ACCULTURATION AND PROSPECTS FOR REPATRIATION: UNDERSTANDING IDENTITY DYNAMICS OF AFGHAN REFUGEES IN PAKISTAN

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DECLARATION

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ABSTRACT

Conflicts lead to various consequences; mass migration is one of them. The circumstances prevailing in Afghanistan, for almost four decades now, have led to the displacement of Afghan citizens in large numbers – both internally and internationally. Pakistan, being the neighbouring country of Afghanistan, has been and continues to be the hosting country of the largest number of Afghan refugees during all this time. Residing in a country – not primarily the country of their origin – leads to cultural transitions in the refugees; the process is referred to as acculturation. This research studies the aforementioned process using the theoretical concepts underlined in the social identity theory, its extension – self categorisation theory, and the identity negotiation theory. These theories are significant in understanding the social categorisations and group processes in addition to giving insight over how the identity is negotiated when the context changes. Keeping this in perspective, the prospects for repatriation of the Afghan refugees residing in Pakistan are also explored. The data, collected through the narrative-based unstructured interviews, is processed using the thematic narrative analysis. The research is significant not only in filling the gap in the existing literature regarding the Afghan refugees in Pakistan but also facilitates in understanding the durability and sustainability of their repatriation. The research findings indicate a considerably positive response towards integration, whereas cases of assimilation and separation are also realised. These findings, however, are informed by certain contributing variables. In case of the choice for repatriation, these variables and factors remain equally contributive, while the prevalence of peace and economic stability in Afghanistan are echoed as necessary conditions for repatriation by Afghan refugees.

Keywords: Acculturation, Repatriation, Identity, Afghan Refugees

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this research to all those

who feel they do not belong to this time and/or space

and are forced to live now and/or here.

I also dedicate this thesis to all those

who facilitated them and made their lives worth-living

even in the time and/or space they never desired of.

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1 INTRODUCTION

Migration, in the contemporary times, has taken the form of a global phenomenon. In simple yet elaborate terms, migration is defined as the "permanent or semi-permanent change of residence" (Lee, 1966, p. 49). It may take the form of internal or external (international) migration (Skeldon, 2017) which may either be voluntary, forced or regarded as an outcome of both voluntariness and duress (Erdal & Oeppen, 2017). Such a demographic event impacts the cultural diversity and the socio economic development of the region from where the emigrants belong as well as the region they move to (Ager & Brückner, 2013; de Haas, 2007; Fakiolas, 1999; Ottaviano & Peri, 2006). Everett lee (1966) has explained the phenomenon of migration as interplay of four types of factors; those associated with the place of origin, those linked to the place of destination, intervening obstacles and personal factors. The first two types of factors are generally referred to as the push and the pull factors respectively and a plethora of literature has further explored them (e.g., Castelli, 2018; Hear, Bakewell, & Long, 2017; Krishnakumar & Indumathi, 2014; Schoorl et al., 2000; Thet, 2014).

Conflicts and threats of persecution (Bohra-Mishra & Massey, 2011; Davenport et al., 2003; Schmeidl, 1997), disasters (natural or man-made), unfavourable environments and climate change (Boustan, Kahn, & Rhode, 2012; Hugo, 1996; Krishnamurthy, 2012; Naudé, 2009; Zhang, Yan, Oba, & Zhang, 2014) serve as some of the factors motivating the individuals to abandon their places of origin while educational or economic opportunities, urbanisation and industrialisation attract the individuals towards certain destinations (Verbik & Lanasnowski, 2007). Complementing these factors, the distance between the place of origin and destination, mode of travel and the cost involved (in both financial and legal terms) and ethnic aspects all contribute to the intervening obstacles whereas age, gender (Boyd & Grieco, 2003), profession, family associations, personal capacities and sensitivities, etc. constitute personal factors (Hossain, 2001; Lee, 1966). The present time has witnessed significant migrations taking place owing to one major (push) factor – (protracted) conflicts.

It is estimated that an approximate of 258 million migrants inhabit this world; living outside their countries of birth (United Nations, 2017). The developing and the developed countries are simultaneously being affected because of the increasing human migrations – of which refugees are a significant part. A refugee, as defined by the 1951 refugee convention, is someone who:

> [...] owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it. (UN, 1951, 1)

An approximate 10 per cent (25.4 million) of the total international migrant population comprises of the refugee community. The developing countries are being impacted more by the refugee population as they are not only the generators of most of the refugees but are also the destinations of most of them. The developing region hosts about 85 per cent of the total number of refugees. Contemporary conflicts have contributed greatly to the matter especially the protracted nature of these conflicts has further made the situation grave. The circumstances in Syria, Afghanistan, South Sudan, Myanmar and Somalia are among the dominant contributors of refugees (UNHCR, 2018a). Several studies refer to the phenomenon of refuge and the consequences (positive or negative) of the process (e.g., Biswas & Tortajada-Quiroz, 1996; Fiala, 2015). In addition to the consequences of migration (and refuge), the associated processes are also important to be studied.

1.1 Migration, Acculturation, and Repatriation

The individuals undertaking migration not only experience the change of their country (region) of stay but also are exposed to be impacted by certain other related phenomenon; one such process is acculturation – since migration transports the individuals from the contexts they develop in to new (cultural and social) contexts where they are then expected to live and (re)establish themselves. Migration, in many cases, results in the formation of groups with different social and cultural identities coexisting in

a society but these groups differ in the power they hold (numerical, political, economic etc.). Culture is considered as a significant determinant of behaviour and the cultural transition (with migration) is categorised as a "complex pattern of continuity and change" (Berry, 1997). The process which serves as means for this transition to take place is termed as acculturation, which may occur through multiple strategies depending upon the retention of one's own cultural identity and the degree of interaction with the hosting community (Dow, 2010). These strategies, which may be opted for or exercised upon the acculturating group (members) include assimilation, integration, segregation (or separation), and marginalisation (Berry, 1992; lee & Frongillo, 2003). Acculturation may also be explained through the characteristics the individuals of the acculturating group (migrants) possess and how they are treated in their hosting community (Colic-Peisker, 2003). Several factors, like age at the time of migration, generational status, level of education, gender, the socio-economic status, and prejudice or discrimination experienced in the hosting society, contribute to this process (Berry, 2001; Lee & Frongillo, 2003).

Though acculturation is an important accompanying process of migration, certain other considerations also gain significance when specific forms of migration are in view. The three durable solutions for the refugee issue, presented by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), are among those considerations when the particular form of migration is "refuge". These solutions include local integration, repatriation, and resettlement (UNHCR, 2016). Despite the fact that UNHCR does not prioritise any one of the solutions over the others (in its policy), the implementation, however, particularly in the developing countries like Pakistan, is centred more on repatriation of the refugees back to their country of origin and is realised through the tripartite commissions. Voluntariness, safety, and dignity serve as the three principles for repatriation – which may also be referred to as reverse migration. The same forces, which influence migration, will also be in action upon reverse migration owing to the reverse (cultural) transition. This would mean that the repatriation of the refugees back to their country of origin would expose them to reverse acculturation (Kim & Park, 2009) and pose challenges to their reintegration in the home country. Since repatriation, either through formal means or self-induced, is a rational decision of any refugee (Zetter,

1994), this thesis, therefore, is focussed on the Afghan refugees in Pakistan; studying them as an acculturating group in Pakistan and the subsequent prospects for their repatriation.

1.2 The Refugees from Afghanistan

The 1979 Soviet invasion of Afghanistan led to a mass mobilisation of the Afghan citizens – reaching up to six million. Most of them made their ways to the neighbouring countries Pakistan and Iran. The changing circumstances in Afghanistan did not bring this emigration process to a halt. It was further accelerated, in late 1990s, with the Taliban rule in the country and then by the invasion of American forces in 2001 following the twin tower attacks of September 11 (AFP, 2016). The instability and lack of security in Afghanistan played its role in contributing to the protracted nature of refuge of its citizens; Pakistan being host to the largest number of Afghan refugees followed by Iran.

Though Pakistan is not signatory to the 1951 UN refugee convention and the 1967 UNHCR protocol about refugees, which bind the states to provide international protection to refugees (UNHCR-Pakistan, 2018), Pakistan has made provision of relaxation and privileges to the vulnerable refugee community on humanitarian ground and has long respected the principle of non-refoulement, i.e. the practice of not forcing the refugees or the asylum seekers to return to the conflict zones against their will. Pakistan, however, signed the tri-partite agreement with the government of Afghanistan and UNHCR in 2003 which obliges the government to respect and protect the rights of Afghan refugees (Redden, 2003). But certain (internal) security concerns, being faced by Pakistan in the recent years, have influenced the authorities to act otherwise (HRW, 2017). Despite all this, Pakistan was among those UN member states that voted for the Global Compact on Migration and also supported the Global Compact on Refugees at the General Assembly in December 2018 (APP, 2018a; United Nations, 2018). Upholding the principles, Pakistan has been involved, with the assistance of UNHCR, in a voluntary and dignified return of the refugees from the country.

Despite the repatriation of approximately 4.4 million refugees back to Afghanistan since 2002, Pakistan is currently home to about 1.4 million registered Afghan refugees (UNHCR, 2019a) – out of which 32 per cent reside in the refugee villages (UNHCR, 2019c).[1] 60 per cent of the (registered) refugees are estimated to reside in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province (UNHCR, 2019b) – the province that holds relatively stronger ties, in terms of culture and traditions, with the refugee community. Simultaneously, the number of Afghans (refugees) living in Pakistan unregistered ranges from half a million to a million (Stubley & Baynes, 2018).[2] Unregistered Afghans (refugees) – number exceeding 890,000 – have been issued Afghan Citizenship Cards (ACC) following the attempts of the Pakistan government to document them under the National Action Plan (APP, 2018b).[3]

Though repatriation is argued to be (and is practised as) the best durable solution in the case of larger refugee populations, certain phenomena are important to be studied to support or reject this hypothesis – especially in the protracted situations as that of the Afghan refugees. The experiences of the refugees in the hosting country are considered to play an important role in determining the behaviours of the individuals. Thus, when individuals are transported from one context (of their home country) to another (of the host country) because of migration, certain processes are worth studying. keeping this notion in view, this research is aimed to study the process of acculturation in the refugees from Afghanistan (which is being experienced by them in Pakistan) and link it with the prospects for repatriation, which among the three durable solutions proposed by UNHCR (voluntary repatriation, local integration and resettlement) is the most practised one when it comes to the case of the Afghan refugees.

[1] "The registered" refugees are the ones who are documented with the National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA) Pakistan and have been issued the Proof of Registration (PoR) which is normally referred to as the (Afghan) refugee card.

[2] The "unregistered" refugees are the ones who do not have any documentation (or validation) of their stay in Pakistan.

[3] The Afghan Citizenship Card (ACC) is an attempt to register the undocumented Afghans living in Pakistan. This need was highlighted in the first ever National Action Plan (NAP) in December 2014, whose point number 19 states "formulation of a comprehensive policy to deal with the issue of Afghan refugees, beginning with registration of all refugees". This (attempts to document the unregistered Afghans living in Pakistan) has also been a part of the two National Internal Security Policies (NISP) of 2014 and 2018.

1.3 Purpose & Significance of the Research

Migration has taken the form of a global issue and continues to affect multiple states. The current time may be regarded as the era of protracted refugee emergencies. The existing literature on refugees has much explored and explained the link between conflict and refugees from various dimensions (e.g., Davenport et al., 2003; Salehyan, 2008; Salehyan & Gleditsch, 2006) and also well-tended the role of returning refugees in the post-conflict development and reconstruction of the affected regions (e.g., Arowolo, 2000; Black & Gent, 2006; Chimni, 2002; Crisp, 2001; Kibreab, 2002; Stefansson, 2006). The (prolonged) conflict in Afghanistan has made it the leading country, following Syria, from where the refugees have originated in the recent time. Pakistan, despite the repatriation of millions of refugees, still remains one of the leading countries to host the (Afghan) refugees; providing a rich research site to scholars, from all disciplines, who are interested in the dynamics of migration. The researches have been carried out but majorly in the field of health and medicine (e.g., Bartlett et al., 2002; Haq et al., 2017; Kassam & Nanji, 2006; Rowland, 2002). Though there is literature on Afghan refugees pertaining to social sciences as well (e.g., Fayyaz, 2018; Kronenfeld, 2008), there is a greater need of in-depth and interdisciplinary researches that may provide sound ground for future actions of the policymakers and the government.

Migration, and refuge in particular, has not only emerged as a global phenomenon but has also given birth to certain labels used frequently as that of immigrants or refugees. The binding factor of the Afghans residing in Pakistan – their refuge or escape from the conflict – has united them all under a single (bureaucratic or administrative) identity. In addition to this aspect of identity, they (may) also experience a significant impact of refuge on their social (and cultural) identity, which is not only dynamic and multidimensional but also socially constructed and dependent upon the context an individual is in. Zetter (1994) argues that migration leads to the formation of two groups in the country of asylum; one of the migrants (the Afghan refugees in this particular case) and the other of the hosting community (the local residents of that place). Thus, this thesis employs the lens of the Social Identity Theory (proposed by Henry Tajfel) and the Self-Categorisation Theory (proposed by John Turner) to understand the group processes

and intergroup behaviour in relation to the Afghan refugees residing in Pakistan. This, however, must be kept under consideration that the term "refugees", in this thesis, is not meant to label or differentiate anyone; it is used merely to refer to the Afghan citizens who undertook the voyage to Pakistan in order to escape the life threatening situation of their home country and denotes their legal status of stay in Pakistan.

The mass mobilisation of the Afghans to Pakistan has exposed them not only to a new country but also to a relatively changed environment and circumstances; thus, enabling them to experience acculturation. There are studies focussing on the phenomenon of acculturation for migrants or immigrants elsewhere, but the Afghan refugees in Pakistan have failed to grab significant attention from the researchers. Complementing the aforementioned theoretical underpinnings by the Identity Negotiation Theory (proposed by Stella Ting-Toomey), this study aims to explore the identity dynamics of the Afghan refugees in order to understand the process of acculturation being experienced by them. Additionally, this research also aims to explore the prospects for repatriation considering it with regards to acculturation; the relation which is not very well explored in the existing literature and is missing in the context of the Afghan refugees.

The principal objectives of this research are to study the phenomenon of acculturation for the Afghan refugees living in Pakistan, to explore the means by which acculturation can ease or hinder repatriation of the refugees back to their country, and to investigate if, in this protracted case, repatriation is a feasible option (in terms of pragmatism and sustainability). Thus, this research is steered by three questions:

- How have the Afghan refugees experienced/ undergone the process of acculturation during their stay in Pakistan?
- What are the prospects of repatriation of Afghan refugees from Pakistan considering the acculturation they have experienced? and
- What are the opportunities or threats the process of acculturation poses to their repatriation?

These questions form the foundations of this thesis which is meant to introduce the readers/listeners to the different strategies of acculturation the Afghan refugees in Pakistan have chosen for themselves or have been imposed on them (by Pakistan –

authorities as well as public) and to understand how these experiences of the refugees play their part in impacting their choices (or decisions) for repatriation. For this purpose, the thesis employs narrative inquiry as the research design which serves as an appropriate approach to understanding the life experiences of the concerned individuals – the Afghan refugees in this case, as it makes their voices heard by relying on the narratives provided by the refugees and lets the researcher to present them in their own words without fracturing the data (Riessman, 2008).

Further adding to the significance to this research by means of contributing to field of refugee studies, this research not only studies the phenomenon of acculturation in the Afghan refugees living in Pakistan, but also attempts to understand the link of their experiences with the prospects for their repatriation, which is practised as a policy in the case of Afghan refugees in Pakistan through the tripartite commission (Afghanistan, Pakistan, and UNHCR). Additionally, this research attempts to fill the gap present in the literature in the field of refugees and forced migration in Pakistan. The Afghan refugees residing in Pakistan have not attracted much attention of the scholars. The existing studies focus on limited dimensions of the refugee phenomenon and highlight a need of interdisciplinary research that caters to the depth of the issue under consideration.

1.4 Thesis Outline

To understand the identity dynamics of refugees living in the host community, it is important to develop a sound understanding of the concept of identity. To lay the foundations, the following chapter discusses the social identity and self-categorisation theories in brief. Explaining how the ones who take refuge form some connection with each other (on the basis of their common country of origin and experience of refuge) and consequently are identified as refugees either by themselves or by the other members of the community, this chapter further dwells on how the immigrants interact with the members of the host community. Based on how they negotiate their identities with the community they reside in, the chapter then refers to the factors affecting the acculturation

process and the strategies of acculturation. In the end, the chapter draws a connection between acculturation and immigrants' choices to return to their countries of origin.

In order to study the aforementioned concepts for the Afghan refugees whose country of asylum is Pakistan, qualitative research – with narrative inquiry as the research design – was employed. The third chapter explains in detail the methodology of this thesis. For the purpose of narratology, unstructured narrative interviews were conducted to collect the narratives of the refugees, which were then analysed using thematic narrative analysis. While taking into account the limitations of this research, some noteworthy elements for assessing the quality of this study are also mentioned. The narratives of the (selective) participants of this research are then presented in the succeeding part of the dissertation. This is then followed by the discussion over these narratives in the light of the theory and literature already explored. The last part of the dissertation presents the readers/listeners with the conclusion of the research carried out followed by recommendations and directions for future studies.

2 IDENTITY ↔ ACCULTURATION → REPATRIATION

The voyage undertaken by an individual from his/her place of origin to a foreign land, be it for political, economic, or any other reason, is often complemented with some other notions – disconnection from the known and the recognised cultural practices as well as the social institutions. Migration is usually followed by acculturation in the experiences of the immigrants (Schwartz, Montgomery, & Briones, 2006). Acculturation may be explained as the process which is triggered by the interaction of individuals from different cultures and leads to cultural change (Gibson, 2001). Redfield, Linton, and Herskovits (1936) presented the classical definition of acculturation; "Acculturation comprehends those phenomena which result when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact with subsequent changes in the original culture patterns of either or both groups" (p. 149, as cited in Berry, 1997). Though acculturation is not particular to migrants and can also be observed in non-immigrant population, as in the case for the ethnic groups (Pope-Davis et al., 2000; Suleiman, 2002), this study is only concerned with the acculturation supplemented by migration –with migrants as the acculturating group.

In the context of refugees, as is also true for all other forms of international migration, the two cultures that come in contact with each other are the one of the hosting community and the other of the country of origin. Thus, acculturation is concerned with the adoption of elements of the culture to which the refugee is introduced following migration and retention of the culture brought along with migration (Phinney, Horenczyk, Liebkind, & Vedder, 2001). This process is concerned with various aspects i.e. cultural, social, psychological, economic as well as political (Lee & Frongillo, 2003). Graves (1967) has viewed acculturation at two levels; group or collective level and the psychological or individual level. The process of acculturation, at both these levels and all aspects inclusive, can well be explained in connection with the concept of identity and the theories built on this idea. This chapter discusses the social identity theory (proposed by Henry Tajfel) and its extension – the self-categorisation theory (proposed by John Turner). It further expounds upon how the process of acculturation may be explained

through the identity negotiation theory (proposed by Stella Ting-Toomey). After establishing the theoretical ground for the study, light is shed on the strategies and factors in the process of acculturation which is followed by the discussion over repatriation in relation to acculturation.

2.1 Social Identity Theory and Self-Categorisation Theory

Before dwelling on the different theories explaining identity and identity processes, it is important to get at least a superficial understanding of what identity means in general. Identity – with the roots of the word in the Latin term idem meaning the same – not only depends on similarities but is equally dependent upon differences. The importance of differences in identity formation is further emphasised by the fact that no self can be perceived in the absence of the other (Dundes, 1984). There are multiple theories addressing identity; identity theory and the social identity theory can provide a holistic understanding of the self. The identity theory is concerned with the individual (personal) self while the social identity theory focuses on the group identity. Fearon (1999) argues that the personal and the social (group) identities are interrelated to one another. Self may be classified uniquely as per the changing situations or other social classifications; this categorisation of self is referred to as identification in identity theory and as self-categorisation in social identity theory (Stets & Burke, 2000). The foundations of the identity theory lie in the concept of roles given to or achieved by an individual in any social setting (Burke & Tully, 1977) while the social identity theory is established on two primary grounds – social categorisation and social comparison (Tajfel, 1974).

Despite having their roots in different disciplines, both the theories believe in a dynamic, multidimensional, and socially constructed self (referred to as identity and social identity in the two theories) that guides the individual's behaviour in any social structure. Since the roles an individual takes vary in different contexts, the personal or role identities (which are regarded as different components of the self), as per the identity theory, also varies; asserting that a person can have several role identities depending upon the different groups or situations he/she is in (Hogg, Terry, & White, 1995). The idea of

the other is prevalent even in role identities as it differentiates roles from the relevant counter roles (Hogg et al., 1995; see e.g. Lindesmith & Strauss, 1956). Conformity to roles by a larger population, in general, may result in the formation of norms – which is dealt as a group process – thus leading the individual identity to the social identity (Hogg et al., 1995).

In contrast to the identity theory which focuses on the interpersonal interactions, the social identity theory, proposed by Henry Tajfel, deals with intergroup processes and behaviour by dwelling upon ingroup affiliations and outgroup attitudes (Tajfel, 1974) and explains how they are influenced by the social context (Hornsey, 2008). The group is conceptualised as the

> […] collection of individuals who perceive themselves to be members of the same social category, share some emotional involvement in this common definition of themselves, and achieve some degree of social consensus about the evaluation of their group and of their membership of it. (Tajfel & Turner, 1979, p. 40)

A person tends to derive positive aspects of his/her social identity, and subsequently the self-concept, through his/her association with a particular group (Tajfel, 1974) in order to enhance his/her self-esteem (Hogg & Terry, 2000). Therefore, the self is understood in relation to the group associations an individual has with any social group or category. An individual is defined to be a member of a particular group if "the individuals concerned define themselves and are defined by others as members of a group" (Tajfel & Turner, 1979, 40). This categorisation leads to the formation of ingroup and outgroup, the terms used to represent the collective self and other in the social identity theory, by creating distinct boundaries between the two. Social identity, irrespective of how much the group is geographically dispersed, is dependent on the contextual factors that determine the salience of any group identity within a certain context (Hogg et al., 1995).

