

## **Work, Organisations and Ethnography**

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### **Living the Code of Honour: Pashtunwali and Entrepreneurial Identity of Afghans in Peshawar**

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#### Abstract

This study employs *Pashtunwali* as an ideal type model (Ahmad, 1980) to analyze the entrepreneurial identity construction of Afghans entrepreneurs in Peshawar, (Pakistan). Adopting the processual view of entrepreneurship, the life history narratives of entrepreneurs provide a version of projected identity as well its journey through the temporal dimension anchored around the lived experience. Lived experience of Pashtuns, *Pashtunwali*, is mainly inscribed in poetry from which individuals draw conspicuously to construct their narrative of identity. *Pashtunwali*, as lived of honour of Pashtuns can be conceptualized as an ideal type model. The analyses of stories reveal that Self-Esteem (Path) act as the core tenant however it is built on the basis of other ideal types such as Bravery (Tora), Loyalty (Wafa) and Welfare (Kheegara). The entrepreneurial identity emerges from the interaction of ambit of various tenets of Pashtunwali within a given context.

Stream: Identity and Ethnography: dimensions, transitions, expressions

## **Introduction**

During the past 3 decades Afghans have established themselves as an integral part of social life of Peshawar, Pakistan where every fourth person is Afghan. They were never aliens in Peshawar as both sides of Durand line (a border separating Northern Pakistan from Afghanistan) is populated by ethnic Pashtuns. Albeit this affinity, Afghan Pashtuns can be easily differentiated from the natives (Pakistani Pashtuns) as they have a distinct life style such as their food habits, living conditions and livelihood practices. For instance, at tea, Afghan Pashtuns would place a separate medium size tea pot for each individual while Pakistani Pashtuns (Including myself) serve tea in a kettle to several people. Almost all the Afghan Pashtuns (From here on Afghans) in Peshawar are self-employed (as they are not officially recognized as Pakistani citizen) with many wealthy and noticeable businessmen. Thus doing a business is a necessity for an Afghan as they have no other source of subsistence but they have remarkably succeeded in their businesses although it never reflects in official statistics as most of them are unregistered. Afghan businesses have remained elusive as they have not been a subject of systematic research and have remained rather unexplored. Several factors have contributed to this outcome such as the absence of any statistics regarding Afghans and their businesses in Peshawar, fear of being exploited by tax authorities due to their status and the habit of keeping secrets. The subject however is of increasing importance as majority of Afghans are entrepreneurs by virtue of setting up their business. This paper aims to address this gap in knowledge to explore Afghan entrepreneurs by using a holistic perspective which can lead to in depth understanding. One such perspective is to entrepreneurial identity of Afghans by analysing their life history narratives. The paper firstly locates Afghan entrepreneurs in the light of current literature on entrepreneurship and proposes to use a dynamic process view of entrepreneurship. Secondly it elaborates the context by framing the ideal type model of 'Pashtunwali' and discussing the contest of Afghan migration. The third part examines how narratives can be conceptualized as ontological, epistemological and representational explains how entrepreneurial identity is manifested as life history narratives. In the fourth section two life history narratives are analysed for relationship between entrepreneurial identity and the pursuance of ideal type. The paper concludes in the final section.

## **A perspective on Afghan Entrepreneurs**

Entrepreneurship has been defined in a variety of ways and agreement on a single definition has been lacking. As a matter of fact this has cast doubt on the viability of entrepreneurship as distinct field of research. However regardless of this presumably sought after 'unified definition' entrepreneurship is getting ever increasing attention of all wakes of life including researchers, academicians, policy makers and organizations. The lime light attained by entrepreneurship today is convincing enough to advance its understanding rather than abandoning it. However the first issue that demands attention to define the what, how, and why of entrepreneurship. There is neither a consensus about the definition of entrepreneurship (Bruyat and Julien; 2001; Garland et al., 2004) nor a universal blueprint to explain an 'entrepreneur' (Gartner, 1988). The variability in definitions constructs a divergent notion of entrepreneurship oscillating between as narrow as few entrepreneurs in the world (for instance Schumpeter's creative destructor) to as broad as almost everyone being labelled an entrepreneurs broad (for example Kirzner's arbitrageur).

