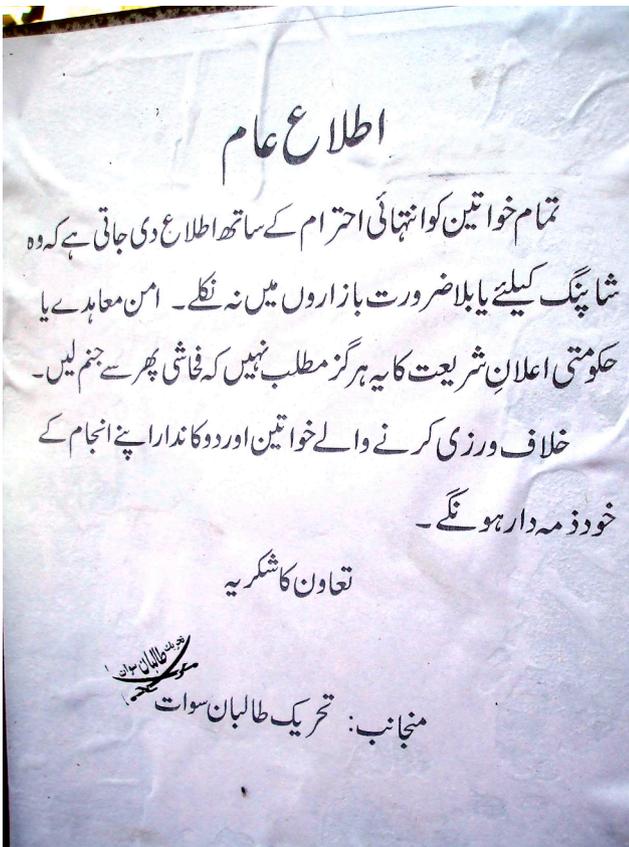


Fig. 2. Taliban warning letters_V2.

military personnel to account for his act of installing those banners (Interview with women's market president, May 4, 2016).

The president took all the letters of Taliban and went to the colonel in-charge of the region. The president reports the following conversation with the colonel: "The colonel asked, have you [the president] installed those banners?". I replied, yes. The colonel asked me, are you [president] their [women customers] father, brother, or husband that you are imposing these limitations on? I [president] placed all the letters at his [colonel] desk, counted them, and then asked him [the colonel] to read. I said, "Read them, I have installed these banners to save my life and the life of my fellow traders, you were nowhere when they were issuing those letters, but you only see the banners." (Interview with president of

women's market, May 4, 2016). This brief encounter points towards displacement of the familiar affective landscape of Swati women's markets. Taliban also stuck posters in the narrow alleyways of women's markets to regulate women mobility and instil fear of punishment among traders for not serving women against Taliban's orders. As the president of one women's market explains, "I was frustrated at the site of it [poster], thinking about what is happening to us in our own markets. I also came thrice during the night to remove those notices, but as I was about to do it, I would get scared of the consequences. (MM7, 16 August 2021). The everyday visceral logic of the market during Taliban crises included "fear", "insecurity", "loss", "attachment" and "hatred" which will be explored in the next section.

5. Findings: Affective dimensions of women's markets during Taliban's crises in Swat

Women's bodies, already a valuable currency in the affective economy of fear, were further objectified by Taliban when they grouped together women's markets along with girls' schools, female health-workers, and women working in NGOs. Women's markets, due to their stigmatized gender construction became an important component of Taliban's place-destruction strategy for projecting terror. Material objects and women's bodies were the mediums for spreading fear. In some markets, the traders were first ordered to remove curtains from the entrances of their shops. Initially installed to provide women customers a comfortable shopping experience and provide them purdah, these curtains soon began to be debated as a source to facilitate elicited relations between men traders and their women customers. Next, trader's associations of these markets were warned to notify all the traders against selling gaudy clothes and traditional shawls (sadar) used as veils. They were forced to sell burqas only, and that also of the simple kind. In the meantime, women were ordered to avoid visiting marketplaces without a mahram (father, brother, son and husband). There was also a warning for those women who visited markets without the Taliban-prescribed veil. These directives were issued not only through local FM radio, but also through banners (as described above) at the entrance of market and posters placed inside the market (in some instances) to admonish potential violators of these directives. Some of our male interviewees also reported to have been ordered by the Taliban that traders should not sell goods to women.