The social identity may also be comprehended as the "type identity" which is explained as the label shared by individuals based on their common characteristic(s) that may be related to their physical appearance, norms, beliefs, behaviours, place of origin, language, etc. (Fearon, 1999). The social identity, similar to the personal (role) identity, is dynamic in nature which is derived from the individuals' relationships to a particular group(s) (Tajfel, 1974). The social identity theory builds upon four inter-related concepts;

social categorisation, social identity, social comparison, and psychological distinctiveness. Social categorisation deals with the classification of individuals into groups which are not only meaningful to the subject but are also contextual (Tajfel, 1974). The members of the group usually share the same attitudes, beliefs, language, cultural traditions, locality, or certain experiences of life (Stewart, 2008; Tajfel, 1974). This categorisation of group construction may be activated or influenced by some leader (may be for some political or economic gain) or the state (Barthe, 1969; Brubaker & Cooper, 2000). In these cases, where the categorisation is being imposed on the individuals by an external – relatively powerful – actor, how the individuals categorise themselves becomes less significant in comparison to how they are viewed by others. Thus, the group identification, in addition to being determined by the perceptions of individuals of belonging to a certain group, are also dependent upon what others perceive of their association or connection to a group (Stewart, 2008).

The second concept, social identity (also explained earlier), is based on the component of the self-concept that originates from his/her association to a particular group and the related sense of belongingness for that group (Tajfel, 1974). An individual realises his identity in socially defined terms which are then transformed into reality as he continues to interact in that social context (Berger, 1966). The sense of belonging to a certain group leads to the formation of a prototype to which the group members conform and regard it as the identity of the group. All those not fulfilling the identity of group are regarded as not belonging to that particular group and are, thus, seen as outsiders. This enables an environment for social comparison (Tajfel, 1974), which is often made between the groups which are proximate to each other in addition to sharing the relevance dimensions with one another; thereby, making them comparable (Trepte & Loy, 2017). Through social comparison, an individual tends to favour his/her ingroup by viewing the self in a positive light (Hogg et al., 1995). In case the social comparison leads to unfavourable results for the ingroup, the individual may dissociate himself/herself from the group (if possible) and attempt to acquire membership in the new group (perceived to be better than the old one). Thus, an individual (because of his/her talent, hard work or any other factor) can cross the permeable boundaries between the groups and attain the

membership of the group he/she deems better than the one he/she belonged to (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Trepte and Loy (2017) have referred to this move as individual mobility.

Individual mobility is rarely achievable; the individual neither remains a member of the group he wants to move from nor is accepted as a true member in the new desired group (Hogg, 2016). Since disconnecting oneself from a group is usually not a viable option, the individual will strive either for social mobility or social change. Social mobility may be explained as a cognitive process of reinterpreting those components or factors of concern, which initially were a source of contributing adversely to the social identity, in a way that the (new) interpretation either justifies or makes them acceptable for the group (Tajfel, 1974). Contrarily, social change refers to changing the prototype of the ingroup so it may no longer be the disadvantaged one when it comes to comparison with other groups. These two approaches (social mobility and social change) can also be enacted simultaneously (Hogg et al., 1995; Tajfel, 1974). The psychological distinctiveness serves as the fourth and final concept of the social identity theory. It can only be achieved in the presence of the outgroup(s) which is (or are) clearly different from the ingroup. Thus it may be argued that the comparison operates at two levels; on individual level: bringing the similar people close to each other in group formation, and group level: establishing distinctiveness between the groups (Tajfel, 1974).

An individual can have multiple social identities depending upon his/her group membership. Being a part of the larger group does not confine him/her from forming subgroups. However, the context will determine which social identity is (psychologically) salient in the given situation, which will in turn govern the intergroup interactions and behaviour. Attempts to (forcefully) assimilate the subgroups in one larger group identity can, however, lead to intense inter-subgroup competition in response to a perceived identity threat (Hogg & Terry, 2000). An individual cannot hold negative emotions for an (out)group unless he/she associates himself/herself with another group (ingroup). Perception of an outgroup as a threat or danger or having adverse feelings for that group can lead to a stronger sense of ingroup affiliation (Tajfel, 1974). Association with the subgroup is particularly important when the superordinate group is very large and

impersonal (Hogg & Terry, 2000). Thus, in such circumstances, individuals realise distinctiveness in the form of their subgroups (Brewer, 1991).

The perception of individuals as a group depends upon the existence of actual or perceived similarities between them (within the ingroup) – which forms the basis of the group prototype (Hogg & Terry, 2000). Hogg et al. (1995) have defined prototype as the "subjective representation of the defining attributes (e.g., beliefs, attitudes, behaviour) of a social category, which is actively constructed from the relevant social information in the immediate or more enduring interactive context" (p. 261). The idea of the prototype can also be understood in terms of "membership rules and content" of a social category; membership rules determine whether an individual will be included or excluded from a social category (e.g., nationality), while the content includes beliefs, attitudes or behaviours expected of a group member (Fearon, 1999). In conforming to these prototypes of the social groups, individuals are depersonalised and instead of being viewed as unique beings, are perceived as the embodiment of that prototype. This social categorisation of the self on the basis of prototype is referred to as the self-categorisation (Hogg & Terry, 2000) which, in turn, produces the social identity phenomenon (Hogg et al., 1995). Explaining the process of self-categorisation, John Turner extended the social identity theory to self-categorisation theory, which was formalised in 1985 (Reynolds & Turner, 2012). Both, the social identity theory and the self-categorisation theory, argue that the formation of the self relies on the understanding of the social category to which an individual belongs and to which he/she feels associated to (Hogg et al., 1995). This social category can either be temporary as that of a political affiliation or relatively permanent one e.g. nationality, etc.

The self-categorisation theory builds upon four key concepts; categorisation, salience, depersonalisation, and individuality (Turner, 1999). The theory hypothesises that the group behaviour is guided by the social identity and differentiates between the personal and the social identity by proposing levels of self-categorisation which are the levels of abstraction at which an individual defines himself/herself e.g. at the interpersonal, intergroup or superordinate level (Reynolds & Turner, 2012). The salient identity is the one which is more relevant to the context and setting and which will

determine the behaviour of an individual in that setting. In contrast to the social identity theory, self-categorisation theory suggests that both personal and social identities can simultaneously be salient and can guide the behaviour of an individual together (Trepte & Loy, 2017). The self-categorisation theory also explains how the prototype functions and leads to depersonalisation.

The group members usually share the same prototype about their group, which may be viewed in the form of exemplary members or a holistic abstraction of group qualities and features. Thereby, they assess the association or belongingness of themselves, and others too, based on how similar they are to the prototype, which may be transformed in case of change of the salient outgroup; it tends to maximise similarities within the group and differences with the outgroup. The individual behaviour is transformed into group behaviour as a result of this process. Depersonalisation also provides basis for other group processes like unity, ethnocentrism, collective behaviour, shared norms and traditions, discrimination and social stereotyping (Hogg et al., 1995; Hogg & Terry 2000). In contrast to depersonalisation, which presents individuals in a group or collective identity, individuality builds upon the distinctiveness of each individual and his/her personal identity and its ability to influence a person's behaviour (Trepte & Loy, 2017).

2.2 Identity Negotiation and Acculturation

Tajfel and Turner (1979) have viewed the behaviour of humans on a continuum with purely interpersonal and purely intergroup behaviour at the two extremes; both of which are almost impractical. In the case of any (form of) intergroup conflict, the individuals will tend to interact with each other on the continuum closer to the intergroup extreme as the intensity of the conflict increases (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Ting-Toomey (1994) has defined the conflict as "the perceived and/or actual incompatibility of values, expectations, processes, or outcomes between two or more parties over substantive and/or relational issues" (p. 360). The problematic intergroup behaviour may be transformed into a harmonious one by bringing together the conflicting groups in one superordinate

social category (Gaertner & Dovidio, 2000). The existence of a cultural divide can, however, pose serious challenges to such an approach (Prentice & Miller, 1999). This may be observed in the case of refugees resettling in European and American states, as almost all of them come from those regions of the world that are socio-culturally distant (Colic-Peisker & Walker, 2003). In the case of a conflict, individuals tend to negotiate their identities; this process is well dealt with in the identity negotiation theory (proposed by Stella Ting-Toomey).

The term identity in identity negotiation theory encompasses all facets of identity; ranging from personal (individual) to social (group) identities. It may refer to identities based on any factor including gender, age, profession, socio-economic class, ethnicity, or culture (Ting-Toomey, 2015). A group identity may be embedded in a multifaceted context; incorporating various factors like language, cultural background, social class, geographical region and political conflict (Ethier & Deaux, 1994). In intergroup interactions, "face" is regarded not only as the explanatory mechanism of the means to avoid any potential conflict but also to study the role of culture in such situations (Ting-Toomey, 1988).

Since the identities of individuals are determined by the cultures and structures they are in, they are based on the connections the individuals have with the groups and networks. Migration adversely influences these connections, which is true especially for the spontaneous refugees. Thereby, this poses them with a need to reconstruct their identities (Colic-Peisker & Walker, 2003). Moreover, migrants often face intergroup conflicts activating their identity concerns (Schwartz et al., 2006) as they come into contact with an unfamiliar community in an unfamiliar setting. Thus, two groups are formed – the refugees and the hosting community. Furthermore, the refugees living in any host community often face being associated with certain labels leading them to situations where they are to deal with an imposed identity (Zetter, 1991), which may be in the form of their legal status or an administrative identity of "refugee". Such an identity is usually perceived as undesirable and from which an individual should get rid as early as he/she can (Colic-Peisker & Walker, 2003). The interaction of the different identities and the way they are perceived may be explained using the identity negotiation

process which provides a theoretical ground for understanding the interplay between the (perceived) self and the (perceived) other (Swann, 1987). The face (identity) negotiation theory argues that the influence of cultures on the behaviour of an individual in a conflict can be explained through face (identity) and how it is negotiated (Ting-Toomey, 1988). An individual learns this behaviour through socialisation in his/her particular cultural environment. Since the socialisation process varies for each individual, each individual may have a unique behaviour and distinctive approach towards face negotiation. Thereby, the cultural values either directly or indirectly (through individual-level factors) influence the behaviour of an individual in situations of any conflict (Oetzel & Ting-Toomey, 2003).

Culture may be regarded as the manifestation of the group symbols and, thus, plays a significant part in forming the group associations (Schwartz et al., 2006). These group symbols may be communicated by the means of customs and traditions (Dundes, 1984). Culture of any region is determined by the dominant group in that region (Schwartz et al., 2006). The identity of an individual can also be communicated (or expressed) through several other means, including the clothes he/she wears, the house he/she lives in, and other physical symbols (Swann, 1987). The component of the social identity, addressing these factors, is referred to as the cultural identity (Phinney et al., 2001) and is defined as the form in which an individual interacts with his/her cultural context (Bhatia & Ram, 2001). The cultural identity, in comparison to the ethnic identity, is more comprehensive (Jensen, 2003; Phinney et al., 2001). It is further argued that social and cultural identities lay the foundations for the process of acculturation (Schwartz et al., 2006). Thus, in a multicultural context, the cultural identities will determine the social categories (psychologically) formed and the behaviour of the individuals in these intergroup setting (Jensen, 2003).

Upon migration, the immigrants are exposed to a (relatively) new cultural identity in the form of that of the hosting community. Hence, the immigrants, with their (minority) cultural identity, are influenced by the culture of the region they migrate to. This influence or modification in the cultural identity, interpreted as acculturation, may be observed in the choice of language, belief system, or changing the perception of the

ingroup prototype so as the receiving society is no longer considered as an outgroup. A stronger affiliation with the group or culture would mean a greater solidarity and conformity with the culture. During the process of acculturation, however, certain elements of the cultural identity of the hosting community may also be adopted by the incoming migrants. Acculturation will be guided by the cultural prototypes of the (perceived) ingroup and outgroup; rendering the others insignificant. No unidirectional causal relationship can be established between acculturation and cultural identity; both influence one another (Schwartz et al., 2006).

Ting-Toomey (2015) has defined (identity) negotiation as "the exchange of verbal and non-verbal messages between the two or more communicators in maintaining, threatening, or uplifting the various socio-cultural group-based or unique personal-based identity images of the other in situ" (p. 418). Thereby, acculturation, in the light of identity negotiation theory, may be assessed through the adoption of new elements into the cultural identity and the retention of the old elements of the culture of origin (Phinney et al., 2001). The change in the cultural identity, as a result of acculturation, also depends upon the divergence between the two cultures (Rudmin, 2003). Greater phenotypical and cultural differences between the migrants and the receiving community can add to the hardships an individual might face in the process of acculturation by contributing to the prejudice and discrimination against the migrant community (Mummendey, Klink, & Brown, 2001; Rudmin, 2003; Simon & Lynch, 1999).

The primary motivation behind negotiating the identity, by an individual, is to gain acceptance in that particular context. One of the core assumptions of the identity negotiation theory is that individuals belonging to all ethno-cultural groups are motivated to strive for identity security, inclusion, predictability, connection and consistency in their composite identity i.e. both personal and social. This may be realised through selective interaction i.e. looking for particular social contexts and avoiding the others (Swann, 1987). An increased emotional security for the identity, experienced in a familiar cultural environment, will incline them towards ethnocentrism while increased levels of emotional insecurity or vulnerability, in an unfamiliar cultural environment, will lead them to perceive the outgroup(s) as a threat or danger. Another assumption states that an

individual is more likely to feel included in the case of positive endorsement of his/her desired group identity in ingroup interactions and feel differentiated when the desired group identity is stigmatised by the outgroups (s) (Ting-Toomey, 2005).

This can be observed in the case of migrants. In addition to the cultural identity with which the migrant comes, the transformed (or retained) cultural identity, owing to the acculturation process, also determines how the individuals of the (former) ingroup and the members of the receiving community will perceive him/her. A person who retains his original identity and refuses to adopt the elements from the new culture is more likely to face discrimination at the hands of the hosting community (Piontkowski et al., 2000). In a similar way, those who adopt the new culture may be criticised by the traditionalist members of the migrant community, while a bicultural (integrated) individual, despite being able to relate to both the cultural identities as per the situation requires, may not be perceived as the member of any of the two groups (Schwartz et al., 2006).

Certain elements of identity may be retained even when the physical settings of an individual change; this is particularly true for group identity. Yet, there are aspects of identity which are particular to a social setting (Dundes, 1984). The connection with the cultural background of a group and its strength plays an important role in determining how the identities will be negotiated when the context or the environment changes especially for an extended period of time. Individuals having a strong connection with their cultural background tend to involve themselves more in cultural activities – further strengthening their group identification. Contrary to this, individuals having a weak connection perceive more threat to their social or group identity in the changed environment – lowering their tendency to identify with that social group. However, the identity-salience relationship is also significant when considering contextual changes particularly for a longer duration (Ethier & Deaux, 1994). The following section presents the different strategies that either are adopted or imposed on the individuals whose contexts change owing to (forced) migration and also discusses the factors influencing this process (of acculturation).

2.3 Acculturation: Strategies and Factors

(Forced) migration has certain implications, which may be personal, political, social, and/or economic, not only for the receiving community but also for the migrants; acculturation is a part of these implications (Colic-Peisker & Walker, 2003). Almost similar to the decision of refuge (which is not a choice but is indispensable), acculturation, for refugees, is not something they voluntarily enter into; it may be regarded as a process inevitably accompanying migration (Taft, 1977). Gudykunst and Kim (1984) regard assimilation as the ultimate goal of the process of acculturation; not all scholars, however, agree to this notion. Variations may be observed in the course, the difficulty level and the outcomes of acculturation considering the varying strategies taken up for the purpose (Berry, 1997). The strategies employed for the purpose of acculturation may differ – both at group and individual level – depending upon the importance associated with the cultural identity, its characteristics and their maintenance, and the interaction and participation with the other cultural groups (Dow, 2010). Broadly four strategies are identified for acculturation; assimilation, integration, separation/segregation, and marginalisation.

assimilation allows to let go of the cultural identity seeking frequent interactions with other groups; integration facilitates the refugees in maintaining the cultural identity when in continuous interaction with the hosting community; an inclination towards preserving one's identity with a minimal interaction with others leads to separation; while marginalisation dwells upon cultural loss accompanied with exclusion (Berry, 1992; Berry, 1997). It may be argued that the acculturating group may not have the choice to choose the acculturation strategy for itself. For instance, marginalisation is not chosen rather imposed. Also, the alternate for separation, i.e. segregation, is used when the said form of acculturation is not out of the willingness of the acculturating members (Berry, 1997). Lalonde and Cameron (1993) are of the opinion that integration and separation are more collective in nature while assimilation is more individualistic. There are, nonetheless, other approaches as well in order to understand the process of acculturation.

Acculturation may also be viewed through another lens; as the interplay between two set of factors – the characteristics of the immigrants and the attitudes or behaviours

of the hosting society towards the immigrants. The characteristics include the physical attributes as well as the culture they bring along with them and the distance it has with the host culture; the greater the cultural distance, the more cultural shock an individual will experience and vice versa. Language serves as one of the crucial obstacles an immigrant faces in the hosting community. The response of the receiving community can be assessed through the (official) policies towards the immigrants in addition to the behaviour of the public (Colic-Peisker & Walker, 2003). Several other factors contribute to the form taken by acculturation for different individuals.

Prejudice towards the acculturating group members (may be based on group identification through physical features etc.) also plays a significant role in the selection of the strategies. The immigrants having obvious differences from the members of the host community may not choose (or are not given the opportunity) to assimilate considering the discriminations they experience (Berry et al., 1989; Duckitt, 1992), while the ones whose physical attributes make them indistinguishable from the members of the hosting community may find it easier to integrate (Colic-Peisker & Walker, 2003). Acculturation, in its final form, may be reached after going through different strategies. The location also plays a significant role in the matter; private spheres may invite greater tendencies for more cultural maintenance and less intergroup interactions (Berry, 1997). Employment can serve as an important tool in accelerating the acculturation process (Colic-Peisker & Walker, 2003). Some other factors influencing the acculturation process include gender, age, arrival age, generation, marital status, working status, formal education, place of residence, and socio-economic status (Berry, 2001; Berry, Trimble, & Olmedo, 1986; Colic-Peisker & Walker, 2003; Kim & Hurh, 1993; Lee & Frongillo, 2003). All these factors, referred to as the exogenous variables (Lee & Frongillo, 2003), have the potential to contribute to familiarising the immigrant with the host culture (Berry, 2001).

Lee & Frongillo (2003) found that the age of immigrants at the time of arrival is of particular importance as it also determines the likelihood of being formally educated in the new country. The longer the stay and the lesser the age at the time of arrival, greater is the probability for integration or assimilation; whereas separation is more likely in the

individuals of relatively older age who undertook migration at a later stage in life (Lee & Frongillo, 2003). Similarly, women may face more challenges in integrating or assimilating in the host environment as compared to the men, especially when the women either are treated differently or have different (traditional) roles in the home culture and the host culture (Berry, 2001; Dow, 2010). Colic-Peisker and Walker (2003) found out that the immigrants with a higher level of education or an urban background tend to integrate, while the others opted more for separation. Language also plays an important role; unfamiliarity with the language of the receiving community will, consequently, lead the immigrants to remain in (proximally) close contact with their cultural group. It may be concluded that the strategies individuals employ for the purpose of acculturation present a "compromise between desires and possibilities" (Colic-Peisker & Walker, 2003, 349). The phenomenon of acculturation is not only important when considering the stay of the refugee community in the country of asylum, but should also be given equal importance when devising the strategies to effectively deal with the refugees' issue.

2.4 Acculturation and Repatriation

The matter of refugees has long been debated upon, resulting in coming up with three durable solutions for the issue – repatriation, local integration, and resettlement. Repatriation refers to the return of the refugees to their countries of origin; local integration means the naturalisation of the refugees in the host community; while resettlement refers to the refugees settling in a country other than the countries of origin and first asylum (UNHCR, 2016). Though according to UNHCR (2016), no solution is prioritised over the other, repatriation is often regarded as the best, or rather the only effective, solution among these three approaches to the matter (Zetter, 1994). Furthermore, the return of the displaced population is considered essential for the peace processes in the war torn societies (Stefansson, 2006). UNHCR (1998) has conditioned not only the transition of war to peace but also its sustenance and durability with the return of the uprooted population (because of the conflict) back to their country of origin.

It is, however, argued in many cases that repatriation should not be the centre of focus and more attention should be paid towards the other two solutions (Jacobsen, 2001). Repatriation, however, continues to remain the most practised approach particularly for larger refugee populations.

The 1951 UN refugee convention highlights voluntariness as the key principle for repatriation. The conditions of safety and dignity were also later included to the requisites of repatriation. Nonetheless, the interpretation of safety and dignity varies and remains ambiguous; thereby sometimes making refoulment an international policy issue. The experiences and the policies in the hosting state may lead to an "imposed return", when the refugees are left with the impression that this is the only option available, particularly when their visas or the stay permits in the host country expire. Thus, the repatriation may be engineered by the states, as was witnessed in Tanzania where the Rwandese refugees were forced to return to an insecure country by the Tanzanian authorities. In situations like these, the returning refugees may become internally displaced in their country of origin or seek for asylum in a third country; thereby questioning the sustainability and durability of repatriation (Crisp & Long, 2016).

The sustainability of return can be assessed using multiple criteria; some of them include the (re)emigration of the returnees and their (social, economic, and political) reintegration in the home societies (Black & Gent, 2006). Though repatriation, and subsequent reintegration, has been implemented successfully in different refugee situations, it does not implicate that similar will be the rate of success in all cases; repatriation, in some other contexts, has also proved itself to be a durable solution which is problematic and difficult to implement (Rogge, 1991).

Moreover, the conditions in the country of origin may also have changed during the prolonged stay of migrants in the second country. Since the concept of home is not only limited to the notions of territory and place but also incorporates identity and memory, thus, associating it with the country of origin in the case of refugees may not always be the right approach.

The likelihood of repatriation of the refugees, and the success and durability of this process of return, is interplay of different sets of factors; the experiences in the host country and the conditions (change) in the home country (Rogge, 1991). Two important influencers associated with the former are: (a) confusion in their identities as insiders or outsiders and (b) the protracted nature of political uncertainty regarding their status (Zetter, 1994). The return of a refugee to the country of origin may be exercised through a formally planned program or on their own – generally referred to as refugee-induced or spontaneous returns. Return, in both the forms, is motivated by several factors which are both positive and negative. The decision to repatriate is a rational one; made after consideration of several aspects including personal aspirations, capabilities, economic prosperity and social needs. Refugees who do not integrate in the country of asylum and who are vulnerable and dependent are more likely to undergo repatriation, as was observed in the case of Greek-Cypriot refugees (Zetter, 1994). Refugees returning from the country of asylum may face challenges for reintegration in their country of origin owing to several factors. The ones, especially the young adults, spending a major part of their lives in the foreign country may find it hard adjusting to the living conditions in their home country. Besides, they may also face difficulties in acquiring (or retaining) jobs, following their return, because of the language barrier in the working environment (Arowolo, 2000).