Since the coining of term 'entrepreneurship' by Richard Cantillon (Van Praag, 1999) it has been focused upon as an economic phenomenon by those interested in economic growth and its sustainability (Hart, 2003). However Joseph Schumpeter (1934) came up with a fully-fledged economic theory of entrepreneurship. According to him economic change is exogenous but an entrepreneur could bring about endogenous change in five different ways: introducing a new good; introducing a new method of production; exploiting a new market or new source of raw material, or new way of organizing the business. He further shed light on underlying motivations for an entrepreneur to 'go through uncertainty willingly', which would coincide with the dream to find a 'private kingdom'; the joy of creation, of getting things done, and an ambition to conquer. Schumpeter's concept of entrepreneur has been used (especially in technology sector) to qualify those as entrepreneurs whose offered services or products produce unprecedented profit. This view has narrowed down the scope and understanding of entrepreneurship in the sense that any creative service should reach and pass the market test 'with flying colours'.

However scholars have called for the need to broaden the horizons of entrepreneurship research beyond the economic sphere as segments of society use the economic sector for balancing resource need and availability, and for valuing worth (Porter,

1998). Thus economics theory alone should not dictate who an entrepreneur is? For this purpose it is necessary to turn back to the original conceptualization of an entrepreneur which emphasizes the notion of decision under uncertainty. Thus the unique ways of combining resources to maximize its yield can be categorized entrepreneurial acts. This can take into account the opportunity cost incurred and the final value produced by the entrepreneur's effort. Such elementary concept can be contextualized according to the given setting and operationalized as without any static means-ends framework. For example, if the entrepreneurship in public sector is under consideration then factors such as service delivery is the end while by creating maximum value (e.g. satisfaction of public) by making the most efficient use of resources while operating within the acceptable moral values and legal framework. In business sector, monetary gain can be one of the measures of success however other elements can be introduced in research framework. Focusing on the individual as entrepreneur can provide a common starting point.

Distinctions regarding who exactly can be identified as an entrepreneur are often drawn either on the basis of the kind of contribution made to particular business or societal sectors or in relation to specific activities one engages in. An example of the former is a 'social entrepreneur' contributing to the social sector through a social enterprise; the latter is characterised on the basis of who leads with ideas or rather follows and puts 'things to use' (Baumol et al., 2007). Specifically, innovative entrepreneurs are those introducing an original idea and making a ground-breaking discovery. Replicative entrepreneurs exploit an innovation in terms of reaping its best benefits. Thus, replicative entrepreneurship, at the individual level, can become a source of self-employment – a fundamental motivator for an entrepreneur.

Replicative entrepreneurs play a crucial role in the economy although they are less 'glamorous'. "Replicative entrepreneurship is important in most economies because it represents a route out of poverty a mean by which people with little capital, education or experience can earn a living" (Baumol et al., 2007: 3). Thus entrepreneurship can be seen as an inherent 'human potential' which has always been present in societies, being allocated to societal sectors for which it would bring the best payoff (Baumol, 1996). Taking this as basis some authors (e.g. Steyaert and Hjorth, 2006) call for broadening the horizons and search for the 'entrepreneurial potential', especially in developing contexts. Implications can have diverse effects on the ground like providing practical frameworks for filtering out

entrepreneurial businesses while doing research (Davidson, 2004) or promoting self-employment also in the most disadvantaged parts of the world. A renowned example of the latter is Muhammad Yunus's Grameen Bank supporting very poor people through micro-financing. As the Nobel winner (1997) points out, researchers have a role to play in the dynamics between economics and development; research practices in developing countries should be scrutinized as they are far from fruitful currently:

*We got too much bogged down by abstract theories... And models and things, and we started thinking that's the reality - and if it doesn't match the outside world, then we start blaming the others. So they're inefficient or they're bad or there's something wrong with their culture. We don't try to find out what the reality is and how to explain that reality (Worldfocus, 1997)*

This comment can be extended to entrepreneurship research because of a strong tendency to reduce the concept of entrepreneurship either to some traits (e.g. Gartner, 1989; Bird, 1989; Baron, 1998; McClelland, 1961) or characteristics of entrepreneurs or to exogenous effects and economic contingencies, and to do so in a predominantly Western fashion. Current approaches can thus only capture part of the complexity of entrepreneurship as they reduce the rich phenomenon to the mere mobilisation of resources or to a value addition exercise (Steyaert and Bouwen, 1997). This paper attempts to redress the balance looking at entrepreneurship as a complex and dynamic phenomenon in terms of the lived experience of 'being an entrepreneur' in a situated context. That 'being' is part of an enacted and projected entrepreneurial identity as it perpetuates the entrepreneurial process – one that does neither dismiss the 'human-in-the-being' nor its inhabited socio-historical environment.

