Men, Masculinity, and Migration: Continuity and Change in the Perception and Performance of Masculinity among Pashtun Food Delivery Workers in Milan, Italy.

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Abstract

This study is mainly focused on the relationship between masculinity and transnational migration. The study is based in Milan, Italy, analysing the migration experiences of male Pashtun refugees and asylum seekers, mainly involved in food delivery services as riders. The study examines, how transnational migration affect the perceptions and performance of masculinity among migrant Pashtun men in Milan, Italy? To answer this question, the study analyses the narratives and practices of Pashtun men, regarding the notions of masculinity and manhood in a transnational context. The study is based on ten life history interviews and participants observation with male Pashtuns from Pakistan and Afghanistan, analysing how these men use migration as strategy to overcome their marginalised social position, and to gain an empowered and elevated social position. The study argues that migration provide these men with the opportunity to overcome certain levels of their marginality, attaining recognition and respect in their home communities, while at the same time, they remain marginalised within the Italian society. The study also analyses the ways in which Pashtun men negotiate their sense of masculinity while navigating Italian society and maintaining their transnational connection. It argues that Pashtun men construct hybrid and flexible masculinities, influenced by both Pashtun and Italian culture, strategically adopting new codes of behaviour and practices to navigate the Italian society, while suspending certain behaviour and practices related to Pashtun culture and masculinity. In addition, the study analyses the changes in the perception of participants regarding gender equality, in terms of gender division of labour. It argues that the Pashtun men while experiences gender role reversal as migrants without families and female family members, and observing the Italian gender order, embraces limited changes in their perception regarding traditional gender roles of men and women in Pashtun culture.

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Dedication

Dedicated to my parents, whose boundless love have been a constant presence throughout my entire life.

Contents

Introduction

The focus of this study is to analyse relationship between transnational migration and masculinities. The study argues that while interesting literature on migration, masculinities, and the relationship between masculinities and migration is available, however Pashtun masculinities, particularly the relationship between Pashtun masculinities and transnational migration, is an overlooked field of research. This study is an attempt to fill this gap in the literature on transnational migration and masculinities. The study provides empirical data on the impact of transnational migration on the perception and performance of masculinity among Pashtun asylum seekers and refuges, mainly involved in food delivery work, in Milan, Italy. The study investigate how migrant Pashtun men strive to attain dominant and respectable forms of masculinity in their home countries, even as they encounter marginalization during the process of migration and settlement in Italy. Furthermore, the study seeks to explore how Pashtun men, who have become refugees, asylum seekers, and food delivery workers in Italy, adapt and reshape their notions of masculinity, potentially adopting more flexible and hybrid expressions of masculinity as they navigate Italian society and interact with Italian male identities. Lastly, the research delves into the perspectives of these Pashtun men concerning conventional concepts of masculinity, femininity, and gender roles, examining both continuity and change in their perceptions and practices.

The study is consisting of three parts and eleven chapters with a conclusion at the end. Part one consists of first three chapters, discusses the contextualization of Pashtun masculinities in transnational migration. The first chapter begin with the discussion on research questions and problematics, explaining the overall objectives, and development of a research project on Pashtun masculinities within the context of transnational migration. The main arguments of the study are also discussed in this section. Theoretical framework of the study, which includes hegemonic masculinities, transnationalism, and intersectionality, is also discussed in this first chapter. The chapter two then proceeds to introduce the Pashtuns, as an ethnic group living in Afghanistan and Pakistan, their culture, with a focus on gender dynamics, particularly, ideals of Pashtun masculinity embedded in Pashtunwali and Islam, and the existence of multiple masculinities in Pashtun society. A literature review on the gender and migration is also provided in chapter one, explaining the inclusion of gender in migration studies and the impact of migration on masculinities. Chapter three discusses methodology of research, articulating the data collection tools and field work experiences and my positionality as male Pashtun

researcher. Part two consists of chapter four and five. Chapter four discusses the history of Pashtun migration and the role it plays in their collective identity and influence in the region. The contemporary migration patterns of Pashtuns from Afghanistan and Pakistan also discussed with a focus on irregular Migration. Chapter five argues that the irregular Pashtun migrants uses irregular migration as strategy to overcome their marginalized socio-economic position in the home countries. The chapter suggests that Pashtun irregular migration is predominantly a masculine endeavour, viewing by the marginalised Pashtun youth as hope to elevate their social position, however in the process they encounter difficulties and challenges adding to their marginalization. Part three consists of last six chapters, discussing how the Pashtun men navigate the transnational context experiences changes and adopting flexible masculinities, in their arenas of their life and work in Italy and maintaining their relationship with the home countries and families and upholding their cultural and religious norms of the home culture. Chapter six analyses the persistent challenges and marginalization experienced by Pashtun men as refugees and asylum seekers. It sheds light on the hurdles they encounter during the integration and settlement processes in Italy, exploring the consequential impact on their sense of masculinity and manhood. Chapter seven extends the discussion to their engagement in food delivery work and its correlation with notions of manhood and provider masculinity within a transnational framework, emphasizing aspects of freedom and control. Chapter eight discusses how Pashtun food delivery workers navigate their liminal situation in a transnational context. The chapter discusses the transition of these men to adulthood, the overcoming of their partial marginality and their seeking of belonging between Italy and their home countries. Chapter nine self-perceptions of Pashtun men while navigating the transnational context between Italy and their home countries and in relation to Italian and other masculinities, the chapter articulate the suspension of certain practices embedded in Pashtunwali, and the adaptation of new codes and behaviours to survive in Italy. Chapter ten examine how Pashtun migrants uphold ethnic boundaries and maintain transnational connections as strategies to address exclusion and navigate the broader Italian societal and cultural landscape.   Chapter eleven explores changes and continuities in participants' perceptions of masculinity and femininity, as well as their perspectives on Italian cultural norms and gender dynamics in comparison to Pashtun counterparts. The chapter also documents participants' viewpoints on Italian men versus Pashtun men.

Part one

Contextualizing Pashtun masculinities and transnational migration

Part one is divided into three Chapters, namely, the research question and problematics, Ideals of Pashtun masculinity, and research methodology. In the first chapter I have briefly introduced the research question, objectives, and background of developing this research project. In this chapter, I have also discussed the specific theories such as hegemonic masculinity, intersectionality and transnationalism that guided the data analysis and fieldwork undertaken in this study. In the second chapter, a theoretical background of the study is provided. In this chapter I have discussed the social and cultural context of the Pashtuns with a focus on the gender dynamics and ideals of Pashtun masculinities. In the second chapter I have also outlined a literature review on the inclusion of gender into migration studies and the impact of migration on masculinities. The third chapter deals with the methodology of the study. In this chapter I have discussed field work with the mobile Pashtun food delivery workers in Milan, methodology and tools of inquiry and data collection, my position as a male Pashtun researcher, the social positioning of participants, and sampling techniques and recruitment strategies.

Chapter one

why a study on Pashtun Masculinities and transnational migration?

1.1. Research questions and problematics.

The central research question guiding this study is: "How does transnational migration affect the perceptions and performance of masculinity among migrant Pashtun men in Milan, Italy?". The study primarily focuses on examining the impact of transnational migration on the masculine identity of male Pashtun refugees and asylum seekers working as food delivery workers/riders in Milan, Italy.

The study argues that transnational migration can significantly impact men and their sense of masculinity in both the host and origin countries. The study aims to gain insights into how this process impact Pashtun men, as refugees, asylum seekers, and food delivery workers, who strive to attain hegemonic/respectable masculinity in the eyes of their families and communities in Afghanistan and Pakistan, while experiencing marginalization throughout the migration journey, including challenges related to work, gender role reversals, illegal migration processes, settlement procedures, and their experiences in the host country, Italy.

Taking into consideration their differential levels of education, skills, legal status, professions, and other intersections it can be argued that all the migrant Pashtun men do not experience enhancement in their social status in the origin country or marginalization in the process of migration and during settlement in the host country. However, the participants of this study are Pashtun refugees and asylum seekers who enters Italy illegally as asylum seekers, without any higher education and technical skills and currently they are working as food delivery workers in Milan, Italy. They belong to working class backgrounds, both in the country of origin and destination. Keeping in view these intersections it can be argued that these Pashtun men took great risk in migrating to Italy to improve their socio-economic situation back home and at the same they are more vulnerable to marginalization during the migration process and settlement in Italy.

Migration to Italy have intriguing implications for Pashtun migrants in acquisition of hegemonic masculinity in the origin countries, Afghanistan, and Pakistan. As Hegemonic masculinity upheld as dominant and ideal in society, and is associated with power, control, and dominance, remittances and improved economic status resulting from migration enhance the sense of provider masculinity among Pashtun migrants in their home communities. Success achieved in the host country also elevate social status and prestige in the home community, reinforcing the ideals of hegemonic masculinity. It is crucial to acknowledge that these effects are diverse and context-dependent, varying based on individual experiences, cultural contexts, and the reception of these migrants in the host country. Moreover, masculinity is a complex construct shaped by multiple factors beyond migration alone.

On the other hand, various factors contribute to the marginalisation of Pashtun refugees and asylum seekers in Italy and in the process of illegal migration. One such factor is the clash of cultural norms and expectations. Migrants Pashtuns struggle to adapt to the host country's prevailing notions of masculinity, which differ from their traditional understanding and notions of masculinity, leaving them feeling excluded and marginalized. Additionally, language barriers pose a significant challenge for communication and social integration, making Pashtun migrants feel inadequate and powerless. Moreover, racial, and ethnic stereotypes exacerbate their marginalization, perpetuating discrimination and questioning their masculinity. Lastly, social isolation resulting from the separation from families and support networks leads to negative impacts on mental health and self-esteem.

In addition, the study argues that in the context of transnational migration men adapt more flexible and diverse ways of being masculine to navigate in the new cultural and social environments. Pashtun men as refugees, asylum seekers, and food delivery workers, go through a process of renegotiation and reconfiguration, to construct more flexible/hybrid masculinities, while navigating the Italian culture and in relation to Italian and other ethnic masculinities. This study examines the ways and strategies of being masculine, adapted by migrant Pashtun men to navigate their everyday life in Italian society.

Finally, the study analysed continuity and change in the perceptions of Pashtun men regarding traditional notions of masculinity and gender roles. Acculturation and exposure to different gender dynamics during their time in Italy leads Pashtun migrants to adopt changed perceptions of masculinity and gender norms, potentially influencing their attitudes, and behaviours in both

the home and host countries. However, this change in the perception and behaviour regarding masculinity and gender role is some time temporary and limited to the Italian context exhibiting the enactment of suspended masculinity, but in Pashtun culture it cannot be performed easily once they go back. These are the main objectives of this research study to understand this process of challenge and change in the perceptions regarding masculinity among migrant Pashtun men in Italy.

1.2. Pashtun masculinities and transnational migration: dwelling into an overlooked field of research

In 2018, I successfully completed my MPhil degree, during which I conducted a research dissertation titled "Representation of Ideals of Pashtun Masculinity in Pashto Folksongs: The Tappa". This study primarily entailed an examination of the role of Pashto folksongs in both reinforcing and, at times, challenging the concept of ideal Pashtun masculinity. Notably, my investigation revealed a dearth of scholarly literature encompassing gender dynamics within Pashtun society, with masculinity being a particularly underexplored topic. The existing literature predominantly focused on women's issues and their societal status, with only a couple of studies, even parts of the studies, addressing the concept of ideal Pashtun masculinity such as Sana Uddin (2015), "Proverbs and patriarchy: analysis of linguistic sexism and gender relations among the Pashtuns of Pakistan", and Echavez et al. (2016), "The other side of gender inequality: Men and masculinities in Afghanistan". These studies primarily centred on the ideal Pashtun masculinity, a thematic alignment with my own research. These studies lack a full understanding of multiplicity and fluidity of masculinity in a specific cultural context. This conspicuous gap in scholarship and the desire to discern the disjunction between ideal and practical masculinities within Pashtun culture, akin to Connell's (1995) concept of multiple masculinities, impelled me to initiate research endeavours in this field.

Adding to this, my work as a gender-based violence case worker at the non-governmental organization SHARF, operating under a UNHCR-funded project for Afghan refugees in Peshawar, Pakistan, further propelled my exploration of Pashtun masculinity within the context of transnational migration. Commencing this role in 2019 after the completion of my MPhil degree, I regularly interacted with refugees and asylum seekers who were victims of gender-based violence, primarily instances of domestic violence against women and child sexual

abuse. The responsibilities of my position extended to processing the asylum claims and dispensing financial assistance to Afghan asylum seekers and refugees.

An illuminating incident transpired during my tenure at SHARF when I visited the home of an Afghan refugee. His nine-year-old son had been sexually abused by two local boys a few months prior. Although the case had gone to court, the perpetrators were acquitted due to their age, leaving the father deeply distraught and disheartened. His perception was that the court's decision was influenced by his refugee status and the local population's dominance. This encounter underscored how migration could severely impact one's sense of manhood and masculinity. Another noteworthy occurrence, which further informed my understanding of migration's influence on masculinity, involved an Afghan refugee's arrest by the police on the grounds of verbally abusing Peshawar police officers in a widely circulated social media video. Subsequently, the police subjected the arrested individual to physical abuse while recording a video of his naked state, which was then disseminated across social media platforms. This blatant act aimed to serve as a deterrent for others who might criticize the police on social media. Although instances of such nature were frequent, the degree of severity in response differentiated treatment of Afghan refugees from that of local inhabitants, illuminating an inherent bias within Pakistan's legal and police systems against refugees.

In addition to the discriminatory treatment that Afghan refugees experience from state institutions in Pakistan, they also encounter a lack of respect from the local population. This stems from the perception of Afghan refugees as both a threat and competitors in terms of job opportunities, businesses, and the labour force. Following the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, many refugees from Afghanistan migrated to nearby cities in Pakistan, primarily to the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province. It is worth noting that majority of the local population in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa are Pashtuns, much like majority of the Afghan refugees who arrived there. Despite sharing the same culture, tribes, religion, and language, the Afghan Pashtun refugees were often unfairly labelled as "*Mahajar*", which literally translates to migrants or refugees, but this term was used by the local Pashtun community in a way that implied a lack of trustworthiness.

While the attitudes of the local population toward Afghan refugee is not linear and influenced by the geopolitical scenarios in both the country, and by the state policies of Pakistan towards Afghan refugees. For instance, when Pakistan was receiving funds from the western world to

settle the refugees in Pakistan after the invasion of Soviet Union of Afghanistan and the *mujahideen* (the freedom fighters, fighting in the name of Allah) were fighting against the soviet forces with the support of Pakistan army, the Afghan refugees were accepted and welcomed. However, when the foreign funding declined after 1995, the attitude of Pakistani state and population become hostile toward Afghan refugees. Numerous studies by the international organizations working for the rights of refugees in Pakistan, have confirmed the shifting attitudes of the Pakistani state and society based on the needs of the time. The European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA) May 2022 report about Afghan refugees in Pakistan highlight that the concerning trend of decreasing social cohesion between Afghans and Pakistani hosts is attributed partly to the Pakistani government's contribution to associating Afghan refugees with security concerns and terrorism, leading to a strained relationship. The blame wrongly placed on Afghans for the attack on the Peshawar Public Army School in 2014, where 200 school children were killed by terrorists of Tehreek Taliban Pakistan- a terrorist organization active in Pakistan, further fuelled hostility. This shift in attitude led to derogatory comments and increased tensions between local population and Afghan refugees. Afghan refugees were blamed for affecting Pakistan's peace, economy, and infrastructure. Instances of friction related to land, resources, and competition emerged between host and refugee communities. This circumstance led to instances of bullying of Afghan refugees and raised questions regarding the prospect of returning to Afghanistan. It encapsulates the sentiment expressed by local individuals towards Afghan refugees, often inquiring, *kala Ba ze,* mean when will you depart?

Muniza Kakar, a lawyer, and a social activist working for the legal rights of Afghan refugees in Pakistan, in a Facebook post shares that the ongoing situation concerning Afghan refugees remains deeply troubling. In Karachi, approximately 300 Afghan refugees were apprehended in the second week of September 2023, ostensibly due to issues with their documentation, even though many of them possessed valid Proof of Registration (PoR) cards. On September 12, 2023, the police brought a hundred Afghan refugees to court, the majority of whom have been residing in Pakistan since the 1990s. Muhammad, an Afghan refugee arrested alongside others, claimed they had PoR cards, but the police seized their cards and charged them as undocumented refugees. Another Afghan refugee, Kala Khan, who has been living in Pakistan for 30 years, was also arrested. He stated that the police demanded a significant sum of money from him, and when he refused, they arrested him and confiscated his card.

(https://m.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=pfbid0326tPZxT6eTLivsrw9t3WDzP6wVpXg
iDktjqLigaeNKGmJLkZjtPMScYo7JuPjgz9l&id=100056823889153).

This situation of Afghan refugees led to my realization of the multifaceted impacts of migration on Afghan refugees shattering their perceptions of manhood and masculinity and honour. This observation became the foundation upon which I developed my initial research proposal. Subsequently, in October 2020, I embarked on my PhD journey in cultural and social anthropology at the University of Milano-Bicocca in Milan, Italy—a platform that affords me the opportunity to execute my research proposal.

1.3. Theoretical framework of the study

In exploring Pashtun masculinities within the realm of transnational migration the theoretical frameworks of hegemonic masculinity, intersectionality, and transnationalism are utilized in this study. These frameworks offer valuable insights into the intricate intersections of gender identity, power dynamics, and social hierarchies within migrant communities in transnational settings. In this section I will briefly define these concepts and at the end a synthesis and application of these concepts in studying Pashtun masculinities in transnational context will be provided.

1.3.1. Hegemonic masculinity

According to Connell (1995, 2005), "Hegemonic masculinity can be defined as the configuration of gender practice which embodies the currently accepted answer to the problem of the legitimacy of patriarchy, which guarantees (or is taken to guarantee) the dominant position of men and the subordination of women" (p. 77). The concept of Hegemonic masculinity Connell (1995), as the predominant and culturally endorsed manifestation of masculinity, holds norms and expectations that men are encouraged to embody for social recognition and influence. Connell's work on 'hegemonic masculinity' (1995) is useful for studying male gender identity as intersectional. Hegemonic masculinity, the most honoured way of being a man, influences other masculinities and justifies the subordination of women. This concept recognizes masculinity as diverse, with different forms defined in relation to hegemonic masculinity. According to Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) hegemonic masculinities, although emulated by a minority, embody the most revered ways of being a man, while other men who depart from this hegemonic ideal, because of either their bodily attributes

or lack of necessary skills and material resources, are placed in subordinate masculine positions. Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) enables us to adequately frame masculine identities by retaining the concept's core dimension, namely the underlying reality of power differential, while adding new elements, such as the geography of masculinities. The latter refers to the interactions among local, regional, and global ideals of hegemonic masculinity, allowing for the understanding of masculinity as geographically contingent, complex, and fluid. This can be easily applied to the study of men migrants, as they navigate multiple masculinities at home and abroad, and their masculine performances could be informed by different—even contradictory—models of masculinities.

Donaldson et al. (2009) further explores the concept of hegemonic masculinity and its role in shaping gender orders. It argues that within male-dominated systems, the appearance of stability and homogeneity is maintained through hegemonic masculinity, which operates as an empty signifier. It means that hegemonic masculinity represents an idealized set of principles and practices that people aspire to but cannot fully achieve, highlighting the difference between what men should be and what really, they do. In this sense hegemonic masculinity's primary role is to mediate and give coherence to various gender identities and configurations of practices. It achieves this by demanding complicity from individuals in upholding certain normative principles, such as heterosexuality, breadwinning, and aggression. it also highlights that this hegemonic exclusion of those who do not conform to its principles creates an illusion of gender homogeneity and completeness, even though it is based on the logic of difference and hides the inherent incompleteness of gender identities. Overall, it emphasizes that hegemonic masculinity plays a crucial role in shaping and maintaining gender orders, both at the national and international levels, by representing an idealized norm that influences people's aspirations and practices.

1.3.2. **Intersectionality**

Intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1989; Collins, 2000) is a theoretical framework that recognizes the intricate interplay of various social identities, such as gender, race, class, and sexuality, and their collective impact on shaping individuals' experiences, opportunities, and societal positions. The term intersectionality Coined by legal scholar Kimberle Crenshaw in 1989, emerged as a response to the limitations of conventional approaches to understanding social inequalities, which often examined individual facets of identity in isolation. Initially introduced in Crenshaw's work on legal cases involving discrimination faced by black women who

encountered bias as both women and black individuals, the concept highlighted the inadequacy of solely considering gender or race in understanding their experiences. The failure of the legal system to address these intersecting identities resulted in an incomplete understanding of the discrimination they endured. Intersectionality underscores that social identities are interconnected and mutually influential, transcending isolated existence. It asserts that unique experiences arise from the intricate intersections of multiple identities, which cannot be fully comprehended by examining only one aspect. For instance, a person's understanding of gender is intricately intertwined with their racial, ethnic, economic, and other social identities. This framework allows for a more nuanced examination of the workings of privilege and oppression, as well as an exploration of how individuals navigating multiple marginalized identities in complexities of intricate social landscapes.

Patricia Hill Collins' influential work 'Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment' explores the profound concept of intersectionality within the realm of Black feminist theory. Within this book, Collins delves into the intricate interplay of gender, race, class, and other social identities in shaping the experiences of Black women. The core of intersectionality, as elucidated by Collins, lies in the recognition that social identities are interwoven and mutually shaping, rather than isolated. Collins contends that comprehending the lived realities of Black women necessitates a deep examination of how their identities converge and interact, generating distinct systems of power, privilege, and oppression. She critically assesses conventional feminist and anti-racist frameworks for often failing to address the intricate intersections of these identities. Collins illustrates how the experiences of Black women stand apart from those of White women or Black men due to the compounded impacts of racism, sexism, and other forms of bias. She underscores that achieving comprehensive liberation and empowerment demands acknowledgment of these interconnected systems of oppression. In her work, 'Black Feminist Thought', Collins employs the concept of intersectionality to address the inadequacies of prevailing theories in elucidating the actual experiences of Black women. By embracing the interconnectedness of multiple identities, Collins provides a framework that grasps the complexities of social inequalities and underscores the necessity for more inclusive and holistic approaches to social justice. Overall, Patricia Hill Collins' book stands as a seminal text, shedding light on the significance of intersectionality within the context of Black feminist theory. It underscores how this concept offers a perspective through which to perceive and confront the multifaceted manifestations of power and privilege within society, particularly among marginalized groups.

1.3.3. **Transnationalism**

Transnationalism denotes the practice of individuals and communities sustaining dynamic social, economic, cultural, and political bonds beyond national borders. It encompasses the flow of people, ideas, goods, and customs between their native and host countries. This concept challenges the conventional view of migration as a unidirectional process by recognizing the enduring links and interactions between migrants and their homelands even after settling abroad. Transnationalism acknowledges the coexistence of multiple affiliations and loyalties in migrants' lives, as they navigate diverse cultural, social, and political contexts. It underscores the interdependence of global migration patterns and how individuals and communities manage identities and relationships across national frontiers.

According to Schiller et al. (1995) the term "transnationalism" is commonly employed to characterize and classify specific behaviours of immigrants whose daily lives are intricately tied to constant and multifaceted connections across international borders. Their identities are shaped in relation to more than one nation-state. Unlike sojourners who settle and become integrated into the economy, political institutions, and daily life of their host country, transmigrants simultaneously maintain connections, establish institutions, engage in transactions, and influence events in the countries they emigrated from. Transnational migration is the process through which immigrants establish and sustain complex social relationships that connect their societies of origin and settlement, emphasizing the ongoing and continuous nature of these connections. Brownee (2006), explore transnationalism through an everyday life perspective, focusing on personal ties cultivated and negotiated across distances, including remittances, communication, and return visits. He highlights the social consequences of the dynamic relationships between migrants and those they left behind, investigating how movers and stayers navigate their asymmetrical bonds. The study acknowledges that the bulk of transnational engagement is directed towards a select group of significant individuals in the home country. This engagement, characterized by selective and dynamic attributes, has implications for migrants' life course stages and experiences. The study suggests that migrants' transnational ties can contribute to recreating a sense of life continuity and security, bridging the gap between past and present experiences. However, these ties are also ambivalent, carrying tensions and unmet expectations, particularly evident in practices like remittance management. Case studies of Ecuadorian migrants in Italy reveal that the intensity of transnational engagement varies across migration phases, highlighting the shifting nature of migrants'

attitudes towards their home societies and the different ways they enact transnational practices. The study underscores the interplay between transnational ties and migrants' life course trajectories, illustrating how these ties provide both stability and complexity in migrants' experiences abroad.

Issakyan and Triandafyllidou (2017) explore the concept of "social remittances" which recently gained attention in migration and transnationalism studies. This concept suggests that migrants bring non-financial capital (e.g., norms, practices, social networks) that influence their interactions and integration in host societies and go beyond monetary contributions. Social remittances occur at individual/family and collective levels, potentially leading to changes in communal practices, gender roles, business practices, welfare arrangements, and self-perception of communities. The impact of social remittances varies based on the national context's existing norms and practices. These remittances are often unintentional, originating from migrants' primary economic focus, but they shape social and cultural dimensions. These remittances are influenced by the boundaries between established and new norms in a given context. They often develop unconsciously and are interwoven with economic remittances, creating "remittance scripts" or socio-cultural expectations. Social remittances have an interactive nature, influencing both migrants and their home communities, shaping their social positioning and reflecting their social and economic capital.

1.3.4. **Synthesis and application of the theories to study Pashtun masculinities**

Incorporating the concepts of hegemonic masculinity, intersectionality, and transnationalism into the study of Pashtun masculinities within transnational context, allows me to explore the intricate relationships between gender, power, culture, and identity. This approach encourages a comprehensive understanding of how transnational migration influences the construction and negotiation of masculinity among Pashtun men in diverse and contradictory social and cultural contexts of Italy and Pashtun society.

In the context of Pashtun transnational migration, the concept hegemonic masculinity provides a vantage point to investigate how established ideals of masculinity, both in Pashtun society and Italy, are navigated, upheld, or altered throughout the migration process. Through an examination of shifting power dynamics due to transnational migration, I observe how Pashtun men manoeuvre through changes in social, economic, and cultural standings and assess whether they conform to, challenge, or resist established masculinity norms both in the host

and origin country. The concept of hegemonic masculinity is used in theorising Pashtun masculinities and exploring the existence of multiple masculinities with Pashtun society in relation to the ideal or hegemonic masculinity in Pashtun culture, which I discussed in detail in coming sections.

Transnationalism, emphasizes the dynamic and fluid nature of contemporary migration, emphasizing that it involves ongoing connections and activities across borders rather than being a one-way, permanent move. Within the context of migrant Pashtun masculinities, transnationalism, as a framework, is used to highlights how transnational migration of Pashtun men to Italy disrupts the traditional gender norms and roles associated with masculinity in Pashtun culture. The concept of transnationalism is used to understand Pashtun men navigating between the expectations of their home communities and those of the Italian society, leading to a renegotiation of their masculinities. Additionally, the influence of remittances, economic and social remittances, communication technologies, and transnational social networks in shaping masculinities among Pashtun migrants, impacting how they perceive and perform their gender roles in both their home and host country.

While the experience of transnational migration is not monolithic for all the Pashtun migrants due to their differential social positioning both in the host and origin countries. Transnational migration give rise to new intersections for individuals which influence their personhood and identity both at host and origin country as well. Migrants bring new ideas and culture to host country and adapt to the host country culture and values as well. in this regard the concept of intersectionality is used to understand that how migrant Pashtun men simultaneously experiencing various forms of privilege and marginalization in a transnational context. Within the study of migrant Pashtun masculinities, intersectional analysis reveal that their masculine identities intersect with other facets of identity, including race, class, ethnicity, sexuality, legal status, age, religion, and profession etc. This approach enables me to acknowledge that the perception and enactment of masculinities among migrant Pashtun men are diverse and vary due to each individual's intersecting identities, shedding light on how some migrant men may experience vulnerability, discrimination, and marginalization or hegemony and respect in the host and origin country.

Just as Black women's experiences are shaped by the intersections of various identities, migrant men's experiences are influenced by the unique fusion of their identities. In exploring Pashtun

masculinity within transnational migration, intersectionality involves recognizing that factors like ethnicity, religion, race, social class, sexuality, and nationality converge to impact how migrant Pashtun men navigate their self-identity, power dynamics, and societal expectations in the host and origin country. This perspective underscores that the understanding of masculinity among migrant Pashtun men emerges not in isolation but through intricate interplays of diverse identities, shaping their interactions, opportunities, and challenges. Additionally, Collins' insights into power dynamics and privilege can be extended to the study of migrant masculinity. As she highlights that power operates differentially among distinct groups, investigating how power and privilege transform for migrant men during migration can yield insights into their negotiation of masculinity. By grasping the interplay between power dynamics in the host country and migrants' backgrounds, researchers can illuminate how they adapt, resist, and seek empowerment within a novel cultural context. Furthermore, the concept of complex systems of oppression and identity provides a potent framework for comprehending migrant men's constructions of masculinity within migration settings. The compounded impacts of various forms of oppression, encompassing racism, xenophobia, and economic disparities, significantly shape migrant men's conceptualizations of masculinity. An exploration of how these systems intersect with their gender identity illuminates how notions of masculinity are influenced, challenged, or reconfigured. This perspective acknowledges that migrant men may encounter distinct forms of discrimination and privilege that intersect with their gender identity, shaping how they perceive masculinity and their roles in their communities. These concepts offer a valuable framework for exploring how power, privilege, and identity intersect to influence the diverse experiences of migrant men and contribute to a more inclusive exploration of masculinity in migration context.

Chapter two

Cultural ideals of Pashtun Masculinity

In this chapter, I have briefly introduced the crucial terms related to the study's title. These terms encompass Pashtuns, Pashtun masculinity, and transnational migration and masculinity. I began by providing an overview of Pashtuns as an ethnic group and delved into Pashtunwali as a guiding principle and as Pashtun code of life that shapes the social and gender dynamics of the Pashtun community. Furthermore, I explored the concept of hegemonic masculinity intertwined within the code of Pashtunwali and Islam. Finally, I concluded with a literature review that addressed the incorporation of gender within transnational migration research and the influence of transnational migration on men and their masculine identities.

2.1. Who are the Pashtuns?

The Pashtuns constitute an ethnic community present in both Afghanistan and Pakistan. Pashtuns speak Pashto, a language belonging to the Indo-Iranian language family (Rahman, 1995). It is widely spoken in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Baluchistan provinces of Pakistan and is also the national language of Afghanistan. Variations in nomenclature such as Afghan, Pashtoon, Pushtoon, Pathan, and Pukhtoon are employed to refer to this ethnic group. The term 'Afghan', originally signifying an Afghan citizen in a legal context, is interchangeable with 'Pashtun'. Numerous Pashtuns in northwestern Pakistan maintain a strong awareness of their ethnic identity and persist in identifying themselves as 'Afghan' in official records, a custom that emerged during the British colonial era. The term 'Pathan', derived from the native 'Pakhtun' and employed in British colonial ethnographic descriptions, was historically utilized to denote Pashtuns; however, its utilization has been diminishing over time (Siddique, 2014). At present, approximately 60 million individuals of Pashtun descent consider these two nations their residence. Among them, around 20 million Pashtuns reside in Afghanistan, with an additional 40 million Pashtuns making their homes in Pakistan. Within Pakistan's provinces of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Baluchistan, as well as the tribal regions along the Afghanistan-

Pakistan border, the Pashtuns represent the second-largest ethnic contingent, comprising 15% of Pakistan's population (Yousaf, 2019).

Despite their historical prominence, the origins of the Pashtun ethnicity have remained obscured. Limited information is accessible regarding Pashtun lineage and genealogy. Various oral traditions exist regarding the Pashtuns' origins, including prevailing assertions that they descend from Alexander's soldiers, have Jewish heritage (the lost tribe of Israel), or possess Aryan roots, or the descendants of Qais Abdur Rashid. However, none of these claims have been definitively validated or conclusively refuted. According to Khan and Ahamad (2013), recent genetic studies have examined the Pashtun population, with a focus on their ancestry and genetic variation. One such study investigated Greek ancestry in Pashtuns, Kalash, and Burusho populations by analysing 16 multi-allelic Y-STRs and comparing them to historical populations. The findings suggested a genetic connection between the Pashtuns and Europe, particularly Macedonia, with Pashtuns showing the least genetic distance from Greeks.

In contemporary classifications, Pashtuns are grouped into four main tribal categories: Sarbani, Bhittani, Ghurghust, and Karlani. The first three are believed to be descendants of Qais Abdur Rasheed, while the Karlani group was adopted. Qais Abdur Rasheed. a mythical ancestor the Pashtuns, is believed to had a meeting with the Prophet Muhammad and accept Islam along his 40 companions. Within the Sarbani segment, there are Sharkbun and Kharshbun branches, encompassing notable tribes like Sherani, Tareen, Urmer (an adopted tribe), Durranis, Khalils, Mohmands, Daudzai, Chamkanis, Yousafzai, Shinwari, and Tarkalani. The Bhittani branch includes Bhittanis, Niazis, Lodhis, Marwats, Babars, Gandapurs, Kundis, and the vast Ghilzai confederacy, recognized for their nomadic kuchis. The Ghilzai tribes consist of Hotak, Sulaiman Khel, Kharoti, Ali Khel, Nasar, and Taraki. The Ghurghust branch comprises tribes such as Kakar, Mando Khel, Musa Khel, and Panri in Baluchistan Province of Pakistan, while the Safi and Gadun tribes are found in Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province, Tribal Areas, and eastern Afghanistan. The Karlani group, lesser known to Mughal historians, upholds original tribal structures and augmented customary laws. This group resides on both sides of the Afghan-Pakistan border and includes renowned Pashtun tribes such as Afridis, Khattaks, Mangal, Zadran, Muqbil, Zazi (Jaji), Bangash, Mehsud (Maseed), Orakzai, Khugiani, Wardak, Turi, and Wazirs. This intricate tribal arrangement positions Pashtuns as the world's largest society organized around tribal affiliations (Siddique 2014).

Tribe in the Pashtun context refers to social segments within Pashtun society that are organized around a genealogical structure and shared ancestral heritage. These tribes function not only as political entities but also carry significant importance as structural components within the Pashtun society. It recognizes that while the Pashtun tribal structure has political relevance, it is uncommon for Pashtun tribes to collectively act as political units. Glatzer (2002) suggests that the historical inconsistency of Pashtun tribes in political matters is acknowledged, as well as instances where tribes successfully organized to conquer empires but failed to maintain rule due to organizational shortcomings. The Pashtun political leaders historically harnessed tribal networks and identities to attain power. However, once in power, they often needed to establish alternative institutions beyond the tribal framework. Nonetheless, the tribal system continues to play a crucial role in shaping societal order, conflict resolution, power dynamics, and cultural norms like *Pashtunwali* in regions where state authority is limited, such as the Afghan hinterlands. The tribal system coexists alongside complex social structures, remaining pervasive despite societal changes and challenges. The participants of this study, and Pashtun generally, used their tribe's name at the end of their names. Majority of the participant I this study belongs to the Yousafzai tribe but other are from Mohmand, Afridi, Bangash, etc.

The vast majority of the Pashtuns adheres to the Sunni branch of Islam, specifically following the Hanafi school of thought. However, there are exceptions, such as the Turi tribe located in the Kurram Valley, Pakistan bordering Afghanistan, certain factions within the nearby Bangash and Orakzai tribes, as well as smaller communities within Afghanistan, who follow the Twelver Shia tradition. Additionally, certain Sufi orders or mystical schools of thought such as, Chistiyah and Qadiriah, have garnered significant followings among Pashtun tribes. Within the realm of Islamic beliefs, a notable number of Pashtun clerics, both in Pakistan and Afghanistan, identify as Deobandis, aligning with the Deoband Islamic movement that originated in the latter part of the nineteenth century in British India. In recent decades, regions inhabited by Pashtuns in both Afghanistan and Pakistan have witnessed the emergence of various radical Islamic political ideologies and sectarian groups promoting global jihadism. This jihadist ideology has deeply rooted itself in the region. The ascendancy of radical Islamic ideologies has at times overshadowed traditional religious institutions and clerical establishments. This shift has been facilitated by sustained financial support and strategic direction from external sources.

Ahmad Shah Durrani has created the first Afghan state in 1747 based on a distinct Pashtun identity. Functioning as a tribal confederation of the Pashtun community, its establishment

aimed to unite the Pashtuns and safeguard their concerns and unity in the face of non-Pashtun competitors. While acknowledging that the state's composition was not entirely uniform ethnically from its outset, it is noteworthy that the Pashtun majority in Afghanistan remained predominant during the early 19th century (Harrison, 2008). The original Pashtun homeland was located between the central Afghanistan's Hindu Kush mountains and the Indus River that cuts through Pakistan. However, Pashtun communities have now spread across an extensive area. In the northern regions of Afghanistan, the Pashtun population reaches the border with Central Asia at the Amu Darya (Oxus River), where Pashtun communities have significantly expanded over the last century. In the southern Pakistani port city of Karachi, situated along the Arabian Sea, there exists one of the largest urban Pashtun populations in the region today, owing to considerable economic migration. Among Karachi's twenty million inhabitants, approximately four million are Pashtuns.

From the Pashtun perspective, British colonialism deprived them of their inherent entitlements. Prior to the era of the British Raj, the Pashtun community experienced almost a century of political cohesion under the umbrella of an Afghan empire that extended eastward, encompassing the lands reaching as far as the Indus River. The acquisition of ancestral Pashtun territory between the Indus and the Khyber Pass by the British was a deeply distressing event for the Pashtuns. This seizure impacted half of the Pashtun populace, and the subsequent imposition of the Durand Line solidified their subjugation, as its eastern boundary with British India was demarcated in 1893 by a British official, Sir Mortimer Durand. The situation intensified when the British transferred this region to the newly established, Punjabi-dominated government of Pakistan in 1947, leading to the inheritance of a volatile, irredentist dilemma. This issue has consistently loomed in the rhetoric of Afghan regimes dominated by Pashtuns and has fostered a persistent toxicity in the relations between Afghanistan and Pakistan. The Pashtun nationalist political parties, such 'Awami national party' and 'Pakhtunkhwa milli awami party' till date consider people of both sides a one nation. A famous slogan among the Pashtun nationalists from both sides of the border is that *Lar aw bar yaw Afghan-* means that people from both sides of Durand line is one Afghan nation.

2.2. Pashtunwali: the Pashtun code of life

'Che Pashto kay no Puktai ba maate garzai'

Abiding by Pashto and adhering to Pashtunwali is like consistently bearing fractured ribs.

(A Pashto *Matal,* Proverb)

'Pakhto asana na da khalqa', 'Sok che pakhto kri pukhtai mati garzaweena'

Doing Pashto is not simple; the one who do Pashto bear the weight of fractured ribs.

(A Pashto *Tapa*, folksong)

Both, the Pashto folksong, and proverb highlight the difficulty of embracing Pashto—it demands bravery and sacrifice to undertake the journey toward becoming a respected Pashtun. It exemplifies the challenge of adhering to the tenets of Pashtunwali.

Pashtunwali refers to the code of conduct that governs the behaviour and actions of Pashtuns within their society. It is a customary framework developed over centuries of living together in their homeland. Pashtunwali encompasses various practices, habits, and ways of life. The roots of Pashtunwali dates to pre-Islamic times and have been intertwined with Islamic teachings since Islam's arrival in the Pashtun region (Rzehak, 2011). In Pashto language the cultural values and rules of behaviour are summarized under the word *Pashtunwali* also known as *Pashto*. Pashto language, spoken by Pashtuns, is not only a means of communication but also a representation of adhering to the principles of Pashtunwali. According to Khattak, (2008) Pashto is the language as well as the code of life of Pashtuns. The usage of the term *Pashto Kawal* (doing Pashto) means to follow the principles of *Pashtunwali,* and the term *Pashto wayal* means speaking the Pashto language. Similarly, the term Pashtun represents a nation/an ethnic group, and a character type-a person adhering to Pashtunwali. *Pashto kawal* and *Pashto wayal* also signify that to be a Pashtun it is not enough to speak Pashto but to do Pashto as well.

The core pillars of Pashtunwali include *Melmastya* (hospitality), *Badal* (revenge, reciprocity), *Tarboorwali* (agnatic rivalry), *Siyali* (family competition), *Nang* (honour), *Namus* (chastity of women), *Jirga* (council of elders), *nanawatay* (plea for reprieve, apology), *tor* (female honour), *hujra* (male guest house) *theegah* (truce, cease fire), *panah* (providing refuge, asylum), "*olasi zye*" (public sphere) (Khattak 2008; Shaheen 1989; Spain 1962; Khan et al 2019; Jamal, 2014; Saeed, 2012). *Melmastya* emphasizes treating guests hospitably, going beyond Western notions of hospitality and extending even to enemies seeking refuge. *Badal* signifies retaliating against insults or harm, often through reciprocity, while *Nanawatay* promotes forgiveness and

sanctuary when an offender genuinely seeks pardon. *Tarboorwali* involves competitive engagement among cousins, and *Siyali* promotes positive competition within the extended family. *Jirga*, the council of elders, serves as a conflict resolution mechanism in Pashtun society. Comprising respected individuals well-versed in local customs, Jirga plays a significant role in resolving disputes among Pashtuns due to the inadequacy of state institutions in tribal settings. *Nang* and *Namus* emphasize honour and protecting the chastity of women, portraying Pashtuns' commitment to pride and integrity.

Pessala (2012), outlined that the Pashtun nation, distinguished linguistically from other regional groups, possesses an enigmatic historical origin. However, they share a profound sense of common ancestry and shared principles. The Pashtun way of life is guided by Pashtunwali, an unwritten code of conduct comprising multiple tenets such as honour, vengeance, autonomy, and gallantry, which also imposes various restrictions on the actions and behaviour of women. Pessala goes on to elucidate that "despite the intimate relationship between Islam and Pashtun identity, the values upheld by Islam and Pashtunwali diverge in various aspects" (p. 3). Jamal (2014) asserts that while Pashtunwali has been perpetuated across generations, it remains conservative, inherently democratic, and ancient in origin, yet still relatively youthful within Pashtun culture. Similarly, Saeed (2012), argues Pashtunwali signifies adhering to *ghairat* (self-respect or dignity) and *Pashto kawal* (following Pashtunwali), which stands as an emblem of prestige and honour within Pashtun culture.

Besides Pashtunwali another important marker of Pashtun identity is adhering to Islam or Muslim-ness. Islam and Pashtunwali hold significant significance within contemporary socio-political dynamics of Pashtun society, influencing even gender dynamics. Majority of the Pashtuns inherently associate themselves with Islam from birth leading to instances where the concepts of "Pashtun-ness" and "Muslim-ness" intertwine. This intertwining is to such an extent that being a Pashtun inherently implies being a Muslim (Sanauddin, 2015). Similarly, Jan (2010) argues that the anthropological and political literature widely agrees on the integral role of Islam in shaping Pashtun identity. He asserts that there is an inseparable connection between Pashtun-ness and Muslim-ness. Jan contends that being a Muslim is a fundamental aspect of being a Pashtun, a status acquired at birth and inseparably linked. This intertwining of identities ensures a secure and predetermined position within society as both a Pashtun and a Muslim from birth. This perception instils confidence in Pashtuns and fosters a sense of universality and tolerance within their religious beliefs. He further observes that while Pashtun

behaviour exhibits substantial "Islamic symbolism", the full comprehension of these symbols is often limited. Nevertheless, these symbols gain renewed significance as they become associated with social status. An illustration of this symbolism is evident in the placement of the Mosque near the Hujra in Pashtun society. The importance and practice of rituals like Prayers, Fasting, Pilgrimage (Haj), Zakat (charitable donations to the poor), and Jihad also hold significant sway among Pashtuns. He acknowledges the undeniable centrality of Islam to Pashtun identity while contending that its role is more passive in social matters and assumes a self-evident aspect of individual and cultural identity. Based on the combination of Islam and Pashtunwali, Zahir Rahman, a Pashtun refugee from Pakistan, describe his identity in the following way.

> I want to live my life according to Islam; I want to follow those teaching and values which Islam taught us not those which is I Pashto. But in Pashto there are certain things that is considered essential for a man, like hospitality, protecting *namus*, Badal, and a certain type of dress code and for example having moustaches. But as I told you earlier, the highest of men is the who stood by truth and righteousness, and who have good manners and treat others with respect.

> - 'Zahir Rahman', a Pashtun refugee from Pakistan, interviewed in Bicocca Village, Milan.

Emerging from a tribal societal framework, Pashtunwali encompasses principles that overlap with the broader surrounding civilization. However, it uniquely encompasses a foundational set of principles dictating individual and communal conduct that are considered distinctively Pashtun. According to Sanauddin, (2015), western writers often are at fault for oversimplifying Pashtunwali into a few behaviours that contribute to reinforcing a stereotype. These behaviours comprise honour (nang), the practice of hospitality (melmastya), and the concept of reciprocity, referred to as badal (which is frequently conflated with mere vengeance, although it possesses a more intricate nature). A notable aspect is *tarboorwali*, signifying agnatic rivalry, frequently observed among male cousins, and *siyali*, signifying competition within an extended family, which instil a high degree of competitiveness within Pashtun society. Additionally, Pashtunwali embodies the values of forgiveness, equality, egalitarianism, and chivalry. The jirga, or council of elders, plays a central role in resolving local disputes and strategizing responses to threats and challenges. Across centuries, specific Pashtun tribes have formulated their distinct *narkh*,

or customary legal systems, rooted in Pashtunwali's principles. Typically unwritten, these codes compensate for the absence of inadequacy of state institutions. In essence, comprehending Pashtunwali necessitates recognizing its incorporation of numerous universal values while remaining shaped by local traditions.

2.3. Pashtunwali and the gender order of Pashtun society

Pashto kawa kah tah Pashtun ye

Ma pah Pashto bandi ter kari di ghamoona

(*Pashto Tapa*, a Pashto folksong)

The initial line of this Tapa reveals a woman's counsel to her male counterpart to follow the path of Pashtunwali as to prove himself a true Pashtun, and the subsequent line demonstrates her own adherence to Pashtunwali with pride by saying that many of the trials I have faced have been in the realm of Pashtunwali. This Pashto *Tapa* implies that as a Pashtun, doing Pashto or embracing Pashtunwali is essential to remain honourable. This also signifies that a woman's practice of Pashtunwali or living by its principles necessitates her ability to endure all challenges and hardships with resilience.

Pashtun society, characterized by its rich cultural heritage, is marked by distinct gender roles and structures that have persisted over time. The concept of Pashtunwali, a complex cultural framework governing various aspects of Pashtun life, including social norms, ethics, and interactions, plays a pivotal role in shaping the gender dynamics within the Pashtun society.

The gender structure of Pashtun society as influenced by the code of Pashtunwali, is predominantly male dominated. As asserted by multiple scholars (Saeed, 2012; Sanauddin et al., 2016; Alam, 2012). Saeed (2012) explains that how the concept of ghairat (honour), which is closely intertwined with Pashtunwali and holds significant implications for gender roles and behaviour of men and women. While ghairat pertains to honour, it differs considerably in its application to Pashtun men and women. For men, ghairat is reflective of virility and masculinity, encompassing elements such as control over women's conduct and sexuality, property ownership, provision for the family, and seeking revenge to safeguard familial honour. Conversely, women's ghairat entails traits like tolerance, obedience to the husband and in-laws,

observance of *purdah* (seclusion from unrelated men), and safeguarding their husband's property and honour (Saeed, 2012, p. 96).

Pashtunwali serves as a prism through which the gendered expressions of both men and women in Pashtun society are refracted. The practice of Pashtunwali, encompassing concepts like ghairat and *Pashto kawal* (the act of doing Pashto), is deeply ingrained in the society's fabric. This phenomenon indicates that both Pashtun men and women exhibit the principles of Pashtunwali through their distinct gender roles and corresponding societal expectations within Pashtun culture. This dynamic engenders the circumstance, where men exercise dominance over women, thereby perpetuating the established patriarchal framework.

Drawing from the principles of Pashtunwali and Islam, the cultural perceptions of masculinity and femininity exert adverse effects on the lives and societal standing of women within Pashtun communities. As asserted by Alam (2012), Pathan women inhabiting rural regions of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa encounter prevailing conditions of illiteracy, adherence to tradition, and lack of skills. Their existence is governed by deeply entrenched traditional and conservative frameworks, characterized by a prevailing patriarchal dominance and religious oversight (p. 315). However, the status of women in Pakistan is not homogeneous, largely due to the intersection of gender with other forms of inequality. There is considerable diversity in the status of women across classes, regions, and the rural-urban divide (Bari & Mariam, 2000). Therefore, a woman's reality varies depending on her membership in the highly educated elite, as part of the urban middle class, or as a rural peasant or resident of a tribal area where customs have remained relatively unchanged over time. In addition, an important factor that influences the status of a woman in Pakistan is her ethnic background. As asserted by Daood Afridi, "in Pakistan there are certain cities where women do not observe Purdah, but women from the rural and tribal areas should never come here (to Italy), there is no need for them to come here, because a proud Muslim Pashtun women should never come here" (Dawood Afridi, a Pashtun refugee from Pakistan, interviewed at Bicocca Village, Milan).

This assertion resonates with prevailing patriarchal norms embedded in Pashtunwali and Islam, which influence women's decisions and prospects in Pashtun society, even in the realm of migration. The mention of "certain cities where women do not observe Purdah" alludes to urban areas where traditional veiling practices are less stringent, indicating that women's freedom of movement could be more accepted there. However, the subsequent declaration that

"women from rural and tribal areas should never come here (to Italy)" unveils the tenacious grip of established gender norms even across borders. This stance implies that Pashtun women should avoid migrating to Italy to avoid disrupting or challenging traditional gender roles and expectations, implying that migration choices should align with conserving traditional values. The assertion "because a proud Muslim woman should never come here" reinforces gender norms embedded in culture, ethnicity, and religion, and adhering to established gender roles to discourage independent migration choices that might diverge from these norms. In this light, the statement illustrates the pervasive influence of male dominance and traditional gender norms even in the context of contemplating international migration. Women's autonomy, movement, and decisions remain constrained by societal pressures and the perceived obligation to uphold cultural and religious ideals, often overshadowing personal pursuits and opportunities. It serves as a poignant reminder of the intricate challenges Pashtun women encounter as they navigate their ambitions within the constraints of patriarchal expectations, both in their homeland and in the landscape of migration to foreign destinations like Italy.

The Pashtuns, compared to other ethnic group in Pakistan, are considered by scholars to be more conservative regarding gender relations, particularly surrounding issues of women *purdah* (seclusion of women) (Ferdos, 2005). This entrenched patriarchal structure and the values associated with honour and shame contribute to the emergence of a gender-based paradigm, which confines women to domestic realms, encompassing unproductive household tasks, while men are allocated roles in the public sphere, involving productive pursuits. Consequently, this arrangement culminates in the marginalized status of Pashtun women, manifested through restricted mobility, limited educational opportunities, absence of resource access, inconspicuous involvement in development endeavours, compromised health conditions, inadequate nutrition, heightened mortality rates, and male-centric control. Attaullah Jan for example describe the gender segregation of males and females in his extended family in the following way.

> In our kinship we have certain rules and values which everybody must follow, for example if I have paternal female cosine, and if I am an adult, I cannot shake hand with her, Similarly, I cannot shake hand with my maternal female cosine if she is an adult. So, in our family its forbidden for adult boys /men to sit with female cosines especially if they are unmarried, because first, this is a sin/unislamic, and secondly, it is better to protect the family from any disgrace/dishonour. Similarly, a lot of other customary practices which

encourage closeness between male and female we do not allow that in our family, so it is not acceptable to sit and talk to females often, even I purchase a cell phone for my wife after a lot of persuasion with my parents, in our family females are not allowed to keep a cell phone. Our law is that, offer your prayers, eat, and drink and sleep that's it. They are not allowed to go other people's home if there are males in that family, we allowed them to visit only close relative whom we trust 100 percents. Beside this my parent always taught me not to look at other people's daughters and sisters with bad intention/ to respect everybody's sisters and daughters so that they respect your sisters and daughters, and if you disrespect others, they will disrespect you. As the Pashtuns say, *"ma kawa pa cha, obashi pa ta"* whatever you do to others, comes back to you.

This prevalent male dominance in Pashtun culture is also evident in the context of Pashtun transnational migration. This becomes apparent when examining the data provided by participants in response to inquiries about women's migration to Europe. For instance, Ejaz Khan, a 22-year-old refugee, puts forth the viewpoint as following.

In my view, it is not advisable for women to migrate to this place (Italy). The environment here is quite permissive, and the Devil is always there, and by that, I mean that negative influences can easily affect anyone, leading to engaging in undesirable actions. Therefore, I believe women should reconsider coming here. On the other hand, if a young man or adult male intends to migrate for work or education, it is a viable option. Particularly for education, this place offers significant advantages. Allow me to provide you with a related example: boys possess the capability to handle a wide array of tasks, whereas girls encounter limitations. A boy can engage in work responsibilities, provide for his family, and remain focused on educational and career goals. He has the capacity to seek guidance on finding employment and eventually secure a position. Conversely, even if girls manage to secure employment in this location, their job opportunities might not align with those available to boys. that is why girls, particularly Pashtun women, need not consider migrating; they should remain in our own country where they have the freedom to pursue their aspirations. In Pakistan, various educational opportunities are at their disposal, spanning different courses. Hence, there is no necessity for them to come here.

- 'Ejaz khan', a Pashtun refugee from Pakistan, interviewed in Comasina, Milan.

The Participant's opinion that women should not migrate because of the "open environment" suggests a belief that women need to be protected from potential negative influences. This

viewpoint implies that women may lack the agency to make decisions for themselves, and men should take the responsibility of deciding what is best for them. The assertion that "the devil is always there" and can manipulate women into doing "anything bad" implies a perception that women are more vulnerable to negative influences and need to be shielded from temptation. This reflects a notion of women as morally weaker and needing male protection. The explanation that boys can "do everything" while girls cannot imply a belief in distinct gender roles and limitations. The Participant emphasizes that boys can work, care for their families, and achieve success, while suggesting that girls have more limited capabilities. This reinforces the idea of men being more competent and dominant in various aspects of life. The recommendation that Pashtun women should stay in their own country and pursue education and other opportunities there reflects a positive change in the participant's perception regarding women education and employment, however it also shows a desire to maintain traditional gender norms and roles. This advice discourages women from seeking opportunities outside of their established roles, reinforcing the idea of men as decision-makers and women as beneficiaries of those decision. The statement that "the culture of these people is very different from that of ours" suggests that cultural norms play a significant role in shaping the individual's perspective. It is possible that these cultural norms contribute to male-dominated attitudes where women's actions and opportunities are restricted to align with traditional gender roles.

Jamal (2014) underscores the centrality of women's chastity and honour, deeply sensitive aspects within Pashtun society, which underpin male authority in decisions pertaining to women's matters encompassing education, marriage, employment, childbirth, and their roles within the community. The traditions and norms that revolve around honour, encapsulating concepts such as *ghairat*, *nang*, and *namus* in the Pashto language, collectively foster an extreme manifestation of patriarchal structure, accentuating hierarchical distinctions and a clear demarcation between the social statuses of males and females. Fredrick Barth delves into the power dynamics within Pashtun families and society at large elaborating it in the following way.

> Pathans give importance to males and presuppose their authority over females in all situations. this holds true in the domestic sphere as well as in the larger world. Their society might legitimately be called patriarchal. In the family, the husband and father has all authority; he controls the social intercourse of the family members to the extent of being able, at his pleasure, to cut his wife off from all contact with her natal kin; he controls all

> property; he may use physical compulsion to enforce his authority; and he alone has the right to dissolve the domestic unit or expel its members, by divorce or by disinheriting the children. These are his formal rights.

(Barth, 1959, p. 22).

These cultural standards and principles surrounding masculinity, femininity, and gender dynamics within the Pashtun community serve as primary agents in upholding the patriarchal structure. These norms and values also present significant barriers to the active involvement of women in the socio-political and economic spheres of Pashtun society. It dictate that men have the responsibility to regulate women's bodies and sexuality, confine them within domestic spaces to avoid public scrutiny, and safeguard their honour. Conversely, women are expected to yield to male authority and control, aiming to avert disgrace. However, the Pashtun society can be seen as an evolving society where women are entering into the job market in various fields and with gradual increase in the female literacy rate especially due to urbanization and modernity where women have increased socio economic and political participation as compared to the rural and tribal areas.

2.4. Theorising Pashtun masculinities

R.W. Connell's influential work, "Masculinities" (1995), has greatly influenced contemporary examinations of the masculinities. In contrast to the oversimplified view of masculinity and femininity as rigid binary oppositions applicable universally, Connell's perspective delves into the complexities. He presents masculinity as a relational concept, intricately interwoven with gender, sexuality, class, race, and a multitude of social dynamics. His approach recognizes that masculinity is not a fixed concept but varies across cultures and time periods. Connel argues that masculinity is shaped by and shapes other aspects of society, reflecting the evolving nature of gender identities and emphasizing the need for a more inclusive, context-aware understanding of what it means to be a man in today's world. Connell's perspective results in exploring a wide range of masculinities arranged in a hierarchical structure, with a dominant masculinity, hegemonic and complicit masculinity, occupying the highest position. This prevalent form of masculinity not only relegates femininity to a subordinate role but also marginalizes and subjugates alternative expressions of masculinities, which he calls complicit, subordinate, and marginalized masculinities.

Schippers (2007) defines that "Hegemonic masculinity is the qualities defined as manly that establish and legitimate a hierarchical and complementary relationship to femininity and that, by doing so, guarantee the dominant position of men and the subordination of women" (p. 94). She argues that Connell's conceptualization of hegemonic masculinity is based on difference to femininity, which leaves no place to conceptualize hegemonic femininity. In this regard Schippers introduce the complementary relationship of hegemonic masculinity with femininity and creates space to conceptualize hegemonic femininity as well. She asserts that hegemonic femininity "consists of the characteristics defined as womanly that establish and legitimate a hierarchical and complementary relationship to hegemonic masculinity and that, by doing so, guarantee the dominant position of men and the subordination of women" (Schippers, 2007, p. 94). Schippers's conception shows that how patriarchal gender norms and values are internalised by women, through consensus or coherence. as I discussed in the previous section that how Pashtunwali and doing Pashto for women differ from that of men.

In the Pashtun cultural context, a true embodiment of hegemonic masculinity is associated with adhering to the established norms of Pashtunwali (Sanauddin, 2015; Saeed, 2012). However, the code of Pashtunwali cannot be viewed separately from Islam. As I discussed earlier that Islam and Pashtunwali significantly shape Pashtun society and identity and influencing gender dynamics. A strong association between being Pashtun-ness and Muslimness exists, defining a Pashtun's identity from birth. Pashtuns believe that their conversion to and accepting of Islam was caused mainly by the resemblance between the code of Pashtunwali and Islam. There is a famous saying in Pashto that *Pashtun minhaisul qoum musalman dy*, means that Pashtun as nation collectively accept Islam because of the shared principles and values of Pashtunwali and Islam, and that all the Pashtuns are Muslims currently.

Within the Pashto language, terms like *Nar* and *Sarai* used for male and man respectively, while *Nartoob*/*Narintoob* and *Saritoob* means masculinity and manhood respectively (all signifying masculine traits and manly behaviour). In Addition terms like *Pashtun* (Pashtun here can be seen as a character type of hegemonic masculinity), *Asal Pashtun (*true Pashtun)*, Narsarai* (masculine man), *and Ghairatman* (honourable man), all are employed to connote the idealized form of Pashtun masculinity. Conversely, descriptors like *Mozi*, *Dala*, *Daus*, (conveying effeminate qualities), *Begharata* (a person having no honour), *and Bepushto* (a person not abiding by Pashtunwali), are used for individuals who do not conform to the ideal notions of Pashtun masculinity. The cultural ideals of Pashtun masculinity, embedded in the established

norms of Pashtunwali, aligns with Connell's (1995) concept of hegemonic masculinity, which refers to the dominant and culturally endorsed version of masculinity that establishes the norms and standards to which other forms of masculinity are compared. The terms *Narintoob*, *Saritoob*, *Narsarai*, *Gharatman, and Pashtun* serve as descriptors for hegemonic masculinity, reflecting the characteristics and behaviours that are idealized and esteemed within Pashtun culture. Conversely, the use of terms like *Mozi*, *Dala*, *Daus*, *Beghairata,* and *Bepakhto* highlights alternative perspectives on masculinity. These terms suggest undesirable and effeminate qualities and are used to label individuals who deviate from the dominant ideals of Pashtun masculinity. These labels indicate the existence of subordinate masculinities that do not conform to the norms of hegemonic masculinity. Connell's theory recognizes the existence of subordinate masculinities, which are defined in relation to and in contrast with the dominant or hegemonic masculinity, often experiencing marginalization or discrimination. According to Connell's theory, a multiplicity of masculinity forms can coexist simultaneously, influenced by variables like age, social class, ethnicity, and other cultural intricacies. The terms *Saritoob*, *Narintoob*, and *Ghairatman* represent one version of masculinity, while *Mozi*, *Dala*, *Daus* and *Begahirata* suggest alternative manifestations. However, this classification highlights the extreme forms of hegemonic and subordinate or marginalized masculinities, while majority of the Pashtuns men embodies the complicit masculinity, adhering to the ideals of Pashtun masculinity in their perceptions but due factors such as economic class, age, caste or profession, and other intersections, are unable to embody the hegemonic masculinity in practice. This aligns with Connell's notion of multiple masculinities, where different groups of men may practice distinct forms of masculinity while aspiring to attain hegemonic masculinity.

Connell (1995, 2005) asserts that "hegemonic masculinity can be defined as the configuration of gender practice which embodies the currently accepted answer to the problem of the legitimacy of patriarchy, which guarantees (or is taken to guarantee) the dominant position of men and the subordination of women" (p. 77). Within this framework, the configuration of gender practice, to exhibit hegemonic Pashtun masculinity, can be defined as the predominant modes of exhibiting manhood within Pashtun culture, which entails abiding by principles like *Ghairat* (honour and dignity) or *Pashto Kawal* (following the path of Pashtunwali). Pashtun men, according to their designated gender roles and the expectations placed upon them, manifest the principles of Pashtunwali through various concepts, such as *Namus* (upholding the pride and honour of women and land), *Nang* (displaying grace, Pashtun pride, and commitment), *Badal* (seeking revenge or reciprocity), '*Hujra*' (a male guest house, exclusive

male domain for hospitality), *Turzan* or *Turyalay* (exhibiting bravery and confidence), *Kor palanah* (providing for the family, the extended family, as a breadwinner and protector), *Turboorwali* (engaging in competition with cousins), *Watan palanah* (demonstrating patriotism), heterosexuality , and *Peghor* (using taunts or slurs to encourage masculinity). An individual who encompasses all these attributes is referred to as a *Ghairatman* (honourable), which bestows him with a dominant position within both the family and society, and prove his *Saritoob* or *Nartoob*, (masculine behaviours and actions). This embodiment forms the bedrock for the prevalence of male authority over female and over other men within Pashtun culture and society. All the above principle cannot be viewed in isolation rather they are closely interlinked and interdependent on each in its practice.

