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Afghan Muslim Male Interpreters and Translators: An Examination of Their Identity Changes and Lived Experiences During Pre and Post-Immigration to the United States During the Afghanistan War (2003-2012)

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AFGHAN MUSLIM MALE INTERPRETERS AND TRANSLATORS: AN EXAMINATION OF THEIR IDENTITY CHANGES AND LIVED EXPERIENCES DURING PRE- AND POST-IMMIGRATION TO THE UNITED STATES DURING THE AFGHANISTAN WAR (2003–2012)

by

Michael T. Solomon

A Dissertation Presented to the
Graduate School of Humanities and Social Sciences of Nova Southeastern University
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
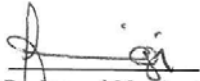Doctor of Philosophy

Nova Southeastern University
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Nova Southeastern University
Graduate School of Humanities and Social Sciences

This dissertation was submitted by Michael T. Solomon under the direction of the chair of the dissertation committee listed below. It was submitted to the Graduate School of Humanities and Social Sciences and approved in partial fulfillment for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Conflict Analysis and Resolution at Nova Southeastern University.

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02/05/2015
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Date of Final Approval

Dr. Ismael Muvingi
Chair

Dedication

This life long journey was not a solitary passage. First and foremost, I give all thanks to God for this achievement and his continued blessings. On earth, I honor through love, commitment, and work to my family of six beautiful J's for their support, patience and encirclement; Janice, Jamie, Jessica, James, Josslyn and Jalisa. Also, to my mother and father (Willie & Beatrice Solomon) whose parental love, guidance and belief in me never waned. And finally, to the mainstays in my life and who now watch from heaven; Mamie & Willie Solomon Sr., Betty & Jimmy Cooper, and Ozabeth Rogers - I continue to feel your embrace and smile.

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Abstract

This research examined the lived experiences of an Afghan Muslim male participant group. This study explored their immigration from a Southwest-Asian, highly non-secular society to a Western-style, liberal, secular nation-state. Further, this research was an examination of Muslim male identity as an attribute that is closely related to lived experiences, environment and cultural assimilation. Also, this study looked closely at the meanings that this Afghan Muslim male immigrant group attached to identity, as well as exploring their unique narratives during pre-immigration and post-immigration periods. This qualitative research study used narrative methods to unearth the lived experiences of five Afghan Muslim male citizens. These participants immigrated to the U.S. while serving as interpreters and translators for the coalition forces during the Afghanistan War between 2003 and 2012. Several researchers have examined Muslim immigration from Eastern to Western nations, focusing on their adaptation, assimilation, and developmental patterns. The research objective of this study was slightly different and important to social science in that it focused on how a select group of Afghan Muslim males conceptualized their own sense of identity and how their notion of identity was shaped and influenced by their own pre- and post-migration experiences. To this end, the discoveries in this study revealed that the nature of the identities for many in this study may be deemed more blended and in some instances renegotiated, holding onto parts of their core native identities while embracing aspects of the cultural, ethnic, and social elements of their new host land that fit within their own individual frame of reference.

Chapter 1

Introduction

At the beginning of the war in Afghanistan (2003), the need for exceptional

Afghan language interpreters and translators quickly emerged. In Afghanistan, the United

States and its allies are involved in a complex modern war. Unlike the conditions or

environments of a war in the traditional or conventional sense (e.g., WWI, WWII, or the

Korean War), the Afghan war is termed a "counter-insurgency operation" (COIN).

According to Celeski (2005), in COIN war environments, operations and the lines of

troops are less defined—combat operations are more fluid and rapidly change. Military

scholars report that the key to success in the COIN environment is deliberate military

engagement at all levels within civilian communities and direct interface with local and

national leaders and the populace (Kelly, 2007). The nature of this relationship is a

partnership with local forces that enables and creates stable, secure, and safe communities

for the local population. Put differently, the goal of counter-insurgency operations is to

change the "hearts and minds" of the population, and developing trust among the

participants is critical to its objectives (Celeski, 2005).

To satisfy COIN requirements, those "trusted" Afghan nationals who spoke fluent

English—as well as their native Dari, Farsi, Pashtun, or other indigenous Afghan

languages—were deemed vital to the war's effort. According to Kelly (2007), this meant

interpreters and translators would be needed at every level of engagement: in villages, in

communities, in districts, in the provinces, in regions, and at the national levels of

government. Soon, thousands of men and some women were recruited for the war. In an

April 14, 2013 New York Times (Asia Pacific) article, Azam Ahmed (2013) underscores that the danger is real for anyone working in support of or alongside the coalition forces.

> The Taliban also forbid any kind of collaboration with the government and particularly with the foreign troops, including that of an economic nature. Since contracting for ISAF or for Western aid agencies is one of the main sources of employment in Afghanistan, the ban has a major impact on the ability of households to earn a livelihood. Not surprisingly, most Afghans ignore it, at their risk and peril. Executions of contractors do occur. Usually the Taliban follow a procedure, which includes warning the collaborationists that they are going to be punished if they persist. (Country of Origin Information Centre, 2011)

Ahmed (2013) made clear that the danger is especially real for the estimated 8,000 interpreters and translators who have worked for the American military in Afghanistan.

> According to UNHCR, all persons who are seen to support NATO-soldiers and people working for NATO, as well as foreigners and people working for foreigners are at risk of being targeted by the Taliban. UNHCR commented that regarding staff employed by the US military or ISAF, there is a high possibility for every staff member being intimidated by the Taliban. Interpreters as well as local drivers working for companies supporting the bases are at risk. UNHCR mentioned it as rule of thumb that all blue-collar employees who are seen going in and out of military bases as well as camps

on a regular basis, may be at risk of intimidation by the Taliban. As United

Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) expressed it: 'the more

visible you are the higher the risk you run of being targeted'. In practice,

however, it is difficult to distinguish between the various levels of

employment according to UNHCR. In general, all Afghans who are

associated with foreigners could be at risk in Kabul as well as in the

countryside. (Country of Origin Information for Use in the Asylum

Determination Process. (Report from Danish Immigration Service's fact-

finding mission to Kabul, Afghanistan, 2011, p.17)

Interpreter and translator duties include working beside the United States military

and coalition military members, supporting the large phalanx of private U.S. contractors,

and, at times, fighting and dying in the performance of their duties. However, while the

interpreters and translators were intensely loyal to their work, their commitment came at

great risk and cost to themselves, their families, and their communities. According to

Celeski (2005), the Al-Qaida terrorists and Taliban insurgents quickly recognized the

significant roles the interpreters and translators served and began a campaign of threats,

intimidation, and terror to undermine COIN. Celeski (2005) adds that the additional

objective of the insurgents was to strip away any ability of the U.S. and coalition to work

with and engage the local populace. This meant minimum contact with national Afghan

government actors on vital security, stabilization, and rebuilding projects. Needed

programs to ensure peace and stability in the country were hampered and, in some cases,

jeopardized altogether (Pul, 2013).

These reports make it clear those Afghan interpreters and translators working with the coalition forces are at risk. The skills of the interpreters and translators to bridge Eastern and Western languages and cultures were deemed instrumental by the terrorists, Taliban and the coalition. As part of a range of actions under consideration for the United States and Afghan-led transition plan, the United States government enacted special visa programs for Afghan interpreters and translators. According to the National Defense Authorization Act (2006), special immigrant status was made available under section 1059 of the act for Afghan nationals who worked directly for the United States Armed Forces as a translator or interpreter and to their spouses and children. In addition, the act further stipulated that once admitted to the United States as permanent residents, these individuals and their families might eventually acquire U.S. Citizenship (National Defense Authorization Act, 2006).

From a qualitative research stance, many questions surround the translators' and interpreters' lived experiences during this episodic period. For example, how did immigration experiences affect the participants' sense of identity? From this framework, the overarching research endeavor is structured around the concept of identity and analyzed in the context of the participants' lived experiences. The frame of reference of the lived experiences is concentrated on pre-immigration and post-immigration timeframes.

Is the Afghan Muslim identity a consequence of ethnic and cultural solidarity? Is the identity among Afghan Muslim immigrants more closely related to socio-economic conditions, shared values, elements of successful immigration, and community

belonging? From a qualitative research perspective, how the participants apply meaning to identity is much more crucial than determining ranges that contrast and measure such attributes against the construct of identity. Several scholars address the issue of Muslim identity, but Malik (1992) had a particularly distinctive perspective and outcome. Malik (1992) maintained that Muslim identity has been based on Islam, and Islam serves as a rallying point in the postcolonial world. The ongoing debate among Muslims is not mainly related to being Muslim. Rather, the debate centers on seeking a consensus within a number of young political and old socio-cultural identities (Malik, 1992). Malik's work informs the current study through its countering perspective shared by other Muslim researchers and scholars, such as Cesari (2004). Cesari described the relatedness between the practices of Islam as the dominant religion among Muslim nations. Further, these conditions establish the foundations for Muslim individual and national identities. As a religion, Islam accommodates ethnic pluralism, but the nation-states led by bureaucratic elites advocate the imposition of uniformity, all in an effort to impose global nationalism (Malik, 1992).

Before proceeding, it is appropriate to pause and come to an agreement, or at least a common understanding, regarding the meaning of identity. The attribute of identity has been studied for some time. It has reached a status of self-evident notions arising from one's firsthand experience (Sfard & Prusak, 2005). Kosmitzki (1996) stated that one's subjective identity or sense of self consists of attributes that make one unique, as well as the characteristics one may share with others. Berry, Phinney, Sam, and Vedder (2006) stated that there was an effort to improve the body of knowledge about the ethnic

components of cultural identity for Muslims within the family context. More specifically, Berry et al. (2006) focused on how the term identity, as used in the past, encapsulates the relationship between factors such as religion, culture, ethnicity, and national identities.

In contrast to these views, Schachter posited that identity is not a "personal task" but a co-construction of the individual and socio-cultural factors. In the current research, the participant's experiences were explored across a continuum of time, space, and events that took their form and shape prior to their immigration to the West and in the post-immigration period (2005, p. 391). The broad timeframe of 2003 to 2102 is intended to better explain the spectrum of identity, beliefs, values, and meaning used by the participants as they endured dramatic life episodic events during both their pre- and post-immigration experiences.