Non-compliance was punished in different ways. In late 2008, Taliban carried out a bomb blast in a women's market in Khwazakhela (upper Swat), because despite Taliban's directives, the traders did not stop women from coming to market. Physical destruction of marketplaces was rare. Usually, beating up of men and women in the narrow alleyways of women's markets would suffice to generate and maintain fear. As a garment retailer in Cheena market recalls, "But Taliban were also beating women who were wearing burqas." (MM4 interview, December 3, 2020). On such occasions, MM5 states, "I would avoid going closer to them [Taliban beating women]" (Interview, December 14, 2020). Arrival of Taliban to women's markets is reported to have generated restlessness and fear [ghobal ow yara] among the male traders of the Cheena Market of Swat. the fear of Taliban's presence would result in the temporary suspension of usual trading relation between men traders and their women customers. As MM7 recounts, "because we had people standing outside the market to inform us that Taliban are here, we would sometimes even shout from inside our shops that sister (to woman customer), Taliban are hear and we cannot sell right now. They [women customers] would sometimes even call us cowards, saying that get lost cowards, you cannot sell things, why are you sitting in these shops." (MM7, August 15, 2021).

Once women's markets were deserted, Taliban further objectified women's bodies not only for intimidating women to restrict their mobility, but also to coerce local men in reversing the clock for increasing women's mobility in the marketplace. A male interviewee recalls sitting at a friend's shop when he saw a 50-year-old beggar with

her adolescent daughter. The interviewee states, “In the meantime, Taliban came and said to her [woman beggar], had we [Taliban] not told you [woman beggar] that you will not beg in the bazaar? They [Taliban] shot the lady and her daughter in front of our [interviewee and his friends] eyes, a bit further from Sohrab Chowk, I [interviewee] cannot forget that.”. The interviewee adds, “The woman was not killed for begging, in fact, for begging in a men’s market space.” To amplify deterrence, Taliban frequently publicised such events in the daily radio speeches to warn people of congruent consequences of disobedience.

This violent politics was aimed at engineering affects, and quite successfully generated multiple emotions along gender lines. As already noted, helplessness, loss of control, confusion, insecurity and hatred dominated the affective landscape surrounding women’s markets. The traders, despite their dependence on women customers, had to close their doors for women customers not complying to Taliban’s orders. Below, I separately explain fear and insecurity, helplessness, and hate (along with attachment).

5.1. Fear and insecurity

Women’s mobility in the public space became a ‘dangerous’ and unfamiliar experience. Unfamiliar in the sense that Taliban could stop a woman and question her culturally approved way of veiling allowed by her own male family members. As an interviewee recounts, “Once I was going to the house of my relatives with my son but I was not wearing a burqa. I was wearing a chadar which was completely covering my body. I even tried to cover my eyes too, I left my eyes a little uncovered so that I could see. I saw the Taliban stop a woman, she was not wearing a burqa, they were telling her something with anger, I [interviewee] was very scared of what they [Taliban] do to me because I was also wearing chadar.” (MW6, December 15, 2020). “The roads were empty” (MW2), the markets were “silent” (MW5), there were banners at the entrance and posters inside the markets (MM3, December 3, 2020), and everybody was feeling insecure and nobody wanted to see Taliban, as people were told that they [Taliban] are patrolling in the bazaar.” (MW1, December 1, 2020). Swati women “felt lost as they were cut off from the rest of the world where life was as usual” (MW9, July2, 2021). The confusion and fear multiplied when Taliban started beating up women who’s dress-code was fully Taliban-compliant. As (MW3) summarizes, “Women were rarely coming out of their houses [during the conflict] and when Taliban imposed restrictions against women for coming out without burqa, that was not that Taliban actually wanted women to wear burqa but was just intimidating women from coming out of their homes” (Interview, December 3, 2020).

In addition to actual acts of violence, fear was also intensified through circulating rumours. A 27-year-old woman interviewee recounts, “We could not think of going out of our homes, let alone to the market. Taliban had stabbed a woman in such a way that her hair and neck were half cut and blood oozing down her entire back. Why? Because she was not wearing a burqa.” (informal conversation, December 20, 2020). Most of such instances were reported to have been heard, without actually knowing to whom it actually happened. Here, rumours were employed as “a mechanism of generating impenetrable, overwhelming fear” (Chaudhry, 2013, p. 717).