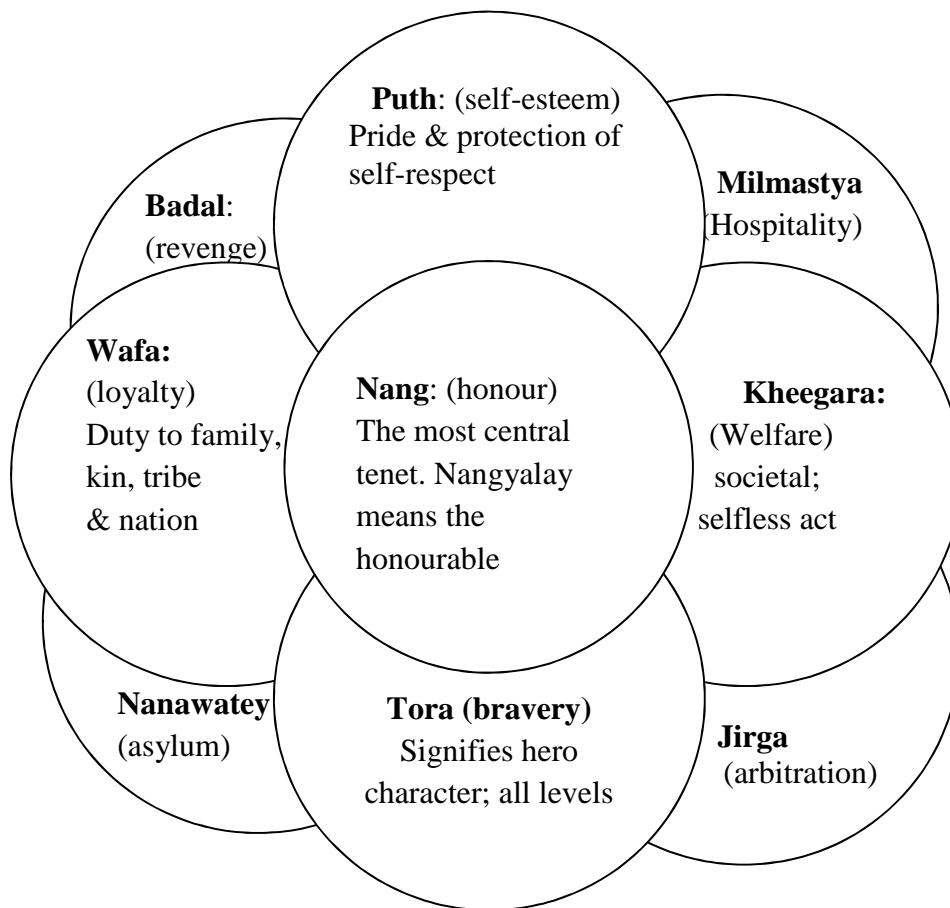
### **The ideal type model of Pashtunwali**

Pashtunwali represents a standard course of action for a Pashtun which has been historically constructed, shared, and agreed upon to be collectively followed by the society. This study frames the Pashtun code of life 'Pashtunwali' in terms of Weber's ideal type model as previously employed by Ahmad (1980). The ideal type model was introduced by Max Webber who utilized it in various ways (e.g. the study of bureaucracy). Broadly, ideal type is an abstraction from reality which represents those common features in a number of instances which logically fit together while the rest are left out (Nefzger, 1965). In this sense 'Pashtunwali' represents a set of tenets that regulate the daily lives of all Pashtuns to varying degrees. There is a certain degree of dynamism in 'Pashtunwali' as it evolves with time and

space. An individual Pashtun can, through interplay with ethnic Pashtun society, participate in determining how to 'practice Pashtunwali' in the light of the basic tenets and common logic. The ideal type model does not make any value judgements and does not prescribe a rational course of action. The Pashtun code of life overshadows the value judgements of religion, state law or other moral codes. Any action that can be legitimized through 'Pashtunwali' is socially acceptable. The meaning of central tenets remains stable and in Pashtun history they have been practised at the cost of great number of lives. Thus it can be proposed that the time tested, central tenets of Pashtunwali can represent a common thread among Pashtuns. Therefore the 'Pashtunwali' ideal type model would be a timeless model depicting Pashtun *social reality as it existed uninterrupted, stable and equilibrium for over four centuries at least* (Ahmad, 1980, p.88). Weber constructed his ideal type on the basis of his extensive study and was a result of informal inductive process (Becker & Barnes, 1938)The Pashtun ideal type proposed here is based on the works of previous authors (e.g. Ahmad, 1980) and the author's personal lived experience of being a Pashtun.