In addition, the current research narrowed the beam and focused on identity in an effort to advance dialogue and discussions that both inform and serve social scientific research. Understanding the construct of identity among this group of underexplored Afghan Muslims helps deconstruct the relationship between religion, cultures, environment, and self-knowledge of one's authenticity, among other factors (Hoare, 1991). Understanding the function and interaction of identity is essential to learning more about the multiplicity, types, complexities, and the nature of Afghan and Muslim identities. Hall wrote,

> Despite the different terminology, literature is replete with paradoxical
>
> notions of a self and identity: identity is understood as "oneness," "one
>
> true self," which people with a shared history and ancestry have in

common, and yet, it is an entity which is continually recreated, as people

make sense of themselves and the world around them. In a way, identity is

not simply what we are or the names we give to ourselves as positioned by

a single set of narratives. Instead, it is a collection of these experiences

along with the interactions, relationships and boundaries engaged in and

affected by others. If one were to synthesize all of these definitions, it may

be that identity is a complex, multidimensional constructed sum of all

these things: internally and externally shaped with both individual and

national dimensions. This constructed self is further shaped by one's life

experiences, culture, and religion among relationship interactions. Most

importantly, identity as we know it is not motionless and rigid, rather in

flux and flexible as we experience the world around us. (1994, p. 394)

In a study linking home of origin, host country, and identity, Manning and Roy

(2007), used United Kingdom (UK) Labor Force survey data (2001) to measure identity

integration and broaden the discussion involving identity's definition to include one's

"national" identity. In their research, they expanded the scope of identity to that beyond

one's self, introducing the notion of national identity. Using a research measurement that

asks study participants "What do you consider your national identity to be?", the

respondents most often associated their own identity with UK-related factors: the value of

religion, attitudes towards inter-marriage, and the importance of racial composition in

schools (Manning & Roy, 2007). Further, in the same study, the researchers found that the

longer the stay in the UK, the more intense was the sense of self-identification with the

host country (Manning & Roy, 2007). This may suggest that identity conflicts and tensions among Afghan Muslims immigrants to the United States may develop, persist, and even become exacerbated the stronger the cultural differences and connections are to their homeland.

However, in slightly different research about immigrant integration, Bisin, Patacchin, Verdier, and Zenous (2007) found that first-generation Muslims in the UK, as a population, tend to integrate and assimilate into Western nations much slower as compared to other immigrant groups. Bisin et al. (2007) reported that a Muslim who is born in the UK and has spent more than 50 years in the new host land exhibits, on average, the same probability of having a strong identity to the new host country as a non-Muslim who has been in the UK for less than 20 years. This seems to suggest that unless there is some powerful pulsating force or attachment (e.g., politics, economics, ethnic, religion, or nationalism), distance and time weaken identity attachment for the native land in favor of the new host country's identity, integration, and assimilation.

Further, Bisin et al. (2007) indicated that greater tensions and evidence of cultural clashes exist among "initial" Muslim immigrants, as compared to first-generation Muslims, or even non-Muslims who immigrated. Bisin et al. (2007) informed the researcher for the current study that within each group, second-generation immigrants have a lower probability of showing a greater attachment to their culture of origin over time, and this reduction is more pronounced for non-Muslims than for Muslims. In other words, the longer subsequent Muslim generations remain in their choice "Western" host country, the more the effects of identity attachment to their native land of origin decrease.

Conversely, a longer stay also indicates a higher level of identity attachment and assimilation to the new host country (Bisin & Alberto, 2007; Patacchini, Eleonora, Verdier, Thierry, Zenou, & Yves, 2007).

In contrast to the much broader discussion about identity, the key question for this research was what identities are reflected in the pre-immigration and post-immigration Afghan informant experiences. Thus far, a number of defined identities, such as gender, age, and sect affiliation have emerged within Afghanistan's complex social environment. Canfield (1986) wrote that these identities are based on loyalties, relationships, and obligations, among other considerations. In traditional Muslim lands, such as Afghanistan, identity is not a matter of choice because it is handed down from one generation to the next.

> The question of identity does not come up at all in traditional Muslim societies, as it did in traditional Christian societies. In a traditional Muslim society, an individual's identity is given by that person's parents and social environment; everything from one's tribe and kin to the local imam to the political structure of the state--anchors one's identity in a particular branch of Islamic faith. (Fukuyama, 2004, p. 2)

Saroglou and Galand (2004) described Muslim and Afghan identity as three defined identities that factor across pre- and post-immigration experiences. These Afghan identities include an ethnic and cultural identity that corresponds to pre-immigration activities and a Muslim and Islam religious identity that correspond to post-immigration experiences.

Ethnic identity is particularly important to Afghans. Hashem (1991) wrote that ethnic identity has a time dimension and hinges on one's collective experiences and sentiments that hold both historical as well as ancestral meanings. Afghan identities have different dimensions where shared experiences bind the members of tribes and ethnic groups, which are diverse and culturally distinct from all outsiders. According to Smith (1991), ethnicity gives a minority group a sense of common history in the form of shared memories, which unite successive generations and result in accumulated experience" (p. 91). This analysis informs the current study in that within Afghanistan, ethnic and religious identities are arguably more important than other considerations. This is not intended to diminish shared histories, languages, customs, and practices that are uniquely tribal or national in Afghanistan. Rather, Afghanistan's conflict environment forces one to cling to their ethnic identities in order to strengthen individual and group survival against external threats (Smith, 1991).

The second key pre-immigration component concerns Afghan cultural identity. According to Jamal (2008), Afghan cultural identity binds disparate tribes, villages, and ethnicities to a sense of belonging, based on common experiences, as well as Muslim beliefs and practices (e.g., family, marriage, song, dress, dance, etc.). The effect of these practices is in the channelization of cultural identity toward a sense of connection directed at those who are closer in relation to Muslim lived experiences (Magen, 1985). This phenomenon informs this research in that cultural identity among Afghans imprints a sense of exclusiveness and belonging that is never fully relinquished.

Bourhis, Moise, Perreault, and Senecal (1997) found that the dimensions of Afghan cultural identity (e.g., traditions, ethnicity, and religion) may develop differently and progress at varied speeds from one individual to the next. Bourhis et al. (1997) indicated that cultural identity formation progresses through stages from a diffused notion of identity to a more concrete understanding of self. Interestingly, where ethnic identity served the survival needs of Afghan ethnic groups, cultural identity reinforces the Afghan sense of who they are, and this sense of self often intersects with other factors, such as culture, language, and history.

> Identities use the resources of history, language, and culture in the process of becoming rather than being: not "who we are" or "where we come from," so much as what we might become, how we have been represented and how that bears on how we might represent ourselves. (Hall, 1989, p. 4)

What this says about identities in a broad sense, and Afghan identity in particular, is that identities interact and are extracted from a collection of meanings that are outcomes of social and cultural circumstance. This idea of interaction, as observed by Brah (1996), can be translated into a cross-disciplinary approach that sees identities as relational. In other words, the idiosyncrasy of Afghan national identity acquires meaning in relation to the social and cultural context in which identities are constructed.

The third key identity and the attribute that corresponds to post-immigration Afghan experiences is the Muslim faith or religion of Islam (Saroglou & Galand, 2004).

Identity becomes problematic precisely when Muslims leave traditional

Muslim societies by, for example, immigrating to Western Europe. One's

identity as a Muslim is no longer supported by the outside society; indeed,

there is strong pressure to conform to the west's prevailing cultural norms.

The question of authenticity arises in a way that it never did in the

traditional society, since there is now a gap between one's inner identity as

a Muslim and one's behavior vis-à-vis the surrounding society.

(Fukuyama, 2006, pp. 5-20)

Muslim identity gives practitioners unity, meaning, and purpose, as well as an invaluable method to navigate individual life discrepancies. Van Hoof (1999) observed that the importance of Muslim identity, as represented by Islamic ideals, values, and beliefs, is that it assists believers in resolving these life discrepancies. Consequently, Afghan scholars and thinkers alike recognize the irreplaceable importance religion, particularly Islam, has in the identity formation of the Afghan people (Marcia, 1980). While structure, coherence, and connection among disparate groups inside Afghanistan are invaluable as integrators, the post-immigration dimension is arguably more crucial to identity formation. Hirschman (2004) wrote that for immigrants who are separated from their homeland and from many relatives, religious membership offers a refuge, in the sense that it creates a sense of belonging and participation in the face of loss and the strains of adjustment. This is because Islam, for post-immigration study participants, provides a sense of community and social support. This is also because the American towns and communities where Afghan Muslim immigrants settle and experience

networks of mutual support through religion provides a counterweight that helps

ameliorate the traumas of assimilation (Ebaugh & Chafetz, 2000).

To provide clarity and cohesion, the strategy in the current research study was to

employ a funneled technical approach (Roberts, 2010). In this funneled technical

approach, the bottom of the funnel or wide base was represented by content that portrays

the study participants' conceptualization of identity and sense of self. This was presented

through a continued narrowing logic that found its way through the lived experiences, as

presented in biographical, narrative form. The opposite end of the funnel—the top,

narrow point, contrasted the widening open structure. At this top end, the funnel's content

was initially introduced by a case study of Afghanistan (see Chapter 4) and the

phenomenon that historically links this Eastern, rural, highly non-secular nation to the

democratic, secular West. In the modern context of conflict and struggles, one cannot

conduct a thorough discussion of either Afghanistan or the West separately. This is

particularly true when one focuses on the environment and aftermath of 9/11 in the

United States and the assault on the Muslim immigrant identity that followed.

In the discussion of Afghanistan (top, open end of the funnel), lived experiences,

and self-identity, the researcher presents a theoretical understanding that conceptually

frames the conditions, dimensions, and character of this decade-long war and conflict. To

accomplish this theoretical framework, the researcher turned to Huntington's (1993)

hypothesis of the nature of world tensions and conflicts because of found linkages to

identity. Often viewed as absolute and fundamental incompatibility between the Christian

West and Muslim East, Huntington (1993) serves as one of the key nexus' to conflict

resolution in this study. This is because at its core, Huntington's theory reveals the immeasurable differences and failed understanding between eclectic identities from Eastern and Western multicultural orthodoxies. According to Murden, identities that define who we are remain "too basic in that civilizations are differentiated from each other by history, language, culture, tradition, and, most important, religion" (2011, p. 416-426). Huntington minimizes the emergence of universal identities and culture differences due to the speed of interactions and individual engagements that have been made more common, given a shrinking world (Esposito, 1999).

Huntington posits that the end of the Cold War ushered the world out of its "Western phase' of struggles" (Saroglou & Galand, 2004). Moreover, the nature of the new struggles and nation state clashes will be along cultural fault lines. The world in Huntington's (1993) new model would no longer exist because of ideological differences. Huntington believed that future divides would evolve and persist because of fractures along cultural and religious differences. As related to this theoretical belief and the issue of Afghan identity, the researcher for the current study investigated how the study participants resolved assimilation experiences in these culturally "clashed" environments. Put differently, how did the study participants bridge their two worlds? What was the nature of the participants' internal conflicts that Huntington's theory posits? Huntington would have stated that successful assimilation by the study participants presumed balance and the ability to reconcile their own sense of self with the identity attributes of their new surroundings. This occurs while reconciling those new identities with native beliefs, values, and meanings of the past. While further discussion of this theory is reserved for

the literature review that follows, Huntington's position is also important as a theoretical

frame of reference for this particular work. Additionally, Huntington's work is widely

acknowledged as a significant contribution to the theoretical underpinnings that shape

and inform scholars on geopolitical entanglements. Notwithstanding its prominence, it is

not without criticism, as noted in the literature review section that follows.