Material objects were employed or destroyed for maintaining circulation of fear. For instance, FM radio, along with other material objects were used to enlist women’s support. On one hand, FM radio was employed to enter the domestic sphere, on the other hand, television, cable networks, dish antennas, DVDs and CDs were deliberately destroyed to (1) limit women’s entertainment and increase their dependence on the radio and (2) to reach out to women for acquiring their support. The radio gradually became a necessity for navigating the terrain of fear and uncertainty as people would want to know whether they are in the good or the bad books of Taliban, or whether any warning or threat is issued against them or their relatives (Zaidi, 2014, pp. 192-193). Taliban’s FM was also used to project fear through public

pronouncement of punishment for those women continuing either paid work, or mobility in the public space. A women interviewee from Matta explained the emotional experience of listening to Taliban’s admonishment to a woman who would go out without her male family members and not in a Taliban’s prescribed veil. “This Taliban leader at gambar whose name was Shahdawran was announcing on FM to her that get your [woman’s] conduct right otherwise we [Taliban] will deal with you. The announcements were horrible. I [interviewee] was very scared those days.” (MW16, 16/04/2022).

Corpse, and sometimes the heads of these corpses were key objects in the material organization of the apparatus of fear. Taliban employed these objects not only to instil fear, but to terrorize potential non-compliers. MW9 (July2, 2021) reports an incident where Taliban were holding a head (chopped from a man’s body) from its hair in a busy bazaar. as she states, “our [interviewee’s] car was behind a girls-school Van, they [Taliban] stopped the van and had shown them [the girls] the head and said, we [Taliban] will do this to you [the girls] if you do not follow our orders and come out of your homes again.” (MW9, July2, 2021). MW9 added, “it (the head) was not brought to our [interviewee’s] car yet, but when I saw what they [Taliban] were doing at the school van, I started screaming and my body started shivering”. Taliban employed material objects such as veil, FM radio, corpse, human heads, letters (of warnings) to create and intensify the atmosphere of fear in Swat.

5.2. Helplessness and frustration

Taliban’s restrictions on women’s mobility to market particularly disadvantaged women in the families of immigrant labourers whose absence necessitated women’s mobility in the public space, and those women who were the only source of support of their family. Generally, women refrained from visiting the markets during the Taliban’s crisis, but these particular types of women had to either rely on their family members for purchasing items of their domestic use, or to visit the market regardless of the outcomes. As MW2, an NGO official and the only support of her family at that time, recalls, “In their initial days, they [Taliban] announced that women can go shopping but in burqas with their son, brother or husband”. “In my case, my father was bedridden due to prolonged illness, and my brothers were five and six years old. How could I go to the market? It was just making life difficult for people.” (MW2, 3/12/2020). In this situation, MW2 and her family relied on their relatives to purchase goods for them. Recollecting her experiential emotional memory, she asks in exasperation, “But how long could they [relatives] help us buying things?” (MW2, December 3, 2020).

Using a Taliban-prescribed veil was not easy for the majority of Swati women who were accustomed to local chadar, but never a burqa (Weiss, 2013, p. 183). MW7 remembers that “women were asked to wear burqas. It was not easy for those women who didn’t wear it in routine.” (MW7, December 15, 2020). Taliban prevented traders in women’s markets from selling traditional chadar for women which was confirmed by our male interviewees. However, additional rumours were circulated that Taliban had burnt stocks of chadars in the markets, and burqa became the sign of imposed bodily discipline, fear, and helplessness. Some women initially decided not to wear burqa, as MW3 states, “I was committed if I am not wearing niqab or veil for Allah so I will never wear it for moalyi saib [Fazlullah]” (MW3, December 3, 2020). Nevertheless, the majority of women refrained from such commitments by tactically adapting this type of veil to reduce the stress of navigating the public space. As one woman interviewee recalls, “I never had a Burqa nor I ever intended to have one, but I quickly realized that this thing is helping me pass by big beards with guns in their hands” (MW9, July22, 2021). This adaptation was not without physical discomfort and temporary frustration. Therefore, soon after the crisis was over, many women stopped wearing the burqa and returned to their normal chadars.

5.3. Hate against Taliban as a community visceral response

Hate against Taliban was unevenly distributed within the community, and various elements of the community adopted different roots to arrive at this visceral community response. Here, in line with Ahmed (2014, p. 43), hate is generated by the abuse of good feelings (attachment) of the Swati community by others who are hated. How hate binds the Swati community together against the Taliban requires what Khoja-Moolji (2015), following Deleuze and Gwattari (1987), calls molecular reading of the collective.