Pashtunwali is the code of life as understood, interpreted and practised by Pashtuns. It is the core of social behaviour for Pashtuns although unwritten and not defined precisely it is part-fiction and part-reality and can be found in the songs, proverbs, metaphors thus never away from the individual's mind (Ahmad, 1978). Scholars have identified an overlapping set of tenets as a core of Pashtunwali. Ahmad (1978) concludes that Pashtunwali operates in the social and cultural life of Pashtuns, (especially rural areas) and Pashtuns from all wakes of life participate in shaping the multidimensional and intimate account of Pashtun social and political life. Further he finds the Native and foreign models (making the ideological model) and the practice dimension (of 'empirically observed social behaviour and organization') among Pashtuns are in agreement with regards to the main features of Pashtunwali (Ahmad, 1978, p.89). Initially he lists four main, agreed upon institutions of Pushtunwali. 1) Badal (Revenge, Vendetta), 2) Melmastia (Hospitality), 3) Nanawatee (Supplicating for mercy and peace), 4) Jirga (assembly of elders acting making binding decisions based on Islamic law and Pukhto customs) but later he concludes that the core element of honour has been reduced to Tor (Killing for Honour) and Tarborwali (agnatic rivalry) among Mohmand tribe. Similarly other authors (for instance Khan, 2004; Ahmad, 1980; Glatzer, 2002; Dupree and Gouttierre, 1997) have identified an overlapping set of tenets of Pashtunwali. This study takes into account the previous conceptualizations of tenets of Pashtunwali and also make use

of an approach in which Pashtuns like to describe themselves. It is common among Pashtuns to use the word ‘Pukhton’ as an abbreviation for five core tenets of Path, Khegara, Tora, Wafa and Nang. Taken together with four additional tenets of Badal, Milmastya, Nanawatey and Jirga a Pashtun ideal type model is proposed.



The ideal type model of Pashtunwali (Source: Literature and personal experience)

### **Afghans in Peshawar: Refugees, migrant or settled?**

Afghan mass migration was triggered due to Russian influence and invasion since 1970s. More than 3 million Afghans crossed into Pakistan and mainly settled in the Khyber Pukhtunkhwa (North Western Pakistan) which is inhabited by Pakistani Pashtuns. These Afghans were given a good reception not only by Pakistan but the entire anti-communist bloc including USA and Western European countries. The Pakistani administration declared them refugees in theory but in practice gave them the status of “Muslim brothers” and allowed them equal rights as Pakistani citizens (although they were not given any official status). Internationally, they were recognized as “Afghan refugees” and became the main reason for flow of foreign aid in all conceivable forms including US dollars, weapons and food supplies.

Since then most of the research undertaken on Afghans adds a convenient and predetermined suffix of 'refugees'. Governmental as well as Non-governmental organizations (who undertook most of the research) carried out research studies on 'Afghan refugees' aimed at highlighting their 'plight and misery' to appeal to donors and get funding. The 'refugee' label was conveniently accepted throughout the world by the academic community as Afghans did show some characteristics of refugees. They were war refugees as they left their homes due to foreign invasion they were traumatized. However within Pakistan they were received as guests by referring to them as those who left their homes for God. Informally they were given equal citizenship rights within Pakistan, they established their business, and they bought lands and built houses. Thus they were given a status of 'welcomed migrant'. However migrant would normally encounter an alien culture, instead Afghans found themselves living among Pakistani Pashtuns who had historically migrated from Afghanistan over the past 300 years. A marked difference between everyday lives can be attributed to urban/ rural divide or due to affiliation with different tribes however, in general, the majority of Afghans and Pakistani Pashtuns follow 'Pashtunwali'. This seamless integration can be attributed to the fact that most Pashtuns (Pakistani and Afghani) never accepted the Duran line as envisaged and implemented by the British imperial rulers. In fact it is considered an imperial conspiracy to divide Pashtuns and many tribes Pashtuns firmly held their lands after the Durand line. In theory those tribes live in two countries however in practice the Durand line is an unseen line running across their villages, unable to divide them as Pashtuns and non-Pashtuns habitually cross the border without any travel documents.