According to Spain (1962), the concept of *ghairat* (honour) among the Pashtuns revolves around three primary aspects: *Zan* (women), *Zamin* (land), and *Zar* (gold or wealth). These elements often serve as triggers for various conflicts and hostilities within Pashtun society. Fredrick Barth also describes this point in the context of Pashtun leadership in the following way.

> The objects of strife among Pathans are, according to a Pakhto proverb, zin, zer, zamin-'women, gold, land'. Zamin, land, is the ultimate source of livelihood for leader and follower alike; its acquisition and retention are in the interest of both. His ownership of land gives the leader power over those who depend on it. Zcr, gold, stands for riches in general, which, utilized in making gifts or bribes, gives authority over others. Finally, zin, women, are a source of conflicts in so far as family honour is involved in the conduct of sisters and wives. Such conflicts are regarded as the ultimate tests of a man's honour, martial valour and ability to command.
>
> (Barth, 1959, p. 73)

Safeguarding *Namus* (female honour), requires a Pashtun man (whether a father, husband, brother, or other male family member), to exercise control over women, their sexualities, and their conduct. This control extends to ensuring the right to choose one's spouse, adhering to *Purdah* (the seclusion of women), either by consensus or employing force to confine women to their homes and the private sphere. Furthermore, protecting *Namus* also entails safeguarding one's land and possessions and maintaining authority over decisions concerning women's lives. According to Barth "the only successful defence of honour is revenge, equal to or beyond the

extent of the original insult, so as to re-establish parity or gain an advantage vis-a-vis one's rival" (Barth, 1959, p. 82).

The concept of *Nang* for a Pashtun man revolves around fulfilling commitments and promises at any cost (Saeed, 2012; Rzehak, 2011). The individual who honours their commitments or promises is referred to as a *Nangyalay*, signifying their entitlement to the pride of being a true Pashtun. Conversely, someone who fails to uphold their commitments or promises is termed a *Benanga* or *Bepakhto*, indicating that they are not deserving of the honour associated with being a Pashtun, thus not considered a true Pashtun.

The concept of *Watan palana* (Patriotism) constitutes an integral component of Pashtunwali, and it is expected of every Pashtun to be prepared to defend and make sacrifices for their homeland. Pashtun history provides ample evidence that, whenever invaders have threatened Pashtun territory, the Pashtuns have organized themselves to resist these incursions (Khattak 2008). *Turzan, Turyalay*, and *Merhu*, which encompass bravery, risk-taking, and confidence, represent universal characteristics of hegemonic masculinity. In the Pashto language, the term *Merhana*, signifying bravery, is derived from *Merhu*, which also translates to 'man'. In Pashtun culture, a man's bravery is defined by his ability to defend his honour, fight for his country, protect *Namus*, provide for his family, and adhere to other aspects of Pashtunwali.

The *Hujra* is an exclusively male guest house and designated men's space, known as *'da saro zaye'* in Pashto, where women are not permitted entry. It is an integral part of a Pashtun home, typically with a separate entrance and often detached from the main living quarters. The *Hujra* serves a significant function as an informal school where younger individuals learn about the ideals of honour and masculinity from their elder counterparts. The *Hujra* holds a significant place in Pashtun culture and Pashtunwali. It serves as a gathering point for Pashtun men, where they come together to share their joys and sorrows, as well as to impart and learn the principles of Pashtunwali. Pashto language, Pashtunwali, and the Pashtun identity form the foundational pillars of the Hujra (Dawood, 1999; Shaheen;1989). Similarly, the tradition of *Melmastya* (hospitality) holds great importance among Pashtuns, representing a crucial aspect of Pashtun honour and Pashtunwali. Every Pashtun, in accordance with their social standing, strives to extend the highest level of hospitality to their guests, a practice noted by (Spain,1962; Khattak, 2008).

Additionally, the concept of *Badal* (revenge) remains a vital element within Pashtunwali. according to Shaheen (1989), Pashtuns view it as their solemn duty to seek revenge when a family member is harmed or killed. Within the framework of Pashtunwali, there are well-defined principles governing the act of seeking vengeance. Similarly, Spain (1962) emphasizes that the foremost and most fundamental tenet of Pashtunwali is *badal*, wherein the responsibility to seek retribution for a perceived or actual wrong extends not only to the individual who endured the injustice but also to their family and tribe. In Pashtun society, *Badal* is a longstanding tradition, and a Pashtun is steadfast in pursuing retribution from those who have wronged them (Khattak in 2008). The duty of exacting revenge primarily falls on men, although women also hold the expectation that their male relatives will avenge the wrongdoing or killing of a family member. According to Barth (1959):

> Revenge in defence of honour may vary, depending on the magnitude of the insult, from seizure of the opponent's property or of hostages, beating him up, or, in serious cases, blood revenge. In other words, it requires a show of superior force by the insulted person. Revenge may therefore be taken by the man himself or by his followers acting on his behalf. The action of his friends and allies does not remove the shame as effectively as recourse to force by himself.

> (Barth, 1959, p. 82-83).

However, *Badal* is not confined solely to seeking revenge; it encompasses a range of practices rooted in reciprocity, such as sharing gifts and participating in each other's celebrations or mourning.

The concept of a male breadwinner for the family remains a widespread phenomenon, and even in the face of socio-economic changes, the ideal of the male breadwinner persists in societies (Kanji & Samuel 2012). In Pashtun society, *Kor palana* (provision for the family) is an integral part of Pashtunwali, it is the duty of men to provide for and safeguard the family. This enduring ideal of the male breadwinner remains intact, despite the increasing involvement of Pashtun women in paid employment (Rzehak, 2011; Saeed, 2012; Sanauddin, 2015).

Cashmore and Cleland (2012) observe that traditional concepts of masculinity traditionally emphasized the display of physical strength, adherence to heterosexuality, and a negative stance towards homosexuality. Heteronormativity and homophobia serve as mechanisms to

normalize heterosexuality and discourage homosexuality within society, a perspective supported by (Richardson & Robinson, 2008). The societal hostility towards homosexuality lays the foundation for Connell's theorization, as seen in his works Masculinities (1995, 2005), which conceptualize hierarchies of masculinity and position gay men in a subordinate role on the masculinity scale. While homosexuality exists in the Pashtun society, but it is hidden and stigmatized encouraging men behaviour towards compulsory heterosexuality and homophobia. the participants of this study also show a similar response to the question about homosexual relationships. For instance, Zahir Rahman expressed his views about homosexuality in the following manner.

> Personally I really hate this, because Allah says if someone is involved in homosexuality they are sinners, as I told you the people who do *Bachabaazi*, (taking interest in boys) I really hate them, I do not see any *Saritob* in them, look if you are younger than me I would treat you like a father or elder brother, especially when we are in a migration context, but some people will treat you with bad intentions if you are younger, or a teenager. And I observe it here as well in Bari, there was a person from Sawabi Pakistan he did this with another boy from Quetta Pakistan, he was very old than the boy and do this to him, so I was very angry with him. Then I told my friends that this boy is very young, and we should treat him like our son or as younger brother and not to treat him like this. But here (in Italy) it is (homosexuality) very open it also exists in Pashtuns but there it is hidden.

> - 'Zahir Rahman', a Pashtun refugee from Pakistan, interviewed in Bicocca Village, Milan.

Similarly, Shahab express that "I consider it (homosexuality) a bad deed, in Pashtun society there is homosexuality between men but between women there in no such thing. It is a sin, and it is illegal in and immoral in every religion. Either it is among boys or girls" (Shahab Saleem a Pashtun refugee from Pakistan, interviewed in Bicocca Village, Milan). Shahab Momand another participant expresses that "in our religion (Islam) it (homosexuality) is forbidden, and there is the story of Qoum-e-loot (nation of loot, the prophet) and this thing (homosexuality) was prevalent in that society, so Allah destroy them with his wrath, so it is not a good deed no matter in what religion it is" (Shahab Momand, a Pashtun refugee from Pakistan, interviewed in Bicocca Village, Milan). Sartaj khan another Participant when asked about his views on homosexuality he responded that "I would say that everything which against the law of Allah, we have to consider that as evil, but the Shaitan (devil) is a big enemy of Islam, so we should

pray that Allah protect us from Shaitan". Most of the participants reject homosexuality as unislamic and sinful.

Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) argued that only a minority of the men in each context are capable to embody the hegemonic masculinity, while the majority men embody alternative forms of masculinity such as, complicit, subordinate, and marginalized masculinities. in the Pashtun cultural context, the embodiment of hegemonic masculinity is also limited to a minority, while majority of the men embody alternative forms of masculinity. Nonetheless, while incorporating these characteristics, embedded in Pashtunwali and Islam, renders a man honourable (Ghairatman) in Pashtun society, it is not possible for every man to embody them, as we would see from the analysis of the collected data as well, underscoring that only a minority of Pashtun men can encompass these attributes and ascend to dominance and honour. This reaffirms the coexistence of diverse and hierarchal expressions of masculinity within Pashtun culture and society. In his analysis of Pashtun leadership among swat Pathans, Barth (1959) confirm this point by describing the Swat Pathan society, where the authority of a chief extends beyond mere possession of lands and wealth; it crucially relies on the intangible concept of honour (*Izat*). A chief's relations with his dependents can be severed by either party, allowing individuals to align with a new leader. The chief's wealth, land, and ability to handle critical situations all contribute to his prestige, a major source of authority. The idealized leader is characterized as virile, impetuous, and unyielding, with a commitment to extremes and bravery. The concepts of honour and shame are pivotal in evaluating a leader's qualifications, and conflicts arising from threats to honour are as significant as those related to land. Honor, associated with a leader's ability to defend against insults, is defended through revenge, often involving blood feuds. The successful defence of honour enhances a leader's reputation, attracting followers and establishing him as a competent and powerful chief. A chief's reluctance to defend honour can lead to a loss of reputation and is perceived as weakness, endangering both him and his followers. Thus, the code of honour becomes a fundamental aspect of a leader's authority and influence.

As Fredrick Barth describes that leadership in the context of Pashtun society is intricately tied to hegemonic masculinity, epitomized by traditional virtues like virility, impetuosity, bravery, and a readiness to employ violence when deemed necessary. It explains that to secure a position of leadership and authority in Pashtun society, material wealth, such as land in traditional agrarian society, or the modern-day professions, which emerged as addition to and sometimes

as replacement to the traditional sources of wealth, and the intangible quality of honour, intimately connected to their prowess in defending against insults through acts of violence or revenge. The social construction of masculinity in this context demands adherence to ideals centred on honour, bravery, and the ability to safeguard oneself and followers, with deviations potentially resulting in a loss of reputation and power. The distinction between leaders and followers itself explains the relations between hegemonic masculinity and alternative form of masculinities such as complicit, marginalised, and subordinate masculinities. As I have discussed earlier that most of the men in each context hold complicit positions in relation to the hegemonic, the leaders in Pashtun context face a perpetual pressure to uphold their honour and masculinity, and leaders that perceived to be as weak or unwilling to resort to the hegemonic practices can be abandoned by the followers. It suggests that the followers are complicit to the hegemonic practices or signifiers but not the leader itself. As Connell argued the significance of hegemonic masculinity was "not necessarily what powerful men are, but what sustains their power and what large numbers of men are motivated to support" (quoted in Roberts & Elliott, 2020, p. 90).

This continuous pressure fosters a cycle where leaders are compelled to adopt aggressive and dominant behaviours to sustain their status. Moreover, it highlights gendered conflicts, associating women with sources of conflict, thereby emphasizing a societal structure that indirectly links women to the honour of men and the perpetuation of masculine ideals. Donaldson et al. (2009), argues that the concept of hegemonic masculinity can be viewed as empty signifier which demands complicity or adherence to certain hegemonic principles that create homogenous and normative gender orders.

> within any gender order whether at the national, international, or transnational level the hegemonic takes the form of an empty signifier whose content is drawn from the particularity of masculinity and whose task is to mediate heterogeneity to produce normative gender regimes and ultimately, gender orders. It is used by the traditional intellectuals as a mechanism for demanding complicity to the hegemonic principles that express the nature of the dominative hegemony of men.
>
> (Donaldson et al., 2009, p. 35-36).

In this context, hegemony signifies the control and dominance wielded by a particular group or ideology over others. The notion that the "hegemonic takes the form of an empty signifier"

implies that within these gender frameworks, a prevailing and overarching concept of masculinity exists, yet this concept lacks a fixed or specific definition. Instead, it derives its meaning and attributes from the specific cultural, societal, and historical circumstances in which it operates. This hegemonic masculinity plays a vital role within these gender systems by acting as a mediator for the diverse expressions of masculinity and gender roles. It offers a framework for understanding and comparing different manifestations of masculinity, effectively establishing a benchmark against which other forms of masculinity are measured. These norms often mirror and perpetuate the dominant or hegemonic concept of masculinity. They also refer to "traditional intellectuals" who utilize this concept of hegemonic masculinity as a means of enforcing compliance with the prevailing principles that support male dominance. Essentially, individuals in positions of power or influence, frequently men in patriarchal societies, leverage this concept to sustain and perpetuate gender inequalities by highlighting the superiority of hegemonic masculinity and expecting others to conform to it. Hegemonic masculinity as an adaptable yet potent concept that influences and moulds gender structures and norms, ultimately reinforcing male dominance within these systems. It underscores how this concept can be wielded to control and perpetuate gender disparities across a range of social and cultural contexts. In the Pashtun cultural context as the collected data suggests that majority of the participants are perceiving the masculine traits, at least some of the traits, embedded in Pashtunwali and Islam, as ideal and hegemonic for men, showing their complicity to these ideals of Pashtun masculinity. However, their own story of becoming a man, before migration, shows a different picture regarding their own masculinity, placing them in alternative positions in relation to the hegemonic.

Connell (2000) demonstrates that the spectrum of masculinities displays a structure of hierarchy and exclusion. Within this hierarchy, the advantages of the 'patriarchal dividend' are not evenly distributed among men. Consequently, comprehending dominant manifestations of masculinity requires acknowledging those marginalized due to factors like class, race, and sexuality. To understand masculinities more broadly, we must make sense of the impact of class, race, and sexuality hierarchies on men's lives. Masculinity is thus something that must be accomplished in specific social contexts. Similarly, the theory of intersectionality Collins (2000) serves as tool in identifying the key social identities that intersect with masculinity in the specific culture. These identities could include race, ethnicity, religion, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, age, and more. In Pashtun context, for example, Barth (1959) provides insights into the traditional Pashtun social structure, where authority stems from

material, religious, and cultural capital and consequently came into practice in roles of chiefs and saints. He emphasizes that Chiefs among the Swat Pathans derive their authority or hegemony from a combination of tangible and intangible factors. While possession of lands, wealth, and material resources contributes to a chief's influence, Barth emphasizes the crucial role of intangible factors such as honour and reputation. in addition to chiefs, saints play a mediating role in Swat Pathan society. They are seen as figures with spiritual influence and are often involved in settling disputes and conflicts. While chiefs derive authority from more cultural norms and values rooted in Pashtunwali and material factors, saints bring a spiritual dimension to the social fabric by which the also secures material possessions. Barth explores the multifaceted status of Saints within various communities, highlighting their diverse roles, from mystic recluses to rulers of territories. Despite this diversity, the political authority of Saints stems from shared factors: control, of land, mediation skills, and a reputation for morality and holiness. While traditionally the religious Maulvis and Peers (the saints) were under the influence of Khans and Maliks, (the chiefs), with the rise of Islamization in the 1980s during Zia ul Haq regime and the mobilization of Pashtuns for Jihad in Afghanistan against soviet forces, the religious clerics gain more respect and authority as wholly wariors than the traditional chiefs such as Maliks and Khans. The State's sponsorship to clerics, who would encourage and train the students of their Madrassas (religious schools) for Jihad in Afghanistan, making the religious identification become strengthen among the Pashtuns.

Beside these traditional avenues of authority and honour embedded in Islam and Pashtunwali in the traditional and agrarian society, new forms of authority, power, honour, and control emerge from the integration of Pashtuns to state institutions and modern professions, such as civil and military bureaucracy, doctors, engineers, judges, lawyers, and businessmen. As Connell proposes in the following way.

> hegemony is likely to be established only if there is some correspondence between cultural ideal and institutional power, collective if not individual. So, the top levels of business, the military and government provide a convincing corporate display of masculinity, still very little shaken by feminist women or dissenting men. It is the successful claim to authority, more than direct violence, that is the mark of hegemony (though violence often underpins or supports authority). I stress that hegemonic masculinity embodies a 'currently accepted' strategy. When conditions for the defence of patriarchy change, the bases for the dominance of a particular masculinity are eroded. New groups may challenge old solutions

and construct a new hegemony. The dominance of any group of men may be challenged by women. Hegemony, then, is a historically mobile relation.

(Connell, 1995, 2005, p. 77-78).

In analysing the concept of masculinity from the participants perspective it can be argued that the participants show a complicit position and at times holds opposing views to the traditional ideals of manhood and masculinity defined within the framework of Pashtunwali and Islam. However, their own socio-economic and political positioning with Pashtun society, prior to migration, place them in a marginalised position of masculinity in relation to ideals of Pashtun masculinity. Although they embody the patriarchal power in relation to women in Pashtun gender order, which Connell refers to as 'Power relations', implying the overall subordination of women and dominance of men, they also embody the belief in gender division of labour where they embody the role of provider to the family in the overall production relation and as we have seen previously, they are all heterosexual men. However, due to lacking essential economic and material resources resulting in their marginalised social position compared to men holding the places of power and influence. The marginalization of the participants can be seen at the group level, as they are all belong the working class, and individual level as they see themselves in comparison to other men in the extended family and community, who relatively have a better social position as compared to them. as I discuss earlier the participants of this study are uneducated or without higher education and professional skills, which is essential to climb up on the social ladder of Pashtun society and securing a position of power and authority. Beside the modern education religious education can also play an important role to secure a dominant and authoritative social position in Pashtun society, however none of the participant receive religious education of the sort which can make them a religious scholar or leader, lacking these cultural, religious, and economic resources hinder them to attain hegemonic masculinity in the context of broader Pashtun society. In addition, the ongoing war and terrorism in Pashtun regions have affected majority of men, and their sense of manhood and social standing directly or indirectly. The participants, at least some of them who come from the immediate conflict zones, face stigma or suspicion linked to their perceived affiliations or identities, potentially resulting in discrimination, harassment, or double migration as refugees, impacting their social standing and identity. As Conflicts disturb established social structures and support systems, causing men to relinquish their roles as protectors and providers due to the breakdown of societal norms, challenging their sense of

identity and purpose. The marginalization of men in conflict zones can be intensified by traditional gender expectations, making societal norms regarding masculinity, like being providers and protectors, unachievable amid violence and displacement, adding to their marginalization. In this scenario irregular migration can be seen an attractive and hopeful option among the participants to gain a sense of empowerment and to assert their masculinity, as I will discuss in chapter four and five.

In defining and describing an ideal Pashtun man the participants provide a somehow similar image as a person who embodies traits of Pashtunwali and Islam. Their conception of ideal Pashtun masculinity is rooted in both tangible; possession of material wealth, power and authority, and intangible aspects; upholding cultural and religious norms and values.

Attaullah Jan, articulated the characteristics of an ideal Pashtun man in the following manner.

> In Pashtun society and the family structure, a man bears numerous responsibilities. He must provide all that a woman requires within the family. Likewise, all a child's needs must be met by the man. Throughout the entire day, he remains outdoors, toiling diligently to sustain the family. His earnings directly impact the family's meals; without them, sustenance is uncertain. Hence, a man's dominance over a woman stems from his arduous work in varied conditions—rain, storms, heat, and cold—to ensure the family's provision. In the Pashtun context, a man is deemed honourable when he exemplifies masculinity by being exceptionally hospitable, regularly hosting 30 to 40 individuals in his Hujra. Within his Hujra, he orchestrates Jirgas and dialogues, not driven by financial gain, but to earn Allah's favour. This type of individual garners high regard among Pashtuns; however, not every man can attain this distinction. These exceptional qualities are scarce, perhaps one in a hundred. Amid the Pashtun populace, some individuals stand out as commendable, embodying the essence of goodness. A noble man in this context extends aid to the less fortunate, standing alongside bereaved families in times of loss, offering any assistance within his capacity. This ethos is synonymous with honour and nobility. Respecting others' honour leads to receiving honour, while disrespect invites disrespect. Hence, a virtuous man possesses these traits, referred to as *Saritoob*, epitomizing masculine behaviour and honour. So, to attain saritoob (masculinity) and respect, it is imperative to treat others respectfully, avoiding arrogance linked to wealth. Additionally, a man should oversee his female family members' conduct, safeguarding them from public gaze and upholding their privacy or Purdah.

- 'Attaullah Jan', a Pashtun refugee from Afghanistan, interviewed in Sedriano, Milan.

Attaullah conceptions of ideal Pashtun masculinity resonates closely with the ideals defined in Pashtunwali and Islam, showing his complicity to this ideal type of Pashtun masculinity but his own situation in Pakistan and Afghanistan was far from achieving this hegemonic ideal of Pashtun masculinity, especially the material side of it. It shows that in Pashtun society, masculinity is deeply interwoven with the roles of *kor palana* (provider and breadwinner), both for the family and the wider community. Men are tasked with fulfilling the needs of women and children, underscoring their significant economic contributions that sustain family life. This concept of masculinity extends to enduring physically demanding conditions, such as adverse weather, as a demonstration of their commitment to their provider role. This tireless work ethic is deemed emblematic of masculinity. The man's role also translates into a perceived dominance within Pashtun society, bolstered by men's financial contributions and physical resilience. The narrative underscores the distinction between men and women's roles, reinforcing traditional gender norms. Beyond this, the ideal Pashtun masculinity encompasses attributes beyond the provider role, encompassing qualities such as hospitality and communal leadership. It also shows that men who run *Hujras* (male guest house) and actively extend *melmastya* (hospitality) and facilitate *jirgas* (community discussions and gatherings) are esteemed as exemplars of honourable masculinity. Ethical values take centre stage, with acts of providing *mlatar* (support) to the underprivileged and participating in *Gham Khadi* (literally means sorrows and happiness, to participate in social and cultural rituals) being viewed as hallmarks of nobility. The underlying foundation of this ideal masculinity hinges on *nang* and *ghairat* (respect and honour) and *badal* (reciprocity) that how one treats others influences their own reputation. Finally, ideal Pashtun masculinity involves men's control and overseeing the behaviour of female family members to preserve their *purdah* and *Namus* (seclusion and female honour). Another important point made by the participant is that, while wealth is essential to acquire the leadership position in Pashtun society, however, wealth alone cannot make a person hegemonic without embodying other traits embedded in Pashtunwali, as he asserts "to attain saritoob (masculinity) and respect, it is imperative to treat others respectfully, avoiding arrogance linked to wealth". While economic status of a person plays an important role in gaining communal influence and power as outlined by Atta Ullah, running a hujra, organizing jirgas and providing hospitality to numerous people demands economic resources, however in

Pashtun society just by being rich is not enough to be honourable and to gain leadership position, similar point described by Fedrick Barth in the following way.

> Honour as a source of authority is certainly conceptually distinct, in the eyes of a Pathan, from such other sources of authority as land ownership and wealth. It is possible, to a degree, to be honourable yet poor. More commonly a chief may be rich yet lacking in honour, and this seriously affects the extent of his political authority. Such failings are constantly discussed, in terms such as: 'He may be wealthy (Maldar), but he's a woman (khaza) (Barth, 1959, p. 82).

However, as I said earlier, it evident from Attaullah's story of growing up and his own confession his own masculinity, in term of material reality of his existence, was a marginalised one, as he said.

> I tried a lot/really wanted to become a doctor or engineer or some officer, like to pursue a degree of this kind, because a doctor has a lot of respect and value in the society, similarly any other educated person who has a job have value and respect in society, so I wish to be a person like this, but I was uneducated, I had interest in education but because we could not afford it, so due to no education I did not become what I wish to be. Even I had 5th standard education, I would be successful in Afghanistan or Pakistan, because I was familiar to everything, I did every work there, I would collect the scrap, I would collect the animal's bones, I did everything, except theft, and with respect as the Pashtuns do not be a gay, or use sex to earn money, and do not beg. It is acceptable to collect the bones in the streets and sell it to provide for the family with honour. I used to collect bones in Torkham, I would sell it and earn legal money/*khaq halal rizq* and would eat that.
>
> - 'Attaullah Jan', a Pashtun refugee from Afghanistan, interviewed in Sedriano, Milan.

As I discussed earlier that beside the traditional sources of power and honour, new forms and professions of power and honour have emerged in Pashtun society, as Attaullah's has pointed out. He was aspired to get education and to become a doctor or engineer or an officer as these professions are respected in society and a source of economic independence. How ever due to his family economic condition he did not get education and from childhood he start to work to support his family, in which he show pride.

Similarly, in the context of Pashtun masculinities, Ejaz provided the description which highlights the qualities and attributes that are esteemed in an exemplary Pashtun man. Pashtun masculinity is deeply rooted in notions of honour, respect, and the protection and provision of the family.

> An exemplary man is someone who safeguards and provides for his family while showing respect. He refrains from engaging in wrong or negative actions himself and guides his family members to do the same. Ensuring the control of female family members, particularly their adherence to Purdah, and protecting them from public view are also vital. Additionally, upholding parental honour and values is essential, though these attributes are inherently personal and cannot be imposed on others. An ideal man is recognizable by his actions; he speaks only when prompted and refrains from excessive talking. He avoids complaining about minor matters like food taste. Gossiping and speaking ill of others in their absence are not part of his conduct. His honesty, commitment, and loyalty define him as an ideal man. In my opinion, a man who attentively looks after and ensures the seclusion of women, particularly within the context of "Purdah", is significant, especially in Pashtun society. This belief is strengthened by my experiences traveling through various countries where I haven't encountered individuals as virtuous as Pashtuns. I hold the view that despite their imperfections, Pashtuns will ultimately find a place in heaven, "Jannat". From my observations, I've come to understand that people interpret and practice Islam differently, yet Pashtuns stand out for their genuine adherence, likely due to their limited exposure to the outside world. Their straightforward nature sets them apart from Italians and other Muslims. There are different things that establishes the image of a real or ideal Pashtun man in Pashtun society. For example, they respect a person who protect his honour, who stand firmly on his words of mouth/commitment/promise.

> - 'Ejaz khan', a Pashtun refugee from Pakistan, interviewed in Comasina, Milan.

In Ejaz's view an ideal Pashtun man is one who fulfils, both tangible and intangible aspects pf Pashtunwali, the role of a provider and protector for his family while upholding moral values. The emphasis on controlling and seclusion of female family members, as exemplified through the concept of "Purdah", underscores the significance of gender roles and the importance of maintaining traditional norms. This portrayal of an ideal Pashtun man also underscores the virtue of modesty, humility, and refraining from engaging in negative behaviours such as gossip or speaking ill of others. Loyalty, honesty, and commitment are seen as defining characteristics of such a man. It is worth noting that this ideal is shaped by the specific cultural and Islamic

context of Pashtun society, where adherence to these values is regarded as particularly virtuous. This description suggests a religious perspective, where Pashtuns are seen as distinct in their commitment to Islam, possibly due to limited exposure to external influences. Overall, it reflects the complex interplay of cultural and religious expectations that shape Pashtun masculinities and the image of an ideal Pashtun man.

Ejaz personal story of becoming a man is also showing a picture where his aspiration for his education and his family situation contradicts each other.

> I really to be in Armed forces, but as you Pashtuns do not plain the future of their children. My parents were uneducated, and they were not aware of the importance of education. My father was a bus driver, and he would mostly be out of home. So, he did focus on my education, to become a doctor or to join the Army, that is why I left the school. But here, in Italy, when a child is born the parents will follow and observe his or her interest and support the child in whatever he or she wants to become. They fully support their children financially and otherwise.
>
> - 'Ejaz khan', a Pashtun refugee from Pakistan, interviewed in Comasina, Milan.

Dawood Afridi define ideal Pashtun masculinity in the following way.

> *Pahtun Sari sara spakawai khwand na kai, somra che drond v domra kha lagi*, means that a Pashtun man doesn't look good with cheap behaviour, the more honourable behaviour he possesses the more respected he is. If a Pashtun do a cheap deeds/*kacha kar* in front of me, it makes me hate not only that Pashtun but all the men. *Zka che da yaw Pashtun dy che da sra da ghairat noom taralay shwe dy,* means that, because it is the Pashtun to which the word *Ghairat* is like a synonym. And if a Pashtun do not have *Ghairat* then there is no difference between him and an animal. And by Ghairat I mean that nobody should have the courage to do wrong or bad things to you or in front of you, you should try to stop that person from doing that. But some time you do not have the power to stop someone from doing bad things, so it is better to have hate for this kind of people in your heart. And Pashtuns also consider a man *ghairati/ghairatman* who stand by his words of mouth/commitment/promise, *che pa khpla Khabra walar wi*, this is the more exceptional quality of a man in Pashtun society.

Dawood views on ideal Pashtun masculinity reflects the intangible aspects of Pashtun masculinity, emphasizing the importance of honourable behaviour and the concept of *Ghairat* (honourable conduct). He argues that In Pashtun culture, a man is valued for exhibiting honourable behaviour and actions, and the absence of such traits is viewed negatively. He also uses the term *Ghairati* which signifies the courage to prevent wrong or bad actions, underlining the expectation that a man should actively intervene to uphold moral standards. However, he confesses that some time it is difficult to stop some from bad behaviour or action due to lack of power, which is strongly linked to the material aspect of hegemonic or ideal Pashtun masculinity. Additionally, the emphasis on standing by one's words as an exceptional quality underscore the significance *Nang* or integrity and reliability in defining Pashtun masculinity. Overall, the intangible qualities discussed, including honour, courage, and integrity, contribute to shaping the perception of Pashtun masculinity in the cultural context. Besides these ideal Dawood also pointed out his Ideal man in religious terms is Prophet Muhammad and in current scenario it is Imran due to his courage and bravery, as he argued that:

> if we think the first person as ideal should be our prophet Muhammad, and if you are asking about someone in today's world then its Imran Khan. I like Imran khan because he is brave, he doesn't fear anyone except Allah. Secondly, he is separated from his family just to take care of our kids and families and the whole of Pakistan. That's why Allah created love in my heart for Imran khan.

> - 'Dawood Afridi', a Pashtun refugee from Pakistan, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan.

His Complicity to the hegemonic masculinity and leadership positions both in religious and economic and political sense is evident in his models of ideal man. As the prophet Muhammad is the ideal leader of all Muslims and Imran Khan as Prime minister and as political leader is the ideal of Pakistani youth in general. His ideals of Pashtun masculinity show a combination of religious, political, and economic aspects couple with the intangible aspects as he defines earlier.

In his personal life Dawood belongs to a working-class background as said that his father was a driver, and in his family, there was no such environment for education, which he regrets, as he describes that:

> my father was a driver, he would drive a heavy transport, so in our family education not a priority, they were unaware of its importance. So, some we would come out from home pretending that we are going to school, but we would go to aur cosines Hujra instead. And then later I left the school. So, it was not the right thing to do, but we were immature and were not interested in studying.
>
> - 'Dawood Afridi', a Pashtun refugee from Pakistan, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan.

Dawood's narrative explains the socio-economic impact of educational decisions, as his family's lack of emphasis on education potentially limited his opportunities for socio-economic development. The regret he expressed indicates a recognition of the role education can play in personal and professional growth. Furthermore, the reference to immaturity at the time suggests an evolving perspective on the value of education and its role in shaping his life and identity.

Similarly, Bilal khan also defines ideal Pashtun masculinity as it is rooted in Pashtunwali and Islam with a focus of intangible aspects of behaviour and practices. These practices include the respect of women and girls, fulfilment of promises and to perform religious duties, as he describes.

> Pashtunwali tell you to do certain things and not to do others, it is a way of life of Pashtuns. For man in this code of life is to be a good Muslim, to offer his prayers and to follow the religion, and not to be distracted. It prohibits you from wrong things like theft, because Pashtuns do not do this kind of things, and if someone does, people will taunt him that how can you call yourself a Pashtun while doing things such as theft or harassing a girl, because Pashtuns don not like this. Similarly, a Pashtuns do break promises, once they give their words to do something they will do it, they do not step back from their words. And the one who step backs from his promise and words, the others will taunt him that is this your Pashto, means that real Pashtuns do not do this.
>
> - 'Bilal Khan', a Pashtun refugee from Pakistan, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan.

Bilal also talks about the responsibility of a man to provide for the family based on the framework of gender division of labour in Pashtun society, as he said "in Pashtun society there is a lot of expectations from a man, because a Pashtun man is responsible to work and earn money to provide for the whole family. In Pashtun society a man is solely responsible for the livelihood of the family". However, referring to certain practices in Pashtunwali Bilal khan point out that certain aspects can be harmful and violent like killing someone in the name of honour or taking revenge in an aggressive manner, which he discouraged and showing his opposition to these practices. As he argued.

> Pashtun consider a man ideal who can kill to stand by his honour and respect, and do Pashto, he is an ideal man for most of Pashtuns. But you do Pashto your ribs will always be broken, means it is very difficult to be a true Pashtun. If now I say something bad to Shahab, then he must fight me or shoot me, if he wants to prove himself a Pashtun. But I think if someone say something bad to you, you should not react aggressively, being passive is better. But if you want to do Pashto you have to react aggressively. It is true when you do not react to someone who did bad to you, the people will call you a *Beghairata*/ dishonourable person, but if you are a wise man, you do not have to care what people will think about you.
>
> - 'Bilal Khan', a Pashtun refugee from Pakistan, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan.

In his personal life, like other participants Bilal khan did not pursue higher education and his father passed away before he decides to migrate, placing him in the position of head of the household while facing economic crises. As he said.

> My parents want me to get education, but I did not like it and I didn't pursue it. They tried a lot for it, the spent a lot of money and admitted us to school, but I would not understand any lesson, it would go out of my mind, that's why I just done my Matric in Pakistan, but due to some issues I didn't pursue higher education. And then I was doing nothing I was jobless.
>
> - 'Bilal Khan', a Pashtun refugee from Pakistan, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan.

Jameel also define ideal Pashtun masculinity with the framework of Pashtunwali and Islam. The main characteristic he provides in defining an ideal man are Ghairat, doing Pashto, following the teachings of Islam, protection of children and women, taking of revenge, and fulfilling the promise and standing by one's words, as he describes.

> We can call a man *Nar* if he is close to religion, he who know the teachings of Islam and practice it. If he knows about religion he will control the society, and a Pashtun who *has Ghairat* we can call him an ideal man. The important thing in doing Pashto is that to protect/control your children and women, the family the religion, the mosque, this kind of person we call *Ghairatman*. The who always fight we do not call him *Ghairatman*, the one who talk nonsense we do not call him *Ghairatman*. In Pashto we have a proverb that *Pashtun khpl badal hes kala na pregdi,* that a Pashtun never forget to take revenge, the one who has Pashto he will never forget to take revenge if it to fight or to kill, he will never dispose his land and it is something that our ancestors left to us. an ideal man in Pashtun society is one who do what he says, and if someone only say thing but do not practice that so that is different from the ideal person.

> - 'Jameel', a Pashtun refugee from Pakistan, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan.

2.5. A review of the relevant literature

In past few decades, the field of migration has garnered significant academic interest. Employing a wide range of disciplinary perspectives, scholars have extensively explored migration theory, resulting in the accumulation of a substantial body of knowledge. This has led to the development of various theoretical frameworks and research methodologies, as well as the emergence of numerous inquiries regarding the underlying reasons for migration and its ensuing impacts. However, the study of migration from a gender lens is relatively a new phenomenon. Numerous scholars discussed this gap in the academic literature on migration and emphasised the importance of bringing gender into the study of migration.

2.5.1. Bringing gender into transnational migration studies

Gender plays a crucial role in understanding migration. Gender distinguishes societal roles, expectations, and behaviours assigned to men and women. These norms are socially constructed, evolving over time and space and effect decision-making, motivations, and experiences of migration. Gender intersects with other factors like class and ethnicity but has

historically been overlooked in migration theories. The exclusion may stem from misconceptions about gender, associating it solely with women's issues or inequality. Gender impacts migration differently for men and women, influencing power dynamics and access to resources. Recent research has started to address these gaps, emphasizing a need for a comprehensive gendered view of migration.

Rudnick (2009) "Working gendered boundaries: temporary migration experiences of Bangladeshi women in the Malaysian export industry from a multi-sited perspective" argues that gender has been largely overlooked in international migration theories due to the assumption that migration is a gender-neutral phenomenon, in which men and women have similar motivations and migration experiences. Based on these premises, migration theory effectively leaves little room to discern potential differences in incentives and migration experiences of male versus female migrants and the various ways in which gender influences the migration process. He emphasizes that while economic factors are central to migration in early theorisation of migration, given the multifaceted causes and consequences of migration it requires multidimensional analysis with gender been an essential consideration. Similarly, Boyd & Grieco (2003), argues that in the last 25 years, efforts to integrate gender into international migration theories have been limited, despite its crucial importance. Traditional migration theory focused on explaining causes, often neglecting who migrates and gender-specific experiences. This oversight hinders understanding factors driving women's migration, their presence in certain labour migration patterns, and motivations for transnational migration, trafficking or seeking refugee resettlement. Recognizing migration as profoundly gender-specific is vital. In response to the historical focus on male migrants and neglecting women, the women's movement's,1970s and 1980s, influence led to inclusion of women in migration research, but differences were often attributed to sex roles. Subsequently, feminist theory, in 1980s and 1990s, highlighted gender as a socially constructed concept affecting and affected by migration, necessitating a comprehensive framework considering gender across the migration process. The inclusion of gender into migration research was based on the argument that early studies on migration focused primarily on men and much more attention was focused on male individual decision-making processes rather than those of their female partners, their family or community. These studies not only disregarded the role of women in the migration process, but also failed to fully explore the experiences of men as men in the complexities of the ways in which migration and settlement are negotiate. Secondly, the rise in female migration, as result of economic disparities between nations and regions, complicating gender

status, and race dynamics also shift more focus on the issues of women and migration. Additionally, female migration has shifted from labour to permanent, financial to social, and temporary to family-based settlement. Addressing the migration of women independently from men was crucial in understanding these evolving dynamics, where women are considered independent entities with distinct migration patterns (Park 2008).

Consequently, numerous scholars have sought to address the evident gender gap in migration research, leading to a substantial body of work on women and migration. However, this examination has encountered certain issues. The emphasis on gender has often been exclusively centred on women, as though prior migration research adequately captured men's experiences. (Castles & Miller 2003; Christou & Kofman 2022; Hondagneu-Sotelo 1999; Pessar 2003; Charsley & Wray 2015). As previously mentioned, this broad depiction of migrant men presented an image of someone making rational choices to optimize their labour capacity, while overlooking their distinctive experiences and viewpoints as men. The emphasis on integrating gender into migration resulted in the "feminization" of labour migration, along with increased consideration for households, family, friends, and social networks in the decision-making processes related to migration (Castles & Miller 2003). According to Christou and Kofman (2022) the narrative of 'discovering' women as active agents in migration research has filled a significant gap. However, what problematic was to conflate gender with women or essentialize the 'feminization of migration'. Christou and Kofman argues that it is essential to generate disaggregated data by gender, age, and family status to capture the complexities of vulnerabilities, mobilities, and gendered findings. Gendered migration research must explore the experiences and vulnerabilities of male migrants. A nuanced approach is needed that considers structures impacting migrant identities, agency, societal spheres, and relationships. Migrant masculinities are multifaceted and should be understood in intersectional and holistic ways. Transnational approaches reveal how gendered migrations shape identities. Recent research has brought immigrant men into the frame as actors with both masculine privilege and social marginality, allowing for new theorizations of masculinity. Migrant masculinity is performative, relational, and contextual. A feminist lens can analyse the complexities of male migrant masculinity and agency, exploring material impacts on gender practices within family life, gender identity, and attitudes. Migration extensively transforms masculinities, prompting migrants to reconfigure their sense of adult-male status within a broader socio-cultural context of home and host countries. Hondagneu-Sotelo (1999) argues that the "preoccupation with writing women into migration research and theory has stifled theorising about the ways in

which constructions of masculinities and femininities organise migration and migration outcomes" (1999, p. 566). Nevertheless, there are assertions indicating that the shift has been so extreme in the opposite direction that male migrants, as subjects of study, have been almost neglected to the same extent as female migrants were in the past .Charsley and Wray (2015) argues that the initial efforts to introduce a gender perspective into the understanding of migration, mirroring broader trends in academia, primarily involved an increased focus on women's experiences. cautioned against the risk that, in addressing the invisibility of women, researchers might inadvertently give excessive attention to women's migration experiences while overlooking those of men. Such an approach could unintentionally undermine a comprehensive gendered understanding of migration, which is essential for comprehending the experiences of both males and females.

The feminist literature's emphasis on women's migration experiences, which was overlooked by previous gender-neutral migration models, is understandable. However, gender neutrality has led to the neglect of both genders' experiences. Conventional migration research has primarily concentrated on men, but it has done so by viewing them as non-gendered individuals, thus disregarding the gendered aspects of their experiences. Consequently, there is a pressing need to shift towards a more comprehensive approach, treating gender not merely as a variable within the migration causes and experiences but as a central analytical concept for scrutinizing the migration process's origins and consequences.

The result of these struggles is that there is the development of a more fully engendered understanding of the migration process that enables further analytically coherent studies that interconnect the simultaneous nature of factors such as gender, race, ethnicity, class and so on (Pessar 1999). Pessar's primary objective is to solidify the theoretical innovation of shifting the focus on gender in the study of migration from a mere variable to a central concept. Despite recent efforts to incorporate gender into migration literature, there remains a nascent exploration of men and their masculinities within this field. Currently, there is a limited understanding of how men navigate and respond to various male and female gender identities encountered during the migratory process. Men, particularly in settled societies, face significant pressures to fulfil the traditional role of being the primary breadwinner and maintaining authority within their families. These expectations create a host of personal, cultural, educational, and systemic obstacles that hinder their ability to conform to societal ideals of masculinity. The challenges are even more pronounced in refugee and diasporic

communities, where the sense of displacement and detachment from their cultures of origin can exacerbate feelings of disorientation. This disorientation can contribute to various social issues, including instances of family violence. Truong and Gasper (2008) assert that comprehending the gender aspects of transnational migration necessitates considering the intricate social construction of migrants' identities. This multifaceted process intertwines various aspects of their social existence, including sexuality, gender, employment, household responsibilities, childcare, engagement with institutions, experiences of violence, and acts of resistance. Furthermore, these processes are intricately linked with material disparities arising from factors such as race and legal status.

As numerous scholars recognized the persistent oversight of women in international migration research, early attempts to incorporate a gender perspective into migration studies, aligning with broader trends in academia, initially emphasized an intensified examination of women's encounters. Nevertheless, Boyd and Grieco (2003) issued a warning about the potential pitfall of inadvertently overemphasizing women's migration experiences in the quest to address their 'invisibility',possibly neglecting the experiences of men in the process. This approach could unintentionally hinder the development of a comprehensive gendered perspective on migration, which is crucial for a holistic understanding of the experiences of both men and women.

2.5.2. The impact of transnational migration on masculinities

In recent years, a limited body of social science research has emerged, employing a gender-focused approach to the examination of male migration. This existing literature has shed light on the intricate connections between masculinities and the migration process. It suggests that migration offers gendered opportunities for acquiring new roles or identities, akin to a rite of passage, marking a transitional phase before adopting a new status. This shift in status and identity can either result in marginalization or an enhancement of the social standing of migrant men. Another important debate in the gender and migration studies is that of gender equality. The existing literature suggest that depending on the context and intersections within the migrant community, migration can either promote gender equality by challenging traditional gender roles or reinforce traditional gender divisions of labour within the host and home countries. Another important aspect in the studies of transnational migration is the strategies and coping mechanisms adapted by migrant men to navigate the host country's culture and society. Studies shows that men often adapt temporary, fluid, and hybrid masculinities to

navigate this complex landscape. These aspects will be explored in depth using insights from existing studies on men and transnational migration.

Van Aken (2006) highlights the connection between the challenges faced during migration in Jordan by Egyptian migrants and the enhancement of their social status upon returning home. He argues that migration can be seen as a ritual-like process, characterized by stages of separation, transition and incorporation. He demonstrates that for many Egyptian male migrants, migration is closely linked to the increase social status back home. It is viewed as a temporary phase in their lives, marked by hardships and challenges, including performing traditionally female roles while working in the Jordan Valley. The migrants endure these difficulties as part of a transformative journey toward gaining autonomy, honour, and social recognition. Migration also fosters a sense of belonging to a broader Egyptian community, distinct from their village identities. Ultimately, migration is perceived as a series of transitions, with each trip representing a distinct phase in their life cycle, such as marriage, home construction, and providing for their children's marriages, all contributing to their sense of masculinity and self-reliance. It suggests that viewing the experience of migration as a ritual, considering its temporal and spatial dimensions, provides a useful model for understanding how migrants themselves perceive their journey. For instance, in this study, male migrants' experiences challenge their sense of manhood, but at the same time, migration is a process through which they seek to achieve and reaffirm their manhood by navigating various transitions in terms of place, time, and social status. Similarly, Kirk et al. (2017) argues that despite the emergence of global flows due to migration and technology, spatial relations remain significant. They discuss young Indians' strong aspiration for migration, especially in the IT sector, where migration is seen as a rite of passage into adulthood. Amsterdam shapes the performance of masculinity among Indian men. The anticipation of freedom, liberal attitudes towards sex and drugs, and the perception of Amsterdam as a space far from Indian norms contribute to their liminal experiences. Amsterdam is seen as a place to live out culturally constructed sexual fantasies, including encounters with Western women and visits to strip clubs. Dating non-Indian girls is also explored as an opportunity for new experiences, though it may not lead to marriage for some. Language and cultural differences, as well as food preferences, contribute to feelings of alienation and challenge the sense of belonging in Dutch society. Sinatti (2014), explains the relationship between manhood and economic support among Senegalese migrants is significant. Providing remittances and financial assistance to their families contributes to the construction of manhood, as it allows male migrants to gain

respect and status from their experiences as breadwinners. The construction of masculinity also evolves over time, and fulfilling the role of supporting the family is considered a central step in the transition to manhood, with sons expected to contribute to the well-being of their families of origin. Dispensing monetary and material support through migration becomes a marker of manhood, bringing virtue, prestige, and personal fulfilment to male migrants. Moreover, migration can serve as a shortcut to adulthood, accelerating a man's progression towards mature manhood by offering opportunities to access marriage, claim independent status, and become the head of an extended family. Thus, this text highlights the intertwined connection between family, migration, and the construction of manhood among Senegalese migrants, where economic support and remittances play a crucial role in shaping their identities and social standing.

On the other hand, Hibbins and Pease (2009), argues men's subjectivities are socially constructed and are open to challenge and change, however, migrant men are often subordinated and marginalized within local male dominance hierarchies. The authors showcase how racism and masculinity intersect to create challenges for black men in North America and marginalized non-English-speaking-background men in Australia as they construct their masculine identities. Excluded from traditional white masculinity, which embodies power, control, and authority, these men face difficulties in shaping their identity. In addition, Asian men encounter stereotypes that label them as feminine, desexualized, unscrupulous, and untrustworthy in both Australia and the United States. As a response to marginalization, marginalized groups like Lebanese young men in Sydney and African American men may adopt protest masculinity, characterized by exaggerated claims of potency and hypermasculinity. During the settlement process, migrant men navigate gender, sexual, ethnic, and class dimensions of identity, developing hybrid identities with varying emphases in different contexts. This adaptation process leads to shifting and fractured gender identities, influenced by both their home country practices and the new environment. Poynting et al. (2009) discusses the history of anti-Lebanese racism in Australia, tracing it back to the late 19th century when Lebanese immigrants faced discrimination under the White Australia policy. It highlights how this discrimination continued over the years, particularly during events like the Gulf War and after 9/11, with an Islamophobic slant. The Cronulla riots in 2005 marked a peak in this racism, with violence against Lebanese immigrants, often fuelled by stereotypes about deviant masculinities and cultural differences. The text also discusses the labelling of Lebanese youth as "gangs" and argues that such criminal activities are not inherently tied to

their ethnicity but can be influenced by discrimination and limited opportunities in the labour market. The study discusses the concept of respect among young men of Lebanese background in Australia, particularly in the context of the Cronulla riots. It explores how their behaviour, often perceived as disrespectful, especially towards young Anglo-Australian women, is related to their ethnicized experience of broader social disrespect, showing that respect was a key concern for these young men and that they sought it through various means, including ethnic identity and hypermasculine performances, especially in their teenage years. Over time, as they became adults and gained education and employment, their pursuit of respect diversified to include different sources of recognition and validation. The study emphasizes that respect, in this context, is not just a moral value but a practical strategy to gain social power and agency. Pande (2017) explores the interactions between gender and race by studying Bangladeshi men's masculinities during their migration to South Africa. It highlights three key moments in their journey, revealing the shifting nature of masculinity. The decision to migrate is tied to manhood rituals, but the migration experience itself can be emasculating, especially when encountering black African masculinity. The study also discusses various forms of protest masculinity and emphasizes the need for research on fluid, relational masculinities within mobility studies, shedding light on how gender, race, and differences shape migrant identities and narratives. Donaldson et al. (2009) argues the migrant are subordinated and marginalised within the hierarchies of localised male dominance; however, this may not be so for those professional and businessmen who spend most of their time in the diaspora with much the same power and status they had in their home countries. Bozok (2019) argues that migration has emerged as a context that contributes to the occurrence of masculinity crises. According Bozok Various research studies have delved into the challenges experienced by migrant men, employing approaches such as dislocation, disempowerment, and negotiation. The paper shows that the difficulties faced by patriarchal masculinities during migration, encompassing the loss of power, social status, and acceptance, can be interpreted as instances of masculinity crises that entail a diminishing of masculine identity. migration has the potential to trigger masculinity crises by prompting men, especially those from lower socioeconomic backgrounds who may be less prepared for cultural adaptation, to perceive a remasculinization resulting from a backlash against their previously privileged positions of authority, alongside a decrease in income and social standing. These perceptions of masculinity loss might lead to the reconstruction of alternative patriarchal masculinities characterized by distinct dynamics, underscoring the malleability of gender identities.

In the context of gender division of labour Pease (2009) reveals that men often invoke specific cultural elements to justify their views on gender roles, emphasizing the importance of recognizing both cultural diversity and common patriarchal elements, including the breadwinner ethos, patrilineal family structures, belief in 'natural' gender differences, and a gendered division of labour. While men in their home countries held unquestioned patriarchal power, this changed upon migration to Australia due to women's increasing economic contributions and men's declining earning capacity, mainly due to unemployment or low-paying jobs, resulting in more egalitarian authority and decision-making dynamics and a shift in domestic labour division. Though men highlighted differences in gender relations between their home countries and Australia, these perceptions were partly influenced by economic shifts. In their home countries, they could fulfil their provider role, but financial challenges in Australia empowered women to renegotiate patriarchal norms to some extent. However, this renegotiation hasn't fundamentally disrupted overall patriarchal gender relations, as many men have reluctantly adapted, leading to potential explanations for rising rates of separation, divorce, and domestic violence in immigrant families. The research underscores culture and ethnicity's significant role in shaping masculinity and the persistence of patriarchy, influenced by macro factors like class, race, culture, and social hierarchies, as well as micro factors such as personal experiences, divorce, political changes, individual life histories, and localized impacts of global forces. in the context of Polish male migration, Bell & Pustułka, (2017) argues that traditional gender roles and masculinity are influenced by economic factors and the perception of men as cheap labour abroad. Men often grapple with job loss, economic instability, and a loss of status in destination societies. They may experience desliking and struggle with their self-esteem. Some see migration as a chance for personal growth, while family men prioritize stable employment to support their families. Separation from families due to work abroad initially offers freedom but takes an emotional toll over time. Men downplay its impact on relationships, while women express emotional strain. Reuniting with families can be challenging, with men navigating their roles as providers and husbands. Hegemonic masculinity's emotional reserve limits discussions about coupledom, but some men express regret and resentment, feeling manipulated into their roles. Polish migrant fathers experience various roles and attitudes towards fatherhood while abroad, from traditional breadwinning to engaged and caring fatherhood. Migration can reinforce traditional roles but also prompt self-reflection and negotiation of gender norms, potentially leading to more progressive attitudes. In Norway, some Polish fathers adopt complicit masculinity by conforming to local norms. For many male migrants, migration serves as an escape from social

control and high parental expectations, with communication with parents often seen as a strain. The role as sons does not lead to shifts towards caring masculinities but aligns more with traditional gender roles. The study also explores how gender ideology and inequalities affect friendship relations among Polish male migrants, highlighting challenges in maintaining meaningful friendships while balancing multiple social and family roles abroad. Many male migrants report negative experiences with friendships and a lack of time for socializing. In Hondagneu-Sotelo's (1992) research on Mexican migrants in the United States, it was observed that both men and women faced challenges related to social class and ethnicity. However, their ability to exert domestic power shifted in opposite directions: increasing for women and decreasing for men. This shift was attributed to factors such as social class, racial-ethnic background, and often legal status, which further diminished men's capacity to exercise patriarchal privileges. Gallo (2006), delves into the dynamics of men's relationships with women working abroad, revealing how these interactions can simultaneously challenge and bolster masculinity. It asserts that examining men's vulnerabilities within transnational marriages goes beyond merely failing to meet traditional standards, it is also influenced by their endeavour to reconcile the role of a "modern husband" with the aspiration for autonomy as self-sufficient providers, a symbol of modernity in contemporary Kerala. Furthermore, the research positions transnational conjugality within the broader context of redefining the "modern family" and the evolving models of femininity and masculinity in contemporary Kerala, particularly affecting lower-class Malayali men who often compromise their masculine ideals. The perception of Italy as a "feminizing" place among Malayali men in such marriages captures the complexities of their masculine identity formation, considering their experiences of downward mobility and dependency.

Hibbins, (2009) discusses the changing characteristics of young Chinese entrepreneurs in Australia compared to their fathers. Key differences include their relationship with new technology, higher education levels, willingness to form partnerships, and a shift towards a work-life balance and consumption-oriented lifestyles. While they value networking and hard work like their fathers, they rely less on traditional Chinese networks, utilize the internet for sales, and seek quicker returns. Work is not as central to their lives, and they desire more independence. However, some traditional gender expectations persist, with evolving attitudes towards wives working outside the home. These changes reflect a more flexible masculinity, but there is no evidence of protest masculinity. Further research is needed to explore the influence of different factors on the development of new masculinities among Chinese

entrepreneurs. Syrian refugee masculinities are intricate and influenced by a confluence of factors, encompassing age, employment status, and familial anticipations. Older men are inclined to uphold traditional masculinity as a response to unemployment and status diminishment, while younger men reinforce these traditional views through employment. Both groups grapple with the demands of family expectations in the context of involuntary displacement and resettlement in the Netherlands (Huizinga & van Hoven, 2021).

Chapter three

Methodology of the research

The study is situated within the disciplinary domains of Critical studies on men and masculinities, Migration studies, and Cultural and social anthropology. In conducting this study, I draw upon concepts and methodologies from these disciplines.

3.1. Doing field work with mobile Pashtun food delivery workers

The study is based on 10 life history interviews and participant observations involving male Pashtun refugees and asylum seekers who entered Italy illegally/irregularly from Pakistan and Afghanistan and are presently employed as food delivery riders in Milan, Italy. Originally, the study intended to include a sample size of 30 Pashtun men, but due to time constraints and respondent availability issues, only 10 life history interviews were conducted. Among the study participants, some have obtained legal refugee status from the Italian government, while others are asylum seekers awaiting a decision on their asylum claims. The age range of the participants is between 20 and 40 years, comprising both married and unmarried men who reside in Milan without their families. Majority of the participants come from working-class backgrounds, lacking higher education and professional skills. For the life history interviews, the selection criteria required that the men had spent at least 2 years in Italy, although most of them had lived in foreign countries for 4 to 7 years.

My first strategy for recruiting the participants in Milan was to look for a "convenient sample" of Pashtun men who "meet certain practical criteria, such as easy accessibility, geographical proximity, availability at a given time, or the willingness to participate are included for the purpose of the study" (Musa & Alkassim, 2016). Through this first group of participants, I gain to enter other social networks of Pashtun men in Milan. After this I also use a "purposive sampling" through which I identified and select individuals that were more relevant to the study, in terms of knowledge and experience, availability and willingness to participate, and the ability to communicate experiences and opinions in an articulate, expressive, and reflective manner (Musa & Alkassim, 2016).

The data collection methodology employed in this study encompasses two ethnographic research methods: life history interviews and participant observation. To gather primary data,

interviews were carried out with male Pashtun refugees and asylum seekers employed as food delivery workers in Milan, Italy. Additionally, the study incorporated secondary sources of data collection, including existing research on men, masculinity, and migration, with a particular focus on Pashtun migrant men. The guiding Questionnaire for life history interviews is based on open-ended, semi-structured questions. It is designed to combine "structure" with "flexibility" (Keegan & Ward, 2003) to explore specific and desired themes in an unstructured way. Through these questions participants were asked to talk in detail about their perceptions and experiences regarding any specific topic. The questionnaire is used to collect information regarding the migration process and motivation, pre and post migration perceptions regarding masculinity, pre and post migration practices and experiences regarding masculinity. The questions were primarily presented in the Pashto language, which is the native language of the Pashtun participants. All interviews were recorded in audio format, but these recordings were deleted once the interviews were transcribed. The transcription process involved translating the interviews from Pashto to English, a task I personally undertook.

Participant observations is also conducted for my long-term interaction with participants and presence in the workplace of the participants, to understand the social context that shapes the actions and experiences of the participants. It is important to play an established participant role (Aktinson & Hammersley, 1998) as a researcher, to know about social and physical spaces such as parks, clubs, restaurants, family get-togethers, national festivities, games, where Pashtun men socialize and pursue entertainment, however, due to their schedule I undertake the participant observations exclusively at their workplaces. Given the limitations of in-depth interviews Aguila (2008) pointed out that some "sensitive" topics or populations are difficult to assess through face-to-face interviews, and it is important to contrast things that people *say,* things that the researcher will *observe,* and things that the researcher can *feel* while participating. In this sense, discourses are not enough to describe a social world; the researcher needs different sources to interpret the phenomenon under study.

3.2. My positionality as a male Pashtun researcher in conducting this study.

To pursue my PhD in cultural and social anthropology at the University of Milano-Bicocca, Italy, I arrived on January 8th, 2021, to Milan, Italy from Mardan, Pakistan. Although I had received confirmation of my admission and enrolment in November 2020, it took me approximately three months to complete the necessary documentation and obtain my study visa from the Italian embassy in Islamabad, Pakistan. During this period, I chose not to share the

news of my admission to the PhD program and scholarship with the people in my village and most of my relatives, except for my immediate family and a couple of close friends. The reason behind keeping my admission to the PhD program and the scholarship a secret was my apprehension about the possibility of visa rejection. I was concerned that if my visa application were denied, people would mock me and accuse me of fabricating the story to enhance my social status. In Pashtun culture, migrating to Europe is often seen as a symbol of improved social status and wealth. Upon successfully obtaining my study visa, my family members and close friends expressed pride in my achievement. I received congratulatory calls from many friends, and some even visited me in person to extend their best wishes.

The community elders, especially my father's friends, expressed great joy and pride in my achievement, not only for my journey to Italy but also for my pursuit of a PhD at a foreign university. I came to realize that undertaking a PhD in Europe, the UK, or the West is closely linked to people's perception of intelligence and knowledge, and it enhances my standing within both my family and the community. In particular, my uncle remarked that the remarkable aspect was not just my move to Italy, as many individuals from our village and neighbouring areas migrate to Europe illegally for work and financial gain, but the truly proud moment lies in my pursuit of a PhD. A few weeks before my departure for Italy, my relatives and friends extended invitations for dinners and lunches, a common Pashtun tradition when someone is about to embark on a journey abroad. This hospitality and celebration filled me with happiness and pride because I would be the first person in my extended family to pursue a PhD and travel to Europe. In essence, I sensed a sudden increase in my social recognition related to education, knowledge, and the prospect of earning money abroad. During my time in Pakistan, I spent approximately eight years in Islamabad, where I completed my master's and MPhil degrees at Quaid-e-Azam University while also working with various NGOs. Despite these achievements I did not experience such recognition, my family members, especially my elder brothers, were urging me to secure a permanent job as they had high expectations for my education at one of Pakistan's top public sector universities. However, due to stiff competition, I was unable to secure a permanent position in the government sector. I felt a sense of relief when I secured a PhD position at the University of Milano-Bicocca in Italy. These aspects of my journey to Italy shows how Pashtuns celebrate migration as a ritual, however this celebration also depends on the pattern of migration. The families of illegal migrants cannot celebrate their journey until they reach safely to the destination country. It also depends on how frequently one can go back home and how long he would stay in the host country, as for asylum seekers and illegal migrant

it takes too long to go back. Majority of the illegal migrant from Pakistan decide to migrate without letting their families know as they would not allow them to migrate illegally.

During my first week in Milan, I had the opportunity to meet two Pashtun men, Shakeel and Junaid, hailing from Peshawar and Swat Valley, Pakistan. These individuals were friends of my acquaintance Azhar, whom I have known for the past decade since our friendship began at Quaid-e-Azam University in Islamabad. Azhar had secured admission to a PhD program at the University of Milano-Bicocca a year ahead of me and had been instrumental in assisting me with the application process for various Italian universities. Shakeel and Junaid were introduced to Azhar by another Pashtun man from Mardan, Pakistan, which is the city where both Azhar and I reside. In the company of Azhar, I paid a visit to Shakeel and Junaid's residence to get acquainted. Following the introductions, they ordered pizza for us and prepared tea after our dinner. Prior to our visit to their home, my friend informed me that Shakeel and Junaid held conservative religious beliefs and were affiliated with PTI (Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaaf), which was the ruling party in Pakistan at the time. PTI, led by the populist leader and former cricketer Imran Khan, held the position of Prime Minister. In the 2018 general election, PTI emerged as the victor, defeating the more established mainstream political parties such as PMLN (Pakistan Muslim League) and PPP (Pakistan People's Party). PMLN, PPP, as well as other religious and nationalist parties like JUI (Jammiat-e-ulama-e-Islam) and ANP (Awami National Party, a Pashtun nationalist party), accused Imran Khan of election rigging with the support of the Pakistani Army. It is worth noting that the Pakistan Army has historically played a significant role in the country's politics, overseeing, and influencing the political landscape and electoral processes.