This research aims to study the phenomenon of acculturation in the Afghan refugee community residing in Pakistan and, in that light, explore the opportunities or challenges it poses for their repatriation – which is the strategy the tripartite commission (Pakistan, Afghanistan and UNHCR) are working for. Narrative inquiry is employed for the purpose, which is elaborated on in the following chapter.

3 METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes in detail the methodology used to learn about the lives of the Afghan refugees living in Pakistan; which consequently led the researcher to find answers to the research questions already mentioned in chapter 1. Using a qualitative approach, this research is based on the study of narratives, which is referred to as narratology. Narrative is both – a phenomenon and a method (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). By means of the narrative inquiry, the data was collected through narrative interviews (in the form of unstructured interviews) and was analysed using the thematic narrative analysis. Incorporating the element of narration and narratives in all the phases of this research makes this study a narrative inquiry in its true spirit. The specifics of how this was done and the rationale behind those choices and decisions, beginning from the selection of the qualitative research approach to the particular form of analysis, are much expounded in this chapter.

A qualitative research was carried out to understand the process of acculturation the refugees have been experiencing during their protracted stay in Pakistan and to understand if this has some impact (in the form of facilitation or hindrance) on the prospects of their repatriation and its durability. The qualitative approach, being inductive and interpretative in nature, allows the researcher to explore the relatively untapped phenomenon; it may be the case that the phenomenon, otherwise studied extensively, has remained untouched in a particular context or group of people (Morse, 1991) – as is true for the Afghan refugees living in Pakistan. By offering a deeper understanding of the perspectives of individuals or groups and the meanings they assign to a (research) problem (Merriam, 2002), the qualitative nature of the study not only offers the researcher a flexibility in the approach but also is efficient for dealing with the complexity of the problem (Creswell, 2014).

Moreover, the drivers of a qualitative research are the participants of the research, and not the researcher; therefore, importance is given to what the participants of the research deem significant and not otherwise (Bryman, 2012). Hence, the researcher is always open to learn from the participants of the research (Creswell, 2014). The close

contact between the researcher and the respondents (Afghan refugees in this case), which is a characteristic of the qualitative approach (Bryman, 2012), facilitated the investigator of this study in comprehending and presenting the viewpoints of the refugees in a better way; by interacting with them in their natural settings. Furthermore, the flexibility and the relative unstructuredness of the qualitative approach enabled the researcher to adapt the research methods as per the requirements of the situations. It also aided the researcher to gain a contextual understanding of the problem being studied. Towards the end of the chapter, it highlights the strengths of this research while also tending to the factors that serve as limitations of this study.

3.1 Research Design: Narrative Inquiry

The research design, also referred to as the strategies of inquiry (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011), guides the researcher in the selection of appropriate research methods to be used in the study. The narrative potential of the research topic led the researcher towards selecting the narrative inquiry as the research design in this case (Earthy & Cronin, 2008). Narrative inquiry is particularly used to study the lives and experiences of the individuals of concern; by attempting to unravel the stories of their lives (Riessman, 2008) which are then reiterated by the researcher in the form of a narrative (Creswell, 2014). Such an approach renders the individuals as storytellers who lead storied lives (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). Through narratives, individuals make sense of what is happening around them (Daiute, 2014). The narrative, nonetheless, should not be considered as an objective recall of what happened in the past, but it also incorporates the reflection of the narrator over the past experience; it simultaneously deals with two time dimensions – then and now (Conle, 2001). Therefore, it may be argued that a narrative is the (re)presentation or interpretation of the past rather than the past (Etherington, 2013). What makes a narrative, narrative is the "sequence and consequence" (Riessman, 2005a). Hence, a narrative may be understood as the relation of different events with each other (Wiles, Rosenberg, & Kearns, 2005).

The narrative inquiry is concerned more with the experiences of the individuals instead of the general descriptions (Riessman, 2006b); it stands by the belief that there is no single truth but multiple interpretations and perspectives and also argues that the social context influences the identity and image of an individual and the roles he/she attains in the society (Earthy & Cronin, 2008; Fehér, 2011; Rosenwald & Ochberg, 1992). Thus, narrative inquiry, as a research design, was found suitable by the researcher for this study. It helped her gain a deeper insight into the matter by listening to the stories of the refugees living in Pakistan for decades and getting to learn about their experiences as a refugee in this country. The narrative research is also focussed to give voices to the ones less heard (Daiute, 2014) as can be argued for the refugee community residing in Pakistan. Furthermore, the narrative inquiry turned out to be useful in order to study the different views and perceptions of the refugees living in different socio-cultural contexts.

3.2 Sampling Strategy: Maximum Variation Sampling

The individuals of concern for this research were the Afghan refugees residing in Pakistan. from this population, the participants for this study were selected using the purposive sampling technique; they were selected cautiously and deliberately based on who can provide information of particular relevance to the research questions (Maxwell, 2013). More specifically, maximum variation sampling was used which incorporates both extreme and typical case sampling (Palys, 2008). It ensures a wide range in terms of dimensions of interest (Bryman, 2012). A typical case, for this research, was any of the Afghan refugees living in Pakistan, while the extreme cases were conceptualised based on several criteria including the area of residence (inside/outside the refugee village), gender (male/female), generational status (those who themselves undertook the voyage to Pakistan /the ones born in Pakistan), and the dominant culture of the province they reside in (Pashtun/Punjabi).

The researcher interviewed twenty-six refugees from Islamabad/Rawalpindi (two), Mianwali (twelve), Nowshera (six), and Peshawar (six) from March 27 to April 30, 2019. The respondents of this study included fourteen males and twelve female

members who ranged from late teens to late seventies in age and the duration of their stay in Pakistan varied from 20 to 40 years (for the ones who themselves undertook migration from Afghanistan). Three refugee villages, established by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Pakistan, were purposefully selected for this research. These villages included the one in Akora Khattak (Nowshera), the Kot Chandana village in Mianwali, and the Kababian village in Peshawar. The two villages, Akora Khattak and Kababian, are situated in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) province of which the majority population is Pashtun. These two villages were selected from the 43 refugee villages in KP considering the factor of proximity and accessibility. Contrarily, the Kot Chandana refugee village is the only one situated in Punjab and was selected to ensure maximum variation in the participants. In case of the Akora Khattak and Kot Chandana villages, the contact was established through a local resident of the area, while for the Kababian village in Peshawar, the contact was established through UNHCR Pakistan. seven, out of the twenty-six, participants of this research resided outside these refugee villages; the two from Islamabad/Rawalpindi, one from Peshawar, and two from Mianwali and Nowshera each.

3.3 Tools and Instruments: Unstructured Narrative Interviews

Keeping in view the purpose and nature of the research project, the researcher employed narrative interviewing for data collection. The narrative interview is focussed less on getting facts from the interviewee and more on the perspectives the person holds regarding his/her life (Miller, 2000). A narrative interview allows the respondents to reconstruct their past and project/predict their future through their words; they will remember and tell their version of reality and what is important to them. Therefore, a narrative is based on “representations and interpretations of the world” (Muylaert et al., 2014). Such an interviewing technique lets the respondents to be in control of the direction, content and pace of the interview (Anderson & Kirkpatrick, 2016).

In-depth or unstructured interviewing technique, also referred to as intensive interviewing by Lofland & Lofland (1995), was used to realise the narrative interviewing

method. Unlike semi structured interviews, while conducting unstructured interviews, the interviewer does not have a formulated set of questions, rather only has a list of topics or issues to be discussed; known as aid-memoire or the interview guide (Bryman, 2012). The aid-memoire for this research included topics like customs and traditions, interaction with the locals, prejudice or discrimination experienced, sense of belongingness, inclination towards repatriation, etc. Unstructured interviewing, in its form, is very much similar to a conversation (Burgess, 1984). Such an interviewing technique is more flexible in nature and allows the researcher to see through the eyes of the respondents (Bryman, 2012), and this allows the researcher to expand the scope of the interview from what was included in the interview guide to the issues and topics the interviewee highlights (Heuson, 2006).

The interview, for this research, began with a simple – yet comprehensive – question inviting the story of the life of the individual as a refugee living in Pakistan; this set the foundation for the conversation which was grounded in the follow up questions arising from the initial narrative. Following this narrative part of the interview, some more questions were asked based on the topics included in the aid-memoire that had not been covered in the conversational interview (James, 2017; Muyleart et al., 2014; Rosenthal, 2004; Scârneci-Domnișoru, 2013; Wengraf, 2001). This strategy not only helped in bringing comfort to the conversations being carried out but also helped the researcher to dig deeper into certain aspects which are considered relatively more sensitive like that of securitisation of the refugees. During these conversations, the researcher tried to give maximum time to the respondents so they may dwell on the matters important to them in as much detail as they wish.

3.4 Data Collection and Organisation

Going through the aforementioned process, the data was collected through the narrative-based unstructured interviewing. All interviews were carried out face-to-face by the researcher herself at places convenient for the participants; these included their homes as well as their work places. Except for one female respondent, all females were

interviewed at their homes, while most of the male respondents were interviewed at their places of work. This also enabled the researcher to make field notes, in an unstructured form, regarding the natural environment of the participants. These field notes incorporated both forms of observations; descriptive and reflective (Creswell, 2014).

The (apparent) universal ethic of getting the informed consent form signed by the participant of the research was not observed in this study; an attempt was made to put the "ethics in context" while conducting this research (Riessman, 2005b). thus, oral consent to participate in the research was obtained from each respondent before conducting the interview. The preferable language for interviewing was Urdu in the cases it was a common language between the researcher and the respondents, but a significant number of interviews were carried out in Pashto considering the unfamiliarity of the respondents with Urdu. The two interviews from the refugees residing in Rawalpindi/Islamabad were conducted in Urdu and so were the ones from Mianwali (excluding three women who were interviewed in Pashto); while all the rest except for one in Peshawar) were in Pashto and were facilitated by an interpreter. All the interviews were audio recorded (other than the one for which the respondent did not allow the researcher to record the audio) to guarantee accuracy in transcription.

To make sure that no information has been lost or misunderstood during the simultaneous interpretation being carried out in the interviews, the services of another (neutral) person (fluent in Pashto and Urdu both) were employed who listened to the audio recordings to point out any discrepancies in the interpretation of the interview content (Squires, 2009). The researcher then translated these interviews into English that is the language in which the research was to be presented. Thus, the translation was carried out at two levels for the interviews conducted in Pashto (Pashto → Urdu → English) and at a single level for the ones in Urdu (Urdu → English). Halai (2007) has defined translation as "converting ideas expressed in one language for one social group to another language of another social group". Going through this process, transcriptions of the (translated) interviews were generated, which provided details and specificity of the interviews (Riessman, 2005b). though the transcriptions convey the same essence as the original interviews (conducted in a different language), the words have changed in the

process (Halai, 2007). A pseudonym was assigned to each participant to ensure anonymity. Thus, the field text was converted into the research text after undergoing the phase of interim text (Clandinin & Connelley, 2000; Halai, 2007). During the field work, the researcher also got the opportunity to converse with some locals, an Afghan national who was a guest in one of the refugees' homes, and the UNHCR officials, which helped her in developing a deeper understanding of the research inquiry.

3.4.1 Special Considerations During Data Collection

In view of the cross cultural nature of the research, certain considerations were particularly important for this study. The language was one of the most important ones as an implicit assumption in a cross cultural research is that it would also be cross language. For this, the services of multiple interpreters were employed. The interpreter was different for each city; every time the individual was someone from the same locality, so that the issues of varying dialects in the same language (Pashto) may be overcome. Cultural aspects were also not ignored. Each interview with a female respondent was facilitated by a female interpreter. However, in Mianwali, where the researcher was accompanied by a male interpreter only, some family member (who understood Urdu and Pashto both) of the (female) respondent was requested to facilitate the interviewing process.

Another issue faced by the researcher in most of the interviews was that of trust and confidence building with the (potential) respondents. Some of the respondents doubted the identity (affiliation) of the researcher. A probable reason for this may be the time period in which the interviews were conducted; the deadline for the stay of Afghan refugees in Pakistan was due to end in a couple of months. As a strategy to gain trust of the interviewees, the researcher did not ask their names (the researcher is aware of the names of only those respondents who revealed them voluntarily). Approaching the refugees when being accompanied by a local person (interpreter) also facilitated in creating a relatively comfortable environment for the interaction between the researcher and the participant. This also proved beneficial for overcoming reluctance on the part of

the participants and sharing their experiences in a less hesitant manner. However, conducting the interviews with the interpreter was comparatively challenging as the researcher had to remain engaged and attentive even when the language of conversation was the one unknown to her; the purpose was to not let the respondent think that the researcher has lost interest in what is being told and that he/she should cut down the responses.

3.5 Data Processing and Analysis: Thematic Narrative Analysis

Not all the interviews conducted could be subjected to data processing and analysis owing to several reasons. First, the interview which was not audio recorded (however notes were taken during the interview) was not included in this phase; Scârneci-Domnişoru (2013) considers such a narrative interview as a lost interview. Second, not all the interviewees provided with a narrative or the story or experience of their lives in their interview; not all the individuals like to talk or share their experiences resulting in a failed narrative interview (Scârneci-Domnişoru, 2013). Thus, they were also not included in this phase (see e.g., Sahito & Vaisanen, 2018). Third, because of the depth, which is the characteristic of the narrative inquiry, not many narratives could be included in this dissertation – on account of the limited space. This led to a further reduction in the number of interviews to be subjected to the analysis phase. Therefore, the researcher could not incorporate more than nine interviews in this research. The density and richness of the data gathered raised a further need to select which data to include even from those nine interviews (Creswell, 2014).

The data was processed using the approach of narrative analysis. People generally perceive their lives in the process where a sequence of events is deemed important. Narrative analysis, focussing on either the entire life span or on particular episodes from it (Riessman, 2008), allows the researcher to focus on "how do people make sense of what happened and to what effect?" instead of focussing on "what actually happened?". Such an approach renders the respondents as storytellers and is sensitive to the sense of temporal sequence perceived by them (Bryman, 2012). While conducting the narrative

analysis, the researcher organises, connects, and evaluates the events described by the respondent as a narrative (Riessman, 2006a). Owing to the variation in data collection and analysis, the term narrative analysis does not convey any single meaning; it may refer to biography, auto-biography, oral history, life story, auto-ethnography, etc. (Earthy & Cronin, 2008). Riessman (2008) refers to narrative analysis as the "systematic study of the narrative data" (p. 6) which can take the verbal as well as the non-verbal form (Daiute, 2014).

Considering the various forms in which the data may be collected (interviews, observations, and audio visual information) and the different approaches for analysing this data, narrative analysis may be performed in four ways; thematic, structural, dialogic or interactional, and performative. In the thematic narrative analysis, the focus is more on the content i.e. what is said instead of how and why it is said. Such an approach is helpful in identifying themes across a number of narratives under consideration. In contrast to this form of narrative analysis, the structural analysis also incorporates how the story is told i.e. the process of telling in addition to what is told. The dialogic analysis deals with the interactions and how the narrative is co-constructed through the interaction between the inquirer and the narrator, while the performative analysis regards the narrator as a performer and the entire performance of doing the narration is analysed (Riessman, 2005a; Riessman, 2008). This research employed the thematic narrative form of analysis – which avoids data fragmentation (Bryman, 2012) by keeping the responses of a participant intact (Riessman, 2008). Such an analysis builds upon the actual words of the narrator as told to the researcher (Etherington, 2013). For this research, it was based on extended accounts of the interviewees – Afghan refugees in this case – which concerned the themes under consideration (details of which also follow in the succeeding part). Detailed excerpts from the interview transcriptions are presented to provide the readers with the narrative of the respondent. These extracts were cleaned up from superfluous and irrelevant information to avoid losing focus from the research inquiry, and are presented in the subsequent part of the dissertation.

3.6 Limitations of the Research

The focus of the narrative inquiry is not truth but how it is reflected upon; the same respondents interviewed at some other time may reveal different information depending upon how the context, time, and place of the interview influence their interpretations of the past event and how they recollect it in front of the interviewer. Also, because of the time constraints, each participant was interviewed only once, and no follow up interviews were arranged with them, which can prove to be significant in adding details to the narratives presented. Also, the unfamiliarity of the researcher with Pashto, which served as the language of communication for a significant number of the participants, generated the need of interpreter in this research. This resulted in certain limitations of this research which are discussed in detail in the methodology section. Though maximum attempts were made to keep the translation objective, the translation essentially involves interpretation on the part of the translator and can never be completely neutral (Wong & Poon, 2010).

The issues of trust over the identity of the researcher have also been previously mentioned, which posed challenges in getting detailed information from the respondents – the Afghan refugees in this case. Though not exactly a limitation of the research design, the narrative inquiry does not attempt to generalise the experiences of a small number of individuals over the larger population, but it certainly helps the researcher to come up with the possibility of similar human attitude and behaviour in cases of comparable contexts and experiences. Thus, the findings of this research, though not applicable for all Afghan refugees residing in Pakistan, are a mere reflection of how the refugees perceive and reflect upon their lives during their stay in Pakistan. furthermore, though the research tried to ensure participation of refugees from different areas, the ones from the Balochistan province could not be included, which is the province hosting the second largest population of refugees after Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Despite these limitations, the significance and credibility of this research cannot be undermined.

3.7 Quality Assessment

Riessman (2008) regards the validity of any narrative research in its ability to empower participants and inform future research. The narrative inquiry does not aim to discover the objective truth concealed somewhere, and going beyond generalizability, it is based on "authenticity" which can be realised through honesty and truthfulness on the part of the participants as well as the researcher (O'dea, 1994). Smith and Deemer (2000) have argued that the criteria of judging the quality of any research are completely relative to that research. The succeeding list is important when assessing the quality and trustworthiness of this research.

3.7.1 Contextual Ethics

This research did not attempt to export ethics from one socio-cultural context – without modifications –to another (Riessman, 2005b). Instead of following or abiding by the universalism of ethics, this research highly contextualised the ethics and took the approach which the researcher deemed appropriate in the settings under consideration. This included taking oral consent from the participants of the research instead of the written consent, and using multiple interpreters (male for male respondents and female for female respondents) in the cross-language interviews. Also, services of different interpreters were employed for different localities in order to facilitate the process of building trust between the researcher and the respondents and to provide a relatively comfortable environment to the participants because of the presence of someone known (or stranger) to them.

3.7.2 Participant Understanding

Since the research is of cross-cultural nature, it was important to understand the sensitivities associated with it. As explained earlier, the cultural sensitivities were well taken care of. Since most of the Afghan women interviewed were more comfortable in their own homes, the same was the site of their interviews. Only female interpreter accompanied the researcher when going inside the homes and every possible effort was made to keep the respondents in their comfort zones. This all helped ensure a smooth interviewing process.

3.7.3 Triangulation

Triangulation, exercised in multiple forms, adds credibility to this research (Flick, 2006). First, the methodological triangulation is realised by using multiple methods for data collection, i.e. interviews and observations. Second, the triangulation of theories is achieved by using multiple theories to understand the identity dynamics of the Afghan refugees residing in Pakistan and their subsequent influence on strategies and approaches towards acculturation and repatriation.

Peer debriefing, also known as analytic triangulation, was also used to add to the credibility of this research (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2008; Nguyin, 2008). An objective peer, experienced in the process of qualitative research, reviewed the study at each phase of the research while giving the investigator the opportunity to defend the decision-making. The feedback of the peer was important in highlighting new insights in this study. This not only helped the researcher in keeping her bias out of the research but also motivated her to dig deeper into the data gathered. Peer debriefing, in addition to pointing out and resolving any discrepancies in the research methods employed, aided the researcher in improving the trustworthiness of the study and dealing effectively with the ethical concerns encountered in the research.

3.7.4 Rich Rigour

Rich rigour was ensured in this study by establishing its foundations on the literature present on the process of acculturation studied theoretically as well as in different cases, in addition to the scholarly work on repatriation and the factors influencing the decision of repatriation. Studying acculturation and repatriation through the lens of identity has added further rigour to this study. Conducting a larger number of interviews and then selecting the ones well-suited for the research design also contributed to the rigour of this research.

3.7.5 Transparency

Each decision taken for this research, at any phase, is described comprehensively which not only provides the readers/listeners with the details of how the step was carried out but also explains the rationale behind that choice.

3.7.6 Unique Methodology

Using narrative inquiry as the research design, this study presents the narratives of some refugees originating from Afghanistan. Not being heard very often, the narrative inquiry lets the researcher to project the voices of the individuals living a refugee life while not presenting them through another person's perspective. This research, by incorporating the narratives of the refugees, enables the readers/listeners to have the exact knowledge of what information was communicated to the researcher by the respondent related to the research topic. This not only provides rich descriptions but also adds to the credibility of the research carried out.

4 THE NARRATIVES OF THE REFUGEES

This chapter presents nine narratives of Afghan refugees, out of the twenty-six, interviewed for this research. Intending to ensure diversity and variation in the interviews chosen for this phase of the research, these nine refugees include five males and four female respondents. Out of these nine, five reside in the refugee villages (two in Punjab and three in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa) while the remaining four live outside the refugee villages established by the Office for the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (comprising of three from Punjab and one from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa). Five narratives from the total nine are of the ones who themselves took refuge to Pakistan (including the individual who was a child at the time of refuge) while four are of those refugees who were born in Pakistan. The narratives cover multiple phases and facets of the lives of the refugees, in order to understand their experience while living in Pakistan and how it influences their choice for repatriation.

In order to dig deeper into the identity dynamics of the Afghan refugees living in Pakistan, the cultural and social similarities and variations between the home and the host region, and how they were dealt with, are discussed in these narratives; in addition to focussing on the bureaucratic identity imposed on them in the form of the "refugee" label as a legal status. The first narrative, that of Hesther – a resident of the refugee village in Peshawar, includes her recollections of her migration experience. It also incorporates her reflections on the norms and traditions of the two regions she has resided in. the experiences during her stay in Pakistan have, however, not led her to taking any definite approach towards or against repatriation.

4.1 Hesther's Narrative

Hesther, of around 60 years in age, is a resident of the Kababian refugee village situated at the Warsak Road in Peshawar. She herself undertook migration and has been living, along with her husband and children (three daughters and two sons), in this refugee village which, unlike the others that exist in the form of a unit, comprises of

clusters of Afghan refugee population interjected by the local inhabitants. Hesther, while not indulging into much detail, tells the reason of coming to Pakistan and how this journey was undertaken.

> When the Russians invaded (Afghanistan), (there was a rumour that) they are forcefully taking the young people, boys and girls alike, with them so they may participate in the fighting. Because of this, we ran away from that area; to escape such a situation. [...] It was soon after I got married. [...] My family as well as my husband's family left the area.
>
> We undertook our journey (to Pakistan) making our way through the mountains – using camels. Our feet got swollen because of (the hardships of) the travel. We came empty-handed; we did not bring anything along with us.