Thus 'Afghan refugees' must be reconsidered with a reference to broader Pashtun migratory patterns. For this paper, migration is taken as a social construct (Tejero and Torradadella, 1999) and the concept of migratory field (Kaplan, 1993; Parramón, 1996 in Tejero and Torradadella, 1999) is employed. The notion of migration as a fixed event with clear boundaries and effects is rejected. Migration is conceptualized as the experiences between place of origin and destiny, which is a continuous process and does not stop at settlement (Tejero and Torradadella, 1999). According to this temporally dynamic perspective migrants adapt to the new environment in various ways and degrees according to their social conditions. When these new elements are adopted their *cultural legacy* can appear as a *fertile chaos* (Tejero and Torradadella, 1999, p.5). The concept also provides flexibly in terms of labelling migration as a tense or stressed event.



To sum up, the culturally rich and dynamic context of Afghan entrepreneurs within the migratory spaces requires suitable underpinning to be explored. The complexity of a multitude of interacting factors can be investigated by employing the concept of entrepreneurial identity.

### **Entrepreneurial Identity construction**

Definitions of identity abound in literature but express different epistemological positions in line with theories stemming from different disciplines. Individual identity, the focus here, is still seen as a matter of social categorisation most of the time (e.g. with reference to age, race, ethnicity, etc.). The fundamental question of ‘who am I’ has thus been answered differently, depending on the theoretical stance. Stryker and Serpe (1982), for example, define identity as a reflexive cognition. It is a journey of self-definition which becomes the basis to explain behaviour. Identity would motivate behaviour (Burke 1991). As an implication, it can be said that entrepreneurial identity is the basis for entrepreneurial action when entrepreneurs behave ‘entrepreneurially’. But personal and social identities are in a state of constant tension at different levels; that is, different selves of an entrepreneur do not just refer to mere role-identities (e.g. being a father, a mentor, a friend) or cognition (e.g. ‘how I perceive myself to be’). Instead, they point at different modes of identification with oneself, others, the dynamic situation as well as dominant discourses and practices in society. Using the concept of identity in entrepreneurship is consistent with Fletcher's (2003) concept of “fifth movement in entrepreneurship research”. It proposes to conceptualize entrepreneurship as a dynamic phenomenon that is socially emergent (Fletcher, 2003). Moreover a growing interest in entrepreneurial identity (e.g. Cohen and Musson, 2000) has been made possible because *there is clear resonance between the conceptualization of entrepreneurial identity as a reflexive journey and the conceptualization of entrepreneurship as a networked social process* (Warren, 2004: 26).

In this paper it is that entrepreneurial identity is ontologically seen as a continuous process of becoming which is in a state of change or “construction”. Such take on identity is mainly inscribed in a constructivist perspective (Down and Reveley 2004; Johansson 2004; Downing 2005) linking the individual to a social group and its actions (Giddens 1991). In addition identity construction is conceptualised through narratives. Narratives are “interpretative devices, through which people represent themselves, both to themselves and to

others...” (Lawler, 2002: 242-3). As such, we can speak of a narrative identity (Ricoeur, 1991a:32; Polkinghorne, 1991; Rimmon-Kenan, 2002) which demands a certain structure to lend coherence to our sense of self. Narratives also draw boundaries as to what is included or excluded from identity construction. This can serve to legitimise action and personal experience (De Certau, 1984). In every case, “in the process of identity construction, narrative is constitutive, not just a medium for the expression of a selfhood which lies somewhere ‘inside’” (Nocker, 2006: 76). However for this paper life history narratives are elevated from a representational form and conceptualised as social epistemology and social ontology (Somers, 1994). Ontologically, the social world is an unfolding story where each individual is placed in several stories (overlapping and distinct) and social objects are relationally tied through “evolutionary” narratives. Epistemologically narratives are sense making tools for both the individual and the society. Conceptualized in this manner, the individual self and life story are congruent as they are emergent, negotiated, and their future is unknown.

For this paper life history narratives are used to explore the emergent entrepreneurial identity with reference to the ideal type of “Pashtunwali”. *The life history is important as a subjective document. Conventionally, it is used to provide a finely detailed account of an informant’s life, to study connections between personality and culture, and to document a “slice of life” as experienced by a member of another culture* (Luborsky, 1987: 367). The story starts with the past and ‘ends’ with the current experience of being an entrepreneur; the future is not featuring prominently or not at all. Migration from Afghanistan to Pakistan and related experience are given different meanings and ‘weightings’. Some storytellers relate to it in terms of an explicit transition; others speak more of a turning point or even just an ‘episode’ in their lives. The end of the story tells about the current state of entrepreneurial identity to reflect upon their ‘unfinished stories’. The title chosen for each story is taken from the ending ‘scenes’ of the story as it contains the ‘morale of the story’. This highlights the current status of the unfolding identity which actually represents the ‘acclaimed’ and ‘projected’ identity. It also points to the most ‘sought after’ ideal type among the tenets of Pashunwali. However this is not a final product and furthermore it has been ‘built upon’ embracing other ideal types of ‘Pashtunwali’. Thus the past and transition state is analysed to understand how the current identity emerged contextually out of others. Table 1 shows the two stories and their narrative structure. The past, transition and present of both stories have