This researcher used the present conflict in Afghanistan as the context for this

study, and in so doing, cast light onto the current manifestation of Huntington's cultural

divide against the West (i.e., the United States and its "Western" allies). In this research,

the cultural fault lines were clearly distinguishable in the Afghanistan model, where

clashes between Islamic civilizations and Western democratic states are observable

among several tangible characteristics, including culture, ethnic identity, nationalism, and

religion. Just as Huntington predicted, these discords erupted into violent cultural clashes

and conflict (e.g., the 9/11 attacks). Additionally, these fault lines, particularly as related

to the Afghanistan region, are linked to both national and individual identity of Afghan

citizens (Barker & Muck, 2009).

Rationale for Study

The current research is distinguishable from other related social science inquiries

that focus primarily on the patterns of immigration of Afghan Muslim male refugees to

Western nation-states. The researcher for the current study focused on an under-examined

participant group of Afghans who each directly served in the war in Afghanistan. As such,

the research provided a unique opportunity to explore the dramatic cultural change in

progress in a participant group with unusually strong family, cultural, tribal, social, and

religious ties with historically intense national allegiance to their birth country. Arguably more important is the manner in which this study's participants rationalized, comingled, and resolved seemingly incongruent beliefs and values in their new host land.

Additionally, this research was an exploration of the lived experiences of Afghan Muslim males who emigrated from their native Afghanistan to the United States. After more than 10 years of war, preceded by 30 years of occupied presence and conflict, unearthing the meanings these participants gave to their identity presented an extraordinary opportunity for social scientific discovery. This researcher also investigated the associated phenomenon of individual identity and the meaning ascribed to one's sense of self for these study participants. Moreover, considering the matter of lived experiences, this researcher explored the associated concept of identity for several reasons. Least among these reasons was the underexplored nature of identity relative to this group of Afghan Muslim men who immigrated to the West. Arguably more important, the researcher delved into how identity holistically informed their Muslim experiences in the West and the static or malleable nature of these individual identities. In addressing these issues, a seminal question became, "How do Afghan Muslim male interpreters and translators who immigrated to the United States during the war (2006–2012) reconcile pre-immigration and post-immigration ethnic, cultural, and Muslim (religious) identity conflicts?"

The focus on the construct of identity through the lens of Afghan Muslims' lived experiences is further influenced by the body of knowledge that says identity as an individual construct is shaped and molded by several factors. These factors include local,

ancestral, religion, national, and cultural attributes that interface to form one's collective

sense of self and identity. In terms of Eastern and Western cultural, societal, and identity

differences, the degrees of separation could not be greater for an Afghan emigrating from

Kabul to Kansas, for example. Understanding how this transference occurs and the

factors that contribute to successful acculturation and assimilation helps deconstruct

barriers and re-shape images that have repeatedly fueled intra- and inter-group conflict

between families, tribes, cultures, ethnic groups and global communities. Leveraging

qualitative methods to study and learn more about the theoretical framework of identity,

as related to this particular group, is to become better informed about the construction of

identity and its outcome in human interaction.

Purpose and Goals

Despite the wave of articles, books, and reports about Afghanistan and its relation

to the war, significantly less material exists on Afghanistan immigrants and refugee

movements to the West (Pul, 2013). This is especially true if one is interested in

understanding the lived experiences of the immigrant interpreters and translators who

transitioned from Afghanistan to the United States. This population of Afghan nationals,

who worked with the United States Armed Forces and allies, were pivotal to the

successful partnering with the Afghan security forces and has not been studied in great

depth. According to Pul (2013), researchers have primarily focused on assimilation, along

with health, economic, and workplace perceptions and discrimination issues experienced

by Afghan or Muslim refugee immigrants to the West. Existing research primarily relies

on data related to refugees who have migrated to the United States, Canada, and Europe

following the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan during the late 1970s through the 1980s (Emadi, 2005). The research methodologies have also often rested on quantitative approaches, relying heavily on United States census data to explore the aforementioned social issues according to Emadi (2005). A problem with this approach is that it examines the issue of Afghan Muslim immigrants predominantly from the perspective of the host state. Additionally, the focus has almost exclusively been on the effects the immigrant group has had on the host nation's economy, commerce, social, education, political institutions, and state infrastructures (Emadi, 2005). This gap in the literature informed and motivated this researcher to examine the effects of the immigrant group's migration to the United States and how this event has shaped participant beliefs, understandings, and conceptualizations of their identities and lived experiences. For this research, inquiry and analysis of the pre-immigration period began at the start of the Afghan War (2003). This means the interpreters' and translators' narrative terms of reference may start as early as three years prior to the enactment of the U.S. Visa legislation (2006). According to the National Defense Authorization Act (2006), special immigrant status was made available under section 1059 of the act to Afghan nationals who worked directly for the United States Armed Forces as a translator or interpreter. The aim of the current research study was to capture the experiences and lived history of the participants during the war, and beyond the period when immigration to the west commenced.

Problem Statement

Afghan Muslim male interpreters and translators experience interpersonal struggles and intergroup conflict as they migrate from the East to the West. In yielding to

Western assimilation and acculturation pressures, interpersonal tensions emerge between and within native family units who seek to honor and cling to traditional tribal and ethnic beliefs, values, and customs. Additionally, intergroup conflict arises as Afghan Muslim male interpreters and translators attempt to reconcile those native traditions and associated identities with the customs, values, and beliefs of their new host land. The problem is defining and understanding the disparate identities for this population group during their immigration to the West. To this end, are the identities the same and or static across both pre- and post- immigration periods? Also, does finding the right balance between bridging the native social, cultural, and religious constructs matter? Research needs to be conducted to better understand the identity issues of this Afghan Muslim male group and the nature of their interpersonal and intergroup conflict. And, the aim of such future research must be to design more constructive methods to help participants mitigate this identity conflict issue, and enhance cross-cultural awareness.

Research Questions

To explore the rarely-researched Afghan Muslim male interpreter and translator "conflict and change" issue of identity, the primary research question of the current study is: What are the lived experiences during pre- and post-immigration of Afghan Muslim interpreters and translators who migrated to the United States during the Afghanistan War (2003 - 2012)? Supporting research sub-questions were:

1. How do these Afghan Muslim males conceptualize identity?

2. How do these experiences shape, inform, and affect their developed identities?

3. How does intergroup conflict shape experiences and influence identity dilemmas within the study group?

Reflexivity

According to Creswell (2007), the written text and the researcher are intertwined. Meaning, what one writes and who one is are presented through communications via various reflections. These reflections are a compilation of one's views about social issues, race, class, gender, religion, and politics, among other factors. This study, therefore, is not written void of all interpretations and reflections by the researcher—honesty and integrity prevent the researcher from stating otherwise. However, where certain reflections have emerged, attempts to mitigate their presence through full disclosure assisted in delivering the voices of the storyteller without distortion, bias, or reflections by the researcher. In the spirit of full disclosure, since 2007, the researcher had lived and worked routinely in Southwest Asia, primarily in Afghanistan, in the service of the International Military Coalition. Moreover, throughout the researcher's presence in Afghanistan, he was with and around interpreters and translators, hearing and learning about their stories while attempting to understand the complexities of the identities of the Afghan individuals he came into contact with. In reflecting on those interactions and this research study, the researcher understands that his personal and professional commitment in Afghanistan could unduly sway this research. To guard against this threat and bias, outside scrutiny of the research was constantly necessary, and regular reflection on the methods employed in this study served as a useful tool, as observed by Guba and Lincoln (1985). Moreover,

Guba and Lincoln (1985) observed that reflective commentary should also be used in this instance, and can be applied in a variety of ways.

> The reflective commentary may also be used to record the researcher's initial impressions of each data collection session, patterns appearing to emerge in the data collected and theories generated. The commentary can play a key role in what Guba and Lincoln term 'progressive subjectivity', or the monitoring of the researcher's own developing constructions, which the writers consider critical in establishing credibility. Ultimately, the section of the commentary dealing with emerging patterns and theories should inform that part of the research report that addresses the project's results, and any discussion in the report of the effectiveness of the study maybe based on the investigator's methods analysis within the reflective commentary. (Guba & Lincoln, 1989, pp. 70-71)

During the one on one-interview sessions with each of the participants my own reflections surfaced. I was conflicted as I listened to their emotional stories. My conflict involved feelings of loss and pain over the American and coalition soldiers that committed themselves, and in some instances sacrificed their lives for Afghanistan and its people. This researcher's own conflict emerged while working to convey the narratives of Afghan Muslim men. Some of these men at times seemed dismissive of the US involvement and appeared to levy blame on the coalition for the destruction and deaths. As I worked to convey the subject's stories, what of the narratives and lived experiences of those

countless American lives that will be forever changed as a consequence of this conflict. As a retired American military officer who served in the same war, I am not sure I ever fully resolved this conflict. I simply resigned myself to focus on the research at hand, and apply the principles, research techniques and to work within the ethical boundaries I have been exposed to in preparation for this study.

Through the researcher's work and interactions, he came to admire the beauty of the Afghan people, their culture, and heritage, while often being bewildered at the level of violence among Afghans and the dismissal at the loss of life as some pre-ordained will. In studying the Afghan society, the researcher saw the promise of a proud nation and remained saddened by the inexplicable and contradictory theft, corruption, and deceit at the hands of those entrusted with power. The researcher felt strongly about the future for the Afghans and believed that they would be best served in this research with scholarly, impartial, and unbiased research. He also remained steadfast in his convictions that rigorous qualitative research methods applied consistently throughout the entire process provide a voice to those silenced through violence, conflict, marginalization, and oppression.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

In every country within the Muslim world, Islam is either a State religion or under State control. This condition applies to even the most secular "Muslim" states. For some, leaving the Muslim dominated Islamic East, offers freedoms of choice and experiences where other religions exist in harmony. Such choice among Afghan immigrants leads to a range of new, or possible hybrid Muslim identities. —*Jocelyne Cesari, 2004*

Despite numerous reports, articles, and literature on refugees from Afghanistan arriving in the United States and Europe, comparatively little research has described the lived experiences of Afghan male immigrants. The population of Afghan nationals that worked with United States and coalition armed forces was pivotal to the United States' successful partnership with the Afghan security forces, but has not been studied in great depth. To date, researchers have focused primarily on health, economic, workplace perception, and discrimination issues of Afghan refugees in the United States, Canada, and Europe. The existing literature is in large part based on the data regarding refugees who migrated to the United States following the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan from the late 1970s to the 1990s. In addition, the research methodologies have mainly relied on quantitative approaches to explore the aforementioned social issues (Emadi, 2005).