Though Hesther has been living in Peshawar division ever since she migrated to Pakistan, the Kababian refugee village was not the first place where she arrived. She lived at a couple of other places too before she came to reside here.

> We came here (to Peshawar) since Peshawar is close to Afghanistan. And also, there were camps (refugee villages) established in Peshawar which were not there in many other cities. [...] We first lived in the Bakhshi Pull and then near the Shabqadar Dheray – both the places are in (or close to) Peshawar. We have been living in camps (refugee villages) for ever. There too we lived in camps, and now we are living here (in Kababian).
>
> When we were in Bakhshi Pull, we were told that we would be able to get ration at the other place, and so we moved there where we were given the ration cards. The ration cards lasted for three to four years. After that, the camp was closed and the process (of ration distribution) came to a halt. (Following these events,) we came here (to the Kababian refugee village).

Hesther finds little to no difference between the lifestyle she observed in Afghanistan and what she exercises in Pakistan.

> There has come no difference in the lifestyle of ours while living here; what we did there, we do the same here. We do not have furniture in our home, just as we did not have it when we lived in Afghanistan. The only modification that has come is that the younger girls, unlike the women in Afghanistan who wear frocks (Firaq Partug), dress like the women here (in Peshawar) do. But when they go to Afghanistan, they follow the Afghan clothing then.

Whatever Hesther and her family members have learned about their hosting community, which they may also have adopted (like the language), is all through interactions; they do not consume any form of media content.

> Our tribe is Shaari and so is our native language. But we all know Pashto too. We acquired it while living here. The children, the younger ones, also know Urdu; they have learned it from school. [...] We do not have radio or television in our home. Our men do not like it, but some of our neighbours have it.

Though Hesther lives in an Afghan settlement, she is not into celebrating the festivals, like Nowruz, that are particular to Afghanistan. But she tends to arrange her family festivities in the cultural style that was observed in Afghanistan.

> There, in Afghanistan, they do celebrate Nowruz. We have our relatives in Afghanistan too, so when my children visited them during that time, they celebrated Nowruz with them. But we do not have any festivities for the occasion here (in Pakistan).
>
> [...] The usual practice is that we (the women) apply Hina when there is some function, like wedding etc. when a child is born to a family, it is also celebrated in the same manner as a marriage ceremony. We also celebrated the birth of a child to our family some time before to the extent we could, though not in exactly the same manner. We invited everyone to our place and had the meal together.

To strengthen her argument of retaining the Afghan culture, Hesther also expounds on some particular traditions regarding arranging marriage ceremonies, which she continues to observe even at the present.

> We (still) abide by the same customs and traditions that we used to follow in Afghanistan. For instance, it is in our culture to take money when marrying our daughter(s), though the amount varies. There, too, we used to take money from the groom which is then invested on the bride. Dowry for the bride is also made from the same money that the groom's family gives. Recently, I married my daughter; I took two lac rupees (from the groom's family). I did not keep a single rupee for myself, and from the same amount, I also got a *tola* of gold for her.

She, however, also mentions of certain variations that have come in cuisine and also the practice of having collective meals (eating together).

> We (Afghans) generally do not use chillies and spices at all; we only use onions, garlics, etc. but, while living here, we have started adding spices to our food. However, when some guest comes (to our place) from Afghanistan, we cook food for them without adding spices to it.
>
> [...] There we also used dairy products more; we used to make yogurt and churned curd (lassi), and (from that) ghee and karhi too, but we do not have that much (resources) here. [...] Here, we have to buy everything, even the vegetables. There, we had the land, and so, we grew everything for us ourselves.

> [...] In Afghanistan, the family members not only eat together but they all also eat the same regardless of someone likes it (the food) or not. But while we are living here (in Peshawar), if someone does not want to eat what is cooked, he/she gets something else to eat from the market, since the market is nearby.

Despite residing in a refugee village that is in the form of clusters – enabling the inhabitants to be in close neighbourhood of the local population in addition to the Afghan people they live with, Hesther has a limited interaction with the local residents.

> We interact with all (Afghans); the ones of our tribe as well as the others. My son and daughter are still at a home in the neighbours; one of their family members died last night. [...] One of my daughters and a grand-daughter also go to a madrassa. [...] My Daughters also go to the homes of my son's friends – the Pakistani ones.
>
> [...] We (however) do not have much interaction with the other (local) people around (in the neighbours), except for one family which lives close by; it is a Pakistani family. I also attended the wedding ceremony of their daughter. I then invited them too when my own daughter was getting married, and they came to attend the ceremony; though they left early as they were committed elsewhere.

Hesther quite emphatically and repeatedly mentions of not experiencing any prejudice or discrimination, during her interactions, at the hands of the public. She, however, also gives a counterargument and validates it by narrating an incident when members of a private organisation visited her home and were even dubious of the intentions with which she offered them food.

> We experience nothing like this (discrimination); everyone exhibits a good behaviour towards us. [...] The ones who are (family) friends with us, whose houses we visit and those who come to ours, they are fine with us. But those who do not know us, the ones whose houses we do not visit and they also do not come to ours, they do differentiate.
>
> [...] One day, some people, from a (private) organisation, came here (to the refugee village). We offered them lunch, but they refused to have it. They doubted that we would have put something (poisonous) in the food. We even said that we can eat before you do, and we did too. Despite that, they did not have the lunch. [...] They revisited us some time later, and asked those individuals to come forward who ate the food when they came the last time. Seeing us all alive, they consented on having the lunch then.

While living in Pakistan as a refugee, Hesther has not paid frequent visits to Afghanistan; the only times she has been to Afghanistan were when she went for the

burial of her family members – which also shows her (family's) attachment with the land of Afghanistan.

> My children have their grandparents in Afghanistan; they used to visit them there. But now the movement across the border is (much) controlled, consequently their visits have also stopped. [...] I (myself) have only gone twice to Afghanistan (post migration). [...] All my children were born here (in Pakistan). [...] All my sons are married – married to Afghan girls – but they all were married in Pakistan. [...] Both the times, when I went to Afghanistan, were when we were taking a dead body along; the first time was my son's and the second time my grandson's.

Nevertheless, Hesther does not take any clear stance on whether she wants to return to Afghanistan or not. While depicting an inclination towards staying in Pakistan, she simultaneously exhibits fatalist notions.

> It has been 40 years that we are living here in Pakistan; we are happy here. [...] The men (of our family) say that they do not want to return. They have their livelihood here; what they would do there.
>
> [...] Though, in Pakistan too, there is much poverty, it is still better in comparison to Afghanistan. There is no employment (opportunity) in Afghanistan, but here we can still find some work to earn our living. [...] My daughter, however, wants to repatriate and live among our own people there. [...] But our livelihood, for the time, is written at this place, and so we are here. When it will be written for Afghanistan, we shall return then.

Unlike Hesther, Najeeb – a refugee who himself undertook migration and currently resides in Akora Khattak – is quite certain of his desires and intentions concerning repatriation. He does not want to return to Afghanistan, for which one of the primary reasons, in addition to being assimilated in the Pashtun community of the locality, is his business. This is quite evident from the narrative he presents.

4.2 Najeeb's Narrative

Najeeb is an Afghan refugee (in his mid-50s) who resides, with his family, in the town of Akora Khattak in the Jehangira tehsil of district Nowshera. He was in his early teenage when he undertook the journey from Kabul, Afghanistan, to Pakistan.

> I migrated here, to Pakistan, with my family towards the end of (19)70s or the start of 80s when the war started and the situation there worsened. [...] I was 13 or 14 years old then and was accompanied by my parents and siblings. [...] I was young (then) and did not understand things; I was not in that phase of life then. But since we are here for years now and we have spent our lives with the people in this place, it is all fine now.

Najeeb found it hard to settle in Pakistan in the early days, but the later circumstances proved to be in his favour.

> In the beginning, we did not have a very good life because we were refugees here and could not understand what was happening. But now we have settled here. And I have the business set up here too. So now everything is going well.

His involvement in the cloth business is what encouraged him to continue living in Nowshera even after the closure of the Jalozai refugee village where he initially lived.

> We first lived in the Jalozai camp. [...] We lived there for about 10 to 12 years. [...] But then that camp was closed. So, following the closure of that camp, we came here (to Akora Khattak). [...] It has been almost thirty years now that I am here. [...] That camp was close by, and I could work here (in Nowshera) while living there. But I could not leave my business when that camp was closed; consequently, I chose to live at this place (in Akora Khattak).

Because of his business, Najeeb has developed relationships with many Pakistanis – locals as well as those from other cities.

> I have the wholesale business; I supply cloth to different shopkeepers in different cities including Lahore, Faisalabad, etc. [...] I have my business with both Pakistanis and Afghans. [...] Though there are Afghan refugees in this market – not many of them, the business outside this market is all with the Pakistanis. [...] I have faced (financial) loss in this business too; for instance, one person from Lahore ran away with 17 to 18 lac rupees of mine, but otherwise it is all fine.

His work has also contributed to his decision of not to repatriate even when his brother did repatriate to Afghanistan.

> I have my business set up here; I cannot once again leave everything behind. [...] Many people have gotten cloth from me on debit, and I have done the same too. It is a relation of trust that we have with each other. So it is not just the business but that relationship of trust that we have to keep. (If I would have repatriated,) we all would have faced a financial loss.

After he first migrated to Pakistan, Najeeb has not paid frequent visits to Afghanistan even though his brother still lives there.

> My mother has died, but my brother still lives in Afghanistan. I only go to Afghanistan in case of any need, otherwise not. On the border, they ask for passport, so I tend not to go – never – unless it is very important.

Keeping this in view, Najeeb got married in Pakistan despite his wife being an Afghan.

> My wife is an Afghan and belongs to my own tribe. She also came here as a refugee. We got married here (in Pakistan). [...] All my children are born here and are being brought up here.

Najeeb is not the only one in his extended family who lives in Pakistan; his relatives also live in Pakistan at different places. He, however, wishes to have his own house, which is not permissible as per the law of Pakistan.

> They (the relatives) reside in different areas; some live in camps and some in settled areas. Most of them live in rented houses. I myself live in a rented house. If we get permission, we would purchase land here and build our own house, since we have our business here and I want to spend the rest of my life here.

He, with his family, lives on his own, i.e. among the local population– outside the refugee village established by the UNHCR in Akora Khattak. His place of residence, however, is in close proximity to the (refugee) village. While living in the local community, Najeeb and his family maintain a usual interaction with the neighbours.

> We know all about this place and the people here. [...] We work in the market, so when there is a holiday in the market as announced by the government, it is also our holiday. [...] They (the children) interact with the neighbours and visit their homes. [...] We share our sorrows and festivities (with the locals). [...] We celebrate Eid when the local community does and not with the refugees residing in the refugee village who celebrate it with Afghanistan. [...] We invite our neighbours and the ones living in the locality (to our place) when there is some specific occasion, and they also do so.

Najeeb mentions of not experiencing any sort of discrimination because of him being an Afghan or a refugee. A probable reason for this is his exposure (or interaction) which is limited to the Pashtun dominant region, as he, in addition to being an Afghan, is also a Pashtun.

> I have never stayed or visited any place other than this (Nowshera); I only have lived in the Pashtun region. [...] There is nothing of this sort (discrimination for being a refugee from Afghanistan). The people here have kept good relations with us.

He demonstrates a rather sense of contentment when comparing his life in Nowshera with what he remembers of the life in Kabul.

> I am from the main city of Kabul. It was mostly inhabited by the businessmen who had their businesses established there. But when the peace situation there worsened, we were no longer able to perform our routine activities. While living here, I am satisfied and happy that we are free to do whatever we want to do, like offering prayers. The children are also able to get their education with ease. The life is better here.

Exhibiting little knowledge or interest in the Afghan culture, Najeeb presents himself as a practitioner of the (greater) Pashtun culture of his hosting community, which is somewhat similar to that of his place of origin, but he does not elaborate much on this aspect.

> When the war started there, the culture of the region was completely destroyed. From the time we left (Afghanistan) till now, fight is continuing there. [...] We left (that) culture and (those) norms and traditions there, and we have transformed ourselves as per the customs of this region. [...] In Afghanistan, they used to celebrate Nowruz, but now we are here so I do not know if they still do so or not, but we do not. [...] However, the customs in our area were almost the same as are practiced here in this region of the Pashtuns. [...] We are living here for years, and these same are the customs and traditions that we follow and practice.

Instead of identifying himself with Pakistan or Afghanistan, Najeeb identifies himself with the Pashtuns – a superordinate identity (however, he is not perceived as such in Afghanistan). A weak emotional attachment with Afghanistan and no documented relationship with Pakistan play a role in him associating himself with the Pashtun identity and not in terms of the membership conceptualized through borders.

> I do not have any relation with Afghanistan as such, but the thing is that we are from Afghanistan. This is the only relation I have; there is no other connection of mine (with Afghanistan). We cannot escape from the label of Afghan refugees associated with us. Also, we get the passport etc. from Afghanistan. We will be happy if we get nationality (of Pakistan) because there is no peace in Afghanistan. [...] We are all Pathans, and everyone (here) calls us Pathans. But if we go to Afghanistan, they call us Pakistanis.

Najeeb does not feel like repatriating to Afghanistan, neither now nor at any time in the future. He wishes to be naturalized in Pakistan, for which he offers several rationales.

> I do not have my heart in repatriation. If we are naturalized here and get nationality (of Pakistan), then why we would want to go there. The circumstances are not good there. [...] I would prefer to live in Pakistan rather than going back to Afghanistan.
>
> I also have my business here, so how I can go. Many Pakistanis come to me and buy cloth from me. How I can think of leaving this all. People trust me and give me material on debit. So, there is this relation of trust among us. If I go from here, those to whom I am to pay, they will drown, and so shall I; which will also ruin my hereafter.

In addition to this, his children also serve as a reason for his decision of continuing to live in Pakistan and not returning to Afghanistan. Furthermore, the peace situation in Afghanistan complements all the other justifications for this decision-making.

> They (my children) do not know about what was commonly known in Afghanistan. They are born here; they are being raised up here. [...] They are also studying here; in a Pakistani school, a private one.
>
> [...] We are happy here and prosperous too. We do not want to return. [...] (In Afghanistan,) there is no peace nor there any prospect for peace. Anyone, who lives (in Pakistan) in camps or outside, what he/she would do there in such circumstances; what I shall do if I go there (to Afghanistan).

Complementing the views of Najeeb regarding repatriation, a refugee from Islamabad, Jansher, also wishes to acquire citizenship of Pakistan. Being born to refugee parents in Pakistan and spending his entire life here has greatly contributed to his inclination towards Pakistan despite the police harassments and prejudice he experiences. This is revealed in the narrative that follows.

4.3 Jansher's Narrative

Being a resident of Islamabad, Jansher was born in this same city and is now of 37 years of age. His own family (wife and children) as well as his siblings all live in

Pakistan. Talking about the migration of his family and getting to know of him being a refugee, he narrates,

> My parents were the ones who migrated. When the circumstances got bad there (in Afghanistan), they came here (to Pakistan). It was Zia-ul-Haq's time then. [...] I do not know when that time was. My mother says that it was then when they came here. Pakistan gave us refuge. We have been here since then and have not returned after that. However, from the time we grew a little older, we have been visiting Afghanistan.
>
> [...] When you grow up, you come to know about things; everyone does. [...] When we grew up, we realised we are refugees and that we are Afghans. Everyone finds out his nation one day; that I am Pakistani or Afghan or whatever. And that is why, as a proof, we got this Afghan refugee card (Proof of Registration).

However, Jansher regards the links between Pakistan and Afghanistan as strong especially when considering their close proximity to each other, which allows their citizens to travel from one country to the other with relative ease.

> Afghanistan and Pakistan are (just) the same. They are neighbours; there is not much distance. [...] The travel time is only around five hours from here. You go to Peshawar and just across it is Afghanistan. [...] What significance the four to five hours travel has. Many Afghans who live there, they went to Afghanistan after living here (in Pakistan); so they have also seen Pakistan.

Jansher has, from the start, been living in Islamabad (Rawalpindi) despite facing challenges in finding a permanent residing place for himself and his family. He currently lives in a suburban settlement along with his relatives and other local people.

> When we were young, we used to live somewhere else. But then, we had to move. That place was owned by the (local) people; why would someone leave his/her land. You kick us out of one place, we go to the other; kick us out from the next, we move to another. In the meantime, we moved (from Islamabad) to Rawalpindi too. [...] And now we again live in Islamabad.
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> We are five to six households, all related to each other, who (now) live together. My brother is my next door neighbour. [...] Local people also live there and so do Afghans; it is a ghetto.

He values interaction between the Afghans and the locals in order to understand one another.

> Those who have spent more time with the Afghans, they know much (about us). [...] It has been thirty-five to forty years that we are living here. I was young, we were here; I have grown up, we are still here. My children were also born here. [...] We not only go to each other's homes but the children also play together in the evenings. [...] Also, there is a mosque nearby. If you go there, you will find many Afghan children there who have come to get education of the Quran. [...] So these people know us. The ones who have not lived with the Afghans and not interacted with them, what they would know about the Afghans. [...] This is what matters. [...] You do not know Afghans because you do not live with them, nor would you have Afghan neighbours. [...] If you ask anyone in this locality, they know everything about our lifestyle. [...] They can tell you everything in detail since it has been a long time we are here. [...] They (local people) treat us as if we are a part of them.

Though Jansher repeatedly talks about the good behaviour of the local residents, he also mentions of experiencing prejudice when it comes to employment opportunities.

> Previously, I have been working in a godown (warehouse). After leaving that place, I worked on daily wages as a labourer somewhere else. [...] Those who have given me the job here, it is their kindness; otherwise who hires an Afghan? [...] They (people) say you are an Afghan, a refugee; there is no place for you here. [...] It is very difficult for Afghans to find some job. They employ only those Afghans of whom someone gives guarantee. The ones whose socio economic conditions are better, it is not difficult for them, but the poor do not get employed.

Furthermore, this prejudice/discrimination has also made its way to institutions and is being exercised by police as is evident from Jansher's experience.

> It has been twice or thrice that I have been taken to the police station. [...] It is so much trouble; calling one person or the other (for guarantee). [...] So either you get out this way or else you give them some money. [...] They (police) bother Afghan whether he is involved in some criminal activity or not [...] because he has no proof. [...] We have this card (Proof of Registration) but this one expired in 2016. [...] This is what we last got. [...] When we are not given the renewed cards from the authorities, then what we can do; we cannot get it by force.
>
> [...] This is the primary difficulty we face [...] After work, I cannot leave my home out of fear. I say that they will capture me for no reason and then ask for money to release me; so what use it is. [...] I come to the work place and return home, that's it. I cannot roam freely anywhere like other people; that you are free and see different places around – no. so unless it is very important, I do not go out. It is to avoid being harassed by the police for no reason.

Considering this, Jansher wishes to procure the citizenship of Pakistan which, he is of the view, will put an end to troubles like these.

> The ones who are identified by the Pakistani card have everything; they have facilities. But they are not for us; there is only some trouble for us. [...] (Prime Minister) Imran khan announced some time before that he will give nationality to the Afghans. [...] But there is such an uncertainty. [...] Let's see what happens.

Another reason of Jansher trying to secure the nationality of Pakistan is that he feels himself more strongly associated with Pakistan and the Pakistanis and feels somewhat detached from Afghanistan – which he repeats multiple times in his narrative.

> When your life is passed there (in Pakistan), your parents are buried there, then it is certain that you will develop an association with Pakistan. [...] We have eaten Pakistan's salt for quite long now. I was born here and now I myself have children. [...] It has been decades that we are living here with the Pakistanis. We are just the same. We have gotten together quite well. [...] We celebrate happiness with Pakistan and share grief with Pakistan. [...] We have stayed here; lived here; spent our time here. We have moved around with them here and there. [...] We are a part of Islamabad; we are a part of Pakistan.
>
> [...] When you are living at a certain place, you get to know it. [...] I know each and every corner of Islamabad. Contrarily, I do not know anything of Afghanistan. I am Afghan, but I have not properly seen Afghanistan. [...] I have been there once or twice; just to see how it is like. [...] It was only for ten or fifteen days. The situation I have seen there has not attracted me. [...] Pakistan is a relatively developed country. I am happy to be in Pakistan and wish that we are allowed to spend our future lives here too. [...] I'll be happy if we get identified with Pakistan

His relation with Pakistan is also evident from his decision to arrange the ceremony of his marriage here.

> My wife is from Afghanistan. [...] They asked us to come to Afghanistan to marry. I, however, refused; I said if you want to marry here (in Pakistan), only then this marriage can take place. [...] After some argument, they agreed.

A prominent implication of Jansher living in Pakistan, and in Islamabad, is the acquisition of the (second) language, in addition to his first language (Pashayi).

> When you are spending time with people here, then, certainly, you have to learn (their language). [...] If you are Afghan but your entire life is spent here, then it is essential that you have to get integrated with the Pakistanis. This is how, through interactions, I learned Pashto. [...] I learned Urdu in the same way – through interactions with people; I have been interacting with people (who speak Urdu) from childhood till now.

Though Jansher has learned Pashto and Urdu from his environment and uses them as per need, his first language (Pashai) continues to remain the first language of his children.

> At home, we speak our own language – Pashai. [...] And when I go out, I speak Urdu with the people around; if the other person is Pathan, I speak Pashtu; and if (he/she is) our own relative, (then I speak) our language. Whether it is an occasion of wedding or anything, wherever it is, we speak accordingly. [...] My children, since they are young, they do not know much. They are learning Pashai at home. I sometimes bring them along (to the work place), and the children here get shocked at the language they speak. It will take (my children) some time to learn (Urdu). But my son, who goes to school, has started learning Urdu there.

A noticeable difference between the Afghans and the Pakistanis that can be observed routinely, as highlighted by Jansher, is the use of green tea instead of the black tea.

> We drink green tea; we use milk less. Mostly Afghans use milk less; only those do who themselves keep buffalo or cow. [...] Most Afghans drink green tea– three times a day. We also do the same.

Jansher mentions of retaining certain traditions of his origin, but at the same time, he exhibits a certain extent of disconnect with the Afghan culture especially when it comes to celebrating festivals like Nowruz.

> Our lifestyle is different (from that of the Pakistanis). In some aspects, they have different traditions and we have different, even (if they are) Pathan. The wedding traditions are also different. The drum as well as the rhythm of the drumbeat is different at the weddings. Our wedding ceremony lasts for two days; it only includes giving meal to the guests and the Rukhsati. [...] [...] (However,) I do not pay much attention to these things (as) I remain busy with my work. [...] Nowruz is not celebrated by everyone. Some people celebrate it, some don't; we don't.