an embedded theme which points to a dominant ideal type of ‘Pashtunwali’. The last row of the table summarizes the ‘pursued’ ideal types over time.

Table 1: Life history narratives and the pursued ideal types

<b>Narrative structure/ life history</b>	<b>Embedded theme (story 1)</b>	<b>Embedded theme (story 2)</b>
<b>Story</b>	<b>‘Death and food is your weakness’</b>	<b>‘I can make it work again’</b>
<b>The Past</b>	The travelling traders	I am going to die anyway
<b>Transition</b>	Becoming wiser together	The refugee camp
<b>Present</b>	Coward natives, Brave migrants	Surviving with no capital
<b>Pursued ideal types</b>	Tora based on Wafa, Path,	Path built over Tora, Kheegara,

Next the stories are presented which were gathered in three different settings.

### **Story1: ‘Death and food is your weakness’**

The first story is by Suleman Kheil, an Afghan who came to Pakistan after the communist revolution in Afghanistan. He belongs to a tribe called Dosto-Kheil which has a long history of being sheep herders. Almost 50 years ago, this tribe turned towards trade. Suleman has been a partner and a sole owner in a variety of business ventures since. He is acquainted with the co-author’s father and there is basis of good relationships between families. Suleman is a grandfather of five children and has given most of his business responsibility to his three sons. His eldest lives in the UK while another one in Germany, both with refugee status.

### **The travelling trader**

*Our people were already acquainted with travel and they used to trade some small items like dry fruits so they knew the routes. So tea was brought from India (united India then) and that was the start of our import activity; before that we used to only export items*

*like pomegranate, dried grape and other dry fruits like almond and pine seeds. All of this used to come to Peshawar about 70-80 years ago. My elders bought back items like clothes, tea, spices and raw sugar from Peshawar. They sold it in a local wholesale market of Kabul. After the separation of India and Pakistan, our people started trading from India. At that time, the camel as transport vehicle was abandoned in favour of newly arrived trucks and cars. When some traders would go to India, others would give them some money to buy tea for them. They had a trust relationship.*

Suleman constructs his past firmly on the basis of Wafa (loyalty) where he is loyal to his tribe- one of traders travelling together to find new business routes and markets. Initially, they were trading only in the local area but the political change of the own country is taken as the opportunity to expand business. However this growth is collective and the this notion of being loyal to one's tribe starts of a narrative with a view of closely-knit relationships upon which are trust relationship and that can be fully rely upon.

### **Becoming wiser**

*My forefathers shifted to new locations, sold old lands in villages and bought new ones in cities, including Kabul. In the winter we used to come to Jalalabad (which is a hot place) and in summer we used to go back to Kabul (with a cold climate). In cities, we settled down and bought shops and commercial properties. One of our tribal elders, Haji Allah Nazar, bought a Sarai (a neighbourhood). He was a famous man known to all of Afghanistan. At the time we were only about 50 to 60 families, now we are about 5000 families. In our tribe of Dosto Kheil, we are still known to each other completely. I went to school for 7 years and my brother got separated as families became large, so I started helping my father in trading tea. I have only done tea business and nothing else for a long time. However, when we moved here, all types of goods started being traded. Presently only 30% of our people would be doing tea business. Hazarbuз tribe followed us in tea trade as they thought that they have progressed and we would be left behind, however we are the pioneers in tea trade. They were in similar in number and now they claim to be more than us and we claim we are more. Hazarbuз do the same type of businesses like tea, clothing and nowadays marble tiles. They have become wiser, e.g. no one will pick up junk from London; they collect the junk and put it into containers and send it over here. Sometimes it fetches double the cost price and sometimes even three times. Items like compressors and freezers are brought from Germany.*

*My friend's son has got a visa after eight and a half years and soon he will come back home after such a long time. He is also doing the same business.*

In the next part of the narrative the loyalty with tribe remains the vehicle for identity construction; it also is seen as enabling the growth of business acumen as a collective achievement. What changes in the story, however, is the use of increased reference to Path (self-esteem) which was achieved together but is highlighted through comparison between his tribe and other tribes. Thus the achievement of self-esteem is built upon the lasting close nature of relationship between families in the own tribe. The portrayed image is of unity but there a sense of pride in the ever increasing size of tribe is very clear.