Because this study uses a qualitative analytical approach to investigate the lived experiences of male Afghan Muslim immigrants, this literature review takes a more holistic approach to framing the context and subsequent debate. This approach also

allows a careful study of how the participants view their identities in the context of their world experiences. It accomplishes this by recognizing and acknowledging that these experiences are bracketed by time, events, history, and geopolitical circumstances, among other factors that contribute to the formulation of self-identity (Suleiman, 1987). In this vein, both pre- and post-immigration conditions have significance for this paper as they inject meaning and purpose into the lives of the participants requiring their interpretation and understanding. Also, rather than simply examining post-immigration experiences, this research explores pre- and post-migration events combined. This allows for a more thorough understanding and comparison of the experiences that will improve both the researcher and reader's understanding of perceived identity changes among the participants during their lived experiences and assimilation to the West.

This literature review is constructed in two distinct, but logically connected parts. Part one explores Afghanistan and pre-immigration patterns of Afghan Muslim behavior and interaction in a global context. This section focuses on Afghan national experiences and regional and external pressures, in addition to global interactions that have helped to shape pre-immigration lived experiences. The section also looks critically at cultural, ethnic, and religious influences, particularly as they contribute to identity development among Afghan Muslim male groups. Lastly, this section of the literature review also explores individual identity issues pre- and post-immigration as well as the familial and group identity issues across related time periods.

In part two, this literature review provides an examination of Afghan Muslim post-immigration experiences. In this section, the research study draws on a wide array of

existing literature, reports and journals that assist in uncovering identity-related findings learned from previous inquires of Muslim-world interactions and experiences. These interactions and experiences are transferred from native lived activities and events to new host country experiences. Further, in this section, focus is given to Muslim self-identity and the observed identity changes and differentiations between pre- and post-immigration periods. However, before addressing prevalent and related literature on either pre- or post-immigration Afghan Muslim issues, a contextual framework is presented. To this end, this research literature review begins by examining the ideological rifts that establish the preconditions that undergird twenty-first century experiences and identities among Afghan Muslims. What we know from the literature that follows is that these identities are not singular and symmetrical. Rather, they appear to be uniquely influenced and shaped by ethnic, cultural, national, as well as religious factors.

Global and Cultural Ideological Differences

In discussing tentative findings on the complexities and paradoxes of Islamic Muslim identity in Afghanistan and conflict in a conservative world, Mazrui (1996) writes extensively on the ideological shifts that took place in the lead-up to the twenty-first century. He writes about the ideological divides within the Western world between liberals and conservatives in response to Muslim and Islamic fundamentalism. While Islamic fundamentalists are entrenched in a global struggle against Western ideology and those that would support it, the ironies that exist within nation states are noteworthy. Mazrui (1996) observes that jockeying for political power between American conservative and liberal parties is affecting Muslims and Islam globally; in France, there

is growing hostility towards foreigners and Muslims, in Germany, xenophobia, and in America, a foreign policy that is frequently pro-Muslim, but often unsympathetic domestically.

To better understand the extent of the effect on Muslims and non-Muslims globally, this literature review examines the Cold War phenomenon that eventually had an impact on the lives of Afghans. The success of the West in defeating communism during the Cold War created unforeseen circumstances when a political vacuum emerged as Soviet power collapsed. According to Dennis (2004), "one of the stabilizing facts of the Cold War competition was that both East and West kept their client states in check. While some rivalries fueled during the Cold War, others clearly were suppressed by it" (pp. 25-27). Unchecked, the former satellite states of the Soviet Union were suddenly without an identity that had previously united them - a communist ideology.

With the failure of this ideology, former Soviet satellite nations reverted to religion, suppressed under communism, but now used to self-identify and unify their populations. Dennis (2004) claims that three events resulted from the demise of the Soviet Union: an ideological vacuum, a power vacuum, and global weapons proliferation. Of the three, the ideological effects were most prevalent and impactful on Muslim experiences as fundamentalists moved quickly to gain political standing:

> At its height, the Cold War generally worked to suppress other political
> ideologies as both the Americans and Soviets (and their respective allies)
> committed tremendous resources to either democratic or communist

parties or leaders in Asia, Africa, and the Middle East. (Dennis, 2004, p.

27)

Since the conclusion of the Cold War, and the subsequent withdrawal from large

swaths of the global mosaic by foes, Islamic fundamentalism gained an ideological

foothold. And while the emergence of Islamic fundamentalism is explained, the motives

behind the fundamentalists' rage against the West, and particularly the United States, are

less defined (Dennis, 2004). Through this uncertainty, we observe that the world is now

connected. This means trade, commerce, and communications effectively link previously

isolated nations and forces, forming partnerships, while at the same time establishing

enduring structures that rely on each other to thrive. Dennis (2004) suggests that Islamic

fundamentalism is hostile to any outside force that makes their aim of a puritanical entity

harder to achieve. In addition, a globally connected universe exposes Muslims to a

secular and enticing Western culture. Another rationale offered by Dennis (2004) is that

fundamentalists hold the view that they are the heirs to an ancient Arabic heritage, which

they have failed to uphold. As previously indicated, the politically changed landscape and

ideological differences caused seismic changes in Africa and elsewhere. These changes

eventually reached Southwest Asia and subsequently rippled across Afghanistan.

While many researchers support Dennis' (2004) view, others offer an alternative

theory. One such theory, as provided by Samuel P. Huntington, has come to be known as

the "Clash of Civilizations." In 1993, Huntington presented his hypothesis, which posits

that conflicts in the world would no longer exist because of ideological differences, but

rather according to fractures along cultural and religious divides. Huntington's theory is

generally acknowledged as a major contribution to the theoretical discussion. His work

focuses on civilization conflict and broader intellectual debates and discussions about the

driving forces behind today's more complex geopolitical disagreements.

> It is my hypothesis that the fundamental source of conflict in this new
>
> world will not be primarily ideological or primarily economic. The great
>
> divisions among humankind and the dominating source of conflict will be
>
> cultural. Nation states will remain the most powerful actors in world
>
> affairs, but the principal conflicts of global politics will occur between
>
> nations and groups of different civilizations. The clash of civilizations will
>
> dominate global politics. The fault lines between civilizations will be the
>
> battle lines of the future. (Huntington, 1993, p. 22)

For Huntington and others holding the same belief, what matters most is not

ideological dissimilarities - rather, it is cultural and identity similarities that define people

through language, religion, culture, history, customs, and institutions (Schweitzer &

Shay, 2011). Still, as the political and cultural reality of today's post-9/11 world adds

credence to Huntington's basic premise, his theory is not immune to criticism.

Esposito (1999) faults Huntington for depicting all Muslim states as complicit in

their cultural conflict and struggle with the West. Indeed, Huntington often used a

metaphor about a northern and a southern Italian village with distinctly different customs,

but sharing a common Italian heritage, ethnicity, and identity, compared to a German

neighbor to the north. In this sense, Huntington believed that Muslims, whether they are

Afghan or Algerian, share a similar identity that is nested in their common religious

practice of Islam. The problem, as pointed out by Esposito (1999), is that Islamic

fundamentalism is rooted in a minority. And while these minorities fall under a common

fundamentalist umbrella, they are often distinguishable by their philosophical uniqueness.

Countering both views, Schweitzer and Shay (2011) posit that the Muslim majority is

secular or moderate and, even more importantly, pragmatic and far from engaged conflict

with the West. Many agree that Huntington's one-size-fits-all model unfairly casts both

moderate and fundamentalist Muslims in the same indistinguishable category.

Afghan Individual Pre-Immigration Identity

What the above criticisms underscore is the diverse and dynamic nature of both

the country of Afghanistan and its people. The environment has a powerful role to play in

shaping the identity of the nation and, as a consequence, its population. Where the

Afghan national identity is concerned, categories such as history, culture, ethnicity,

customs, and institutions all play integral roles (Canfield, 1986). In addition, Canfield

(1986) maintains that the use of these categories is important to putting into order a

"normative orientation" regarding the events and social order that feed one's self-identity.

These categories serve a supplementary purpose in addition to ensuring clarity regarding

what it means to be an Afghan. Other researchers refer to these categories as a national

phenomenon that connects and binds each Afghan to one another. Canfield (1986)

describes the phenomenon as a construct of self-identity that is complex and important to

the common Afghan identity in that it permeates all facets of the social order. Even more

interesting is the notion that self-identity is best understood as a social struggle or a kind

of give and take between reality and one's sense of what is real.

Identity entails a confrontation between the ideal and the real and affects

both the construct and the situation within which it is used. The construct

shapes the situation by defining it in terms of familiar, established

concepts, whereas the actual situation, on the other hand, places a strain

on the ideal construct so as to "wear" the construct into its own image.

Over time the construct is shaped to fit, more or less, the kinds of

situation that regularly arise in human relationships so that the meanings

of social categories received from one generation are often infused with

fresh nuances and by the time they are passed on to the next social

categories, like all cultural phenomena, are developed in the experience

of social groups. (Spiro, 1984, pp. 185-186)

What this says about Afghan self-identity, among other things, is that Afghan

people work to accommodate and reconcile their idea of social meaning and identity

through individual reference points. These reference points then help them to fit reality

neatly into their own self-identity construct or notion. Further, this individually

prescribed notion of self-identity is reinforced through shared experiences that connect

Afghan social groups, tribes, families, and individuals (Spiro, 1984). The idea of

common experiences is a powerful component of identity self-development and links the

notion of belonging to one's native people, history, culture, and society to Afghan

experiences and social groups. According to Canfield (1986), Afghan social groups

establish unique identity categories. These identities have lasting traditions for many,

taking root as enduring parts of the societal structure. What follows next is a closer look

at some of these iconic Afghan traditions and how they are viewed in the lived

experiences and manifest themselves in the phenomenon of self-identity.

Afghan identity is often synonymous with how Afghans view traditions,

according to Tapper (1984). For Afghans, such traditions often include centuries-old

customs and beliefs that many consider part of their national treasures. These national

treasures, traditions, or identities are further detailed in varied literature about social

relationships and affiliations known as watan and qawn. Canfield (1986) and Tapper

(1984) state that belonging is a critical component of the Afghan sense of self. The word

watan translates as "homeland" and suggests a deeply held connection, relationship, and

belonging to one's birthplace, community, or native home. Further, when Afghan

scholars present their findings surrounding the concept of watan, they frequently describe

a relationship between the homeland and the individual. This relationship is authentic and

centered on real depth and relatedness that results in a sense of obligation that is

permanent and enduring. The sense of obligation as the underpinning of watan is

understood as sharing and helping people who are connected to a common village or

region (Canfield, 1986). Moreover, the sense of self-identity resulting from such an

attachment, shared experience, and permanent belonging to a place is strengthened by

kinship (Tapper, 1984).

The English translation of the Dari or Pashtun (the official Afghan languages)

word *qwan* is "kinship." According to Tapper (1984), qawn underscores the importance

of ancestral relationships to the Afghans. Other Afghan scholars, such as Canfield (1986),

also note that the meaning and interpretation of qawn can sometimes be extended to close

friends. Often these connections, qawn refer to those who speak a common language and broadly share an ethnic identity, observing similar rituals and observances.