This disconnect extends to the Afghan cuisine too which Jansher explains through his socio-economic circumstances.

> We live in the same way as Pakistanis. [...] We also eat the same vegetables and pulses that they do. [...] When you have good income, only then you can afford to make such dishes (kabuli palao). Poor persons cannot eat these kinds of dishes. So those who have money, [...] even if they do not cook these foods at home, they have it from outside. It is all about money, about income. A poor person cannot do many things.

When talking about the dress, Jansher rather creates a distinction between the practices of men and women.

> The clothes (we wear) are just the same as those of the other Pakistanis. Someday I wear pants and someday I wear Shalwar Qamees. But that of our women are somewhat different; they are not like those of the Pakistani women here. They wear loose clothes just like what other Afghan women wear. For men, there is no issue; they wear what other people here wear. But at home we wear our own dress.

Despite having relatives in Afghanistan, Jansher does not pay frequent visits to the country. The same is true for his children too. One reason, nonetheless, is the border management by the forces of Pakistan.

> I do not (often) go there (to Afghanistan). [...] My children have also been there only once; their maternal grandparents live there. [...] They went there quite some time before; when Pakistan and Afghanistan were at better terms with each other. However, now, there are some problems; they are fencing the border. We did not go after the situation has worsened. [...] You can go there, but then you cannot return (without a passport).

Jansher very straightforwardly refuses to return to Afghanistan; regarding it as an unfeasible option. He deems that his family, his children in particular, would also not want to repatriate. Considering this, he once again expresses his desire to continue living in Pakistan.

> We cannot go there. The circumstances are not good there. [...] They (my children) would certainly want to live here. Why would they go to Afghanistan? There, the environment is different; the circumstances are different. [...] I spent ten to twenty days there, but I was unable to understand; I understood neither the public nor the government. The primary reason is that when you are unfamiliar with some place, you'll require some time to adjust yourself there, to familiarise yourself with the environment, and to get to know people and understand them. And it requires much time. [...] We have travelled and visited places and interacted with people here. [...] You name any corner of the city (Islamabad) and I'll know someone there. [...] We pray that they (Pakistani authorities) do not force us out of here (Pakistan). [...] The environment is peaceful here; everyone is happy. We do not want that they send us back to Afghanistan. They should let us live in Pakistan.

Another refugee, Farjaad, from Kot Chandana (Mianwali), exhibits similar notions regarding repatriation as those of Najeeb and Jansher. Like both of them, Farjaad also does not reside in any refugee village established by UNHCR – Pakistan, though he had been living there previously. Being integrated in the local community of Kot Chandana, Farjaad exhibits concerns regarding repatriation as his siblings as well as children are unaware of the life and people of Afghanistan. He elaborates this in detail in his narrative.

4.4 Farjaad's Narrative

Farjaad, 36 years of age, was born in Pakistan and resides in Kot Chandana, district Mianwali in the Punjab province. He is the head of family of 11 members; having five sons and four daughters. Though Farjaad does not live in the refugee village established by the Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees, he resides in the same locality. His father migrated to Pakistan from the Baghlan province of Afghanistan in 1980 and got married to another refugee within a couple of years. Farjaad does not tell much about the life he spent in the refugee village; he, however, regards the limited education opportunities as the reason for deciding on moving out of there.

> Previously, we used to live in the camp no. 6; the one which is in this same locality. But in 1994, we left the camp and moved to Kot Chandana (outside the camp). Because then acquiring education was a little problematic there; we all siblings were young then, so for our education, we left the camp and started living here. [...] Now all my siblings are educated. [...] My children are still studying. Everyone has also acquired religious education.

Farjaad was formally educated from a public school in Kot Chandana. Studying amongst the children of the locality helped him learn the local dialect of Punjabi – Saraiki – in addition to Urdu which was the medium of instruction in his school. This has also facilitated him in conversing with the local population.

> I have studied till eighth class in the school of Kot Chandana. [...] Initially, we faced some trouble because we are Pashtun and speak Pashto while we were being taught in Urdu. This made things quite hard. But then, gradually, [...] we gained experience and learned Urdu as well as Punjabi. And the matters then improved.

> [...] My work has also helped me learn these two languages. I have my shop here and everyone in this area is Punjabi. They all speak Saraiki, so we converse with them in their language.

Though Farjaad is married to an Afghan girl (who resided in Afghanistan before), the event was arranged in Pakistan.

> I was of five years of age when my grandmother returned to Afghanistan. We used to live in the (refugee) camp then. There, she chose a girl for me when I was only five. Later, I got married here (in Mianwali).

He has been and continues to visit Afghanistan quite frequently; his family connections as well as his business serve as the reasons.

> I have visited Afghanistan many times. [...] The last time I went there was around two months back. [...] My father in law is from Afghanistan. And secondly, we have a trailer which we use to transport goods, like cement, flour, sugar, etc., from and to Afghanistan. So sometimes I go with it.

In Kot Chandana, the place of residence of Farjaad is inhabited by the local population, with whom he and his family maintain a regular interaction and have developed cordial relationships with each other.

> There is no Afghan living in close proximity to us; all our neighbours are Punjabis. [...] The people here know us for quite long. Such relations have been established between us that we go to each other's whether there is a wedding ceremony or a funeral activity. [...] We share grief and happiness with one another; we help each other.
>
> [...] It has been 10 to 11 years that we are living at this place, and now, we are planning to relocate. The neighbours come to us, ask us the reason, and tell us that we shouldn't. one of my neighbours even asked if I was doing this for any financial issues, and that if this was the case, they all will support me, and I need not to leave the place. But we have to. The home is small, and we are a big family; we need a bigger house. Some of our neighbours are quite unhappy with our decision to leave the place; they do not want us to go.

Farjaad is not the only member of his family who has developed an association with Pakistan. In his opinion, the same is the case with his parents, siblings, and children. He thinks this true even for his wife who, before getting married, had been living in Afghanistan.

> I feel more connected to Pakistan (than Afghanistan). There are 35 to 40 individuals in my (extended) family who have not even seen Afghanistan. My father, who came to Pakistan in 1980, went only once or twice after that. My mother also went only once; on my brother's wedding; [...] two of my brothers were married in Afghanistan, though they too live here. [...] My visits, however, have become more frequent, particularly from 2006, because of the business.
>
> [...] My wife is here for almost 16 years now. [...] During this time, she has gone to her parents' home (in Afghanistan) only twice or thrice. [...] In spite of experiencing much change in her life, she has not expressed the wish to go to Afghanistan. If she would not have developed an association with this place, she would have asked me to take her to Afghanistan – to her parent's place.

Farjaad also narrates an instance when he took one of his sons to Afghanistan to visit a holy place, but his son insisted on getting back to Pakistan at the earliest.

> A rabid dog once bit my child. Though we got him injected for vaccination (for rabies), his grandparents were of the view that he should be taken to the *Ziyarat* in Afghanistan to get him "dam", so he may get well. Obeying them, I took him there. [...] Not a day had passed and he started asking me to take him back; that he did not want to be there any longer. Very difficultly, we stayed there for two or three days.

In addition to a good relationship with the place Farjaad resides in, he also exhibits gentle emotions towards the local inhabitants of Kot Chandana.

> The people here are kind-hearted. They tend not to fight. [...] It has been 22 to 23 years now that we started this shop – no one has ever used harsh words for us in all this time.

Not very fond of watching television, Farjaad primarily consumes news content. He, however, is enthusiastic about cricket, and with the cricket World Cup scheduled for June-July 2019 in which Afghanistan and Pakistan will play against each other, --- does not choose one team over the other which he will support.

> I return to home from the shop at around seven in the evening. That is the time for news, and that is what we watch – the private news channels. [...] And in the cricket season, I watch the cricket matches to.
>
> For the world cup, I shall support Pakistan as my first team because I live in Pakistan. And the secondary team will be Afghanistan; we shall support Afghanistan for sure, as it is our team. [...] And when both the teams will play against each other, I'll support both. I'll be happy if the match is drawn and none of the two loses it; that there is a tie between the two.

Even when Farjaad shows much inclination towards Pakistan, he identifies himself as an Afghan. He uses the documented proof of identification as a justification for this preference.

> First of all, we are Afghan, and we have come from Afghanistan. If we get the Pakistani citizenship, we'll prioritise Pakistan. But, at the moment, what I have in my pocket is the card which shows that I am an Afghan citizen.

Farjaad perceives the social and cultural environments of the two places, his home town in Baghlan and Kot Chandana, as being different from each other. Being born in Pakistan and spending the entire span of life here makes him believe that he or any member of his family will not be able to adjust in Afghanistan.

> The culture of Afghanistan and the traditions and customs followed there are quite different from that of Pakistan. [...] What we follow now are the traditions and customs of Pakistan. [...] We all were born here. I have seven younger brothers and none of them has ever seen Afghanistan. My children were also born here and are getting educated here. They do not know what the colours of Afghanistan are. Even if any of my brothers goes there and witnesses the circumstances, he will feel strangled that where he has come.

Highlighting some differences between the environment of his town in Afghanistan and Kot Chandana, Farjaad not only mentions the traditions that are observed on occasions like marriages but also compares and contrasts the usual behaviour of the people of the two places.

> The culture, the people, everything is different. There the traditions of wedding are different; they take money at their daughter's wedding, here they don't. There, the bride's family purchases the dowry from the money given by the groom, but here, the dowry is arranged on the part of the bride's family. So, there, it sometimes gets hard for a poor man to get married because of being unable to give as much amount as the bride's father demands.
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> [...] The people of Afghanistan have a harsh tone while the Pakistanis have a soft tone. The people of Afghanistan are more aggressive; the Pakistanis are not. This increases problems there. For instance, if I fight with my uncle or my cousins here, the dispute gets settled in some time, but if we fight there, one will most probably kill the other. [...] Previously, the people were mostly illiterate. But now, the number of educated people has increased significantly there too. So, things are changing gradually.

He practises the local customs and traditions of Kot Chandana and exhibits a rather lack of interest in retaining the norms of Afghanistan. He is more inclined towards adopting the culture of the area he resides in.

> Our way of living is the same as of this place; there is nothing different. [...] I do not find any difference between my home and those of the local people here. [...] We do not celebrate any Afghan festivals. [...] Here, we do not even realise when the Nowruz started and when it ended. [...] We do everything as the people here do. [...]
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> We celebrate the 14th of august; waving flags on our homes and the car etc. [...] we also join them (local people) in the celebrations of Eid Milad-un-Nabi. [...] When they (locals) close their shops, we do that too. If they go on a strike, we also support them. [...] Whatever they do, we do the same.

Farjaad highlights several problems he faces while living in Pakistan, which all are associated to his bureaucratic identity of being a refugee.

> We have our business, [...] so we face a lot of issues of the bank. And if we want to purchase land and construct our own home, we cannot. Also, if we buy a car, we cannot transfer it to our name. And wherever we go, for instance, if I go to Lahore, I need a room for the stay; I give them my Afghan card (PoR) but I do not get a room on that. They say that this card is expired, so either I show them my passport or else I won't get the room. [...] The problems are too many. [...] I do not have the driving licence; there is no licence for us nor can we have one, so how we can get one. There are many difficulties; they are not even less.
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> [...] All these are the policies of the government. (It will be better for us) if the government changes its policies or gives us new cards (Proof of Registration). The bank accounts problem has been taken up by the government and has announced that we shall be allowed to have accounts. I just want that the government formulates such policies so that we are not bothered.

But Farjaad finds the behaviour of the local citizens rather unprejudiced not only towards him but towards the refugees in general.

> No one has ever said something bad to us, like why are you living here or that you are causing problems for us or anything like that – no. there is no such issue on the part of the public. We are living here for quite long; it has been twenty-five years now, and no one has ever said anything of the sort to us.
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> [...] This might come in their minds that these (terrorists) are all Afghans and they (Afghans) are involved in all such (terrorist) activities. [...] People may say this to you sometimes in their anger, but not otherwise. No one has ever bothered us. [...] No one has ever said to me that we are the ones involved in this (terrorism).

In view of all this, Farjaad shows no ambiguity in his thoughts concerning repatriation. He is quite certain that he does not want to do so and believes that this is true for his other family members as well.

> I really want that we get the citizenship (of Pakistan), so we may continue with our business here without any troubles. [...] Even if you ask any of my younger brothers, he will also say that he does not want to return. They do not know about the people there. They repeatedly listen to the news of someone killing someone else's child and another person murdering another. This fear has filled their hearts that something similar will happen to them too.

Unlike the preceding narratives, the one following – that of Zarafshan – presents a unique case as she is the only one, among all the participants of this research, who wishes to opt for resettlement in a third country, other than the country of origin (Afghanistan) and the country of first asylum (Pakistan). though very much integrated in the community she resides in, Zarafshan exhibits a strong affiliation towards the Afghan people. Her narrative offers interesting insights to the readers/listeners.

4.5 Zarafshan's Narrative

Zarafshan was a tag-along migrant, a four-year-old child then, who accompanied her parents on their journey from Afghanistan to Pakistan. Twenty-eight years of age, she is a resident of Rawalpindi and a doctor by profession. She lives here with her mother and three siblings while her father lives in Afghanistan and so does her elder sister who is married there. Narrating her experience as a refugee, she relates,

> My parents migrated to Pakistan in 1994. I was four then. So, naturally, I came along [...] I was very young then. [...] I do not even remember the part I was there. I have memories because we frequently go there. [...] Probably because of this, we have a connection with Afghanistan. [...] The Afghan music also keeps me connected to that place.

The first destination of her family, in Pakistan, was the Nowshera district in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa; the province which is considered to have greater similarities with the Afghan people and culture because of its Pashtun majority and geographical ties with

Afghanistan. Zarafshan also did not perceive herself to be different from the local population during her stay there.

> All are Pathans there; all are Pashto speaking. And when you see your family members are interacting with other people around, you feel that you know those people. My mother and father, both, know Pashtu. [...] We did not use to feel much that these people are different from us. [...] They used to come to our home and we went to theirs.

Staying in Nowshera for a year, she moved to Rawalpindi as her parents thought Rawalpindi to be a city equipped with better education facilities. Moving from KP to Punjab, however, exposed the family to a different environment also in terms of culture. This is when she and her family opted for a different approach towards life in Pakistan – which has continued till this day.

> I do not remember very well, but from what I remember, it used to feel different. [...] We no longer went to any neighbours, etc. nor did anyone come to our home. [...] We are isolated right from the start [...] very much isolated when it comes to interaction with others. [...] Even now, we do not meet with many people[...] We do not go to anyone's place, not to neighbours or anyone else, not even when it is Eid. If someone comes (to our place) on his/her own, we do welcome them. But we do not go on our own to anyone else's home.
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> [...] People are very nice; they always give you a chance to be with and among them. [...] They (neighbours) have invited us so many times on their children's weddings as well but I don't know why we do not go, or maybe we are generally lazy. I do not know if being Afghans or refugees has something to do with it. But it is us; we do not tend to go. They do come; they sometimes come to me for consultation etc., but we generally do not take any initiative for interaction. [...] Perhaps the reason for this is that we want to stay in ourselves.

Zarafshan expresses a sense of confusion when it comes to the overall behaviour of the citizens. She perceives them to be generally good, but then, certain attitudes or actions of theirs force her to think otherwise.

> When Imran Khan gave the statement regarding the citizenship of Afghan refugees, people criticized him a lot; though they are nice generally.
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> [...] When some (terrorist) incident happens, I feel that the behaviour of people is a little different than usual or that they are blaming us for such activities. [...] When the APS incident happened, I felt a little strange from people [...] saying strange stuff. [...] I felt they are all saying this to me. [...] This (prejudice) is not for the Pashtuns in general but for Afghans, I think.

Though Zarafshan exhibits a constant disconnect with the population of the area she resides in, she considers being Afghan as a factor that naturally associates her with other Afghans.

> This is such a coincidence that both my best friends in school were Afghans. [...] It was a private school. [...] I do not know how they came to the same school as mine despite living in a different area. [...] In the medical college too, there was an Afghan; she was my best friend, but I had another friend too who is a Pakistani. [...] I have never thought much that the reason of our friendship is because we are Afghans, but perhaps there is an inclination naturally. [...] It is of course because we are Afghans – the bond between an Afghan and an Afghan.
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> [...] We share the same language. Though Urdu does not seem alien to me, I have spoken Urdu from the start but still, I feel more (for Dari) that this is my language. [...] These are quite spontaneous feelings. [...] Even when some patient comes to me whose name is in Dari or Persian, I realize at once regardless of them speaking Pashtu. I ask if they are Afghan. I tell them too that I am also Afghan, and then we talk a little about things.

Sharing similarities with the Pashtuns, who constitute the second largest ethnic group in Pakistan, contributes to her being less perceived as a foreigner. Moreover, she also feels more connected to them instead of the people of Punjab – among whom she resides.

> But when some patient comes who is a Pathan, I talk to them in Pashtu despite the fact that my Pashtu is not very good. [...] Pathans do not care much if you are Afghan or what; you speak Pashtu – that's all. [...] Others, the Punjabi patients, I think they are not much able to differentiate; they would perceive me more of a Pathan and not an Afghan.

Nevertheless, Zarafshan credits her formal education in playing a role in developing her social life in Pakistan which has also, in a way, contributed to her knowledge about the local culture. The extent of interaction, however, varies when considering the country to which the person belongs.

> I had friendships with others too. [...] The different friends I have are from the places I got my formal education from; school, college, etc. [...] The little social life I have is from there. [...] I have learned to cook food from them; the Pakistani recipes. [...] We learned from them and they learned from us.
>
> [...] One thing is that we (Afghan friends) go to each other's homes while I do not go to other friends' (from Pakistan) homes. [...] I have not thought over why this is so. [...] probably because we sit on rugs and have the same cooking recipes [...]

> I am more comfortable at her place and perhaps because of the same reasons, she is more comfortable at mine too.

But, in her opinion, she is "less Afghan" because the formal education system in Pakistan did not offer her the opportunity to learn Dari and this is where she lags behind her elder siblings.

> If I would have been older when we came to Pakistan, [...]. I might have been more Afghan than what I am now. [...] My Dari is not that good. [...] I can write a letter in Urdu and in English but not in Dari. I do not know formal Dari; I only know the spoken one, and I cannot write it quite correctly. [...] Especially my elder two siblings are more Afghan than me. They can write letters in Persian; they have studied Persian. [...] I, however, feel so proud that I am more Afghan than my younger siblings; they even do not know certain Persian pronunciations.

Zarafshan perceives fewer similarities and more differences between her culture and that of the place she lives in.

> Both, there in Afghanistan and here in Pakistan, they give Eidi. And [...]when a child is born, [...] there is a small knife which is hung over the baby. [...] Maybe some superstitions are somewhat similar to an extent.
>
> [...] Contrarily, we have very male dominant families irrespective of how educated the family is. [...] If my father would have been here, he would have been the dominating figure but in his absence, my brother is the one. [...] If my brother forbids me from something, I obey him; though he is younger but still. This, I think, is not that common in Pakistan [...] especially in the case of younger brothers.
>
> The calendar is different, new year is different. The weddings are so different; the functions are different. [...] Take the concept of dowry. Among us, the bride's family does nothing. [...] All expenses are borne by the groom. [...] But in Pakistan, it is the opposite. [...] Among us, this is perceived as very wrong if something is being expected of the bride or her family and if they are giving some dowry and stuff. The dresses are also very different. [...] And we do not do Walima (reception) which is considered very significant in Pakistan.
>
> Also, the cuisine is different. [...] We do not add spices while they make very spicy dishes in Pakistan. [...] Despite living here for this long, Pakistani food still does not suit my stomach. [...] Also, we do not take black tea; we drink green tea (kehwa). [...] Here black tea is more cultural sort of thing, but we make it either for the guest in the breakfast or for someone who is ill.
>
> And language too. We have been speaking Dari at home for ever and that is why when other people outside speak Urdu, it feels like this is not our language. It

feels as an alien language. Not that much but still; though it has been a long time here.

There are, however, some changes that have come in the lifestyle during her stay in Pakistan.

> It (the home) is not exactly the same as was in the start when my mother came to Pakistan in the beginning. [...] We were two families living here then. [...] We have red carpets (rugs) and cushions in Afghan homes on which we sit. My mother has removed them all. [...] When my uncle's family went back to Afghanistan, we just changed this. [...] We have sofas now. [...] Maybe my mother wanted to get new furniture. [...] Or maybe because she finds rugs a little hard to deal with. But if I have my own home, I'll set it that (Afghan) way.

The influence of the stay in Pakistan can also be observed in her dressing choices which even remain consistent during her visits to Afghanistan.

> This is my prominent dress; *shalwar qamees*. [...] They (Afghans) call it the Punjabi dress. If someone is wearing it, they tend to know that this person has come from Pakistan. My cousins tell me that I am wearing the dress of the Punjabis.

Referring to certain festivals and occasions celebrated in Afghanistan, Zarafshan expressed some confused thoughts.

> We no longer celebrate it (New Year – Nowruz) [...] we think it is religiously not right[...] Though there is an official holiday for that in Afghanistan. People celebrate; go to each other's places and cook the food specified for that day.

> There is another festival, Samanak, which we do not celebrate. [...] For this, something special is made from wheat. [...] People meet and eat together. [...] We have not abandoned it. [...] If we have people around, we might also celebrate this occasion.

Despite her protracted stay in Pakistan, Zarafshan still tends to identify herself with Afghanistan. A probable reason for this is the structural restrictions or limitations she experiences while living here. And while attempting to do so, she strives to portray Afghanistan in a less negative light by downplaying the negative aspects.

> Though I have been here for most part of my life and I speak Urdu, I do not identify myself with Pakistan. [...] I am here for too long, but I do not have any rights. [...] This is all in the legal system. [...] You cannot buy property here; you cannot even buy a car. [...] You cannot send a TCS abroad because you do not

> have the NIC. The UNHCR cards, the proofs of registration, only give us the right to live here and nothing else.
>
> When people say that Afghanistan is the greatest or the largest opium producer, [...] despite knowing it's a fact, I feel so bad about it. [...] When the last time I made a presentation, I was looking at the record of UNODC. I removed all such statements from it (presentation).

Though she expresses an association with Afghanistan, Zarafshan is not sure about if she wants to return to Afghanistan. Settling in a third country is also among the options under her consideration. Keeping her elder sister's experience of repatriation (following her marriage) in mind, she is of the view that going back to Afghanistan and adjusting there would not be that easy.