My friend explained that while these individuals hold conservative traditional views on matters of religion, politics, and society in general, it is essential for us to meet them in order to establish connections with other Pashtuns residing in Italy. Since we are unfamiliar with anyone here, forging these relationships and friendships can be beneficial in times of necessity. Shakeel and Junaid arrived in Italy around 2016 as students pursuing their bachelor's degrees. After completing their studies, they found employment in private companies in Milan. When discussing the treatment of migrants, especially Pashtun migrants, by the Italian state and society, they expressed the belief that Italians did not hold them in high regard due to the presence of refugees and illegal migrants. Their perspective was that Italians tended to stereotype all Pashtuns/Pakistanis based on their interactions with refugees who had arrived

illegally and did not adhere to local rules and norms. According to them, these migrants often neglected hygiene and were involved in drug-related activities, which tarnished the reputation of the entire Pashtun/Pakistani community. However, Shakeel and Junaid emphasized that they had come to Italy legally for educational purposes, but Italians failed to distinguish between students like them and *Sadaro Wala*, a term used to refer to Pashtun refugees from Afghanistan and Pakistan. This term, *Sadaro Wala*, originally referred to a person wearing a shawl, a traditional Pashtun garment worn in winter. However, its connotation had evolved, particularly in Pakistan, where Afghan refugees often engaged in street vending, including selling shawls (Sadar in Pashto), which was not considered a prestigious profession in Pashtun culture. Shakeel and Junaid applied a similar connotation to Pashtun refugees in Italy, as Pashtun refugees and asylum seekers are primarily employed in food delivery services, they compare this work with street vending and selling shawls. Their perspective on Pashtun refugees and illegal Pashtun migration sheds light on how different migration patterns and professions within the host country can create dynamics of domination and marginalization within the same ethnic group. They were of the view that being educated they should be treated with more respect and value than those of refugees and illegal migrants.

We also discussed political situation in Pakistan where the traditional mainstream political parties, PMLN, PPP, make a political alliance PDM (Pakistan democratic alliance) against Imran khan to oust PTI from power. While all these parties including PTI are right wing political parties and have little differences in their political outlook, Shakeel and Junaid considers Imran khan as the only solution to Pakistan's problems, while ignoring the fact that he rises to power using the same formula of submitting to the Military dominance as previously did by the other parties. They were mainly comparing the PTI with other parties while ignoring the overall structure of Pakistan politics. However, the discussion was smooth as I was not affiliated to any of these parties. In Pakistan during my Master, I join AWP (Awami workers party) a socialist organization, in 2012. During my student life I participated in the political mobilization of the left in Pakistan. In 2018 the Pashtuns, mainly from the tribal belt, affected by military operations against terrorism, formed a movement called PTM (Pashtun Tahafuz Movement-Movement for the protection of Pashtuns). PTM accused the Pakistan army in supporting the TTP (Tehreek e Taliban Pakistan) terrorist activities in Pashtun belt to legitimize the operations against it and to occupy the resources of the Pashtuns. A great number of nationalist and progressive organization, war affected people, joined the movement. I also participated in organizing numerous protests and large gathering in different cities of Pakistan,

especially in Pashtun region. While discussing PTM, and while knowing that I was supporting the PTM, Junaid accused PTM as foreign funded by RAW and NDS, Indian and Afghan intelligence agencies, and use some bad words for the leaders of PTM, which is highly condemnable in Pashtun culture, as Pashtun say, *Hujre ta che di dushman hum rashi da haga ba izzat ke*-means that even your enemy visits your Hujra you must treat him with respect. Me and my friend who was also part of PTM, opposed these allegations. After that we meet a couple of time, but from both the sides there was no further interest to meet. Me and my friend Azhar then discussed that it is not possible to develop a good relation and friendship with such people as our ideas were far from near.

In the context of this study these encounters highlight that, how transnational political affiliations, ideologies, and cultural norms plays an important role in building and breaking relationships and friendships. It also highlights that sometimes we compromise our principles and values in transnational settings to survive and to meet more practical needs, depending on your positioning in the host country. As my friend Azhar know them before me, he also told me that Shakeel and Junaid always try to assert dominance over him in their previous interactions. He said that they think that just because they spent more time here in Italy, they know more than us while ignoring the fact that we are PhD students, and they just did their bachelors in natural sciences and lacking the necessary knowledge to make sense of the socio-political and cultural aspects of Pakistan and Italy. Spending more time here does not mean that they are more knowledgeable than us, he said. It shows that how different intersections such as education level and field of education, time spent in the host country, type of job, and political participation establish specific relations in transnational context. As male and Pashtun it may be easy to reach out other Pashtuns in the host country, but developing relations and networks depends on various intersections as discussed above. A similar farmwork of intersectionality is also pivotal to understand the relations of Pashtun with other communities and the Italian society at large.

During my stay at the university residence at Via Mantova, I noticed a distinct lack of interaction between Italian and international students. It became apparent that students tended to form exclusive groups, with Italians congregating separately from their foreign counterparts, especially during gatherings and parties. The international student body consisted of individuals from various countries like Pakistan, India, Egypt, Sudan, Ethiopia, Spain, Albania, Mexico, Iran, Brazil, and more. While students from these nations developed close friendships

and strong bonds among themselves, a certain distance between them and Italian students was there. The division between local and foreign students could be attributed to a variety of factors. Initially, I believed that the language barrier played a significant role in this separation. Many foreign students struggled with Italian, and Italian students typically did not speak English. However, even when some international students were proficient in Italian, there still a certain distance and did not establish deeper connections, aside from exchanging greetings like "ciao" and engaging in limited interactions. Conversations among foreign students regarding this division revealed a range of opinions. Some attributed it to Italians being perceived as pragmatic and closed-minded, while others pointed to the language barrier. Some even mentioned stereotypes related to refugees and migrants. Foreign students also discussed how the university residence staff appeared to treat Italian and international students differently, often with discrimination. Additionally, foreign students noted regional differences within Italy. They observed that people in the southern regions tended to be more friendly and welcoming toward migrants, while those in the north were more individualistic and less inclined to form relationships with foreigners. While these observations were based on general trends, it is important to recognize that these relationships are multifaceted. For instance, friendships among international students and among Italians from different regions added complexity to the overall dynamic. Nevertheless, despite these complexities and divisions, there was a sense of solidarity among foreign students, possibly driven by factors such as shared language (English), being migrant isolation, and experiences with racism.

3.2.1. The initial contact with Pashtun food delivery workers and selection of research sites

Prior to my fieldwork and data collection, I encountered Pashtun food delivery workers, who would deliver food to the University residence in via Mantova 75, Sesto San Giovani, where I was residing. Whenever I came across a Pashtun individual, I engaged in conversation with him in the Pashto language and exchanged contact information. On some occasions, when they overheard us speaking Pashto, they would approach us, and we would engage in friendly discussions. This practice is a customary aspect of Pashtun culture and a religious obligation among fellow Muslims. Even if they were not personally acquainted, they would greet each other with *Salam* (a religious practice) because of their shared Muslim and Pashtun identity. They would inquire about each other's general life situations, a practice known as *Roghbar* or *Tapos*. This sense of camaraderie became even more significant when Pashtuns encountered each other in non-Pashtun regions or cities, as their shared national identity strengthened when

living away from their homeland. For example, when Abdurahman, a Pashtun delivery worker who delivered food to our residence, observed me conversing with another Pashtun student outside our residence, he greeted me with *Kaliwala sanga ye*, which translates to how are you, my fellow Pashtun? In Pashto, *Kalay* signifies a village, *Kaliwal* denotes a villager or someone from the same village, and in situations where one doesn't know the name or place of origin of another Pashtun, they can refer to them as *Kaliwal*, meaning a fellow Pashtun, or *Watandar* and *Watanwal*, signifying a fellow countryman, derived from the word *Watan*, which means homeland in Pashto.

Abdurahman expressed his delight when he overheard us conversing in Pashto amidst a gathering of Italian students. Following our introduction, he inquired if I was engaged in any part-time employment in Italy. I explained that I was not working and was relying on the scholarship funds I received for my financial support. This seemed somewhat unusual to him because many students in Italy take up part-time jobs to earn money, often viewing their educational visa as a mean to access Europe for work opportunities. Abdurahman suggested that I should consider taking up food delivery work, mentioning that I could potentially earn between 800 to 1000 euros per month by working just 5 hours a day. However, I raised concerns about whether the university would permit such employment and mentioned my busy schedule with my PhD studies. Additionally, I noted that as a student visa holder, I might not be eligible to register with delivery apps directly. He assured me that the app registration was not an issue and explained that I could work using someone else's account, provided I shared 20 percent of my earnings with them. Abdurahman also informed me that the university typically did not scrutinize students engaging in delivery work. He pointed out that newcomers, including asylum seekers who were not officially permitted to work yet, often utilized the apps of other refugees for employment. Later, Abdurahman assisted another student who had recently completed his master's degree in finding an app for job opportunities. As an insider, being a male and Pashtun played a significant role in encouraging Abdurrahman to approach me. Initially, the fact that we were conversing in Pashto, our shared language, motivated him to initiate contact. However, it is possible that if he had heard a Pashtun girl in a similar situation, he might not have approached her due to the cultural segregation between genders and prevailing gender norms within Pashtun culture.

A few days later, Abdurahman noticed us playing volleyball outside the residence and eagerly joined in. He mentioned that he had played volleyball in his village and was quite skilled at it.

He also shared that during his time in a refugee camp, he had served as a goalkeeper for a local football club but had to stop due to an injury. The following day, when I visited Bicocca Village, Abdurahman introduced me to Jameel, another Pashtun refugee hailing from the Kurram Valley in Pakistan. During my pursuit of the M.Phil. degree, I had been employed as a trainer within the framework of the UNICEF-funded project by NRSP (National Rural Support Programme). My role involved providing training to Polio workers across the province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. This work led me to visit Kurram Valley on multiple occasions. Typically, the training sessions were conducted at the district headquarters hospital in Sadda, which is a small city boasting various shops, a handful of restaurants, and a transportation hub. In conversation with Jameel about his hometown in Kurram Valley, he mentioned that he resided in Sadda. I took the opportunity to share my experiences working in Sadda and other locations within Kurram Valley, including my familiarity with several individuals involved in the Polio program. I mentioned names such as Idrees Bangash, Gul Hadi, Doctor Inayat Ullah, and others, and Jameel revealed that he was acquainted with all these individuals. This interaction played a pivotal role in forging friendships with Abdurahman and Jameel and whenever they would deliver food to our location, they would make it a point to call me to meet.

This is how I initially established friendships with them, and gradually discussed the subject of my research project and fieldwork. I requested their assistance in connecting me with other Pashtuns. One day, while I was in the company of Abdurrahman and Jameel, another Pashtun delivery worker approached us. Jameel introduced me to this newcomer, identifying him as Bilal from Nowshera, Pakistan. When Jameel mentioned to him that I am pursuing a PhD at the University of Milano Bicocca, Bilal immediately exclaimed, *os mi sai kas paida ko*, signifying that he had finally encountered the right person he had been searching for. He then shared with me that there is a girl in Nowshera, Pakistan, who had been urging him for a long time to help her apply for a PhD program in Italian universities. I assured him that when the admissions are open, I would send him the necessary links and assist him in the application process. Subsequently, we exchanged contact numbers and kept in occasional touch. The girl also sent her documents to Bilal, who then forwarded them to me for review. One day, I inquired about the girl's identity, asking if she was a relative of his. Bilal smiled and replied that she was just a friend he had met on Facebook. They communicated solely through phone calls since they had not met in person in Pakistan. As some Italian universities began announcing their admissions, I sent Bilal the relevant links, which he shared with the girl. She would send voice

messages expressing her difficulty in understanding the application procedure. Bilal would forward these voice messages to me, to which I responded with voice clips that he, in turn, shared with her. In this situation, it became crucial for me to directly communicate with the girl because explaining the application procedure through indirect voice clips was proving to be challenging. However, neither I asked Bilal to provide her with my contact number for direct communication nor did he offer me her number. This situation reflects the traditional gender dynamics within Pashtun society, where female family members, friends, or girlfriends are generally not introduced to male friends and unrelated men, and friend or unrelated men also cannot ask for direct interaction and communication with female family member of someone.

These people were working mostly at Bicocca village, a place with number of shopping malls and restaurants from where they would pick the orders. With the help of these individuals, I met with other Pashtuns who works at Bicocca village, and it was the main reason that Bicocca village remain the main site of my Participant observation and life history interviews. However, in my initial proposal the field work sites and the food delivery worker as participant was not mentioned. I just have provided that I will conduct the field work in Milan and with migrant Pashtun, but specific research site and Pashtun food delivery workers was not mentioned. Starting in December 2021, I commenced the process of reaching out to and meeting Pashtun migrant men such as students, food delivery workers, and waitstaff in restaurants in Milan. My aim was to locate specific neighbourhoods where I could find Pashtun communities living in close-knit groups. However, I encountered difficulties in identifying such neighbourhoods or communities among the Pashtun population. Given this I realised that without having a specific location where Pashtun migrant live as a community it was impossible for me to undertake an ethnographic fieldwork, scheduling interviews and conducting participant observations with Pashtun migrants. Following my initial phase of establishing connections with Pashtun migrants in general, as well as with refugees and asylum seekers engaged in food delivery services, I decided to shift the focus of my study from a generic Pashtun migrant to Pashtun food delivery workers and from a specific residential neighbourhood to the workplaces where these food delivery workers go to work. I selected three key locations within Milan, Milano Centrale (the central train station), Bicocca Village, and Centro Sarca. During my visits to the city, I observed that these places were always populated with migrants' communities such African, Bangladeshi, Pakistanis, Arabs, and Pashtuns. The majority migrants, both Pashtuns and others, in food delivery services are working at these workplaces.

Accordingly, I make changes to my research proposal where I proposed the Pashtun food delivery workers as participants and the mentioned workplaces as the research sites. In April 2022, I have proposed the three workplaces. When I start conducting the interviews and participants observation at the mentioned workplaces, I realized that the participants very frequently switch between different workplaces. As I discussed earlier the Bicocca Village remain the primary workplace, where I conduct most of the interviews and participant observation, but some time I would visit other workplaces to follow a particular participant who would show willingness to participate in the study, and in this way, I conduct a few interviews in other two locations. In doing so, sometimes I would discuss the arrangement of an interview with a participant at one location, but the interview would take place at another. The second issue that I faced while conducting the fieldwork was working hours of the participants. They usually work from 9:00 am to 2:00 or 3:00 pm, in the first shift, and from 7:00 pm to 12:00 pm or 1:00 am, in the second shift, and mostly remain on the move to deliver food. In-between these two shifts of work they take a break and goes back to their homes for lunch and prayer. This schedule of work of the participants makes it very difficult for me to convince them for an interview which would normally take 1:30 hour. In terms of the participant observation, the workplace has some advantages and disadvantages as well. Doing participant observation in the workplace allows me to observe their relationship with other ethnic groups, such African, Indians, Bengalis, and other Pakistanis such as Punjabis. However, most of the interactions and discussions would take place exclusively among Pashtuns, and only when they would find some free time or waiting to receive orders from the clients, otherwise they would remain on the move delivering food.

Secondly, because these Pashtun men work from 9:00 to 13:00, having 2-to-3-hour break in the afternoon for rest, prayers, lunch, and to charge their bicycle batteries. It was impossible for me to visit their homes in the break time or after they finish work at late night and given their tough schedule, they were also not able to find a suitable time to invite me to their homes, as few of them tell me that someday they will invite me to their home for lunch or dinner. Sometimes I would ask them to visit their homes for the interviews on weekends, however, most of them works on the weekends too, and even if someone take off from the work on weekends, he will go to visit other cities for outing or spend the day with other friends.

The participants are working with multiple companies at the same time depending on which company's app the received the order. The enterprises they work with includes Deliveroo, Uber

Eats, Glovo, and others. All the Participant I interviewed rely on bicycles for food deliveries to various destinations. Majority of the participants opt for electric bikes equipped with rechargeable batteries, while newcomers often start with conventional bicycles and aspire to acquire electric bikes once they have saved up from their earnings. The motivation for Pashtun migrant to become delivery workers often aligns with the industry's flexible working hours and income potential. Influenced by modernist individualism, these younger workers value personal autonomy, freedom, making the food delivery sector an appealing choice due to its potential for high income and relative work autonomy. In explaining his work in delivery services Sartaj Khan Mohmand for example said, *Tata kho pata da che pashtun da cha ghulami na kavi* – means, as you know that Pashtun do not like to be enslaved, or to do work under someone's supervision. Bilal Khan another delivery worker said that *da dasi kar dy che da chaa ghag ba darpasi na wi* – mean that, this is a kind of work where no body supervised you. The income structure of the food delivery industry primarily depends on the number of orders fulfilled, allowing workers to select their preferred working hours, as Shahab khan asserts that *Sta khwakha da ka kar ke aw ka nak e, aw che sa time di khwakh v da kaar kawly shi* – means that it up to you if you want to work or not there is no compulsion or you can chose your favourite time to do this work. workers receive immediate payment upon order completion drive the attraction to this sector's higher earning potential, as during the interview Sartaj Khan Mohmand opened his app to show me his income, he said, *ogora nan oweshtam (27th) dy aw ma 1800-euro kri di* – mean that look it is the 27th of the month and I have made 1800 euros. The Pashtun migrant believes that for migrants in Italy there is no other suitable job than delivery, in terms of income and flexibility and freedom. For example Zahir Rahman explain that "if you work in a restaurant and possess legal document they will offer you maximum 1000 euros and if you do not have the documents and work illegally they will offer you maximum 600 to 700 euros for 12 hours of work, while here we work 7 to 8 hours and earn 1500 to 2000 euros per month" (Zahir Rahman, a Pashtun refugee from Pakistan, interviewed at Bicocca village Milan).

Although Pashtun delivery workers perceive delivery work as offering flexibility, independence, and better income opportunities, their behaviour and time are closely scrutinized by advanced flatform technology. As Li and Jiang (2022) asserts that the food delivery industry offers workers apparent autonomy in setting their work hours, yet it enforces "responsibility autonomy" within platform-defined constraints. This control relies on technology and data, creating an "electronic panoptic control" system. Workers face intense app-based monitoring,

and consumers can track orders. Manipulated delivery times, worker competition, and blurred work-life boundaries add pressure, making practical emotional labour essential. Despite the illusion of freedom, the industry exerts strong time control mechanisms, affecting delivery workers' work-life balance.

3.2.2. **Data collection and field work**

During my fieldwork, I made a deliberate effort to acknowledge the reflective aspect of my role as researcher and how it can shape the study's outcomes. Engaging in reflexivity entails recognizing my position as an outsider, insider, both, and neither all at once. It also involves acknowledging the inherent impossibility of remaining unaware of my own subjectivity, personality, and presence within the research settings. (Wolf, 1996). It is crucial to note that the researcher's subjectivities should not be viewed as self-centred indulgence but rather as valuable resources that contribute to data collection and the generation of future knowledge about the studied topics (Salzman, 2002). Being reflexive about one's own positionality means taking the time to reflect on how one fits into power dynamics and how this positioning can influence research methods, interpretations, and the overall process of knowledge production (Sultana, 2007).

As a researcher engaged in fieldwork focused on examining Pashtun culture, masculinities, and migration through discussions, inquiries, and observations, it became imperative for me to carefully weigh the advantages and disadvantages of my dual role as both an insider and an outsider. I identify myself as an insider due to my Pashtun heritage speaking the same language, aligning me with the same ethnic group being studied. However, my status as an educated individual and a PhD student at the University of Milano-Bicocca, holding a study visa, receiving a monthly scholarship, and residing within the university accommodation also positions me as an outsider in this context.

Being a male and Pashtun researcher, it proved beneficial as an insider for establishing rapport and contacts with participants during my fieldwork. However, this insider position also presented challenges, most notably the risk of taking things for granted. Consequently, it was crucial for me, as an insider, to practice reflexivity to avoid depending on assumed knowledge about Pashtun culture, masculinity, and migration. Such assumptions had the potential to influence the study's results significantly. While I had a theoretical understanding of the researcher's dual role as both an insider and an outsider and its potential impact on the research

process and results, this awareness was primarily acquired through my reading on reflexivity and the researcher's positioning in ethnographic research. I gained this awareness while I was in the process of developing my research proposal and methodology before embarking on fieldwork. However, I found that putting this theoretical knowledge into practice was challenging during actual situations, particularly during interviews and participant observations. It was difficult for me to consistently maintain awareness of my own subjectivity and biases, especially when dealing with certain topics that were integral to the study. Remaining truly neutral to avoid falling into the trap of taking things for granted was a complex endeavour. The realization that I had been taking certain aspects of Pashtun culture and masculinity for granted occurred after I conducted my initial interviews and participant observations. I encountered difficulty in formulating questions when I assumed I already possessed the answers, and I found myself neglecting to document behaviours and actions that appeared commonplace to me. For instance, during the initial interviews, I did not inquire about Pashtun women's migration in general, or specifically about women's illegal migration to Europe. I made this omission under the assumption that Pashtun women would unlikely engage in illegal migration, especially without a male family member accompanying them. This assumption was rooted in my understanding of Pashtun culture, where females are typically not permitted to travel alone, even within their own village or city. however, as the research progressed, I introduced questions about women's migration to Europe, including both legal and illegal pathways, and whether they migrated with or without male family members. This addition aimed to gain insights into their perspectives on women's migration.

Furthermore, upon analysing the participants' concise and precise responses, I recognized that I had been presuming certain issues. This presumption seemed to be reinforced by the participants who frequently used the phrase *tata kho pata da* "as you know" in their responses, as if assuming that, as a fellow Pashtun, I was already familiar with these matters. Consequently, I refrained from asking probing questions, as if I were already well-versed in the background and details. Participants also tended to feel a sense of shyness and hesitation when it came to openly sharing their thoughts and feelings, likely due to the awareness that I share their Pashtun identity, and as a PhD students possess more knowledge as compare them. They may have worried about unintentionally saying something incorrect and feeling embarrassed as a result. Additionally, as a fellow Pashtun, when I posed what seemed like straightforward questions, it appeared unusual to them. Furthermore, articulating their responses to questions regarding masculinity and gender proved challenging, primarily because

many gender-related behaviours and actions operate on a subconscious level. This was their first encounter with such questions, requiring them to consciously express thoughts that had previously remained largely unspoken.

Another factor contributing to their hesitancy to be more forthcoming and their reluctance to engage in the research and interviews was the matter of trust, which was closely tied to my status as an outsider. As previously mentioned, my identity as an educated individual and a PhD student at the University of Milano-Bicocca, receiving a monthly scholarship and residing in the university housing, positioned me as an outsider in the eyes of the participants. This outsider status led to their suspicion regarding me and my research project, thereby increasing the challenge of establishing their trust and obtaining comprehensive information about their lives. Despite establishing contact with numerous Pashtun men and maintaining ongoing interactions with them over extended periods, I encountered difficulties in persuading them to participate in interviews. Although some of these individuals went out of their way to introduce me to other Pashtuns with whom I successfully conducted interviews, they themselves remained hesitant until the very end. This reluctance stemmed from the fact that many of them had entered Italy illegally and were currently in the country as refugees and asylum seekers. This precarious status left them feeling particularly vulnerable, fuelling their fears of both Italian and Pakistani authorities, and heightening their suspicions regarding outsiders.

In addition, engaging in illegal migration to Europe represents an extremely perilous endeavours for these individuals, akin to a journey fraught with mortal risks. This dangerous nature of their journey is a primary reason why they are unwilling to undertake even the slightest of risks when it comes to sharing their personal stories. A prevalent apprehension shared among Pashtuns revolves around the activities of intelligence agencies such as ISI (inter-services intelligence agency), Pakistan army, and Carabinieri in Italy. This pervasive fear contributes to their reluctance to share any information or narratives. Moreover, there exists a widespread belief among Pakistani people that intelligence agencies and the Pakistan Army deploy their personnel to foreign countries under the guise of students, where they closely monitor the activities of the Pakistani diaspora. For instance, following my interview with Ejaz Khan, he reached out to me the next day with a question on his mind. I responded affirmatively, encouraging him to ask whatever he wished. He inquired cautiously, expressing concern that the interview might be used in a way that could harm him. I reassured him, emphasizing that his information would not be shared with anyone and that the recording would be promptly

deleted. Even during the interview when I asked about the reasons to leave Pakistan. Ejaz remains silent, he was not willing to respond and by his hand gesture he shows his unwillingness to respond, however I asked in a different way for example I told him that many Afghan people would say that in our country there is war and poverty that's why they migrate to escape persecution and to earn livelihood for their families, so in this way what was your motivation to migrate? Ejaz replied that yes that is right, but he was still unwilling to respond. The reason for this silence was obviously the fear of deportation, as most of the refugees came to Italy illegally, and they made different cases and stories to the authorities for asylum and to be recognised as refugees in Italy and to get the documents. After a month later, Ejaz Khan travelled to Pakistan, and upon his return to Italy, he encountered difficulties at Peshawar airport, where authorities did not permit him to proceed with his journey. In his distress, he contacted me, inquiring whether I had any connections within the Federal Investigation Authority (FIA) in Pakistan who could assist him in returning. Additionally, he speculated that his predicament might be linked to the interview we had conducted. Due to this incident, Umair, a friend of Ejaz who had initially expressed a willingness to partake in the research, declined to be interviewed. This prevailing suspicion further complicates my efforts to conduct life history interviews with these individuals.

To avoid this situation, I employed specific strategies aimed at heightening my awareness of my own subjectivity and establishing a sense of rapport with the participants to gain their trust. In my endeavours to maintain as much neutrality as possible while operating from an insider perspective, I regularly reviewed recorded interviews. This review process allowed me to contemplate the content, analyse their responses to the questions posed, explore alternative approaches to framing questions, elicit further details, and incorporate additional probing inquiries into the questionnaire. Additionally, I took the initiative to conduct follow-up interviews with participants with whom I had initially engaged. This afforded me the opportunity to renew our interactions and gather additional data during our routine encounters, thereby enriching the depth of information collected. in order to manage their preconceived expectations that, as a fellow Pashtun, I should possess inherent knowledge of these common-sense facts, I initiated discussions with them about my research. I tried to persuade them to be more forthcoming in discussing specific topics, emphasizing that I was not conducting this research as a Pashtun, but rather as an impartial researcher.

To establish trust as an outsider, I began dedicating more time to immersing myself in the field without immediately broaching the subject of my research and interviews. Instead, I engaged in conversations revolving around everyday life topics, such as politics, poverty, and unemployment in Italy, Pakistan, or Afghanistan. Striking a balance between concealing my personal opinions and occasionally revealing my perspectives on certain matters, especially those of a religious nature, which might have been unsettling for them, proved to be essential. in certain instances, I adopted a demeanour akin to that of my informants, refraining from openly expressing my own critical views as a means of fostering rapport and trust. However, in most cases, I cultivated close relationships with my informants that afforded me the opportunity to question and directly address their occasional racist or homophobic narratives. I challenged their viewpoints and openly shared my own opinions and emotions during our informal conversations. Maintaining equilibrium between these two approaches was not always a straightforward task.

Another significant strategy involved immersing myself in their humour and discussions, which played a crucial role in making them comfortable with my presence among them. Over time, participants began sharing insights into the process of obtaining study visas and scholarships. Some even sought my assistance in guiding their friends and family members through the admissions process for various programs at Italian universities. They willingly shared my contact information, leading to group and individual calls where they discussed admission procedures and requirements for different university programs. I also shared links and information about admission and application procedures. In some instances, they showed me emails and text messages from companies that needed translation into Pashto, which further contributed to building trust. During this phase, I decided to be more explicit about my research project and my role as a researcher. Participants began asking questions such as why I was conducting this research and how it could benefit refugees. In response, I explained that pursuing a PhD degree necessitated writing a research dissertation on a specific issue or topic, and as a Pashtun, I was genuinely interested in exploring the experiences of Pashtun male migration. I emphasized my sincere intent to delve into their lives and experiences as refugees and clarified my research objectives and goals, particularly my focus on their masculine identities after migration. Some of my key informants, including those familiar with my research goals, took it upon themselves to discuss my research with others and persuade them to participate in interviews.

Part two

Transcending borders: Pashtun migration as a strategy for hegemony amid marginalization

Part is divided into two chapters, chapter four, and chapter five, analysing how migration plays an important role in both the individual and collective identity formation among the Pashtuns. Historically Pashtuns negotiate their sense of collective identity as they transcend borders, encountering challenges and opportunities that contribute to their individual and collective identity. Simultaneously, the collective and individual experience of migration among Pashtuns can be seen as a process of overcoming marginalization and utilizing migration as a strategic means to assert hegemony. To discuss the collective Pashtun identity formation and their assertion of power and influence in the region, I mainly discuss the history of Pashtun migration to India, in chapter four. In this chapter I discussed that how Pashtuns in historical trajectories, as marginalised social group among other powerful regional groups, asserts power and influence and established their own state and ruled other regions after going through the experience of migration. I also discuss the contemporary history of individual labour migration to other destinations, such as Europe, US, Australia, and the Middle East, from Pakistan and Afghanistan. Following this brief historical overview, in chapter five, I discuss the Pashtun transnational migration as a predominantly masculine endeavour by analysing the perceptions about Pashtun women's migration. As I have previously discussed the socio-economic and cultural dynamics of the participants in their home countries, which place them in a marginalized position as compared to the hegemonic, in this chapter I will further elaborate the issue of marginalization, which influence the participants' decision to migrate illegally to Italy/Europe to regain a sense of empowerment or to overcome their marginalized social status. I will also discuss the problems and difficulties they face in the journey of irregular migration, adding to their marginalisation, before reaching Italy.

Raewyn Connell, by introducing pivotal concepts like hegemonic and marginalized masculinities, initiated a theoretical discourse on framing and comprehending the evolution of masculinities (Connell, 1995, 2005). According to Haywood and Johansson, (2017), the evolution of critical studies on men and masculinity begins in the 1980s, and that research has been expanded into empirical areas such as fatherhood, violence, gender equality, and sexuality, however alternative masculinities and marginalized men has been neglected in the research till recently. The book focuses on diverse forms of marginalized masculinities across societal fields

and generations, aiming to contribute to theoretical developments in critical studies on men and masculinities. Drawing from the Connell's concepts of hegemonic and marginalised masculinities, Haywood and Johansson provide a theoretical framework to study masculinities, especially marginalised masculinities, in specific context and in relation to dominant or hegemonic masculinities. The concept of marginalisation can be applied to both individuals and groups to examine the interplay of marginalization and hegemony, both across diverse groups and among individuals within a particular group. In analysing the marginalised social positioning of the participants of this study, in their home countries, as well as in Italy, I applied Connell's concept of Marginalized masculinities which he develops in relation to hegemonic masculinity, implying that marginalised masculinities can be analysed only in comparison to hegemonic masculinity in each context. As Connell (2000), illustrates that the diversity of masculinities is marked by hierarchy and exclusion. This hierarchy of masculinities means that men do not benefit equally from the patriarchal dividend. Dominant forms of masculinity thus need to be understood in relation to masculinities that are marginalised by class, race, and sexuality. Furthermore, to understand masculinities more broadly, we must make sense of the impact of class, race, and sexuality hierarchies on men's lives. Masculinity is thus something that must be accomplished in specific social contexts (Messerschmidt 1993). While men's subjectivities are socially constructed, however, they are also open to challenge and change. Men are thus involved in a process of continually constructing themselves.

According to Haywood and Johansson (2017), marginalization is an intergroup and intragroup relations resulting in peripheral, disadvantaged membership, and disparate treatment. It encompasses individuals or groups positioned outside mainstream society, living at the margins of power, cultural dominance, and economic welfare. Marginalization manifests as a zero-sum power concept, indicating varying degrees of disadvantages. Examples include men facing physical or mental disabilities, economic challenges, and shifts in traditionally male-dominated industries. The focus connects lack of access to opportunities and resources to a marginalized status, emphasizing the role of social, economic, and cultural circumstances.

Haywood and Johansson explain the relation between masculinity and marginalization in the following terms.

> Marginalization connects a lack of access to social, economic, and cultural opportunities and resources to a marginal status. Interestingly, in this approach there is little need to draw

upon masculinity as an explanatory tool as men become subject to social, economic, and cultural circumstances resulting in a range of positions that may include high levels of poverty, low educational opportunity and poor access to health and social welfare and housing provision. Thus, men may be marginalized because of their social, economic, and cultural location rather than the version of manhood in which they invest and perform. Therefore, in this sense, marginalization is caused by the structural organization of social and economic relationships that affect men.

(Haywood and Johansson, 2017, p. 5)

To further explain that marginalized masculinities can be identified in relation to hegemonic masculinities.

In many ways, marginalized masculinities are often located and defined in relation to men that hold cultural privilege. From this perspective, masculinity becomes the resource through which marginalization takes place. More specifically, men's positionality as marginal is dependent on what is deemed as central. This approach suggests that we can know and understand marginal masculinities through their relationships with those masculinities that are socially, culturally, and economically elevated.

(Haywood and Johansson, 2017, p. 6)

Chapter four

A brief history of Pashtun transnational migration

The historical trajectory of Pashtun migration, originating from both Afghanistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan, has been intricately tied to the Indian subcontinent as its initial destination. However, the migration of Pashtuns to regions such as Europe, America, Australia, and the Middle East represents a relatively contemporary phenomenon. Pashtun migration to India is very much a part of Pashtun folklore as well. For instance, the following two folksongs suggest the historic migration of Pashtuns to India. These folksongs also suggest a close link between migration and Pashtun masculinity.

Tar Hindustana Shahzalmi zi, da dodi ghrap tar Pindai zi wapas razeena

(*Tapa*, a Pashto folksong)

Only the brave and courageous young ones can go to Hindustan, and the ones who are good for eating goes till Pindi and comeback.

Hindustanai sha rupai rawra, Pa korano rupo me plar na drkawina

(*Tapa*, a Pashto folksong)

Travel to Hindustan and fetch some money; the income you generate here (at home) is not sufficient to persuade my father to approve our marriage.

The first Pashto folksong praise the individuals with exceptional bravery and unwavering courage to embark on journeys to Hindustan (India). It explains that this challenging endeavour is reserved for those who possess the spirit and courage to go beyond the familiar and embrace the unknown, this kind of youth is titled as *Shah Zalmi,* (a brave youngster). On the other hand, the second line "the ones who are good for eating just go to Pindi and come back home" refers to those men that do not have the spirit and courage to go beyond the familiar places (Pindi, a city in Pakistan) and are perhaps more focused on comfort pleasure of being at home, who are titled as *Dodi khlas*, (a person who do not earn but just eat). In the second folk song a Pashtun girl asking her beloved to migrate to Hindustan, to earn money and to prove his manhood so that her father agrees to their marriage. Both the folk songs suggest the relationship between

masculinity and migration, and how historically Pashtun use migration as a strategy to overcome their marginalized position amid the limited resources and opportunities at home.

Historically the present-day Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province of Pakistan was originally part of Afghanistan until the Durand Line agreement in 1893. Accordingly, Pashtun migration encompasses the movement of Pashtun people from both sides of the Durand Line. The motivations and factors driving Pashtun migration to India are diverse, including individual labour migration, the pastoral migration of tribes between Afghanistan and India, and the historical instances of invasion and conquest of India by Pashtun rulers who governed various parts of the subcontinent at different times, while Pashtun soldiers serving both Pashtun and non-Pashtun rulers who invaded and ruled India for centuries also contributed to these migratory patterns. The Pashtun migration to India exhibits characteristics of both circular movements and permanent settlements in different regions of India.

The migration history of Pashtuns to India and various global regions can be divided across different historical periods marked by significant political and structural transformations in the region. These periods have left a lasting impact on Pashtun migration, shaping their socio-political, and cultural experiences. Pashtun migration unfolds across several epochs, including the pre-Islamic era in India before the 10th and 11th centuries, the period of the Delhi Sultanate (1206-1526) under Muslim rulers, the establishment of the first Afghan rule in India (1451-1526) by the Lodis, who were the final rulers of the Delhi Sultanate, and the Sur dynasty led by Sher Shah Suri, a Pashtun ruler. The timeline also encompasses the Mughal era, the British colonial rule, and the post-1947 partition of India. The refugee migration of Pashtuns, especially from Afghanistan to neighbouring and Western countries, gained prominence, in the 1980s. Nevertheless, the Pashtun migration to Western countries had already commenced significantly during the British rule in India.

The migration of Pashtuns to India played a pivotal role in the formation of Afghan identity and ethnicity, contributing to the emergence of a distinctive political and social collective amidst the complexities of a fragmented tribal system. This movement allowed the Pashtuns to establish a unique identity, setting them apart from other ethnic groups present among the local Indian population. The migration fostered a sense of unity and cohesiveness among the Pashtuns, shaping their collective political and social life while simultaneously distinguishing them from the broader cultural landscape of indigenous communities in India. According to

Green (2008), the Afghan diaspora in India, often overlooked in the broader context of Afghan history, played a crucial role in shaping Afghan identity. Nile Green contends that, until at least the eighteenth century, the epicentre of Afghan history resided in the courts and prosperous tribal settlements of India. Afghans migrated from the northwest, establishing diasporic communities that became pivotal for the study of Afghan history. Exploring the formation of Afghan historical consciousness, Green argues that it evolved through the experience of migration to India and following the encounters with diverse social, religious, and political structures distinct from those in Afghanistan. The period of Afghan political dominance in northern India, led by rulers like Lodis and Sur in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, contained these transformative pressures. However, their subsequent defeat and gradual assimilation into the Mughal state after 1555, intensified the urgency of questions related to Afghan self-definition. India emerges as the backdrop for the ethnogenetic process, where Afghans gradually differentiated and discovered their collective identity amid various forms of identity. Green demonstrates the historical contingency of Pashtun Afghans' self-identification with the tribal system, as discussed in chapter two, underscoring the significance of the diaspora in India in this transformative process. The success of these ventures, particularly in the arms trade and horse business, led to the emergence of a class of Afghan notables in northern India, marking a significant chapter in the historical development of Afghan identity. In terms of the recent Afghan migration to India Warsi (2015), argues that the history of Afghan migration in India is intricately woven into the dynamic historical tapestry of the region, shaped by empires and multifaceted interactions. Understanding the concept of Afghan identity in Delhi requires delving into diverse meanings and modes of belonging. The term 'Afghan' underwent evolution within a historical context, as Indo-Afghan communities developed a shared historical identity during the decline of Pashtun dynasties in Delhi. The notion of Afghan identity transitioned from tribal distinctions to a focus on common ancestry, and linguistic belonging gained prominence during the eighteenth century with Ahmad Shah Durrani's ascent. Under Mughal rule, various Indian communities, including Muslims, Hindus, and Sikhs, became integral to Afghan society through financial and economic networks. This historical movement of people and language persists, influencing contemporary Afghan migrants in Delhi. The study accentuates the enduring impact of linguistic and historical connections between Afghanistan and India. Acknowledging these ties, allows to recognize the complexity of Afghan migration to India since the late 1970s, identifying three waves, the most recent in the mid-2000s due to worsening economic and political conditions. The availability of medical

tourist visas has broadened migration beyond urban elites, reflecting the ongoing influence of historical and linguistic ties on the migration landscape.

In "A History of Pashtun Migration, 1775-2006", Robert Nichols provides an in-depth historical, anthropological, sociological, and economic overview of the importance of migration and circulation in Pashtun society. Nichols states, "Regionally, for centuries, agrarian districts with little irrigation and limited rainfall in eastern Afghanistan, the northern and western colonial Punjab, and the North-West Frontier Province (now Khyber Pakhtunkhwa) produced surplus workers looking outside the immediate village economy for subsistence and opportunity" (Nichols, 2008, p. 3). According to Bhattacharya (2019), before the 19th century, India and Afghanistan were connected through a significant annual migration known as Powindah, involving Pathan tribes. These tribes descended to Punjab from Central Asia, not only for trade but also seeking pasture, work, and a respite from the harsh uplands of Central Asia. This migration had a seasonal cycle, starting with assemblies in the plains east of Ghazni in autumn, followed by journeys through various passes, and reaching destinations like Multan, Rajputana, Lahore, Amritsar, Delhi, Kanpur, Benaras, and sometimes Patna. The Powindahs returned to their home regions as summer approached. This mass migration involved families, herds, flocks, and merchandise. Militarization was crucial due to the fear of attacks, leading to the formation of armed caravans. The Powindahs were not a homogeneous community; they engaged in various economic activities, differentiating internally based on wealth, occupation, and function. Over time, British colonial policies impacted Powindah nomadism, with grazing taxes, border interventions, and changes in power dynamics affecting their traditional way of life. Despite challenges, Powindah nomadism persisted, adapting to the constraints of changing times. However, certain economic activities, such as trade, were more adversely affected than others, eventually leading to the decline of Powindah presence in Indian markets after the Partition of India in 1947 and the closure of grazing grounds in Dera Ismail Khan after 1960.

The initial movements began with Pashtun migration to northern India. According to Sheikh (2016), prior to the founding of the first Afghan Empire in India (1451-1526), a notable influx of Afghans occurred to India, and they assumed influential positions within the Delhi Sultanate. These Afghan migrants arrived in India as mercenaries, soldiers serving under foreign commanders, or as members of the nobility. The reasons for their migration were varied, encompassing the desire to escape difficulties in their native land, as well as the allure of patronage opportunities in India. Additionally, the broader Islamic expansion into India played

a role in facilitating the migration of Afghans to the region. The pattern of Afghan migration to India likely predates even the foundation of Muslim rule in the region. in 682 AD, Muslim Afghans invaded and devastated north-western territories, including Peshawar. Despite initial resistance by the Raja of Lahore, Punjab, a treaty was eventually concluded, leading to Afghan control over Peshawar and the construction of the fort named Khyber. The region witnessed conversion to Islam by the Ghaznavids, led by Abu Mansur Sabuktigin, around the end of the tenth century. Sabuktigin's conquests involved capturing cities, eliminating idolatrous practices, and establishing Islam. The narrative emphasizes the victorious accounts of Islam's spread, with people rejoicing over the results achieved for the religion. During Sultan Mahmud of Ghazni's, (971-1030), Indian campaigns, Afghans showcased their martial prowess in Mahmud's military expeditions into India. After Ghaznavids Afghans found employment under Mamluk dynasty, such as Balban, who deployed 3,000 Afghans in 1260 AD to secure Delhi. Threatened by Mongol incursions, Balban strategically stationed Afghan commanders and mercenaries at key locations. Afghans recruited in large numbers also rose in nobility and begin settling in India. Subsequently, during the Ghorian conquest of India in 13 century, Mohammad Ghori enlisted about 12,000 Afghans in his army, with Malik Mahmud Lodi leading them against Prithvi Raj Chauhan. Shahabuddin Mohammad Ghori, on his return from India, founded the fort of Sialkot, appointing Malik Shahu to populate and govern the town with significant powers. According to Hussain (1978) during the Ghorian conquests in the 13th century, early settlements of Afghans in India took place in places like Gopalpur, Afghanpur, Bhojpur, Kampil, and Patiyala. Despite facing challenges, Afghans transitioned from petty mercenaries to forming the ruling class under the Lodis and Sur during the Sultanate period.

According to Sheikh (2016), the political rise of Afghans in northern India began during the Saiyid rulers' era (1414-1451), laying the foundation for the first Afghan Empire in 1451 AD. Afghan aristocracy participated as governors, courtiers, and military leaders. Under Bahlul Lodi, different provinces were governed independently by Afghans. When Sultan Hussain of Jaunpur opposed Bahlul, leading to a siege of Delhi, Bahlul, facing threats, sought aid from Roh's (present day Peshawar Vally) Afghan tribes, emphasizing the honour of Afghan women. Afghans from Roh defeated Jaunpur's army and after the victory, some returned to Roh, while others settled in India, establishing a steady stream of Afghan immigration. The emergence of the Afghan kingdom marked the culmination of continuous immigration between the 13th and 15th centuries. After the fall of the Lodi and Sur dynasties, Afghan immigrants faced

challenges, but early Mughals continued to enlist them in their armies. In the 17th and 18th centuries, Katiher (later Ruhelkhand) witnessed significant Afghan immigration.

According to Hussain (1978), Mughal ruler Akbar's policy displayed hostility towards Afghans, but he acknowledged loyal Afghans with *Mansabs* (civil and military positions). A shift occurred during Jahangir's reign due to political needs, leading to increased Afghan prominence and new settlements across the country. The Ain-i-Akbari reveals Afghan zamindari (land allotments) in 43 parganas (a group of villages, subdivision of a district in India) of the Mughal Empire, particularly in Delhi and Agra provinces. Most Afghan zamindars (landowners) belonged to tribal affiliations like Lodis, Lohanis, Niyazis, Isa Khails, Tarins, Dilezaks, Kakars, and Miyans. The immigration and settlement process persisted under the Mughals, focusing on Uttar Pradesh. Afghans primarily came from regions beyond Attock and southeastern Afghanistan, engaging in agriculture and trade. Afghan immigrants, especially from the Bungush region, were mostly agriculturists, but some engaged in trade. Trade activities continued into the 19th century. Family feuds and Mughal inductions, like Jahangir inducting 3,000 Dilezaks, contributed to migrations and settlements in areas like Dalmau, Qamarnagar, Zafarnagar, Rustamnagar, Husain Nagar, Ujjain, Sarangpur, and Bhilsa. Afghan settlements were so significant in some areas that local zamindars could form an exclusively Afghan army. Afghans exhibited dual roles as soldiers and traders, reflecting the dynamic nature of their immigration and settlement patterns in India. during the Mughal period, the influx of Afghans to India gained momentum with the patronage of Jahangir and his successors. Particularly, in the Katiher region, where initially the Ain-i-Akbari did not record any Afghan zamindars, the rise of Afghan settlements occurred due to strategic considerations. The Katiheriya Rajputs, challenging Mughal authority, prompted the encouragement of Afghan settlements by the Mughals to maintain control. Shahjehanpur, founded by Diler Khan, emerged as a notable Afghan settlement in 1647 A.D., accommodating 9000 Afghans who migrated from south of Khyber. The settlement was structured with meticulous care to preserve individual tribal identities. Other Afghan settlements like Shahabad, Jalalnagar, Walipur, Khaimani, and Sarai Agha were established for various political reasons, often in response to revolts or to suppress local uprisings. These settlements, marked by separate muhallas/streets for distinct tribes and professions, exemplify the dynamic political and social motivations driving Afghan immigration and settlement in different regions of India.

British invasion of India and the expansion of the East India Trading Company brought an extensive regime change, and Pashtuns were forced into more sedentary lifestyles during this time as the British took over trading routes. Nichols discusses the role of the integration of Pashtuns into the slave trade as they migrated to Latin America, Africa, and the Caribbean. It details the key role the Pashtuns played in the Australian outback as skilled travellers of the terrain (Nichols, 2008). Similarly, Dashti (2022) indicates that the first Afghan migration to the west took place in the middle of the 19th century, when the Russian and British struggle for influence continued. With the help of the British government, in 1860 more than 70 Afghan families from Ghazni and Kabul settled in Australia. The migration, which took place in the Afghans' own vehicles, camels, and mules, took months. Several families died due to thirst and long journeys. Thus, with the cooperation of Britain, the first Afghan population nucleus was established in Australia. During the British Pashtuns occupied both low-skilled positions and higher-ranking positions during this time.

4.1. Contemporary Pashtun migration from Afghanistan and Pakistan

Pakistan and Afghanistan hold significant importance for individuals and organizations involved in migration. Pakistan serves as a country of origin, destination, and transit for migratory flows, while Afghanistan has been a country of origin and emigration since the last four decades. Given the multiethnic structure of both societies, determining precise facts and figures about Pashtun migrants is challenging. Nevertheless, it can be argued that Pashtuns make up majority of the Afghanistan's population and are the second-largest ethnic group in Pakistan, following the Punjabis. This section provides a brief overview of contemporary Pashtun migration from Afghanistan and Pakistan, covering various patterns such as refugee, economic, irregular, and student transnational migration from the 1950s onwards.

4.1.1. Migration from Pakistan

Pakistan is recognized for its large emigration, particularly to Europe and the Middle East, however, since its inception in 1947, it represented not only a place of emigration but also a host nation for refugees from India and Afghanistan. Additionally, it served as a crucial hub for transit migration from Southeast Asia, particularly facilitating the movement from Bangladesh to Europe. Positioned in South Asia along the Arabian Sea, Pakistan acts today as a bridge connecting Central and South Asia to the Middle East. Its geographical location, coupled with specific historical occurrences, has played a significant role in shaping migration dynamics involving Pakistan (Yousef, 2013). Upon the establishment of Pakistan in 1947, the world

observed one of the most significant migrations in history, involving as many as 17 million people crossing the borders of the newly formed nation (Bharadwaj et al. 2008). Due to its geographical positioning, relationships with neighbouring countries, and intricate history, Pakistan serves as a destination, transit, and source country for migration processes. The initial migration of Pashtuns, within Pakistan, was internal labour migration as the economic opportunities in the province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa was scarce due to lack of industries and limited agricultural land in comparison to Punjab and Sindh. Pashtun migration from 1950s begins with the movements of Pashtuns to Karachi in search of work, then further afield to the US and UK and then, in the 1970s and 1980s, to the Middle East (Nichols, 2006). Pakistan being a former British colony, has close ties with Britain, thus during the Second World War, when Britain's heavy industries were suffering a labour shortage, Pakistani seamen often left ships to take industrial jobs on shore. Slowly, their relatives and friends trickled in after them, as a member of the Commonwealth, Pakistanis were eligible for most civic rights. In a 1961 British census 32,000 Pakistanis were enumerated as residents of Britain. After the construction of a dam by a British contractor destroyed several villages in Azad Kashmir, the displaced were encouraged to come to Britain to fill in the labour shortages. Three-quarters of the British Pakistan is originated from an area of no more than 20 to 30 square miles lying in Azad Kashmir, and particularly in the Mirpur district. This was considered the first stream of emigration: the movement of unskilled and semi-skilled Pakistanis to Britain to work in industry there. The second stream consisted of the emigration of qualified professionals, often termed as the 'brain drain,' to Britain, the USA, Canada, and the Middle East during the 1960s and 1970s (CIDOB, 2012).

With a diaspora estimated to exceed seven million (comprising both legal and illegal migrants) on a population of 240 million approximately, the impact of migration is unmistakable in the country. The more recent trend involves the movement of educated and professional Pakistanis to the USA, Canada, and the Middle East, constituting the fourth migratory stream. Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis records indicate that around 5.5 million Pakistanis are presently employed abroad. This figure excludes undocumented migrants not registered with any government agency. Foreign employment is often facilitated by private agents, with approximately 80% of overseas manpower managed by overseas employment promoters (CIDOB, 2012). In 2019, Pakistan ranked among the top 10 countries with emigration, with 6.3 million emigrants, with major destinations being the Gulf States, India, and Europe, particularly the UK, representing over three percent of the nation's population (IOM, 2020).

Pashtuns constitute the second-largest ethnic group, following Punjab, in terms of emigration from Pakistan. According to the International Organization of Migration (2019), majority of the emigrants in 2016 originated from Punjab, with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Sindh, and Baluchistan regions in Pakistan following respectively. It is perhaps unsurprising that Punjab contributes the most significant share of emigrants, given its status as the province with the largest population. The report further shows that Despite an increase in Pakistani labour migrants in recent years, the trend reversed from 2013, with projections estimating 15.5 million labour migrants by 2020. Pakistani students studying abroad have seen a notable increase, and despite legal channels, some labour migrants use irregular means, resulting in significant deportations. Migration to Europe, predominantly male, is motivated by economic reasons, war, and conflict, with Italy and Germany being common destinations. Participants cited socio-economic conditions and perceived access to asylum as primary determinants (IOM, 2019). In terms of refugee migration from Pakistan the report estimates that as of mid-2017, the global count of refugees from Pakistan stood at 136,527, with 87,082 hosted in Afghanistan, 14,872 in Italy, and 7,003 in the United Kingdom. Additionally, there were 66,405 asylum applicants, mainly in Germany (19,355), Italy (12,291), and Greece (6,080). The surge in Pakistani refugees from 49,000 in 2012 to 336,000 in 2013 is notable, possibly linked to the 2013 earthquake in Baluchistan, which displaced around 300,000 people and disrupted livelihoods, prompting migration in search of better opportunities (IOM, 2019).

Though the Gulf States are major destinations for Pakistani emigrants, in particular labour migrants, nearly one million Pakistani emigrants of the total global Pakistani migrant stock in 2019 were residing in Europe. As the global number of Pakistani emigrants has risen steadily during the past two decades, the percentage of those going to Europe has increased proportionally, rendering the continent a consistent and significant destination for Pakistani nationals looking to migrate overseas. Land routes between Pakistan and Europe are well-established and highly organized, while sea routes see the arrival of hundreds to thousands of Pakistani nationals to Europe's shores each year. Pakistan was one of the most frequently registered countries of origin for those transiting through the Western Balkan countries in 2019 and the second most registered nationality among arrivals by sea to Italy in the same year according to available data from national authorities (IOM, 2020). The broader data available on mixed migration to Europe confirms that movement from Pakistan has significantly increased in 2023. While Pakistan did not even feature in IOM's ranking of the top ten countries of origin among arrivals in Europe in 2022, Pakistan was the fifth most represented country in

the first half of 2023, with 5,342 arrivals. However, in Greece, there has been no significant recorded increase of Pakistani nationals between 2022 and 2023. Instead, there has been a sharp uptick in the number of Pakistani arrivals registered in Italy: while in 2022 Pakistani nationals comprised just 3 per cent of the total number of arrivals in Italy, according to UNHCR, so far in 2023 this proportion has risen to around 10 per cent (MMC, 2023).

According to Abenante (2017), Pakistani migration to Italy is a recent and slow-developing phenomenon, contrasting with the established flow to Northern Europe. The Pakistani presence, mainly in Lombardia (38.4%), has evolved beyond temporary status, forming households in northern Italy. Historical shifts from the UK to Scandinavia and the Middle East influenced migration patterns. Economic opportunities in the Gulf Countries led to temporary South Asian migration. Stricter immigration laws and Middle East turmoil redirected migration routes to Southern Europe, especially Italy, Spain, and Greece. Recent geopolitical events like the Arab Spring reinforced migration from South Asia. The Pakistani community in Italy comprises two waves, with recent migrants viewing Italy as a temporary stop enroute to Northern Europe. Pakistani migration to Italy, predominantly occurring since the 90s, exhibits distinctive sociological traits. Representing about 3% of non-EU citizens, the Pakistani community in Italy is rapidly growing, contrary to other established communities. Characteristics include a lower average age (28 years), predominantly male population, and a shifting gender ratio due to family reunions. Cultural factors contribute to low female workforce participation (4.5%), with many Pakistanis engaging in autonomous work. Evolving motivations for migration now include political and humanitarian reasons, reflecting Pakistan's deteriorating situation. Despite economic challenges, there's a noticeable trend of settlement, increased marriages with Italians, and a noteworthy intellectual diaspora. Mukhtar (2020), suggest that Pakistanis living in Italy is one of the biggest Pakistani Diaspora Community in Europe. In 2002, Ministry of Foreign Affairs Pakistan, and Pakistani Embassy in Rome speculated more than 50,000 individuals are living in Italy. According to different media reports and Pakistani newspapers in 2017 gave numbers higher than 130,000. According to Italian bureau of Statistics ISTAT, there were 122,884 Pakistanis in Italy till 2016. Mostly Pakistanis are living in the North especially in Lombardy, Milan and Brescia are the dominant regions of Pakistani community. Pakistan has always remained an attractive human resource export country. Flow of Pakistani immigrants in early 1970s was towards western European countries but this trend changed to Gulf states after surge of huge developmental activities and continuous discoveries of black gold in Middle East. People are much more interested in

migration because it directly or indirectly affects all areas of social, economic, and political life of the people. Majority of Pakistani migrants came from Punjab region, followed by the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa KPK, and with a small share from Baluchistan, Sindh, Gilgit Baltistan, and Azad Jammu & Kashmir. We will primarily focus on region of origin at district level. Majority of Pakistanis coming to Italy are from Punjab and more precisely from Central Punjab districts like Gujrat (24%), Mandi Bahauddin (12.7%), Gujranwala (8.7%), Jhelum (7%), Sialkot (6%), Rawalpindi (4.7%), Sargodha (4.7%), Lahore (3.6%), Peshawar (KPK) 3%, and Karachi (Sindh) 3%, are the most repeated region of origins of the Pakistani migrants coming to Italy.

4.1.2. **Migration from Afghanistan**

Afghanistan's recent history is marked by migration due to prolonged conflicts, economic uncertainty, and climate-induced hardships. The Soviet invasion in 1979 triggered the largest migration, displacing over 5 million Afghans. The subsequent Civil War forced over 6 million to migrate to Iran, Pakistan, and Europe, making Afghans the world's largest immigrant group. Despite foreign aid post-2001, security and economic issues fuelled ongoing migration. The recent Taliban takeover and economic downturn intensified the crisis. Situated as a vital nexus connecting Central Asia, the Middle East, and South Asia, Afghanistan has consistently faced continuous global and regional interventions. Referred to as the "Graveyard of Empires", the country has been a battleground for influence, marked by conflicts between Russia and Britain in the 19th century, Soviet occupation in the 20th century, and U.S. intervention in 2001. These historical events have played a substantial role in shaping the persistent migration trends witnessed since the 1970 (Dashti, 2022).

Since 1978, international migration from Afghanistan has predominantly involved refugee movements, with a significant number seeking refuge in Pakistan and Iran during one of the largest refugee crises of the late 20th century. The prolonged conflicts and displacements over three decades have given rise to the Afghan Diaspora, categorized into the "near Diaspora" and the "wider Diaspora". The near Diaspora comprises Afghan refugees predominantly in neighbouring Iran and Pakistan, while the wider Diaspora includes those who have resettled further abroad, particularly in the West. The global estimated size of the Afghan Diaspora is 2,031,678. Italy ranks among the top ten recipient countries for Afghan-born migrants within the wider Diaspora context. (Kuschminder & Dora, 2009).

Afghan migration to Pakistan, especially to Pashtuns regions shaped by linguistic, geographical, and cultural affinities the legal and voluntary migration of Afghans to Pashtun provinces in Pakistan predates the 1979 Russian invasion of Afghanistan. However, the refugee migration from Afghanistan to Pakistan begin in 1978, when a Soviet-backed coup in Afghanistan led to the establishment of a communist government, triggering clashes between left and right-wing groups. According to Dashti, (2022) the persecuted right-wing factions sought refuge in Pakistan, with 109,000 Afghans immigrating by June 1979, marking the beginning of a larger wave of Afghan migration due to the Soviet occupation and civil war, with a significant increase since 1978. The Soviet invasion, which lasted nearly a decade, had unprecedented devastating consequences in Afghanistan. During the occupation, 25000 Afghans lost their lives only because of landmines. In addition, Afghanistan, whose economy is completely based on agriculture, experienced a sharp decrease in agricultural production. All these devastating developments have led to the largest migration movement in the history of Afghanistan. During the occupation, 6 million Afghans were forced to migrate to neighbouring countries such as Pakistan and Iran due to violence and conflicts. As of 1990, around 3.3 million people migrated to Pakistan and 3.1 million to Iran. In addition, due to increased violence, two million people were displaced within the country (Jackson, 2009, p. 8). According to United Nation (UN), at the end of 1979, 400.000 Afghans immigrated to Pakistan, while 200.000 Afghans immigrated to Iran. By the end of 1980, the number of Afghan refugees had risen to 1.9 million. With this number, Afghans constituted the largest refugee group in the world. Throughout the occupation, the number of Afghan migrants continued to increase. From 1985 to 1990, it rose radically, reaching 6.2 million in Iran and Pakistan. With this figure, Afghan refugees made up less than half of the world's total refugee population. With 2.7 million refugees remaining in Iran, Pakistan, and other countries in the region by 1997, Afghans remained UNHCR's largest single refugee group in the world for 17 consecutive years (Colville, 1997).

The second largest mass migration wave in Afghanistan started after 1989 with the outbreak of the civil war between different ethnic groups of Mujahideen. With the fall of the Najibullah government in 1992, the Mujahideen, who were fighting against the common enemy, due to the disagreements in power sharing, civil war broke out between them. According to Jackson (2009), because of the conflicts between the mujahideen groups, the infrastructure was destroyed, and the economy completely collapsed. Different parts of the country were ruled by different ethnic groups and the war gained a purely ethnic character. Human rights violations,

including executions, kidnapping, imprisonment, sexual violence, and other forms of torture, took place during the civil war. In 1994, the Taliban emerged in Kandahar and in until 1996 captured the capital, Kabul. The Taliban captured most of Afghanistan in a short time and established the "Islami Emarat", which lasted 5 years. UNHCR estimated that in the year 2000, more than 172,000 Afghans immigrated to Pakistan. On the other hand, with the Taliban takeover, most of Kabul's educated elite, including government employees, medical professionals, and teachers, fled to Pakistan (Ruiz, 2004).

According to Dashti (2022), in 2001 the US military intervention caused over 300,000 people to leave Afghanistan. On the other hand, within the scope of the Afghan government's Voluntary Return Program, 4.3 million Afghan immigrants returned to the country between 2002 and 2008, mostly from Pakistan and Iran. However, the resurgence of the Taliban in 2005 and security problems slowed the return trend. The 2020 Afghanistan Ministry of Refugees and Repatriations report discloses a global Afghan immigrant population of 6.5 million, predominantly in neighbouring Iran and Pakistan. Young individuals under 24 constitute 74% of Afghan immigrants in these countries. Pakistan hosts 2.28 million registered Afghan refugees, with an additional 500,000 undocumented. Iran accommodates 1.47 million registered refugees, including those with identity cards and family passports, while roughly 1 million undocumented Afghan immigrants reside in Iran, with 500,000 legally recognized refugees. Following the US withdrawal from Afghanistan in July 2021, the Kabul government collapsed, and the Taliban took control on August 15, leading to a swift and widespread migration due to security, economic, and political concerns. More than 5 million people are displaced within Afghanistan, with 80% being women and children. Over 550,000 Afghans have left their homes since July 2021. Despite border closures, 300,000 Afghan refugees migrated to Iran, primarily comprising vulnerable groups. Neighbouring countries and Western nations, including the USA, evacuated people, but reluctance to accept Afghan immigrants persists. The situation has led to an increased migration crisis, worsening economic conditions, and deepening poverty.

According to Dimitriadi (2013), the increase in Afghan migration to Greece, as transit country to Europe, was a result of shifting policies in neighbouring countries Pakistan and Iran. From 1979 to 2000, Pakistan and Iran embraced Afghan refugees, but a shift in the early 2000s focused on repatriation. Both countries developed restrictive practices, leading to racial violence and social exclusion. The transition from inclusion to exclusion for Afghan migrants,

symbolized by a metaphorical "wall", severed their traditional routes. Struggling to stay or return, many sought new destinations, with Greece often serving as a transit country. Their presence in Greece requires examination considering their diverse origins, motivations, and the evolving policies of origin and transit countries. The complex motives of Afghan migrants hinder automatic refugee recognition, emphasizing the need for individual assessments. Greece's challenges, including legal measures, racism, and economic crises, prompt many migrants to consider relocation within the EU. Similarly, Dashti (2017), argues that Turkey has become a preferred destination for Afghan immigrants due to its location, developing economy, and proximity to Europe. The US and NATO withdrawal from Afghanistan in 2014 prompted increased migration to Turkey and Europe due to rising violence and unemployment. Iranian-based Afghan immigrants also shifted to Turkey due to US sanctions. Turkey's border measures intensified with the Taliban's advance, hosting 182,000 registered and 120,000 unregistered Afghan immigrants. Turkish President Erdogan urged European responsibility, emphasizing Turkey's refusal to be a migrant storage unit. Similar border measures were adopted by other European countries, including Greece. 1n 2020, Europe was home to 709,549 Afghan migrants, encompassing refugees and those with undetermined status.