Take for instance the radio speeches of the Taliban directed at women. These speeches evoke a range of affective responses such as attachment and affection among those women initially devoted to Taliban's cause, fear and insecurity among professional women, and exasperation and helplessness among non-burqa wearing women who were the only source of support for their households. Taliban manipulated people's love for God, as MW7 recounts, "Once in his radio speech, molwi saib [Taliban's leader] reported, women of Sarsanai say that the molwi of imam deri has supernatural powers, women are in love with him. They [women] are not in love with me [Taliban's leader], they [women] are in love with God" (MW7, 15/12/2020). Taliban manipulated people's attachment to god for generating hate, as "a feeling of againstness that is always in the phenomenological sense, intentional." (Ahmed, 2014, p. 49). Intentionality of Taliban underlying this construction as a medium for women to reflect their attachment with Taliban and hate against Pakistani state makes more sense in the context of deliberate employment of quranic injunctions for creating us versus them binary. Two frequent expressions of the Quran were used to this end. "You who believe" was appended with Taliban, and "you who disbelieve" was appended with Faujiani (Pakistani army). By extension, us (believers/Taliban's supporters) versus them (disbelievers/non-supporters) binary folded categories of local men and women into the affective bonds of attachment and hate.

However, the injury inflicted onto the target of attachment soon stuck them together in the affective bond of disgust, loss and pain with those who were the target of Taliban's violence. For instance, women donated their necklaces, earrings, nose-piercings, perfumes, and cash for the Taliban cause, and some even without the knowledge of their husbands. After the first blast in Mingora (Swat), husbands of these women, as a woman interviewee from Mingora recounts, have sarcastically remarked, "These are just your gold-made nose-piercings that have blasted." (MW3, December 3, 2020). Besides publically appreciating women for the acts of offering donations and jettisoning education, employment, and mobility in the public space, Taliban also publicly commended some women on their FM radio for refusing to pluck their eyebrows or using cosmetics like lipsticks and nail polishes. Some women like MW9 viewed Bringing these private acts of women into the public domain by Taliban with revulsion, because "it was the height of objectifying women's bodies for their [Taliban's] petty political gains (MW9, July 2, 2021).

Initial sympathies of women for Taliban were "emotional", motivated by radio speeches, locally circulated stories, and Taliban's public praise for women contributing to their cause. Nevertheless, "when Taliban were exposed and they [women] saw that they [Taliban] are not as decent people as they had been describing themselves, but they were very cruel, that affiliation changed into hatred and ultimately their [Taliban's] teaching [was] also lost upon them [women]." (MW3, December 3, 2020).

Hatred against Taliban did not convert into attachment with or sympathies for the military, as people felt stuck in the economy of fear between Taliban and the military. No one would dare to utter a word in favour of either the Taliban or the military and local communities felt 'lost', 'cut off', and alienated within their own public and private spaces (Caron and Khan, 2022). I recorded many folk memories, narrated by my women interviewees, expressing this alienation. For instance, MW3 reports, "a man was asked whether Taliban or the military were good, he

replied with anger, both of them are good but not us. One side says slaughter them "fazabahuha" and the other says bomb them with mortars "famataruha" (MW3, December 3, 2020). These local emotions of hate at the quotidian level were never openly expressed because of the increasing intensity of fear maintained by both sides of the conflict.

The decisive military operation against the Taliban by the Pakistani military was launched in the early summer of 2009. This military operation resulted in the displacement of around 2.5 million people from the region, who were forced to live as internally displaced persons (IDPs) in other parts of Pakistan. At the return of IDPs to Swat after the conflict, local men, women, and even kids were asked by military personnel to look at the dead bodies of Taliban hanging from the electric poles. MW10, a 15-year-old girl at the time of the return of IDPs to Swat, narrates her experience: "When we were returning back to Swat, the army [fojiani] tied a dead body to an electric pole, the man was dead, he might be talib. They [army] were asking people to look at that man and then continue their journey. Even now (11 years on), I get really scared when that memory comes back to me." (MW10, December 9, 2020).

Within this complex affective landscape of fear, estrangement, confusion, revulsion, loss, hate and exasperation, returning to the public space of women's markets was met with caution underpinned by lingering fear. As MW2 states, "We [women] did not go to markets for months, fearing the return of Taliban and their killing of innocent people.". However, "a few months after the curfew was lifted, people started going to the markets." (MW2, December 3, 2020).