Regarding the relationship between watan and qawn, it is important to understand that while both are important and powerful elements, together they intersect at the heart of defined Afghan identity. According to Canfield (1986), they can be vitally important to the Afghan identity and sense of self, especially when reinforcing one another and particularly when based upon tribal relationships and sect affiliation. Regarding sect affiliation, certain elements require expansion, as the discussion of "sect identity" takes on a unique dynamic in Afghan society. While the sect is a significant feature of one's identity, it is often too taboo a subject to address publicly or in one-on-one conversations. Typically, one's family name, homeland, village or tribe, dialect, or other cultural indicators are sufficient enough to identify one's sect in Afghan society.

> As nation-oriented Afghans consider it an inappropriate basis of status,
> then avoid mentioning it. But for most traditional people that I have met –
> i.e., the ritual Hazaras and the "folk" populations of the cities – sect
> identity is a significant mark of status, because to them Sunni identity is
> implies compliance and identification with the rule of government and
> Shi'ite identity implies recalcitrance and alienation from it. (Canfield,
> 1986, p. 187)

The story of Afghanistan's colorful and rich identities, made up of ethnic groups of Pashtun, Tajik, Hazara, Uzbek, Baluchi, and Turkoman people, is well absorbed through the lens of the author Khaled Hosseini. Hosseini's (2003) powerful tale, *The Kite*

Runner, reveals the diverse composition of a heterogeneous nation and people. In this work, the reader experiences a sense that Afghanistan is a multiethnic blend of centuries-old tribal influences, customs, and more than twenty eclectic languages that are each honored and preserved today. Of these languages, only Dari and Pashtun are recognized as official government languages. Understanding the experiences and identity of Afghanistan means coming to terms with the unstable and ever-changing geopolitical landscape. As one absorbs Hosseini's (2003) work, a reader comes away with the understanding that Afghanistan has not had the good fortune of peace for nearly 40 years. And, during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, foreign powers such as Britain and Russia often violated the sovereign territory of Afghanistan for their own political and economic self-interest. On top of these global conflicts, regional violations of Afghan territory by neighboring Pakistan to the east, and governmental meddling by Iran to the west, have added to internal pressures (Canfield, 1986). Contributing to these internal issues are the fragmented demands of ethnic groups divided along Sunni and Shi'a orientations, making the challenges of governance immense under normal circumstances (Hosseini, 2003) - that is, unless leaders were able to rally the people around a shared cause, common experience, or national identity.

Repeatedly, Afghan leaders have found such a rallying point in the iconic symbol of national identity - the Afghan flag. According to Poullada (1973), the symbolism of the flag was captured by the use of the national seal that is placed at its center. This flag connected the Afghan people, heritage, and identity with that of Muslims around the world, as the flag embodies the Islamic character and faith. Canfield (1986) writes that at

the flag's center was a mosque, inside which were the outlines of a prayer niche

representing the piety of the people, and a pulpit representing authority of the ulema or

Islamic scholars.

Figure 1. Afghan National Flag

http://www.mapsofworld.com/flags/afghanistan-flag.html

In practice, Afghan rulers aligned themselves, their agendas, and their campaigns

to the national flag and ostensibly to the nation's identity by using grand Islamic titles to

attract loyalty from the people. According to Stewart (1973), the title Commander of the

Faithful was used by Dost Muhammad, who reigned from 1826 to 1864. The title of King

of Islam was also used by Abdul Rahman (reigned 1880–1901). This practice of aligning

one's rule with the iconography of the national identity, in this case Islam, continued well

into the twentieth century by Habibullah, who reigned from 1901 to 1919 and called

himself "The Lamp of the Nation and Religion." And finally, King Zaher Shah, who

ruled from 1933 to 1973, referred to himself as "Dependent of God." Each of these rulers

recognized the national identity embodied in the symbolic Afghan flag. Each of these

rulers also saw the legitimacy of the national flag, and by linking their rule to these cherished Islamic symbols, sought to maximize their legitimacy, as well (Stewart, 1973).

Eventually, rulers succumb to the will of the people (Younos, 1998). Meeting the demands of a diverse nation, ethnically identified as Pashtun, Tajik, and Hazara, among others, is difficult under the best conditions. This is because these groups identify with those who speak their language and share their common culture (Younos, 1998). The overarching commitments and loyalties that these groups exhibit are primarily to their own ethnic groups or tribes. According to Robson (2002), these groups' identification with the nation is of lesser importance, and Afghan development has suffered as a consequence of competing multiethnic identities. The map of Afghanistan below shows the areas of origin of the country's native tribes. Also, the open land mass may shed some light on the influence that geographic conditions have had on many tribal and group customs, traditions, and religious practices. This is because much of what is visible today in Afghanistan is believed to have originated from neighboring regions (Robson & Lipson, 2002).
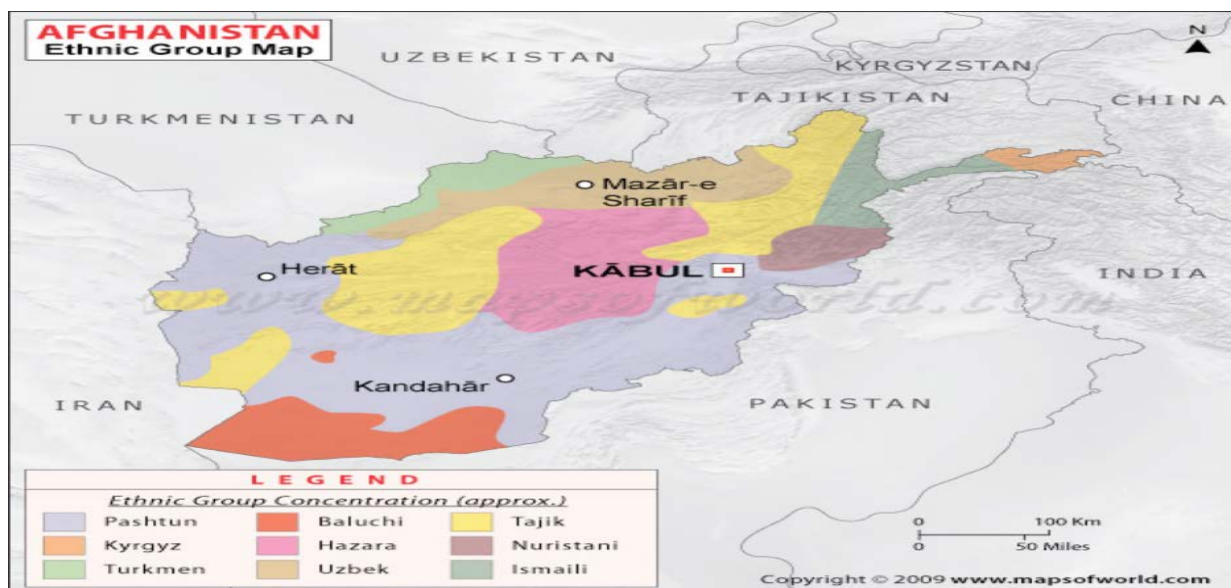
Figure 2. Afghanistan Country Map

http://www.mapsofworld.com/flags/afghanistan-flag.html

Afghan Tribal and Group Identities

Pashtuns. The majority ethnic group in Afghanistan is the Pashtuns. According to

Robson and Lipson (2002), roughly 38% of the Afghan population comprises Pashtuns

who view themselves as holy warriors. They are a resourceful people who take pride in

the difficult lifestyle they have carved out of the austere and often inhospitable Afghan

landscape. Robson and Lipson (2002) also state that they are poor but able to thrive on

adversity, and they can prevail in conditions that would easily defeat others. Scholars

have often commented on the tribal relatedness, identity, and fighting ethos of this group.

The defeat of the British in the nineteenth century was mainly at the hands of the

Pashtuns (Hosseini, 2003). In the twentieth century, the Soviets were soundly defeated

and driven out of the country by Mujaheddin fighters - again, mainly comprised of

Pashtun warriors. Like much of the country, the Pashtuns are deeply committed to their

Islamic belief, and equally faithful to their Sunni heritage, customs, and values. It is these

cultural values that have at times placed the group at odds with other tribes, national

values, and even Islam itself (Hosseini, 2003). A set of common core values links the

tribes together and represents the Pashtun identity. Younos (1998) identified these values

that guide Pashtun interpersonal and intertribal relationships internally and with

outsiders. They include honor (ghayrat); the family, especially the defense of female

members of the tribe (mamus); bravery in battle (tureh); steadfastness (sabats); and

righteousness (imamdar).

     Tajiks. The Tajiks represent the second largest Afghan ethnic group according to

Robson, Lipson, and Younos (1998). They comprise an estimated 25% of the Afghan

population. They are loyal Muslims of Sunni origin. In terms of ethnicity and language,

this group identifies closely with old Persia (now Iran) mainly because of Afghanistan's

geographical location between the Indian subcontinent, China, and Central Asia (Robson

& Lipson, 2002; Younos, 1998). The Tajiks speak Dari, the historic dialect of Afghan

Persian, and are the most influential and predominant Dari-speaking ethnicity within

Afghanistan. According to Robson and Lipson (2002), they are believed to be among the

earliest settlers and native groups of Afghanistan and Turkmenistan to the north.

Geographically, their largest population mass is situated among the difficult Hindu Kush

mountain areas that stretch from the north, with heavy pockets of populations down to the

south and west, near Iran.

Writings from Afghan scholars like Younos (1998), Robson & Lipson (2002), and Hosseini (2003) reflect the fact that these people have been severely persecuted and have often found themselves outcasts in their own country. Nearly half of the Afghans who fled the country during the Soviet invasion were Tajiks (Younos, 1998). While their identity is rooted in their cultural past, they are primarily Sunni Muslims, but some Tajiks belong to the Islamic Shi'a sect (Lipson, 2002). Furthermore, the internal differences within the tribe (Sunni vs. Shi'a) have created tensions both for the tribe itself and for the Afghan nation.

Hazaras. The third most populous Afghan tribe is the Hazaras; these people also speak Dari. They are mostly settled in the mountain areas surrounding the center of Afghanistan, and they share their nomadic lifestyle with their Mongolian ancestors. They comprise about 20% of the national population (which is roughly 5 million Afghan citizens). Their culture is deeply connected to the land and livestock, and they are not tied to any particular area. As such, this lifestyle has often caused conflict with others who view people's worth according to the land that they own. According to Younos (1998), Hazaras are not particularly respectful of these traditions.