4.2. Pashtun transnational migration as a masculine endeavour

According to world economic forum (2020), out of 272 million migrants worldwide percentage 52% are men and 48%, are women. However, migration from Pakistan and Afghanistan, especially labour and irregular migration can be framed as a predominantly masculine phenomenon where men are the primary movers and women migration occurs mostly as students and in terms of family reunions. According to Pakistan Bureau of Emigration and overseas employment (2020), during the year 2020, a total 224,705 emigrants were registered for overseas employment of which 1727 were women emigrants. This trend of migration is shaped by prevailing gender roles and dynamics. This perspective stems from the notable observation that a considerable portion of migrants, particularly in specific regions, is overwhelmingly male. Men may also be more inclined towards temporary or circular migration, common in labour markets with seasonal demands. Societal expectations and cultural norms, where men are often associated with greater mobility, autonomy, risk-taking behaviour, and breadwinning, further contribute to this phenomenon. However, it is crucial to recognize the diversity within transnational migration, with an increasing number of women participating for varied reasons. Understanding gender dynamics in migration requires

consideration of specific cultural, economic, and social context. According to international organisation of migration, migration from Pakistan to Europe is predominantly male, and is motivated by economic reasons, war, and conflict, with Italy and Germany being common destinations (IOM, 2019). Similarly, Abenante (2017), suggests that Pakistani community in Italy is rapidly growing, Representing about 3% of non-EU citizens, contrary to other established communities. Characteristics include a lower average age (28), predominantly male population, and a shifting gender ratio due to family reunions. Cultural factors contribute to low female workforce participation (4.5%), with many Pakistanis engaging in autonomous work. 69 % of Pakistani migrants in Italy are male MMC (2022).

In his foreword to "Migrant Men" (2009), Michael Kimmel explored the influence of globalization on local peasants, small-scale farmers, and craftsmen, proposing a heightened trend in male mobility due to proletarianization. He argues that:

> Globalization includes the gradual proletarianization of local peasantries, as market criteria replace subsistence and survival. Local small craft producers, small farmers, and independent peasants traditionally stake their definitions of masculinity in ownership of land and economic autonomy in their work; these are increasingly transferred upwards in the class hierarchy and outwards to transnational corporations. Proletarianization also leads to massive labour migrations—typically migrations of male workers—who leave their homes and populate migrant enclaves, squatter camps, labour camps. Most migrants are men.

(Donaldson et. al. 2009).

Kimmel highlights migration as a masculine phenomenon within the context of globalization. Kimmel observes the impact of globalization on local communities, emphasizing the shift in definitions of masculinity among small-scale farmers and craftsmen due to proletarianization. Economic autonomy tied to land ownership, traditionally defining masculinity, is increasingly displaced upward in the class hierarchy. This transformation leads to male-dominated labour migrations, creating migrant enclaves and labour camps. Donaldson and Howson (2009), extend this perspective, highlighting migration as an opportunity for men to redefine themselves and their relationships, particularly with their families. The implicit assumption is that such changes are perceived as positive and beneficial for both the individual men and their

family's well-being. As they argue that "migration provides them (men) with an occasion to change themselves as men and to alter their personal relationships, particularly with their families and their partners, with the very often unwritten assumption that this is 'for the better', 'for their own good' and 'for the betterment of their families'" (Donaldson and Howson, 2009, p. 210).

The data analysis in this study reveals that the participants collectively suggesting that Pashtun women should not migrate to Italy/Europe, either legally or illegally. Regarding the migration of Pashtun men, the participants recommend the legal migration, however they also discourage illegal migration for Pashtun men as well, a point I will discuss in the next section. While a few participants suggests that women should only migrate with their husbands and male family members, other participants discourage women migration to Europe even with their husbands and families as well. These sentiments of the participants contribute to the perception of Pashtun migration as a predominantly masculine endeavour. The participant provides various reasons for discouraging Pashtun women migration to Europe. The most recurring reason according to all the participant is the open environment and the legal freedom women are entitled to in Europe/Italy, which they consider a threat to Islamic values and Pashtun cultural norms regarding women behaviour and gender roles. The participants suggests that the open and permissive atmosphere in Europe, including exposure to alcohol, clubs, and different societal norms, poses a threat to the moral fabric of Pashtun individuals, especially women. Overall, the participants collectively portray Pashtun migration as a masculine endeavour rooted in a desire to protect cultural and religious traditions amidst the perceived challenges posed by the European environment. The reasons the participants provide to discourage women migration to Europe is strongly connected to their sense of masculinity and femininity, gender division of labour, and patriarchal power relations where controls women behaviour and actions in Pashtun culture. As discussed in chapter two, gender dynamics in Pashtun culture is strongly connected to Pashtunwali and Islam emphasizing male dominance. The concept *ghairat* (honour) plays a pivotal role in defining masculinity for men and prescribing obedience and modesty for women. Pashtunwali influences both men and women and reinforces traditional gender roles and a patriarchal power relation. The impact of Pashtun gender order on Pashtun women is evident in restricted opportunities, education, and autonomy, perpetuating gender-based inequalities. Particularly, the concept of *namus* requires from a man to protect honour and chastity of his female family member by limiting her to the private sphere. The participants hold differential views regarding migration of women and girls and men and boys

in terms of finding and doing jobs in Italian context and in resisting the local cultural and religious influences, where they see men as stronger in resisting these influences and women as prone and vulnerable to the local environment and temptations. The perspectives shared by the participants regarding women migration highlights a fixed and traditional views about gender dynamics with limited change can be observed in the participant perceptions regarding gender equality and masculinity and femininity, however a detailed discussion on the changes in the perceptions of the participant s regarding gender roles and behaviours of men and women will be provided in chapter eleven.

The participant presents varied perspectives on women's migration, highlighting conservative views that align with traditional gender norms and male dominance. Attaullah Jan, a Pashtun refugee from Afghanistan, for instance argued that:

> Young girls should not come here at all. Even along a male family member. Because if you bring a young girl here, and even you try your best to keep check on her, eventually she will do something wrong/immoral due to the open environment here and then you will be unable to do/say anything to her, because the police will be on her side, the people will be on her side, and you cannot do anything to her. So, it is not a good thing at all that someone bring her daughter or sister here, legally, or illegally.

> - 'Attaullah Jan', a Pashtun refugee from Afghanistan, interviewed in Sedriano, Milan.

Attaullah statement reflects a perspective on gender roles, masculinity, and migration, emphasizing concerns about the expected immoral and rebellious behaviour of young girls in an open environment of Italy as compared to Afghanistan. His assertion suggests a belief in the need for strict control over young girls to prevent perceived immoral behaviour. However, he suggests that in a society like Italy, where legal and social systems entitle women and girls more freedom and power, this can potentially undermine traditional authority structures in Pashtun culture where men dominate women. Attaullah's perspective explains his fear of loss of masculinity and the perceived threat Pashtun women in migration context could pose to Pashtun men authority and control and Pashtun cultural and religious values. In support of his arguments, Attaullah narrates a story of a person he heard from his friend.

One of my friends was telling me a story of a person he knows who brought his wife and children to London from *Tagaao*, Afghanistan. His daughter was 13 years old. One day she was busy with her laptop till late night, so the father told her to close the laptop and to sleep, so that in the morning she could go to school, she was studying in the school for one year, the father just told her this thing, in the morning the girl was sleepy in the school because she was awake the whole night, so the teacher ask her why she is like that, she said to the teacher that my father was angry at me, that is why I did not sleep last night. So, the school report it to the police, the police called her father to the police station and as punishment the police make him clean all the Washroom/toilets for six months. After six months he somehow managed to bring her/his daughter back to Afghanistan and wedded her to his nephew and goes back to London. So, it is better not to bring young girls here, legally, or illegally, rather than to be dishonoured.

- 'Attaullah Jan', a Pashtun refugee from Afghanistan, interviewed in Sedriano, Milan.

The narrative underscores the perceived dishonour of the father associated with the actions of his daughter in a foreign, culturally different environment, where she was able to challenge her father authority and even make him punish for his alleged harsh behaviour with her. Attaullah narrative highlights his belief in protecting the honour of female and the family by avoiding women exposure to perceived moral risks in Europe.

Similarly, Bilal khan express his perspective on Pashtun women's migration in the following manner.

Women and girls should not come here, because the environment here is not the way it is in Pakistan, here it is very open/more freedom and female here can be distracted and become corrupt morally, because no one keep check on them here. if a married man brings his wife for two or three months, it is another thing, but when girls come here alone then they are free to do whatever they want, they will go here and there freely and, in this way, they become immoral, so women should not come here.

- 'Bilal khan', a Pashtun refugee from Pakistan, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan.

Bilal articulates cultural and moral concerns linked to the idea that freedom in a new, more open environment might lead to moral corruption among women. His idea regarding women stems from the gender order of Pashtun society where women are expected to be controlled and remain in the house, otherwise they will bring dishonour to the family and in the migration context, to the whole community. Bilal also identify another phenomena in his response to women migration where he argues that most of the men brings their wives and children just for economic benefits here in Italy and once the documentation took place the send them back to Pakistan, so women migration which is mostly happens due to family reunion with their husbands, is also temporary and motivated by economic incentives and once they begin to receive the incentives they send them back to Pakistan, as he said.

if you get married in Pakistan, it is possible to bring your family here legally, and the kind of status here, have here you wife and children will be given the same legal status, and the services like education and health etc, then if your wife and children go back to Pakistan, they will still pay you their educational expenses, so most people they bring their family for this purpose, and after they spent a specific time here they send them back to Pakistan.

- 'Bilal khan', a Pashtun refugee from Pakistan, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan.

The acceptability of married men bringing their families for a short period is acknowledged in Bilal's narrative, however single women and even married women migration, to reunite with her husbands for long stay is discouraged.

Likewise, Sartaj Khan expresses support for the migration of married women to Europe, while he dissuades the migration of single and young girls to the same destination, as he describes.

I would say that if a woman come here with his husband and if the husband has a good job and can support his family they should come here, because it will also secure the man from bad deeds because without wife it difficult to

spent life here. But if you ask about young girls migrating here, I will say no, they do not have to come here, it not a good idea for young girls to come here.

- 'Sartaj Khan', a Pashtun refugee from Pakistan, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan.

Sartaj Khan's statement presents different perspective on the issue of women migration and its relation to her husband, particularly in the context of family dynamics. Sartaj acknowledged the advantages of a woman migrating with her husband, however it is established in his statement women should play the supportive role in the family and husbands wellbeing, while emphasizing the importance and primacy of the husband's role as provider having stable job where he does not feel the need for his wife paid employment. The women migration according to Sartaj is embedded in the belief that a wife's presence can positively influence the husband's behaviour, potentially addressing moral or social and religious concerns. However, a different stance emerges regarding young girls' migration, with Sartaj expressing caution and suggesting that it is not advisable for them to migrate alone. This caution appears rooted in concerns about potential challenges and societal judgments, reflecting traditional gender roles and protective attitudes towards young women. Jameel in a similar way express accepts of women migration in terms of family reunion with focus on following the Islamic way of life, however he discouraged migration of unmarried and unaccompanied Pashtun girls due to religious cultural and religious concerns, as he suggests that:

If someone brings his family here that's ok, but the upbringing of the children should be according to Islam and environment here is not good for girls because we are Muslims and we care about women's *haya* (modesty) and *purdah* (seclusion), especially among Pashtun it is really matters. So, for Pashtun girls it not good to come here. Because the environment here open and Islam does not allow us that much freedom. Even though here we are allowed to follow our religion, but the environment sometimes distract you.

- 'Jameel', a Pashtun refugee from Pakistan, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan.

Ejaz khan provide the same perspective about Pashtun women migration in the following words.

In my opinion women should not come here. Because here the environment here is open, I mean the devil is with every one of us and he can manipulate you to anything bad, so I think women should not come here. If a Pashtun girl come here to study or otherwise, eventually she will become shameless (*stargo na ba ye sharm/naw khtam shi*) that there will be no decency or shyness or modesty in her eyes, then she will become loafer. But if a married person who lives here in Italy want to bring her wife here that is ok, for him it is much better because she will be with him and would learn a lot of things.

- 'Ejaz Khan', a Pashtun refugee from Pakistan, interviewed in Comasina, Milan.

Shahab Momand's perspective on women's migration is influenced by the gender norms and division of labour within Pashtun society, where distinct roles and treatment are assigned to men and women. He also argues that the cultural difference between Italy and Pashtun society is different and once the Pashtun women are here this environment can influence them and they would become like Italian women.

I would not recommend them to come here, in our Pashtun society, (*da Pashto pa mushaira ki*), women work is not considered a good thing, its ok if they go to school and acquire knowledge in Pakistan, but they should not come here because the environment here is totally different. And we know what these differences are, because these people are open minded, they do not care about women seclusion or doing work outside, or making friendships with boys, but in our culture, it is not possible. This environment can influence them once they are here. But if someone want to bring her wife here its ok but girls should not come here alone, because I see girls who came here alone and now, they are like them.

- 'Shahab Momand', a Pashtun refugee from Pakistan, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan.

Shahab Momand's statement reflects a Pashtun man's perspective on women's migration, and the perceived clash with traditional Pashtun values. He discourages women from migrating

alone to Italy and shows concerns about cultural differences. His assertion that women's work is not considered good in Pashtun society indicates a traditional gender role perspective prevailing in Pashtun society. Shahab emphasizes the cultural differences between the open-minded environment in Italy and the conservative Pashtun culture, expressing fears of potential influence on women's behaviours, such as working outside or making friendships with men. His recommendation for Pashtun women migration to Italy is conditional, allowing for wives to come with their husbands but discouraging young girls migration to Italy alone, expressing a protective stance rooted in traditional gender norms and societal expectation.

In similar way, Shahab Saleem views regarding Pashtun women migration to Italy reflects concerns about the cultural and environmental differences. He points out practical challenges, such as small living spaces, which might not align the way houses are constructed in Pashtun society. He also suggests that the environment outside the home in Italy is unsuitable seclusion or 'purdah' for women, which shows concerns about potential cultural clashes and the impact on women's traditional seclusion. Shahab Saleem also shows his concern that women's behaviour might change in interaction with interaction and observation of Italian women behaviour and lifestyle, as he argued.

> in my opinion women should not come here, in this environment our women cannot spent time, first the houses are very small here, then if they go outside the home, the environment is not suitable, their *purdah* (seclusion) will be on stake, and if they follow the Italian women here it will change their behaviour as well.
>
> - 'Shahab Saleem', a Pashtun refugee from Pakistan, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan.

Dawood Afridi examines regional variations in Pakistan regarding gender dynamics and women status and place in the society. He argues that in cities where women do not observed *purdah* can come to Europe as they are familiar with urban life and do not care about cultural and religious values. However rural and tribal women are singled out, as he himself belong to a tribal area in Pakistan, suggesting their perceived incompatibility with Italy due to cultural differences.

> In Pakistan there are certain cities where women do not observe purdah, but women from the rural and tribal areas should never come here to Italy, there is no need for them to come here, because a proud muslim and Pashtun women should never come here.
>
> - 'Dawood Afridi', a Pashtun refugee from Pakistan, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan.

Dawood's perspective emphasizes conserving traditional values, particularly the modesty of muslim Pashtun women. The statement implies a judgment against these women migrating to Italy, reflecting a conservative stance on cultural preservation and gender roles.

Zahir Rahman, along with women and girls even discourage the migration of young children to Europe. His view on their migration is rooted in the erosion of Muslim identity among especially in the second and third generation in Europe as he explains.

> I think women should never come here, The environment is not good here especially for girls, if they came here they will go to schools and colleges and then schools and colleges will send them to beaches and such places, and the parent would not be allowed to join them , they would stay there in the hostels, even in Pakistan girls go to schools and colleges but the environment there is different from here, so it is not compatible with our culture with Pashtunwali and Islam.
>
> - 'Zahir Rahman', a Pashtun refugee from Pakistan, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan.

His argument reflects a gendered perspective on migration and cultural values. He asserts that women, particularly young girls, should not migrate to Italy due to concerns about the local environment. He emphasized on the negative aspects of schools and colleges, suggesting girls' potential exposure to activities that are deemed inappropriate in Pashtun culture and Islam. Zahir Rahman also argues that the restricted access of parents to their picnic points and places adds to the perceived risks of girls being involved in in appropriate activities and learning with the check of their parents. Zahir Rahman statements express his belief in preserving the Pashtun cultural values embedded in Pashtunwali and Islam and perceives that social and cultural

environment of Italy is not compatible with Pashtun cultural norms. Zahir Rahman also argue that young children and teenagers should not come to Italy as well due to the perceive identity crisis and erosion of Muslim youth, as he suggests.

> I would say even children and teenagers should not come here as well, because I observed in the Switzerland that the Turkish youth there, when we would offer prayer, they would tell us that the activity you are doing, our father or grandfather would also do this, they would call the prayer an activity, *Chal*. so, first generation is still ok, but the second generation and third generation of migrants completely forget their religion, culture, and country. As I talked about the Turkish youth, the environment here can influence them the same way.
>
> - 'Zahir Rahman', a Pashtun refugee from Pakistan, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan.

Zahir Rahman expresses his concerns about the impact of Italian culture on migrant children and youth, particularly in erasing their religious and cultural identity. He shares an observation in Switzerland, highlighting the perceived assimilation of Turkish youth into the local culture, leading to a detachment from their religious practices. The use of the term "activity" instead of "prayer" implies a devaluation of a religious duty. He expresses his sorrow about subsequent generations losing connection with their religion, culture, and country, emphasizing the potential influence of the local environment in this process. His statement reflects a fear of cultural assimilation and the potential erosion of Islamic identity among migrant Muslim youth in the face of a different cultural context.

Allah Noor provided a different perspective regarding girls' migration to Italy expressing a more enlighten viewpoint, as he argued.

> I do not know everybody has his own choices to make. And yes, if they want to come here for education, so education is a good thing to do. Education is light everybody should get educated, and learn things, to be independent, for example I not highly educated so if I got any message on my phone, I ask others to read it for me.

- 'Allah Noor', a Pashtun refugee from Afghanistan, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan.

Another important aspect from discussion about women migration emerged is the perceived sexual exploitation of women and girls and the type of jobs which culturally not appropriate for women. As Bilal khan argued.

Girls, if they come here for education it is still ok, but if they come here for jobs/work, they will face a lot of problems, and the kind of jobs here are not suited them, because in Pakistan they mostly stay at home, they do not possess the experience of the public sphere and workplaces, they mostly go to school there, but the way women work here like in an restaurant, it is not available to them in Pakistan. when the girls come here they will have to follow the specific rules and values of work here, for example if they want to find a job in a restaurant, they will have to wear certain dress, which is un acceptable in Pakistan, but they will wear it anyway to find the job, and if they are without male family members and search for job they will accept everything the owner demands.

- 'Bilal Khan', a Pashtun refugee from Pakistan, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan.

Bilal express concerns about sexual exploitation and challenges faced by migrant girls in inappropriate professions according to Pashtun cultural norms. The speaker suggests that jobs in Europe may not align with the traditional roles of women in Pakistan, especially in professions like restaurants. The mention of specific dress codes deemed unacceptable in Pakistan implies a clash between cultural values. The vulnerability of migrant girls is emphasized, as they might compromise on cultural values and personal boundaries to secure employment, potentially exposing them to exploitation and difficulties in adapting to unfamiliar work environment.

When asked about their perspectives on the influence of the open environment on men and boys, participants articulate distinct viewpoints compared to women's migration. The views on male migration to Italy are intertwined with notions of masculinity, emphasizing men as primary providers engaged in paid work within the public sphere. In contrast to deeming certain

behaviours dishonourable for women, the same actions by men and boys are not considered shameful. Their perception of male migration aligns with beliefs about men's strength, rationality, and experience in the public sphere, deeming them more suitable for migration than women. As Attaullah Jan argued that:

> if a male/Nar come here and do something Immoral, it is not that bad as compare to a female, maximum people will say that the boy or man is loafer, so it is not a big dishonour, but if your female /wife is loafer it is a big dishonour, because everyone will shame you, everyone will say that she is the female/wife of a Pashtun and still doing such things, they will taunt you over this kind of behaviour of your female family member.

> - 'Attaullah Jan', a Pashtun refugee from Pakistan, interviewed in Sedriano, Milan.

Attaullah's statement reflects a gender biased viewpoint in the context of migration, highlighting a disparity in societal perceptions of male and female behaviour in Pashtun culture. He suggests that if a male engages in immoral actions, the consequences are less severe, merely labelling him as a "loafer" without significant dishonour to family or community. In contrast, if a female, particularly a wife, exhibits similar behaviour, the societal judgment is harsher. Attaullah emphasizes the potential shame and taunts directed at a male family member who is not in control and lacking the essential masculine traits. His statement also emphasizes the heightened scrutiny and societal expectations placed on women, especially within the Pashtun community, which reinforces traditional gender roles and demonstrates a gender biasness in the assessment of morality and honour. As Bilal khan stated that "the environment here is also open for men as well, but for men it does not matter" (Bilal khan, a Pashtun refugee from Pakistan, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan).

Ejaz Khan presents a narrative regarding women's migration, which shows the perceived challenges women might confront in the job market compared to men and boys. His account underscores the notion of males being the primary providers, portrayed as more focused, responsible, and capable. He argues that:

> if a boy or man want to come here for work or education he can come, for education it much better to come here. let me give you an example related to

it, for boys, they can do everything, but girls cannot. A boy can work, he cares for his family, he will remind himself that I am here to be educated and to become successful, he can ask from anyone how to find job and eventually he will find it. But even if the girls find a job here it would not be a job like the boy have.

- 'Ejaz Khan', a Pashtun refugee from Pakistan, interviewed in Comasina, Milan.

His opinion reflects distinct gender-based perspectives rooted in Pashtun notions of masculinity and femininity concerning migration and work. Ejaz suggests that boys or men are more empowered to migrate for work or education, emphasizing their ability to engage in various activities. The example provided shows the perceived flexibility and opportunities available to boys, who can work, care for their families, and navigate the challenges of migration more independently. On the contrary, he implies a more limited role for girls, emphasizing challenges women and girls may face in finding suitable jobs compared to boys. This distinction highlights a gendered perspective of migration in terms of opportunities based on the traditional Pashtun gender order and roles. Shahab Momand expresses a perspective rooted in male superiority in resisting the local values and temptations in the context of migration. He argues that:

If I talk about the influence on myself, I will say no, the environment here does not influence me, because I always try to follow our own norms and values. But as you know women is a kind of being that their mind could be influenced sooner than men. For Italians it is ok, they are like this from early childhood, but our girls should not come here. Because when someone came here and see this environment, they try to become like them, but men have this strength to resist these things because Allah has given them such strength, our women are also virtuous but still you never know.

- 'Shahab Momand', a Pashtun refugee from Pakistan, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan.

Shahab Momand asserts that the environment in Italy does not influence him personally, showing his commitment to following his own norms and values. However, he introduces a gendered perspective by suggesting that women, being more susceptible to influence, might be

affected sooner than men. While he acknowledges the cultural differences in Italy, he advises against Pashtun girls coming to such an environment, implying a perceived vulnerability of women as a weak and a notion of men possessing the strength to resist external influences due to divine endowment. While Shahab Momand presented men as more in control as naturally superior beings, Sartaj Khan focuses his views on the socialization and upbringing of the boys, in a good or bad, which can influence their behaviour and activities in the migration context, leading them to become a respectable and honourable man or a disrespected and dishonoured man. As he argued that:

> if a family upbring their children in a good way, I mean that if a family teaches their youngsters the difference between good and bad, Insha Allah this kind of boy when come here, will benefit his family. But if a person's upbring is not good and come here, he can be indulged in the wrong doings here he and his family will be in loss. I know some boys who came here and were involved in gambling, drugs, and drinking, but gambling more dangerous than those drugs. So, when they start this kind of activities, they lose everything, and then even their friends stay away from them, they even do not allow them to eat with them. Then they beg for 10 or 20 euros.
>
> - 'Sartaj Khan', a Pashtun refugee from Pakistan, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan.

Allah Noor provide a similar argument about men migration to Italy in terms of the impact of Italian culture on boys and men. He argues that the impact of the environment depends on the individual world view, as he said.

> As for as the environment here in Italy is concerned it depends on the persons own way of life, that what kind of life he or she want to live, he or she can spend a good life or a bad life here. And I know that here its more open you can find drugs/alcohol, clubs, and girls, but we do not indulge ourselves to these things.
>
> - 'Allah Noor', a Pashtun refugee from Afghanistan, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan.

Dawood Afridi dissuaded migration, regardless of gender, based on his Islamic convictions regarding Halal work, which is considered lawful in Islam. He expressed reservations about work in Italy, deeming it Haram (forbidden) due to instances of delivery riders handling alcohol and pork. His concept of Halal work is deeply connected to the Islamic identity of men, asserting that one's occupation defines a man's honour and faith. Afridi's perspective reflects a commitment to Islamic principles and concerns about maintaining religious integrity in work in Italy, shape his discouragement of migration for both men and women, particularly due to concerns about identity crisis or erosion in Italian culture. As he argued that:

> If somebody has money back home and can start a Halal business there, they should never come here, especially the Muslims, and the non-Muslims they should come for them it does not matter. But the culture and environment of Europe is not suitable for Muslims, it distracted them from the religion.
>
> - 'Dawood Afridi', a Pashtun refugee from Pakistan, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan.

Dawood argues that those Muslims who have financial stability in their home country should refrain from coming to Europe, emphasizing the importance of starting a Halal business in their own community. The reference to "especially the Muslims" suggests a specific focus on the challenges faced by individuals of the Islamic faith in maintaining their religious identity in the European context. The speaker contends that the culture and environment of Europe may be unsuitable for Muslims, potentially causing distractions from religious practices and values. This perspective underscores the perceived clash between European culture and the religious identity of Muslim migrants.

Chapter five

***Kachaak /Dunki*: Pashtun irregular migration to Europe**

The participants of this study are irregular migrants from Afghanistan and Pakistan. When asked most of the participants responded that they come to Italy through *Kachaak*, a term they used to refer to irregular migration with the help of *Kachaackgar*, the human smugglers. Some time they would say *Pyada raghale yam,* means that I came here by walking/as pedestrian, as throughout the journey they used to walk for extended periods of time. *Danki* is another term which common in use among other ethnic groups like Punjabis and Indians to refer to irregular migration. According to IOM definition irregular migration is the "movement of persons that takes place outside the laws, regulations, or international agreements governing the entry into or exit from the State of origin, transit or destination". IOM further explains irregular migration in the following way.

> Although a universally accepted definition of irregular migration does not exist, the term is generally used to identify persons moving outside regular migration channels. The fact that they migrate irregularly does not relieve States from the obligation to protect their rights. Moreover, categories of migrants who may not have any other choice but to use irregular migration channels can also include refugees, victims of trafficking, or unaccompanied migrant children. The fact that they use irregular migration pathways does not imply that States are not, in some circumstances, obliged to provide them with some forms of protection under international law, including access to international protection for asylum seekers fleeing persecution, conflicts or generalized violence. In addition, refugees are protected under international law against being penalized for unauthorized entry or stay if they have travelled from a place where they were at risk (Convention relating to the Status of Refugees (adopted 28 July 1951, entered into force 22 April 1954)189 UNTS 137, Art. 31(1))

(Key Migration Terms, Migration Glossary | IOM, UN Migration).

Irregular migration can be divided into two categories, human smuggling, and human trafficking. The United Nations office on drugs and crime, define human smuggling, and human trafficking in the following way,

Human trafficking is therefore characterized by an act (recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring, or receipt of people), specific means (threats or use of force, deception, fraud, abuse of power, or abusing someone's vulnerable condition) for the purpose of exploitation (for example sexual exploitation, forced labour, slavery, or organ removal. Migrant smuggling is a crime that takes place only across borders. It consists in assisting migrants to enter or stay in a country illegally, for a financial or material gain. Smugglers make a profitable business out of migrants' need and/or desire to enter a country and the lack of legal documents to do so. International law requires governments to criminalize migrant smuggling, but not those who are smuggled. Since migrants give their consent to the smuggling venture, mostly due to the lack of regular ways to migrate, they are not considered victims in absolute terms. However, smuggled migrants are often put in dangerous situations by smugglers (such as a hazardous sea crossing) and might therefore become victims of other crimes during the smuggling process, including severe human rights violations.

(Human Trafficking and Migrant Smuggling (unodc.org)).

According to CIDOB (2012), in Pakistan's shadow economy, migrant smuggling surpasses human trafficking, primarily directed toward Europe and the Middle East. The terms 'human trafficking' and 'migrant smuggling' are interchangeably used in Pakistani law, hindering precise assessment. Due to limited data, authorities struggle to determine the scale of this illegal economy. Migrant smuggling to Europe faces significant challenges, utilizing land routes with increased costs and diminished success rates. Strengthened immigration measures post-9/11 have shifted migration patterns, emphasizing irregular border crossings to Europe and sea routes to the Middle East. According to mixed migration centre MMC (2022) approximately 2.2 million Pakistanis reside in Europe, signifying the region's significance for the Pakistani diaspora. Italy, with around 120,000 Pakistani residents, stands as a key host country, second only to the UK (housing over 1 million Pakistanis) and followed by Greece and France. This summary provides insights into their migration experience based on 123 interviews with recently arrived Pakistanis in Italy. Among those interviewed, 80% indicated the conclusion of their migration journey, with 67% choosing Italy as their preferred destination. Of the remaining 33%, half opted to settle in Italy (18%), while the other half expressed intentions to move elsewhere (15%).

Afghan refugees, once hosted by Pakistan and Iran, and Turkey now contribute to migrant flows seeking asylum in Europe and Australia. Europe has become a major destination for Afghan immigrants due to favourable living standards, immigrant acceptance conditions, high welfare levels, and job opportunities. Ongoing conflict and violence have made Afghanistan one of the largest refugee-producing countries globally, with a significant Afghan refugee presence in Europe. As of 2020, reports indicate 709,549 Afghan migrants in Europe, including refugees and those with undetermined status. In 2015, the open-door policy of the European Union facilitated the arrival of 250,000 Afghan immigrants, with Germany hosting the fourth-largest Afghan refugee population. The majority live in Germany, while others are dispersed in countries like France, Austria, and Sweden. Approximately 62% of Afghans seeking asylum have been granted legal status. Afghans, the second-largest irregular migrant group after Syrians in 2015, primarily reached Europe via Turkey, the Western Balkans, and the Eastern Mediterranean route. Policy changes, especially after the EU-Turkey Statement of March 18, 2016, led to a significant decrease in Afghan arrivals to Europe. In 2017, out of 178,500 migrants arriving in Europe, only 3,441 were of Afghan origin (Dashti 2022).

5.1. The hopeful narrative of irregular migration among marginalized Pashtun youth.

Considering the prevailing socio-economic, political, and security conditions in Pakistan (especially in Pashtun region) and Afghanistan, individuals, particularly youth, find themselves in marginalized socio-economic circumstances. Feeling uncertain and devoid of hope regarding their future in these countries, young Pashtun men resort to irregular migration to Europe to re/gain a sense of empowerment and to overcome their marginalized status. Haywood and Johnson (2017) argued that "marginal masculinities are those masculinities that operate in ways that restore their lack of power. This can often be achieved through deviant behaviours such as criminality. The key point to recognize is that marginal masculinity is defined in relation to those men who have power" (Haywood and Johnson, 2017, p. 6). These men find themselves marginalized at intra group and inter group level as well. The decades long war and terrorism in Afghanistan and its impact on the bordering regions of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in the form of terrorism and economic instability have severely reduced the livelihood opportunities for the population of these regions. On the other hand, the participant as they belonging to the working-class backgrounds with limited education and skills, are at the margins of Pashtun society as well. Though the aspiration to migrate to in middle classes and educated people in Pakistan is very strong, however, they never resort to irregular migration through *kachaak* or *dunki,* as more legal opportunities are available to them. During the field I also meet a Pashtun irregular

migrant who did his masters in Pakistan and after the completion of his degree he was unable to find employment, and resort to irregular migration to Europe. However, it can be argued that the percentage of people having higher education in irregular migration could be very low, as throughout the field work, I encounter only one such person. Secondly there are students who left their degrees and submit their application for asylum. Junaid a refugee from Pakistan recently calls me to discuss one such issue. Junaid was seeking my advice about a master student in Brecia who want to leave the studies and to apply for asylum, I told him to give me my number and to call me I will talk to him, but he did not call.

The aspiration among young Pashtun either educated or uneducated irrespective of their class is very strong. As Kirk et. al. (2017), suggests that among young Indians the aspiration is as strong as it present a "culture of migration in which the celebration of migration has become the norm and begets further migration" (p.2775). they further argued that "for many young men, migration has become a desirable element in their 'coming of age'. Within the context of personal, social, and national development, spending some time working abroad seems to have become an expected element of the transition into adulthood" (kirk et. al. 2017, p. 2775). However, the pattern of migration is dependent on the education level and economic class where most of the uneducated Pashtun youth from working class resort to irregular migration.

According to United Nation Pakistan annual report for the year 2021, Pakistan, the world's fifth most populous country with 225.2 million people, has a predominantly youthful population, with 61.4% in the working age group (15–64 years) and 34.6% under 15. Pakistan ranks 154th on the Human Development Index (HDI), with the second lowest HDI value in South Asia at 0.557. Approximately 24.3% live in income-based poverty, and 38.3% in multidimensional poverty. Malnutrition affects 40.2% of children, and women's labour force participation is low at 21.5%. High rates of maternal and child mortality, substantial out-of-school children (32%), and gender inequality contribute to its challenges. Discrimination and violence persist, reflected in a low Global Gender Gap Index ranking (153rd). Pakistan is the eighth most climate-vulnerable country, facing risks like floods and earthquakes. Hosting 1.435 million Afghan refugees, it is been the largest protracted refugee population host for over 40 years. The conflict in Afghanistan in 2021 raises concerns about a potential rise in refugee influx into Pakistan (UN Pakistan 2022). Pakistan's economy, marked by high population growth, poverty, and unemployment, pushes its workforce, primarily unskilled labour from lower-income groups, toward the Middle East, offering better earnings. Similarly, educated middle-class

families migrate to Europe and North America with the intent to resettle. With an estimated seven million expatriates, Pakistan is a top recipient of remittances, primarily from Saudi Arabia, the UAE, the UK, and the US. Remittances, positively impacting poverty reduction in Pakistan however it faces challenges from the brain drain. (CIDOB, 2012). Pakistan primarily experiences labour migration, constituting a vital aspect of the nation's economy. Remittances from overseas workers play a crucial role in the country's economic structure, contributing to government initiatives targeting unemployment and poverty reduction. The Pakistani government actively supports migration, fostering a robust legal and institutional framework. The Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development is dedicated to overseeing the welfare of Pakistani nationals abroad, highlighting the nation's strategic approach to managing migration (IOM, 2020). Though the absolute numbers of Pakistani refugees, migrants and asylum seekers entering Europe are still relatively modest, if looked at long-term, it is important to understand what may have caused this recent spike. Given the deteriorating economic situation, high unemployment and runaway inflation, these factors are likely to have evolved, with desperation and lack of opportunity driving more to migrate. The devastation and displacement brought on by last year's catastrophic flooding have only made matters worse (MMC, 2023). Similarly, conflict, violence, and drought in Afghanistan have driven significant migration trends. Between in the recent years, drought and violence led to 1 million internal displacements and 6 million refugees abroad. Despite the rising Afghan migrant numbers, international aid to Afghan refugees in neighbouring countries decreased. Afghanistan's geographical and climatic challenges, with limited precipitation and over 80% reliance on agriculture, exacerbate the impact of drought and famine, causing economic hardship and poverty. The severe drought from 1999 to 2010 displaced millions, and recent droughts forced over 2 million to migrate internally. Persistent violence, destroyed infrastructure, and climate-induced challenges have impeded the return of Afghan refugees, maintaining Afghanistan as a consistent producer of migrants over the last four decades. Emigration, initially a response to labour needs in neighbouring countries, transformed into mass forced migration due to prolonged conflict, security issues, and climate-related problems, making migration a predominant choice for Afghan (Dashti, 2022).

The participants of this study provide certain motivations and reasons for their decision of transnational migration from Pakistan and Afghanistan to Italy. Common factors include economic reasons, escape from conflict, and seeking better living conditions. Many faced challenges in their home countries, such as terrorism, sectarian conflicts, and Taliban threats,

prompting a desire for safety and stability abroad. Economic considerations, including unemployment and poverty, drove some to migrate for better opportunities. Additionally, the ease of obtaining documents in Italy and the perceived leniency in the migration process were attractive factors for choosing Italy as a destination. Individual experiences and family circumstances, such as personal enmity and family ties to the Taliban, also played crucial roles in the decision-making process. As per the 2022 report from the Mixed Migration Centre, the study shows that among Pakistani migrants in Europe, the decision to migrate is often shaped by various factors and influences. In the case of interviewed Pakistanis, nearly half (48%) cited multiple reasons for leaving their country of origin. The primary drivers included violence, insecurity, and conflict (54%), lack of rights and freedom (36%), and economic factors (33%). Within the subset of individuals citing reasons related to violence, 55% specifically mentioned war, armed conflict, or terrorism, while 34% pointed to crime and general insecurity (MMC, 2022). According to International Organization for Migration-IOM (2020), Among respondents, dissatisfaction with income situations in Pakistan (54%) as well as a lack of hope for the future (21%) were the most frequently cited life events that triggered migration to Europe among respondents. Unemployment (12%) was also an important trigger for migration. This is reinforced by both the SDM 1 and the Comprehensive Migration Flows Survey (CMFS)2. Both reports emphasize that, for both potential migrants and returnees in Pakistan, the lack of job opportunities in the country is a main driver of migration. Ninety-four per cent of respondents experienced challenges in Pakistan on the personal level 6 months prior to migration. The most reported primary challenge was a lack of sufficient income (59%) followed by unemployment (14%) and a lack of hope for the future in Pakistan (13%). The motivation for Pakistani migration to Italy is undergoing a gradual shift from predominantly economic reasons, observed among established Pakistani families, to a blend of economic and humanitarian factors. In 2015, 18.7% of residency permit applications by Pakistanis cited political and humanitarian reasons, a significant increase linked to the worsening political conditions, particularly in regions bordering Afghanistan. However, economic considerations often remain the primary driver, with political turmoil playing a role in the decision-making process, as reported by Italian authorities. Applicants frequently attribute their origin to politically unstable areas, such as the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), potentially masking underlying economic motives (Abenante, 2017).

In essence, the motivations underscore a nuanced interaction of economic, security, and personal considerations shaping individual decisions regarding irregular migration.

Interestingly, even individuals with jobs in Pakistan reach out to me seeking assistance in migrating to Europe or Italy. Their current employment in Pakistan does not offer sufficient prospects for a better life and a secure future. Saeed Khan, a relative of a refugee in Italy, contacted me for help in securing a scholarship for his education in Europe. Despite having a job and savings amounting to 700,000 PKR, he expressed the desire to migrate to Europe for educational purposes or through a legal pathway, seeking assistance in exploring available options. As we will see in this section that the participants decision to migrate emanates from a lack of opportunities in Pakistan, driving individuals to seek improved prospects in Europe. Their collective narratives intricately reveal the complex factors involved in the decision to engage in illegal migration to Europe, incorporating familial support and, at times, parental approval, along with the crucial roles of social connections and collaborative finances. The choice to migrate unlawfully appears to be a shared one, influenced significantly by the bonds and shared aspirations within friend circles. The group dynamic is evident as friends undertake the journey together, highlighting the importance of social networks as a crucial support system throughout the demanding expedition. For instance, Allah Noor's journey serves as an illustrative example, showing how, since the inception of the joint decision to migrate, he remained alongside his friends throughout the entire journey. His successful completion of the expedition to Italy was facilitated by the support of his family, as he recounted:

> One day me and another friend of mine decided to go to Turkey for work to support our families, so after spending some time in Turkey my friends were saying to go to some other country like Germany or France or any other country, but eventually they decided to go to Italy, and because we all were friends so we decided to go together, then I call my family to discuss and to send me some money to go to Italy.
>
> - 'Allah Noor', a Pashtun refugee from Afghanistan, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan.

Shahab Momand describe a similar process where he decides with his friend to migrate with the support of his family. He also discusses the financial aspect of his journey, with revealing a substantial cost of around 12 lacs PKR to reach Italy, highlights the collaborative financial efforts involving friends or family, as he said.

In Pakistan I was having friends so I would stay with them we would visit other places together and arrange programmes for eating, so we decide to migrate together. I would communicate with my family, providing them the details of my location that where I am. And the overall journey from Pakistan to Italy cost me around 12 lacs PKR.

- 'Shahab Momand', a Pashtun refugee from Pakistan, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan.

In a similar way, Jameel recounted that "we were three persons from our village; one of them was my relative, but three of us were friends, and we would play cricket together. So, first, we came to Iran, then Turkey, from Turkey to Bulgaria, then Serbia, then Hungary, then Austria, and then Italy" (Jameel, a Pashtun refugee from Pakistan, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan). Bilal made the decision to migrate to Turkey with friends without informing his family, stating, "so, I had some friends who were planning to go to Turkey, so I also thought to go with them. At that time, I did not discuss with my parents about my decision, as I know they would not allow me. So, we came to Turkey, and then gradually we planned to go to Europe/Italy" (Bilal Khan, a Pashtun refugee from Pakistan, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan).

Social connections play an important role in irregular migration decisions as the Zahir Rahman was inspired by a friend's brother in England, engaging in discussions with his friend about his brother, lead him to connect with an agent. And after agreement on costs and initiation of the journey underscore the influence of social networks in shaping migration aspirations and facilitating the process, as he describes. "I had a friend in Bajaur, he would talk to me about his brother who was in England. Then I discussed with him the overall process of illegal migration and they connect me with a person, agent, I talked to the agent and discussed the cost, we agreed on certain amount and then I start my journey" (Zahir Rahman, a Pashtun refugee from Pakistan, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan). Similarly, Ejaz khan said that "I travel with a friend from my village to turkey. When we decided to migrate from Pakistan, we talk to a friend, who was in Turkey, to move us to Turkey, he connect us with a person/agent then we talk to him on phone and after some time we start our journey" (Ejaz Khan, a Pashtun refugee from Pakistan, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan). The process of irregular migration also reveals the fraudulent schemes employed by the agents to deceive individuals seeking migration. As Shahab Saleem recounted "when decided to migrate to Europe we met with a

person who told us that he would provide us with a visa, but there no visa" (Shahab Saleem, a Pashtun refugee from Pakistan, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan). It indicates the intent to exploit migrants, and manipulation faced by individuals navigating illegal migration.

The reason for their migration provides insights into participants social position back home which can be describe as marginalised. As the participant reveals that they were jobless and having financial and security problems, they did get proper education and skills to find reasonable jobs. All these issues can be seen as the reasons which excludes them from the mainstream society. Attaullah Jan, for instance present his situation before deciding to migrate in the following way.

> I came here to escape the hardship of unemployment and life in general in Afghanistan. You know the situation in Afghanistan, after 10 pm you cannot go out, it is like you are a prisoner in the prison/Jail. So, I came here from Afghanistan because there was no work, life and situation were bad there. I see with my own how they killed so many young men and boys based on some fake reasons. They did not commit any crime or injustice to anyone, nor they broke into somebody's home, or disrespects anyone's sister or mother. The were living their lives. They were providing services and were helping to the people of Afghanistan, and anyone who were doing this they, the Taliban, didn't let him do this and killed so many persons like that. So, I thought that if someday I also speak the truth, they can kill me as well, so it was difficult to live there and that is why I left my country Afghanistan.
>
> - 'Attaullah Jan', a Pashtun refugee from Afghanistan, interviewed in Sedriano, Milan.

In his general description of the situation in Afghanistan Attaullah's narrative explains the relationship between marginalized masculinity and migration, as a means, to escape from oppression and attain agency and freedom. Originating from the harsh realities of economic hardship, a constraining societal environment, and the looming threat of Taliban-induced violence in Afghanistan, his migration decision is deeply rooted in the challenges faced by the ordinary people. his mention of economic hardships emerges from unemployment and dire economic conditions intensify his sense of powerlessness, particularly in adhering to traditional expectations tied to masculinity in Pashtun culture. His analogy of the experience of being

confined after 10 pm to imprisonment, suggests a profound restriction on freedom of movement and agency creating a sense of emasculation. Witnessing the Taliban's violence against young men intensifies his fears, compelling contemplation on the potential consequences of speaking the truth. The suppression of humanitarian efforts further accentuates the limitations on positive expressions of masculinity, as those providing services become targets. In this circumstance his migration can be seen as a transformative journey, offering a strategic escape from marginalization and oppression. It becomes a hopeful act to redefine masculinity, reclaim agency, and pursue a liberated life beyond the constraints of oppression and unemployment, and to re/gain a sense of empowerment. the above description can be seen as more general reasons which contribute to the decision of migration among Afghan people, however Attaullah provides a more concreate reasons for his migration which involves a more complex scenario.

> But the main reason/danger in Afghanistan was that three of my uncles were Taliban, they were having special positions among Taliban, one of them would make bombs, the other one would provide the chemicals for explosive bombs, and third one was secret agent for Taliban collecting and sharing information about public. So, I become doubtful about them, I said to my father that your brothers are involved in a bad business/working for Taliban and I consider it as if they are spying on me and I fear that they would arrest me one day as well. so, my uncles, who were in Taliban rankings, got to know about my perception of them and they came to me one day asking me why I said certain things about them to my father and other family members. I told them that I didn't say anything wrong, I said the truth about what you are doing. They told me that the people we are fighting against are nonbelievers. In those days I was newly wedded, one of friends from the village told me that your uncles and cosines are planning something against you, because they were doubting me that I would provide information to the authorities against them. So that's why I was frightened from my own relatives more than other people. And this was the main reason for my departure from Afghanistan, I thought that it better to leave rather than to create conflict within the family, and that's how I came to Italy.
>
> - 'Attaullah Jan', a Pashtun refugee from Afghanistan, interviewed in Sedriano, Milan.

Attaullah's precarious position within the extended family is evident from his narrative. As he reveals that three of his uncle's hold prominent positions within the Taliban, engaged in activities such as bomb-making and espionage, and as he was critical of their involvement in such activities. his scepticism and fear of being arrested by Taliban with the help of his uncle's portraying his marginalized position as compared to his uncles shaped by the oppressive affiliations with Taliban. The fear intensifies as suspicions emerge that he may expose their activities to authorities. This familial discord becomes a primary catalyst for migration, reflecting a desperate need to escape not only the oppressive political environment but also the immediate threat posed by family members. The decision to leave Afghanistan is not solely driven by economic factors but, more significantly, by the imperative to preserve one's safety, agency, and masculinity in the face of familial involvement with a group linked to violence and extremism. The narrative underscores how marginalized masculinity, in this context, becomes intrinsically tied to the complexities of familial disputes, personal safety, and the quest for a new beginning through migration.

Dawood Afridi provided similar reasons before deciding to migrate. As he belongs to the tribal area affected by terrorism and having limited resources of livelihood.

> When I was very young, I watched an Indian movie in which they show Canada, the name of the movie was "Tum Bin". the day I watched that movie since then Canada is always on my head, it brings me here to Italy and God's Well, I hope that one day I will go to Canada. It is different than the way they show it in movies, the first thing is that I really like the Flag of Canada, then the country and the president/prime minister Trudeau, I really him, I never been there but since 6 to 8 year it is in my heart, I really want to see it and to go there. I have done my matric in Pakistan. So, I was living there but there was more poverty and danger due to Taliban in our area, that is why I decided to migrate here, and it was very difficult while coming here through illegal ways. So, I spent almost 3 to 3.5 years on the way to reach here. it involves a lot of violence and difficulties, many times I tell my family to send money to me, and I face a lot of violence through the hands of the police of different countries. It was a very tiring process.
>
> - 'Dawood Afridi', a Pashtun refugee from Pakistan, interviewed in Bicocca Village, Milan.

Dawood's migration decision, as articulated in the narrative, is influenced by a blend of aspirational dreams, perceived opportunities, and the harsh realities of life in Pakistan marked by poverty and the threat of Taliban violence. The initial inspiration for migration, drawn from an Indian movie depicting Canada (Tum Bin), reveals the role of media and representation in shaping aspirations. The attractive portrayal of Canada, create a sense of admiration for its flag, the country itself, and leaders like Prime Minister Trudeau, symbolizes a desire for a better life and represents a form of escapism from the challenging circumstances in Pakistan. As media play a dual role in migration, serving as an information source for decision-making and facilitating cultural connections. It influences aspirations and perceptions, shaping migrants' expectations and ideals of a good life abroad (Allen & McNeil, 2017). However, Dawood's decision to migrate is not only aspirational but also practical, as he discusses the economic difficulties and dangers posed by the Taliban in their home region. This economic and security context, coupled with the long and perilous journey to Italy through illegal means, underscores the harsh realities of marginalized status, where the pursuit of a better life involves facing violence, navigating through challenging circumstances, and relying on financial support from family. Dawood's determination to face the hardships, violence, and financial struggles encountered during the migration journey reflects a quest for agency and the willingness to confront marginalization to fulfil the dream of a better future, even if it means undertaking a challenging and risky journey to reach Italy.

Jameel also belongs to the tribal area, Kurram agency on the border with Afghanistan. along with terrorism, the area for long time is under sectarian conflicts between Sunni and Shia sects of Islam.

> There was terrorism and sectarian conflicts between Shias and Sunnis, then Tehreek e Taliban came there and then the army launch a military operation against Taliban. That's why there was no such education and work there. That's why I thought to migrate to any other country to make and secure my future because there was no hope in Pakistan. I was thinking that at least there will be peace in Europe there will no conflict and wars so the life will be in peace. In the beginning it was difficult here because I was not having any job or work other than this, I did not come across any big issue which create difficulty for me. coming to Europe through illegal ways is not an easy task and even I was aware that on the way I can die or can be injured, but the situation that I was facing in my hometown was worse, it was suffocating that's why I decided to

migrate to Europe even if I die on the ways or became ill or injured. And I was hoping that if I succeeded may be my future will be good.

- 'Jameel', a Pashtun refugee from Pakistan, interviewed in Bicocca Village, Milan.

Allah Noor belongs to Afghanistan and provide the same reasons related to Taliban and his personal enmity with his uncle.

The main reason for leaving Afghanistan was that I was facing a lot of difficulties in Afghanistan from Taliban side, and I was also having personal enmity/disputes with my uncle, because of this I left my country and came here. In terms of earning and work if a person is hardworking, he can earn money everywhere, when first came here people were saying there is no work here in Italy but with two months, I find work first in a restaurant and then the delivery work, and I am also paying income tax here, so, the main reason was the conflict in Afghanistan. Even in 2014 when the power was in our hands and the Taliban was not in power, I was facing problems, my brother was killed because of me, and now the situation is even worse because the Taliban is in power now.

- 'Allah Noor', a Pashtun refugee from Afghanistan, interviewed in Bicocca Village, Milan.

Shahab Momand also provided the similar reasons related to terrorism in Momand agency where he was running a mobile repairing shop but due to Taliban he decided to migrate.

In Pakistan Momand agency I was doing mobile phone repairing, first I learn mobile repairing while I was in the school, then I start working as repairing. So, I got an issue in the village due to which I decided to migrate. And the issue was related to Taliban, that's why I closed the mobile repairing shop. This was the main reason that I decided to migrate.

- 'Shahab Momand', a Pashtun refugee from Pakistan, interviewed in Bicocca Village, Milan.

Beside the issue he faces due to Taliban Shahab Momand explain his economic and educational background which plays an important role in his migration decision.

> I only attended school till 8th standard, and after that I start the mobile repairing. First, I was learning the repairing with someone then I open my own shop so when I closed my shop, I was not having any other option to find employment. And most of my friends are uneducated like me except those whose fathers were on good position in the govt sectors jobs they are more educated now. So, when you get older your expenses also grow and then you need extra money or things, then you feel to do something because at that age you feel bad to ask for things and money from your parents. You also start thinking about your extended family that what other people are doing, then you also want to do something to support your family.
>
> - 'Shahab Momand', a Pashtun refugee from Pakistan, interviewed in Bicocca Village, Milan.

Zahir Rahman belongs to Dir, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, it is also a hilly area with limited opportunity for employment and limited agriculture mostly the people from Dir migrated to middle east and other cities in Pakistan to find work. The reasons he provides was purely economic one.

> as I told you the main reason was economic, I was working in Pakistan as labourer in different cities, but it was difficult to support my family with that earning. As I told you, first, I went to Karachi and then Lahore and I worked for some year there then I migrated to Saudi Arabia but the work there was too hard, in the same work you can earn more money here in Europe and the weather is also cold here more like that of dir.
>
> - 'Zahir Rahman', a Pashtun refugee from Pakistan, interviewed in Bicocca Village, Milan.

Shahab Saleem reason to migrate to Europe can be seen purely an economic one. as he belongs to a settled district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, which is relevantly less affected by terrorism. I

can be argued that Sahab was not facing a direct threat from terrorism however the impact of terrorism on the economy reduces livelihood opportunities and limited services from the state propel him to migrate for his better future. However, he enters Italy as asylum seeker, where many people use the same approach to stay legally in Europe. As he recounted

> the main reason was that I was not interested in education and was difficult to get education as well, so I decide to migrate, my family was telling me to get education, but I was fed up and want to migrate to Europe. Education in Pakistan is expensive and people like us can't afford it, for example if you want to get an MBBS, it very expensive. So, my main reason to migrate was our economic situation our financial situation was not stable and there was poverty due to that I decide to migrate. I have other siblings, but they do nothing they are younger than me and getting education and my father is also unemployed, we also do not have any farming land as people have land, they do farming, but we do not have that as well.

> - 'Shahab Saleem', a Pashtun refugee from Pakistan, interviewed in Bicocca Village, Milan.

Bilal khan belongs to Nowshera settled area and district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa which more peaceful I comparison to other districts and tribal area. His main reason to migrate was economic. As he first decides to go to Turkey with his friends, however once he reached Turkey, he faces problems there but due to the fear of being mocked he did not go back to Pakistan instead he decided to migrate to Europe to be successful and to avoid the shame of returning unsuccessfully to Pakistan.

> I have done my Matric in Pakistan, but due to some issues I didn't pursue higher education. I was doing nothing there in Pakistan, I was jobless. When you are in Pakistan and having no work, you think that lets migrate to settle your problems/life. So, I had some friends they were planning to go to Turkey, so I also thought to go with them. So, we come to Turkey, then it was difficult to go back to Pakistan, because I thought if I go back to Pakistan unsuccessful, people will laugh at me, so keep my honour intact I decided to stay, I spent three years in Turkey, then through Kachak/illegal ways, I came here. first, we go to Greece, for one year I live there after that I came here.

> - 'Bilal Khan', a Pashtun refugee from Pakistan, interviewed in Bicocca Village, Milan.

Sartaj khan a resident of Momand agency another tribal, however currently his family is living in Peshawar, having a stable family ground as his brother are doing business in Peshawar. However, he lost his job and due to his personal economic situation, he decided to migrate. As he said, "economically I was not bad nor good, so you can say that one reason was money as well, and secondly, I lost my job that's why I decided to migrate" (Sartaj Khan, a Pashtun refugee from Pakistan, interviewed in Bicocca Village, Milan).

In their home countries due to pervasive challenges such as unemployment, poverty, and insecurity, places these men, traditionally perceived as providers, in a marginalized position, hindering their ability to meet societal expectations associated with their gender role. Simultaneously, security and conflict-driven marginalization add layers of complexity. The presence of terrorism, sectarian conflicts, and Taliban threats instils a pervasive sense of insecurity, making these men potential targets and restricting their freedom of movement. Living in an environment of perpetual danger limits their engagement in normal daily activities, fostering a deeper sense of marginalization within their communities. Personal and family dynamics, marked by personal enmity and ties to the Taliban, further complicate the social landscape. Men facing targeting due to personal disputes or having family involved with the Taliban may find themselves marginalized. The decision to migrate often arises from a desire to escape these dynamics, suggesting that remaining in their home countries could exacerbate marginalization. The complex migration process, coupled with dissatisfaction with bureaucratic and legal systems, underscores feelings of exclusion or marginalization within existing societal and legal structures. Migration, seen as a path to safety and stability abroad, implies dissatisfaction with the current state of identity formation in their home countries. Men perceive migration as an opportunity to redefine their identities outside the constraints of conflict, economic struggles, and societal expectations. In essence, economic challenges, security issues, personal dynamics, and dissatisfaction with existing systems collectively contribute to the marginalization of individuals, particularly men, prompting a pursuit of redefined identities in a more favourable and stable environment through migration.

5.2. Crossings borders and navigating hazards in the pursuit of hope.

On 14 June 2023 a boat carrying an estimated 750 migrant mostly from Pakistan, Syria, Egypt, Palestine, and Afghanistan, sank in international on the coast of Greece. After the incidence a debate on social media has begun questioning the overall political and economic situation of Pakistan and the strict actions against the human smugglers. A Pakistani Professor Aasim Sajjad Akhtar, teaches at the Quaid-e-azan university Islamabad, described the situation in a post on his Facebook page, highlighting The Tragic Consequence of Contemporary Capitalism on unemployed Pakistani youth.

> The horrifying news of hundreds of young Pakistani migrant workers more capsized is yet one more example of the unending and ever intensifying disaster that is contemporary capitalism. On an almost daily basis working people in this country (Pakistan) face the effects of climate change, violent dispossession by military-sponsored land grabbers, or just the hunger and brutalisation of IMF-backed inflation and unemployment. When they are devoid of all hope, they gather all the money they must pay human smugglers to get them to the 'rich' and 'democratic' countries. These smugglers use any, and all means, including fishing vessels such as the one that capsized in Greece. The smugglers are certainly responsible for such incidents, but so are the immigration authorities in the so-called 'free' world who are always willing to exploit cheap labour around the world when it suits them but then refuse the same labourers' entry into their countries. Meanwhile, the 160 million young people in Pakistan, including those who are highly educated, face a bleak future. The present government has no plan, no vision – only a shameless willingness to compromise with the establishment which in turn is concerned only with the next geo-strategic rent from foreign patrons and crushing the PTI-Frankenstein that itself created. We hurtle towards an even more dystopic future unless progressive close ranks to give some hope to an ever more restless and reactive youthful population.
>
> (https://m.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=pfbid0ffEYG9xhXabrWz9kLJwAXHZaV2gkD4JsX4N46A4QT13p5F8o1ARQ7ceQYYAeX9dfl&id=100063680141232).

The statement highlights the relationship between illegal migration, global capitalism, and the socio-economic conditions in nations like Pakistan. It argues that contemporary capitalism worsens the plight of working people in Pakistan, citing climate change, land dispossession, and IMF-backed economic policies as catalysts for desperation and hopelessness. Additionally, it sheds light on the role of human smugglers who exploit migrants' desperation, turning illegal migration into a lucrative venture. It also Criticize is immigration authorities and policies of western nations for perpetuating exploitation; benefiting from cheap labour in the third countries, while enforcing strict immigration policies for the same labour to migrate freely and legally, heightening the vulnerability of migrants to resort to illegal means. The statement emphasizes the grim future confronting the youth in Pakistan, including the educated, attributing it to systemic failures, a lack of government vision, and prioritization of short-term gains over lasting socio-economic solutions. Ultimately, a call for progressive unity is made to address the root causes of illegal migration and socio-economic inequality, warning that without collective action, the future is destined to become increasingly dystopian.

The Mixed Migration Centre's 2023 report highlights this tragedy involving a dangerously overloaded trawler bound for Europe, shifting attention to the culpability of human smugglers. The vessel, perilously crowded and lacking essential supplies, sank, with Pakistani nationals reportedly mistreated in the lower hold. Despite the condemnation, the use of human smugglers remains widespread, engaging 88% of Pakistani respondents in the MMC study. The complexity of human smuggling is evident, with varied perceptions of service quality. The report stresses the quasi-legitimate role of smugglers as de facto "travel agents" due to the absence of legal migration pathways. While authorities respond with crackdowns, the report emphasize the need to address broader motivations of those desperate for migration and European policies contributing to the perilous journeys, emphasizing the limited alternatives, such as resettlement and accessible visas, that fuel the prevalence of smuggling. Without recognizing these systemic issues, the report warns of inevitable future tragedies. In February 2023, a boat sank near Calabria, Italy, killing at least 94, including Pakistanis. Suspected smugglers were arrested, but new legislation prioritized restrictions over protecting refugees, migrants, and asylum seekers. The slow response of Italian authorities and Frontex may have contributed to the disaster. A more comprehensive solution recognizing smuggling as a symptom of a dysfunctional migration landscape is crucial to preventing future tragedies (MMC, 2023).

According to International Organization for Migration survey on drivers of migration from Pakistan, when inquired about the sources of information concerning Europe and the migration process, respondents predominantly cited social contacts at work (23%), social media and messaging applications connecting with family and friends abroad (21%), and insights from family and friends who had returned to Pakistan from abroad (16%). The importance of transnational connections and information from returnees aligns with findings from the SDM. A significant majority, 84%, received assistance from friends or family, either within or outside Pakistan, in organizing migration arrangements before departing from Pakistan. Financial support (90%) emerged as the most common form of assistance provided by friends or family (IOM, 2020).

The passage from Iran to Turkey, the second leg of the journey, involves dangerous mountain crossings and organized mafia networks. In Turkey, cities like Van and Tatvan are initial stops before migrants move to Istanbul. The transition to Greece is well-documented, with the North Aegean islands serving as the main entrance until 2009. Frontex presence and measures like border patrols and fence construction have impacted sea arrivals. The reduction in arrests at the Greek-Turkish sea borders prompted Greece to seek EU assistance, leading to the activation of Rabit (Rapid Border Intervention Teams) and the development of operational cooperation with Turkey. Operation 'Shield' aims to close the border at the Evros region, and the decrease in apprehensions is attributed to collaborative efforts and deterrence strategies. The reduction is not only due to Greek measures but also cooperation with Turkey. Despite reduced numbers, immigrants continue attempts, prompting discussions about reopening detention centres in Samos and Chios (Dimitriadi, 2013).