> When I go there (Afghanistan), everyone calls me a Pakistani. When I am here, I become an Afghan without any Pakistani legal status. I am lost somewhere in between. That is why I want to go to (third country).
>
> [...] I feel that not being able to settle back in Afghanistan after repatriation is something to think about. [...] Because the environment is different. [...] I have lived here all my life. Kabul is very different. It is a small but a very populated city. [...] The living style is different. [...] I have not lived with people there, but my sister tells that it is difficult. People, there, are a bit different; they are not helping like the people here are. [...] It would be hard to adjust. [...] Maybe I'll go and try[...]see how it feels and then decide. At the moment, it is just a sort of fear.

Similar to Zarafshan, who bases her choice of resettlement not only on her own understanding of the social and cultural environment of Pakistan and Afghanistan but also on her sister's experience of repatriation, another refugee – Amardad – also considers the tendency of his children to repatriate when expressing his own choice in the matter. Apparently integrated, Amardad, despite having a preference for repatriation, is not inclined to do so. His strategy towards acculturation and his approach to repatriation is dwelled on in much detail in the succeeding narrative.

4.6 Amardad's Narrative

Amardad undertook migration in 1984, along with his parents, wife and two children, from Jalalabad in his mid-twenties. He currently resides in the Kot Chandana refugee village in Mianwali. Recalling his memories of that time in Afghanistan and his voyage to Pakistan, he narrates,

> There were two parties; one the Mujahid and the other the government. The government was said to be opposing the religion (Islam). We, in our area, decided not to take their side and remain unrelated to them. [...] The fight had broken out in our area when we were coming. [...] The government, in its oppositional attempts, sometimes used to do firing or bombard the area. [...] We decided to migrate when the bombardments had no longer remained restricted to the daytime.
>
> When for the entire area of ours, there was no source of peace, we were allowed to move to Pakistan. [...] Pakistan allowed the Afghans in general to come; not through the other routes but through the mountains. It was not because we were trying to avoid being caught by Pakistan, but we were trying to escape the eyes of our (Afghan) government.

Amardad lived in an agency (in the former Federally Administered Tribal Areas) and the city of Peshawar before coming to Mianwali. This, he deems, was possible owing to the welcoming attitude of Pakistan at that time. However, he had to struggle much to establish his life in this refugee village.

> No other country was that open to the refugees as Pakistan. Here they did not restrict or refrain us from doing anything. [...] We first lived in an agency close to the Warsak dam. [...] During our travel (through the mountains), [...] we got help from them (local villagers) in the form of donkeys, mules, etc. [...] We got the transport and then came to the city (Peshawar). [...] Some arrangements were made there like that of food etc. [...] We lived there for two or three years. [...] Then, when this camp was established, we were told that this camp offers more facilities and if we want to shift here, we can. [...] From that time onwards, we have been living here. [...] At least we do not have to pay the rent here; we do not have enough resources that we pay the rent too.
>
> [...] When I came here, there was nothing; there was even no shade, no tree, nothing. [...] Some tents were provided to us by the government and some we bought ourselves. [...] Now, however, we have a proper roof and rooms, but this was not there then.

Despite already being formally educated from Afghanistan, Amardad still faced challenges in seeking a job in Pakistan.

> I got my education from Afghanistan. [...] After intermediate, I got admission there in university where I studied for two years. But the circumstances worsened. And so, I had to come here and my education was just left in the middle because of this. [...] I had to look after other necessities of life. I was married, I had my parents with me; you have to eat something for which you have to earn.
>
> There, in Afghanistan, some earnings would come from lands etc., but here, there was no source of income. So I had to leave the education and seek for a job. I worked as a labourer before I got the job. [...] My degrees and all my documents were Afghan; some identification from the Pakistani government was required. (For the purpose,) our ration cards were made here. Subsequently, we started getting the jobs through the ration cards. The ones who already had the ration cards got employed before me.

In Mianwali, Amardad experienced an environment different than that of the agency or Peshawar, which posed him some challenges in his acculturation.

> There is the river close by and the Jinnah barrage too. Initially, for some time, we used to spend our afternoons under the shades of trees at the river bank. There, I developed some companionships (with the locals). They were young individuals then, probably students of ninth or tenth class. [...] We have still retained our friendship.
>
> When they used to talk, I did not understand them. [...] There (in Afghanistan) our education was in Pashto or Persian. [...] I started learning the spoken language (Urdu) from them. And then I started to read; the alphabets are the same as in Pashto. So, I started learning the language by keeping Pashto and Urdu side by side. I first learned the common conversational language; greeting each other, carrying out a dialogue etc. gradually, when I entered into work relations with (local) people, I learned further from them. [...] I am, however, a little weak in Saraiki or Punjabi. I understand whatever they (local residents) speak, but I prefer Urdu in speaking because I have studied it through books. Books more often had Urdu; I have learned it (Urdu) mostly through books and newspapers.

Though Amardad is quite fluent in Urdu, his wife (who also migrated with him) is a complete stranger to the language. This, however, is not the case with their children. Amardad explains this in terms of experience and environment – in which formal education has played a significant role for his children.

> I think this has more to do with experience. [...] You transform yourself according to the environment you are in. [...] Our regional (mother) language is Pashayi,

> which we still speak at home. [...] But here (in the refugee village), the dominant language is Pashto. [...] hence, we have learned (the language) from the environment. [...] We have learned Pashto and Urdu in the same way.
>
> In case of my wife, it is about the environment. [...] The environment we have here is complete Pashto. Whatever a human learns, he/she learns from his/her environment. She has not been in the environment I have been in. [...] I have a regular daily-based interaction with the (Pakistani) people I work with. But with the local people around, it is less often; owing to instances of grief or happiness. [...] Whenever we get to interact outside, on occasions of happiness or sorrow, it is mere two or three hours, so how she can learn a language in just the interaction of a couple of hours. [...] Similarly, my younger children, the ones with lesser age and lower level of education, are less fluent (in Urdu) and, with age, will get to know it better as their experience grows.

In addition to learning the language, formal education (from the school in the refugee village) has also helped his children in acquiring (basic) knowledge of the place they reside in and continue their education in the public school.

> [...] The curriculum followed in the schools of the refugee village was Afghan for some time in the start, but then it was changed to that of Pakistan. During this time, the Pashto curriculum was also implemented for a while; it was from Peshawar. [...] The one implemented now is of this province – Punjab and is in Urdu. [...] This is why my children, after studying from the (refugee) camp schools, were able to continue their education outside as well. [...] When the children are living here, they need to learn about this place. [...] If they were not familiar with their (local) curriculum, then how they could continue their education (in Kalabagh).

Expounding on the cultural aspects – comparing and contrasting the culture of his home region and that of the places he has resided in Pakistan – Amardad finds them almost the same. The exception he comes up with is the dominant language in Kot Chandana.

> We lived on one side of the mountain and across the mountain was Pakistan. Both share the same environment. There is no difference in those areas; the border areas. [...] People from both sides of the mountain used to visit one another. [...] Whatever our culture was, it was the same on this side of the mountain and on the other. [...] The Peshawar environment was also exactly the same as was that of the agency.
>
> [...] Even here too, it is not much different. This is also almost the area of the Pashtuns. [...] Whatever the customs, traditions and culture is prevalent here in this area, it is almost the same as ours. [...] There are two primary events in life; either of happiness or sorrow. Those are celebrated here in a similar manner as

> that in our area. Then is the food; it is also almost the same. [...] These people are also almost like those people of the bordering areas; just that the language is different. It is Punjabi or Saraiki, but the culture is almost just the same – there is no significant difference. [...] If we go to someone's place, they give us the respect in the same way as we give them. People here also have the tradition of veil and so do we. [...] From my viewpoint, our culture and that of here are somewhat similar.

In addition to the language, he also highlights celebrating Nowruz as a prominent variation between the two cultures.

> Nowruz is celebrated there when the new year begins in March, and here the new year begins with January. Nowruz is the first day of the year. It means new day. Here, neither the local people celebrate it nor does the government. For the same reason, we also do not celebrate Nowruz; not according to that new year nor with respect to the solar or the Hijri year.

Despite abandoning some practices, Amardad exhibits a strong connection with Afghanistan as a country. He has kept this connection alive also through multiple visits back to Afghanistan after migrating to Pakistan. The choice of place for burying their dead also exhibits an association with the land of Afghanistan for some people.

> The thing is if we talk in terms of countries, I am an Afghan then; because my nationality is that of Afghanistan. [...] Whenever the need be, I went there. When any of our relatives died there, I went there to attend the funeral, for the funeral, or when someone invited us to a marriage ceremony, we went there to participate in it. I also went to Afghanistan when there were some issues concerning land. [...] When it is about some relative of my wife, then either I go with her or any of our sons.
>
> We take the dead there too and bury them here as well. [...] Both my parents are buried here, but most people take the dead bodies to Afghanistan. My brother's wife died some time ago; she was taken there for her burial. [...] Some people say bury where someone dies; some others say it (Afghanistan) is the land of our forefathers and we belong there and should be buried there. Everyone thinks in his own way.

Though not mentioned explicitly, --- reveals a disconnect with Pakistan as a country or a state. The policies of the Pakistani government towards the Afghan refugees explain this in his case.

> We have no right in politics so what right do we have to talk about it. Neither do we get any government jobs nor any other thing of this sort. [...] We are registered

> with the government of Pakistan. The people come for checking and monitoring, but we have nothing to do with them.

But when it comes to association with people, he regards Afghans and Pakistanis as equals. However, belongingness to the Afghan people and a preference for them is evident from his words when he talks about making new relations.

> If we consider it in terms of relations (with people), both are the same for me; we have spent our lives here. [...] Keeping the Pakistan Afghanistan case aside, when someone marries – even worldwide – one marries in his/her own people; be they be your relatives or anyone else. [...] Some of our people from here are now in Lahore, Karachi, Faisalabad, Rawalpindi, Peshawar, etc. while some are in Afghanistan. [...] You will have the new relation where your destiny will take you; in some city of Pakistan or Afghanistan.

Though Amardad shows an inclination towards repatriation, he is less confident when it comes to repatriation choices of his children and does not voluntarily attempt to develop any connection of his children with Afghanistan.

> If we get some facilities there (in Afghanistan) that we can spend our lives (then I'll want to repatriate). (I'll want to go) if there is peace, but not if there is no peace. [...] But the ones who are born here, most of them find peace of heart here in this place; they do not want to go back to Afghanistan. [...] If they (my children) want to live here and I force them to return to Afghanistan, they will come back here. So there is no purpose in doing so. There are people who went back to Afghanistan only to accompany their parents. Someone I know went back to Afghanistan, left his parents there (in Afghanistan), and himself returned to Karachi.

Contradicting the views of Amardad regarding the repatriation tendencies of the refugees born in Pakistan, the narrative of Farahnoush depicts her inclination towards returning to Afghanistan – though not immediately. Being born in Pakistan and spending her life here has provided Farahnoush an enabling environment to adopt certain aspects of the life of the local community, but overall, she has spent her life predominantly by exercising the strategy of separation for acculturation. the subsequent narrative explains this in detail.

4.7 Farahnoush's Narrative

Farahnoush is a young girl residing in the (only) refugee village established by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in the Punjab province at Kot Chandana, district Mianwali. Her parents migrated to Pakistan, from the Nangarhar province of Afghanistan, almost three decades ago; she and her siblings all were born in Pakistan, which has contributed to her little knowledge of her country of origin – Afghanistan.

> I do not know much about Afghanistan because I have not been there a lot. My visits have been quite infrequent; I have been there only three or four times and not more than that. (Even in those visits,) I did not stay for long; I stayed there for only two to five days.

Though Farahnoush, in her short visits, has developed a liking for her home town in Nangarhar and the people there, she still finds peace of her heart where she is presently residing – in Pakistan.

> That place is very nice; the life there is very clean and very good. The people there are also very nice. [...] But, there, we do not have a house or anything else, and so, there is not much peace (of heart). Whatever the conditions may be, when you do not have your own house (at a certain place), you do not find peace (there).

One of the differences that Farahnoush points out between living in Afghanistan and Pakistan is the joint family system, which is observed in Afghanistan but has been distorted to an extent for the ones who live in Pakistan.

> It is just that there the people – the related ones – they all live together in the same place. My uncles, my grandfather, whoever lives there, and the children too – even after getting married, they all live together. [...] Our relatives live in Pakistan too, but we live alone here (in Kot Chandana); [...] none of them is in Mianwali.

Though Farahnoush has relatives at other places in Pakistan as well, the Kot Chandana refugee village is where she herself has been residing in throughout her life, for which she gives different reasons.

> Most of our relatives are in Afghanistan. However, there are some in Pakistan as well who reside in different cities including Islamabad, Peshawar, and Lahore. [...] The ones in Peshawar reside in the camp and the others live in the city. [...] (But) we have been living here (in Kot Chandana) from the start; from the time I

> am born, I am here. [...] My mother is employed here. And we have shops here too; the business (of our family) is associated to this place. This is on what our household depends. It will be nice if we move out of the (refugee) camp. But we cannot (do that) because of the previously mentioned reasons; we cannot leave all this.

Despite lacking comprehensive knowledge of the Afghan norms and traditions, Farahnoush mentions some other differences between those practised in Mianwali (Pakistan) and those of Nangarhar (Afghanistan); they may be in terms of festivities or routine activities.

> [...] I find it very different (from Pakistan). I do not know a lot though. For instance, the Pakistanis here use spices a lot, and the Afghans do not use the chillies and spices. At first, our cooking followed the Afghan way, but it has changed to the Pakistani form now.
>
> [...] The marriages are also different in the sense that the Pakistanis give a lot of dowry to the girls, but the Afghan people do not give that much; they may give some but not that much. [...] Also, the Pakistanis send their daughters to far off areas too for the purpose of education. But the Afghans do not do so. They do not let them go to any distant place, even not for studying. [...] But generally the lifestyle is the same.

Though Farahnoush is aware of the festivals celebrated particularly in Afghanistan, like Nowruz, she has not celebrated them during her stay in Pakistan.

> It (Nowruz) is celebrated in Afghanistan; we do not celebrate it here. Many of the traditions and customs followed there – we do not have knowledge of them because we are born here and have lived here. So we do not know much about what those people do. [...] Here only those people know who are educated; the ones who are not, if you ask them, they would ask you what Nowruz is. They know nothing about it.

Freedom is, for Farahnoush, one major difference between the life in Afghanistan and Pakistan. she regards this as the reason for not being able to continue her education in Kalabagh which is a neighbouring town of Kot Chandana.

> There in Afghanistan, their lives were completely free. Whatever they do, they do it out of their liking. They go out for shopping and acquire education; it is not that there are any restrictions etc. there. But here, we have not even been to Kalabagh ever. We do not go to markets. Whatever we buy is when the men bring the items home and ask us to choose from them.

> I do not know why it is like this. When we go out here, they say this is someone else's country, why do you wander outside. And there (in Afghanistan), it is their own country; so they can do whatever they want to do. [...] For the same reason, I could not study further here; if I would have been in Afghanistan, maybe I would have studied more. The maximum we can study here is till tenth grade as the school (for girls) in the (refugee) camp is till 10th. And Kalabagh is a little far from here, so we are not allowed to go there.

There is, however, an aspect of the lifestyle of the Pakistanis which Farahnoush wishes to adopt for herself too.

> They celebrate the birthdays of children, wedding anniversaries, and other such events; this makes me happy. But we do not celebrate these as they do. They also go for picnics, to far flung areas like Murree, Abbottabad etc., but we do not.

With Pashayi as her native language, Farahnoush also speaks Urdu very fluently. Being formally educated in Pakistan and the consumption of the Pakistani media content has a role to play in her acquisition of the Urdu language.

> Our own language is Pashayi. At home, with our parents, we converse in Pashayi and with our brothers, sometimes in Pashto and sometimes in Urdu. [...] I have learned Urdu here, in the (refugee) camp, from the school and also from the television. [...]And if we get newspaper from somewhere, then I read that too, but it is not that often. [...] I do not consume any Afghan media content; some other girls (however) search for the Afghan content online and watch the dramas etc. of Afghanistan. We do not do so.

Farahnoush has almost no interaction with the local inhabitants of Kot Chandana; the only Pakistanis she has ever known are through her school, which, despite being established by the UNHCR in the refugee village, has both Afghan and Pakistani teachers. In view of her interactions (whatever she has), Farahnoush has generally a good perception of the Pakistanis.

> We only interact here, within the camp, with our own people – the Afghans. Our only interaction outside the refugee village is with our relatives who live in other cities, so they come to our home, and no one else from the outside. [...] (But) in our school, (only) one or two teachers are Afghans; all the rest are Pakistanis. However, there are very few Pakistani students; almost all are Afghans. We are all just the same. The Pakistani teachers – it has been a good time with them. They do not only teach us well, but they are nice too. They never differentiated us on the basis of being Afghans; they treat us as if we are their own children. [...] The people of Pakistan, whoever I have met, are all very nice individuals.

She views the minimal interaction with the local residents as a reason for her relative disconnect with the local norms and customs.

> Here, all the people are Afghans. If we would have been living in Pakistan – among the Pakistani people – then we would have adopted some things from them. But the customs and traditions – they are the same in almost all Afghans here. The only reason of learning Urdu was that it is taught in schools, otherwise we would not have learned that. Here, we do not have any such neighbours either who speak Urdu. We are all Afghans living in this area (refugee village). Our other cousins – they live in the city, so they live among Pakistanis; their case is different.

Farahnoush not only draws a distinction between Afghans and Pakistanis but also between her own nation– Pashayi – and the other nations of Afghanistan.

> In the (refugee) camp, there are families belonging to various nations; some are Pashayi, some are Qandahari, and so on. [...] We live differently (depending on the nation); everyone follows his/her own customs. [...] For instance, when our daughters get married, we marry in the usual way. But the people of other tribes, when they marry their daughters, they take a big amount of money. We do not do that.
>
> [...] In our nation, it is a norm for girls to get education. There too, in Afghanistan, the girls get education; and in many cases, they are more educated than us. [...] But they (the girls from other nations) do not study; they live the same way as they used to do in Afghanistan in the mountains.

In spite of exhibiting some association with Pakistan, Farahnoush is more inclined towards being identified as an Afghan.

> Because I am born here and I have spent a lot of my life here (in Pakistan), I feel that this (Pakistan) is also my country. But that (Afghanistan) is also my country. No doubt I am an Afghan, so certainly I shall (like to) call myself Afghan.

In accordance with her inclination towards the Afghan identity, unlike many refugees of her age, Farahnoush not only wants to repatriate but is also very expressive of her desire, though she does not want to realise it very soon.

> I shall want to return. [...] There are some relatives of ours who used to live in Pakistan but then returned to Afghanistan. [...] (But) we do not want to return at the moment. When the business is set up there, then we shall go; when we have our own land there. The ones who went, they had their land there and house etc. If we go, what we shall have there; we have nothing there. This is why we want that first we set up something there and then we all return. [...]

> If we are living here and continue to do so, certainly a day will come when Pakistan will ask us to leave the place. [...] (But) I shall want to go back when there is peace and we have our home (in Afghanistan), and the hardships have been alleviated.

Corresponding to Farahnoush, Aarash – another respondent of this research who was born in Pakistan – prefers repatriation over staying back in Pakistan. his case, however, is unique as he, in spite of being born here, has spent a significant part of his life in Afghanistan. Presenting a good example of integration, the following narrative of Aarash also provides an evidence of his love for his country – Afghanistan – that, consequently, urges him to think of repatriation.

4.8 Aarash's Narrative

Aarash is a resident of the Kababian refugee village Peshawar. His parents migrated from Jalalabad, which is the capital city of the Nangarhar province of Afghanistan. Born in Pakistan, Aarash has resided in two refugee villages, both in Peshawar division.

> I was born here in Pakistan. Previously my family lived in the Munda (refugee) camp; I was born there. When that camp was closed, we came here to this (Kababian) camp. It has almost been fifteen years that we are here.

He has not only paid frequent visits to Afghanistan but also has spent a significant part of his life there.

> I have visited Afghanistan several times. I have also lived there. During the Taliban rule, my mother was living here (in Pakistan) while I was there (in Afghanistan) with my grandmother. [...] I was eight years old when I went to Afghanistan. I stayed there for 10 to 12 years.
>
> When the Taliban rule ended there, high-magnitude bomb blasts started to (re)occur. My grandfather also died during that time. So, after his death, we came to Pakistan. [...] (After that too,) I have been going to Afghanistan. The last time I went was, probably in 2012, when there was not much strictness (on the border) regarding the passports.

Aarash does not think that there have come any significant differences in the lifestyle of his family while living in Pakistan. An important contributing factor to this is that both the regions are predominantly inhabited by the Pashtuns.

> We live in Peshawar – the area of the Pashtuns. That (Jalalabad) too is the area of the Pashtuns. Most the things are very much similar at the two places; the customs and norms are the same. There is not much difference. [...] Even the weather of the province we belong to and that of Peshawar is also very much alike.
>
> [...] We live a simple life [...] there is nothing very special. [...] We know of the culture of Afghanistan because we have relatives there [...] I do not feel much difference between the living style of Afghanistan and of here. [...] The customs and traditions here and those in Afghanistan are just the same, and the lifestyle of our family has not changed while living here. [...] Though the women dress a little differently (in Peshawar), the men, there too, wear *shalwar qamees*. The only difference is that they also wear a *wasket* over it (in Afghanistan), and here (in Peshawar) they do not.

Having relatives in Afghanistan not only connects him to his home country but also strengthens this connection by developing new relationships with the people living there. Aarash also briefly tells how this process is undertaken.

> My wife is my uncle's daughter. [...] Our first preference is to marry in our relatives; [...] 99 per cent of our relatives live in Afghanistan. [...] For this purpose, someone takes the proposal (for marriage) to Afghanistan, and when the proposal is accepted, then we arrange the marriages in the way the Afghans do. [...] (But) unlike some other nations in Afghanistan where there is a norm to take large amounts of money, going up to even 10 to 15 lac (rupees), we, in our family, do not take money (when marrying daughters). My sister got married two months before, and we did not take any money (from the groom's family).

His connection with Afghanistan is also retained through his involvement in celebration of different (national or cultural) days that are particular to Afghanistan. They are also joined in their festivities by the local Pakistani community.

> There, in Afghanistan, a day is celebrated known as Nowruz. It is the first day of the year. We celebrate it (in the refugee village) too. [...] The people, living here, sit together; the elders gather and narrate the history of Afghanistan and the history and significance of that day. [...] We celebrate it just like we celebrate Eid. [...] Many friends join us in these celebrations. Since Nowruz is a festivity, it is celebrated in Hayatabad and Kartarpura, where the Afghans as well as the Pakistanis become a part of the observance.