5.4. Women's markets in retrospect: 12 years after Taliban's violence

Explaining the post-conflict revival of women's markets requires attention to Sara Ahmed's dictum of walking into the room and feeling the atmosphere but what we may feel depends on the angle of our arrival. Or we might say that the atmosphere is already angled; it is always felt from a specific point" (Ahmed, 2010, p. 37). These angles or points of arrival into the felt atmosphere and its everyday visceral logic is underpinned by what Filmar (2003), following Williams (1977), calls "the structure of feelings". Memories of Taliban's violence, neoliberal affects of liberating women, cultural norms related to interaction among men and women in the marketplaces, knowledge about street harassers and much more is built into this structure of feelings. "Affective habitus", as Reckwitz (2012) would call it, explains this view taking on the field which depends upon the point from which it is taken (Lizardo, 2004). For local communities, every aspect of the material landscape became a wounded memory which they had to cope with. Whereas, the military who drove out Taliban from Swat perceived this landscape as a springboard to project their image as a saviour to both local and international community. NGOs (both national and international), who were one of the prime targets of Taliban's violence, viewed material and social rehabilitation of Swat as a means to regain lost trust of local communities, but more importantly, to further the neoliberal agenda of top-down empowerment of women—that remained patriarchal.

Within this context, traders began rebuilding trust of their suppliers, and their women customers were still hesitant to visit markets due to lingering fear of Taliban's violence resurfacing. In 2022, Lingering fear of Taliban's violence shapes the affectivity of marketplaces for some of my women interviewees. As MW 17 explains, "When I see a crowd of women in the market it reminds me of the Taliban." To explain why a crowd of women brings back the memories of taliban, she juxtaposes this with "During Taliban's period markets were empty and deserted." "Also when I see women wearing thin and see through chadars, it reminds me of the Taliban. Because the Taliban imposed a strict ban on the use of these kinds of chadars." (MW17, 19 April 2022). At the time of writing, these fears residing in memory are once again intensified through random and momentary appearance and disappearance of posters on social media where Taliban are threatening women with the same restrictions and consequences as they did in 2007–9. Circulation of these posters is followed by circulation of evidence of Taliban's return to Swat

in 2022. For Swati people, circulation of such materials on social media fills the atmosphere of women's markets with fear, frustration, anger and apprehension.

Nevertheless, in the present-day (post-Taliban) Swat, women can choose from three types of places: a new variant of women's markets with women sellers and women customers, traditional women's markets with men sellers and women buyers, and modern shopping centres. The new variant of women's markets is underdeveloped and less known, whereas the modern shopping centre in Swat is predominantly serving affluent customers. For a dominant majority, traditional women's markets are still the most accessible and widely preferred place for shopping due to the variety of goods and range of affordability. Regardless of class distinction, affective atmosphere of women's markets embedded in the structure of feelings appears as a major marker of distinction in the narrative of women related to traditional women's markets and modern shopping centres.

Comparing Cheena (traditional) women market of Swat and City Centre (modern shopping centre in Swat, one of our interviewees explains, "its (City Centre) environment is very peaceful, less crowded and less noisy. The place is very open and less congested. There [City Centre] is no fear of being touched". She adds, "Here (City Centre) shopkeepers maintain a standard while dealing with people and know how to talk, how to facilitate, they [traders] offer adequate time to customers and satisfy their [customers] requirements." (MW3, December 3, 2020). Whereas, in traditional markets, "it is bad there, people pass comments, plus the place is very congested. One cannot shop in a relaxed mood, one [a woman] is often in a rush to complete shopping as soon as possible because of the crowd." (MW7, December 15, 2020). The alleyways of the traditional women's markets are latent with discomfort and fear, as MW6 explains, "Outside the shop there are more chances of receiving negative comments or getting touched", she then continued, "not necessary that it will happen but normally it is like this". (MW6, December 15, 2020).

Both negative and positive affects are latent in the "affective atmosphere" of the traditional women's markets (Anderson, 2009), waiting to be realized at every visit of a woman to the market. For instance, a participant of our FGD stated, "I had heard many bad things related to these markets, Even when I was in my Masters (2014), I would be scared and would try to walk behind my mother, however, I never had any bad experience and hence I became more confident in going to these markets" (November 4, 2020). Women also reported respectable behaviours creating positive affects. As MW3 notes, if we are passing, men give us way, if we are waiting for transport, men prefer to let us sit first, if we are waiting for something and men are also there, they [men] ask [other men] to let us [women] do first." In this sense, affect is the strange attractor lingering in the marketplace awaiting its realization in practice, habit, and sensation (Massumi, 1992, pp. 64-65). The transmission of affect then (Brennan, 2004), in women's markets, is not only "indicative of the subjective moods of certain places. They also frame the array of activities and practices potentially enactable within that place" (Duff, 2010, p. 884).