The journey is complex and fragmented, involving multiple modes of transportation, predominantly land travel (walk, car/pick-up, bus, truck, train, and motorbike), and, to a lesser extent, boat travel (40%), likely from Turkey or Greece. The duration of the journey was extensive, with 72% taking over a year to reach Italy. Smugglers played a significant role in route selection for 41% of respondents, while 33% had no other option, and 17% received suggestions from family or friends. Factors like price, ease, and safety had minimal influence on journey decisions, highlighting the limited choices and the prevailing challenges faced by migrants (MMC, 2022). Until recently, most Pakistani refugees, migrants, and asylum seekers followed the Eastern Mediterranean route through Iran and Turkey or the Western Balkans before reaching Italy. The journey was challenging, often involving various modes of

transportation (89%), and taking more than a year for 72% of individuals. However, in the past year, there has been a notable shift to the Central Mediterranean route. This change is driven by reduced crossings from Turkey due to heightened patrols and border fortifications by Greece, accompanied by reports of severe human rights abuses, including pushbacks resulting in fatalities. The Western Balkans experienced a surge in arrivals in 2022, but countries in the region, responding to EU pressure, implemented stricter migration policies, including forcible returns. Bosnia and Herzegovina, for instance, initiated the forcible return of Pakistani, Bangladeshi, and Moroccan nationals in 2022. This shift in policies might explain the observed decline in the number of Pakistanis transiting Bosnia and Herzegovina from the summer of 2022 onwards. Simultaneously, there has been an increase in migrants opting for the perilous Mediterranean crossing to Italy, either directly from Turkey or through the Central Mediterranean route via Egypt, Tunisia, and Libya (MMC, 2023).

As we have discussed in the previous section that how the situation in Pakistan and Afghanistan influencing the decision of Commencing the dangerous journey of irregular migration to Europe, once decided to migrate illegally, the process initiates in Quetta, Pakistan. Departing from Quetta, the migrants cross the border into Iran, then proceed to Turkey, and subsequently navigate through various European countries, mostly taking eastern Mediterranean route. The BBC Urdu in a documentary report shows that specific locations in Quetta, such as Musa Colony and Zarganji, serve as hubs where agents facilitate the sale of individuals, aspiring to migrate illegally, to other agents with whom they have pre-established connections. According to an agent interviewed by BBC Urdu, these places witness the daily transaction of 100 to 1000 people to other agents. The individuals are then transported in diverse vehicles, including trucks, buses, and cars, near the border of Iran, based on the payments made to the agents. Upon reaching Iran's border, the agents instruct the migrants to run for crossing the border into Iran, where another agent awaits them. Those who successfully crosses the border are then guided by the agent for the subsequent journey to Turkey. The agent revealed that the process of irregular migration is facilitated with the support of security personnel, who accept bribes ranging from 5000 to 30000 PKR per person from the agents (https://fb.watch/lmcUEzqr1-/). According to Mixed Migration centre's study on irregular Pakistani migrants in Italy, most respondents in the study initiated their migration journey from Pakistan, with 80% transiting through Iran, followed by Turkey (80%) and Greece (63%). After Greece, the journey continued through the Balkans, spanning North Macedonia, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Croatia, with Slovenia serving as the entry point to Northern Italy. Common stopping

points included Tehran (Iran), Istanbul (Turkey), and Athens (Greece). Many halted in these locations to earn money for the journey, await transportation, or engage smugglers for the next leg (MMC, 2023).

Talking about the routes take by the participants from Pakistan for example Jameel provided that "I did not spent time in other countries however I came through different borders of different countries, first from Quetta we came to Iran and then from Iran to turkey, from turkey to Bulgaria, from Bulgaria to Serbia, from Serbia to Hungary and then Austria and then Italy" (Jameel, a Pashtun refugee from Pakistan, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan). Similarly, Dawood said that "I came from Pakistan, through Quetta, Baluchistan to Iran, from Iran I go to Turkey, from turkey to Greece, and then Macedonia, from Macedonia I go to Serbia, Belgrade, then we cross the border to Bosnia, then from Bosnia I went to Slovenia and in 13 days I reached Italy" (Dawood Afridi, a Pashtun refugee from Pakistan, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan). Zahir Rahman took the central Mediterranean as he describes.

> First, I went to Queta, from there we crossed border to Iran from Iran we went to Turkey, then we went to Greece. in Greece I was working in orange orchard to pick the oranges, then some friends were planning to move to Italy by boat I also joined them as life was not good in Greece, we were six people on the boat and that how we reach Italy.
>
> - 'Zahir Rahman', a Pashtun refugee from Pakistan, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan.

In the case of Afghanistan, the migration routes are influenced by geographical factors and points of departure. Those departing from southern and eastern Afghanistan usually enter Pakistan, while those in western areas turn to Iran. The challenging terrain, including the mountains of the Hindu Kush and deserts, complicates the journey. In Pakistan, key cities like Karachi, Quetta, and Peshawar serve as settlement and transit points. A newly built fence along the Iran-Afghanistan border forces migrants to detour to southern Pakistan before crossing into Iran (Dimitriadi, 2013). Attaullah Jan starts his journey from Afghanistan using Pakistan as a transit country as he described.

> When we start our journey from Afghanistan, first we go to Queta, Pakistan, from Quetta we went to Karachi, from Karachi we go to Iran by walking 18

hours on a very difficult path through the hills of Baluchistan from Baluchistan to Iran and then to Turkey's border, from Turkey to Bulgaria, from Bulgaria to Serbia to Hungary to Croatia, then to Wuthrich, and then Italy.

- 'Attaullah Jan', a Pashtun refugee from Afghanistan, interviewed in Sedriano, Milan.

The narratives presented by the participants in the study highlights a range of risks, traumas, and instances of marginalization experienced by irregular migrants on their journey to Europe. The emotional distress is evident in the participants narratives as they describe the challenges of leaving their countries and being separated from their families. As Attaullah stated "leaving your homeland is like leaving behind your own mother, the love for and from the homeland is incomparable to living abroad as refugee, it is like spending a night in a forest as compared to spending a night in your home" (Attaullah Jan, a Pashtun refugee from Afghanistan, interviewed in Sedriano, Milan). The emotional struggle of leaving one's homeland is poignantly portrayed as akin to departing from one's own mother, underscoring the profound emotional toll of separating from one's roots.

During the journey the participants describes extended duration of the journey, ranging from three months to two years, where they spent times in different countries to work and earn money for subsequent journeys, explains the prolonged exposure to sustain risks and discrimination and violence from the host communities and the police. The participants also mentioned of spending time in prisons in different countries exposes the additional layer of trauma and marginalization, indicating that the journey itself may lead to incarceration where violence is encountered. Attaullah said that he reached Italy in 16 months where he spent time in prison for two time as he recounted "I start my journey in February 2015, and I reached Italy in May 2016, because I spent 10 months in prison in Bulgaria, because when we were traveling the police caught me twice, once for 20 days and second time for 10 months" (Attaullah Jan, a Pashtun refugee from Afghanistan, interviewed in Sedriano, Milan). The legal challenges are exemplified through Attaullah Jan's 10-month imprisonment in Bulgaria for illegal travel, highlights the legal risks faced by migrants during the journey. Similarly, the narrative of Dawood Afridi regarding his experience of irregular migration from Pakistan to Europe reveals a myriad of challenges faced by him Dawood Afridi also explains that it took him around three years to reach Italy. As he describes, "I worked for three months in turkey and then we plan to

go to Greece, in Greece I spent three days, then goes to from Macedonia I go to Serbia, Belgrade, I spent the whole winter there then I went to Bosnia I spent almost two years in Bosnia" (Dawood Afridi, a Pashtun refugee from Pakistan, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan). Extended stays in unfavourable conditions, such as enduring the entire winter in Belgrade, Serbia, and spending almost two years in Bosnia, underscore the arduous and prolonged nature of the irregular migration journey. It also took around two years for Shahab Saleem to reach Italy.

> I was in Istanbul for around one and a half year I was working there, from there then we moved to Greece, in Greece we go to Athens then there was a small village where I worked for 9 months, in farming sector, from there then we crossed to Serbia, but I did not work there, in a week we crossed to Bosnia, in Bosnia I spent 4 to 5 months, from there then we moved to Italy.
>
> - 'Shahab Saleem', a Pashtun refugee from Pakistan, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan.

Shahab Momand reached Italy in 9 months where he used to spend some time in different countries for work as he describes his journey.

> I came here in 2019, so it is been 2.5 year that I am here, I came here illegally, and it took almost 9 moths to reach here to Italy. So first we came to Iran from Quetta, Pakistan, then from Iran we went to turkey, I spent around a month in turkey, from turkey I crossed to Greece there I worked in an orchard to pick oranges for two months, from Greece then I goes to Macedonia, so in every country I spent some time, from Macedonia then I go to Serbia and from Serbia to Bosnia, then Croatia and then Slovenia and then Italy. And the overall journey from Pakistan to Italy cost me around 12 lacs PKR.
>
> - 'Shahab Momand', a Pashtun refugee from Pakistan, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan.

From the narratives provided by the participants, violence and discrimination with irregular migrants emerges as a pervasive issue, inflicted by border forces, the host communities, and human smugglers, explains the difficult and hazardous nature of the irregular migration

process. Attaullah Jan describes the treatment of Turkish people and police he receives during his stay in Turkey.

> The people of Turkey are Muslims, they claim to be Muslims, they would say that they have certain Islamic things, like several mosques, but their treatment of migrants is worse than nonbelievers, because the cruelty they inflict on Passengers/foreigners no one would do that in the whole world. They would say we are good Muslims but when you go there and observe closely, and especially when you observe their treatment of Pashtuns, you would see that there will be injuries on their heads or their hand would be broken, and the people who do this to Pashtuns are the Turkish Police. So, they would claim that they are Muslims, still they inflict this kind of treatment on the fellow Muslims.

> - 'Attaullah Jan', a Pashtun refugee from Afghanistan, interviewed in Sedriano, Milan.

Attaullah assertion that Despite a shared religious identity, the Turkish police's treatment is depicted as harsher than that of nonbelievers, with physical injuries inflicted on Pashtuns, presents a situation where usually Pashtuns as Muslims perceive other Muslim countries with a pan Islamic view point, where they would be treated with respect and care however once they are there, especially illegally, and receives the harsh treatment it greatly changes their perspective towards them. Talking about the behaviour and treatment of the smugglers and border forces on the way Dawood express that "It is very difficult, I face a lot of violence, they beat us a lot on the way, still when I recall it, it makes me crazy". Dawood also recall his stay at turkey where he stayed when he first came to Turkey. In Turkey, at a place called Dobi Aziz, the Dawood Afridi endures harsh conditions and mistreatment, with limited food provisions exacerbating physical weakness. As he describes:

> In turkey there is place they call it Dobi Aziz, Habka/hapka, I go there, it is a place where all the travellers/migrants pay money to stay there. The people who manage the Habka, are so cruel, they would give us only one bread in 12 hours, one bread for 12 hours is nothing and we were so weak due to hunger. I would think that once I reached Europe, I would eat and drink good, I would really wish to eat something good.

- 'Dawood Afridi', a Pashtun refugee from Pakistan, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan.

Attempts to cross borders, resulting in the arrest of Dawood's 12 friends during an endeavour from Turkey to Greece, highlights the constant threat of legal consequences. Dawood said that "from Turkey with other friends we decided to go to Greece, we were 13 people so when we were crossing the border by bus, 12 of my friends were arrested, and because of my colour and face structure, they did not recognize me, and that's how they did not arrest me" (Dawood Afridi, a Pashtun refugee from Pakistan, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan). Jameel also share his experience of his journey in these words "crossing these borders is not easy I was beaten by the border's forces, I face firing from them, I spent 1 month in prison in Bulgaria, they also beat us, so on every border you face violence and difficulties" (Jameel, a Pashtun refugee from Pakistan, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan). Shahab Saleem asserts that "I did not face violence from the police, but if the police arrest you, they take your stuff from you like clothes, shoes and money, food and you bag etc and they deport you back to Bosnia, so you must plan another attempt to move to Italy (Shahab Saleem, a Pashtun refugee from Pakistan, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan). Similarly, Ejaz khan said that:

> when you are trying to enter Iran from Baluchistan, you can violence on the border Iranian forces some time they open fire on you some time they arrest you, but we were lucky we did not face that. the path from Iran to Turkey is very difficult and hard compared to other regions, first there is a lot of heat, secondly, the elders, the smugglers use physical violence, they will beat us up such as they will break your legs and arms, they will not consider you a human being they will treat you like an animal. And they do it because they will make you keep moving no matter what your condition is.

> - 'Ejaz Khan', a Pashtun refugee from Pakistan, interviewed in Comasina, Milan.

The physical hardships and transportation in border crossing include long hours of walking without access to necessities like food, water, or essential first aid, further contributes to the vulnerability of these migrants. The overloaded transportation, reflects the desperate measures taken to evade detection, emphasizing the constant fear of interception by authorities. Attaullah Jan recounted about his journey in the following manner.

There is a lot of difficulties on the way to Europe, because you would not have food and water on the way, you will walk for days without food and water. From Karachi we go to Iran by walking 18 hours on a very difficult path through the hills of Baluchistan. From Iran they picked us up, 30 to 32 persons by a single Dadson/Pickup, all of us, 30, persons, get on the pick up while standing like woods, and then they told us to sit, when we sat down it was very congested/gridlocked, then these pickups travelled 200 to 270 miles per hour, it has petrol engines and very fast and that is why the police are unable to chase or stop them, they will make you die but would never allow you or themselves to be caught by police, so like this you would reach Italy.

- 'Attaullah Jan', a Pashtun refugee from Afghanistan, interviewed in Sedriano, Milan.

Attaullah narrative shows the physical challenges he encountered, emphasizing the scarcity of necessities such as food and water, forcing migrants to endure days of walking without adequate provisions. The treacherous terrain of the journey, navigating through the daunting hills of Baluchistan, is highlighted by an 18-hour walk, accentuating the physical hardships faced even before reaching the Iranian border. The overcrowded transportation, with 30 to 32 individuals standing in pickups like 'woods', pose discomfort and safety risks. Attaullah's account also sheds light on the dangers of high-speed travel, reaching up to 270 miles per hour, due to the associated risk of police pursuit, underscoring the fear and hazards linked with law enforcement along the route. Dawood's narrative describes 20 to 25 attempts to cross borders, revealing the persistent and repetitive struggle that takes a toll on physical and emotional well-being. Despite heartbreak from repeated failures, Dawood displays resilience by returning to the journey, ultimately reaching Italy after 13 days from Bosnia. The various modes of transportation, including buses and containers, contribute to the difficulties in transit, often leading to deportation and an ongoing struggle to find successful routes.

I made some attempts to cross the border to Greece, but it was failed, one time I go in the stepney tire to travel to Slovenia, but there they caught me, and deported me. In short, I made 20 to 25 attempts to cross the border but failed. Then I was heartbroken and go back to Serbia, in Serbia there was a camp near Macedonia border, then I came back to Bosnia. Then from Bosnia in 13 days I reached Italy. There are two important things in this process, first is that if you

are lucky enough and if you have money within a month, you can come here from Pakistan. But if you are unlucky then it is very difficult even your money can't work then. We spent nights in snow, we face hunger and thirst, and wherever we find water, we would drink it knowingly that it is dirty and the animals' drinks from it.

- 'Dawood Afridi', a Pashtun refugee from Pakistan, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan.

Talking about his experience Jameel describes that "on the we faced a lot of difficulties, we walk through forests and rivers, we faced hunger and thirst in the forests, but the focus was to reach Europe. When I remember those difficulties, it makes very me hopeless/hateful about life" (Jameel, a Pashtun refugee from Pakistan, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan). Reflecting on the difficulties faced by Ejaz khan during his journey he express that:

the smugglers try to make the movement as fast as possible, but it is impossible for a normal person to walk all the day for 15 days, if it is one or two days to walk that's okay but for 15 days you will have to walk no matter what your condition is and if you want to take a break or to slow down they will beat you as I told you.

- 'Ejaz Khan', a Pashtun refugee from Pakistan, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan.

Overall, all these accounts underscore the complex and harrowing experiences faced by irregular migrants, encompassing emotional, physical, and systemic challenges throughout their quest for a better life in Europe.

5.3. Changes in the perception regarding irregular migration

The participants' personal experience of irregular migration and the challenges they face during the journey, significantly shape their views on the practice, as none of them advocate for irregular migration among the Pashtun community, regardless of the circumstances facing by the Pashtuns in their home countries. Following are some of the messages and advice, that the Participants recorded for the Pashtun youth who are aspired to migrate to Europe irregularly. The participant while acknowledging the role of migration in improving the socio-economic

status, emphasizes legal channels to migration. Despite the increased knowledge about the challenges faced during irregular migration, the aspiration among Pashtun youth to migrate is on increase, these messages and advice further illuminates the hazardous nature of the irregular migration, to discourage the young Pashtuns from embarking on irregular migration journey. Ejaz Khan, when asked if he would suggest irregular migration to other Pashtuns, respond in the following way.

> I will advise all the Pashtun youngsters if they really want to come to Europe, come through legal process, but if they want to come through illegal process, I think it is wrong, I know they want to come here due to their bad situation, but they should not come through this way, staying there is better than coming here through illegal ways, which are very difficult, it is a matter of life and death. It is like 90 percent death and 10 percent life. So, it is better to stay in Pakistan even if they earn less and even if they do not have any work, because life is much valuable, and coming here illegally is not simple it involves a lot of risk, you will have to cross a lot of countries by walking difficult paths. So, no one should come through this process.
>
> - 'Ejaz Khan', a Pashtun refugee from Pakistan, interviewed in Comasina, Milan.

The changes in Ejaz's perception regarding irregular migration is evident from his statement. Based on his personal experiences of facing hardships during the journey, he directs his advice to Pashtun youngsters aspiring for similar journeys. Ejaz khan emphatically discourages illegal migration routes, he condemns the process and emphasizes the significance of adhering to legal channels for reaching Europe. His acknowledgment of the irregular migration journey as a dangerous endeavour, as he described it as a matter of 'life and death' with a breakdown of '90 percent death and 10 percent life', highlights the severity of the risks involved. Prioritizing life over perceived economic gains, Ejaz advocates for staying in Pakistan, emphasizing the value of life and a shift in priorities towards safety and well-being over the perceived financial prospects. Ejaz Khan, while recognizing the motivation behind migration driven by difficult socio-economic situation in Pakistan, insists on legal channels as the means to pursue a better life. Similarly, Shahab Saleem discourages the irregular migration journey among Pashtuns, especially his friends and relatives who wants to migrate illegally, as he argues that:

I will never recommend anyone to migrate through illegal ways, the ways are very dangerous, I cannot recommend it for anyone, either it is my brothers, cousins, or friends, because I experience these difficulties on the way, but if they have a visa and can come by air, they can come, it is ok. A lot of my friends asking me to help them migrate through illegal ways, but I suggest them, to come le gally even if takes more money, but do not come illegally it difficult and dangerous, it is possible that you die on the way, or broke your legs and arms or head, you will face hunger and thirst, rain and cold, you will have to walk through forests full of dangerous animals, like snakes, so there is a lot of problems.

- 'Shahab Saleem', a Pashtun refugee from Pakistan, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan.

Shahab Saleem also reflects changes in his perception regarding irregular migration as he discourages illegal ways, based on the dangers and difficulties he faced personally. Shahab advocates for legal migration with a visa, even if it requires more money, to avoid the dangers of illegal routes, including the risk of death, injuries, and exposure to hunger, thirst, and wildlife in forests. The experience prompts a firm recommendation for others to prioritize safety and legality over dangerous alternative. Bilal khan also suggest that despite the difficulties and violence on the way a lot of Pashtun are using illegal channels to migrate to Europe, pointing out people asking his assistance and help in irregular migration, which he discourages and advising them to use legal channels, as he argues.

A lot of persons call me saying that they want to come here, but now adays it very difficult to come here through illegal ways, so I tell them not to come through illegal ways, if possible, come through legal process, through visa, its better. So, the illegal way is very difficult, but still people are coming through, but they face a lot of violence on the way. So, I would advise them not to come illegally, they should come legally.

- 'Bilal Khan', a Pashtun refugee from Pakistan, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan.

Jameel, while discouraging the illegal migration among Pashtuns, tries to clarify misconceptions and misinformation about irregular among that youth attract the youth to embark on such journey, as he argues.

> I would never suggest anyone to come through illegal ways here, if they can come legally that's ok but illegally, I would never suggest. It is like killing yourself, they should try to come legally. Because there are a lot of difficulties on the way, you will face hunger and thirst in the forests. When young boys in Pakistan decides to migrate illegally, they do not know about these difficulties they are inspired by movies and social media when they see this environment. They think that they will leave Pakistan and will be in Europe next day, but they do not imagine the border crossing and walking in forests and desserts they can't imagine that how difficult it is. Before leaving home, you do not know this but once you are there then you came to know about this.

> - 'Jameel', a Pashtun refugee from Pakistan, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan.

Jameel's narrative reflects a changed perspective shaped by his personal experience, aiming to discourage others from the dangers of irregular migration. he strongly dissuades from illegal migration, equating it to self-harm and advocating for legal pathways. He highlights the harsh realities and challenges, such as hunger and thirst, walking in forests, to confront the misconception perpetuated by movies and social media. He highlights the unawareness of young boys in Pakistan about these difficulties, urging them to consider the complexities, including border crossings and traversing harsh terrains. Attaullah Jan also discourage irregular migration after being experienced the overall process personally, highlighting the dangers one could potentially face during the journey. He argues that:

> first they (Pashtuns) should not come here, but if they want to come, it is very difficult, they will face a lot of difficulties on the way, they can die on the way, and if they die on the way it a very bad death, because nobody knows about you if you are dead or alive, where your body is, your parents and families will always be in grief. So, when you know that it is a very difficult path and you could be died on the way then why you are taking this risk, as Allah says, I gave your eyes and brain, so why do not you use it, why you are trying to commit suicide, you do not have to confront death, stay aside from it, I gave

your life and you are taking it yourself. So, that is why I request all the Pashtuns not to think about coming to Europe. If they think that by going to Europe we will earn money, we will win the world, we will make our life great, it is an illusion. But yes, if they want to come here for education it is another thing, and if they come through illegal ways, which is very difficult and dangerous, you must lose something, it can either be your life or brain, maximum they can do will be the delivery, as we do. Because the illegal/*Kachaak* way, if you got the opportunity to see /observe the situation of these ways, you will find that what kind of world is this, you will think it is not the world that I am living in, it is another world.

- 'Attaullah Jan', a Pashtun refugee from Afghanistan, interviewed in Sedriano, Milan.

Attaullah's changed perceptions about irregular migration, shaped by personal experience, is evident in his strong discouragement of others. He emphasizes the immense difficulties and dangers irregular migrant faces during the journey, highlighting the risk of a tragic and unnoticed death. His appeals to rationality, questioning why one would take such risks when life is a gift from Allah. He refutes the illusion of wealth and success in Europe, while, suggesting that the desire for education is a more legitimate motive to migrate. He describes the illegal paths of migration, urging Pashtuns to refrain from such endeavours, showing a hazardous picture of a world that differs drastically from the aspirants' expectations.

Zahir Rahman discourages illegal migration based on a personal tragedy, expressing a poignant message to young people considering such journeys.

I would give a message to the young people who want to migrate to Europe illegal that do not risk your life by such journey, my own brother died on the way while traveling to Europe illegally, we did not allowed him to travel but still he was insisting then I thought that he will be thinking that I am not supporting him and do not want to give him money so I said yes to him,

- 'Zahir Rahman', a Pashtun refugee from Pakistan, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan.

Zahir Rahman mentioned his own brother's death during an illegal migration attempt adds emotional weight to the advice. Despite his initial reluctance, he ultimately supported his brother's decision, which resulted in a tragic outcome. His message serves as a stark reminder of the risks and consequences associated with illegal migration, urging others not to support their relatives or friends, and the aspirants not to risk their lives through such perilous journey.

Sartaj Khan while acknowledging the importance of migration to Europe in supporting and providing for the families, and supporting the economy of Pakistan through remittances, emphasizes the legal channels to migrate, and to avoid the illegal channels due risks involved, as he argues.

> I would suggest that young boys should come here because there is unemployment and poverty in Pakistan and you know the Pashtun boys are very hard working so here for them are a lot of opportunities, but they should come legally. The important thing here is that in these countries you will get the benefit of your hard work here, the more you do hard work the more return you get here, so the Pashtun younger generation is hardworking and they come here they will do something with their lives and will support their families and also they will contribute to the Pakistani economy in terms of remittances. But coming here illegally is like risking your life, so would suggests that they should come here through illegal ways. Nothing is more important than life.
>
> - 'Sartaj Khan', a Pashtun refugee from Pakistan, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan.

Allah Noor assumes a neutral stance when offering guidance to the Pashtuns regarding illegal migration. His impartiality stems from the challenging conditions in Afghanistan, where people grapple with significant livelihood difficulties and a strong urge to migrate illegally. Faced with the conflicting realities of both the desperate need to migrate and the associated risks, Allah finds himself in a position where he cannot advocate for nor discourage irregular migration. He clarifies his stance in the following manner.

> I do not have specific message for them, as our elders says that "*che charta di kha v halta di shpa wi*" which ever place is good for you stay there. So, everyone knows better about their life, every human being is independent and free to thin for himself. So, I cannot

recommend some either to come here or to stay at Afghanistan, if I tell someone to come here, there are lot of difficulties on the way and if something happened to him his family will curse me. And if tell someone not to come here, he will say that you yourself is there and earning money and we here in Afghanistan go here and there in search of work. So, I cannot suggest anything.

- 'Allah Noor', a Pashtun refugee from Afghanistan, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan.

Part three

Pashtun men in Milan: continuity and change in the perception and performance of masculinities in a transnational context.

In part three I will discuss how Pashtun men navigates the transnational context, while adopting to the new environment of Milan, maintaining their relationship with families back home, and upholding cultural and religious norms of their home culture. It begins with the discussion on the ongoing struggles and marginalization of Pashtun men as refugees and asylum seekers, due to difficulties and challenges they face during the integration and settlement process in Italy, and its impact on their sense of masculinity and manhood. Further, I will also discuss their work as food delivery riders, and its relation to their manhood and provider masculinity in a transnational context, with a focus on their meaning of freedom and control. In addition, I will discuss the maintenance of Pashtun ethnic boundaries and transnational connections by the Pashtun migrants, to cope with their exclusionary social position in Italian society, and survive the hardships of being migrants, separated from their families and homeland. I will further discuss the changes and continuity in the perception of participants regarding masculinity and femininity, and their views on Italian culture and gender roles (especially women paid work in public sphere), as compared to Pashtun culture and gender roles. Similarly, I document their perception regarding Italian men as compared to Pashtun men.

Transnationalism, as explored in chapter one, involves individuals and communities maintaining dynamic social, economic, cultural, and political connections across borders. The concept of transnationalism critiques conventional perspectives on migration, challenging its tendency to overlook the lasting connections between migrants and their home countries. It questions the portrayal of migration as a unidirectional process, and the exclusive emphasis on migrants' relationship with host countries only. Transnationalism recognizes the coexistence of multiple affiliations, emphasizing global migration's interdependence and how individuals navigate identities across national frontiers. Schiller et al. (1995) views transnationalism as characterizing behaviours of immigrants intricately tied to multifaceted connections across international borders, shaping identities in relation to more than one nation-state. Unlike settlers, transmigrants maintain ongoing connections, institutions, and influences in both origin and host countries, emphasizing continuous social relationships in the transnational migration process. Issakyan and Triandafyllidou (2017) delve into the concept of "social remittances" in migration studies, emphasizing non-financial contributions like norms and social networks.

These influence interactions and integration in host societies, impacting gender roles, business practices, and community self-perception. The impact varies according to existing national norms. Social remittances, often unintentional, intertwine with economic remittances, shaping socio-cultural expectations and reflecting social and economic capital for both migrants and home communities. In exploring migrant Pashtun masculinities, the concept of transnationalism is employed to illustrate how the migration of Pashtun men in Milan, Italy, disrupts the traditional gender norms and expectations linked to masculinity in Pashtun culture. Transnationalism helps understanding how these men navigate expectations from their home communities and Italian society, leading to a revaluation of their masculinities, suggesting changes and continuity in their perception and performance of masculinities. The existing literature on transnational migration and masculinities, suggest that the impact of transnational migration on masculinities is multifaceted. Migrant men navigate the transnational contexts by the adoption of fluid and hybrid masculinities, while facing challenges like subordination, discrimination, and exclusion within local society and male dominance hierarchies (Hibbins and Pease, 2009; Poynting et al., 2009; Pande, 2017). Transnational migration offers gendered opportunities to individuals for acquiring new roles and identities, akin to a rite of passage, marking a transitional phase before adopting a new status. In the process men, while facing marginalization and challenges in the host countries, may elevate their social status as men, particularly in the origin countries (Van Aken, 2006; Sinatti, 2014), Navigating the host societies brings changes and adaptations, resulting in shifting gender identities influenced new environments, impacting men identity and social positioning (Pease, 2009; Bell & Pustulka, 2017). As discussed in the previous chapter, the decision of irregular migration among the Pashtun asylum seekers and refugees is often influenced by their marginalized social position in Pakistani and Afghanistan. In this chapter I will analyse their post migration social position, in the host and their countries, and that how these men navigate the transnational context through continuity and change in their perception and performance of masculinities, in different arenas of social life.

Chapter six

Navigating integration: the ongoing struggles and marginalization of Pashtun men in Italy.

Most of the participants chose Italy as their destination country, considering its relatively lenient policies and process of claiming asylum, to be recognized as refugees, and to quickly get the documents for the legal stay in Italy. another important and practical reason for choosing Italy as their destination country, is its proximity to Turkey, from where they plan to move to Europe. Some of the participants suggests that they were certain about their migration to Italy and even other European countries, their initial destination was Turkey, to go for work. While some of them having the long-term plan of moving to Europe after working for some months, even years in Turkey, to earn money for their subsequent travel to Italy or other European countries. Zahir Rahman, a Pashtun refugee from Pakistan, said that "Italy is easier to get the documents and it is also easy to cross from Turkey, they are more lenient and other countries torture you mentally, but Italy is more relax" (Zahir Rahman, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan).Shahab Saleem, a Pashtun asylum seeker from Pakistan, provided that "we chose Italy because we heard that Italy gives documents easily and in short time. In other countries it is difficult to receive documents as compared to Italy" (Shahab Saleem, interviewed in Bicocca village Milan). Similarly, Dawood Afridi, a Pashtun refugee from Pakistan, say that "I chose Italy because getting the documents here is easier and quicker. So, every person thinks that if they get the documents in short time, they can go back to his home to meet his family and parents" (Dawood Afridi, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan). Allah Noor, a Pashtun refugee from Afghanistan, provide the following reasons for choosing Italy as his destination.

> I didn't choose Italy, at that time I didn't know anything about Italy, I do not saw it before and I never think of going abroad, but one day me and another friend of mine decided to go to Turkey for work to support our families, so after spending some time in Turkey my friends were saying to go to some other country like Germany or France or any other country, but eventually they decided to go to Italy, and because we all were friend so we decided to go together, then I call my family to discuss and to send me some money to go to Italy. So, on the way when we were traveling, we reached Sweden and some of the friend decided to stay there I also stayed there, and after 6 years I go to France and then to Italy to receive the documents and asylum.

> - 'Allah Noor', interviewed in Bicocca Village, Milan.

Sartaj Momand, a Pashtun refugee from Pakistan, argue that it is easier to get documents, to be recognised as refugee, in Italy, as his asylum claim in United Kingdom was rejected, that is why he decided to migrate to Italy, as he suggests.

> So, for the first time, I applied for asylum in the UK, but they refused it, then I realized that if I can get the document somewhere it is Italy. That's why I decided to migrate to Italy, Italy has this good thing that you can obtain the documents easily and give you legal stay. So, the best thing in Italy govt is that it doesn't make difficulties for refuges either they are from Afghanistan or Pakistan they accommodate refugees.
>
> - 'Sartaj Khan', interviewed in Bicocca Village, Milan.

Upon their arrival to Italy the Participants as asylum seekers and refugees faces numerous challenges in terms of integration and settlement in Italy. They grapple with challenges that profoundly influence their perception of manhood and masculinity in Italy, often resulting in their marginalization, exclusion, and the construction of hybrid masculinities. Struggling with limited employment opportunities due to language barriers, discrimination, or the lack of skills and education required by the new job market, threatening their role as providers, and fostering feelings of emasculation. Their lack of Education impacts their status within the new culture and gender norms, where masculinity is strongly connected to educational and professional success. Mental health challenges stemming from family separations, extended periods of movements, clash with new culture's expectations, intensifying feelings of failure. Experiencing discrimination and xenophobia undermines their sense of belonging, affecting confidence and self-esteem tied to traditional ideals of strength. Challenges to cultural identity and the need to adapt also induce a sense of displacement and marginalization.

The literature on migration widely acknowledges that migrants in a new country encounter numerous challenges and difficulties related to integration and settlement. These challenges encompass aspects such as employment, housing, navigating bureaucratic procedures for legal residency, language barriers, experiences of discrimination and exclusion, and health and psychological issues. These factors collectively influence the socio-economic standing of migrants and contribute to the shaping of their sense of identity, including their gender identity. Truong and Gasper (2008) assert that comprehending the gender aspects of transnational migration necessitates considering the intricate social construction of migrants' identities. This

multifaceted process intertwines various aspects of their social existence, including sexuality, gender, employment, household responsibilities, childcare, engagement with institutions, experiences of violence, and acts of resistance. Furthermore, these processes are intricately linked with material disparities arising from factors such as race and legal status. Bozok (2019) argues that migration has emerged as a context that contributes to the occurrence of masculinity crises. According Bozok, various research studies have delved into the challenges experienced by migrant men, employing approaches such as dislocation, disempowerment, and negotiation. He shows that the difficulties faced by patriarchal masculinities during migration, encompassing the loss of power, social status, and acceptance, can be interpreted as instances of masculinity crises that entail a diminishing of masculine identity. migration has the potential to trigger masculinity crises by prompting men, especially those from lower socioeconomic backgrounds who may be less prepared for cultural adaptation, to perceive a remasculinization resulting from a backlash against their previously privileged positions of authority, alongside a decrease in income and social standing. These perceptions of masculinity loss might lead to the reconstruction of alternative patriarchal masculinities characterized by distinct dynamics, underscoring the malleability of gender identities.

While navigating the host society, the host society's migrant's reception policies also influence the social positioning of migrants in the transnational settings. According to Dotsey (2020), The twenty-first century has witnessed a historic movement of over 1 billion migrants, with 22.5 million identified as refugees by 2016. In Europe, approximately 4.3 million people immigrated to EU-28 countries in 2016, drawing heightened public and political attention, particularly since the "refugee crisis" of 2015. The surge in mass movements into Europe, notably from Africa and the Middle East, is attributed to factors like the Arab Spring, political instability, and humanitarian crises. This influx led to what is termed a "refugee reception crisis" due to the EU's lack of a unified and effective asylum and immigration system. The crisis triggered anti-immigrant discourse, territorial security measures, and externalization of migration policies, resulting in systematic reluctance to provide protection, differential treatment of migrants, and changes in national asylum and migration policies across Europe. This has pushed asylum-seekers, refugees, and established immigrants into precarious positions, affecting their integration process in host societies. The temporary status approach adopted by countries like Germany, Austria, and Sweden during the crisis has impacted refugees' integration desires and employers' hiring decisions. Additionally, EU countries have invested in temporary housing, often lacking permanent and comprehensive immigration

housing policies, further contributing to the precariousness and vulnerability of migrants. Italy, among Southern Mediterranean states, has been significantly impacted by migration flows due to its geographic location, serving as a main entry point to the continent. The country grapples with a growing presence of both economic migrants and refugees with permanent residency, presenting new challenges across political, spatial, economic, cultural, and social dimensions. Italy, historically and presently unprepared to handle these flows, approaches recent migration as generating temporary populations, leading to emergency measures crafted through a security lens. The public and political discourse views these arrivals, often framed as an 'invasion', through a hostile lens. This approach shapes migrants' daily experiences and integration processes, leaving much of their incorporation to local administrations and NGOs. The increasing migration has emphasized the crucial role of cities in reception and integration, necessitating a focus on these local contexts for a comprehensive understanding of the situation in Italy. (Dotsey, 2020). The accounts shared by participants underscore a range of difficulties encountered by Pashtun asylum seekers and refugees in Italy, encompassing issues related to temporary immigration status, bureaucratic hurdles, and instances of discrimination. Together, these challenges contribute to a prevailing sense of marginalization and uncertainty experienced by these Pashtun men.

6.1. Bureaucratic challenges and temporary stay permit.

Irregular migrants initially struggle with the challenging process of seeking asylum, which often involves prolonged waiting times and the potential for rejection. According to Caspani (2019), in "2016 asylum acceptance rates in Italy were 45.5% of requests versus 60.8% in the EU-28 countries. By 2018, the numbers had declined considerably: 33.3% for Italy, and 40% for EU-28 countries" (p. 19). Concerning the time duration for responding to an asylum application Caspani, (2019), reveals that "in 2014 the average time for a decision from the Commission on Refugees was 346.5 days, although by 2016 that number was lowered to 180 days" (p. 19-20). This situation introduces significant psychological and socio-economic burdens on asylum seekers, especially in the case of rejection of the asylum claims. Riaz Khan, an irregular asylum seeker from Pakistan, once contacted me from Modena, Italy, after facing asylum rejection, seeking assistance, and inquiring if I knew anyone who could support him in reapplying for asylum. He conveyed a sense of discomfort, psychological distress, and a feeling of helplessness in isolation. He said that in Pakistan when you face problems while dealing with institution, probably there will be someone familiar who can help you out in such situations but here in Italy it is impossible, and the institutions here do not even accept

references. Riaz Khan contemplated hiring a private lawyer for his case, however he was worried about the finances it would requires. Subsequently, I consulted a Pashtun friend residing in Milan for a decade, who provided me with a lawyer's contact information that I shared with Riaz Khan. He expressed feelings of depression and the desire to meet me in person, highlighting the challenges of finding someone to talk to, while facing isolation.

Ejaz Khan, a Pashtun refugee from Pakistan, depict the intricate bureaucratic processes, coupled with negative interactions, underscores the disempowering experiences and diminished agency felt by migrants, further exacerbated by the uncertainty surrounding stay permits. As he describes.

> when you came for the first time here you will go to the *Thana*/Questura so they will tell you that if there is place available for you in the camp, they will give you the place, and if there is no place available, they will tell you to comeback another day, and we will give you place in the camp. Before they accommodate you in the camp, they will take fingerprints from you. After taking the fingerprints, they check if you have been taken fingerprints by any other country, because there are people who have been taken fingerprints by other countries as well. So, in this case they will tell you that you have the fingerprints in other country as well and can be possible that we deport you, or pardon you, or that you must consult with a lawyer to defend your case and it takes a lot of time.

> - 'Ejaz khan', interviewed in Comasina, Milan.

Allah Noor's protracted struggle for a stay permit over 23 months epitomizes the anxiety and fear of deportation exacerbated by bureaucratic inefficiencies, including communication lapses and delays, describe his current situation in Milan in the following manner.

> I was in Lecco for two months when I first came to Italy, in Lecco they were not accepting my asylum case then someone told me to go to Milan, the I came here for some days I live in Centrale then I came here Bresso. It has been 23 moths that I am here in Italy, and still, they do not tell me if I will get the stay permit or not, or should I wait for it, can I hope that I will receive my stay permit. And the person who oversees the affairs and deals with us in the Questura/police station, when I go to talk to him, from far I can see negative impression on his face, he really misbehaves with me, the way he treats me every time make me mad and angry. One time a day I must go to the office, to ask if our fingerprints for stay permit are being accepted or not. They really abuse me and then I comeback. My Permesso/stay

permit was expired in June, and until now I do not have the stay permit, and they also do not tell us that either I will be provided with another/renewed stay permit or not. Yesterday too I visited the office, there is a guy whenever I go there, he laughs at me, he thinks that I am mad that's why I go there every day to ask about my stay permit. But he doesn't know that I really need the stay permit, I go there every day of necessity, because I have a family and the whole responsibility of my family is on my shoulders.

- 'Allah Noor', interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan.

Sartaj Khan's pragmatic survival-focused stance reveals the structural inequalities tied to temporary residence and the elusive prospect of obtaining nationality, accentuated by the intricate bureaucratic landscape in Italy.

I will leave Italy because there is no future, the important thing is nationality by which you will be entitled to the citizenship rights, then you will live here on equal grounds with everyone, but they will never give us nationality it is not possible, they give us temporary residence. The most important thing is human equality which Italian govt will never agree to provide us, if the govt was willing to give nationality to foreigners, I know people who spent 7 to 12 years in Italy legally, and still, they are not nationals of Italy, they are living on temporary residence permits.

- 'Sartaj Khan', a Pashtun refugee from Pakistan, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan.

Shahab Saleem's emotional distress due to document-related issues emphasizes the symbolic importance of legal recognition and adds an emotional layer to the multifaceted challenges faced by migrants in Italy. As he express, "I am sad because I did not receive the documents yet, otherwise there is no issue, I am doing my work here, which keep me busy, but sometime I miss the village and sometime there is an issue in the family which make sad, so if I got the documents, I would be able to visit my family" (Shahab Saleem, a Pashtun refugee from Pakistan, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan).

Attaullah highlights the delicate balance migrants face, emphasizing the need to adhere to the law for reciprocal respect, yet acknowledging the challenges encountered, particularly by those involved in illegal activities.

when I first came to Italy I was trying to apply for asylum. First I go Udine, after that I go to another city, Philtre, after sometime I moved to bologna, so in bologna I go to Questura/police station, I told them that I came from Afghanistan, I am new here, and that I do not know anything, I cannot speak and understand Italian language, so , they ask me that do you speak Pashto and Urdu, I said yes I do, then they bring a Punjabi person for translation, so they accept my asylum application, the allotted me a camp house, so the police there in bologna really helped me and treat me with respect and so for here in Milano they treat us with respect as well, because if you are not involved in any criminal activities, you respect the laws here they will treat you with respect as well. But if you do illegal things then they will ask you because they the protectors of their country. So, it is necessary to abide by the law and to give respect so they will also treat you with respect. And till date the police never misbehaved with me in Italy.

- 'Attaullah Jan', a Pashtun refugee from Afghanistan, interviewed in Sedriano, Milan.

These narratives portray the compounding impact of prolonged uncertainty, bureaucratic intricacies, discrimination, and the constraints of temporary immigration status on the profound sense of marginalized masculinity among migrants, influencing not only their legal standing but also their well-being, identity, and integration within Italian society.

6.2. Unemployment and exploitation in work

Another important issue emerges from the narratives the participants shared, is unemployment and job finding and exploitation of refugees in work. According to Caspani (2019), the barriers faced by asylum seekers in Italy include limited mobility due to Dublin Accord restrictions, both externally and internally. The difficult Italian labour market, characterized by rigid labour laws and informal employment, poses challenges and exploitation. Inefficient labour matching exacerbates the problem, with refugees lacking access to job information and networking. Additionally, refugees' limited skills and educational backgrounds hinder their access to job opportunities. Addressing these barriers requires improved coordination, labour market flexibility, enhanced labour matching processes, and targeted support for refugees' skills development and integration. Haggis and Schech (2009), argues that the experiences of refugees in Australia are dominated by their struggles with employment, exacerbated by the challenges of the border security discourse and uncertainties of the Temporary Protection Visa (TPV) regime. Work becomes a crucial space through which refugees recount their settlement,

reflecting their lack of welcome, loss of status, and disrespect. The pressure to provide is deeply ingrained, impacting diverse masculinities, and excluding them from hegemonic Australian masculinities. The discriminatory discourse compounds issues for Muslim refugees, often depicting them as fundamentalist oppressors. Employment challenges contribute to compromised refugee masculinities, reflecting broader issues of exclusion and gendered expectations in Australian society.

The narratives from the participants reveal the challenges faced by them in Italy, particularly in terms of workplace exploitation, unemployment, and financial hardships, all of which intricately shape their sense of masculinity and manhood. While sharing his experience of living and working in different places in Italy, Attaullah reveals how he was exploited by paying less while working for longer hours, as he argues that:

> Once from the camp side I got a job, they would pay me 20 euros per day, So, for 600 per month I would work all day cleaning the camps. And when we would ask for uniform or money, they would not provide us that. I also lived in Sicilia, I used to work for 12 hours, and they would pay me only 20 euro for 12 hours work. In Sicilia the situation was very bad, they will make you do whatever they want, they decide to pay 10 or 20 euros you do not have any option, but out of necessity I worked there to support myself, to survive. and not to become a bigger to ask others for money and food or to ask other for help. Then I came to Verona and started working in agriculture, I would pick strawberries, they would pay me 4.5 euros per hour, the whole month I would really do hard work and would get just 1000 euros, but I was there to survive, we would sleep just for 4 hours and the remaining we would work.
>
> - 'Attaullah Jan', a Pashtun refugee from Afghanistan, interviewed in Sedriano, Milan.

Attaullah's first-hand experience exposes the vulnerability of employment opportunities and the insufficiency of income and economic exploitation prevalent in jobs like camp maintenance and farming. This economic strain, coupled with the inability to adequately support his wife and son in Italy and other family members in Afghanistan, generates a deep sense of stress and sorrow, negatively impacting his sense of provider masculinity, as he expresses:

I feel happy here but now I am sad because there is very little work here, I do not have any stable source of income, it is very difficult to provide for my family here in Italy, I am living here with my wife and child, and my parents back home. Because it is very expensive to live with your family here, I spend all my income here and I am unable to send money to my parents back home, but I must send them 200 or some money every month so that they meet their needs. But when there is no work then I feel sad, stressed, that is why now I am planning to move to another country.

- 'Attaullah Jan', a Pashtun refugee from Afghanistan, interviewed in Sedriano, Milan.

Sartaj Khan emphasizes the economic hardships faced by refugees, noting the necessity of intense labour merely for survival. He contrasts the situation with Italians, highlighting the disparity in living standards and the challenges refugees encounter in building a stable life as he argues:

if want to live settle here, you must do a lot of hard work, and you will save nothing but just to survive here. For Italian the salaries are ok because they are the nationals here and the govt support them, so overall their system is good for them, their living standards are equal to other European countries, but our living standards are very bad compared to them.

- 'Sartaj Khan', a Pashtun refugee from Pakistan, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan.

Dawood Afridi reveals the exploitation within immigrant communities, where migrants from Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Bangladesh exploit their compatriots through deceptive work contracts, exploiting their desperation for employment.

here you do not face more difficulty from Italian people, they never deceive you, if they give contract for 8 hours of work, they will take 8 hours of work from you. But the main difficulty here you face is due to the Pakistani, Afghan and Bangladeshi people, who are living here and doing businesses, they will give you the contract for 4 hours of work and then make you work for 12 hours, and out of necessity if you need work and earn money to send it back home you have to accept that.

- 'Dawood Afrid', a Pashtun refugee from Pakistan, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan.

Dawood also share his encounter with a Romanian colleague which adds a layer of complexity, highlighting the challenges arising from cultural differences and power imbalances in the workplace, resulting in financial discrepancies.

> Once I was working with a Farmacia/fabbrica, so it was far from my home and every day I would go by metro which would take me 1.5 hours to reach there, them after metro I would catch a bus to reach the place, so sometimes I would be late by 10 to 15 minutes. Then I said to the owner of the Cappo, that I am late because the bus is not coming here on the same time and by walking it take even much time to reach here, so he understand my problem but there was a Romanian women who would every day ask me why I am not on time, the Romanian are good in flattery, and when it comes to the salary/my payment, she creates problem for me and after so much calls and communication they pay me the money but they did not pay me the whole money.

> - 'Dawood Afrid', a Pashtun refugee from Pakistan, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan.

These narratives portray a stark reality of refugees confronting exploitation, financial strife, and employment hurdles in the host country, influencing their masculinity by engendering stress, sadness, and an ongoing struggle for economic survival. The documented challenges underscore the systemic vulnerabilities faced by refugees, leaving an enduring impact on their overall well-being and self-perception as men and as providers for their families.

6.3. Cultural and religious difference and language barriers

The provided narrative also unveils the intricate dynamics of how cultural and religious differences contribute to a sense of marginalized masculinity among migrant men in the host society. Dawood Afridi finds solace and ease in interactions with fellow Pashtuns, underscoring the significance of shared language and culture in fostering mutual respect. However, encounters with individuals from diverse backgrounds, particularly Africans, present challenges as cultural differences lead to feelings of disrespect and being disrespected. Linguistic and cultural barriers hinder Dawood's integration into the broader migrant community in Italy, emphasizing the importance of familiarity and shared cultural norms in

alleviating the sense of exclusion and marginalization. This preference for interaction with Pashtuns raises the potential for isolating individuals from different cultural backgrounds, contributing to a fragmented and less cohesive migrant community. As Dawood Afridi argues that:

> Everything in the camp is ok, but the problem is that there are people from 14 to 15 different countries who are living there. So, it is very difficult to interact with them in Italian, so it is easy to live with and interact with Pashtuns, because you understand the language and culture, there would be mutual respect as the Pashtun do, the distinction between young and old. But the other people from here and there, like the Africans, they are very disrespected and disrespecting. I am not saying that they essentially like this, but the grownup like this, there system/culture in they are socialized is like this.
>
> - 'Dawood Afridi', a Pashtun refugee from Pakistan, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan.

Religious disparities exacerbate the challenges, as Dawood adherence to Islamic principles clashes with the practicalities of the Italian work environment, where serving forbidden items becomes unavoidable for economic survival. This internal conflict, coupled with the emotional burden revealed in Dawood expressions of sadness and frustration, adds depth to the discussion as he argues.

> One thing really irritates me and that the religion/religiosity, because the work that we are doing here is Haram/forbidden in Islam. Wherever you go alcohol and pork is available, if you work in a restaurant, you must serve these things, if you work food delivery you have to deliver these things, but as you know these things are forbidden in Islam. But because we need work here earn some money, we deliver it; we do not have other option. this is the only thing that irritates a lot to deliver alcohol, pork, and other Haram items. So following Islam here is very difficult which makes me very sad.
>
> - 'Dawood Afridi', a Pashtun refugee from Pakistan, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan

Similarly, Attaullah Jan express his distress over the religious decay of Pashtuns in Italy. Attaullah argues that:

my sincere suggestion to all my Pashtuns brothers would be to stay home, even if there is not enough food. For example, if they have a dry bread with just onions and without oil, they will eat it with keeping their heads high there. And here if you earn a lot and eat good you will feel disrespected, the money, and the material things, but you will lose your faith and the life after death. Because I saw it with my own eyes that Pashtun here, they drink Alcohol, they do not fast here, they are having sex out of marriage, so if a Pashtun come here, he may control himself for few days but eventually one day he will be involved in all these things because of the environment here, everything is available here and there is no restrictions.

- 'Attaullah Jan', a Pashtun refugee from Afghanistan, interviewed in Sedriano, Milan.

Similarly, Bilal khan express that "here on Eid or in the month of Ramadan I feel really sad, because it is difficult to perform your religious duties here" (Bilal Khan, a Pashtun refugee from Pakistan, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan). Sartaj Khan talk about his tears and supplications to Allah reflect the ongoing struggle to uphold religious values in a society where these principles are difficult to maintain, which he considers more painful than his separation from his family, contributing to a sense of marginalized masculinity. as he expresses that:

some time I cry not because I am away from my mother of siblings or family, I really miss them and love them, but I cry because for example few days ago I was crying to Allah that he may not take the strength from me to fulfil my duties religious and other wise. I also remember death, but I want to die as good Muslim and human being.

- 'Sartaj Khan', a Pashtun refugee from Pakistan, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan.

The narratives collectively underscore the profound and multifaceted impact of language barriers on refugees in the host country, revealing the extent to which this challenge places them in a marginalized social position. According to Caspani (2019), the primary obstacle to refugees' employment is language barriers, severely limiting social interaction and economic participation. Proficiency in the host-country language significantly influences labour market success, with studies indicating substantial employment rate increases for those advancing from beginner to intermediate levels. Unlike some EU nations with mandatory language

lessons for refugees, Italy lacks compulsory language learning, hindering employment prospects. Learning Italian is a prominent challenge for migrants seeking jobs in Italy.

Attaullah Jan's seven-year struggle with minimal Italian proficiency exemplifies the barriers that impede effective communication, hindering his ability to comprehend official documents and respond to communications. The narrative extends to his experience in a hospital, where language barriers, compounded by illiteracy in both Italian and Pashto, create challenges in understanding medical procedures.

> I almost spent 7 years here in Italy but still I know very little Italian. In these seven year I attend the school for two years, but they did not teach us properly, secondly my classmates were Pashtuns, they would not attend the classes regularly. So, they would not go to school, and alone the camp authorities would not give me pick and drop to the school alone. The school that I attend the teacher would just lecture us for two hours, and I just learn basic Italian, through which I can communicate with authorities, with police, the Questura, and if got any problem, so I can solve my problem even with my basic knowledge of Italian. But I cannot speak proper Italian, because I didn't learn it and then there was lockdown so everything and the schools were closed. The main problem for me is that I cannot read and write Italian, for example if I got an email or SMS in Italian from police station or any other office, I face problem in understanding and responding to it. One day I go to the hospital, they ask me if I know Italian, told them neither read nor write Italian, then they translate to me in Pashto, but I told them that do not even read or write Pashto as well.

> - 'Attaullah Jan', a Pashtun refugee from Afghanistan, interviewed in Sedriano, Milan.

Dawood emphasizes the pivotal role of language in survival, highlighting how refugees lacking proficiency face discrimination based on their inability to communicate, impacting their daily affairs and interactions with authorities. In terms of survival and finding work, Dawood argues that:

> language is very important without language you cannot do anything here, if you want to survive here you must know Italian and if you do not know Italian you have to know English at least. here in Milan, you will find people from every country, so you must know English or Italian but if you do not know both then it is very difficult. I know a little English and Italian that's why I can do this delivery work.

- 'Dawood Afrid', a Pashtun refugee from Pakistan, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan.

While in terms of communication with the authorities and institution and to avoid discrimination, Dawood emphasized the importance of Italian language by providing his personal example, as he discussed:

> Once I lost my wallet here and my documents was in it, so I face this problem, to report it. In the camp they told me to go to the Questura. when I go there, I talked about certain document that were in the wallet, but they report other documents in the report, because I was not understanding them, and they were not understanding me. So, it took me five days to deal with this situation I face problem in every office either it was Questura or post pay, or the camp, because of the language. here they do not discriminate you because you are not an Italian but because you do not know the language, so in the offices they must deal a lot of people daily and they are unable to give you so much time because you do not know the language, that's why we struggle more than the local people or the people who know the language. If you know the language it does not matter which nationality you have, if you are following the law, you would not be discriminated.

> - 'Dawood Afrid', a Pashtun refugee from Pakistan, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan.

Ejaz Khan stresses the importance of language proficiency for employment, a sentiment echoed by Jameel, who identifies language as crucial for relationship-building and job opportunities.

> And it is also difficult here to survive sometimes people come here but they do not know the language and how to survive here, they spend years but cannot learn the language and they face difficulties to find work. Because when go for any job interviews, when the interviewer asks him questions, he do not understand how to reply or what to say so in return the interviewer say that "mi dispiace" means that we can't do anything for you. I understand Italian now, but in the beginning, it was difficult, because when you do not know the language, and if someone say hello "salam" to you and respond by saying what what what, so it is embarrassing. But it is obvious that when someone first came here, he doesn't know the language, but the government here they sent you to the school to learn Italian. So, you must finish the school and learn the language and get the language certificate, only after that you will be able to do work.

- 'Ejaz Khan', a Pashtun refugee from Pakistan, interviewed in Comasina,

Similarly, Jameel argues that:

> language is very important; without Italian language you are like a mute. You will talk through gestures. The first thing here is language even before work language is more important. Because without language you cannot find work or make relationship with other people. I do not have any relationship with Italian but during my work I met a lot of people.

> - 'Jameel', a Pashtun refugee from Pakistan, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan.

Sartaj Khan discusses the dual role of language in social interactions and securing employment, acknowledging the potential alternative of English proficiency in Milan, but recognizing its potential barrier in other cities.

> I would say that I can understand 20 percent of Italian language. But language is very important here because if you do not know the language how will you communicate with people here so it a medium to establish social relations with people some time you will meet good people and if you know the language they can help you out in finding a job or otherwise if only they speak to you it makes you happy, and the reason I did not learn it because I know English which I do not know If my good luck or bad because with English I can navigate so I did not focuses on Italian. Italian also do not speak English, but I am lucky that I am in Milan because people here can understand and speck English but in other cities it is a problem.

> - 'Sartaj Khan', a Pashtun refugee from Pakistan, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan.

Shahab Momand and articulate the shame and fear associated with inadequate Italian language skills,

> I can speak a little Italian but do understand much of it. And it very important to know the local language, but as you know it is not easy to learn a foreign language soon it take time to learn, so if you do not know the language yourself and you got some work for example in Questura you have to bring someone who know the language otherwise you would be able the to solve your issues. Yes, some time you need something, or you face a problem

but here you do not know how to solve, you do not know the procedure and even when you do not know the language you cannot someone for help as well so it makes me sad sometime. Because of the language issue when go to some office I always fear that someone will make fun of me that's why I speak very slowly so that not all the people listen to it. I feel shameful that I do not know the language.

- 'Shahab Momand', a Pashtun refugee from Pakistan, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan.

Zahir Rahman's broader migration journey reflects the frustration of dealing with various languages, posing significant challenges in essential communication.

I do not know Italian language because first in the school we would learn Pashto, then Urdu and English, then I go to Saudi Arabia there I try to learn Arabic, then in the Swiss I learn Dutch, then I came to Italy and in the camp they would teach us Italian but I was fed up, I thought how many languages I would learn, so I did not give much attention to Italian, but it is very important here for us, but now I am unable to learn because I am aged now, because when I was young I give so much energy to other languages now I do not have that much energy. So, similarly, I faced a lot of problems here due to the language, wherever I go to any office so I cannot communicate my problem to them then I must bring someone with me who know the language. And they do not like to speak English and they also do know English, because once I visited the bank to get my credit card, I was speaking in English so the girl in the bank told me that she do not speak English, then I started speaking a little bit Italian with her but then she start speaking proper English, so I told her that in the beginning you lie to me that you do not know English and now you are speaking proper English, so she did not treat me well but later she was saying sorry to me. When I was in the Swiss they would speak English, they do not have any issue in speaking English as it is not their local language, but Italians do not like to speak English with you.

- 'Zahir Khan', a Pashtun refugee from Pakistan, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan.

These narratives collectively illustrate how language barriers contribute to the marginalization, discrimination, and exclusion of refugees, hindering not only their daily interactions but also crucial aspects such as employment, official communication, and bureaucratic navigation,

intensifying feelings of shame, fear, and frustration and fostering a sense of isolation in their host communities.

6.4. Instances of discrimination and exclusion

The narratives depicting discrimination against refugees and migrants within Italy/Milan, illuminate the intricate factors contributing to the social marginalization of male refugees, significantly influencing their sense of manhood and masculinity. The account from some participants exposes a glaring disparity in the treatment of Italians and foreigners, specifically highlighting discriminatory practices in housing, healthcare, and public services, while some participants express content and focused on abiding by law and avoiding interfering in other people matters to avoid discrimination.

Talking about his experiences of finding a and renting a home in Milan, Attaullah argues that:

> in Italy they do not give much protection to foreigners, first, as foreigner/refugee, it is very difficult to rent a home here, and if luckily you got a home on rent, they do not treat you with love and respect, they do not receive you wholeheartedly, they will give the place on rent but after some time they feel irritated from us, so some time I thought why they feel irritated from us, we spent a lot of time here.
>
> - 'Attaullah Jan', interviewed in Sedriano, Milan.

Attaullah also shares his situation before he finds a place to live. His account reflects a desperate situation driven by unemployment and homelessness, leading to unconventional actions which can be termed as "protest masculinity", as he describes.

> For around eight months I lived on the road under a bridge, there were Pashtuns who got homes but nobody asks me to go with them/live with them and it was because I was unemployed so everyone would ignore me. Then there was an old empty building in Milano Certosa, I along with other person go there and live there for eight months in the winters. After that I broke into home, an Italian owns it, it was empty for rent and I broke into it by force, I thought that either the police would arrest me and send me to jail, or they would assign a home. After that they send me to the camp. I never want to do such bad thing but out of necessity I did it, because I was helpless, I spent eight months on the road

and no one was ready to help me or listen to me, but I broke the house they came ask me why I did this then I told them about my situation, and they send me to the camp.

- 'Attaullah Jan', interviewed in Sedriano, Milan.

Living under a bridge and in an abandoned building for eight months, shows the dire circumstances faced by Attaullah, especially as he felt ignored and marginalized, even by people from his own ethnicity, due to unemployment. Breaking into an empty house appears to be an act of protest in his situation, driven by necessity and a desire for recognition and attention. The act, though unlawful, becomes a form of protest masculinity, a response to systemic neglect and a way to draw attention to his plight, ultimately leading to his placement in a camp.

Securing housing for refugees and migrants, especially those engaged in delivery work, proves to be a challenging and draining endeavour. During my fieldwork, a couple of delivery workers sought my assistance in finding accommodation. Abdurahman, a key informant, and delivery worker, grappled with a two-month struggle to secure a room. The place he shared with four other delivery workers received an eviction notice from the owner due to routine disruptions and battery charging, seen as an additional energy burden. Abdur Rahman approached me with a request for assistance in renting a place. Believing that, as a student, I had a relatively easier time securing accommodation, he proposed I rent a house in my name, with them living in it since I already had university residence. Despite declining the idea, I committed to helping them find suitable housing. Similarly, Umair, another delivery worker, approached me with a similar proposal, which I declined while assuring him of my support in the search for suitable housing. Apart from refugees and delivery workers, foreign students, including Pakistanis, residing in university accommodations encounter significant challenges in finding housing once their residence expires. Azhar, a Pakistani PhD student, struggled for an extended period to secure a place. He recounted instances where owners initially expressed interest, but upon discovering his Pakistani identity during in-person visits, they refused to rent to him. Eventually, Azhar found room in a house rented by a Muslim Moroccan family, who initially accepted him due to his shared religious identity, as he perceived. However, they later asked him to leave when he began delivery work, charging batteries and storing his bicycle in the room. Hossein Noroozi, an Iranian PhD student in University of Milano Bicocca, once shares his experience of renting a place in Milan after he completes his master's degree from

university of Milano Bicocca and worked for three years in Milan. Hossein argues that the landowners in Milan takes so many things into consideration while renting out their properties, such as nationality, job contracts, type of jobs, dressing, gender, and age. Hossein argues that for Asian generally it is very difficult to secure accommodation in Milan as compared to Europeans and Americans. Similarly, he argues that it is more difficult for men and boys to secure an accommodation as compared to women and girls. Without a job contract, Hossein argues, it is almost impossible to secure an accommodation and the type of work also makes a difference, for example if some is doing a menial work such as construction worker or a waiter in restaurant, will find it difficult to secure an accommodation as compared to a formal job for example in a bank. This situation poses increased challenges for refugees and asylum seekers working in food delivery services to find housing. Many asylum seekers lack official job contracts for delivery work, operating on others' contracts unlawfully. Additionally, their work and financial constraints hinder them from maintaining a presentable appearance. Even those refuges with job contracts face difficulties in securing accommodation due to the equipment such as bicycle, batteries, and bags brought to home from work. Furthermore, when a refugee manages to rent a room, they often share it with other asylum seekers to cut costs, leading to overcrowded living conditions and eventual eviction notices from landlord.

Another important issue emerge from the interviews is the discriminatory treatment of refugees in bureaucratic processes. Attaullah Jan pointed out the discriminatory treatment of refuges in the bureaucratic processes in Italy, as he argued.