Uzbeks. The Uzbeks according to Younos (1998), and Robson & Lipson (2002) represent roughly 6% of the Afghan population and live a farming existence in the northernmost region of the country. The literature informs us that the Uzbeks are also Sunni Muslims of the Hanafi sect, and have interwoven some orthodox customs and values into their own Islamic practices (Robson & Lipson, 2002). Although they are generally not orthodox Muslims, Islam is an integral part of their cultural identity

(Robson & Lipson, 2002). They speak a Turkish dialect called Altaic Uzbek, and their cultural heritage is rooted in their Sunni Muslim beliefs.

       Turkmen. The Turkmen is a minority Afghan tribe that lives mainly along the Western corridor of Afghanistan, straddling the border with Turkmenistan. They also share a nomadic lifestyle and they speak a similar Turkish Altaic dialect to their Uzbek neighbors (Robson & Lipson, 2002). They are Sunni Muslims whose identity is deeply affiliated with their Islamic religious beliefs and cultural traditions. Additionally, their values and beliefs reflect a deep connectedness to their land of origin, Turkmenistan, rather than their present Afghan homeland.

Religious Identity

In Afghanistan, Islam is the official state religion by constitutional degree; 99% of the country's inhabitants are Muslim, which can be further divided into 80% Sunni, 19% Shi'a, and 1% other (Borchgrevink, 2007). This means that nearly all citizens share the Afghan identity of being a Muslim. But even among their highly homogeneous Islamic shared experiences, vastly different beliefs and interpretations exist between and among tribes. Borchgrevink (2007) reminds us that religious civil society, however, is not a single, uniform condition, and among the many interpretations of Islam, there are a range of actors that include reform-friendly and pro-government moderates, Islamists, conservative traditionalists, and radical fundamentalists. These differences ensure a wide array of influences that compete against one another.

Borchgrevink's (2007) work informs us that for the eclectic Afghan ethnic population, religious identity is vitally important, and in some cases, crucial to the primal

orientations of lived experiences. The main tribes of Afghanistan all consider Islam as particularly relevant for identity formation. And, as the literature underscores (Borchgrevink, 2007; Anderson, 1983; Hinde, 1999), Islam bonds the Afghan population even though the nation is deeply divided along ethnic and tribal lines. In this way, both Islam and tribal traditions intersect to undergird individual and cultural identity (Anderson, 1983).

These ethnic identities and diverse formations encourage the quest for meaning in individual lives; offer ways of answering existential enigmas; emphasize order and structure; and support coherence and integration between cognitions, emotions, and actions (Hinde, 1999). Other scholars, such as Piedmont (1999), point to the sense of unity, purpose, and social connectedness that bonds seemingly disparate groups beyond what he referred to as "the spatiotemporal discrepancies" of the visible Afghan landscape. Islam is therefore seen as the identity linchpin creating formations that are elevated above the nation and offer a sense of belonging and unity, meaning, and shared experiences. In post-Eriksonian terms (Marcia, 1980), religion could then be conceived as encouraging both commitment and exploration in identity. As a result, groups relate to one another simply by virtue of their religious heritage, and it is that heritage and reverence for religion that has both served Afghanistan during the conflict and simultaneously prevented significant development and modernization (Canfield, 1986).

Canfield's (1986) writings remind this researcher that identity for an Afghan is not a simple proposition. Identity is complex, dynamic, enduring, and multifaceted at all at once, according to Canfield (1986). The literature also informs us that the Afghan

national identity is embodied in the rich cultural heritage, traditions, and symbols that belong to Afghanistan its people, customs, and beliefs. For individual Afghans, the cultural or national identity not only holds diverse meanings, but also is interpreted differently depending on one's life experiences. In addition, these identities are developed from one's tribal and ethnic affiliation, country beliefs, religion, family patterns, traditions, and obligations (Saroglou & Galand, 2004). The question for this research going forward, therefore, concerns the degree to which identity in the studied participant group of Afghan Muslim men immigrating to the West (i.e., the United States, Canada, or Europe) is fixed or malleable as a result of pre-immigration experiences.

Afghan Individual Post-Immigration Identity

More than at any other time in history, we can observe the interwoven nature of world systems as demonstrated by connected economies and agricultures, conglomerates and business mergers, nation-state alliances and partnerships, all of which meet at so many levels. The depth and dimension of these interconnected systems is facilitated and enhanced by advanced technologies, modern transportation networks, global commerce, and the view that once formidable barriers that isolated peoples and nations are now porous, open, and underpinned by one another.

In terms of these changes and their impact on people, lives, and identities, Brah (1996) predicted that the flow of populations between regions of the world would continue to increase as people migrate. Also, the migrations would be undertaken in order to seek increased opportunities and better lives, or else to flee from their home countries, escaping famine or the global injustices of conflict, war, insecurity, or profound social

and economic inequities (Brah, 1996). The focus of this research is the exploration of these journeys across time, space, and events and the derived meanings that define the circumstances as viewed through the lens of the participants themselves. According to Brah (1996), to historicize the narratives of these journeys, it is necessary to look not only at who travels, but also when, how, and under what circumstances. This is because only then does the whole identity that affects the outcomes of lived experiences, either positively or adversely, begin to emerge. Put differently, Jamal (2008) states that these circumstances have serious and lasting impacts on the everyday lives and experiences of Afghan Muslim immigrants as they settle in their new host lands in the West.

In terms of westward immigrant movement, a change in the 1965 United States immigration law opened the doors to a significant number of immigrants of Islam and Muslim origin (Suleiman, 1994). Entrance into America by the initial wave of Muslims seemed to affirm traditional patterns of immigrant migrations, as the first arrivals were mainly composed of those with the means and resources to undergo a new beginning. And, like every other member of an immigrant group to America, the first wave of Muslims arrived seeking better opportunities (Britto & Amer, 2007). In addition, remaining faithful to their sense of self and identities as Muslims assuaged the sense of fear and isolation. This belief is supported by the literature from Suleiman (1994) and Jamal (2008), which suggest that many Muslim immigrants think of Islam not in an individual sense, but rather as a collective set of experiences derived from a shared identity. Furthermore, this identity is developed out of one's native surroundings: culture, family, traditions, and ethnicity (Suleiman, 1994). What the literature also tells us is that

these initial waves of Muslim immigrants held tightly to their beliefs and traditions about family and religion, believing that they were only temporary sojourners in the United States or the West.

> Judging by the autobiographical accounts and other historical sources, many of the early immigrants perceived much of their early movements as transient phenomenon. Their idea or dream was to amass all of the wealth possible, in the shortest time and then to return home. (Khalaf, 2004, p. 8)

Cultural Globalization

Many scholars have explored the phenomenon of cultural and religious transnational movements. Cesari (2004) describes this cultural globalization as "the intensification of worldwide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa" (p. 91). The effect of this phenomenon is a narrowing of the physical distance between once vastly separated spatial and social dimensions. To live globally means to live in a world where social proximity is constructed over and in spite of geographic distance, and where geographic proximity no longer leads a priori to social ties (Beck, 2000). Unsurprisingly, this researcher finds in the literature that in this instance, Islam serves Muslim immigrants by acting as a unifying force by which they continue to identify themselves by their cultural heritage, gender, nationality, class, and group affiliation. However, their global trans-movements to Western cultures are telling in that their desires speak broadly to either inconsistencies or ruptures in the clarity and meanings of identities. In writing about American-Muslim identity, Suleiman (1994) says that while

identifying with native cultural heritages, these Muslim immigrants seek something from the West and America. Further, he observes that these groups "relish the possibilities of establishing a new identity within the complexity of American pluralism. And, this new identity integrates the dual components of previous culture and American citizenship" (Suleiman, 1994, p. 170).

Thus, it can be concluded that the debate about Muslim and ethnic identity is much more complicated and complex than previously thought. This view is underscored by the fact that the structure of Muslim and ethnic identity in Afghanistan is uniquely different in practice (e.g., orthodoxy and progressiveness) than the Muslim structural identity in America (Suleiman, 1994). The question that emerges from this debate is the nature of this structural phenomenon in the United States against the countering argument of assimilation in contrast to pluralist perspectives.

The academic debate between supporters of assimilation and pluralist model of identity construction in the United States is best characterized by Yancey, Ericksen, and Juliani (1976). The assimilation purists argued that for later generation of immigrants to America, the greater the distance in time away from the country of origin, the less important the ethnic group identity (Park, 1950). Wirth (1928) points out this phenomenon occurs because external and internal forces combine to ensure that the integrity of ethnic group identity naturally diminishes over time. A major sociological study in Chicago in the 1920s revealed that through declining residential segregation, limited social mobility, and increased intermarriage, cohesiveness among ethnically homogenous immigrant groups was diminished. The research suggests that when

descendants of immigrants leave their ethnically homogenous areas, they assume an ethnic hybrid—while at the same time, their identities become influenced and begin to reflect more of their new cultural environment (Hechter, 1974). Yancey and associates (1996) suggests that these groups do not automatically assimilate over time. Rather, they follow a pluralist model where features of their native identity continue to be observed (e.g., intermarriage and Islamic religious practices), albeit dissimilar from the wider segregated group. The main point is their practice of deeply held customs remains consistent with native traditions and represents a willingness to remain connected to their identity, passing these customs and traditions to future generations.

These findings appear to support research conducted in the United Kingdom by Manning and Roy (2007), who found that second-generation descendants of immigrant Muslims showed a lower probability of attachment to their culture of origin. Conversely, the initial or first-generation Muslim immigrants demonstrated a higher attachment to their origin country. What these studies reveal is that absent of some overriding cause (e.g., political, economic, or social), ethnic identity among individuals weakens as other identities emerge. According to Gordon (1964), the phenomenon is even more dramatic because once the primary immigrant group becomes ethnically heterogeneous, cultural assimilation occurs and the originating cultural identity fades.

The assimilation model of identity in the context of post-immigration offers a major contrast to the pluralist design. In her book entitled *Ethnic Options, Choosing Identity in America*, Waters (1990) argues that immigrant assimilation is not predictable or inevitable. Citing findings from Novak (1996), ethnic identity is not influenced in a

significant way, and Waters bolsters her claim that post-immigrant Muslim populations maintain a homogeneous relationship within the ethnic community of origin. Furthermore, even with ethnic mixed marriages or intermarriages, the evidence suggests that a strong sense of ethnic identity is continued among subsequent generations. Supporting this view, another set of surveys shows continued high endogamy, attitudinal differences, and self-identification among immigrant groups (Greeley, 1974). This sustained pattern of self-identification underscores the view that identity patterns do not "simply" disappear, as noted in earlier work by Gordon (1964).