> [...] One day we celebrate is the Nowruz and one other is when Russia left Afghanistan. [...] We also celebrate the day when Ghazi Amanullah Khan freed Afghanistan from the British (refers to the third Anglo-Afghan war of 1919). [...] These are celebrated in the Afghan consulate, and we celebrate them here (in the refugee village) as well.

This, however, does not mean that Aarash is disengaged when it comes to the national days observed in Pakistan.

> (We celebrate) the 14th of august, the Kashmir day – there are many. We celebrate them with our Pakistani brothers; many of our friends are Pakistani. So when there is some function in the army stadium, we do go there; but only in the programs in which the Afghans are allowed. The ones in which the Afghans are not allowed, certainly we cannot be a part of them.

In addition to being eloquent in Pashayi, which is his mother tongue, Aarash is also fluent in Pashto and Urdu. His interaction with the ones residing in his area of residence and his formal education has facilitated him in doing so.

> Our mother tongue is Pashayi; it is very different from Pashto. [...] The community we have been living in is dominantly Pashtun. I have grown up in this community and this is how I learned Pashto. Even in Afghanistan, the two official languages are Pashto and Dari.
>
> [...] I got my (primary) education from the Afghan school in our (refugee) camp. I studied in the school till sixth grade. [...] Here in school too, the medium of instruction was Pashto. [...] We had Urdu as a subject in the primary school classes. But I have learned most (of Urdu) from my friends. Many Pakistanis live in this locality. There is the Bihari colony close by; Many Bihari people live there. They all speak Urdu.

The one major difference Aarash perceives between the cultural environment of Jalalabad and Peshawar is how the women are treated at the two places.

> There are no rights of women there in Afghanistan. If a woman gets ill, until the time she seeks permission from the male member of the family, she cannot even go to the hospital. This is also being practiced in our family (in Afghanistan).
>
> [...] Telling the truth, the value and respect of women – we have learned this from the people of Peshawar. It is more exercised here. It is not like this there in Afghanistan. [...] There the dominating figure is the male member of the family; whether he is the elder brother or anyone else, but everything will be on his will.
>
> [...] For instance, [...] if there is a person whose daughter is about to get married, he would not ask the girl about her consent, even he would not take the opinion of

> the girl's mother (his wife). But we, who are here (in Peshawar), especially ask the girl (of her view). This is something we have learned from the people here. We have come to know that how beneficial it is to ask from the girl and the impacts it has on the (concerned) lives.
>
> [...] Similarly, the girls of our family go to schools too; my sister and daughter both are in school at this time (of interview). But it was not like this previously, as in the case of my wife and other elder women. We have adopted this too from the people of Peshawar.

Apart from Peshawar, which is his city of residence, Aarash has also been to Islamabad and Lahore. He finds the environment and the people of the two cities somewhat different from those of Peshawar.

> The people of Islamabad and Lahore are a little open-minded, but the people of Peshawar are not. The difference between the behaviours of the people of Lahore and those of Peshawar is like that between those of Peshawar and Afghanistan. [...] I do not see any difference between us and the people of Peshawar. [...] But the people of Afghanistan are a little aggressive while the ones here, in Peshawar, are relatively cool-minded. [...] The people here are relatively more educated and also encourage the education of the girls.

The international matters of Pakistan with both Afghanistan and India, in addition to the domestic (security) conditions, have a direct impact on how the Afghan refugees are treated (by the public and the authorities) in Pakistan. The attack on the Army Public School (APS) Peshawar of December 2014 is of particular importance as the school is situated in close proximity of the Kababian refugee village.

> As such, we do not face any issues for being refugees. [...] Our friends do not exhibit such a (prejudiced) behaviour towards us because they know us. [...] Sometimes there is this problem (from the locals). [...] Recently when the tensions were raised between India and Pakistan, many people used to say that the Afghans support the Indians, and so we are also on the side of India.
>
> [...] But yes – this has certainly happened that whenever there has been a tension between the two governments (of Afghanistan and Pakistan), we have faced the consequences. [...] Police harassment is also an issue we sometimes experience.
>
> [...] We had not been in such situations previously. But when the APS school incident occurred, we faced much trouble. That too was not from the public but from the government. And in the Muharram days too, we are not allowed to go out of the camp. So if you go out, the police will arrest you.

Aarash is of the view that any experiences of prejudice or discrimination do not influence his inclination for repatriation. Yet, he also mentions of the refugees who repatriated following the APS Peshawar attack of December 2014.

> I understand that what the Pakistan government does, it is out of necessity. They try to ensure the protection of the citizens. So, (to me) this does not matter much. (Usually,) those individuals repatriate who do not have any problem and have some work set up in Afghanistan. But many people repatriated from here following the APS incident.

He refers to Pakistan as his first home; where, in comparison to Afghanistan, he feels safer and more comfortable.

> If I say that my first home is Pakistan, it won't be wrong. Because I am born here, and I have spent my life here. Whenever we go to Afghanistan, we feel a little afraid of the people there. But when we cross the border and enter Pakistan, it feels as if we are back to our own home. [...]
>
> [...] In Afghanistan, there will be a weapon in every house. Previously, we had it here too. But then when we got older, of 17 or 18 years, my father thought that we might create trouble in some way. Now we have nothing. [...] We do not even have a big knife in our home.
>
> [...] The problem is that the people there (in Afghanistan) lack patience. Those people really like to fight. Here you make a mistake and apologise, they will just be fine. But, in Afghanistan, if you apologise to someone, they think that you are being sorry because you are afraid of them. This happened with us once.
>
> We were four to five friends who went to Afghanistan when the Karzai government came. There was a place specified for the mosque and we did not know that. So, when we stepped in there with shoes, all the people of the market came after us and called us infidels. [...] We told them that we did not have an idea of that and apologised several times, but they did not let us go and intended to lock us in a room. We, however, escaped in some way.

At the same time, Aarash, despite exhibiting concerns over the (economic) reintegration following the return of the refugees to Afghanistan, is still inclined towards repatriation. His strong association with Afghanistan and his Afghan-ness serve as the motivating factors in the matter.

> No matter how long we live here, even if we live here for a hundred years, we still will remain Afghan. We are Afghans and we shall return (to Afghanistan). [...] I do want to repatriate to Afghanistan; Afghanistan is our country. [...] One should love one's country. [...] But the problem is that when we go there, we should have

> some money to start our business. The economy (of Afghanistan) is a major problem. It is very difficult to get a job there.

The lack of employment opportunities in Afghanistan is a concern for Aarash, but Afsoon is more concerned with the freedom and sense of security she was able to acquire upon taking refuge to Pakistan. her narrative is unique in itself as she begins with her journey of migration. Taking the reader/listener through the life she has spent in Pakistan, she also relates her experience of (self-induced) repatriation which she has already attempted but it did not turn out to be sustainable.

4.9 Afsoon's Narrative

Afsoon (age not known precisely but more than sixty years) lives in the Akora Khattak refugee village established by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) – Pakistan in the district of Nowshera, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) province. She migrated to Pakistan with her family i.e. husband and children (three daughters and two sons) taking the Parachinar route from Afghanistan to Pakistan; 2019 marks 36 years of the migration they undertook. Elaborating upon the circumstances that led them to taking refuge, she narrates,

> We were among the first ones to come (from our area) to Pakistan. That day, we were having our meal, we had the chapatti and the butter in front of us, and instantaneously the bombardment started. It was so intense that we left the fresh meal in the mud pots as it is. And we left (our home) just like that – very suddenly. Our animals and pet dogs tried to follow us on our journey to Pakistan. But we left everything there – everything. [...] We had our own lands and fields there. [...] We even had to leave the pet puppies behind.
>
> I was outside the animal shed when the bombing started. The jets were flying so low that I felt my soul escape my body. The heavy bombing had turned the day into night. The jets continued to fly overhead until we reached the Pakistan border. Two of my brothers and one sister got martyred during that; and the rest of us reached safely here. Many other (extended) family members also got martyred during the entire episode.

Afsoon continues with sharing her experience of the journey they had undertaken to escape these life-threatening circumstances.

> On our travel from Afghanistan to Pakistan, it was raining very heavily. It rained for two or three consecutive days. During those days, I also gave birth to a daughter.
>
> [...] Our first place of refuge was at some distance from Hangu (in the Kohat division). (We) stayed there for a month or two. [...] At that time, we did not even have the things of daily need. I spent my time just sitting like this; we did not have anything to lie down on. [...] We had nothing with us except for some cushions. [...] (Contrarily,) those who went to the office (supporting refugees), they got tents and bedding for themselves.
>
> [...] The men then went to Peshawar. There, they were told that there is a new camp being established in Akora Khattak and that they can move to that place. We had some animals with us; we sold them there (in Peshawar) before coming here. Different people (then) collectively arranged a car to come here.

In the Akora Khattak refugee village, the initial days of Afsoon and her family were not that easy.

> When we came here, there was nothing. These were all gardens here; my husband got this land (assigned to him) and then we made our house here. [...] These people also used to take rent from us, two or three hundred rupees (per month). But then we raised our voices against it, and they then stopped doing so.
>
> [...] I, along with my children, have built this (mud) house. Even these walls, I have built them with my children. My sons would give me bricks and stones and I would mix sand with them to be used for construction. And then I would ask them to build the walls while I would be standing there. I kept them involved at all the steps, so the people do not laugh at them that their mother is working and they are not. [...] Then we (collectively) made a tandoor. People from 23 families used to come to this Tandoor here to make chapattis for their families.

The feeble health of her husband also contributed to the challenges faced by the family in settling in Pakistan, the refugee village included.

> Previously, I used to earn money for my family by stitching clothes, bed sheets, and other things of such sorts. [...] My husband was not well (then); he has a heart problem and disability too, so he cannot work much. [...] But still he used to do some work because our children were young at that time. But now, he is not well at all, so our children do all the work and earn money.

The environment of Pakistan introduced the family to a relatively new social and cultural identity. Afsoon explains the approach they took in this environment.

> When we were there (in Afghanistan), we followed their traditions. But when we came here, we adopted the (certain) ways of this place. [...] However, mostly, we follow our lifestyle. [...] We live in Pakistan, so we certainly know the culture of Pakistan. [...] Despite this, we cannot assimilate with them. [...] Unlike you people, whose flour lasts for a month, ours (in the same quantity) lasts only for four days because our families are bigger.
>
> [...] The way we conduct our festivities, like marriages etc., it is the same as the old one; we arrange them as per our traditions. It is just that certain changes have come in the language and the dressing preferences. [...] We like your language more than ours. [...] The children have adopted the dress of the locals here. [...] If you leave my children among Pakistanis, no one will be able to recognize that they are Afghans and the rest are Pakistanis. [...] When our people (from Afghanistan) come to visit us, they say that we are dressed as the Pakistanis do. Our girls wear the dresses like Pakistanis, but we, the older people, wear our Afghan clothes. [...] The food is (also) like (what) the people of Pakistan (cook).

A reason of the adoption of certain elements of the host culture may be the exposure of Afsoon‘s family to various regions of Pakistan as well as the interaction with the members of the hosting community. Her home, being close to the entrance of the refugee village (where they continue to live because of lack of resources to afford a house outside the village) and the dispensary (in the refugee village) adds to the likelihood of her family members interacting with the local people coming to avail the health facility.

> We are spread all over Pakistan. My sisters, with their families, reside in Peshawar. [...] We have our relatives at other places (in Pakistan) as well; Lahore, Hangu, Swabi, etc. we go to all these places to visit them. [...] (In addition to the Afghans,) Pakistanis also come to our home. [...] They often come to our place whenever they come to the hospital (dispensary) set up for the Afghans here, and then I prepare meal for them. [...] Sometimes, the female police also come and the polio team too. And when we go to the hospital (dispensary), we also find many Pakistanis there. They all behave very nicely with us. [...] We have been, and are still, spending a really good life with the Pakistanis.

Though Afsoon exhibits positive sentiments towards Pakistan (and the Pakistanis), she displays a sense of rather confusion over which country to identify herself to.

> We came here (in the time of trouble), and Pakistan gave us the place (to live). [...] We have spent our lives here. [...] Though we earn our own living, Pakistan

> has, however, supported us. [...] May Allah keep Pakistan prosperous; it has given us a lot, at least we are spending our lives with respect and *haya*. [...] As long as we live here, we shall consider ourselves Pakistani, and when we go back, we shall call ourselves Afghans.

Despite this confusion, Afsoon shows little inclination towards repatriation; instead, she narrates her experience of attempting to repatriate which did not work out.

> Twenty years back, we went to Afghanistan. We went there to see if we could settle there, but no, we cannot. [...] We tried to establish our lives (in Afghanistan), but it was difficult (for us) to adjust there. [...] We returned (to Pakistan) again. [...] Most of our relatives also went back to Afghanistan, and they all have returned (to Pakistan).
>
> [...] Many (Afghan refugees) are born here, grown up here, and have lived their lives here. [...] They do not want to return to Afghanistan. [...] When we were going back to Afghanistan, my daughter was very upset; she did not want to go there. My son asked her not to worry and said that they are born in Pakistan and will remain Pakistanis (wherever they go). [...] They did not seem like the Afghan citizens; this is why they found it really hard to live there. [...] They used to respond by saying that they are like Pakistanis because they have spent their lives in Pakistan.

The (perceived) circumstances in Afghanistan also contribute to Afsoon on not deciding to repatriate at the present.

> We got freedom upon coming here (to Pakistan). But if we return (to Afghanistan), we shall have to take sides (between the conflicting parties), and this would mean that we can suffer loss of lives. [...] What shall we do in our country if there is no peace? [...] If we go back to Afghanistan, [...] my children get murdered or martyred in front of me, then what is the purpose of going there. [...] Whatever the situation may be (in Pakistan), but my children are with me here safe and sound. There, we were rich, we owned property, had land everything, but we left all behind. If there is no peace, no security for life of your children, then what are these things worth for? [...] We may be financially stable (in Afghanistan), even then we do not want to live there.
>
> [...] We are lying in between; (we do not know) if Afghanistan will accept us or Pakistan will. [...] If they (Pakistani authorities) do not let us live here and force us to leave, then we certainly will have to go (to Afghanistan) regardless of the dangers we face there.

4.10 Synthesising the Narratives of the Afghan Refugees

The purpose of presenting these narratives was to give the readers/listeners the details of the accounts offered by the refugees. Moreover, to fulfil the aims of this research, it was guided by three research questions, which are:

- How have the Afghan refugees experienced/ undergone the process of acculturation in Pakistan?
- What are the prospects of repatriation of Afghan refugees from Pakistan considering the acculturation they have experienced? and
- What are the opportunities or threats acculturation poses to their repatriation?

These three questions are answered using qualitative research in the form of narrative inquiry – which facilitated the researcher to dig deeper into the research topic and allowed her to present the accounts of the respondents in their actual words. The narratives generated in this study have helped the researcher to assess the strategies different Afghan refugees, while residing in Pakistan, have consciously or unconsciously taken up for their acculturation in their respective hosting communities. Three strategies, out of the four, are identified for the participants of this research. These three are assimilation, integration, and separation while marginalisation is found for none. Most of the participating refugees are inclined towards extending their stay in their hosting communities and appreciate the idea of getting naturalised in Pakistan. Even the ones who are determined to repatriate are much concerned, in particular, for their economic reintegration in the Afghan community. In comparison, the ones who tend not to repatriate have concerns for both – economic and social – reintegration.

The ones living outside the villages established for them by the UNHCR were found to be more integrated, and assimilated in one particular case, than the ones inhabiting the refugee villages. The two refugees who exhibited their determination to repatriate were both who lived in the refugee villages, one in Peshawar and the other in Mianwali, and quite interestingly, they both were born in Pakistan. two other respondents residing in the refugee villages, again one male (relatively integrated) and one female (relatively separated) and from the same two cities, expressed an inclination towards going back to Afghanistan but simultaneously mentioned of their family members,

children in particular, who do not want to do so. Both of these refugees were the ones who undertook migration in their early adulthood. Four of the nine narratives reveal a clear preference for local integration over repatriation; three of them were found to be much integrated while one to be completely assimilated in the societies they live in. Two of these four refugees are the ones born in Pakistan. Only one of these four is a female and resides in the refugee village, though very much close to the local population. The one last respondent, a female who migrated to Pakistan as a four-year-old child, employs a combination of strategies for acculturation depending upon the physical context she is in; practising integration when in public spaces, she is more inclined to abide by separation whenever she can. Also, she is the only respondent who neither wants to repatriate nor locally integrate but wants to opt for resettlement in a third country.

These narratives provided details of their experiences and of their interaction with the environment they inhabit. A diversity can be figured out in these narratives; not only because the life experiences of each individual are unique but also because each one, depending upon his/her experiences, has been impacted differently and, consequently, has taken a unique approach towards his/her life in Pakistan. For instance, while living in the same refugee village, Amardad is integrated and only shows an inclination towards repatriation, but Farahnoush practises separation for herself and is determined to repatriate. The analysis of these narratives leads to the identification of three acculturation strategies; assimilation, integration, and separation. Assimilation is observed for Najeeb, separation for Farahnoush and somewhat for Hesther too, and all the rest exhibit elements of integration; though Zarafshan tends to limit her interaction with the members of the hosting community when not at her work place. the insights revealed through these narratives are elaborated in the discussion following this section, which attempts to theorise them and put them in perspective.

5 UNTANGLING THE NEXUS OF ACCULTURATION, REPATRIATION AND IDENTITY IN AFGHAN REFUGEES

This research was aimed to understand the identity dynamics of the Afghan refugees residing in Pakistan and how these identity dynamics shape their prospects for return to their country of origin – Afghanistan. In order to further build on the synthesis established in the previous chapter from the data (narratives of the Afghan refugees), this chapter employs theoretical reasoning to generate a discussion which details the approaches and choices taken (or likely to be taken) by the refugees originating from Afghanistan and residing in Pakistan. Furthermore, it also dwells upon how the identity has played an important role as the determinant of these attitudes and preferences.

5.1 Identity Dynamics and Acculturation

"Afghan" and "refugee" are two different social groups that both are merged as one for the Afghan refugees living in Pakistan. Though many individuals derive a sense of pride from their belongingness to the "Afghan" group, but, the "refugee" group is undesirable for most. With both these groups, there is not only a consensus over the membership of the individuals but is also perceived as such by the outsiders, and share some emotional involvement, either negatively or positively, in this common definition; thereby, satisfying the essentials to be referred to as a group presented by Tajfel and Turner (1979). Belonging to the common "Afghan" group, the Afghans speak multiple languages, e.g. Pashto, Persian, Pashayi, etc., and follow varying customs and traditions; exhibiting the internal diversity and distinctiveness within the larger group of "Afghans". What unites them under the label of "Afghan refugee" is their common country of origin – Afghanistan (and the culture associated to it) – and their experience of migration or being born to migrants. This categorisation is only significant in the context of Pakistan as their status as a refugee is only applicable in Pakistan which is their country of asylum.

5.1.1 Bureaucratic Identity – The Refugee Label

The migration of the Afghan citizens following the conflict in the country has subjected them to a new social and cultural context (of Pakistan) where they are to negotiate their hitherto formed identities. Furthermore, undertaking migration has put them into a situation where a new identity of being a refugee has been imposed on them, which has also been inherited by their children. Though not meant to be used as a label but for administrative purposes, it has united all the refugees under this identity referred to as the "bureaucratic identity" by Zetter (1991). Thus, in addition to being an Afghan, an individual is also identified as a refugee which may be regarded as a type identity (Fearon, 1999).

Social identity theory explains this through the concept of social categorisation (Tajfel, 1974). This, for the Afghan refugees, is not only contextual but also is influenced by the state of Pakistan. Thus, having being imposed on with a refugee label leaves them with a lesser control over how they wish to be identified; instead how others perceive them becomes more important (Stewart, 2008). This social categorisation leads to the socially constructed group identity of the Afghan refugees. Furthermore, the context of their hosting country – Pakistan – enables them to interact with the ones who do not share this identity with them, i.e. not Afghans and/or not refugees; thus providing sound grounds for social comparison, the third concept of the social identity theory (Tajfel, 1974), which is desirable only when it favours the ingroup. An individual is expected to avoid the identity from which he/she cannot derive positive aspects of his/her self-concept and associate himself/herself to the group that will positively contribute to his/her self-esteem (Tajfel, 1974).

Unlike the identity which a person holds with regards to his/her country of origin and is a relatively permanent identity, the refugee identity is a relatively temporary one. An individual may attempt to get rid of this identity since, in most cases, it is an undesirable label and may invite prejudice or discrimination from the public as well as the authorities (Colic-Peisker & Walker, 2003). Among the Afghan refugees, those who perceive this (refugee) identity as a disadvantaged one in comparison to the outgroup – the citizens of Pakistan – strive to escape from this identity by changing their ingroup i.e.,

through acquiring the nationality of Pakistan. As such an action is illegal as per the constitution of Pakistan, the refugees express their wish for Pakistan to change its policy concerning the Afghan refugees. This is quite evident from the narrative of Jansher who thinks that the troubles he is facing, in the form of police harassments or difficulties in obtaining employment, are all because of him being a refugee. And to avoid them all, he wants to acquire the citizenship of Pakistan. But the case with the Afghan identity is somewhat different than the refugee label.

5.1.2 The Afghan Identity

One of the consequences of the social identity phenomenon, as per the social identity theory, is ingroup affiliation. Almost all the participant refugees of this research exhibited an affiliation for the Afghan people, then they may be residing in Afghanistan or Pakistan. This was apparent from their preference for Afghan people, or relatives in particular, for establishing new relations through marriage. The narrative of Zarafshan presents in much detail her affiliation for the ingroup members, i.e. Afghans, when she relates how, despite studying in private and public educational institutions amongst the Pakistani students, her best friends in school, college, and even in her professional degree were all Afghans because of the natural connection she felt with them which was missing in the case of the Pakistani friends.

The emotional attachment with the social group of Afghans extends further to the place that binds them together, i.e. Afghanistan. Different individuals exhibit this association with the place in different forms and through different attitudes or actions. For instance, Aarash is inclined towards repatriation because he is driven by the love for his country while Hesther depicts her connection with the land of Afghanistan by burying her loved ones there, though they died in Pakistan. But this is not the case with Jansher who associates himself more with Pakistan and also has his parents buried in Islamabad.