> They discriminate/differentiate so much between us and Italians. Because Italians are "Italian" and Foreigners are "Foreigners"/not Italian. They treat Italians with another kind of respect and us with another. The way they accept things said by an Italian, or the way they solve the problems of an Italian more efficiently they do not for us foreigners, because they say that Italians are citizens of Italy and you are not a citizen, so, they definitely discriminate us against Italians, for example, if an Italian and you are waiting for your turn/number in que, they prioritise the Italian over you, and you will be standing there, when they deal with the Italian after that they will call you. So, they discriminate a lot, not less.

> - 'Attaullah Jan', interviewed in Sedriano, Milan.

Attaullah's narrative shows a sense of marginalized and excluded masculinity experienced by refugees, particularly in comparison to Italians. He highlights discriminatory treatment, emphasizing a clear differentiation between Italians and non-Italians/Pashtuns. The discrimination manifests in various aspects, including problem-solving efficiency and queue management, where Italians are prioritized over foreigners. The distinction based on citizenship status contributes to a perception of unequal treatment, reinforcing a marginalized identity for non-Italians. Attaullah's observations suggest a systemic bias that impacts the interactions and experiences of foreigners, creating a sense of excluded masculinity shaped by discriminatory practices in the host country. Similarly, Sartaj Khan also highlights the element of discrimination in bureaucratic processes, questioning the consistency of treatment within the migrant community, as he argues.

> On certain occasions I noticed it, I feel discriminated in my encounters with the local authorities or people. for example most of our work lies within Questura, they make us wait in long ques while the Italians they receives with respect and give them entrance without any wait, given that the issue will be the same, even they treat other Europeans with respect for example recently the Ukrainian came here due to war as refugee, they arranges special ques for them separate for other refuges, and would be treated with special attention, so they postpones our issues and give them priority. So, when there is human right violation It make me sad, when they treat to discriminately, first if they think that the Italian have a priority then its ok, but they should tell this openly, but if they say that all are equal and then treat you with inequality then its sanding.

> - 'Sartaj Khan', interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan.

Sartaj Khan highlights experiences of discrimination in interactions with local authorities, revealing a sense of exclusion and unequal treatment in comparison to Italians and even other European refugees, creating a sense of dual discrimination as refugee and as non-European. He points out instances where they are made to wait in long queues, contrasting this with the preferential treatment afforded to Italians and specific attention given to refugees from certain European countries. The perception of being discriminated against, especially when authorities claim equality, evokes a sense of sadness and frustration, emphasizing the impact of exclusion and unequal treatment on individuals in the migration context. Sartaj Khan also express his felling of protest to the plight and discrimination of refugees in the broader European context as he said.

> Whenever I got the opportunity or any flatform then I talk about it, for example in Belgium I was giving interview to a TV channel, so there I shared my feelings, but usually you do not have such flatform or opportunity to share and discuss your issues and feelings. But within the group of friends sometimes we discuss it.

> - 'Sartaj Khan', interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan.

Zahir Rahman's narrative also reveals bureaucratic inefficiencies that may treat refugees differently than citizens or Europeans, contributing to their sense of exclusion. Zahir Rahman argues that:

> they do not give us the same treatment, or position, the way they treat their own people or other European, but their behaviour is normally good with us, but their bureaucratic system is very slow, it too long to solve your issue either it is with Questura or the bank or any other office. as I told you about the credit card issue if there was an American, they would not treat him the way they treat me.

> - 'Zahir Rahman', interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan.

Zahir highlights a perception of unequal treatment and a slower bureaucratic process when dealing with local authorities, contrasting it with the way Italians or other Europeans are treated. While acknowledging generally good behaviour, he suggests disparities in the treatment and position afforded to migrants and refugees. The example of the credit card issue underscores the belief that individuals from certain nationalities, such as Americans, might receive more favourable or efficient treatment compared to him, indicating a sense of discrimination or bias within bureaucratic processes related to migration.

Allah Noor's reflection emphasizes the psychological toll of leaving one's homeland and the compounded challenges of perceived discrimination and social isolation. Discuss his general feelings about living in Milan Allah Noor express that:

> this is not life, it is like the life of Hindus, by God Hindus would not live like this, the way we live here, as people hate Hindus these people hate us in the same way. So, living with your family in your homeland is incomparable, even if you do have enough to eat or earn, and even if you are living in a tent with your family, it is much better than living as refugee or migrant.

- 'Allah Noor', interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan.

It is a stereotype among the Pashtuns that there Hindu/Indian society are more individualised, and because of the individualism here in Europe, Allah Noor compare it with Hindu society by using the expression that *da sa da Hindwano zindagi da*, means that the way the way we live here, isolated, is like the way Hindus live. Allah expresses a profound sense of dissatisfaction and despair regarding the living conditions as a refugee or migrant, also drawing a comparison with the perceived negative sentiments towards Hindus in Pashtun society. The mention of Hindus also suggests negative perception associated with Hindus due to their different religion. Allah Noor feels that the hatred directed towards them is comparable to the disdain felt towards Hindus generally by Muslims. His sentiments reflect a broader issue of social discrimination and prejudice faced by migrants and refugees, as he emphasizes the importance of family and homeland, suggesting that even a challenging life in one's own country is preferable to the difficulties faced as a refugee or migrant. His sentiments show the negative emotional and psychological toll of migration on one's sense of identity and well-being.

Allah Noor also discuss the discriminatory treatment he receives during bureaucratic interactions, as he describes.

> As I told you earlier about the woman in Questura, whenever she saw me going towards her, she shake her head in negative way, when I knock the door she do not say anything like Prego, she never ask me that what is my problem, and when I want to tell her about my problem she gets angry and tell me why everyday you come here. I do not know why they treat us like this, I think they do not like us. One day I told them that every day I come here not because I am an animal but for a legal work , I wait here for hours, and you take out your phones and keep talking to someone and ignoring me, and now that you finished talking, you are shaking your head , I am not an animal, if you do not like me, just tell me to leave Italy and I will leave it. I do not know how they treat other migrant, but they treat me and other friends from Afghanistan like this.

- 'Allah Noor', interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan

The woman's negative gestures, lack of verbal acknowledgment, and dismissive attitude towards Allah Noor create a sense of exclusion and frustration in him. He perceives this treatment as a result of personal dislike, expressing confusion about why they have treated him

in such a manner. His mention of feeling like an animal emphasizes the dehumanizing impact of the discriminatory behaviour. The plea to be informed if unwelcome in Italy reflects the emotional toll of bureaucratic discrimination on the Allah Noor well-being. Allah Noor also suggests that others, particularly friends from Afghanistan, experience similar mistreatment, indicating systemic issues in the treatment of migrants.

Attaullah Jan poignant experience of enduring prolonged dental pain during his residency in the camp, exacerbated by the denial of a health card, exemplifies the neglect, and differentiated medical care faced by refugees, contributing to their overall marginalization. Attaullah also discuss quality of the food receives by refugees in the camp. Attaullah argued that:

> if you got ill/sick, if you have a minor headache they will treat you, but if you got some serious pain or illness, they do not provide with treatment. Once I got a serous dental pain and it lasts for one and a half year, I would tell them to show me to a doctor, but they do not show me, because they didn't give me the health card, so if you do not have the health card you cannot go to a doctor or hospital., Then after one and a half year I go to the police and complained about it. I told them that since one and a half year I am like this, and if I did something wrong, I would not be responsible for that, because my brain is not working properly. On a certain night I would break the mirror on the other I would break the door, because of my brain was not functional. If I could not sleep at night due pain, I would break the door or do something wrong as a result.

> - 'Attaullah Jan', interviewed in Sedriano, Milan

Attaullah also argues that the camp management treat Italian prisoners on preferential basis as he said, "if there is an Italian in the same position, in prison or in the camp, and I saw that in many camps there are Italians prisoners, they give them a kind of treatment that they even care for their shoes, but they do not respect refugees". Attaullah also show his discomfort about the food they serve in Italian refugee camps as he says "food in Italian camps is not good, they will just give you boiled rice, macaroni, and the quality of the rice is the one with which we feed our pigeons and chicks in Afghanistan and Pakistan. So, for us they boil this rice, it is not spicy not salty nor sweet and nor tasteless. As Attaullah's narratives highlights a perception of refugees facing discrimination and lack of respect, particularly in Italy and within refugee camps. He suggests that the camps, despite receiving funds for refugee accommodation, the

situation remains challenging, portraying the treatment of refugees as a business, as he argues that:

> Refugees will be respected in any place but not in Italy, especially not in the camps, in camps they never treat a refugee with respect. And you know that they are receiving a lot of funds to accommodate refugees, it a business for them, but still we are unable lead a simple life here, we do not demand much, just give us, the refugees that are following the law, work and employment, and if there is any fake refugees or those who are involved in criminal activities or those who are against you, deport them, we will never ask you to let them stay here, but those who are real refugees and abiding by law should not be treat like the fake ones. They do not have to treat right and wrong the same way, it is not ok.
>
> - 'Attaullah Jan', interviewed in Sedriano, Milan

Attaullah appeals for fair and just treatment, distinguishing between genuine refugees following the law and those involved in criminal activities. He emphasizes the need for proper acknowledgment and differentiation rather than treating all refugees equally, calling for the deportation of individuals engaged in unlawful activities while urging respect and humane treatment for those genuinely seeking refuge and abiding by the law. His narrative suggests the internal conflict between the refugees and the impact of fake refugees' migration to Italy and its negative impact on the genuine refugee's situation and treatment by the Italian government and society. The overall sentiment points to a burden on refugees and a desire for more equitable treatment in the host country.

Attaullah, while discussing his situation at the camp, once again display his protest masculinity by saying that he always raises his voice against the discriminatory treatment of refuges in Italy especially within the refugee camps, as he argued.

> I used to be interviewed by Italians and whenever they asked me about our situation here, I told them that Italy is not a good place for refugees, I told them that they do not respect foreigners. I asked them, did you see any Italian living on the street, they said no, so I told them that Italy do not provide accommodation to refugees, and they are living in dirty/smelly places, and when they fell ill in the hospital, they do not treat them with respect, so this is totally unfair. They ask me to show them these places, I told them that whenever you want, I will go with you to show you these places, but you must do a survey

of these people and will provide the house and food for them, so that they can live a decent life.

- 'Attaullah Jan', interviewed in Sedriano, Milan

Attaullah's statement reflects elements of protest masculinity, as he engages in a form of protest by vocalizing concerns about the treatment of refugees in Italy. Through interviews with Italians, he tries to highlight the perceived injustices and lack of respect for foreigners, emphasizing the disparity in living conditions, healthcare, and overall treatment. Attaullah mention of inviting Italians to witness the challenging circumstances faced by refugees, shows sentiments of challenging the status quo by suggesting a survey and practical measures to address the issues. This demonstration of protest masculinity involves advocating for improved conditions and fair treatment for refugees, highlighting his desire to bring attention to the problems of refugees. Attaullah also express the reciprocal behaviour and practices of Pashtun masculinity within the migration context by suggesting to the Italians that "If Italians treat us with respect, we will fight alongside Italians, God forbid, if Italy goes on war with any other country or its enemy.

While discussing the structure of the refugee camps in Italy Ejaz Khan's response provides information on the varied types of refugee camps, highlighting differences in accommodation, as he describes.

> there are different types of camps, in some place the camp consists of many rooms while in other place it consists of one big hall. And all the refugees must live together in one hall. And there is also another type of camp, where they assigned a house which can be used as a camp and its usually amazing and beautiful. the camp houses are in different localities however, the big camps, where a lot of refugees live together are at one place. And there are also camps which are basically container and seven to eight persons live together in one container. But this container camp has all the facilities, like air conditioner in summers and which also work as heater in the winters.

- 'Ejaz Khan', interviewed in Comasina, Milan

Ejaz Khan provide descriptions of camps with many rooms, large halls, assigned houses, and container camps accommodating multiple residents. The mention of container camps with facilities like air conditioning and heating indicates varying living conditions. While some camps offer individual houses with positive features, the description of large halls suggests potential overcrowding issues. His description highlights the diverse nature of refugee accommodations, encompassing both positive and potentially challenging aspects, such as varying living conditions and the potential for crowded living spaces in some camp, however overall Ejaz khan show satisfaction with camp life. Ejaz khan also describes the health management protocol upon entering a refugee camp, as he said, "when we enter the camp, they do a health check-up for you to know if you are healthy or have any disease. So, if they found any disease the start your treatment. It can be any kind of illness any injuries on your feet or other part, they do the whole treatment". It shows that upon entering a refugee camp, individuals undergo a comprehensive health check-up, detecting and treating diseases or injuries promptly. The proactive approach emphasizes early intervention, ensuring refugees receive necessary medical attention, contributing to effective health management in the camp.

The narratives of some participants reveal an adaptation towards hybrid masculinity in migration context. More focus on work, adhering to rules, showing good behaviour, solving internal conflicts and negative behaviour, learning language are the ways to adaptation to Italian culture and society to avoid discrimination.

Jameel's nuanced perspective reflects the intricate coexistence of positive interactions and minority-held negative views among Italians, tied to internal conflicts within the refugee community, as he argues that "ninety percent of the Italian treat refugees with respect, the remaining ten percent do not like us because our people they fight among themselves and sometime do wrong things that's why, but normally Italians are good to us" (Jameel interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan). Shahab Momand, a Pashtun refugee from Pakistan, underscore the pivotal role of language and cultural understanding in mitigating discrimination, emphasizing the impact of communication gaps on perceptions of outsiders. Shahab Momand argues that "generally, Italians are good people but if you do not know the language and culture they consider you as strangers, secondly even if they consider you good or bad, we do not know what they are thinking about us because of the communication gap, and you will be confused" (Shahab Momand, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan). It reveals the importance of adaptability and integration for migrants to navigate societal dynamics. The communication

gap becomes a significant challenge, contributing to confusion and potential misinterpretation of intentions. Bilal Khan, a Pashtun refugee from Pakistan, emphasizes a pragmatic approach to focus on work and avoidance of unnecessary social inclusion. His viewpoint underscores the agency of migrants in shaping their own experiences through active engagement in work-related activities, as he argues that "I never feel any disrespect here, you have your own work, you do your work, and they will pay you. So, the Italians are good people they are not bad people" (Bilal Khan, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan). Shahab Saleem similarly emphasizes good behaviour and adherence to work as strategies to avoid discrimination, presenting a form of masculinity rooted in adaptability and self-regulation. The emphasis on personal conduct reflects an effort to blend cultural backgrounds with the expectations of Italian society, as he argues that "here we do our work and do not interfere in other people matters and they also do not interfere in ours. here if you have good behaviour no body disrespect you, if you do not interfere in other people matters, they do not say anything to you" (Shahab Saleem, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan). Similarly, Ejaz Khan's argument further emphasizing adherence to rules, good behaviour, and a commitment to one's work as pathways to gaining respect. Ejaz khan Argues that "here if you do wrong things, you will be disrespected. But if you follow the rules and do good you will be respected. As there is a saying in Pashto language that, *kanrey che pa yaw zai prot v no droon khkari*" means that "when a stone remains at the place where it belongs it seems to have more weight" (Ejaz khan interviewed in Comasina, Milan). It means that if a person sticks to his own work and does not interfere in other people work, he will be respected.

As discussed, that some of the participants claims that Pashtuns are receiving discriminatory and exclusionary treatment as compared to Italian citizen and other European and American migrants. They also share their perspectives on the treatment of Pashtuns as compared to other non-European and American ethnic and migrant groups in Milan. Some of participants believe that Pashtun are treated equally with other groups while other believe that Pashtun are treated with more respect than other migrant, as Pashtun are not involved in crimes and drugs and are more focused on their work. While discussing the preferential treatment of Pashtuns in comparison to other groups by Italians, Ejaz Khan argues that:

> I feel that the Italians like Pashtun people more than other groups because we Pashtuns do not commit crimes and drugs, we do not interfere in other people affairs, while the other groups specifically Africans and Arabs they do all the illegal things, you can say that it is

the African and Arabs who invented the drugs here, they do drugs and do not work. These people are happy without work and without responsibility, as we say in Pashto *kor na pa sahra khushala vi*, means someone who feel happier outside the home than at home or without family than with the family.

(Ejaz Khan, interviewed in Comasina, Milan)

Ejaz's statement reflects a perception of differential treatment of migrants by the Italian society. he believes Italians prefer Pashtun people over other groups due to the perceived absence of criminal activities and drug use among Pashtuns. In contrast, he negatively stereotypes Africans and Arabs, associating them with illegal behaviours and involvement in drugs. This suggests a biased view that contributes to preferential treatment based on cultural and behavioural assumptions, highlighting potential discrimination and unequal treatment of different migrant groups by the host society. Similarly, Attaullah Jan argues that:

The Italians treat the Arabs and Africans different than us, when they arrest an Arab or African person, they treat them very harshly/with violence, because Arabs and African/blacks, they steal, they sell Hash and Heroine. But when they arrest you and you told them that I am Pashtun, they let you go, they believe that Pashtuns are good people, they are not involved in crimes. But they treat Arabs and black this way because they are harming this country.

(Attaullah Jan, interviewed in Sedriano, Milan)

Bilal khan argues that "in my opinion the Italians do not differentiates between different ethnic groups such as Afghani, Bengalis, Indians or African, they treat all of them equally". Similarly, Shahab Saleem argue that "Italians treat all the migrants equally, but it depends on your own behaviour".

6.5. Family separation, isolation, and emotional distress

The narratives presented also illuminates the intricate ways in which family separation, isolation, and emotional stress contribute to the marginalized position of migrant men. Participants, such as Ejaz Khan reveal a spectrum of emotions tied to their separation from family, expressing sadness and longing for their parents and siblings. Ejaz khan express that:

> sometimes I feel unhappy, when you fell ill then you know the importance of family and parents, because you are alone here no body care for you everything will be on your own, so in that situation I miss my parents and siblings friends etc. so in that situation when I am sad or ill I do not discussed it with family or friend because then they will be worried about me, so I go hard on myself but do not want to disturb others. And when the problem is solved then I let them know what has happened.

> - 'Ejaz Khan', a Pashtun refugee from Pakistan, interviewed in Comasina, Milan.

Similarly, Dawood Afridi argues that "every person wants to get the documents as quick as possible to go back to meet their families and parents. Because most of irregular migrants are young and their parents are aged, so everyone wants to get the documents to be free to visit his family and parents legally" (Dawood Afridi, a Pashtun refugee from Pakistan, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan). Shahab Momand highlights the emotional toll of leaving family behind as he expresses.

> It is very difficult when you left behind your parent and siblings, while knowing that the ways through which I am traveling is a risk to life so it is very difficult. But if you do not have other option then you must face it. And some time when there is any problem back home it makes me so sad, then I think maybe I was there so I would handle it myself and help my father and family. Some also I miss my mother and village, which also make sad. So, I talk to my family regularly, but they do not disclose thing and issues to me thinking that I will be after knowing the issue.

> - 'Shahab Momand', a Pashtun refugee from Pakistan, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan.

While discussing about his family Zahir Rahman goes into long silence, and then starts crying, he was unable to express his emotions verbally and was crying for quite some time. His breakdown into tears reveals the profound impact of parental loss and family separation, as he expresses that:

> the sadness and pain of heart can be shared only with your parents especially your mother, and it go away only discussing with you parents, but as I told you my parents passed away and currently I do not have any alternative to share my feeling of sadness and pain with, because it is your parent who did all for you and when you become able to do something

for them the go away, so in every happy or sad moment I really missed them, so some time when I sad or happy I say let's talk to my mother but suddenly I realized that she is dead. When they are alive, we do not feel their presence but when they left us, we realized that how important they were. There is no alternative for the parents, I would use to call my parents after finishing work then my mother passed away and after some time my father also passed away while I was here, so it was very painful that I did not see them in their last days.

- 'Zahir Rahman', a Pashtun refugee from Pakistan, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan.

Allah Noor expresses profound emotional distress due to family separation and the difficult situation in Afghanistan. The separation causes him intense sadness, uncontrollable feelings, and suffering. The fear for the family's future induces depression and affects his daily life activities highlighting the emotional toll of transnational migration. As he describes:

I really miss my family and my elder brother, and it makes me very sad. We you first ask for the interview I told you that I have a lot of personal problems, and I cannot control my feelings, I go through a lot of sufferings, if someone else was in my position/place, he would not be able to survive/live. When I am alone in my room I weep/cry so loudly that you would not believe, and sometimes I do not want to come out for work it makes me depressed. Sometime when i watch any video of the difficult situation in Afghanistan it makes me suffer, because when I watch it, I start thinking about my own children and family, then it fears me what they would do how they would survive if something happened to me, they will be without any future.

- 'Zahir Rahman', a Pashtun refugee from Pakistan, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan.

These narratives depict the emotional complexity of the migrant experience, showcasing how family separation, isolation, and emotional stress intertwine to create a sense of marginalization, compounded by cultural expectations and the challenges of providing for distant families, influencing the mental well-being and sense of masculinity of these migrant men in the host country.

While the participants face emotional struggles due to family separation and isolation in transnational context, However, the cultural expectations around masculinity, particularly in Pashtun culture, discourage the open expression of emotions, leading individuals to internalize their struggles, as Ejaz argues "a man should not express his emotions or feelings, because if you are happy or unhappy nobody cares, nobody is going to give you money, if I am unhappy, I will bear it myself there is no need to share it with other people" (Ejaz Khan, a Pashtun refugee from Pakistan, interviewed in Comasina, Milan). Similarly, Dawood argues that "for a Pashtun man it is shameful to cry in front of others, but we are human beings and when we feel sad and want to cry then we should go aside to cry, crying is not a bad thing, it makes you feel better, but when you cry in front of the people it is a cheap act" (Dawood Afridi, a Pashtun refugee from Pakistan, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan). Shahab Momand express the same narrative as he argues "I do not share anything with friends, but sometimes I talk to my mother, but I do not share my sadness with her as well, because I think that she will be sad for me then" (Shahab Momand, a Pashtun refugee from Pakistan, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan). Bilal khan discusses the suppression of emotions, particularly crying, associating crying with softness. There's a distinction between those with "soft hearts" and "hard, tough hearts". While acknowledging human vulnerability, the emphasis is on men not showing emotion, linking it to strength and resilience, as he argues:

> I do not show my feelings mostly. I never cried until now. Some people who have soft hearts the sometime cry, but some have hard tough hearts, so they do not cry. And if someone cry in front of me, I will be sad for him and will try to help him in any way possible. Because some time human being become weak, they feel incapable, they do not see any hope or way to come out of the difficulties, so it makes them cry. But mostly men they do not cry.
>
> - 'Bilal Khan', a Pashtun refugee from Pakistan, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan.

6.6. Gender roles reversal

The provided narratives also suggest a scenario where participants are engaged in both earning a living through work outside the home and undertaking domestic responsibilities traditionally associated with women, experiencing a form of gender role reversal. In the context of migration, this reversal of gender roles is potentially a marginalizing experience for men and

their sense of masculinity. The Participants implies a departure from traditional expectations of men as primary breadwinners, highlighting the difficulty and stress associated with balancing external work responsibilities and domestic chores. The cultural norms and expectations surrounding masculinity in Pashtun culture may perceive such role reversal as a deviation from traditional gender roles, leading to a sense of emasculated and marginalization for the men involved. The societal expectations around men as providers and the potential strain of deviating from these norms may impact the individual's perception of his own masculinity, contributing to a complex interplay of gender, identity, and societal expectations in the migration context. Zahir Rahman for example express that "during the day I work here then I go home, I will cook something to eat then wash clothes and other household chores. So, doing work outside to earn money is possible, but along with household chores it is very difficult and stressing" (Zahir Rahman, a Pashtun refugee from Pakistan, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan). Similarly Ejaz khan provided that " my one-day routine is that, when I work, in the morning I go to work, and when I came back to home, I do some household chores such as cleaning, cooking, washing cloths etc, then go out with friends for a walk or any other work outside the home" (Ejaz khan, a Pashtun refugee from Pakistan, interviewed in Comasina, Milan). Gender role reversal is a common practice among Pashtun food delivery workers, as they are living without families here in Italy. Usually, they live together with four to six roommates. They divide household chores based on days of the week, akin to the distribution of tasks in Pashtun households among women. For instance, the roommate assigned to prepare meals or clean the house on a certain day, leaves work earlier to fulfil his duty, while others join in later when the meal is ready. Although one could argue that this represents a step toward gender equality and a shift in participants' perceptions of gender roles, they emphasize that these tasks are traditionally considered women's work. They engage in such roles due to their current living arrangements without families, and the cost of dining out is a contributing factor.

Chapter seven

Between freedom and control: exploring provider masculinity among Pashtuns in food delivery work in Milan.

As I have briefly discussed the issues face by the participants as refugees, in finding a suitable employment and their exploitation in the work, and the financial crises they may have faced in Italy, undermining their sense of provider masculinity and manhood. In this section I will discuss the food delivery work being a source to attain the provider masculinity among the participants. While the food delivery work may have not the esteemed profession both in Italy and their home.

7.1. Exploring provider masculinity and the meaning of freedom among Pashtun food delivery worker.

The literature on masculinity frequently emphasizes the direct connection between men's perception of masculinity and their engagement in paid work and provision for the family. According to Pease (2009):

> it was not unexpected to discover that one major theme emerging from these interviews with men was the significance of the provider role. Given the significance of paid work on their lives, one would expect that unemployment and unskilled work would have major consequences on immigrant men's sense of manhood. Men's power is experienced as being founded upon their paid work, whereas women's roles are seen as being based in childcare and domestic work (p. 81-82).

Similarly, Mungai and Pease (2009), argues that the traditional role of men as primary providers for the family is a significant influence across diverse backgrounds. Masculinity, often linked to being the economic provider, is emphasized in Latin American countries. This association persists among men interviewed, both in their home countries and in Australia. Regardless of family structure, the pressure to provide is a crucial aspect of men's identities, influencing their sense of respect and authority in both household and community settings. As discussed in chapter two that the concept of a male breadwinner for the family remains a widespread phenomenon, and even in the face of socio-economic changes, the ideal of the male breadwinner persists in societies (Kanji & Samuel 2012). In Pashtun society, *kor palana* (provision for the family) is an integral part of masculinity in Pashtunwali, it is the duty of men to provide for and safeguard the family. This enduring ideal of the male breadwinner remains

intact, despite the increasing involvement of Pashtun women in paid employment (Rzehak, 2011; Saeed, 2012; Sanauddin, 2015). In the context of transnational migration Shahab Momand, for instance, argues that how work and provision for the family is linked to the ideals of Pashtun masculinity.

> It is not an easy task to take out money from someone pockets, you must do hard work for him and then the person will pay you, but you must do that because when you are grown up you have a lot of responsibilities. A person who does not work in our society everybody looks down upon him and regard him as a cheap person.
>
> - 'Shahab Momand', a Pashtun refugee from Pakistan, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan.

Despite the challenges faced by the participant in Italy in terms of finding work and their exploitation in the work, making it difficult for them to survive and provide for their families, the delivery work can be seen as a source of attaining the provider masculinity among the participants and in effect influence their social recognition and respect in the home communities. As discussed briefly in chapter three, the participant considers the delivery work as an independent work where they are not bound to any strict schedule and supervision and have flexible work hours which strongly connects to their sense of masculinity, independence, and freedom. Sartaj Khan for example said, "*Tata kho pata da che pashtun da cha ghulami na kavi*" – means, "as you know that Pashtun do not like to be enslaved, or to do work under someone's supervision". Sartaj khan further argues that:

> this work is good because you do not have any boss in this work, if you do other jobs you will work under a Cappo/boss, so if only for a moment you stop working, the Cappo/Boss will give you bad looks. So, the delivery work is free of this tension. Secondly there is no boundedness it depends on your mood, whatever time you want to work there is strict duty hours.
>
> Sartaj Khan, a Pashtun refugee from Pakistan, interviewed at Bicocca village Milan).

Bilal Khan another delivery worker said that *da dasi kar dy che da chaa ghag ba darpasi na wi* – mean that, "this is a kind of work where no body supervised you" (Bilal Khan, a Pashtun

refugee from Pakistan, interviewed at Bicocca village Milan). The income structure of the food delivery industry primarily depends on the number of orders fulfilled, allowing workers to select their preferred working hours, as Shahab Saleem asserts that *Sta khwakha da ka kar ke aw ka nak e, aw che sa time di khwakh v da kaar kawly shi* – means that "it is up to you if you want to work or not there is no compulsion or you can chose your favourite time to do this work" (Shahab Saleem, a Pashtun refugee from Pakistan, interviewed at Bicocca village Milan). Similarly, Dawood Afridi Assert that "I really like this work because you are not accountable to anyone" (Dawood Afridi, a Pashtun refugee from Pakistan, interviewed at Bicocca village Milan). The participants also consider the delivery work as less exploitative and where they can earn more, and more suitable for refugees and asylum seekers, due to their lack of documentation and skills, as compared to work in a restaurant or any other company. Sartaj Khan opened his app to show me his income, he said, *ogora nan oweshtam (27th) dy aw ma 1800-euro kri di* – mean that "look it is the 27th of the month and I have made 1800 euros" (Sartaj Khan, a Pashtun refugee from Pakistan, interviewed at Bicocca village Milan). Zahir Rahman argues that "I start the job because it is relatively easier than other jobs. First, it is flexible, and you can offer your prayers during the work as it is an independent work, secondly, it is easy for me because it does not require any special skills". Zahir Rahman further explain that "if you work in a restaurant and possess legal document they will offer you maximum 1000 euros and if you do not have the documents and work illegally they will offer you maximum 600 to 700 euros for 12 hours of work, while in delivery we work for 7 to 8 hours and earn 1500 to 2000 euros per month" (Zahir Rahman, a Pashtun refugee from Pakistan, interviewed at Bicocca village Milan). Similarly, Sartaj khan argues that:

> if you work in restaurant which has less customers and the boss is not earning enough you will also be sad that maybe he does not have money to pay me, and you can also earn more in delivery work than other jobs as well. Some of the boys earn around 2500 to 3000 euros per month, so 2000 plus is a good amount. Few days ago, I met an Italian restaurant owner, in his restaurant when I saw the restaurant there was no customers, I thought that what he will earn in this restaurant, I believed that I would earn more than him in the delivery work.

> - 'Sartaj Khan', a Pashtun refugee from Pakistan, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan.

The type of work also play an important role in social recognition and to be respected as a man in Pashtun culture and society. In Pashtun society certain profession are considered as demeaning while other are respected, due to cultural norms and religious beliefs. The delivery work in Pashtun society, as many of the participants also suggests, considered to be less respectable, and as I discussed in chapter three that some educated Pashtun migrants involved in formal employments in Milan, compares delivery work with the street vending in Pakistan, using the word *Saadaro wala* for delivery worker. However, the transnational context provides these men with the opportunity and freedom to perform any kind of work through which they can earn money legally, and to support their families. Jameel a refugee and food delivery worker from Pakistan argues that:

> If I do this work (food delivery) in Pakistan there is no respect for it, here I am doing this work with respect nobody disrespect me. I am working here but people in Pakistan also respect me, they recognize our migration and earning money here, and earning money is closely link to respect back home. They do not care about what kind of job I am doing here, no matter what I do here but if I am making money here, they respect me. But if you do this work in Pakistan there is no respect for this work no matter how hard you do it there, they will never respect you. To this kind of work people do not give respect similarly as the fruit seller on the cart. In Pakistan there is no respect for the poor even if you are highly educated but if you do not have money nobody respects you.

- 'Jameel', a Pashtun refugee from Pakistan, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan.

Jameel examines the perception of food delivery work in diverse cultural settings of Pakistan and Italy. Jameel highlights the positive reception and respect accorded to delivery work in the Milan/Italy, contrasting it with the perceived lack of respect in Pakistan, akin to stereotypes associated with jobs like fruit selling in Pakistan. His narrative establishes an important link between economic migration, earnings abroad, and the respect garnered back home, emphasizing the role of financial success in shaping social recognition irrespective of job type. Moreover, the mention of respect being tied to financial status in Pakistan reveals a socio-economic hierarchy, where even highly educated individuals may face disrespect without financial means influencing one's sense of masculinity. Additionally, the transnational impact of working abroad is explored, suggesting that money earned in Italy significantly influences the social standing of migrants in Pakistan, showcasing the intricate interplay between economic migration, work perception, and societal respect in a transnational context. In

essence, the transformative impact of transnational experiences on an individual's identity and sense of respect is evident in Jameel perspective. Similarly, Bilal Khan, a Pashtun refugee and food delivery worker from Pakistan argues that:

> in Pakistan there is no such work like delivery, but if you do it there, and deliver the order to someone, it is quite possible that they abuse you. So, it would be very difficult there. Here when you deliver the order they say thanks to you, but in Pakistan you deliver the order a minute or two late, they will abuse you.

> - 'Bilal Khan', a Pashtun refugee from Pakistan, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan.

It is evident from Bilal's statement that transnational migration to Italy provides the Pashtun men with the chance to explore diverse job opportunities that may not receive traditional recognition or respect in their Pashtun society. The cultural differences in work perception become evident when comparing reactions to delivery work in Milan/Italy, characterized by gratitude, to those in Pakistan, where potential abuse is mentioned. Despite the challenges or lack of recognition for delivery work in Pakistan, Bilal suggests that migrants working abroad have the potential to gain respect from their home country. Zahir Rahman also provides a similar narrative about the freedom transnational migration accord him to do any kind of job to support his family, despite the perceived lack of respect associated with delivery work in Pakistan and for that matter in Italy as well. Zahir Rahman argues that:

> As you know a person who sell things on the wheel cart in Pakistan, people call him *rerai wala, alaka wai rerai wala dai*, (a person who sell things on a wheel cart). similarly, people also did not consider this work a respectable profession, normally the people do not respect this work. But we are doing this here to support our families. If I go back to Pakistan, I cannot do the Daily wage work for someone, they will say that even I spent time in Europe and still I am working as daily wager with other people. But here we do not have anything to do with other people, they do not know us, as in Pakistan everybody knows each other. So here we are free to do different kind of jobs to earn money without any social pressure.

> - 'Zahir Rahman', a Pashtun refugee from Pakistan, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan.

Dawood Afridi shows his frustration while working as delivery worker due to his religious beliefs negatively impacting his sense of identity and manhood due to the complexity transnational context, as he expresses.

> The work that we are doing here is Haram/forbidden in Islam. Because if you work in food delivery you must deliver alcohol and pork, but as you know these things are forbidden in Islam. But because we need work here earn some money, we deliver it; we do not have other option, but this is the only thing that irritates a lot to deliver alcohol, pork, and other *haram* (forbidden in Islam) items. And it is not that only drinking and eating *haram* items is a sin in Islam, but serving and delivering *haram* items is also a sin.
>
> - 'Dawood Afridi', a Pashtun refugee from Pakistan, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan.

Dawood's statement highlights the internal conflict experienced by him by involving in a profession forbidden in Islam, driven by the imperative to survive in a transnational context. It suggests that the transnational context on one provide individuals with varied opportunities for employment, to support their families and to gain social recognition and respect, while on the other hand, it can bring personal discomfort and a loss of self-respect. As Dawood grapples with a profound moral and religious dilemma, acknowledging the forbidden nature of their work in delivering items like alcohol and pork, in direct conflict with Islamic teachings. This moral quandary arises from the tension between religious principles and the practical need to secure employment for livelihood. Dawood admission of having no other options underscores the challenges individuals encounter in aligning their work with religious beliefs in transnational context, highlighting a potential negative impact on his emotional well-being and identity.

During the field work I also observed that very less Italian people are attracted to the delivery work as a source of livelihood, it may be due to their education level, which can be seen as an indicator that in Italian society too, the delivery work is not considered as a respectable profession, which make the participants excluded from the local standards of manhood and masculinity. Zahir Rahman provides insights into the type of work and potential exclusion from local standards of manhood in Italy for individuals engaged in certain professions, as he argues that:

We would hear that in Europe nobody judges you from your work, but it also exists here, our example here is that of *rerai wala* in Pakistan. And you will notice that Italians do not do this work, it means that it is not respectable profession here, even though they can earn more in delivery work than other jobs. not all the Italians are the same people give us respect here like during the corona they would appreciate our work as we were supplying food the homes, they also sometime give us tips, so all of them are not the same.

- 'Zahir Rahman', a Pashtun refugee from Pakistan, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan.

Zahir's comparison between delivery work in Italy with *rerai wala* in Pakistan, suggests that certain occupations face stigma or lack of respect in both contexts. His statement implies that engaging in certain types of work, despite potentially offering higher earnings, may result in exclusion from local standards of manhood in Italy due mainstream societal perceptions of manhood and occupation, and cultural expectations around masculinity. Despite biases, instances of recognition and respect are evident, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic, challenging generalizations about Italians' views on certain professions and emphasizing cultural variability within the Italian community. Similarly, Shahab Momand argues that "Italians do not work in food delivery services, but for us its good because we earn through this work which support us here and our family back home" (Shahab Momand, Pashtun refugee from Pakistan, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan). Shahab, while making a distinction between Italians and Pashtuns, in terms of work preferences, suggests a marginalized position of migrants resulting from performing in marginalised occupations. Sartaj Khan provide a more balanced view on delivery work comparing it with other jobs available to them in Italy and to avoid disrespect from Italians, the riders should take care of the hygiene, as he argued " this work is not good nor bad, it is a balance work, for example a person who do dishes in a restaurant, it is better than that, but you must stay clean and if you care about hygiene, it is a good work and people would not hate you for this work" (Sartaj Khan, a Pashtun refugee from Pakistan, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan). Allah Noor also argues that the Italians did not disrespect us the delivery we are doing but because of some riders who do follow the traffic rules and hygiene, and that they are disrespecting the whole migrant community, as he argues.

They (Italians) treat us with respect, but some of our riders, they do not know humanity, they ride the bikes in wrong way, their bags are not clean, the do not wear clean uniforms, so, if my dress is not clean and I go to deliver food to a customer, he will think that how

dirty person I am then how he can eat that food, and that's why they are allergic from us, but it is not their fault, sometimes they are wrong but sometimes we are wrong too. As the Pashtuns says that *da wacho sra lamda hm swazi* (sometimes the innocent people also get punished along with the guilty ones). So, because of these dirty riders the Italians look down upon us/disrespect us too. if we keep ourselves clean and follow the rules then maybe they start loving/respecting us.

- 'Allah Noor', a Pashtun refugee from Afghanistan, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan.

Bilal khan argues that "I do not know how they (Italians) look at our work, but I consider this work good because I earn through this and provide for my family. Jameel argue that "people here, they do not disrespect us for doing this job" (Bilal Khan, a Pashtun refugee from Pakistan, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan).Dawood also suggest that he did not feel disrespect from Italians, on the contrary he compliment the Italians as good people as he said, "when I start working with uber, initially I made a lot of mistakes, but the Italians are good people, when you say scusa/sorry to them, they accept your apology for your mistakes" (Dawood Afridi, a Pashtun refugee from Pakistan, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan).

7.2. App based control measures for worker's time and behaviour in food delivery services.

The preceding discussion reveals that the participants perceive delivery work as possessing greater flexibility and independence, providing them with a sense of relative freedom. However, it is important to note that this perceived freedom is conceptual rather than actual, as previously discussed regarding their work schedules (chapter three) and will be further explored in this section. I will also discuss the process of starting the delivery work and issues and problem the workers face during the work. According to Li and Jiang (2022), the food delivery industry offers workers apparent autonomy in setting their work hours, yet it enforces "responsibility autonomy" within platform-defined constraints. This control relies on technology and data, creating an "electronic panoptic control" system. Workers face intense app-based monitoring, and consumers can track orders. Manipulated delivery times, worker competition, and blurred work-life boundaries add pressure, making practical emotional labour essential. Despite the illusion of freedom, the industry exerts strong time control mechanisms, affecting delivery workers' work-life balance. As outlined in the first chapter, participants engage simultaneously with various delivery companies. Commencing work with a delivery

company involves an initial online application process, necessitating the submission of diverse identity and legal documents, including the passport, stay permit, and codice fiscale. Upon approval of these documents, employees are instructed to procure specific equipment and accessories such as bags, helmets, gloves, etc. Subsequently, the company validates their identification. It is crucial to note that asylum seekers are eligible to apply for delivery work only upon obtaining the requisite legal documents, such as refugee status and codice fiscale.

Following the approval of the application, the company dispatches contracts to workers tailored to their specific identity; for instance, students receive a student contract since many apply for delivery work. The workers are also given the option to choose between part-time or full-time employment, dictating the type of contract they receive. These contracts encompass health insurance and vehicle insurance for motorbikes, excluding coverage for bicycles in cases of theft or damage. Moreover, the company offers online courses on security and road safety via video content. After watching the videos, workers are tested based on the content, and upon passing, they are issued certificate.

Most of the participants contend that full-time employment in this field lacks set hourly limits. Occasionally, the company offers promotions, often during weekends or challenging weather conditions like extreme heat or rain. Furthermore, workers may receive instructions to fulfil specific orders, typically ranging from 15 to 20, in order to qualify for bonuses. To meet these order requirements or capitalize on promotions, individuals invest significant time in the workplace and make substantial investments in enhancing the efficiency and productivity of their bikes. This arrangement suggests a scenario where the workers experience limited freedom, and the company exercises extended control over their schedules and activities. The absence of set hourly limits for employment, which seem by the workers as flexibility, indicates a lack of clear boundaries between work and leisure, also allowing the company to potentially manipulate workers for prolonged working hours. Promotions offered during weekends or challenging weather conditions further imply that workers may feel compelled to work during less favourable times, showcasing a limited choice in determining their work hours due to manipulation of more earnings. Additionally, the requirement to fulfil a specific number of orders for bonuses places a performance-driven demand on the workers, potentially pressuring them to invest significant time and resources to meet these targets, thereby reducing their freedom in managing their work-life balance. The statement highlights a power dynamic where

the company influences the workers' time investment and work strategies, indicating an extended level of control by the company.

The company also instruct workers that their performance evaluation hinges on client reviews, affording clients more influence than the workers. Although there is an online helpline for workers to address concerns, they often hesitate to complain, fearing it may diminish their standing and create problems. Consequently, if a client files a complaint about a worker's behaviour, the company reserves the right to block the worker's ID. The client review system operates in a way that workers cannot view client reviews. Based on these reviews, the company assigns stars on a scale of 1 to 5 to a worker's ID, influencing the number of orders and work hours received by the worker. Based on this information, it can be argued that workers have limited freedom, while clients and the company wield more power and control. The reliance on client reviews for performance evaluation gives clients significant influence over the workers, establishing a power dynamic where the clients' opinions carry more weight than the workers' efforts. The existence of an online helpline for workers to address concerns is undermined by workers' reluctance to complain due to fear of repercussions. The company's reserved right to block a worker's ID based on client complaints further underscores the imbalance of power. Additionally, the opaque nature of the client review system, inaccessible to workers, diminishes transparency and exacerbates the power disparity. The assignment of stars by the company based on client reviews becomes a determining factor in the workers' order volume and work hours, consolidating the company's control and emphasizing the limited agency of the workers.

The company determines order rates considering factors like work hours, weather conditions, weekends, and specific work zones, requiring workers to conform to these criteria. As mentioned earlier, participants employ multiple apps concurrently for increased productivity and efficiency, minimizing downtime. A notable challenge arising from fieldwork is the participants' contention that the growing number of delivery workers has extended their time spent in the workplace to meet targets. Importantly, there is a lack of an organized body advocating for the collective interests of the workers in this regard. It is evident from these observations that workers have limited influence over the determination of order rates, while the company exercises more control by setting rates based on various factors. The company's role in determining rates considering work hours, weather conditions, weekends, and specific work zones establishes a framework where workers must adhere to these predetermined

criteria, reducing their autonomy in negotiating or influencing their pay. Although participants use multiple apps simultaneously to enhance productivity, the overarching challenge arises from the growing number of delivery workers, leading to extended working hours as workers strive to meet targets. The absence of an organized body advocating for the collective interests of the workers further diminishes their ability to negotiate or influence the company's rate-setting decisions. Overall, the company retains more control in determining order rates, limiting the influence and agency of the workers in this aspect.

In September 2022, delivery workers organised demonstrations, in Milan, over a reduction in rates and an increase in ride distances for order deliveries. While the majority of Pashtun workers actively participated in the protest, a portion abstained, creating internal conflicts within the Pashtun community. Other communities, including Africans, Bengalis, and Punjabis, were relatively less engaged in the protest, leading to clashes between workers. Some groups continued working, causing disruption as opposing groups aimed to halt operations in support of the protest. Following the protest, I engaged in discussions with both protesting and non-protesting Pashtun delivery workers. Protesting Pashtuns believed that the lack of support from non-protesting workers, including Africans, Punjabis, and Bengalis, led to an unsuccessful protest. Conversely, non-protesting individuals viewed the protest as futile, asserting that it would not influence company policies, and opted to prioritize work and earning money over participating in what they deemed a time-wasting and ineffective protest. They also expressed the opinion that despite the current rates, the earnings here are considerably better than the situation in Pakistan. Therefore, rather than engaging in protests, delivery workers should express gratitude towards the companies for providing them with employment.

Engaging in protests for fair ride rates can be viewed as a demonstration of protest masculinity. Those Pashtun workers who chose not to participate were derogatorily referred to as *begharata* by the protesting Pashtuns, regardless of their ethnicity. Shahab Saleem, discussing a Pashtun worker absent from the protest, remarked, "*da dah beghairata bachay hm na wo protest ke*" (this son of a dishonoured was also not present in the protest). The derogatory term "*Begharata*" used for Pashtun workers not participating in the protests implies a questioning of their honour and masculinity. The statement by Shahab Saleem further emphasizes the societal expectation for Pashtun men to actively take part in collective struggles and labelling those who do not as "sons of dishonoured" underscores the significance of collective action and the perceived erosion of masculinity for those who choose not to engage in such practices.

This context underscores the complex interplay of Pashtun masculinity within the dynamics of migration and labour protest.

While discussing the outcome of the protest Allah Noor argues that:

> It was a failed protest no one stand by us, the police came, and they disperse the protestors, it was against the lower rates, it is an injustice with us, because previously the rate for two-kilometre ride was 4 euros, now its 3 kilometres for 2.5 euros. Now, Glovo company also exploit us, and no one is there to raise voice for us.
>
> - 'Allah Noor', a Pashtun refugee from Afghanistan, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan.

It is evident from the statement that the perceived injustice of the reduction of rates for a specific distance, from 4 euros for a two kilometres ride to 2.5 euros for three kilometres. This change is seen as a form of exploitation by the delivery companies, indicating a power dynamic where the workers feel disempowered and unheard. The absence of external support or advocacy adds to the participants' sense of vulnerability. The protest's failure suggests a lack of collective resistance or organized efforts to address the issues of pay reduction and potential exploitation. While discussing about the existence of delivery worker's union or any organised body Allah Noor said that:

> They (the workers) do not have any such thing, *da rando hukoomat dy* (it is like the kingdom/government of the blinds), if someone beat you up or you beat up someone, nobody asks. That's why we just came here to work for a specific time, we do not talk too much to everyone, because possibly it will lead you to fighting and create problems for you.
>
> - 'Allah Noor', a Pashtun refugee from Afghanistan, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan.

Similarly, Bilal Khan said that: "some days ago there was a protest of the delivery workers but there is no such organization, we do not have any leadership or something, and I do not know who organize it and who spread this message to the delivery workers" (Bilal Khan, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan). Both these statements highlight that the workers, feel a lack of

collective resistance and adopt a strategic low-profile approach. as Allah Noor describe their environment as lawless, where actions go unaccountable. The metaphorical reference to a "kingdom of the blinds" suggests a sense of accountability absence. In this scenario the workers strategically limit interactions to avoid conflicts, indicating a coping mechanism to navigate vulnerability. This approach to migration for economic gain, coupled with the fear of fighting and problems, reflects a compromise for survival, potentially impacting the assertiveness of their masculinity amid exploitation and unfamiliar conditions.

The tactic of maintaining silence and a low profile can perceived as a compromise primarily concerning interactions with Italians/Europeans and authorities, aiming to prevent issues and concentrate on work and income. Nevertheless, within the migrant community, particularly with Punjabis and fellow Pashtuns, a more assertive stance is adopted, occasionally resulting in confrontations. During the fieldwork once I witnessed a physical altercation between two Pashtun delivery workers. While sitting together, they engaged in a heated argument that escalated into a physical fight. One worker struck the other on the nose, causing bleeding. The injured worker went to a nearby park to clean up, while the other expressed triumph, stating that if he remembers this, he will never fight with me again. Verbal abuse, targeting the other's mother and sister, was also exchanged during the altercation, as in Pashtun culture, it is customary for people not to direct verbal abuse towards a man but rather towards his female family members, which is considered more disgraceful for the individual. When I inquired about the incident later, they chose not to disclose the details to me.

7.3. Beyond the App: Practical Challenges, marginalization, and test of masculinity among Pashtun food delivery workers

The delivery workers also encounter practical challenges and difficulties inherent to the nature of the job and the workplace environment. While these issues have the potential to marginalize the delivery worker, they also perceive the demanding nature of their work as a test of masculinity, involving enduring hardships and making sacrifices for the well-being of their families. As Jameel contends, "It is not an easy job; you must do it in heat and rain, and accidents can happen. Nevertheless, we endure these challenges, aiming to deliver orders promptly and to the correct address" (Jameel, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan). During participant observations, it was evident that they conceal vulnerability, refusing help even in times of need, such as after falling from the bike, displaying resilience and a reluctance to exhibit weakness or pain.

During the discussions with Pashtun delivery workers, they would frequently delve into the intricacies of their rides, detailing the challenges posed by uneven roads, which hindered their ability to complete deliveries promptly and comfortably, resulting in physical discomfort and problems. They underscored the substantial toll of biking the entire day, seven days a week, even when utilizing electric bikes. Notably, one Pashtun delivery worker shared his struggle with bladder issues due to extensive biking/cycling, noting the occurrence of blood during urination as a result. He further mentioned that upon consulting with a doctor, I learned that prolonged biking/cycling could lead to sexual dysfunction. This revelation caused significant stress, especially since I was engaged and approaching marriage, fearing potential embarrassment in front of my wife, I contemplated discontinuing delivery work to avoid any adverse impact on my sexual health. Conversations about erectile dysfunction were prevalent among the delivery workers whenever they talked about the repercussions of extensive biking/cycling. However, these discussions were often laced with humour, and individuals refrained from admitting personal struggles. Some would talk about how the demanding nature and high-speed biking/cycling to meet delivery deadlines also contributed to kidney problems among delivery workers. Additionally, delivery workers bring up the issue of limited water intake as a contributing factor to kidney problems among their peers. They explain that the reluctance to consume ample water is influenced by the cold and rainy weather during winters, as frequent urination adversely affects their work, particularly during rides. Moreover, the absence of accessible restrooms at workplaces poses a challenge, compelling them to find alternative spots for urination, sometimes utilizing parks. They also express concerns about potential bike theft, prompting them to stay in close proximity to their bikes when taking breaks for urination.

At times, accidents occur among delivery workers due to their speed and the urgency to complete rides swiftly. In the pursuit of efficiency, some may even disregard traffic signals, leading to accidents. Additionally, adverse weather conditions, particularly rain, contribute to slippery roads, heightening the risk of accidents. Many participants reside in the outskirts of Milan due to the high accommodation costs within the city, commuting to central areas for work via trains. Transporting heavy bicycles, along with accessories such as bags and batteries weighing between 30 to 40 kg, on elevators or stairs in train stations poses challenges, resulting in occasional falls and various injuries.

Another concern revolves around the physical fatigue and body condition of the workers resulting from extensive cycling. In a conversation, a delivery worker shared his struggle to exercise and preserve his physique, attributing it to challenges in time management and the demanding nature of cycling. He expressed the paradox of cycling being considered beneficial for cardiovascular health, yet causing physical weakness, knee and back problems, and pain. Emphasizing the importance of maintaining a healthy diet alongside biking, he highlighted the difficulties workers face, such as limited time for meals, the expense of restaurant food, and interruptions during meals when orders need immediate attention. Constipation arises as a topic during discussions, often attributed to cycling, poor dietary habits, and irregular routines. Some individuals mention experiencing infrequent bowel movements, stating that they might only use the toilet to pass stool every two or three days. The discussion also brought up concerns about sunburn and skin-related problems, with workers asserting that their skin colour and texture have changed due to their involvement in delivery work. One participant humorously remarked that my face might not be considered good-looking due to delivery work, but it is ok, I have earned and invested in Pakistan through delivery work, which more important.

The challenge of Italy's modern architecture becomes a hindrance for delivery workers, particularly those new to the job, in efficiently delivering orders. Workers explain that the presence of multi-story buildings and apartments with intricate entrances and exits poses significant difficulties and consumes extra time to ensure accurate delivery addresses. This occasionally results in client dissatisfaction and impolite behaviour towards the workers, causing feelings of shame and devaluation among the workers. Likewise, a delivery worker recounts an incident where, during a ride, a person suddenly opened his car door in front of the bike. The worker applied the brakes, cautioned the individual to be careful, but in response, the person used abusive language and mocked the worker for being a delivery worker. The worker expressed that in Pashtun society, encountering such treatment usually provokes an aggressive response, but, in this instance, he chose not to react.

Overall, these experiences highlight the complex challenges the delivery workers face, revealing a complex interplay between loss of masculinity and asserting masculinity, at the same time, in their work in a transnational context. The demanding nature of extensive biking serves as a test of masculinity, requiring endurance of physical difficulties and sacrifices for the betterment of their families. The loss of masculinity is evident in the struggles with health issues, including bladder and sexual dysfunction, as well as the physical toll on their bodies.

These challenges, coupled with the pressure to earn money to maintain their provider masculinity, create a dilemma for the workers, questioning the cost of their masculinity in the pursuit of economic survival. Additionally, the workers' vulnerability to accidents, client abuses, and societal perceptions further complicates their journey, reflecting the nuanced dynamics of labour and masculinity in the context of their work in transnational context.

Chapter eight

Pashtun men in Milan: navigating liminality

While the challenges outlined in the previous chapter, often relegate migrants, particularly refugees, to the peripheries of Italian society, it can be argued that despite facing marginalization, as participants in this study identify numerous issues related to work, housing, discrimination, with some expressing contentment in Italy. Despite their marginalized status, the participants express a desire to remain in Italy, emphasizing their main goal of working in the country to support their families back home. Additionally, as previously discussed, majority of the participants in this study originate from a socially marginalized position in Pakistan and Afghanistan. In comparison to their situation in Pakistan and Afghanistan, where they felt entirely hopeless, they now perceive their presence in Italy more hopeful and positive in securing their future in terms of earning money and to invest back home or to settle in Italy. Through my personal discussions and conversations with Pakistani students, particularly those enrolled in PhD programs, I observe that the prevailing perception among these PhD students, who have a privilege status in Pakistan as compared to the participants of this study, regarding their residency in Italy is that long-term integration and finding a good job is challenging. These students generally feel that they will likely remain isolated and marginalised in Italian society and Europe in general. While other PhD, student bringing their wives and children to Italy to settle. According to some it is better to start working, even as delivery worker or in restaurant, to earn money along the PhD is a more viable strategy than concentrating on assimilating into Italian culture. While others are focused on bringing their wives and children to Italy for a better future and incentives. As Haywood and Johansson identify men in developing countries as having potential privilege over other men and women in a local context, at a global level they are located within transnational flows such as unequal labour markets. In these fluid scenarios, it is not self- evident what marginal masculinity means in relation to (dis)continuous access to masculine resources. They show that how some men can be marginalised and privileged at a same time given the transnational context.

8.1. Transition to adulthood, overcoming marginality, and seeking belonging.

The irregular path of migration can be viewed as the initial stride toward manhood and masculinity, as it instils in the participants a sense of family responsibilities, the future, economic advancement, and exposure. While some participants may have possessed this

awareness even before embarking on their migration, the act of migrating presents them with the chance to act in accordance with their sense of responsibility. The act of irregular migration can be perceived as a trial of masculinity, wherein achieving successful entry into Europe demands risk-taking and resilience to endure challenging conditions and violence. As explored in the preceding chapter, their marginalized social status in their home countries propels them towards irregular migration in the first instance to overcome their marginalised social position. Additionally, traversing borders and encountering a multitude of challenges and hardships contributes to their marginalization. However, simultaneously, it can be viewed as a trial of their masculinity and manhood, testing their ability to endure these difficulties and triumph in their pursuit of successfully entering Europe, as Bilal khan argues that "the way I came here, women cannot come here through those ways. Only ten to five percent women come here through illegal ways, but they pay more money than men to travel by cars, to avoid difficulties, because they cannot walk like men do" (Bilal Khan, Interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan). Similarly, Zahir Rahman explains the dialectical relationship between migration and masculinity arguing that embarking on migration journey is not simple, and the families chose certain individual among many, believing that he has patience and courage and would face the difficulties of migration to succeed, as he argues.

> When I was in the village and my father want one of us to go to Saudi Arabia for work, they chose among my brothers, they were having faith in me I do not know why, they think that I would do better than my other brothers, because I have more patience, courage, tolerance and was more responsible , so they were thinking that I will stay there, because I can face the difficulties.
>
> - 'Zahir Rahman', a Pashtun refugee from Pakistan, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan.

While the participants continue to encounter challenges and difficulties in integrating and settling in Italy, as previously discussed, they have managed to mitigate a certain degree of their marginalization compared to their previous social standing, particularly in their home countries. This is evident through their economic support to their families and children, siblings' education, the construction of new homes, property acquisitions, and the planning of marriages. Nevertheless, they are currently working towards securing a promising future and reuniting with their families. This involves accumulating sufficient savings to establish secure

businesses or find stable employment, either in their home countries or in Italy. As observed, they find themselves in a state of neither complete settlement nor full integration into Italian society, while simultaneously being unprepared to return to their home countries.

Examining their lives through the lens of the rites of passage framework, as refugees and delivery workers in Italy, appear to be in a transitional phase, as Van Aken (2006) argues, where migration can be seen as a ritual-like process, characterized by stages of separation, transition and incorporation. He also demonstrates that for many Egyptian male migrants, migration is closely linked to the increase social status back home. It is viewed as a temporary phase in their lives, marked by hardships and challenges, including performing traditionally female roles while working in the Jordan Valley. The migrants endure these difficulties as part of a transformative journey toward gaining autonomy, honour, and social recognition, all contributing to their sense of masculinity and self-reliance. Similarly, Kirk et al. (2017), discuss young Indians' strong aspiration for migration, especially in the IT sector in Amsterdam, where migration is seen as a rite of passage into adulthood, despite Amsterdam as a space far from Indian norms contribute to their liminal experiences, as language and cultural differences, as well as food preferences, contribute to feelings of alienation and challenge the sense of belonging in Dutch society. Sinatti (2014) explains the relationship between manhood and economic support among Senegalese migrants is significant. Providing remittances and financial assistance to their families contributes to the construction of manhood, as it allows male migrants to gain respect and status from their experiences as breadwinners. The construction of masculinity also evolves over time, and fulfilling the role of supporting the family is considered a central step in the transition to manhood, with sons expected to contribute to the well-being of their families of origin. Dispensing monetary and material support through migration becomes a marker of manhood, bringing virtue, prestige, and personal fulfilment to male migrants.

In the subsequent statement, Allah Noor articulates the shifts in his responsibilities and behaviour toward his family following migration.

> During the past eight years I have changed a lot, and which I think is very important for everyone make progress in life. When I was in Afghanistan I would not care too much about things like earning money, I was more careless because my parent were there and they would ask me to take responsibility, however they would manage all the things, but

now I am here and the whole responsibility of my family is on my shoulders and now I want to earn money because I am old now I not a teenager anymore. I want to earn money to support my children's and siblings' education, I have two younger brothers and a sister. I am the head of the household, and if I do not send money to my family, they have nothing else to survive on, many households in Afghanistan do not have any source of livelihood. But I am thankful to God that I am working here and I sending money so that they can eat, and along with my family I am also supporting other relatives as well.

- 'Allah Noor', a Pashtun refugee from Afghanistan, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan.

Allah Noor's narrative indicates a profound shift in his behaviour and a notable embrace of responsibility after transnational migration. He acknowledges a significant transformation over the past eight years, emphasizing the importance of progress in life. In Afghanistan, the as he describes a more carefree attitude, attributing it to parental support and a lack of personal financial concerns. However, the migration experience has triggered a change, prompting the Allah Noor to assume the role of the household head and bear the entire responsibility for his extended family. It can be argued that this change is associated with an increased focus on earning money to support the education of both his children and siblings. His status as the head of the household underscores the newfound responsibilities and a departure from the carefree mindset of his youth. The act of sending money to sustain his family and support other relatives back home not only demonstrates a commitment to overcoming marginality but also suggests a transformation towards achieving social respect and recognition within his home community.

In discussing his present circumstances, Allah Noor conveys his sense of uncertainty and desire to reunite with his family in Italy or Afghanistan, however, emphasizing a longing for a lasting connection with Afghanistan.

I would say life is better here because nobody here interferes in your life, we work to earn for ourselves, we eat and drink our own. But I am sad because still I do not know about my future here, and once I got the stay permit and feel that my future is secure here, I will be happy then, but currently I do not know any think about my future, as Pantuns says *na da deen yam na da sadeen yam* (means that I am in between, not certain or settled). But I am here hoping that one day I will bring my family here. And yes, we face certain problems dealing with the bureaucracy here, for example when we go to bank to open an account or

for other purpose, they do not work for us because the Questura did not give us the documents yet. So, sometimes I do not want to live here and if the situation in Afghanistan was better, I would go to Afghanistan as soon as possible, to be with my children and family. I do not want to die here, because it possible that I die here but I wish when that day come, I am in Afghanistan, to die and to be buried in my own land, country. But because you know that there is no life now, Afghanistan is constantly at war, I want to be here to bring my children here and to give them a good future, and for this reason I try to do everything according to the law here, because there are many people who are doing illegal things, they do not pay taxes, I work and I pay tax to be able to stay here legally and to bring my family here. I am trying to make my and family's life better, but they, the Italian officials, are destroying our lives, every time I am worried about my legal status here.

- 'Allah Noor', a Pashtun refugee from Afghanistan, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan.

Allah Noor statement encapsulates a liminal experience, marked by the uncertainty of the present and aspirations for a secure future. Content with the autonomy of their current life and echoing the Pashtun saying "*na da deen yam na da sadeen yam*" (in between, not certain or settled), Allah Noor grapples with the ambiguity surrounding their future, contingent on obtaining a stay permit. His desire for stability is intricately tied to the quest for belonging, symbolized by the hope of bringing his family to Italy. Bureaucratic hurdles, particularly in obtaining essential documents, contribute to frustration. Allah Noor is torn between the longing for Afghanistan, aspiring to be with family and laid to rest in his homeland, and the pursuit of a better life in Italy for his children amid the ongoing conflict in Afghanistan. Adherence to legal processes, such as tax payments, underscores their commitment to securing a stable future, while struggles with Italian officials introduce an element of perceived interference and distress, further emphasizing his liminal status and the continual quest for a sense of belonging.

Attaullah Jan elaborates on his present circumstances and the complexity of his transnational existence in the following manner.