### **Natives and migrants**

*You native people are fearful and afraid, for example from death! I remember that, last year, when you were not here, there was an operation against a local criminal Zahir Shah. A few rockets fell some twenty streets away from here and one watchman was also killed there. Your father and other natives gathered and talked about where to flee. I told them not to worry and just to sleep well; there would be no danger. [R: he says this whilst laughing about natives; I smile and so he speaks more about it]*

*They were not taking me seriously; I told them: 'If you were in Kabul and had gone through a rain of rockets there, you would have fled across many countries.' They were afraid and asked: 'What will we do and what will we eat?' I told them: 'We came in one pair of clothes and God took care of us. We have houses, cars and money, better than in Kabul; do not take stress, God is gracious. He will take care.' They answered 'No, you people were brave and had courage but what will we do?' And I laughed and was unable to say anything. So, you natives are very fearful of death and also worry too much about what you will eat. Death and food is your weakness.*

[Coda: When we crossed over to Pakistan we came through tough mountains and I, along with my wife and children, did not eat anything for one day and one night, and we never complained about hunger. We came through snowy mountains. Some family members came later. One of my fellows who crossed over with us is now martyred.]

In the last part of the story the comparative element is pushed further where self-esteem achieved through collective growth turns into claim for Tora (Bravery). This claim to bravery is highlighted by comparison between the 'natives' who are now seen as 'those that worry and fear' unnecessarily whilst Afghan people would be unfaltering in their approach to life and death. The storyteller stresses that he cannot really explain in words the origin of such strength although it is mostly seen as a matter of belief and faith.

The main story told here is one of a strong reference to ideal type of loyalty which is the 'anchor' for identity construction and expressed in the sense of belonging to the own tribe and ethnicity. The storyteller positions himself as highly empowered through that sense of loyalty and implies that the 'one who belongs also believes'. This loyalty becomes the basis of growth with time which is posited as referring to the ideal type of self-esteem. This growth is not only financial but in number of people in tribe and the survival through hard times. In the present situation, this collective self-esteem becomes a claim to Tora (bravery) which is achieved by comparing the native (Paskitani) Pashtuns to Afghan Pashtuns. These are the features of a heroic story. Afghans, belonging to specific tribes like Dosto-Kiehl, would be loyal and guard their self-esteem together. They are also braver than others as they can come out of harsh conditions.

### **Story2: 'I can make it work again'**

The second story is about Abdullah - a supplier of dental equipment. He is the author's dentist's friend and so the meeting is scheduled to take place in the dental practice.

#### **I am going to die anyway**

*Then I went to my uncle's house in an area of Kabul; some security forces checked my ID there and took me with themselves. They trained for four months and recruited me in the army. They sent me to a village side where a tough fight was going on; it was in a desert of Kandahar (a province of Afghanistan)... One day I thought 'I am going to die anyway, so let's flee from here.' This story is really hard and interesting. So when I decided to run away among the soldiers, I found one of them was my father's friend. He was serving for the last years. I consulted him on my plan to flee but he told me to be careful and not to talk about running away as the area is wholly mined and there is nowhere to run. He also told me that our commander would be very cruel because once a soldier tried to run away but he stepped*

*on a mine and one leg was severed. The commander collected all the soldiers and threw him onto the mines; he was divided into pieces. Then I asked other colleagues and one of them told me that a soldier ran away a few days ago and was successful, and that they were aware of the safe path in-between mines.*

*One day we prayed at sunset and fifteen or twenty of us started to cross the mines. Some mines were hidden; others were more visible as the wind had blown the sand away which covered them. Some of them were highly sensitive. We successfully crossed the mines, however one of our colleagues who was walking two meters from me, almost touched a mine trigger. The other walking behind us started cursing him, so some of us returned out of fear and nine of us were able to cross successfully and flee.*

For Abdullah, the highlight of the past is surviving through hard times when he was forced to train as a soldier in the desert of Kandahar. He tells about his fear of life in those times which is characterized by a single sentence prompting the whole story: 'I am going to die anyway.' It is on the background of viewing the own circumstances as leaving no room for alternatives that Abdullah decides to flee from the army. He crosses the dangerous terrain of landmines and thus refers to the ideal type of Tora (bravery). His claim to bravery is rooted in the sense of defeating almost certain death.