While the debate between assimilation theorists and pluralists persists, an interesting hypothesis has emerged that questions the relative importance of either prevailing perspective: new ethnic identity theory. This view holds that immigrants to the United States adhere to a kind of "dime store" persona when it comes to ethnicity and identity (Stein & Hill, 1979). This phenomenon suggests that later generational immigrants selectively choose when and where to self-identify with their ethnic identity of origin. Stein and Hill (1979) found that when the later generation's identity was linked to an attachment, such as a flag or anthem - as is the case of Afghan immigrants - this could sometimes be viewed as superficial. In such cases, such attachment was considered nothing more than a symbolic gesture and appeared as casual as shopping in a dime store. In doing so, the immigrants diminish their ethnicity and their own sense of identity through public displays of inauthentic behavior. While this behavior appears superficial and trivial in some instances, symbolic attachment remains an important factor in the Afghan Muslim identity, as discussed in the previous section. Despite these criticisms,

authentic demonstrations of ethnic identification are omnipresent in the post-immigration lived experiences and reflexive of a rich and meaningful heritage that asserts itself throughout the immigrant's daily existence.

Afghan Family Identity during Pre-immigration

The bedrock of Afghan society, values, and culture is the family structure (Hosseini, 2004). Although the Afghan people sometime voice and demonstrate conflicting views regarding their traditional practices, customs, and rituals, the literature is clear regarding their resolute respect, reverence, and commitment to the family. According to Merrill, Paxson, and Tobey (2006), the family is the single most important institution in Afghan society, and the Afghan people have strong values, beliefs, and rules guiding the family and its members' behaviors. By definition, the view of the individual family unit in Afghanistan also includes the extended family (Marsden, 1998). This means that in a country fractured by post-colonial entanglements, modern war, conflict, and ethnic divides, one's individual security and safety are dependent on others (Merrill, Paxson, & Tobey, 2006). It is the daily struggle itself and the reliance on others that strengthens the bonds between and among family members. Additionally, family members rely on one another to satisfy their basic needs and help each other navigate complex conditions that can determine lived existence. To this end, Hosseini (2003) emphasizes the resilience of the family, as these complex conditions are often dynamic and vacillate wildly depending upon ethnic and tribal affiliation and region of the county.

Specific to the Afghan family unit and structure is the closely held belief in and practice of endogamous marriages (Marsden, 1998). This strong rural, tribal, and ethnic

endorsement of extending relationships within one's homogenous group is reinforced and often variably applied throughout Afghanistan. The practice also extends to arranged cross-relative inter-marriages within the family, and arranged intra-marriages within tribal groups and clans (Marsden, 1998). Among the outcomes of the practice of arranged marriages is the continuation and survival of the cultural, clan, and ethnic groups. Another key consideration is that the practice of endogamous marriages serves as a powerful example of how the Afghan culture and society pays homage to the male gender. The male position, as underscored by Merrill and colleagues (2006), is honored in the family and the tribe. Literature such as *The Kite Runner* (Hosseini, 2003) offers a unique glimpse into the nature and importance of inheritance through male gender lines. According to Lipson, Mehid, Robson, and Younos (2002), the permitted use of polygyny and the patriarchal authority afforded to men has at times been on the receiving end of world condemnation. This is because these practices have sometimes been harmful to the rights and freedoms of women and girls (Marsden, 1998). That said, in Afghan culture, the family is sacred, and privacy within the home is an important value that is strictly maintained. This value extends not only to the confines of the home, but outside the home as well. For example, publicly, women are traditionally covered from head to toe in garments called *burkas*. According to Merrill et al. (2006), this prevents other males from seeing the women as the patriarch does, reinforcing the belief that she belongs to only the family, and is not to be viewed by others.

While there is an unmistakable high regard for the role of the father and males in the Afghan society and homes, according to Marsden (1998), reverence is bestowed to

mothers and senior females in the dwellings, as well. This is important because the senior

female in the home is responsible for management of the home and ensuring all domestic

duties (e.g., cooking, cleaning, child rearing, etc.) are performed. To ensure the home is

maintained, the senior female that is usually determined by age delegate's responsibilities

among other younger females occupying the home (Lipson et al., 2002). Arguably, this

role becomes more important and much more complicated if multiple wives exist in the

same dwelling (Marsden, 1998).

> Extended family households may contain three to four generations including
>
> the male head of family and his wife, his brothers, several sons and their
>
> families, cousins with their families, as well as all unmarried and widowed
>
> female, and elderly grandparents. These multigenerational units practice
>
> close economic cooperation and come together on all life-crisis occasions.
>
> This permits cohesive in-group solidarity to be maintained. (Merrill, Paxson,
>
> & Tobey, 2006, p. 7-8)

If multiple wives share the same house, sometimes the wives will each have their

own rooms, or floors furnished with their own belongings, and their own facilities such as

kitchens or even bathrooms (Marsden, 1998). However, there is typically a joint space

within the home where the entire family unit comes together to bond, socialize, and

entertain, according to Hosseini (2003). To avoid conflict and maintain harmony within

the family, this experience requires close cooperation and support among all involved.

For example, the women of the home work together to care for, socialize, and discipline

the children while sharing the domestic duties (Foster, 1996). The shared family

arrangement also has other benefits according to Lipson and colleagues (2002), including economic and social advantages as families struggle to survive in the challenging poverty conditions and conflict areas that are prevalent throughout the country. Also, the communal family structure strengthens the bond, connection and respect between and among members while creating strong support systems that not only serve the family but the tribe and clan (Foster, 1996). And, this communal, family construct not only satisfies economic, security and social needs, it also lends to family identity. According to Hosseini (2003), this familial identity is unique and distinct from every other clan and tribal sense of being, and it represents important considerations and offers vital meaning to Afghan daily-lived existence.

Outside the family, there is reliance upon the tribal community and elders for matters involving land rights, group rivalries, and dispute settlements with other families and groups (Foster, 1996). According to Wardak (2002), the mechanism by which disputes are settled in the village and tribal areas in Afghanistan is through the Loya Jirga conflict resolution process. The Loya Jirga council is an assembly of adult males that serves as an important economic, ethnic, political, and cultural mainstay of the civil system as practiced in Afghanistan (Merrill et al., 2006). Loya Jirga translates to "assembly" in Persian, and it often refers to a party commission or type of democratic council. The writings from Foster (1996), Spain (1990), and Wardak (2002) state that the Loya Jirga normally calls for the village elders to participate and members who have unique backgrounds regarding the conflict are often selected. The Loya Jirga uses both judicial and executive roles to settle all disputes pertaining to the distribution of land,

properties, blood feuds, debts, and other important affairs (Foster, 1996). Additionally, the Loya Jirga works to ensure participation of conflicting parties during the proceedings. According to Wardak (2002), these actions are undertaken on the basis of traditions and principles of justice that are acknowledged and predicated on historic practice and customs. The Loya Jirga seeks not just to end the conflict and disputes, but has as an overarching objective to find the root causes of the conflict and restore and ensure family and tribal harmony (Spain, 1990).

Afghan Family Identity during Post-Immigration

In contrast to the complicated dynamic that characterizes the indigenous Afghan family experience, the experiences in the United States as compared to the family issues in Afghanistan appear very different. As in Afghanistan, the family continues to serve as the centerpiece of existence. Thus, the Afghan family - in both tribal and cultural focus - is centered not on the individual, but rather the family (Hosseini, 2003). Spain (1990) writes that it is this family focus that underpins the emotional and psychological well-being for people. He also notes that just as the family is the strength of the Afghan tribal system, it is also the nucleus of cultural foundations among Afghan families in the United States and the West (Spain, 1990). In terms of differences in Afghan immigrant family values, member roles, and traditional practices in the West compared to their native land in the East, tensions increase as socialization occurs. According to Robson, Lipson, Younos, and Mehdi (2003), Afghans tend to socialize almost exclusively among and with immediate and extended family members and homogenous groups, tribes, or clans. In contrast, U.S. family socialization practices are less restrictive and more inviting of other

social groups extending well beyond the family core. Unfortunately, Westerners often misinterpret this internalized socialization pattern among immigrant Afghans as a rejection of the community and its non-Afghan members (Merrill et al., 2006).

Another difference that causes stress and conflict within the Afghan family in the West is the freedoms enjoyed by women, and in particular, the roles they play outside the home in the United States. In the U.S., tensions surface as Afghan women seek work outside the home as contrasted to their traditional domestic roles in their native lands (Spain, 1990). These tensions have evolved because Afghan women have adapted to work outside the home, and they have concluded that they must enter the work force in order to contribute to the family income and sustainment (Robson et al., 2002). Spain (1990) suggests that this arrangement disrupts the traditional Afghan family relationship and is only partially mitigated if Western values that buttress economic well-being are balanced by the Afghan value for patriarchal headship. According to Afghan scholars such as Lipson and Omidian (1996), husbands whose wives earn salaries and have economic freedom suffer a loss of their paternal headship role that is important in Afghan culture and society. These new found freedoms or social realities negatively impact the couple's relationship with each other as the traditional male provider and female family and home caretaker roles are up-ended. Also, the tensions surrounding the Afghan couple's relationship are made more complicated, as noted by Lipson and Omidian (1996), if children are involved. In addition, their eventual exposure to conventional America (e.g., schools, playgrounds, etc.) can influence the family dynamics.

A key difference between Afghan and a mainstream American culture is that
the latter stresses the independence of the individual while the former
emphasizes the individual's dependence on the family. In Afghanistan, life
doesn't belong to just one person, an Afghan commented. "Every decision is
connected to the family - we are all tied together. (Robson, Lipson, Younos,
& Mehdi, 2002, p. 25)

According to Omidian (1996), Afghan communities in the U.S. have made
concessions to Western culture. These concessions introduce stress and tension into the
family dynamic as American sensibilities begin extending into the Afghan traditional
home where native values are confronted. These native values underscore family
interdependence and obedience to elders (Robson et al., 2002). Additionally, conflicts
arise as American schools encourage individuality and assertiveness, which may pose a
challenge to Afghan-held family beliefs of modesty and emphasis on the group, rather
than the individual (Hosseini, 2003). Afghans, whether in their native land or in the
United States, cling tightly to their family privacy, and studies indicate that while they
respect the freedoms found in Western societies, they also reject certain societal aspects
(Lipson & Omidian, 1996). With the potential clash of values and complications
stemming from social interactions, finding the right balance between recognizing
Western freedoms and continuing to embrace Afghan traditional beliefs is important.
This balance is important to maintaining the Afghan sense of self and successful cultural
assimilation and acculturation in the West (Merrill, Paxson, & Tobey, 2006).

Pan-ethnic Identity

Scholars like Feagin and Feagin (2003) note that pan-ethnic identity is important to studies such as this one because the developed identity is influenced and shaped by factors both internal and external to the immigrant's environments. Identities of immigrant populations are harmed when they are summarily grouped together into one category of Asians, Africans, or in this case, Muslims. According to Marvasti and McKinney (2004), treating all groups the same fails to honor and recognize the cultures, traditions, and customs that comprise pan-ethnic experiences and identities. Additionally, as pointed out by Marvasti and McKinney (2004), this mass group effect often leads to discrimination and injustices against the minority by the majority actors. In a modern context, this was observed and ran its course as swift condemnation of all Muslims throughout the United States following the attack on 9/11 by men of Arab-Muslim descent. In response, immigrant groups in the United States often self-identify as an American in order to avoid misrecognition and being singled out as foreign (Feagin & Feagin, 2003). Consequently, today we have "African-American," "Asian-American," and "Afghan-American" to act as shared cultural symbols offering a sense of belonging, and more importantly, to diffuse one's distinctiveness among post-immigration populations.