Overall, I feel happy here but now I am sad because there is very little work here to do, I do not have any stable source of income, it is very difficult to provide for my family here in Italy, I am living here with my wife and child, and my parents back home. Because it is

very expensive to live with your family here, I spend all my income here and I am unable to send money to my parents back home, but I must send them 200 to 300 euros every month so that they can meet their needs and currently we are building a house in Kabul as well. But when there is no work then I feel sad, stressed, that is why now I am planning to move to another country. But it will only be possible if I got the permanent residence here in Italy. because I spent a lot of time here, so I want to stay here for some more time to get the permanent document in Italy, after that I would move to another country and start some business there. Because, whatever I earned here I spend it here, I do not save anything, I am just surviving, I didn't establish any business here I didn't open any shop here or bought my own house, whatever I earned, I spent it here in Italy, so we neither take any money from Italy nor we bring money to Italy.

- 'Attaullah Jan', a Pashtun refugee from Afghanistan, interviewed in Sedriano, Milan.

The construction of a house in Kabul stands as a symbolic triumph over marginality, and his commitment to financially support parents in Afghanistan underscores the embodiment of provider masculinity amid economic uncertainties. Yet, the challenges encountered in Italy, such as limited work opportunities and financial instability, introduce a contrasting narrative of struggle. The emotional duality between happiness and sadness reveals a liminal state, where the speaker grapples with both achievements and ongoing challenges. The strategic aspiration to move to another country is contingent upon securing permanent residence in Italy, emphasizing the pivotal role of legal status in shaping transnational aspirations. The decision to prolong their stay in Italy reflects a temporal liminality, existing in a transitional phase, neither fully settled nor ready to depart. The absence of savings and a survival-oriented approach align with the pragmatic aspects of migration, emphasizing the speaker's practical role in the Italian context. In essence, the narrative portrays a nuanced interplay of overcoming marginality, embodying provider masculinity, and navigating the temporal and emotional liminality inherent in a transnational journey.

Attaullah Jan, while discussing the possibility of going back to Afghanistan, reflects a complex perspective on the quest for belonging and a nuanced relationship with the idea of settling in Europe.

Currently I am here, and I do not see if soon I could go back to Afghanistan, however if there is peace in Afghanistan, and the system is stable, and the situation is good, I have intentions that one day I would go back to my country. I would do business and would live a peaceful life, and I do not have any plan to settle in Europe permanently, the life in Europe is not an option because you know that if I die here my body will be send back to Afghanistan so why not I go back alive to Afghanistan.

- 'Attaullah Jan', a Pashtun refugee from Afghanistan, interviewed in Sedriano, Milan.

He acknowledges the current uncertainty about returning to Afghanistan, emphasizing the importance of peace, stability, and favourable conditions in their home country for such a decision. The intention to return to Afghanistan is tied to a vision of engaging in business and leading a peaceful life. This indicates a quest for a sense of belonging, rooted in the familiarity and comfort of one's homeland. The rejection of a permanent settlement in Europe further underscores a desire to maintain a connection with Afghanistan. Attaullah reasoning, citing the eventual return of his body to Afghanistan upon death, suggests a strong attachment to his home country and a preference for being laid to rest there. In essence, the statement depicts a dynamic quest for belonging, intertwined with hopes for a positive transformation in Afghanistan, while expressing a reluctance to permanently settle in Europe.

Bilal Khan reflects the interplay between migration and masculinity, illustrating how the experience of migration shapes one's perception and construction of masculinity, as he describes.

When I was in Turkey, you will remain illegal, and your mobility is restricted, you will always feel fear that the police will arrest you, so you try to remain underground. I was thinking to go back to Pakistan, but it was difficult for to go back to Pakistan, because I thought that if I go back to Pakistan unsuccessful, people will laugh at me, so keep to my honour intact I decided to stay, and then gradually we planned to go to Europe/Italy. When you are in Pakistan and having no work, you think that lets migrate to settle your problems/life. So, I am here now, and I am a man, as time passes you face a lot of difficulties and I think gradually you become a man.

- 'Bilal Khan', a Pashtun refugee from Pakistan, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan.

Bilal khan's initial mention of being in Turkey highlights the challenges and constraints associated with undocumented or illegal status, contributing to a sense of fear and the need to remain underground to avoid arrest. The decision to stay and avoid returning to Pakistan stems not only from the practical difficulties of going back but also from a concern about societal judgment in home community. The desire to protect one's honour and avoid potential ridicule becomes a significant factor in shaping the decision to continue the migration journey. The statement suggests that the hardships faced during migration contribute to the development of resilience and maturity, as indicated by the assertion, "I am a man". This transformation is portrayed as a gradual process, implying that the challenges and experiences encountered during migration play a role in shaping and solidifying one's identity as a man. Overall, the interplay between migration and masculinity in this narrative revolves around the themes of survival, societal expectations, and the personal growth that occurs through the challenges of the migration journey. Bilal Khan also delves into the intricate dynamics of his migration experience, encapsulating a nuanced negotiation between liminality, aspirations to overcome marginality, and a quest for belonging, as he describes.

> I did not think to go to any other country in Europe, however sometimes I think to start business in Pakistan (in the background the other guys were asking him to tell me that he bought plots in Pakistan). If they give 30 million rupees here, then I will go back to Pakistan happily (laughter). Because I cannot start a decent business with 2000 euros per month. (a friend of the respondent said that you have already bought property back home), for which he replied that, for God Sake why are you spreading false rumours here in the whole of Bicocca, why do not you talk about the car you bought.

> - 'Bilal Khan', a Pashtun refugee from Pakistan, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan.

While focusing to remain in Italy, Bilal Khan's contemplation of starting a business in Pakistan introduces a layer of in-betweenness, showcasing a dual consciousness and a connection to his home country. The consideration of entrepreneurship in Pakistan can be seen as move to overcome marginality and seek belonging to the home country, by seeking financial stability. The mention of thinking about starting a business in Pakistan also introduces a layer of

liminality. The humour injected into the remark about returning to Pakistan with a substantial sum reflects a desire to go back to Pakistan but due to the challenging financial aspects of life in Europe, he is not ready yet to go back. His peers mentioning about his property purchases, underscores the process of overcoming marginality and investment in Pakistan.

Dawood Afridi share his experience of migration and its impacts on his personal life as a man, his current state, and future plains, in the following manners.

> when I came here and become migrant/*musafar* I think after that I consider myself a man, when I arrived here, I start thinking about my responsibility towards my family, because before that I never send money to home and there was no responsibility on my shoulder. But now that I am are here, I think that I should send at least 50 thousand rupees to my family every month. After migration this thought of supporting my family is always with me. But because sometimes it is difficult to earn more than your expenses, so when I have money, I send it to them. I do not have such intention stay here permanently, I want to earn some money here and then start a halal business in Pakistan. Then even if I stay here or there the money that I would earn from that business would be Halal. Secondly, I cannot spend all my life here alone one day I will have to get married, now these are the tasks before me, and I think if a person tries to become responsible as early as possible it is possible to overcome all these issues. But if someone is careless and waist time then he will drowned/fall instead of rising
>
> - 'Dawood Afridi', a Pashtun refugee from Pakistan, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan.

Dawood's narrative underscores a profound connection between masculinity and migration, portraying a transformative journey marked by a shift in self-perception and responsibilities. Migration emerges as a catalyst for his self-identification as a man, intertwining masculinity with a strong sense of duty towards family. The commitment to sending a significant monthly amount to support family members emphasizes the provider role, highlighting how migration reshapes familial responsibilities. The acknowledgment of not planning to stay permanently introduces a sense of liminality, indicating that he perceives the current situation as a transitional phase. The quest for belonging is evident in the aspiration to return to Pakistan, to start a halal business, and address life tasks like marriage. The desire to earn money ethically from a halal business, regardless of location, reflects a commitment to align financial pursuits

with religious principles. Emphasizing early responsibility-taking adds a temporal dimension to the quest overcoming challenges and adulthood, suggesting that proactive and responsible actions can navigate the complexities of migration, financial constraints, and personal development.

Ejaz khan's narrative reflects an interdependent relationship between masculinity and irregular migration, showcasing a transformative journey that coincides with the transition to adulthood, as he argues.

> With migration I got to know many things. Because when I was in my village everybody would treats me like a child, but I came here and earn money and take some responsibility towards the family. The brings some changes to my life and it changed other people behaviour towards me, and you know that everyone changes from time to time. And the overall process through I came here in itself need a lot of courage and it involves a lot of risk so once I go through this process it makes me feel confident that I can handle things on my own which make me feel grown up. This whole process also makes you responsible and more disciplined in term of earning money and to support your family, because after such hardship you got the chance to change your family situation and to succeed in life. So, I take biggest risk of my life, it is not everyone's cup of tea, everyone cannot do this, I do not think there is any other risk in the world bigger than the risk to come to Europe this way.
>
> - 'Ejaz Khan', a Pashtun refugee from Pakistan, interviewed in Comasina, Milan.

His initial perception of being treated like a child in his village undergoes a substantial shift upon migrating. The experience of earning money and taking responsibility brought changes in how others perceive and interact with him, symbolizing a process of maturity and adulthood. The overall migration process, marked by courage, risk-taking, and overcoming challenges, as he describes, contributes to a heightened sense of confidence and adulthood. Ejaz Khan highlights the transformative impact of migration on his personal development, emphasizing newfound responsibility, discipline, and a commitment to supporting family. The quest for success becomes a central theme, with the acknowledgment that the undertaken risks are significant and not universally achievable. The narrative underscores the complexity of masculinity, intertwining with migration, growth, and the pursuit of success as mechanisms to

overcome marginality. Ejaz Khan discussion also reveals a state of liminality and a nuanced relationship with the concept of belonging in the context of migration. He argues that:

> I like this place/Italy; however, Pakistan is our own country, and we must go there because my family is there my mother and father is there and without them it is difficult to live life. And secondly if I want to bring my parents here to Italy, they also cannot spend time/life here, because of weather, and people, and I mean the culture they can't live here. But I do not have any plans yet to go back and settle there in Pakistan, but of course I will be visiting Pakistan now and then.
>
> - 'Ejaz Khan', a Pashtun refugee from Pakistan, interviewed in Comasina, Milan.

While expressing a liking for Italy, Ejaz Khan acknowledges that Pakistan holds a unique and irreplaceable place as his own country. This acknowledgment highlights a sense of in-betweenness, or liminality rooted in transnationalism, where he is neither entirely settled in Italy nor completely detached from his roots in Pakistan. The importance of family ties is central to this liminal experience, as Ejaz recognizes the difficulty of living without his parents and emphasizes the challenges his parents would face if brought to Italy. The consideration of factors like weather, people, and culture underscores the complexity of the belonging experience. Despite the connection to Pakistan, there is an absence of immediate plans to permanently return, suggesting an ongoing negotiation and a transition phase of identity and belonging. The intention to visit Pakistan intermittently adds another layer to the liminal nature of his migrant identity, emphasizing the ongoing process of navigating belonging in a transnational context.

Jameel narrative illustrates a significant transformation in his life, particularly in the context of masculinity, recognition, and overcoming marginality after migration, as he argues.

> When I was living in my village and when I came here , I realize that there is no recognition as human but when you start earning money and have a job people start respecting you and recognize you, but if you do not have money no matter how good and well behaved you are, but no one would give you such attention, but the general thinking of the people is that when you have money they consider you valuable. in every important decision of the family, they call me and ask for my suggestions, not because I am earning money but because as family member, they give this respect by asking my suggestions. My mother

and brother ask me about certain decision as elder son and brother, thinking that maybe I would give better suggestion or that I know more than them.

- 'Jameel', a Pashtun refugee from Pakistan, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan.

Jameel's statement reflects on the shift from a lack of recognition in his village and a newfound respect and acknowledgment in the home community, directly tied to his ability to earn money and secure employment in Italy. The transnational connection between financial success in Italy and social recognition in the home country is highlighted, emphasizing the societal valuation placed on men with economic stability, as he observes that people consider you valuable when you have money underscores the role of economic success in shaping one's perceived worth. This recognition, however, goes beyond mere acknowledgment, as it is linked to the speaker's involvement in important family decisions. The recognition of the speaker's opinions and suggestions in family matters signifies not only a shift in economic status but also an elevation in social standing and influence within the family structure, to encompass a sense of wisdom, experience, and responsibility associated with traditional familial roles of manhood and masculinity.

Jameel's further statement also reflects a complex sense of belonging and a recognition of the current phase as transitional and liminal, as he describes that "I do not think that soon I will go back to Pakistan, I want to settle here to earn money and to marry and to bring my children here in future to be educated here because here the life is better than Pakistan". As he expresses a hesitancy about an imminent return to Pakistan, Jameel indicates a desire for a more prolonged stay in Italy. His desire is rooted in the aspiration to settle, accumulate wealth, get married, and, notably, bring future children to be educated in Italy. The acknowledgment that life is perceived as better in Italy compared to Pakistan, underscores his sense of belonging to Italy, at least in the context of future and opportunities. The transitional nature of this phase is evident in his uncertainty about an immediate return, suggesting an ongoing process of adaptation and potential integration into Italian society. The liminality is marked by his position between the familiar past in Pakistan and the envisioned future in Italy, navigating the complexities of identity, belonging, and aspirations in this transitional space.

Zahir Rahman illustrates the complexities and sacrifices involved in migration, portraying it as a source to overcome economic marginality, fulfil familial obligations, to support his family, despite the challenges he is facing being a migrant. He argues that:

> I am happy from one angle as you know in our country the situation is bad, it is difficult there to do something and to provide for the family and children future. So, it was not possible there because my children are getting education and my sisters and brothers are also getting education and I am also responsible for them, but if I was in Pakistan, I would not be able to even provide for my children, left alone my brothers and sisters. So, the work I am doing here through that the family survival ins intact, so this the main thing that I am happy for, but still, I am a migrant away from my family and homeland it not easy but to support my family I am tolerating these difficulties. And let me tell you that no body works on Eid day, but I work on Eid day too, just for a better future of my family, and to meet the expenses of my family because the situation and expenses in Pakistan is so much. If I do not work my family survival is at stake, and we cannot hope that our government will ever support us, so everything is on my own. so, if the situation in our country was stable, I would never come here.

> - 'Zahir Rahman', a Pashtun refugee from Pakistan, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan.

Zahir Rahman articulates the challenges in Pakistan, where limited economic opportunities make it difficult to provide for their family and secure a better future for his children, while working in Pakistan. His migration is crucial, to overcome his economic marginality and to support his family, as he emphasizes a deep sense of responsibility, financially supporting the education and other expenses of their children, siblings, and family members by working in Italy. Acknowledging the lack of government support and challenging economic conditions in Pakistan, and as he argue if the situation was stable in Pakistan he would never migrate, suggest his liminal situation of being a migrant away from his family and homeland. The sacrifices, he is making, like working on holidays such as Eid, demonstrating a commitment to ensuring the familial well-being and a better future, as part of his masculinity.

Chapter nine

Self-perceptions of Pashtun men in the transnational sphere.

Having delved into the profound influence of migration and residing in Italy on the participants' masculine identity, subsequently enhancing their socio-economic standing in their home communities and families, this chapter will explore how these Pashtun individuals perceive their existence in Milan, Italy. In simpler terms, it will address the challenges they face in embodying Pashtun identity in Italy and how they interpret Pashtunwali in the Italian context, particularly concerning practices related to manhood and masculinity. while I have already discussed briefly in the preceding chapters that how Pashtun men adapt and experience certain changes into their identity and practices involving the transnational context, in this chapter I will discuss their suspended practices of Pashtun masculinity and the conscious adaptation of new codes and behaviours to navigate Italian society. According to Hibbins and Pease (2009), during the settlement and ongoing phases in the host society, males must negotiate and adapt identity aspects such as gender, sexuality, ethnicity, and class, emphasizing contextual and strategic adjustment in migration context. They argue that:

> Here we see the development of hybrid identities where different dimensions are emphasised strategically in diverse socio-cultural contexts. Resistance, accommodation, subordination, segregation, marginalisation, 'protest' and rebellion are all possible practices used, as migrant males adapt in the new environment. During this settlement period, migrant males are learning new codes and symbols associated with local variants of masculine behaviours. These symbols are adapted to or modified to accommodate those practiced in home countries traditionally or in contemporary times.

(Hibbins and Pease, 2009).

Similarly, Donaldson and Howson (2009), argues that migrant men carry with them the pre-existing masculine identities to their new homeland, emphasizing the potential for transformation in personal relationships during migration. Scholars suggest that migration offers an opportunity for men to change themselves and their relationships for the better. It can be contended that Pashtun men carry specific masculinity ideals from Pashtunwali, as explored in chapter two, to Italy. However, the evolving cultural and social landscape in Italy, along with the demands of navigating this transnational context, leads them to adopt new behavioural

codes aligned with local culture. They strategically modify certain behaviours and practices. Yet, within the Pashtun subculture, they occasionally retain and enact specific behaviours within their ethnic group, to be discussed in the following section. The transnational setting also offers these Pashtun men an opportunity for active changes in their perceptions and practices related to manhood and masculinity.

9.1. To gain something, you must lose something.

Proving masculinity and manhood within a transnational context poses complex challenges and opportunities for Pashtun men. As outlined in chapter two, ideal Pashtun masculinity encompasses both tangible and intangible aspects in Pashtun society. Analysing the lives of the participants before and after migration suggests that before migration, these men lacked tangible, economic, and material resources required to embody an ideal man. After migration to Italy, they encounter a lack in intangible resources related to the behaviours and cultural practices of Masculinity and Pashtunwali. As explored in the preceding section, they have achieved a certain level of recognition in their home communities, however, in Italy, they continue to grapple with the pursuit of recognition. Sartaj Khan's perspective on the demonstration of masculinity and manhood reflects a nuanced understanding of the challenges and compromises associated with transnational living. He argues that **"**it is (proving masculinity) difficult in Pakistan, here it is easy, so here you can earn money, but you cannot practice other things, which is part of manhood, as they say in Urdu, *kuch pane k liye kuch khona parta hai* (to gain something you must lose something as well)" (Sartaj Khan, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan). His assertion suggests a perception that achieving manhood, in terms of material aspects of manhood, might be more feasible in the context of Italy compared to Pakistan, as he argues that one can earn money in Italy easily, but he may sacrifice other aspects, intangible, behaviour and practices, integral to manhood. The Urdu saying, "*kuch pane k liye kuch khona parta hai*" (to gain something you must lose something as well), underscores the theme of partial attainment of masculinity. The statement suggests that while financial achievements are accessible, some elements integral to traditional notions of manhood may be compromised or sacrificed in the process. Shahab Saleem also point out the difficulty of earning money, the tangible aspect of Pashtun masculinity, in Pashtun society/Pakistan and related issues which hinders one's path to development and progress and recognition. He argues that "I think in Pashtun society it is more difficult because there is a lot of problems, and if you want to reach a specific stage in the society you will face a lot of

problems, related to money or family, etc" (Shahab Momand, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan).

Allah Noor perspective on proving masculinity, both in Afghanistan and Italy, reflects a sense of universality in the expectations placed on men regardless of their geographical location. He argues that "wherever you are, you must prove that you are a man. Because the land of Italy and Afghanistan is the same. The way we follow law here and show wisdom here if we show it in Afghanistan nobody will be able to interfere in Afghanistan" (Allah Noor, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan). His statement suggests that the pressure to demonstrate being a "real" man exists in both places. The emphasis on proving one's manhood is not attributed to a specific cultural or geographical context but is seen as a general expectation applicable wherever an individual resides. However, at the same time Allah Noor suggest a difference in the behaviour of Pashtun men residing in Italy, where they follow rules and show more wisdom as compared to when they live in Afghanistan. The desire to apply the notion of following the law and demonstrating wisdom in Afghanistan to prevent interference, highlights a collective approach to masculinity as a nation to protect their country. The statement also suggests the change in the perception of Allah Noor acquired while living in Italy, emphasizing law and wisdom as the marker of a develop and sovereign state.

Attaullah Jan argues that proving masculinity and manhood in Italy poses greater challenges compared to Afghanistan or Pakistan. His argument is based on the unfamiliarity with the Italian culture and population, coupled with the trust issues exhibited by the local people in their interactions with migrants. Attaullah asserts that:

> it is difficult here in Italy, because when you come here as a new person, people do not trust you. They always doubt you that for what purpose this person came here, he is foreigner not an Italian. If you tell them that I am an asylum seeker they will still doubt you and will think that I have other aims. But in Afghanistan or Pakistan if you tell someone that I am an indigenous person here, they will trust you, because they know that I cannot run away from my home, my family is there I have an identity there. So, here in Italy it is very difficult to prove your masculinity/*Saritob*, because no matter how hard you try to behave good and honestly the Italians do not care, they do not trust you.
>
> - 'Attaullah Jan', a Pashtun refugee from Afghanistan, interviewed in Sedriano, Milan.

Attaullah's statement highlights the challenges faced by migrants in proving their masculinity and gaining recognition in the host country, particularly in Italy. The difficulty stems from a lack of trust and scepticism directed towards migrants and refugees. The perception that foreigners, including asylum seekers, might have ulterior motives contributes to the scepticism. In contrast, he suggests that in Afghanistan or Pakistan, being recognized as an indigenous person is inherently trusted because of established ties, family, and identity. The difficulty in Italy lies in the persistent doubt, despite genuine efforts to behave well and honestly. Attaullah Jan's statement underscores the complex dynamics migrants may encounter in their quest to establish their masculinity and gain respect and recognition in the new cultural context where trust is not easily granted. To support his argument, Attaullah came up with story from his personal experience of working with an Italian man, he narrates that:

> once I was working with an Italian, but he would not trust me, he would think that I might be a thief and I will steal his Tractor or some other things, he was thinking that I do not have document so I can runaway easily from him. So, I told him that look I am a Pashtun, and Pashtuns are very peaceful, respectful, and hospitable people. I told him that if you go a Pashtun man's house, no matter how poor he is, he will serve you with food and everything possible he can. You just knock his door, and he will help you, he will serve you. So, one day he was working with a machine and the machine go out of his control, I quickly control the machine and save the person, he told me that if you did not switch off the machine, I was dead. After that he starts trusting me. After that he would regularly call me, whenever he has some work even a half day work, he would call me, because he realizes that Pashtun are not bad people. then he would say that a lot of people have worked with him, for example Indians, but they are not good in work and not respects us, so I told him that the people/Pashtuns who work honestly for you and respect you, you do not like them, and the people who do not work honestly and do not respect you, you like them.
>
> - 'Attaullah Jan', a Pashtun refugee from Afghanistan, interviewed in Sedriano, Milan.

Dawood Afridi express a similar argument about proving one's masculinity in a transnational context he argues that "it is difficult here to follow the ideals of Pashtun masculinity, because here you must make a lot of compromises, in the village it is not a problem because everybody knows you and observe you that what you are going through, but here nobody knows about your situation". Similarly, Ejaz khan argues that "it is (proving masculinity) hard here because

when you are in Pakistan, you know what to do and that what you do is good or bad, at least your family will guide you, but here you do not know much about their culture" (Ejaz Khan, interviewed in Comasina, Milan). Shahab Momand provide the same explanation as he argues, "it is difficult here because in your own country you have knowledge of every you know ways and means to do things, but when you move to a new country and culture it is very difficult to adjust and settle yourself to that" (Shahab Momand, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan.

9.2. To survive here in Italy, you must leave Pashtunwali behind.

Another important aspect, related to Pashtun masculinity, emerges from the discussion is the suspension of certain practices and behaviours related to Pashtun masculinity and Pashtunwali. Bilal khan asserts that "I think it is (proving masculinity) very difficult in Pakistan. It is nothing here (in Italy), here you do not have to do Pashto/Pashtunwali" (Bilal Khan, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan). Bilal Khan's statement elucidates the setting aside of Pashtunwali in Italy, consequently suspending Pashtun masculinity. His expression indicates a sense of relief in the new environment, suggesting that he finds it easier because he is not constrained by Pashtunwali's code. This observation implies the necessity for him to adopt new codes and practices to navigate Italian society, given that Pashtunwali is not applicable in this context. Allah Noor also suggests a suspension of certain practices embedded in Pashtun culture while adopting new practices and actions in Milan, Italy. He asserts that "you cannot do many things here that we do in Afghanistan, for example, the dressing that we do here we cannot do it in Afghanistan, and we cannot wear afghani cloths here, but out of necessity you must adopt certain things" (Allah Noor, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan). Discussing the application of Pashtunwali in the context of Italian society, Jameel argue that:

> Doing Pashto here is impossible, you cannot do it here, it is very difficult here extremely difficult. If I explain Pashtunwali to these people, they will consider me a mad person. They will be shocked that what kind of life we are living, so when we talk about our social cultural structure, for example when we tell them that our women remain at home and do not go outside for work, which is in Islam and Pashtunwali as, because other Muslims in Pakistan such as Sindhis and Punjabis, they do not mind it but our Pashtunwali restrict us from this. But to survive here you must leave Pashtunwali behind.

> - 'Jameel', a Pashtun refugee from Pakistan, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan.

Jameel's statement highlights the challenges faced by Pashtun migrants in maintaining traditional practices of Pashtun masculinity in the context of transnational migration. He acknowledges the impossibility of adhering to Pashtunwali's practices in Italy, emphasizing the difficulty of conveying these cultural aspects to the local population. His assertion that survival in Italy requires leaving Pashtunwali behind, underscores the pragmatic adaptation needed in the transnational context. This demonstrates the suspended practices of Pashtun masculinity and the imperative for migrants to adopt new practices that align with the cultural norms of the host society. Similarly, Attaullah Jan pointed out certain practices that they he suspended due to the legal and cultural restriction while living in Italy. Attaullah assert that:

> many things that we do in Afghanistan is a culture there, but here they culture is different it can even be a crime here. For example, at the occasion of Eid-ul-Azha, we have a religious ritual/duty to sacrifice a sheep or goat, but here they do not allow us for that. If they want, they can assign us certain place in a forest or a specific place to sacrifice an animal, but we cannot do this. We cannot cook in the open together with other friends, as we do in Afghanistan. And if you do these things, the police will arrest you and fine you. Furthermore, if you married an Italian girl, you cannot keep her the way you keep a Pashtun girl with you, your relation will be very different.

> - 'Attaullah Jan', a Pashtun refugee from Afghanistan, interviewed in Sedriano, Milan.

Zahir Rahman indicates the challenges of practicing hospitality, a significant emblem and ideal of Pashtun masculinity and manhood, it in Italian context as a migrant, as articulated in his argument.

> in the village you always have a hujra and space for guests, to provide hospitality to them, but here it is very difficult, because there is one room where I stay with 2 other persons, so you cannot accommodate guests, and it is very expensive here as well, but I try as much as possible, but in the village it is more easier, even in the village not all people are hospitable but there few people in every village who are hospitable and have hujras. In the village, even if you do not have the money you can lend from others, even you can lend eatables/food from the stores, but here you cannot imagine this, even nobody can give you stay for a night without money.

- 'Zahir Rahman', a Pashtun refugee from Pakistan, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan.

9.3. Life is fast here, everyone is in a rush, like chasing a train.

As observed, participants have mentioned the suspension of specific practices and behaviours while residing in Italy. Navigating Italian culture and society necessitates the adoption of new codes, behaviours, and practices. While certain changes have been previously examined in relation to work, integration, and the transition to adulthood and masculinity, this section will delve into additional perspectives provided by the participants.

Allah Noor talked about the transformations he underwent upon migrating to Italy and how he adapted to the new environment, as he contends.

> I have changed a lot, it like you brings someone from darkness to light, but when I observe the light. here close and the changes it brought to me; I wish to be in that darkness I wish I didn't saw this world, because the lighter/progress/prosperity you seek the more it brings problems to your life, it increases your wants, and you will always be busy in satisfying these wants. Life is fast here everyone is in hurry, it is like the way you run to catch the train, if you want to do anything you have be fast, and if you were late a minute you would leave behind. Life is hard and without love and respect.
>
> - 'Allah Noor', a Pashtun refugee from Afghanistan, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan.

Allah Noor expresses a profound transformation upon migrating, likening it to moving from darkness to light. However, the sentiment takes a critical turn as the speaker reflects on the changes brought about by this newfound light. While acknowledging progress and prosperity, there is a nostalgic desire for the simplicity of the past. His observation that life in Italy is fast-paced and demanding, highlights the challenges of adaptation. He seems to grapple with the drawbacks of increased wants and the frantic nature of life, suggesting a tension between embracing change and longing for the familiar comforts of the past.

Ejaz khan indicates the changes in his perception regarding work, earning money, and independence, as he describes, while comparing work and earning in Pakistan, suggesting a preference for Italian culture.

This place is good, because if you think about Pakistan, one person will earn and provide for the family and 10 others will not work or will be jobless and dependant on one person. So, our government must establish industries and companies to give jobs the jobless so that everyone works. Secondly the people here in Italy, there way of life is good because they all work that's why they are happier. But in Pakistan the life is not good.

- 'Ejaz Khan', a Pashtun refugee from Pakistan, interviewed in Comasina, Milan.

Jameel's reflects a significant adaptation to the cultural and social norms of Italian society after migrating.

after I arrived here and spent time in Italian society, now when I observe the behaviour of people in our village it seems to me that they are mad people. they do backbite, even friends when they are together, they are good but the left the gathering they would talk about you on your back. But here in Italy everybody minds their own business, they do not talk unnecessarily, they do not fight each other, so the environment here better than ours.

- 'Jameel', a Pashtun refugee from Pakistan, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan.

The contrast he drawn between the behaviour in Italy and his home village suggests a process of learning and internalizing new codes of conduct. Jameel highlights the negative aspects of the behaviour in their village, such as gossip and conflict, and expresses an appreciation for the more reserved and peaceful social environment in Italy. This indicates a transformative learning process, where he adopts and values the behavioural norms prevalent in Italy while making a critical assessment of his home culture.

Attaullah Jan reveals his commitment to adopting new codes of conduct and ethical behaviours in the context of migration, as he asserts.

I worked hard to survive, I worked 13 to 14 hours a day for 20 euros, but I never did any illegal thing, I never steal anything, and it was necessary to protect myself from committing any criminal activity, such as theft or selling drugs so that I remain clean in the government eyes, otherwise they will say that you come to our country, you are a refugee, we gave you asylum in our country, so, why you are doing illegal things in our country. So, first I do not have the courage to do such things and my conscience also do not accept this.

- 'Attaullah Jan', a Pashtun refugee from Afghanistan, interviewed in Sedriano, Milan.

Attaullah emphasizes his dedication to hard work, highlighting the long hours invested in employment. The rejection of engaging in illegal activities, such as theft or drug selling, underscores his conscious effort to adhere to the legal and ethical norms of Italian society. The fear of tarnishing his reputation and the gratitude expressed towards Italy for providing asylum further indicate a strong motivation to integrate responsibly and positively into the new society. His stance reflects a proactive approach in aligning with the legal and moral standards of Italian society. Similarly, Jameel discuss the changes he adopts after migration and to navigate the Italian society, as he argues.

> Here we try to mind our own business we never fight with anyone, we are living our life, we do not waste our time here we do not indulge our self into crimes. In the village we would some time fight with friends in the games or anyway, as you know Pashtuns sometime do this. In Pashtun society when someone say something bad about you, your response must be twice in comparison, but here, if someone say something we tolerate it, and if we say something they tolerate it.

- 'Jameel', a Pashtun refugee from Pakistan, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan.

Jameel's narrative reflects the cultivation of non-traditional behaviour of minding their own business. He expresses a desire to integrate peacefully into Italian society, by avoiding violence and criminal activities and to behave according to the legal and cultural norms and values of Italian society. Jameel reports change in his behaviour and practices alternating fights in his village with tolerant stance in Italy, suggesting adaptation to new cultural norms. The distinction Jameel made between Pashtun culture and Italian culture, particularly in terms of responding aggressively in Pashtun culture, and demonstrating a more tolerant attitude in the face of verbal insults in Italy, highlights a profound shift in his personality. Jameel narrative portrays an active attempt to adopt the required attitude and practices in Italian context, such as peaceful coexistence, abiding law, and awareness of cultural dynamics of Italy. Zahir Rahman also reports change in his behaviour and attitude after migration and living in Italy. while providing a comparison between living in Italy and Pakistan Zahir Rahman argues that:

In Pakistan people are very close minded, if someone says something others would encounter him, but after I came here, now I have more tolerance and patience, because you meet so many people and face a lot of hardships then those things seem minor to you. And here with friends mostly I talk about our work, I do not discuss politics or religion with friends because some time they say some unethical and can lead to conflict.

- 'Zahir Rahman, a Pashtun refugee from Pakistan, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan.

The participants also discussed the visible changes they embraced while adapting to Italian culture, specifically in terms of changes to their appearance and clothing choices. While highlighting the differences between cultural attire in Pashtun society and Italian society, Jameel, for instance, articulates the modifications he made to his dressing style and his evolving perspectives on clothing during his time in Italy. as he describes.

The dress that I am wearing here, if I wear this dress in my village everybody will criticize this, they will compare me with western people means that I am not a Pashtun and a good Muslim. And here we cannot wear our cultural dress to go work or going out, if we wear our cultural dress here it seems strange to these people they see us as suspicious, there is no legal ban on us to wear our own clothes but the cultural environment is not suitable for our cultural cloths, so to adapt ourselves to this culture we wear jeans and shirts, we also wear shorts which we cannot imagine wearing in our village, but when we go back to village then we wear our cultural dresses there we cannot wear jeans. If we wear trousers in the village people will laugh at us, they will say that we spent time in Europe and forgot our Pashto, so we try to crate balance here and there in our dressing and behaviour. But because I spent time here if I see someone in Pakistan, as in the city people used to wear jeans and trouser, I will not mind it for that, it is ok, but in the rural areas it is not wise to wear jeans.

- 'Jameel, a Pashtun refugee from Pakistan, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan.

Sartaj khan discussed the changes required in one's behaviour and practices to make a girlfriend Italy in the following manner.

if you want to make girlfriend in Italy, you have to adopt certain qualities, for example you will have to drink, and smoke hash, and dance, which is very difficult for a Pashtun to

do, I have examples of some men , so if you do all these things you can find girls and they will make friendship with you, so the Pashtuns who do these things they have girlfriends but who do not they are alone.

- 'Sartaj Khan, a Pashtun refugee from Pakistan, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan.

Overall, these narratives highlight that the transnational context provide the participants with challenges and opportunities to prove their manhood and masculinity. The transnational context also presents a scenario where the participants suspend certain practices and behaviour, related to Pashtun masculinity and Pashtunwali, and to adopt new codes of behaviour and practices required in Italy, willingly or unwillingly, to navigate smoothly. Nevertheless, as participants incorporate new codes and temporarily set aside specific practices, they rely on cultural and, notably, religious frameworks. They are not entirely devoid of their cultural and religious norms and teachings; instead, they are discerning in choosing which aspects to adopt or suspend.

9.4. Schemas of self-regulation among Pashtuns compared to Italian men.

Nilan et. al. (2009), discusses the concept of self-regulation and its association with subjectivity, drawing on the perspectives of Michel Foucault. It emphasizes that self-regulation is intertwined with specific "technologies of the self" that operate within certain frameworks. The text highlights the contrast between Western men's association of power with physical and rational actions, such as forcefulness and effectiveness, and the prevailing view in Southeast Asia that such overt displays of power may indicate a lack of true efficacy. The cultural differences in the perception of power and self-regulation suggest varying technologies and schemas across cultures, impacting notions and practices of hegemonic masculinity. The example implies that Australia tends to exhibit more overt corporeal self-regulation, while Indonesia leans towards a more moral and personal form of self-regulation.

Within the framework of Italian and Pashtun masculinities, the mechanisms of self-regulation can be understood through the lens of religious and cultural variances. As Ejaz khan discuss his viewpoint on cultural and religious aspects factors shaping behaviour and practices related to masculinity and manhood as he argues that "everybody has their own viewpoints, what to do and what not to do, what is good and what is bad, based on their own culture and religion"

(Ejaz Khan, interviewed in Comasina, Milan). Ejaz provides the diversity of viewpoints based on cultural and religious backgrounds, indicating that individual beliefs about right and wrong are rooted in these foundational aspects. While discussing the role of culture and religion, Allah Noor argues that "Italian manhood is different from our sense of manhood, our lives are different, there is religious and cultural differences, and you must differentiate between Islamic way of life and Christian one" (Allah Noor, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan). Allah Noor emphasize the impact of religious and cultural differences between Italian and Pashtun notions of manhood, emphasizing the need to discern between Islamic and Christian ways of life. Similarly, Zahir Rahman argues that:

> I do not know much about them as never had a meaningful interaction with then and unless you have an interaction with you cannot say anything about them. But considering the little interaction, I had with Italian men and boys, I can say that their upbringing is very different from that of us, in their culture there are some good things and some bad things, but there are good and bad things in our culture as well for example they we celebrate our wedding and engagements are not Islamic. We should also stop these practices. The best way is Islamic way.
>
> - 'Zahir Rahman, a Pashtun refugee from Pakistan, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan.

Zahir Rahman, while acknowledging limited interaction, suggests that Italian upbringing differs from Pashtun culture, highlighting both positive and negative aspects in each. His statement reveals an emphasis on adhering to the Islamic way as superior, pointing out cultural practices. Overall, these viewpoints highlight a profound influence of cultural and religious values on shaping perspectives on masculinity, with a particular emphasis on contrasting Italian and Pashtun cultural norm.

9.4.1. Tangible and intangible aspects of masculinity

Based on their limited interaction with Italian men, the participants delineate disparities between Italian and Pashtun men. From their perceptions regarding Italian men, it can be argued that Italian men express and govern their perception and enactment of masculinity through tangible, material, and rational expressions. In contrast, Pashtun men seem to prioritize aspects of moral and ethical behaviour and respect in their interpersonal interactions, in shaping

their sense of masculinity. Sartaj Khan reflects a specific perspective on the demonstration of masculinity, drawing a comparison between Italian and Pashtun men, as he argues.

> If I compare Italian men with Pashtun men, I will say the Pashtun men are men and the Italian are like women, apparently, they may have good looking personalities, but when you have some dealing with them, they behave like women. But I think in Italian culture a respected person and man is the one who have skills, who are more fashionable, and have good living standards.

> - 'Sartaj Khan', a Pashtun refugee from Pakistan, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan.

Sartaj khan suggests tangible expressions of masculinity by Italian men, as he acknowledges that Italian culture values skills, fashion, and good living standards as markers of respect and masculinity. on the other hand, he criticizes the Italian men being feminine in their dealing and interpersonal relationships, potentially suggesting the lack of commitment and standing by one's word of mouth. His perception of Italian men being perceived as feminine, stems from the notions of Pashtun masculinity where promise and commitment, moral and ethical values, hold a significant importance in demonstration of manhood and masculinity. Sartaj khan suggests that the definition and demonstration of masculinity can vary across cultures, emphasizing the importance of cultural context in shaping perceptions of gender roles and behaviour. Shahab Saleem highlights a perceived emphasis on physical aspects of demonstrating masculinity among Italian men and boys. He argues that "I do not know much about them, but Italian men and boys they are more interested in exercises, gym, and games like football, so they are more focus on physical strength, in our society they give more respect to doctors and engineers" (Shahab Saleem, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan). Shahab Saleem notes that these Italian boys are more inclined towards exercises, gym workouts, and sports like football, suggesting a focus on physical strength and fitness. His observation contrasts with the own society, where doctors and engineers receive more respect, indicating a preference for professions associated with intellectual and educational prowess rather than physical prowess. In the Italian context, as described, physical activities are highlighted as significant markers of male strength, diverging from the emphasis on educational and professional achievements and associated respect in Pashtun society. Similarly, Allah Noor argue that "The world needs love and respect for each other, if you are a good player of football,

or bodybuilder or anything else it is your personal thing, and people will support you, but if you do not have love respect and manners people will hate irrespective of who you are" (Allah Noor, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan). While acknowledging the physical aspects of demonstrating masculinity among Italian men, Allah Noor prioritizes love, respect and manners, the intangible aspects of masculinity. Jameel argues "Italian men are more mature than ours, our people are not educated they are belonging to tribal structure, there is no facilities available to our people, such as health and education, so our people are very backward they do not know much" (Jameel, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan). His statement reflects a perception of developmental differences between Italian men, as more developed socially and economically, and Pashtun me, as lacking socio-economic development, shaping their masculinities. While focusing on the perceived maturity and educational levels of men, Jameel suggests that Italian men are more mature, attributing this difference to education and societal structures. Additionally, the mention of a tribal structure and the lack of facilities in Pashtun society is presented as factors contributing to what the speaker characterizes as the backwardness of their people.

9.4.2. Drugs, alcohol, food and women and masculinity

Another significant aspect revealed in the participants' perceptions of Italian men is their engagement with drugs and alcohol, as well as their interactions with women. Their distinct involvement with substances, alcohol, food, and interactions with women indicates a distinct pattern of self-regulation between Italian and Pashtun men. Attaullah Jan explain the different behaviour of Italian men, as compared to Pashtun men, towards alcohol and drugs in the following way.

> The Pashtun's behaviour and values are very different from those of Italian men. First, the Italian men drink a lot of alcohol, and consumes many other drugs. And we Pashtuns, maximum we smoke cigarette or took *naswar* (smokeless tobacco/snuff) or *chars*/hash/hashish, and if we smoke hash, it is just one or two cigarettes in the whole day and that's enough. But these people drink a lot of wine and alcohol, you can feel the smell every time from the morning till evening, because alcohol has its own smell. But the place where we live, some Italians also live there, so they know that we are Muslims, so in front of us they do not drink, because they think that if they drink Infront of us, we will not sit with them again, so they avoid it when they are with us. Secondly, we eat different/halal food from what they eat, they eat everything, but we try to eat only *halal* and clean food.

> They even eat those things, which, sacred books also prohibit, but still, they eat it. So, this the difference between us and them.

> - 'Attaullah Jan', a Pashtun refugee from Afghanistan, interviewed in Sedriano, Milan.

Attaullah's reflect the differential self-regulation practices he observed between Pashtun and Italian men. Firstly, the contrast lies in alcohol and substance consumption. While Italian men are described as heavy drinkers and users of various drugs, Pashtuns limit their indulgence to smoking cigarettes or using smokeless tobacco like *naswar* or occasionally hashish. The cultural distinction is evident in the adherence to halal and clean food among Pashtuns, who avoid certain items considered prohibited by sacred books. Shows the role of religion in self-regulation of individuals. Additionally, the acknowledgment that Italians refrain from drinking in the presence of Pashtuns reveals a form of self-regulation influenced by cultural awareness and mutual respect, indicating a nuanced interplay of cultural values and behaviours between the two group. Zahir Rahman perspective differential food preferences, emphasizing the cultural and religious distinctions between Pashtun and Italian men, he argued that:

> Once I was go to a restaurant to eat pizza, I ordered Margareta the simple pizza, there were also Italian and other people, they would order the pizza which have pork In it, so I was very sad for them, I was thinking if we did our work of spreading Islam to all the people so they would that this thing is haram, so if we preached our religion to them they would be like this. They would not eat this thing, they would be Muslims, and the same sorrow I feel here as well due to our lack of work to preach Islam to these people.

> - 'Zahir Rahman', a Pashtun refugee from Pakistan, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan.

His observation of Italians ordering pizzas with pork, a forbidden food in Islam, serves as a cultural and religious distinction, highlighting how dietary choices underscores the potential for exclusion or inclusion based on adherence to specific cultural and religious norms, which, serves as schemas for self-regulation for Pashtun men in migration context.

Regarding the relationships between men and women, the participants offer different perspectives on Italian and Pashtun men. For instance, Shahab Saleem argues that:

here in Italy, they do not have the limitation on relations between men and women, they can establish relations to any women, they can become friendly to unrelated women, there is no restriction here, they are more open, as the Pashtun says *Khushala koranai da*, (a family who do not care about social norms and values, having less respect in Pashtun society). So, in Pashtun society men cannot do that, there is a lot of difference in both the cultures.

- 'Shahab Saleem', a Pashtun refugee from Pakistan, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan.

Shahab Saleem observations highlights the perceived moral and ethical distinctions between Italian and Pashtun men, particularly concerning relationships with women and sexuality. The participant notes that in Italy, there are no limitations on interactions between men and women, and individuals can form relationships freely. This openness is contrasted with Pashtun societal norms, where such unrestricted relationships are viewed negatively, characterized as "*khushala koranai da*" or a family lacking concern for social norms and values, thereby having diminished respect in Pashtun society. The observation suggests a significant cultural gap in the approach to relationships between men and women, and moral standards, emphasizing the differences in social expectations and values surrounding male-female interactions in both cultures. Similarly, Zahir Rahman's statement underscores the perceived contrast in moral values regarding interactions between boys and girls in Italy and Pashtun culture he argues that "the boys and girls here drinks, go to parties and dance together, which, in our culture and religion is forbidden". He points out the openness in Italy, where boys and girls engage in activities such as drinking, attending parties, and dancing together. The participant explicitly notes that these behaviours, while accepted in Italy, are considered forbidden in Pashtun culture and religion. This observation highlights the cultural and religious norms that shape moral values surrounding masculinity and femininity. The emphasis on the divergence in acceptable social behaviour reflects his perspective on the varying moral landscapes between the two cultures.

9.4.3. Collectivism and individualism

It is also emerged from the discussion that Italian men are more individualistic in its approach to friendships and sense of manhood as compared to Pashtun men, who thinks more in terms Collectivism. Shahab Saleem for instance argues that:

> The way Pashtun men treats their guests, here they do treat their guest as such, for example if you go out to eat here, everybody will pay their own bill, which is easy here but in Pashtun culture, the one who make the plan for eating , he will pay the bill, and if he do not it is against the manhood, that's is why I told you that it is difficult in Pashtun society to prove your manhood.

> - 'Shahab Saleem', a Pashtun refugee from Pakistan, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan.

The Pashtun cultural practice of the person proposing a meal covering the bill underscores the intertwining of hospitality, financial responsibility, and notions of manhood. In this context, being a man is intricately linked to providing financially for social gatherings. Conversely, the observation of everyone covering their own expenses in Italy illustrates a more individualistic norm, where financial responsibilities are decentralized. This comparative analysis underscores the diverse cultural nuances shaping perceptions and expressions of masculinity, shedding light on distinct expectations regarding shared financial duties in social settings. The cultural variations highlight that, in Pashtun culture, proving manhood involves financial generosity, whereas in Italy, a prevalent individualistic approach governs shared expenses. Dawood provided a similar picture regarding the differences in manhood practices between Pashtuns and Italian me, in the following.

> Their system is like when they go out with friends to eat, they pay the bill separately they do not have the custom to pay for each other as we Pashtuns do, so here, there is no concept of manhood. The way their men lives like the way they dress, going to clubs and drinking, you cannot say that they have any concept of manhood, but given their culture which is different from our you cannot judge them based on our concepts of manhood, which is wrong but when you think about their behaviour in their own culture then they are right.

> - 'Dawood Afridi', a Pashtun refugee from Pakistan, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan.

These narratives underscore the contrasting perspectives of Pashtun and Italian men regarding drugs, alcohol, food, women, and friendships. Pashtun men predominantly adhere to their religious and cultural norms as frameworks for self-regulation, presenting a challenge to Italian cultural and religious which guides the behaviours and practices prevalent among Italian men

shaped by local cultural and religious frameworks. As highlighted earlier, participants navigating the transnational context of Italy engage in the adoption and suspension of certain practices and behaviours. This adjustment aligns with the boundaries set by their respective religion and culture allowing them for selective adaptation and suspension.

Chapter ten

Pashtuns in Milan: maintaining ethnic boundaries and transnational connections.

10.1. Where there are Pashtuns, you do not feel to be a migrant/*musafar*

> I would like to tell you something, where there are Pashtuns, you do not feel as a migrant/*musafar,* whenever you meet Pashtuns, you do not feel that you are away from your homeland, and even if you meet Pashtuns from the same tribe then you really feel like at home. So, there are a lot of Pashtuns in Italy, either they from Pakistan or Afghanistan, together they create a good environment to live and socialize.

> \- 'Sartaj Khan', a Pashtun refugee from Pakistan, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan.

> When you are at camp, they (the Italians) very easily find out that this boy/man is from Afghanistan or Pakistan and is a Pashtun, because of our culture and our behaviour everyone knows there that he is a Pashtun, they know us. And if we talk about Punjabis, Bengalis, Indians and African, *haghi da lari na pejandal kegi* (they can be recognised from faraway, the respondent use this expression because of the dark colour of the mentioned groups). They also recognised us from our language because its sounds very different.

> \- 'Ejaz Khan', a Pashtun refugee from Pakistan, interviewed in Comasina, Milan.

The above statements suggest profound sense of community and belonging among Pashtun migrants in Italy. Sartaj Khan articulates a strong connection and comfort when surrounded by fellow Pashtuns, emphasizing that their shared ethnicity creates an environment that alleviates the sense of being a migrant. This underscores the pivotal role of a common ethnic background in fostering a supportive and familiar social setting. Moreover, the passages suggest the active creation of a Pashtun community in Italy, where the sheer presence of a significant number of Pashtuns contributes to the formation of a cohesive and supportive network, transcending specific geographical origins. The recognition of Pashtuns by the host community, as described by Ejaz Khan, signifies the maintenance of ethnic boundaries not only within the Pashtun community but also in the broader Italian society. The distinction is made based on cultural traits, behaviour, and language, showcasing a conscious effort to preserve and assert their

ethnic identity. Additionally, the contrast drawn with other ethnic groups highlights a certain level of ethnocentrism, as Pashtuns are depicted as distinguishable even from a distance due to unique cultural markers, reinforcing the significance of ethnic distinctions in their social dynamics within the migration context.

Fredrik Barth (1969) argues that ethnic boundaries, both social and to an extent territorial, defines an ethnic group identity. Ethnic boundaries involve criteria for membership, signals of inclusion/exclusion, and complex organization of behaviour. To identify someone from the same ethnic group involves common evaluation criteria, fostering potential diversification in social relationships. To distinguish others as strangers involves recognition of differences and limits interaction to an assumed common understanding. Ethnic groups persist through systematic rules governing inter-ethnic social encounters, preserving cultural differences despite contact. In the context of Pashtuns as an ethnic group, Fredrick Barth, while identifying cultural diversity among the Pashtuns, based on different ecological zones and different livelihood sources, identify a certain criterion for belonging to this ethnic group. He emphasizes three main elements such, patrilineal descent, Islam, and Pathan/Pashtun custom/Pashtunwali. Fischer et.al. (2020), explores the concepts of "boundaries" and "borders" in the context of ethnicity and migration. They argue that boundaries, as social constructs, create symbolic differences that separate groups and influence feelings of similarity, membership, and exclusion. They underline the close relationship between borders and boundaries, both contributing to the creation of differences and social order. Everyday bordering blurs the distinction between territorial state borders and social/symbolic boundaries. They argue for treating borders and boundaries as distinct but interrelated phenomena. Borders are necessarily related to states, while boundaries involve broader social and cultural differences, impacting group creation and reproduction. The distinction is crucial for specific terminology and understanding how relationships between borders and boundaries shape experiences of inclusion and exclusion. In the context of transnational migration, Crossley and Pease, B. (2009). Argues that men's experiences in fitting in and forming relationships were crucial for adapting and forging identities in Australia. The text explores the constant negotiation of identity, cultural symbols, and practices considering migration's impact on both the settlement and origin countries. Relationships with other Latin American men, facilitated by shared migration experiences and language, are particularly important for refugees with limited English skills. Spanish, though a significant factor, brings unforeseen consequences due to diverse variations. Frustration with English proficiency compared to Spanish fluency is

highlighted. The performative aspect of Spanish remains key in maintaining national identity within the Latin American community.

Pashtun men in Italy establish an ethnic boundary, potentially resisting exclusion and discrimination, and providing mutual support and belonging. This subculture offers an avenue for showcasing their culture, language, and identity, allowing the performance of cultural practices within their community. Ethnic boundaries become apparent in interviews and participant observations, where Pashtuns maintain distance from other ethnic groups, citing differences in language and lifestyles. This distinction is observed in social interactions, living arrangements, and workplaces. Despite occasional negative sentiments, Pashtuns from Pakistan and Afghanistan share close ties due to a common language and culture. While many Pashtuns, including participants in this study, reside in Italy without their families, they create a homosocial environment base exclusively on the relationships and interaction among Pashtun men. The narrative also reveals the participants are sustaining their transnational connections with their families and friends, through communication technologies and remittance sending, which, I will discuss in the later part of this section.

10.1.1. All my friends here are Pashtuns, we live together.

The narratives offered by the participants make it clear that they form close friendships and relations exclusively with fellow Pashtuns. It is also apparent that the participants show a preference and practice for sharing living spaces specifically with other Pashtuns, rather than with individuals from different ethnic groups. In their workplaces too, the participants remain within exclusively Pashtun groups.

Sartaj khan, while discussing about the close people and friends to him in Italy say that "as I recently moved here from Rome, I have some friends from my village, and the home where I am living there are three other Pashtun boys, they are good people, so these are the people who are close to me here" (Sartaj Khan, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan) . Allah Noor assert that "in Italy I have a friend who I trusted the most. His name is Shah Saoud, we first meet in France, there we become friends. He is from Pakistan and is a Pashtun" (Allah Noor, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan). Similarly, Shahab Momand "yes, I have friendships with other Pashtuns here, all my friends here are Pashtuns, we live together, sometimes we go for outing together or cook something together, and some time we discuss our journey and difficulties" (Shahab Momand, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan). These statements

suggest that ethnic boundaries play a significant role in shaping social connections and living arrangements for migrants. The comfort and trust derived from shared ethnic backgrounds contribute to the formation of close relationships and shared living spaces. The statements shows that in migration context, where individuals may face challenges related to language and cultural differences, the presence of same ethnic group and ties play an important role in establishing a sense of belonging.

Allah Noor also suggests the ethnic boundary making, in terms of exclusion and inclusion, between Pashtuns and other ethnicities from Afghanistan, in the following way.

> I am living in a camp with another person, he is Persian from Tahaar, Afghanistan, but he is racist toward me, because they (the Persian people) blame us Pashtuns for the situation of Afghanistan, but we Pashtuns ourselves are homeless. And other friends are those Pashtuns whom I work with, and when we come here to the workplace we sit here and talk and do gossips.
>
> - 'Allah Noor', a Pashtun refugee from Afghanistan, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan.

Allah Noor express a sense of exclusion as the Persian person exhibits racism towards the Pashtuns, blaming them for Afghanistan's situation, revealing the existence of ethnic tensions and prejudice, potentially stemming from historical or political factors. On the other hand, Allah Noor express a feeling of inclusion in terms of friendship with other Pashtuns at their workplace, where they interact and socialize. This difference in relationship with Pashtuns and other ethnic groups, with experiences of both exclusion and inclusion based on ethnicity highlights the differences within the migrant community. Similarly, Bilal Khan expresses a strong connection with a fellow Pashtun, in terms of friendships with other Pashtuns, some shared living, however ethnic boundary become visible in terms of limited interaction with other ethnic groups, as he argues.

> He is my closest friend in Italy, pointing to a fellow Pashtun delivery worker, Shahab, all the time I try to make him angry, but he doesn't get angry, that is why I like him the most. I have friendships with other Pashtuns here, some of them are living with me. With Italian I do not have any relation and with Punjabis. There are a lot of Punjabis here they work here but I do not have much interaction with them, we just say hello and hi to each other.

Punjabi, they sit together that side, and we Pashtuns, sit together this side. They talk with each other in their own language and gossip in our own language, they do not understand our way of life and we do not know theirs.

- 'Bilal Khan', a Pashtun refugee from Pakistan, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan.

Bilal's statement, as it reveals the lack of relations with Italians and Punjabis, suggests a visible existence of ethnic boundaries in migration context. The separation between Pashtuns and Punjabis, both in living arrangements and socializing, indicates a division based on ethnicity. Limited interaction with Punjabis is attributed to linguistic and cultural differences, with distinct social circles formed along ethnic lines. The statement reflects the persistence of ethnic boundaries, influencing friendship dynamics and social integration within the migrant community. Ejaz khan, while suggesting limited interaction and friendship with fellow Pashtun, due to limited number of Pashtun in the area where he lives, also reveals limited interactions and friendship with other groups, especially Punjabis, as he argues.

I do not have any strong friendship or relationships with other Pashtuns I do not meet them regularly, because the place where I work there are no Pashtuns there, there are other groups like Europeans, Indians, Bengalis, Punjabi from Pakistan but no Pashtuns. It is not that I do not have close friends, I have them, but they are out of Milan. But the place where I live there no one there are only Punjabis. A Punjabi man never stand/take side or support, with a Pashtun man. He doesn't even talk to you until he has a purpose to take advantage of you, but he will never share anything that can benefit you. When he needs something, he will behave like your brother but when he gets what he wants or need from you after that he would not even say hello to you or ask about you. I think that blacks then are much better than the Punjabis and even Indians are better than Punjabis, once they befriend you, they ask about you they will say hello and how are you, but Punjabis do not even do that. Secondly Arabs are also good in friendships.

- 'Ejaz Khan', a Pashtun refugee from Pakistan, interviewed in Comasina, Milan.

Ejaz Khan describes limited interactions with both Pashtuns and other groups, especially Punjabis, highlighting a lack of strong friendships with Pashtuns in his workplace and living area. While he describes that the place where he lives there a lot of Punjabi people however, he

expresses distrust and negative experiences with Punjabis, based on ethnic stereotypes, emphasizing a perceived opportunistic approach in their relationship, and as a result he avoids making friendship and relations with Punjabis. He argues that has Pashtun friends in Italy, but they are living out of Milan. Ejaz khan statement reflects ethnic boundaries between Punjabis and Pashtun even when are sharing nationality as Pakistanis.

Shahab Saleem, on the other hand, emphasizes solidarity among Pashtuns, treating them equally irrespective of their diverse origins. He maintains close relationships with Pashtuns, highlighting the importance of shared ethnicity and working together. Shah Saleem suggests a strong sense of inclusion within the Pashtun community, as he describes.

> So, normally we Pashtuns stay together, we also have relations with Punjabis, but I have close relations with Pashtuns. all these persons, Pashtuns, are close to me, Qari is closer to me, with all these people, Pashtuns, I have close relationship, we work here together and sit together most of the time. So, I treat and consider them all equally, because there no one from my village here which I can say is the closer one, all these Pashtuns come from different parts of Pakistan and Afghanistan, so they are equal for me.
>
> - 'Shahab Saleem', a Pashtun refugee from Pakistan, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan.

Attaullah Jan emphasizes the centrality of his family in Italy, with his closest relations being his wife, son, and his Pashtun neighbours. Attaullah Jan also acknowledges positive interactions with Italian families, particularly Sicilians, highlighting mutual respect and goodwill, as he argues.

> The closed people to me in Italy now is my family, my wife and son, and neighbours (a Pashtun family from Pakistan) with whom we have good relations. Beside this I do not have any close relations with anyone else. And there are some Italian families living in the same building, they have good terms with us, the treat us with good behaviour, because most of them are Sicilian people, they are the people from hilly area, they are very respected people. they really like my son, they play with him, my son goes to their houses, they ask about our life so it is good with them, they respect us.

- 'Attaullah Jan', a Pashtun refugee from Afghanistan, interviewed in Sedriano, Milan.

10.1.2. I know every street and corner; everyone calls me seeking help.

The Pashtun ethnic boundary also become evident in mutual support and solidarity network among Pashtuns in Italy. the narratives present a scenario where ethnic bonds and mutual support among Pashtuns in Italy, is significant in employment, accommodation, and general assistance. Within the job market, Pashtuns often turn to their community for guidance, seeking recommendations, sharing contact details, and leveraging social networks to secure employment. The solidarity among Pashtuns is particularly evident in the delivery work sector, where Pashtun individuals draw inspiration from other Pashtun friends. Sartaj khan for instance asserts that "before I start this job one of my friends was already doing the delivery work here in Milan as I was in Rome, even when I was in UK, he would tell me about delivery work, so when I moved here, I opened my own id and start this work" (Sartaj Khan, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan). Similarly, Allah Noor asserts that "I saw other Pashtuns doing this work, so I also applied to Glovo for delivery App, they give me the app and I start working. One of my friends helps during the procedure to make an account on the website and to upload my documents, to start work with any delivery work" (Allah Noor, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan). Shahab Momand also argue that "when I came, initially I was not working, then gradually I meet friends and made connection then I start working in the delivery" (Shahab Momand, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan). Shahab Saleem also provide the same explanation for starting his job at in delivery work "I was having friends who were doing this work, and I came here during the corona time, so restaurant and other jobs were closed that's why I started delivery work" (Shahab Saleem, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan). Similarly, Bilal khan asserts that "I was having a friend here, he was working in delivery for quite some time, so when I got the documents, I ask him for work, so he told to open an account to get the ID, so in this way I started the work" (Bilal Khan, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan). Pashtuns creates a supportive environment among themselves where practical advice and shared experiences are shared among them in terms of securing employments. Dawood Afridi, for instance argues that:

> when I came here and got the permesso for 6 months, so a friend of mine ask me to apply for the uber eats App, I was unaware of the process of application for the, I do not know how the app and locations works, but my friend really helped me to understand these

things. And gradually I understand everything related to this work, and now I do not have any problem everything going smoothly.

- 'Dawood Afridi', a Pashtun refugee from Pakistan, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan.

Similarly, Ejaz Khan provided that:

it was like I was having a friend I told him that I do not have work, so he gives me a website and told me to surf it and to write the name of the work/company. When I go through it and search, I got the contact number of the company and called them to ask for work. They ask me to send my data /CV on WhatsApp and to visit them the next day. So, after that they told me that they have work for me and that they will inform me when to join the work. And this friend of mine was a Pashtun.

- 'Ejaz Khan', a Pashtun refugee from Pakistan, interviewed in Comasina, Milan.

Beyond work, Pashtuns extend crucial support in various life aspects, as suggested by Attaullah Jan in the following way.

In Milano there are a lot of Pashtuns, Masha Allah, and every day, eight to ten people contact me or meet me when I go out for work. Because I am here for seven years, I work here for Delivero on bicycle, I know every street and corner, every man/person calls me seeking help in different matters, such as hiring a lawyer, if somebody had accident and do know what do or how to hire a lawyer, I share the information and the contact numbers with them.

- 'Attaullah Jan', a Pashtun refugee from Afghanistan, interviewed in Sedriano, Milan.

Attaullah Jan, as he is living in Milan for seven years, can be seen as a reliable person to help fellow Pashtuns facing not only job-related challenges but also legal issues. Attaullah also suggest that he also seek financial assistance, in time of need, within the Pashtun community, as he argues "when I face financial issues, I discussed it with some friends for any possible suggestions/solution, and some time, God bless them, they support me financially with 200, 300, or 500 euros to survive, and when I got work then I return it to them" (Attaullah Jan,

interviewed in Sedriano, Milan). it highlights a collective effort to overcome financial hurdles faced by individuals belonging to the same ethnic group, as he argues.

Acts of hospitality among the Pashtuns in Italy is also evident, as Zahir Rahman describes.