### **Reaching the refugee camp**

*We were taken to a mosque (by Mujahedeen) and people in the village brought food to eat. However, we were unable to eat anything as our stomachs were unable to accept food. An elder understood our condition as he came to know that we have not eaten for three nights and days. He made us eat semi-liquid food such as milk and yogurt and forbade us to eat any solid food. We were taken to a training camp of Hizb-e-Islami (Mujahedeen group) we lived there for a month; they made us stay as they were waiting for a group to come that we could join for the journey. The group came after one month... I came here to a refugee camp in Jalozai (near Peshawar) and met a relative there; he hosted me for a week.*

The story continues with recounting exceptional experiences and dangers triggered by historical moments that link an individual's life to a country's fate. In this part of story Abdullah refers to the Kheegara (Welfare) ideal type where other Pashtuns helped him

survive by giving food and asylum. This welfare was also responsible for him being crossed over into Pakistan and becoming a guest of his uncle in a refugee camp for a long time. A caring image of his 'countrymen' is portrayed by constant referral to welfare which unquestionably helped him survive the worst moments in life.

### **I have no capital**

*Yes, it is good, but I need capital as I can get hold of good equipment from foreign countries. I do not have any capital but, still, I am able to run the business... When you will come to my shop you will be able to see my condition there. I have a huge variety of faulty equipment. I can make it work again; I know how to repair it. In the last ten-twenty years I got good expertise from it. I come in at 9am and work on this equipment for up to 5pm; I then get a buyer and sell the item.*

On this background, the present carries forward the ideal type of bravery and welfare past into a battle for Path (self-esteem) which is achieved by doing his own business and sustaining his own life through it. Although he is struggling to do business has no capital of his own he still keeps his self-esteem and work hard to keep himself 'afloat'.

Abdullah's story depicts as more disintegrated notion of a person who has been in troubles and had to defeat those conditions sometimes through bravery and other times with the help of help from his countrymen (welfare). His struggle continues in the present as he tries to keep his self-esteem by earning bare minimum livelihood.

### **Final remarks**

The two analysed in this paper represent the ways two Afghan entrepreneurs construct their entrepreneurial identities in situ through the narration of their life histories by grounding their action in 'Pashtunwali' ideal type. There convey some commonalities. Most importantly, the entrepreneurs have all gone through a major and rather traumatic transition when migrating from their own homeland to settle in Pakistan. They survived difficult situations and have subsequently established themselves, being successful or at least earning their livelihood from their ventures. They tend to have a strong sense of entrepreneurial identity as they convey their ability to re-construct their own life stories by attending to the



outside world (Sennet; 2000). The present analysis suggests that self-esteem is the most enduring ideal type in the harsh conditions encountered and it was the main driver behind becoming an 'entrepreneur' by growing together or out of necessity. However the two entrepreneurs evolved very differently towards such acclaiming such self-esteem. For the first entrepreneur the ground work is laid through loyalty which has been provided a firm basis in good as well as tough times. The claiming of self-esteem through growing together and reflecting back on it while comparing himself to the 'natives' breeds a claim to bravery. Thus entrepreneurial identity is enabling him to make such claims as self-esteem and bravery in a very consistent and uniform fashion. The second entrepreneur's story does not portray such integration and coherence as he had a 'rollercoaster' life and he has to come of out of tough conditions every time. Though he makes reference to the ideal type of bravery and welfare in 'carrying his story forward' there is a lesser sense of disintegration. He is rather protecting his self-esteem by becoming an entrepreneur and is working hard towards it. It is possible that high growth in Abdullah's business might allow him to make a claim on bravery. From this perspective it can be envisaged that Abdullah's story has unfolded to a lesser extent as compared to Suleman. In sum, the stories in this paper highlight the relevance of narratives for accessing lived experience (Bruner, 1990) but also the dynamic constitution of a social space of difference (Hetherington, 1998). It clearly portrays the relevance of ideal type model of Pashtunwali to these Pashtun entrepreneurs. However it is such strong interweaving of different ideal types of Pashtunwali that becomes crucial in this paper for understanding better what it means and feels to become an Afghan entrepreneur. As such, it is hoped it will open up further discussion on the merits and limits of contextualizing entrepreneurship research.

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