6. Conclusion

"A man can never experience being in the market in the same way that a woman does, and hence he cannot feel the market the way I feel it as a woman." (MW12, August 15, 2021). My endeavour to write a representational account of the affective dimension of Taliban's violence in relation to women's markets was rewarding as it allowed capturing the visceral logic of everyday interaction in women's markets and their multiple affective dimensions. The "felt atmosphere of women's markets" to borrow Anderson's (2009) term, is embedded in the "structure of feelings" (Folmer, 2003). Affect as an embodied meaning-making capacity of this structure of feelings is deposited in agent's habitus as "foregrounding of history", but its formation "is felt in the everyday as a particular visceral sensation" (Leaney, 2019, p. 312).

Affects of habitus formation are "both momentary and particular (felt in the present) and constituted within social and historical context (structural materiality)" (Leaney, 2019, p. 217). In this sense, affective atmosphere of women's markets in Swat emanates from the assembling of the human bodies, discursive bodies, non-human bodies and all the other bodies that relationally makeup everyday situations (Anderson, 2009, p. 79).

In the Swat conflict, it was this embeddedness of women market-places that Taliban manipulated to generate terror for restricting women's mobility in the public spaces. Taliban's place-destruction was aimed at the felt atmosphere of the women's markets by sticking them together with other places where they wanted to restrict women's access. In doing so, Taliban relied on the culturally framed patriarchal idiom of rancid or corrupted women, to generate negative feelings against those frequenting the markets without their male relatives. The intensity of Taliban's fear and their manipulation of negative emotions related to women's markets initially worked well for Taliban's affective politics. However, inconsistencies in people's interactive experience with Taliban generated emotions of frustration, disappointment, disgust, hate, and anger. Therefore, when the military wiped out the Taliban from Swat, women did not immediately return to markets due to a lingering fear. In the long run, however, women's mobility to markets has increased. Not only of the educated and professional women, but also those madrasa-going women who were reluctant to visit markets in the initial post-Taliban Swat. Taliban's violence against women and related memories are an integral feature of women's markets in Swat, which has the capacity to affect and be affected once the body comes into contact with these memories, either in conversation, site of an object, or a particular event.

Women's markets, as affective spaces of the everyday are "always more than themselves and latent with affect." They can best be viewed as a plane of multiplicity, full of material elements entangled amongst human perceptions of touch, smell, texture and light, tethered through linkages of structures recognizable to both previous and current day experiences (Wells et al., 2020). This multiplicity of the everyday rooted in a historically framed but dynamic cultural idiom, and attention to its affective dimensions is absent in the gendered analysis of the war on terror. Affective atmosphere of women's markets in Swat is also embedded in regional and global geopolitics. With the return of Taliban to Afghanistan in 2021 and parts of Pakistan including Swat in 2022, and Taliban's restrictions on women's mobility are once again beginning to be felt within the everyday markets. It remains to be seen how the Taliban and the state generate, manipulate and transmit affects. and how bodies, of local men and women, of Taliban and military personnel circulate within this affective economy. What is clear however, is the interest of the discursive and the everyday, past and future, presence and absence, memory and experience, culture and geopolitics, personal and collective experiences shape the affective atmosphere of women's markets in Swat which 'envelops' and 'presses' upon. And People of Swat, both men and women, feel it!

Declaration of Competing Interest

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

Data availability

The data that has been used is confidential.

Acknowledgements

I Thank Professor Daanish Mustafa, Dr. Shehnaz Haqqani, Dr. Matt B, and Dr. Matthew Tillitson for commenting on earlier versions of this draft. I also thank the editor of Geoforum and two anonymous reviewers

for their very instructive comments. All errors remain mine.

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Dr Salman is a lecturer in human geography at the department of Geography in the school of social science and Public policy at King's College London. Salman is interested in local political economy with special interest in informal economy, marketplaces,

entrepreneurship, institutional analysis, local governance and trust, borderland markets and cultural production (with a special interest in affect theory). Salman is currently working on the affectual geography of women's markets in the northwest of Pakistan along with a collaborative learning project aimed at highlighting the significance of local voices

in Swat to inform academics and international donors on understanding heritage preservation and the causes of heritage destruction. He can be reached at: Muhammad_salman.khan@kcl.ac.uk