The identity of being an Afghan refugee gains salience when in the environment which enables the interaction with Pakistani citizens. Thus, the “Afghan refugee” identity is less significant when all the individuals (being considered) belong to the same group. Contenting with Hogg and Terry (2000), belonging to the group of “Afghan refugee”

does not mean that the members cannot be associated with some other social group. The multiple social identities of the Afghans also incorporate their membership in the subgroup of the nation (or tribe) they belong to, which changes the outgroup for that particular context. Thus, the salient identity, which is contextually more relevant and determines the behaviour in that setting as is explained by the self-categorisation theory (Turner, 1999), also changes. The case of Farahnoush, who has an almost negligible interaction with the local community members, alludes to this notion. Since her interaction is only with the Afghans mostly residing in the same refugee village as hers, she goes beyond the differentiation of Pakistanis and Afghans – by drawing distinction between her own nation, i.e. Pashayi, and the rest, e.g. Qandahari, and presents her nation as being better than the others.

The Afghans, despite being different from one another when considering the different tribes and ethnicities they belong to, exhibit certain group processes like unity and shared norms and traditions. Turner, in self-categorisation theory, has elucidated this through depersonalisation (Hogg et al., 1995). Depersonalisation is realised through multiple means in the Afghan refugees residing in Pakistan, but it has most to do with them being "Afghan" and not with "refugee". Some of the characteristics of the prototype of an Afghan (derived from the common attributes mentioned or observed during the interviews), which emerge as a consequence of depersonalisation, include maintaining a patriarchal system, abiding by the traditional gender roles, being hospitable, not having furniture in their homes, and following the traditional Afghan clothing especially by the women. Additionally, Zarafshan also mentioned of being well familiar with the Persian language, which is one of the two official languages of Afghanistan, as one of the criteria of knowing if someone is "more Afghan" than the other. Residing in Pakistan, however, influences their abilities to realise this prototype.

The social and cultural environment for the refugees is not the same all over Pakistan. The ones residing in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province of Pakistan experience a relatively less cultural shock because of the province dominated by the Pashtun community which exhibits a lesser cultural distance for the Afghans; the case of the refugees living in the Punjab province is, however, different. One of the elements of the

definition of intergroup conflict, presented by Ting-Toomey (1994), is the "perceived and/or actual incompatibility of values". Since values form an important component of the culture of any group, the cultural divide plays a significant role in determining how the identity will be negotiated in any context. A smaller cultural distance facilitates the integration or assimilation of the refugees in the hosting community, since the retention of the home culture as well as the interaction with the new community members is easy to achieve in such circumstances (Colic-Peisker & Walker, 2003; Prentice & Miller, 2000). Thus, the approach towards identity negotiation and the consequent strategies exercised for acculturation, and the factors influencing the process, are found to be unique for each case depending upon his/her experience with the hosting community.

Probably, because of this, the only case of assimilation – Najeeb – was observed in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa where he did not even have to learn any new language for communicating effectively with the local citizens. It may be argued that Najeeb did not experience a significant conflict between his Afghan identity and the (dominant) local Pashtun identity. Therefore, in the context where he did not have to face substantial concerns over his Afghan identity, there was a minimal need for him to negotiate his face (identity). Some other factors contributing to his assimilation are him living outside the refugee village, among the local population, and being involved in the business in the local market which encourage his interactions with the inhabitants of the locality he resides in as well as the businessmen from within and outside his city of residence.

Furthermore, Najeeb also explicitly associated himself with the superordinate identity of the Pashtuns, instead of identifying himself with Afghans. Gaertner and Dovidio (2000) have argued that association with the superordinate group can reduce intergroup conflicts i.e. between the subgroups of that superordinate group. it may be argued that when an individual (an Afghan refugee in this case) finds his/her subgroup as the disadvantaged social group, he/she may tend to identify himself/herself with a bigger group which will, consequently, change the (perceived) outgroup and let the individual derive a sense of satisfaction or positive self-esteem from belonging to the superordinate group (which is the Pashtun identity in this case). In this research as well, this inclination was observed for the one who wishes to get naturalised in Pakistan and does not want to

exercise repatriation. But the approaches of the refugees vary with the environments they are exposed to.

The ones living in Punjab are found to experience a relatively greater cultural distance upon their initial interactions with their hosting community; this demanded for extra-efforts on their part in order to negotiate their identity and integrate in the society they live in. the narrative of Amardad presents the readers/listeners with the detailed account of how experience and environment helped him acculturate in the society where, in the beginning, he was even unable to converse with the local population because of being unaware of the language they spoke. Oetzel and Ting-Toomey (2003) have referred to it as the socialisation process which determines the behaviour and approach of any individual towards negotiating his/her identity upon encountering a (intergroup) conflict.

Schwartz et al. (2006) have argued that the influence of the (relatively distant) cultural identity of the hosting community can be observed in various forms; for example, acquisition of the language of the receiving community, change in the belief system of the immigrants etc. Multiple narratives, included in this research, depict this influence of the hosting community. Learning Urdu is one example, which can be found in the narratives of Amardad, Farjaad, Jansher, and Zarafshan. Furthermore, Zarafshan also highlights some other effects of the hosting culture by mentioning of having furniture in her home and finding comfort in routinely wearing the "Punjabi dress". This, however, does not implicate that the Afghan refugees have not retained any elements of their own culture.

All the refugees, narratives of whom are previously given, despite learning (and being fluent in) the dominant language of the community they reside in, speak their own (native) languages at their homes or when among the relatives. The settings of homes of all the refugees, except the one already mentioned, followed the traditional Afghan style. Also, all the participants of this research mentioned of arranging events, like marriages, in the Afghan way; following the traditions and customs of the region their families have come from. Since the regions (of Afghanistan) are different for different respondents, there is a variation in the practices they observe – but everyone has retained this part of their original culture. Unlike the wedding ceremonies which are organised and celebrated

in the same manner as were (are) done in their respective regions in Afghanistan, there are certain celebrations or festivities that have lost their existence in the lives of many Afghan refugees residing in Pakistan.

Another way in which the hosting culture has influenced the refugees is their non-observance of the cultural or national days of Afghanistan. No refugee, the narratives of whom are included in this research, except for Aarash have mentioned of observing cultural celebrations, like Nowruz, or national days of Afghanistan during their stay in Pakistan; either because they no longer find it (religiously) right to do so or because this is not the trend in the locality they reside in. the connection with the cultural background and its strength also act as determinants of this behaviour, and the identification with that group is reinforced through the involvement of the individual in activities like these (Ethier & Deaux, 1994). Among the narratives included, that of Aarash is a perfect example to illustrate this idea. He has not only expressed a strong emotional connection with (the culture and land of) Afghanistan but also associates himself quite strongly with the Afghan identity. In addition to this, the factors, mostly the ones which are referred to as exogenous variables by Lee and Frongillo (2003), influencing acculturation, and consequently repatriation, are dwelled upon in the following section.

5.2 Other Factors Affecting Acculturation and Repatriation

The acculturation of the Afghan refugees in Pakistan not only depends upon the social (and cultural) identities which they brought along with themselves during migration but is equally dependent upon the social and cultural environment of the community wherein they reside after taking refuge. For Phinney et al. (2001), acculturation is concerned with the retention of the prior culture as well as the adoption of the culture the migrants are exposed to following migration. The adoption of this culture is less likely without the interaction with the members of the hosting community, and therefore, Berry's (1992; 1997) two determinants – interaction with the host community and retention of the old culture – are primarily used to study the acculturation

process for the Afghan refugees. Several factors, however, influence this process, which are discussed in this section.

Berry et al. (1989) regard the prejudice or discrimination experienced by the immigrants as one of the determinants for the acculturation strategies. This research has analysed that such experiences impact different refugees differently. Two of the participants of this research, Aarash and Jansher – who have mentioned of experiencing prejudice or discrimination on the part of the local population or the authorities, still were able to integrate in their respective hosting communities. Both of them, as well as Hesther, are of the view that interacting with the refugees, and subsequently knowing them better, leads to reduced discriminatory tendencies on the part of the general public. But Zarafshan views the discrimination, practised structurally and legally, against the Afghan refugees as an element which hinders her integration in Pakistan and, somehow, contributes to her having some sense of discontentment with the life she is spending in Pakistan. A similar is the case observed for Farjaad who also talks of discrimination exercised mostly by authorities.

The experiences of police harassments of Aarash and Jansher may be explained through different factors. Being distinguishable through physical features may contribute to an individual's vulnerability to prejudice or discrimination and vice versa (Colic-Peisker & Walker, 2003). Jansher is a resident of Islamabad, a city where the Pashtun population is in minority, and thus, he can be recognised as an Afghan depending upon his physical features. Contrarily, Aarash lives in Peshawar which is the city dominated by the Pashtun population. But his residence in the refugee village makes him vulnerable to police harassment, especially when the village he inhabits, Kababian, is situated quite close to the Army Public School which was attacked by the terrorists in 2014. Prejudice or discrimination impacts the level of interaction of the refugees with the hosting community; the employment of the refugees in the societies they reside in does the same but in a different manner.

Colic-Peisker and Walker (2003) have argued that employment also plays an important role in accelerating the acculturation process towards integration for the immigrants. This is also true for the Afghan refugees living in Pakistan – where the

nature of their jobs was found to contribute to their acculturation experiences irrespective of gender. Since all the male refugees interviewed were into earning a living for their families, their jobs let them interact with the respective local community members on a regular basis. This not only facilitated them in developing relationships with the local population but, through this, also helped them integrate in the society. The only working female refugee interviewed for this research is Zarafshan. For her too, being a doctor has assisted her in maintaining a routine interaction with the local community members in addition to the Afghans who come to see her for consultation.

But in the case of Zarafshan, being educated in a private school and then in a public institution for her professional degree also facilitated her in getting to know the local community better and develop friendships with them. Similarly, Farjaad was able to learn Urdu and Saraiki which is the local dialect of Punjabi. The importance of formal education in the country of (asylum or) immigration is also backed by the literature (Lee & Frongillo, 2003). This research, however, also presents an exception to this hypothesis. Though Farahnoush is also formally educated in Pakistan, her case is different because she acquired education from the school established by the UNHCR in the refugee village where almost all the students are also Afghans. Contrary to employment, some other factors, like the socio-economic status and age, have a role to play in how the cultural identity of the refugees is impacted while their stay in the hosting community.

Berry (2001) has indicated certain factors that influence the acculturation process for the immigrants. In this research too, the socio-economic conditions were found to be important when it comes to retaining a particular culture. This is quite evident from the narrative of Jansher who attempts to retain the part of the culture which he can afford to, but at the same time, he is unable to keep certain cultural or traditional practices (like celebrating Nowruz or having Kabuli Pulao) as a part of his life because of no other reason than his socio-economic conditions which do not let him do so. Moreover, age and generational status are generally regarded to play an important role when studying the acculturation strategies opted by the immigrants. In this research, however, no set pattern was found; the only assimilation case was observed for Najeeb who undertook migration in his teenage. All the rest, whether the ones who themselves migrated to Pakistan or the

ones born here, exhibited integration except for Farahnoush, who despite being born in Pakistan, exercises separation while Hesther, not truly integrated, may be regarded as relatively separated.

The exception of Farahnoush and Hesther both may be because of their gender; the women are not expected, in most cases, to go out and interact with the strangers; instead are to look after the household tasks. Simultaneously, it may be argued that their age had some role to play in the openness of the refugees to relatively new ideas or values. The younger refugees, e.g. Aarash and Farahnoush, were more welcoming to adopting the new beliefs or practices (from the hosting community) than the older refugees, e.g. Afsoon and Hesther. Aarash, for instance, mentioned of adopting values like giving respect to women and taking their opinions in important decisions of life. Farahnoush, though has not adopted these practices, wishes to celebrate events of personal life and create opportunities for amusement in the form of trips etc. younger age also makes acquiring a new language easy and the clothing preferences also varied for young girls and older women; the former dressed more like their hosting community members while the latter tended to retain their traditional dressing. These all, in one way or the other, contribute to the prospects for repatriation of these refugees.

Rogge (1991) has identified two sets of factors as determinants of the likelihood for repatriation and its success; one of them is with regards to the experiences of the refugees in the country of asylum. The experiences of the Afghan refugees during their stay in Pakistan can well be explained and understood through acculturation. With acculturation already discussed, the same factors are considered for repatriation and the link between acculturation and repatriation is explored for the Afghan refugees residing in Pakistan.

Age and generational status are not found to play any significant role in determining the likelihood of repatriation. The two refugees, Farahnoush and Aarash, who are quite certain of their intentions to repatriate are both the ones born in Pakistan. The level of education has, however, some role to play. Zarafshan, the only refugee interviewed who has a professional degree, is also the only refugee who expresses the desire for resettlement in a third country. All the rest of the refugees interviewed either

talked of returning to Afghanistan or staying in Pakistan, maybe because of their unawareness with this third possible solution. In addition to this, the two refugees, Amardad and Hesther, despite exhibiting an inclination to repatriate, are also influenced by their family associations. Both the refugees, nearing 60 years in age, are also considerate of the choices made by their children. Keeping this in view, they are less likely to repatriate because their practical approach towards repatriation will be based on what their children decide, and both of them are of the opinion that their children (the ones in the position of decision-making) do not want to exercise repatriation.

Home, for all Afghan refugees, does not essentially mean the place they belong to in Afghanistan. Though it provides most of them with a shared history, Black (2002) also includes the relationships and networks in the defining characteristics of the home. The narratives of Jansher and Farjaad clearly illustrate why they both have a greater association with Pakistan; because they find home in the place they currently reside in. they have developed their relationships and social networks in their respective areas of residence and, therefore, are not inclined towards repatriation as the place (in Afghanistan) that once was home for their parents is no longer home for these two who were born in Pakistan. According to Zetter (1994), the refugees who are less assimilated or integrated are more likely to repatriate to their country of origin. The narrative of Farahnoush offers a perfect example in this regard. Clearly spending her life in separation, with a minimal to no interaction with the local community members, she wishes to repatriate so she may be able to live among the people whom she refers as her own. Aarash, however, presents a different case. Though integrated, he still exhibits a strong inclination towards repatriation. This may be explained through his love for Afghanistan; spending a significant part of his life there also contributes to the matter.

The conditions in the home country also are important when considering the prospects for repatriation and its durability (Rogge, 1991). The refugees interviewed for this research, those who exhibited inclination towards repatriation as well as those who do not wish to return to Afghanistan, all have raised concerns over the reintegration of refugees in Afghanistan, be it economic, social or both. The narrative of Afsoon presents the readers/listeners with a good example of an unsustainable attempt of repatriation. in

addition to exhibiting a confusion over her identity in terms of association with one of the two countries (Afghanistan and Pakistan), her reasons of returning back to Pakistan, after exercising repatriation, were more related to the social integration of her children who had spent their entire lives in Pakistan. This also shows that protracted stays add complexity to the practice of repatriation and thus, require for special considerations which should be case specific.

6 CONCLUDING REMARKS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Migration, internal or international, is influenced by a multiple range of factors; push and pull alike, in addition to the intervening obstacles and personal factors. A significant segment of the international migrants comprises of refugees; the on-going conflicts playing a key role in the matter. Afghanistan has, for decades, remained one of the leading countries from where the refugees have originated, and Pakistan continues to be the leading host of these refugees. Migration, demanding for an interdisciplinary approach for its study, cannot be understood in depth without taking into account the associated phenomenon like acculturation. Therefore, this research attempted to study the process of acculturation as experienced by the Afghan refugees residing in Pakistan, what strategies they employed for the purpose, and what factors influenced these strategies. This study also endeavoured to explore and understand the subsequent impacts of acculturation and the factors in action on the tendency of the refugees to return to Afghanistan, which is the durable solution adopted for them through the tripartite commission (Afghanistan, Pakistan, and UNHCR).

By means of narratology and narrative inquiry, this research included the narratives of nine refugees, five from within the refugee villages established by the Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees and four from outside. These narratives were generated through narrative interviewing which was realised in the form of unstructured conversational interviews from the refugees residing in Mianwali, Nowshera, Peshawar and Rawalpindi/Islamabad. Ensuring a maximum variation in the sample, the refugees belonged to different age groups and generational status. They also varied in terms of their socio-economic conditions and level of education. Multiple theories provided the theoretical foundations for this research. These included the social identity theory (proposed by Henry Tajfel), its extension – self-categorisation theory (proposed by John Turner), and the identity negotiation theory (proposed by Stella Ting-Toomey).

Keeping its focus on identity and the identity dynamics of the Afghan refugees residing in Pakistan, this research dealt with the bureaucratic or administrative identity imposed on the Afghan individuals during their stay in Pakistan in the form of the

refugee label while also incorporated the elements of their social (and cultural) identity as being Afghan. These theories, thus, provided the grounds to study how the "Afghan refugees" have negotiated their (administrative as well as cultural) identities and what strategies can be identified for their acculturation in Pakistan. The refugee label was generally found to be an undesirable identity that has been imposed on them by the state of Pakistan. Owing to the negative emotions associated with this administrative label, most of the Afghan refugees expressed the desire to escape it. This can be realised either by getting naturalised in Pakistan or by returning to Afghanistan which will change their context and the (contextual) refugee label will no longer be significant. However, most of the refugees derived a positive sense of self-concept from their Afghan identity, which plays an important role in their acculturation as the participants of this research derived their culture from their Afghan identity.

Characterised by two principal determinants – retention of the home culture and interaction with the host community – the acculturation strategies widely known in literature are assimilation, integration, separation (or segregation), and marginalisation. Three of these four, through this research, were found for the Afghan refugees participating in this study. They include assimilation, integration, and separation. All these three are practised by the refugees themselves and not imposed on them as is the case with segregation or marginalisation. In the context of Pakistan, establishing refugee villages does not implicate that the refugees are being segregated by keeping them confined to certain spaces. However, residing in a refugee village may allow the refugees to opt for separation, as interacting in their immediate neighbourhood would mean interacting with other Afghan refugees and not the members of the hosting community. Furthermore, it may also enable the refugees to differentiate amongst themselves based on the nation (tribe) they belong to. Contrarily, the Pashtun dominated society was observed to provide an enabling environment for assimilation of the Afghan refugees in the hosting community because of the relatively small cultural divide it offers to the Afghans. Certain other factors have also contributed to the process of acculturation for the Afghan refugees during their stay in Pakistan.

The factors that mostly accelerated the interaction of the Afghan refugees with the Pakistanis include their employment (associated with the role of earning the livelihood for the family) and getting formal education in Pakistan (though being educated from the school inside the refugee village does not contribute much). Both of these factors also facilitate the refugees in acquiring the language dominant in their respective hosting communities. Some other factors like prejudice or discrimination, also practised through police harassment, adversely influence the level of interaction with the local community members since it plays a role in restricting the movement of refugees – then it may be for a particular time or practised in general. These interactions are important when considering how the Afghan refugees have negotiated their identities in Pakistan. The more they interact with the local citizens, the more they come to know them and the more they are able to identify the similarities and differences between the two groups. Age and generational status is found to be important when it comes to the likelihood of the adoption of new cultural elements; younger refugees, mostly those born in Pakistan, are more receptive than the older ones who themselves migrated from Afghanistan. Since all the refugees have been residing in Pakistan for an extended period of time, their experiences, explained through acculturation, play a significant role in determining the tendencies of the Afghan refugees to repatriate.

The repatriation of the refugees from Pakistan to Afghanistan is an on-going process which is probably one of the most complex repatriations; owing to the protracted nature of exile and the identity negotiated, during this exile, as per the context of Pakistan. A refugee with a confused identity, i.e. not being able to identify either with Afghanistan or with Pakistan, may lead him/her in deciding to resettle in a third country. Age and generational status were not observed to play any noteworthy role in the prospects for repatriation of the Afghan refugees from Pakistan; though they were found to be one of the determinants of the preference of the Afghan refugees to repatriate. The older refugees exhibited an inclination for repatriation. However, this research indicates that expressing the wish to repatriate does not essentially mean that the refugee will exercise repatriation. Other factors like family associations and their wish to repatriate or stay also influence the likelihood of repatriation. Having good or strong relationships and networks developed in Pakistan also deter the refugees from returning to Afghanistan –

where these elements are missing. Contrarily, a strong association with the land or the people of Afghanistan encourages the refugees for repatriation. But repatriation is not only expected but also witnessed to be lacking durability and sustainability if the returnees fail to reintegrate economically and socially in Afghanistan. The acculturation experienced in Pakistan contributes to the reintegration of returning refugees in Afghanistan, as it is important in determining the place which the refugees would refer to as home.

6.1 Recommendations

The freedom to exercise the choice over selection from the three durable solutions suggested by the UNHCR should be accorded to the refugees. Mechanising repatriation, through establishing tripartite commissions, as is the case for the Afghan refugees (whether they are in Pakistan or Iran) may not prove to be as durable as is expected to be. In such situations, the refugees, instead of being given the opportunity to choose from the three solutions, are being imposed with one particular solution, i.e. repatriation, and the refugees can exercise voluntariness only in deciding when to repatriate which may also be impacted by the policies of the country of asylum including the deadline it sets for the refugees to repatriate. Protracted stay, as is the case of the Afghan refugees who have been living in Pakistan for decades, add complexity to the practice of repatriation. Therefore, plans for repatriation should not be formulated without the involvement of the refugees in the process, since they are the most important stakeholders in the entire matter. The elite stakeholders should not decide for all the individuals concerned; every refugee should be given the right to choose for himself/herself what he/she deems appropriate for him/her. Thus, a mechanism for repatriation may be set up, but it should not be imposed on the entire population of the refugees. Only then the true essence of "safe, dignified, and voluntary" repatriation can be realised which will, consequently, contribute to the durability and sustainability of repatriation.

6.2 Directions for Further Research

No case of marginalisation was found in this research. This, however, may be because of the selective sites visited and limited persons contacted by the researcher in order to find the potential participants for this study. Future researches can target the two voluntary repatriation centres established by the UNHCR in Pakistan to study the acculturation experienced by the ones who actually are repatriating unlike this study which merely focussed on the prospects of repatriation. Also, longitudinal researches may be carried out using multiple sources of data gathered at different times. Since narrative inquiry is a quite flexible approach, and the investigator carried out this study by decentring herself from the research topic – to focus only on what the participants reveal to her, further studies can take into account the personal narratives of the researchers. Furthermore, they can also be based on the role of the researcher in generating the narratives in the situations or settings as the ones created in this research.

This present research greatly relied on the social identity while paying little attention to the personal (role) identity influences on the process of acculturation; future studies can aim to do so. Besides, the future researches may focus on the different strategies towards acculturation that the members of the same family take up while living in the same place. Larger samples may be selected to conduct surveys regarding the strategies for acculturation and choice for repatriation, and the results then be complimented by qualitative analysis. In addition, this research only focussed on the acculturation of the refugees, but the future researches can also study the acculturation in hosting community members following the influx of refugees in their locality. The reverse acculturation can also be studied in the returnees i.e. the refugees who have repatriated to Afghanistan, and the experiences of the returnees from Iran and Pakistan maybe compared in such a study.

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