> few days ago I was going back home, and I the way I was very thirsty it was 12 in the night, there was some water I was drinking it, a man was looking at me, I said to him ciao, he replied are you a Pashtun, I said yes, he said I came here from Verona, for the passport and looking for a hotel to spent the night, I told him that I cannot take you with me on the bike, but I give him my address and told him to come to my home, when I reached home he also reached there. So, he was asking about the hotel, but I thought that it is not good to send him to a hotel as he speak Pashto with me, and was a Pashtun, my conscience was not accepting this to send him a hotel instead I offered him stay at my place for the night, so he was very happy and were asking if he can do anything for me I told him that no, so I always try to be hospitable.
>
> - 'Zahir Rahman', a Pashtun refugee from Pakistan, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan.

Zahir's offering accommodation to a fellow Pashtun, underscore a shared identity and a strong sense of community among Pashtuns in Italy, emphasizing their collective readiness to support one another in navigating the complexities of migration. Overall, these accounts highlight the pivotal role of ethnic ties in fostering a comprehensive support network that goes beyond employment, encompassing various facets of migrants' lives in a foreign land. Pashtuns rely on their community for guidance, practical assistance, and emotional support, showcasing the integral role of collective solidarity in addressing the challenges of migration.

10.1.3. Competition between the Pashtun in terms of work and earning.

The narratives provided by the participants also depict a profound sense of competition among Pashtuns in a transnational context, aligning with the cultural element of *Syali* (competition among extended families), part of Pashtun masculinity, embedded in Pashtunwali. Earnings and work performance become arenas for friendly competition, as Pashtun men strive to outdo each other and discuss their achievements, as Sartaj Khan argues "We compete here in earning money and to do the best, because it is in the human nature to strive for the better, and we try to do better than others when we go back home, we discuss how much money everybody

makes" (Sartaj Khan, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan). Similarly, Bilal kha argues that "even here when we go back home from work, we compare who did more work who earn more money. I live with 8 Pashtun people, so the winner is the one who earn more and the looser is the one who earn less than others" (Bilal Khan, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan). Shahab Momand also provided that "here all of them are busy in making money everybody tries to earn more than others. and in light mood we do gossips about each other and tease each other, some of us are lazy they do not work hard so we tease them" (Shahab Momand, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan).

The desire to succeed economically and provide for family underpins this competition, reflecting a cultural value of financial success and familial responsibility. However, the accounts also reveal complexities, as some individuals express resentment or discomfort when a peer earns more, indicating potential tensions within this competitive dynamic, as Allah Noor argues.

> We ask each other very often that how much work you did, how much money you make today, and we check each other Apps/delivery Apps. And some of the person would make comments if you got order and he do not, he would show his sorrow of not getting any orders. But we do it for fun to pass time, but some of them mind it if you make more money than them. But who make how much it depends on your luck.
>
> - 'Allah Noor', a Pashtun refugee from Afghanistan, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan

The stories also illuminate the challenges and pressures associated with this competition, with comparisons leading to familial expectations and judgments, as asserted by Dawood Afridi in the following manner.

> because of the competition in Pashtuns we suffer a lot, I left home along with my cosine but he reached earlier than me to France but there they reject their asylum claim, now he is here Italy, but the French govt pay him 400 euros per month and he is also working here so would send a lot of money to his family, and build a house as well in the village, so every time my family members asking me that look at your cousin what he is doing and what you are doing means he send more money than you. But they do not think that he is

also taking money from the French govt as well. then I tell them that he is receiving 400 I receive 70 euros from Italian govt which a big difference.

- 'Dawood Afridi, a Pashtun refugee from Pakistan, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan.

Attaullah Jan emphasizes a positive aspect of competition, focusing on mutual progress within the same family.

Yes, Pashtun men do compete in certain ways, for example if one finds a work somewhere, even as migrant for work, so his relatives, and cosines will try to do more work and to earn more than that person, so that the first one does not taunt him that he left behind. So, it is a competition, for example my cosine is I France and I am in Italy, he cannot compete with me in work and earning even if he tries his level best. All day he just talks big/lie, only delivering dialogues, to his parent do deceive them, he just sends fifty thousand afghani rupees, and they think that everything is good, but there is nothing. So, the competition is to earn money, to have a good future, but to support your parents so that they remember you in their prayers/good wishes, so you will be successful in both this world and in the world after death. But if you compete with others in casino its not a good thing. A good competition is that when you say to your cosine lets compete who will earn more money, because it is a win-win situation for both, whoever earn more, it will go to the same family. So, it is a positive competition.

- 'Attaullah Jan', a Pashtun refugee from Afghanistan, interviewed in Sedriano, Milan.

Overall, while competition is culturally ingrained and often viewed positively, it also introduces complexities and potential disparities, reflecting the nuanced role of competition within the Pashtun community in a transnational setting.

10.1.4. Here I do not trust anyone, except Allah.

Besides cooperation, Distrust among friends and with other Pashtuns in transnational context, and potentially due to competition and lifestyle in Italy, also emerges from the narratives. Bell & Pustułka (2017) explores how gender ideology and inequalities affect friendship relations among Polish male migrants, highlighting challenges in maintaining meaningful friendships

while balancing multiple social and family roles abroad. Many male migrants report negative experiences with friendships and a lack of time for socializing. Allah Noor, for instance, expresses the difficulty of establishing meaningful connections in the new environment, in the following way.

> here it is difficult to pursue friendship, even if you have a very close friend he cannot do anything for you, you are solely responsible for your own affairs/issues. And some friend will even dig a hole for you (*kanda drta obasi*) they will try to let you down, and if you sit with all and talk to them it can lead to conflict, so, its better to be alone or only say hello and hi to them, because you cannot trust friends here, like you trust and love your friends in your village/Afghanistan. Here everybody is busy in their own work and benefits, they do not have time for you and if sometimes they are free, they prefer Facebook and TikTok than you to spend time with
>
> - 'Allah Noor', a Pashtun refugee from Afghanistan, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan.

Allah Noor emphasises a lack of mutual support and genuine trust among individuals. His mention of friends potentially undermining each other suggests a perception of competition or even betrayal within the migrant community. The caution against engaging in deep conversations to avoid conflicts underscores a pervasive sense of distrust. The statement implies that the social dynamics in the migration context are marked by individualism, with people primarily focused on their own concerns rather than fostering communal bonds. The reference to the preference for social media platforms over interpersonal connections highlights a perceived shift in priorities, further contributing to the sentiment of isolation and distrust within the Pashtun migrant community. Similarly, Dawood argues that "here I do not trust anyone, except Allah" (Dawood Afridi, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan). Sartaj Khan express his resentment towards Pashtuns from Afghanistan in the following manner.

> I am very angry with some of the Afghans, they are really hypocrite, and I am saying this from my experience, so I am unhappy with them because if they got the chance, they would proof that they are our worst enemies. I would request them that for God's sake be positive and clean your hearts from hate, some Pakistanis are also like that, but they are a few, but Afghans do enmity with Pashtuns more than other Pakistanis, they wash dishes with Punjabis but whenever they got the opportunity, they will do bad with Pashtuns. In the UK

they would clean toilet for Punjabis, under the Punjabis they even become sweeper, but they have problem with Pashtuns from Pakistan, and still, they chant lar aw bar yaw Afghan. When they would not have their own cricket team, they would support Pakistan's team but when they form their own team, they support Indian team against p Pakistan.

- 'Sartaj Khan', a Pashtun refugee from Pakistan, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan.

His statement underscores a profound sense of distrust and discord between Pashtuns from Pakistan and Afghanistan amidst their migration to Italy. Sartaj expresses discontent and resentment toward Afghans, accusing them of hypocrisy and posing a potential threat to Pashtuns from Pakistan. He highlights perceived betrayals within the Pashtun community, pointing to instances where Afghans, despite engaging in menial jobs for Punjabis, are believed to harbour negative sentiments towards Pashtuns. The call for Afghans to cleanse their hearts from hate and the frustration evident in his plea for positivity suggest a desire for unity. However, the reference to supporting Indian cricket against Pakistan reveals a perceived lack of solidarity within the Pashtun diaspora. Overall, the statement unveils a complex dynamic of distrust, competition, and perceived betrayals among Pashtuns in Italy, particularly between those from Pakistan and Afghanistan.

10.1.5. Cultural and religious festivals, sports, and entertainment

The accounts also underscore the pivotal role of religious and cultural festivities in shaping the social ad ethnic fabric of the Pashtun community in Italy, contributing to a shared sense of identity and connections. The emphasizes the role of religious and cultural events in socializing and maintaining connections, by regularly attending the mosque for Eid and Friday prayers. Additionally, they use these occasions as opportunities for social support, seeking solace when feeling sad by meeting with friends. Allah Noor for instance assert that "along with my friend I go to the mosque to offer my Eid and Friday prayer. And sometime when I feel sad, I go to meet him" (Allah Noor, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan). Similarly, Bilal Khan emphasizes the communal aspect of religious and cultural festivities, participating in prayers and Eid celebrations with friends as he asserts that "we go to prayers together, we get together on the Eid, on Eid day we offer the Eid prayer after that with friends we go for outing, we eat in restaurant" (Bilal Khan, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan). The post-prayer activities, such as outings and dining, showcase how these events contribute to social bonding within the

Pashtun community. Dawood also wood describes his regular attendance at the mosque on Fridays, emphasizing the communal nature of these gatherings, as he suggests "on Friday I go to the mosque to offer my prayer and almost everyone come there so sometimes I talk to other Pashtuns there" (Dawood Afridi, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan). The mosque becomes a space for social interaction, Attaullah Jan highlights the geographical clustering of Pashtuns in Milano, where they gather on special occasions like Eid to celebrate together, as he assets "there are places in Milano, where a lot of Pashtuns live, such as Centrale, chaise, Bresso, and Loretto and for example Certossa, so in these places all the Pashtuns came out on special occasions like Eid, they get together to celebrate the occasion" (Attaullah Jan =, Interviewed in Sedriano, Milan). This underscores the significance of religious and cultural events in fostering a sense of community and maintaining ethnic boundaries. Shahab Saleem contrasts Italian festivities with Pashtun celebrations, indicating a clear preference for the Pashtun festivals. He argues that "on specific occasion I participate in events with other Pashtuns, on Eid or if someone invite me for a dinner party etc. We never participate in Italian festivities, but when we have our festival like Eid then we organize get together and participate in that" (Shahab Saleem interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan). The organization of get-togethers during Pashtun festivals demonstrates the community's active role in maintaining ethnic boundaries through shared cultural practices. Zahir Rahman notes the limited cultural programs in Italy but highlights the significance of Eid celebrations for Pashtun as he argues "in Italy there is very little cultural program but on Eid people do get together and I also celebrate it with my friend, and sometime during the Friday prayer I met with other Pashtuns in the mosque" (Zahir Rahman, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan).

Another important aspect of maintaining ethnic boundaries is sports and entertainment. The participants, while suggesting that they find limited time for sports and entertainment due to more focus on work and earnings. Most of the participants suggest that before migration they would play games and, organize outings, and would travel to different place with friends, however after their migration these activities are enormously diminished. Shahab Saleem for instance argues that "in the village (Pakistan) I would play football, hockey and cricket and other games. Here in the camp also boys would play different games, but we do not play games here, because we are not free to play games, we normally have shortage of time" (Shahab Saleem, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan). Similarly, Bilal Khan argues that "Pashtun here, they do not play games, they do not play football as such, sometimes they play cricket, but I do not play, I never played game here" (Bilal Khan, interviewed in Bicocca village,

Milan). Dawood Afridi also argue that "the camp is very large, there are playgrounds, but everyone here wants to earn money and give their maximum time to work, so the games are useless" (Dawood Afridi, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan). However, the limited opportunities they find the participants prefer to play games among themselves, Sartaj khan for instance assert that "mostly we play ludo and cards, we also discuss politics and cricket, and discuss the issues here we face. Also, we discuss how to start business in Pakistan together, topics like this" (Sartaj Khan, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan). Similarly, Attaullah Jan suggests that,

> We would get together in Certosa, to play cricket, a lot of boys/men would go there in groups, both from upper/Afghanistan and lower/Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in Pakistan, and there would be no differentiation between the upper and lower Pashtun all of them would walk together, play together, and eat together, so, we would really enjoy that life/moments.
>
> - 'Attaullah Jan', a Pashtun refugee from Afghanistan, interviewed in Sedriano, Milan.

Allah Noor suggest a clear ethnic boundary in sports, between Punjabis and Pashtuns, particularly from Afghanistan, as he argues.

> In the camp they play cricket, but most of them are Punjabis, and you know that they do not like us, so I do not play with them. And they now hate us more because of the match between Pakistan and Afghanistan recently, spectators from both sides were fighting and abusing each other, so it is also created more hate here between afghanis and Pakistanis.
>
> - 'Allah Noor', a Pashtun refugee from Afghanistan, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan.

10.2. Maintaining transnational relations

In terms of maintaining transnational relations, the narratives reveal that the participants consistently maintain strong ties with a specific group of individuals, predominantly family members such as parents, children, and spouses. While upholding their transnational connections and relationships with their families, the participants depict a dynamic scenario where few of the participants suggest that they are still in contact with their friends, while majority of them suggest that their friendships gradually diminish over time spent living

abroad. Regarding remittance sending practices, participants indicate that they send financial support to their families, as discussed also in the preceding sections, based on their employment and income earned in Italy. The value of remittances varies across different periods and circumstances. Additionally, participants highlight their significant role in both social and familial affairs within their home countries. Brownee (2006) highlights the social consequences of the dynamic relationships between migrants and those they left behind, investigating how movers and stayers navigate their asymmetrical bonds. The study acknowledges that the bulk of transnational engagement is directed towards a select group of significant individuals in the home country. This engagement, characterized by selective and dynamic attributes, has implications for migrants' life course stages and experiences. The study suggests that migrants' transnational ties can contribute to recreating a sense of life continuity and security, bridging the gap between past and present experiences. However, these ties are also ambivalent, carrying tensions and unmet expectations, particularly evident in practices like remittance management. Case studies of Ecuadorian migrants in Italy reveal that the intensity of transnational engagement varies across migration phases, highlighting the shifting nature of migrants' attitudes towards their home societies and the different ways they enact transnational practices. The study underscores the interplay between transnational ties and migrants' life course trajectories, illustrating how these ties provide both stability and complexity in migrants' experiences abroad.

Sartaj khan while discussing the communication with his friends and family and sending remittances to his family asserts that "I do communicate with all my friends and family in Pakistan, through WhatsApp" and "currently I am not sending money to my family because I just start this work, but when I was in England, I used to send a lot of money to my family" (Sartaj Kahn, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan). Jameel also argues that, beside his close ties with his family, "in the village I still have relationship with my friends we sometime talk to each other, through WhatsApp or on messenger some time we chat" (Jameel, interviewed in Bicocca village Milan). Sartaj khan and Jameel statements suggests that even after migration they are still maintaining connections with both their families and friends in Pakistan. However, most of the participants reveals that their connection with their families is intact, but connection with friends and broader community back home diminishes enormously after migration to Italy. Allah Noor, when asked about the important people for him in Afghanistan and his communication with them, responded that "my parents, wife and children are very important for me, other than them there is no one very close to me" (Allah Noor, interviewed in Bicocca

village, Milan). he further explains that "usually I talk to my family on internet, WhatsApp, but sometimes it works sometimes it does not, I manage to talk to them once a week, and I also send money to them every month because they nothing there to provide for themselves". Similarly, Attaullah Jan argues that "in Afghanistan my parent are the closed ones to me. I do not have many friends In Afghanistan, one or two may be there now, but since long time we are not in contact, so the only close people now are my mother and father" (Attaullah Jan, interviewed in Sedriano, Milan). Similarly, Ejaz khan provided that "before I would not contact my family regularly but now, I do, I talk to my parents once in a week or so, but I am not in contact with my friends in Pakistan. I do not have that kind of close friend in Pakistan, but when I have some problem, I have a brother I discussed it with him" (Ejaz Khan, interviewed in Comasina, Milan). Allah Noor, Attaullah Jan, and Ejaz Khan emphasize the centrality of family members in Afghanistan, with limited or sporadic contact with friends from their home country.

Bilal explains his transnational relationships with his family and friends, highlighting the challenge of sustaining friendships from a distance, as he argues.

> the most important people in Pakistan for me are my parents, family, my siblings. I do not have many friends in Pakistan and the friendship in Pakistan is just a time pass, it is not true friendship. With some of my old friends I am still in contact, whenever we talk, they ask me to bring them here, they think that it is very easy but it is not.
>
> - 'Bilal Khan', a Pashtun refugee from Pakistan, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan.

The narrative illustrates a shift in relationships upon migration. Bilal describes friendships in Pakistan as mere 'time pass' and notes that friends often misunderstand the complexities of life in a new country. Similarly, Dawood Afridi argues that:

> yes, I do communicate with my family I am not married but with my parents and siblings I talk to them usually through WhatsApp. I am closer to my mother than other family members. I was having a lot of friends back home, but when I came here the situation is different now, they still think that I would be the same person, but it is not true, here you have hundred issues to face. So, it is very difficult to remain in contact with them, may be once in a year.

> - 'Bilal Khan', a Pashtun refugee from Pakistan, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan.

Shahab Momand also observes a decline in contact with friends due to the demands of life in Italy, as he describes.

> In Pakistan I was having friends so I would stay with them we would visit other places together and arrange programmes for eating etc. but now I do not have much contact with, in the beginning when I came here, we are in contact, but it decreases, because I am busy here and. But the most important people in Pakistan for me is my family now.

> - 'Shahab Momand', a Pashtun refugee from Pakistan, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan.

Zahir Rahman prioritizes regular communication with family members, using financial support as a means of connection.

> Almost every day I talk with my wife and children. I also have three brother the younger one lives with me, sometimes I talk to them, I send money to my brother-in-law than he gave it to my wife. Because he is elder my son is a minor. And as life goes on so the contact with friends decreases, but on special occasion I do contact them, but everyone now is busy in their live but when I go to village, I meet them.

> - 'Zahir Rahman', a Pashtun refugee from Pakistan, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan.

The provided statements also reflect a significant role in maintaining transnational social affairs, particularly within the family structure, as suggested by Zahir Rahman in the following way.

> I am the head of my family, in the extended family as well, even I have an elder brother, but in every important issue they gave me the authority to make the final decision. So I have much burden of the family responsibilities, all the social relations (*gham khadi*), for example, the engagement of my sister and nieces are my responsibility to decide. even my elder brother asks me to decide his daughter marriage. So, if anyone ask for the hand of

our girls in marriage, my brothers told them to discuss with me. And if I am agreeing then they will say yes as well.

- 'Zahir Rahman', a Pashtun refugee from Pakistan, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan.

Zahir Rahman portrays himself as the head of both their immediate and extended family, assuming a central role in decision-making processes. His responsibility extends to crucial aspects of family life, including social relations and marital decisions. Zahir Rahman holds authority in matters such as engagements and marriages, and their decision-making role is evident in negotiating marriage proposals for their sisters and nieces. This emphasizes the trust and reliance placed on him as a key decision-maker within the family's social affairs, showcasing a transnational continuity of cultural norms and hierarchical structures that grant certain family members significant influence over critical aspects of family.

Overall, maintaining transnational relationships involves adapting to the challenges of distance, cultural differences, and individual responsibilities. Family ties emerge as enduring and crucial, whereas friendships tend to be more affected by the practicalities of life in a new country. The use of technology facilitates communication, but the evolving nature of relationships in the face of migration is evident, emphasizing the multifaceted dynamics of staying connected across border.

Chapter eleven

Exploring changes and continuity in gender roles perceptions.

The impact of transnational migration on gender role reversal is evident from the existing literature on gender and migration. Pease (2009) reveals that men often invoke specific cultural elements to justify their views on gender roles, emphasizing the importance of recognizing both cultural diversity and common patriarchal elements, including the breadwinner ethos, patrilineal family structures, belief in 'natural' gender differences, and a gendered division of labour. Bell & Pustułka (2017) argues that in Norway, some Polish fathers adopt complicit masculinity by conforming to local norms. For many male migrants, migration serves as an escape from social control and high parental expectations, with communication with parents often seen as a strain. The role as sons does not lead to shifts towards caring masculinities but aligns more with traditional gender roles. In Hondagneu-Sotelo's (1992) observed that Mexican migrants in the United States, both men and women, faced challenges related to social class and ethnicity. Their ability to exert domestic power shifted in opposite directions, increasing for women, and decreasing for men. This shift was attributed to factors such as social class, racial-ethnic background, and often legal status, which further diminished men's capacity to exercise patriarchal privileges. Gallo (2006), delves into the dynamics of men's relationships with women working abroad, revealing how these interactions can simultaneously challenge and bolster masculinity. Gallo asserts that examining men's vulnerabilities within transnational marriages goes beyond merely failing to meet traditional standards, it is also influenced by their endeavour to reconcile the role of a "modern husband" with the aspiration for autonomy as self-sufficient providers, a symbol of modernity in contemporary Kerala. Furthermore, the research positions transnational conjugality within the broader context of redefining the modern family and the evolving models of femininity and masculinity in contemporary Kerala, particularly affecting lower-class Malayali men who often compromise their masculine ideals. The perception of Italy as a "feminizing" place among Malayali men in such marriages captures the complexities of their masculine identity formation, considering their experiences of downward mobility and dependency. Most these studies analysed the gender dynamics within the context of migrant families, suggesting changes in both males and females' roles and the resulting impact of power relations within the family. However, As discussed briefly in the preceding sections that the participants, while living in Italy without their families and female

family members, have experienced gender role reversal, where they perform roles which traditionally are associated with women. This gender role reversal is adopted by the participants out of necessity not primarily because of the changes in their perception regarding gender roles and equality, as argued. In this section I will discuss their perceptions regarding the differences between Italian and Pashtun gender order. Notably I will discuss that how the participant perceives the gender roles between Italian men and women and between Pashtun men and women. I will also discuss that which gender order, Italian or Pashtun, they perceive the ideal one. As the participants observed both societies, by discussing these gender dynamics, I will analyse the changes, if occurred, in their perceptions and practices regarding gender roles and gender equality.

11.1. Italian men and women, all seems to me similar.

While discussing the dynamics of gender roles in Italian and Pashtun societies, participants primarily consider the dichotomy between the public and private spheres. Regarding Italian culture, they contend that there is an absence of differentiation in the roles of men and women, as both genders engage in activities within both public and private domains. Conversely, within Pashtun culture, the participants emphasize a distinct separation of responsibilities between men and women. Women are predominantly associated with roles in the private sphere, with limited exceptions, while men predominantly assume roles in the public sphere. The significant disparity between Italian and Pashtun gender roles are evident in the narratives. In Italy, men and women are perceived as mostly the same, sharing similar responsibilities and individual autonomy. In Pashtun society, women primarily stay at home, often restricted from working or pursuing education, as Allah Noor argued.

> They (Italian men and women) are mostly the same, women here work outside the homes as their men do, they do the same jobs, and every individual is responsible for his or her own life. But our women, they mostly stay at home, and not allowed to go out to work or even education. Generally, there is a huge difference between them, but it also depends on the family values and socio-economic status. But yes, there is difference between men and women in Afghanistan, even here in Italy, among the Afghan families as well. So, the difference is everywhere, but it depends on the lifestyle and the behaviour of the male family members.

- 'Allah Noor', a Pashtun refugee from Afghanistan, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan.

Allah Noor argues differences persist between men and women in Afghanistan, even among Afghan families in Italy, suggests the enduring influence of cultural expectations on gender roles across different cultures and geographical locations. The variability in women's experiences, contingent upon family values and socio-economic status, underscores the intricate and multifaceted nature of their roles in society. He argues that roles of Afghan women are not uniform, as women may be involved in both public and private spheres in Afghanistan, emphasizing that this variation is shaped by diverse factors such as family values, socio-economic status, lifestyle, and the behaviour of male family members. It posits that women's roles are significantly influenced by the specific values and economic conditions of their families, demonstrating the impact of family dynamics and men's role as the dominant decision maker, in decision related to women work outside the home. The mention of different lifestyle of Afghans, based on socio-economic and rural urban differences, and the behaviour of male family members, highlights different intersections, that affects women's role in Pashtun society. Similarly, Bilal Khan echoes the sentiment of similarity between Italian men and women, emphasizing that roles of men and women are more distinct in Pashtun society. Women there usually engage in specific jobs, prioritizing their honour in profession selection, while men predominantly work outside the home.

> They (Italian men and women) all seem to me similar, either it is men or women, they all do the same. But there is a difference between the roles of men and women in in Pashtun society, women mostly stay at home, and even if they are allowed to do jobs they will do specific jobs such teaching, but they would not do jobs like here women do in restaurants, here girls do every work, but there, girls do specific jobs not every job. They take care of their honour while picking up a profession. And the men they do work outside the home mostly.

> - 'Bilal Khan', a Pashtun refugee from Pakistan, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan.

Bilal's statement contrasts Italian gender order where both men and women, work in public and private spheres, with Pashtun society, where women are predominantly limited to specific roles within the family prioritizing honour. as I discussed in chapter two, the concept of honour

and shame in Pashtun society is strongly connected to women behaviour, to protect one's honour, a check on women behaviour become essential, as suggested by Bilal's statement, the important form of control is the restricting of women opportunities in the public spheres jobs and remaining inside the home, through consensus or coercion. Pashtun women, even if allowed to work, choose specific professions to safeguard their honour, while men predominantly work outside the home. Dawood Afridi also contrasts Italian society, where there is no apparent difference in the roles of men and women, with Pashtun society, where women's roles are confined to the home. He also suggests the differences in family system between Italian and Pashtun society, influencing women roles and status in society and also influenced by women roles outside the home. He suggests a clear boundary for men and women activities within Pashtun society, as he argues.

> In Italian society there is no difference between the roles of men and women. Secondly here the family is small comprising of wife husband and one or two kids, they mostly even do not eat at home mostly they eat in restaurants, and even if they eat at home, they do not cook It, they order it. So, like we say in Urdu that *chota khandan khushkhal zindagi*. In Pashtun society women belongs to home, *da khazi dpara kor wi,* and men to hujra, *aw da nar dpara bahr hujra.*
>
> - 'Dawood Afridi', a Pashtun refugee from Pakistan, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan.

Jameel observes Italian women's freedom, contrasting it with the distinct roles in Pashtun society, where men and women have specified roles within and outside the home. He refers to Islamic teachings to justify these roles, as he argues.

> Italian women are free, they are allowed to do whatever they want, if they want, they can work at home and if they want, they can work outside, they can do everything, I mean they are same as men, the live equally same to same as men, they do not care about purdah or anything like that their system is like that. But the role of women and men is very different in Pashtun society, but as our prophet said doing household work for a man is not *beghairati* (dishonour), it is a good thing you can help women of your family in household chores. But it is true that women have their own roles within the house in purdah, and men have their own role in public sphere, but if a women have some problem a man can help her. So, it is not *beghairati*, it is a virtuous thing and it is also not against Islam.

- 'Jameel', a Pashtun refugee from Pakistan, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan.

Jameel depict Italian women as enjoying freedom and equality with men, able to pursue various activities without restrictions. In Pashtun society, he emphasized the traditional gender roles of men and women, based on Islamic teachings, he also discusses the positive aspects in Islam, where men helping with household chores is seen as virtuous and not against Islamic principles.

Sartaj khan emphasizes the visual differences in appearance between Italian men and women, attributing 20% of dissimilarity to dressing. However, he acknowledges the shared responsibilities among Italian men and women, while Pashtun women bear the burden of maintaining the entire family.

> They (Italian men and women) are 80 percent the same, and have 20 percent differences, the 20 percent difference is due to the dressing, but that too is now becoming the same for men and women. So, the 20 percent differences are in the appearance otherwise they do not have any difference in the jobs or social relations. So, these women only responsible for themselves, but our women, they take the responsibility of the whole family, which some time consists of 20 person, and one or two women are responsible for them all to maintain them.
>
> - 'Sartaj Khan', a Pashtun refugee from Pakistan, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan.

Shahab Saleem highlights the sameness of roles in Italy, where both men and women engage in similar jobs. In Pashtun society, women have distinct roles at home, nurturing and caring for the family, while men work outside to provide.

> Here (in Italy) it is the same for men and women, the jobs that a man do, women are also doing that here and the jobs that a woman do a man also do that here, but in Pashtun society women have their own roles and men have their own, women role is inside the home to upbring and take care of the children, etc. and men role is outside the family, to earn money and to provide for the family.
>
> - 'Shahab Saleem', a Pashtun refugee from Pakistan, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan.

Shahab Momand underscores the absence of role division in Italy, where men and women share responsibilities and work for their livelihood. In Pashtun society, even if women engage in public jobs, they remain in purdah, and the education system is often segregated.

> Men and women are the same here (in Italy), they do the same jobs, there is no division in their roles. And both men and women work to earn money. But if you think about women jobs outside in Pashtun society it is rare. Women are also doing jobs like teaching, but in purdah. Girls here, they go to coeducation, but in Pashtun society there are separate schools for girls and boys, so even if a Pashtun woman do a job in public sphere, she remains in purdah.

> - 'Shahab Momand', a Pashtun refugee from Pakistan, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan.

Attaullah Jan notes the equality in roles between European men and women, each responsible for themselves. However, he contrasts this with the traditional roles of Pashtun women, who primarily focus on domestic responsibilities, and rarely pursue work outside the home.

> In Europe, both men and women are responsible for themselves, male earn for himself, and female earn for herself, there is no difference in their roles here. but the roles of Pashtun women, either they are in Afghanistan or Pakistan, is to cook/prepare meals/food, tea, to serve her husband and children and the family/home and if they want to study, to recite the holly Quraan, they are allowed to do that. Besides this Pashtun do not want to send their women outside to work to earn money, or to go to market. They do not take advantage of women to make their lives better through women work or money, they never think of both in Pakistan and Afghanistan. I never saw someone who send his daughter to work to earn money, to think that my daughter would earn, and I would eat is wrong. Mostly they think that it is right to get education but then she will stay at home until she finds some respectable work like a doctor, or teaching in school, then its ok.

> - 'Attaullah Jan', a Pashtun refugee from Afghanistan, interviewed in Sedriano, Milan.

11.2. Every girl in Pashtun culture rules her family.

The narratives provided, offer insights into the notable differences between Italian and Pashtun gender orders, delineating the distinct roles of men and women in each society. Participants

highlight that in Italy, there is a greater degree of gender equality, where men and women share similar responsibilities, including pursuing careers and participating in various social spheres. Italian women are portrayed as free to make choices regarding work and lifestyle, with minimal differentiation in their roles compared to men. This stands in contrast to Pashtun society, where traditional gender roles are emphasized, restricting women primarily to domestic responsibilities and certain specific professions like teaching. Pashtun men express a preference for maintaining a clear distinction between men and women's roles within the family structure. The narratives underline the cultural and societal disparities in the perception of masculinity and femininity between Italian and Pashtun contexts, reflecting diverse attitudes towards gender roles, equality, and individual freedoms.

The next important aspect of this discussion is to analyse the impact of migration on the perception of participants regarding gender roles and gender equality, and that how the participants perceive these differential gender orders and roles. The provided narrative in this matter, suggest that most of the participants prefer the Pashtun gender order and the reasons for this they provide, is the religious beliefs, naturalized differences and stereotypes associated with men and women. It can be argued that in terms of gender division of labour and gender equality in terms of work, most of the participant remain unchanged, with a couple expressing limited changes in their perception towards women work outside home and shared responsibilities of both men and women in public and private spheres. Natural differences between men and women are expressed in the narrative, where men are seen as superior and women are inferior, leading to differential gender roles and status in society, and where religion and culture legitimizes these differences in status and roles. Shahab Saleem for instance, expressing a natural difference between men and women, argues that "the basic difference between men and women is that Allah created women weaker than men. The roles that men can play a women cannot play that" (Shahab Saleem, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan). Shahab Momand argue that "my personal point of view is that the jobs/roles that men do women cannot do that" (Shahab Momand, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan). He further explains his viewpoint, emphasizing and reinforcing the gender division of labour, based on the stereotypes and expectations from men and women in Pashtun society, as he argues "I do not like that in Pashtun society women work and earn outside home, I do not consider it a right thing. As a Pashtun I like that men earn and provide for the family and women should stay at home, to upbring and take care of the children and her husband" (Shahab Momand, interviewed

in Bicocca village, Milan). Similarly, Bilal Khan provides a stereotypical difference between men and women emphasizing men's superiority, as he argues.

> The things that a man does, women cannot do that. Woman is very weak, woman lose courage very soon, but man does not lose courage, there are so many differences between men and women, women cannot do hard/tough work, they cannot bear it, they cannot tolerate hunger and difficulty, men can face any difficulty with patience.

> - 'Bilal Khan', a Pashtun refugee from Pakistan, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan.

The provided narratives reflect a preference for Pashtun gender order, while comparing it with Italian gender order, articulates a perspective that endorses traditional gender roles and advocates for a societal framework where women primarily assume domestic responsibilities by staying at home to care for the household and raise children, which the participants perceive as essential for a balanced and smooth functioning of the society. This preference for Pashtun gender order and roles is strongly linked to the religious and cultural norms and values regarding masculinity and femininity, in Islam and Pashtunwali. Attaullah Jan's preference for Pashtun gender order is rooted in the beliefs that men and women are essentially different, where men are seen as dominant and more suitable for provision and protection of the family. and women, as inferior, are more suitable for domestic chores. He also suggests that in Pashtun culture women are expected to stay at home and if she works outside the home, it is a dishonour for the male family members, as he argues.

> Man has a lot of responsibilities in Pashtun society and family. Everything a woman need in the family a man is responsible to provide it, anything a child need a man must provide it. A man remains outside the home for the whole day to work hard and to provide for the family, he will earn, and the family will eat but if he did not earn what would the family eat. That is why a man is dominant to a woman, because he works hard, in difficult situations, in rain, storm, heat, and cold, he faces all this to provide for the family. This is the difference between man and woman. in Europe you see both men and women are responsible for themselves, male earn for himself, and female earn for herself. But because we are Pashtuns, we cannot accept this, our conscience does not allow us to send our women to work. Our culture is better in this regard. Who would like to make her woman work to earn money. Women should stay at home, what is the purpose of being a man, it is

a man responsibility to work and earn. If a woman does same as men, why then a man shouldn't marry a male, because when a woman goes outside the home, to the market and public sphere/men's sphere, she will behave like a man, so there will be no difference between a man and woman. Then your woman would behave like your father at home.

- 'Attaullah Jan', a Pashtun refugee from Afghanistan, interviewed in Sedriano, Milan.

Attaullah Jan offers insights into gender roles within Pashtun culture, underscoring a traditional delineation of responsibilities where men are viewed as the primary providers and protectors of the family. His perspective posits that a man's duty is to work outside the home, ensuring the family's needs are met, while women are expected to remain within the domestic sphere. The argument stems from the belief that allowing women to work outside the home would disrupt established gender roles, eroding the distinction between men and women. In contrast, he suggests a perception in Europe where both men and women are seen as individually responsible for their own earnings, fostering a more individualistic approach to familial duties. Attaullah contends that Pashtun culture differs from this European perspective, asserting that it goes against a Pashtun's conscience to have women engage in work outside the home. His statement illuminates a particular standpoint within Pashtun culture, emphasizing traditional gender roles and indicating a preference for a clear division of labour between men and women. Shahab Saleem, while comparing Pashtun and Italian gender order and roles, prefers the Pashtun gender order and the reasons for this preference he provides is the perceived rift between parents and children and disregard for the elderly persons in Italian society. He linked this rift between parent and children and disregard for the elderly as the outcome of the Italian gender order, as he argues.

> I think our system is better, because women should not go to work outside to earn money, their main responsibility is to stay at home and to take care of the children in a good way, to upbring them in a good way, here women they are busy in outside jobs and they do not give much time to children and unable to upbring them in a proper way. Because men are also outside so for children, they do not have much time, and then the children also do not have much love and respect for their parent that's why when they became aged, they shift them to the old age houses, and the parents cannot say anything to their children because after the age of 18 they are independent they do not have the responsibility of their parents. In our culture children serve their parents when they get old.

- 'Shahab Saleem', a Pashtun refugee from Pakistan, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan.

Expressing his viewpoint Shahab Saleem believes that women's engagement in outside employment may compromise the time and attention they can devote to their children, potentially resulting in an inadequate upbringing. The preference for Pashtun gender order and roles is underpinned by the conviction that children require dedicated parental, particularly maternal, attention for proper nurturing. Comparing the simultaneous employment of both parents outside the home in Italian society may lead to a diminished level of love and respect from children, potentially straining the parent-child relationship. The mention of elderly parents being sent to old age homes serves to underscore the perceived consequence of weakened bonds between children and parents. Additionally, Shahab hints at Pashtun cultural values that prioritize children serving their aging parents, contrasting this with the assertion that Italian culture may not exhibit the same level of care. Based on these reasons, Sahab advocating for traditional Pashtun gender order, highlighting limited change in his perceptions even he is challenging Italian gender. Sartaj khan preference for Pashtun gender and social order is rooted in the perceived sexual exploitation and devaluation of women in Italian society, whereas in Pashtun culture, based on its gender division of labour, women enjoy a more respectable and equitable status. He perceives women work outside the home as a potential threat to women chastity and honour, and to protect women honour and chastity the Pashtun gender order is essential and better as compared to Italian gender order. He argues that:

> If you think about the life of girl here, the way they dress, the way they work in restaurants from morning to evening, beside that they do drugs, drinks, and parties, the men here they misuse them they, do not have any meaningful life, but Alhamdulillah, in our culture and in Islam, there is very beautiful system for men and women, look, every girl in Pashtun culture rule her family. In our Pashtun culture there is a difference between men and women, but that is based on divine orders from Allah, and the difference is based on equity in some issues men are superior but in other women are, and I really like the division of roles between women and men in our culture, it is good, and it is necessary.

- 'Sartaj Khan', a Pashtun refugee from Pakistan, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan.

Similarly, Zahir Rahman preference for Pashtun gender order is influenced by his observation of women work in the public sphere and, and the perceived risk of their sexual exploitation in workplaces, in Italy and Switzerland. he also argues that the gender division of labour is necessary for a balance in society where men and women perform specific roles in family and community, believing that in this regard the Pashtun culture and gender order is more respectful to women, as he explains in the following way**.**

> I think our men and women have beautiful life, /division of work , for example a man work outside and a woman work inside the home which create a balance life style, and light of my experience in the Swiss and here in Italy, so I was working with Turkish people so girls would also come there for work, they would work for some time there, and the owner would physically exploit them, and then they would fire them saying that you do not have enough skill to work here , we do not like your way of work, so it was like slavery of the women, because if the women who want to work outside for example in a restaurant they have to follow and obey certain things they have to wear exposing dresses otherwise they will not be able to find work. And they must take care of the customer even though the customer says disrespecting words to them, but Alhamdulillah our women does not go through this kind of exploitation and treatment, so our system is more respectful and peaceful for them. And the way people consider that Pashtun do violence with women I think it does not true in our Pashtun society women have a lot of respect.
>
> - 'Zahir Rahman', a Pashtun refugee from Pakistan, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan.

Jameel viewpoint regarding gender roles rooted in Islam and Pashtunwali. He provides a clear preference for Pashtun gender order and roles of men and women in the following way.

> As a Muslim, I think our system is better because our prophet chose this for us, and we must live according to his teachings. From what I know, I think women are not allowed to work outside the home, in Islam, so they should remain in the home and purdah, and men should do work outside the home to earn and provide for the family. I personally do not like women to work outside the house, I do not like that the women of my family sit and work with or talk to unrelated men, and Islam also teach us the same. In terms of women roles as I told you that I believe to spent life according to the teachings of Islam, so if you follow Islam then you cannot allow your women to go out and work or earn money. Our family system and Pashtunwali also do not allow women to work outside the

family, our elders also do not allow their daughters or sisters to go out and work as men do. As in Pashtunwali and Islam women are a little inferior to men, so the best thing is that women should stay at home and men should stay outside.

- 'Jameel', a Pashtun refugee from Pakistan, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan.

Taking insights from teachings of Islam and arguing that Prophet Muhammad's guidance mandates a specific gender order, Jameel provide a traditional interpretation of Islamic gender roles, prohibiting women from working outside the home and advocating for women purdah. Furthermore, his emphasis on men as primary providers resonates with conventional Islamic views on male responsibility. The influence of Pashtunwali is evident in the commitment to its ethical code, emphasizing familial protection and provision. The assertion of women's inferiority is reflective of a traditional interpretation of Islam. His viewpoint is shaped by a fusion of religious beliefs and cultural traditions, highlighting a traditional and conservative stance on gender roles. Dawood Afridi's preference for Pashtun gender order is rooted in Islam and Pashtunwali, where he regards the same responsibility of men and women as a dishonour. He also makes a distinction between Italian and Pashtun family system, arguing that Italian do not procreate more than two children, which he considers as against the laws of Islam. He also perceives large family as a marker of power and respect in society, as he argues.

I really do not like the same roles of men and women, the good thing for a human is to behave respectfully. A life without respect and honour is worthless. Women responsibilities are within the homes to do household chores, to take care of the children. And the man or boys should do work outside the home to earn money. And I really like our system. The system here is not good, here you cannot differentiate between men and women, *dalta da nar aw da khazi pat ana lagi*. Secondly as talk about their family system (nuclear family), is not a good family system, because Allah promised us that he will provide the food for us, and that's why Pashtuns have large families, and they procreate more children. They also produce more children because in Pashtun society if you have a couple of children everybody will threaten you, knowing that you are weak because you do not have more family members. But if you have large family and more family members then nobody can threaten you even if you are on the wrong side.

- 'Dawood Afridi', a Pashtun refugee from Pakistan, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan.

As discussed earlier that some of the participants shows an evolving perception regarding gender role and women work outside the home, suggesting the impact of migration on their perceptions. Bilal Khan suggests a perspective that intertwines religious and cultural beliefs in terms of a preferred gender and social system, contrasting the Pashtun and Italian systems, with different reasons influencing his preference, highlights certain changes in his perception regarding gender roles, and women work outside the home in Pashtun society, as he argued.

> If you take into consideration the religion/Islam, then Pashtun system is better and if you take in account the development then Italian system is better. Because we keep in mind our religion but Italians the do not care about religion. I think the way Pashtuns live is good, but they should be more patient more tolerated. And I think this is a good division of work, but if for example a man wants to do housework and a woman want to do outside work it is their personal decision, there is nothing wrong with that as well. but women should be careful about their work outside the home, they should pick a profession where they are safe, like teaching, the other jobs like in NGO, s and restaurants is not good for them, and Pashtuns they do not like this kind of work for women. If a Pashtun women want to do a job its ok, but the job should be a respectable one where their respect and honour is protected.
>
> - 'Bilal Khan', a Pashtun refugee from Pakistan, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan.

Bilals preference for the Pashtun gender order is rooted in religious considerations, particularly Islam and preservation of religious values, indicating his favour for a conservative and traditional social structure. In comparison the Italian social system is preferred in terms socio-economic development. The reasons behind these preferences delve into religious alignment and traditional gender roles for the Pashtun system, while the Italian system is lauded for its focus on development and more flexible gender roles. While supporting a division of work based on traditional roles, the statement acknowledges the acceptability of individuals deviating from these norms based on personal decisions. Concerns for safety and honour guide he suggestion that women in Pashtun society should be cautious about their choice of profession, emphasizing a conservative outlook on women's roles outside the home, favouring certain professions like teaching over others such as those in NGOs and restaurants. Ejaz khan also provides insight into his evolving perceptions of gender roles, specifically concerning women's participation in the workforce, as he argues.

Here they do the same work/jobs, in this regard the Pashtuns are ignorant because when a girl goes to school the question it/they do not like it. Ok she can go to school in wearing a scarf/burqa/hijab but at least they should let her go to school to get education. Girls' education is very important for example here girls are more aware about everything because they are educated our girls start learning things after they get married. So, they must have freedom, every must have freedom for education and mobility but within the limits. these people, Italians, do not differentiate between men and women or girls and boys. When a boy and girl are together, they call it friendship, friendship is ok, but in the process, they become involve sexually as well, they become more open, sometimes they indulge themselves into drugs, so this is not a good thing.

- 'Ejaz Khan', a Pashtun refugee from Pakistan, interviewed in Comasina, Milan.

Ejaz Khan highlights a perceived lack of awareness among Pashtuns regarding girls' education and employment, contrasting this with the more liberal approach observed in Italy, where girls receive equal education. The acknowledgment of the importance of girls' education for personal development is accompanied by freedom of women within certain cultural limits. The comparison underscores the contrast between traditional Pashtun gender roles and the more egalitarian Italian cultural norms. Concerns about potential negative consequences, such as increased openness leading to sexual involvement and drug use, reveal a disapproval for such behaviours and practices, overall, the statement signifies a changing perception of gender roles with an emphasis on the need for a balanced approach between cultural values and women freedom. Allah Noor also reflects his changing perceptions of gender roles after migration, in the following manner.

You will find such ignorant people that they even do not allow women to get education, they are not allowed to say hello to close relatives even. But here, they (women) have freedom, they can do whatever they want, if they do not like you, they will tell you to leave. There is more burden/responsibility on men than women. Because men must do work outside the home, to earn livelihood and to provide for the family. Women prepares what the men bring to home and do the household work. The work is almost the same, but men are more responsible for the family. It is not that in Afghanistan women do not work outside the home, they do it, and yes in that case both men and women should cooperate, if its household work or outside work. if a family is facing financial problems, then its ok for a woman to do paid work, to support her man/family financially. But generally, Pashtun do not like her women to work outside the home, it is true, but I know certain families in

Afghanistan who do not have male family members, the women are widows, so, how they will survive if they do not work outside the home to earn money and to provide for the family, she will go outside for work.

- 'Allah Noor', a Pashtun refugee from Afghanistan, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan.

Allah Noor's statement highlights a contrast between restrictive attitudes in Afghanistan, where women face limitations in education and interaction, and the freedom women are entitled to in Italy. He emphasizes gender equality, noting that women can express preferences and participate in decision-making. The perceived burden on men for external work and financial support is acknowledged, while recognizing exceptions, such as widowed women contributing to family income through work. Overall, the narrative suggests a shift towards more egalitarian gender roles perceptions in post migration scenario.

11.3. Perceptions of intimacy, sexuality, and marriage in a transnational setting.

Having briefly discussed their perspectives on homosexuality in chapter two, this section shifts the focus to how the participants, identifying as heterosexual, perceive their interactions with Italian women. It delves into the nature of these relationships, the ideals they hold regarding potential life partners, and the intricate connections between these aspects and their perceptions of masculinity and manhood. Additionally, the section addresses the challenges they encounter in pursuing intimate relationships with Italian women and girls.

All the participants reject homosexuality as unislamic and unnatural, expressing a discomfort with its existence in Pashtun and Italian society. Bilal khan shares his perspective on homosexuality in the following way.

It is not a good thing. It also exists in Pashtun society but there it is hidden; it is not open but here it is open. Now they say that in Pakistan they are legalising it, but it is not a good thing because it will increase the adultery/zina/sex. It is there but it is in control now but if they legalize it, it will be widespread and more open, and the situation will become worse.

- 'Bilal Khan', a Pashtun refugee from Pakistan, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan.

Attaullah Jan, while sharing his views on homosexuality, suggest the unnaturalness of homosexuality by linking it with procreation, as he argues.

> It is totally wrong, because if you think why God create men and women, what was the purpose for creating men and women. God create women for men and men for women. If men and men could have married, then why men marry women. Can men procreate children, no he cannot, so it is not like you see a transgender or a man and you say that lets get married, it totally wrong. So, we never accept this before and will never accept this ever.

> - 'Attaullah Jan', a Pashtun refugee from Afghanistan, interviewed in Sedriano, Milan.

Dawood Afridi linked homosexuality with religion, suggesting that in a non-Muslim community/Italy it may be allowed, suggesting that it is not a right thing to do if religion is taken to consideration, distancing himself from discussing it openly. as he argues that "these people are non-Muslims they do not have anything to do with religion, so whatever they do they think only of this world. So, I cannot say much about homosexuals" (Dawood Afridi, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan).

The perspectives shared by the individuals regarding their ideal life partners offer insights into cultural expectations, religious considerations, and traditional gender roles, particularly within the context of Pashtun culture and the concept of *namus* (honour related and chastity of women)**.** These perspectives highlight the interconnectedness of cultural, religious, and gender expectations, while selecting a life partner within Pashtun society. The desire for a life partner is not only influenced by personal preferences but also shaped by broader cultural norms, religious values, and the maintenance of social control, particularly regarding women's behaviour and adherence to traditional roles. The participants narratives reflect valuation for the qualities such as, respect and adherence to cultural norms, emphasizing the importance of a girl following Pashto and behaving in accordance with Pashtun culture. This reflects a desire for a partner who aligns with traditional values and societal expectations, as Jameel has describes in the following way.

> The qualities that I look for in a girl as wife, is that she should be respectful to me and my parents, she may not be beautiful but should have manners and respect. She should behave

according to our culture as the Pashtun culture did not allow you to be free as here the girls are the y are free to do whatever they want to be with some or to leave someone. So, she should follow Pashto.

- 'Jameel', a Pashtun refugee from Pakistan, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan.

The participants also suggest a preference for marrying a Pashtun girl, emphasizing the importance of religious compatibility, as discussed by Shahab Momand in the following manners.

I really want to marry a Pashtun girl, but I find a good girl here I can marry her as well. but if she can live with me as I want then it is not a problem. I would like to marry a girl and converts her to Islam, it is a very good deed in our religion, they would not like it, because they believe in their own religion, secondly if the religions are not the same then it will be a problem for children, so same religion is very important. And I f married in my village I would never like to bring my wife here, because the environment here is open and if my wife take influence from the girls here it is become like them then it is a real shame, and you know Pashtun can kill someone for women honour and chastity.

- 'Shahab Momand', a Pashtun refugee from Pakistan, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan.

Shahab Momand's desire to convert his partner, in case of marrying to an Italian girl, to Islam suggests a commitment to religious values. Additionally, his concern about the open environment in Italy and potential influence from other girls, reflects a desire for control over his future wife's behaviour and the preservation of traditional values associated with Pashtun masculinity and femininity. Similarly, Shahab Saleem expresses a preference for marrying someone from his village, highlighting a desire for a partner who shares the same social background. This preference can be seen as a way, to maintain social control and conformity to established norms of masculinity and femininity and related gender roles, as he argues that "I want a good girl, but it is very difficult to find here, so I want to marry someone from my village, these girls cannot spend time with us" (Shahab Saleem, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan). Bilal Khan prioritizes religious values and cultural identity in his ideal partner. His reluctance to consider Italian girls, despite acknowledging their beauty, underscores the

importance of Islam, prayer, and cultural considerations in his choice of a life partner, he describes this in the following way.

> I would like to have Pashtun girl as my partner not Italian. It is true that Italian girls are very beautiful but what will you do with their beauty if they do not have Islam, they are not Muslims they do not pray, and as a Muslim and Pashtun you must consider these things and keep in mind your culture and religion.
>
> - 'Bilal Khan', a Pashtun refugee from Pakistan, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan.

Similarly, Dawood emphasizes the importance of religious devotion and adherence to Islamic duties in his ideal life partner. His aversion to marrying an Italian girl is rooted in his commitment to finding someone who shares his religious beliefs and cultural value, as he argued.

> I do not have any girlfriend here in Italy I also do not have any intention to have a girlfriend, I want to get married a girl who is religious and follow Islamic duties and prayers. I do not want that she must be very beautiful, but I want that she follows the commandments of our prophet, I like this kind of girl, I will never an Italian girl even if someone wants to marry me. I will marry a Pashtun girl.
>
> - 'Dawood Afridi', a Pashtun refugee from Pakistan, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan.

Managing the household efficiently and fulfilment of traditional gender roles, are also emerges as the ideals for a life partner, as Sartaj Khan, despite occasional concerns about her prayer habits, appreciates his wife's dedication to domestic responsibilities, reflecting the importance placed on a wife's role in maintaining the household, as he describes.

> Honestly my ideal girl is my wife, it is been long that we are married but until today we never fight, until today my wife never angry with me, she never says no to me whenever and whatever I ask her to do, *che za owain shpa da hagha hm wai shap da, k za waim wraz da no hagha hm wai wraz da.* (if I say it is night, she also says it is night, when I say it is day, she also says it is day). And she is beautiful as well, as you know Pashtuns are beautiful, but some time I am angry with her because some time she doesn't offer her

prayer, but normally she does. I have lives in an extend family, and the building is also large, so she always manage the whole house with cleaning and all that stuff, as I told you we live in Peshawar city but still next our house we have a place where keep cows for milk and stuff, she also manage that as well, despite the fact the she is the only daughter of her parents and never work like this in his parents' house before marriage. So, she serves all from children to elder without any complaints.

- 'Sartaj Khan', a Pashtun refugee from Pakistan, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan.

While the ideals shared by the participants regarding ideal partner is linked to their long-term relationship in the form of marriage, also showing a preference for long term relationships than temporary. However, during the fieldwork interactions, I noticed that the participants reflect a desire for intimate relationship with Italian and other European girls. During fieldwork I noticed that discussing girls and finding a girlfriend was a common practice among the Pashtun delivery workers, praising the beauty of Italian girls, expressing desire for relationship, commenting on bodies and looks, etc. On one occasion I asked a Pashtun food delivery worker if he has a girlfriend in Italy, he responded that the Italian girls do not even talk with us, left alone friendship. He also argues that not only Italian girls, even the girls from Philippines are not interested in friendship with us. The dynamics of finding an intimate partner are shaped by a complex interplay of language, cultural differences, societal norms, and occupation, appears to be difficult for these individuals despite the increased level of freedom afforded in Italy, compared to Pashtun society, regarding male-female interactions. The contrast between the more restrictive cultural norms in Pashtun society and the relative freedom, but socio-cultural differences between Italians and Pashtuns in Italy, influence their experiences and perspectives on intimate relationships. Jameel for instance, emphasizes the importance of language in building connections, suggesting that the lack of proficiency in the Italian language hinders the formation of intimate relationships. He contrasts this with the ease of forming connections in the village, where shared language and cultural understanding are prevalent.

Language is very important in making a girlfriend as I told you earlier language is very important, so if you do not know the language how you can talk to them, through gesture it is not possible to make a girlfriend. So, the biggest problem is the language we do not know the language that's why I do not have any girlfriend. It is easier to make a girlfriend in the village compared to here, because we did not spend much time with these people,

we do not know much about them so it is difficult and when you do not the language it not possible here. so, it is easy there because we speak the same language and know the culture. So, I have a female friend in the village but not just for the time pass I want to marry her and spent life with her.

- 'Jameel', a Pashtun refugee from Pakistan, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan.

Shahab Mohmand discusses the challenge of finding a girlfriend due to time constraints associated with work. Additionally, he highlights the difference in cultural norms between the host country and Pashtun society, where the freedom for casual interactions is limited, and engaging with someone's sister or daughter is considered a serious matter.

Ans. I do not have girlfriend here, it not that difficult here to find a girlfriend but the thing is that we do not have time for that, so everything is possible here, but it requires time, and we do the delivery work all the time. In the Pakistan I also do not have girlfriend or fiancé, and it is very difficult in Pashtun culture to have a girlfriend, but here its easy compared to there. It is very difficult because in Pashtun society there no such freedom like this, here you see girls and boys walk and stay together outside, so you can find an opportunity to talk to them, but in Pashtun society if you talk to someone sister or daughter it means to make enmity with them.

- 'Shahab Momand', a Pashtun refugee from Pakistan, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan.

Similarly, Shahab Saleem express the difficulty of having a girlfriend in both Italy and Pakistan due to cultural and societal expectations. In Pashtun society, having a girlfriend may lead to enmity or be perceived as a violation of cultural norms, reflecting the conservative nature of relationships within the community.

I do not have girlfriend here nor in Pakistan. It is easy here in Italy to find a girlfriend but it requires a lot of time and as you know we are not have much time here, and in Pakistan it is very difficult, as you know we live in a Pashtun society, da Pashto mushaira, even if you make a girlfriend there and if some get to know about from your family or the girl family, it is a big issue then, not a big issue but a real enmity, it means that if someone's sister or daughter talks to an unrelated men or boy, before marriages so in our Pashtun society it is considered a crime. And even in Islam as well. it also applicable to a boy as

well, by doing so he also bring shame to his family, everybody will say that the son of that man did this type of deed.

- 'Shahab Saleem', a Pashtun refugee from Pakistan, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan.

Bilal khan and the challenges of maintaining a girlfriend in Italy due to time constraints and the potential distraction from work "I do not have a girlfriend here and I do not want to have one as well. I t is very difficult to keep a girlfriend here, it involves a lot of problems, and consume a lot of time, and then you would not be able to focus on work. So, they need time, and we do not not have much time" (Bilal Khan, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan). Ejaz Khan underscores the absence of the concept of a girlfriend in Pashtun society, attributing it to societal norms and a different code of life. Ejaz khan further elaborates on the differences in social norms regarding gender interaction. In the host country, he notes the freedom to initiate friendships, while in Pashtun society, restrictions on talking to female neighbours and adherence to modest behaviour are emphasized, as he argued.

There is no concept of girlfriend in Pashtun society, and here you can make a girlfriend in five minutes, because there is freedom here, for example if you If you are a good person you go to work and live peacefully and if there is girl in the neighbourhood, she will herself approach you for friendship. So, in Pashtun society we also live with other people, and we work but you cannot do this there, because the law/code of life, of Pashtuns is different. There you cannot talk to your female neighbour, girls there they have observed Purdah and behave modestly to keep her family honour. So, our people do not tolerate this kind of behaviour and the friendship between girls and boys. Here they like friendships and to talk to people, girls here also want to talk to us, and we also want to talk to them to know from each other to learn the language for example.

- 'Ejaz Khan', a Pashtun refugee from Pakistan, interviewed in Comasina, Milan.

Similarly, Allah Noor contrasts the ease of finding a girlfriend in Italy with the challenges in Afghanistan. He attributes the difficulty in Afghanistan to societal expectations and commitments that endure for a lifetime. In Italy, the freedom to make and end friendships is highlighted, showcasing a more flexible approach to relationship.

I have a girlfriend I can't lie that I do not, but she is asking me to marry her, and I am already married. In Afghanistan it is very difficult to find a girlfriend, its easy here as compared to Afghanistan, because everyone has freedom here, they make friend and if they do not like you than they leave you and go for another one, but if in Afghanistan you called soe girl your girlfriend or wife, then until she dies, she will be with you.

- 'Allah Noor', a Pashtun refugee from Afghanistan, interviewed in Bicocca village, Milan.

Conclusion

The thesis has explored the historical and contemporary dimensions of Pashtun migration, unveiling it as a means of overcoming collective and individual marginalization. Rooted in Pashtun culture, migration is depicted as a ritualistic phenomenon with diverse historical motivations and reasons. The present-day Pashtun migration landscape primarily consists of economic and refugee migration, with a rising trend in student migration to west.

The study delves into the challenges that Pashtun men faced in their home countries, where pervasive issues such as unemployment, poverty, and insecurity contribute to their marginalized position. The complex interplay of security concerns, terrorism, sectarian conflicts, restricting freedom and fostering a sense of perpetual danger and marginalization, influencing their traditional roles and identities linked to manhood and masculinity in Pashtun society. This situation leads some men to opt for irregular migration to escape these challenges, underscoring migration as a response to marginalization and hope for a better future, and to cultivate a sense of empowerment, recognition, and respect within their home communities. The irregular migration of Pashtun men reveals a dialectical relationship between migration and masculinity. The decision to migrate irregularly is deeply connected to and influenced by their sense of masculinity and manhood, simultaneously, irregular migration significantly impacts their sense of masculinity in both the host and home countries.

Irregular Pashtun migrants face enormous difficulties and hazards during the irregular migration journey, adding to their marginalization. During their journey the spent varying durations ranging from three months to two years, residing in various countries to work and earn funds for future journeys. This prolonged engagement exposes them to enduring risks, discrimination, and violence from both host communities and law enforcement. Additionally, participants note instances of being incarcerated in various countries, adding an extra layer of trauma and marginalization. Upon arrival in Italy, participants, as asylum seekers and refugees, confront numerous challenges impacting their perception of manhood and masculinity. Struggling with limited employment opportunities, language barriers, and discrimination, they face threats to their role as providers, fostering feelings of emasculation. Educational deficiencies affect their status within the new culture, where masculinity is closely tied to educational and professional success. Mental health challenges, discrimination, xenophobia, and displacement compound their sense of marginalization.

Despite these challenges relegating migrants to the peripheries of Italian society, the study argues that some express contentment, highlighting their desire to remain in Italy for work to support families. According to their socially marginalized positions in Pakistan and Afghanistan, participants perceive their presence in Italy as more hopeful compared to their home countries. Because migration offers Pashtun migrants an opportunity to attain respectable masculinity within their home communities, driven by remittances and improved economic status, which is as the result of working in Italy, specifically as food delivery workers. While successful entry to Italy elevates their social status in their home communities, they face a type of marginalization in the Italian society related to the notion of masculinity, since they do not have the same social position as Italian men.

The study also illuminates the struggle of Pashtun migrants to adapt to the host country's prevailing notions of masculinity, leading to feelings of exclusion and marginalization. The struggles such as language barriers, racial and ethnic stereotypes, and social isolation further challenge their integration. To overcome these challenges, Pashtun men take some strategies like renegotiation and reconfiguration, constructing more flexible/hybrid masculinities while navigating Italian culture and in relation to Italian and other ethnic masculinity. This transnational navigation allows Pashtun men in Italy to actively change their perceptions and practices related to manhood and masculinity. Besides, their different masculinity ideals from Pashtunwali, they tend to modify behaviours and practices to align with the local culture, such as tolerance, patience, and enduring difficulties as strategies for success while facing discrimination, when despite of the difficulties they face in their new context, they prefer to remain their low profile to avoid unnecessary conflicts with the host society and its authority.

Another strategy that Pashtun men apply in Italy is establishing an ethnic boundary to resist exclusion and discrimination, fostering mutual support, and belonging within their origin cultural community. This community serves as a space in which they can practice their own culture, language, and identity. However, they face some conflicts within their own community, still they stay connected it closely, and through their connections to friends and families in the home countries they strength their sense of belonging and their identities.

The study also analyses the continuity and change in Pashtun men's perceptions of traditional notions of masculinity and gender roles, and it revealed that their exposure to different gender dynamics in Italy lead them to gender role reversal. However, this change is sometimes

temporary and limited to the Italian context, exhibiting the enactment of suspended masculinity that may not easily transfer back to Pashtun culture. The gender role reversal experienced by participants living in Italy without their families is attributed to necessity rather than changes in perceptions of gender roles and equality. A highlighted preference for the Pashtun gender order rooted in religious beliefs, naturalized differences, and stereotypes was identified from the data. While migration introduces some changes in their perceptions, the majority remains unchanged.

I finalize the research, focusing the multifaceted reasons for migration, the challenges faced by Pashtun men, and their strategies for constructing masculine identity in a transnational setting, and the contribution of the valuable insights into the complex interplay between migration, masculinity, and cultural adaptation, providing a nuanced understanding of the experiences of Pashtun migrants in Italy.

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