This chapter explored a wide breadth of literature about Afghan Muslim pre- and post-immigration experiences and patterns of identity. It begins with an examination of the prevailing global effects that contribute to conditions in Southwest Asia and directly impact the country of Afghanistan and its people. It focuses on life as an Afghan citizen

along with the experiences, the internal and external pressures, and the interactions that combine to shape pre-immigration experiences. Religion is an important element of Afghan identity, and Marvasti and McKinney (2004) offer that Islamic fundamentalism is hostile to any outside force that makes their aim of a puritanical entity harder to achieve. In addition, a globally connected universe exposes Muslims to a secular and enticing Western culture. In contrast, this paper re-introduces the clash of civilizations theory (Huntington, 1993), which long hovered over global political structures, and its various critics, including Esposito (2000), who offered counter positions that sought to invalidate the notion of ideological struggles between the East and West. Still, in discussing tentative findings on the complexities and paradoxes of Islamic Muslim identity in Afghanistan and conflict in a conservative world, this research presented the ideological shifts that occurred during the run-up to the twenty-first century. And, citing Mazrui (1996) among others, the literature served to frame the debate concerning the divides that underlie conflicts between liberals and conservatives in response to Muslim and Islamic fundamentalism. The section on pre-immigration literature closed with the presentation of the contextual canvas that allows Afghan Muslims to self-identify. Here, the study amplifies the point that language, ethnicity, tribal affiliation, heritage, and customs contribute to a shared Afghan experience that reverberates against many facets of social and cultural order.

In part two (post-immigration), this research study provided an examination of Afghan Muslim post-immigration experiences. As changes in the 1965 American immigration laws opened the doors to a significant number of practicing Muslim

immigrants, the literature viewed their identity in the West as complex, multilayered, and

adaptive. Considerable attention is given to the perspective that from the moment

immigrants arrive in the West, opposing forces are at work, which according to Wirth

(1928), results in a diminished identification with the country of origin. This view is

balanced somewhat by Waters (1990), who argues that immigrant assimilation is not

predictable or inevitable; later generational immigrants selectively choose when and

where to self-identify with their ethnic origin. Additionally, the literature demonstrates

that in response, immigrant groups in the United States self-identify as an American in

order to avoid unfair majority behavior. The pivotal point is the notion that Muslim

immigrants in America frequently consider Islam as a collective set of experiences

derived from a common identity, rather than in a purely individual sense (Wahud, 1999).

And, while this literature review presented a range of authors that show a more holistic

approach of considering Muslims as a new minority within Western democracy. This is

done while comparing the interactions and addressing the impact and implications of

increased Islamic identity. In context, Islamic self-identity, as related to migrants' pre-

and post-immigration experiences, is pervasive throughout this research study.

Chapter 3

Modern Afghanistan: Politics, Governance, and History

It was during the period 1887 to 1893 that the territory known as Afghanistan was delineated. Throughout this period, Afghanistan and its land served as the ancestral home to several ethnic identities, including the Pashtuns, Hazaras, Tajiks, Uzbeks, and Turkmen tribes. According to Robson, Lipson, Younos, and Mehdi (2002), the modern Afghan boundaries were decided upon not through careful deliberation or even conquest, but through the geographical restrictions that came into being through the interests of foreign powers. These outside entities arbitrarily divided lands that had traditionally been occupied by one of many ethnic tribes or groups (Maley, 2002). The inhabitants of these lands were naturally linked to their areas by language, culture, and heritage. According to Wieland-Karmi (1998), the new land and territories were predominantly the work of outside forces, including British, Indian, and Russian powers. Additionally, the interventions by these outside forces not only shifted land affiliation, but also contributed to social and ethnic unrest among the groups, creating rivalries and inter-group tensions over land and territorial disputes. Tribal experiences and identities are often defined in Afghanistan by land (Maley, 2010). However, such affiliations and tribal-identity connections to the land seemed inconsequential to outside forces. According to Robson et al. (2002), these foreign forces demonstrated neither concern for nor interest in the disparate Afghan identities, be they ethnic, cultural, tribal, or religious.

Thus, the heterogeneity of the population of Afghanistan is so great that neither language nor religion nor any other cultural pattern forms a unifying

national force for all the country's inhabitants. Even Islam, to which around 99% of all Afghans adhere, is not available as a force for national unity because in Afghanistan it takes a multitude of heterogeneous and often contradictory forms. (Wieland-Karmi, 1998, p. 6)

According to Maley (2010), during the nineteenth century, other nations viewed Afghanistan and its heterogeneous population with modest interest. Maley (2010) also notes that the Afghan territory itself was viewed by many as a desolate, unyielding outpost with little potential value, aside from serving as a pathway to more resource rich Central Asian lands and lucrative territorial interests in Southeast Asia. However, that view changed sharply at the turn of the twentieth century, when Britain and Russia found themselves engaged in a strategic game of cat and mouse designed to deny each other regional advantages. According to Wieland-Karmi (1998), these colonial interactions continued to have a local impact and lasting influence on the Afghan people, as their identity became threatened by subjugation, talk of annexation, and national boundary realignment.

This newly arisen national identity was accompanied by a de-Pashtunisation of the national ideology because the majority of the non-Pashtun population now also identified itself with Afghanistan as a country. However, this Afghan identity could hardly be anchored to any common values, traditions or experiences, since any definition of national values inevitably failed against the cultural heterogeneity of Afghanistan and the varying models of ethnic origin in existence. (Glatzer, 2001, p. 383)

What the region and the world began to see was a classic rivalry between the colonial British and Russian powers, and their game was played out across a 250,000-square-kilometer swath of land roughly the size of Texas. This placed the Afghan Islamic territory in a precarious position. Immediately, Afghanistan became a buffer state for foreign powers and their military forces, and the country was not only caught in the middle, but also now part of the rivalry itself (Migdal, 1998). Fortunately, though Afghanistan would suffer by having its ethnic, cultural, and national identities trampled on without consideration, it was spared major violence - at least in the short term. This was in part because neither Britain nor Russia was willing to risk their potential strategic and economic interests by allowing their rivalry to erupt into military conflict (Becker, 1968). As a result, the game continued well into the twentieth century when the boundaries of what is now called Afghanistan had been largely fixed, although not necessarily in a manner satisfactory to the parties involved (Becker, 1968). While the game continued to be played well into the twentieth century, its origins can be traced back to the eighteenth century. During this time, the British Monarchy's drive into Asia had pushed into India, establishing the region as a suitable strong point. To this end, the British established a stronghold in India as part of its colonial expansion (Robson, Lipson, Younos, & Mehdi, 2002). At the same time, Russia's need for warm water ports also saw India as a good gateway to the Indian Ocean (Becker, 1968).

In contrast to the external posturing from the British and Russian forces, power, politics, and eventually identity issues associated with land changes began having an impact on the local Afghan tribes (Hilton, 2001). Inside Afghanistan and in a move to

gain standing and capitalize on the discord between the two foreign powers, local struggles began to take place between the indigenous Afghan tribes of Pahtuns, Hazaras, and Tajiks. Hilton (2001) writes that the outcome of this tension was that families turned against each other, neighbors fought against neighbors, and tribal relationships suffered, as territorial boundary disputes grew increasingly contentious and violent as ancestral lands were redistributed. Maley (1968) and Hilton (2001) speculate that the rise in intertribal conflict coincided with the Russian forces' placement in northern Afghanistan and in a counterbalancing move, the British takeover and occupation in the south. Predictably, both the British and the Russians viewed Afghanistan as viable strategic options for commercial enterprise and shipping (Becker, 1968). However, their competition created additional conflict and tensions that eventually led to a series of skirmishes and battles between Britain and Afghanistan (Robson et al., 2002).

> From Afghanistan's point of view, the most relevant result of the Great Game was the series of wars that the British fought against the Afghan Pashtuns in hopes of keeping the Russians at arm's length. These wars, which were unpopular in Britain and occasioned much controversy among the British troops fighting them, ultimately failed: The Pashtuns retained control over their areas. The first of the wars lasted from 1839 to 1842 and the second from 1878 to 1880. (Robson, Lipson, Younos, & Mehdi, 2002, p. 15)

According to Hilton (2001), the wars between the British and the Afghans resulted in failure for the English because the conflicts were unpopular in England and, as a consequence, lacked all manner of support. But the conflict did have a lasting effect in

Afghanistan, as some southern boundaries were again changed, thereby displacing local tribes. The exception to this was the Pashtun tribal group (Becker, 1968). The Pashtun land boundary settlement was a victory for the tribe and was due in large part to Abdurrahman Khan, a Pashtun leader who studied and understood British military tactics. According to Robson et al. (2002), Khan rose to power in Afghanistan by virtue of his military guile and ability to gather large patches of the countryside, thereby consolidating his Pashtun kingdom. However, his reign came at a cost for many non-Pashtun tribes and groups.

Bracketed by foreign forces to his north and south, Khan resorted to harsh tactics in order to exert control and gain allegiance from the different tribes. Maley (2010) noted that Khan ordered forced displacements of people considered threats to his reign, including groups and tribes deemed enemies to the kingdom. As such, Pashtuns inherited areas previously occupied by non-Pashtun tribes and the old occupants, failing to exhibit proper loyalties, often found themselves forcibly relocated to lands and areas north of the Hindu Kush that were harsh and certainly less hospitable (Robson et al., 2002). Khan's strategies divided the tribes and inflamed intertribal anger and hostility. Khan's tactic also created new boundaries and provinces for governors that currently exist today. The creation of these fixed demarcations that were established in 1893 would come to be known as the Durand Line. According to Edwards (1996), the Durand Line was never intended to serve as a physical barrier to encase Afghanistan from outside threats. Rather, the Durand boundary between Afghanistan and India was developed to denote the conceptualized line of strategic interest between Afghanistan and British India.

In 1891, after much saber rattling, the Russians and the British, with

Abdurrahman as observer, agreed that the Amu Darya would form the

boundary between Russia and the Afghan territory, leaving the fertile

agricultural area between the river and the mountains in Afghan control.

They also decided to include the Wakhan Corridor in Afghan territory, as a

buffer between Russia and British India. (Robson, Lipson, Younos, and

Mehdi, 2002, p. 17)

Afghanistan's Reform and Modernization Movement

The colonial imprint created tensions and conflict among the competing tribes and

groups, and these tensions lasted well into the twentieth century. According to Goodson

(2001), despite these conditions, Afghanistan was characterized by a period of reform and

modernization. And, just as he was in the boundary settlement issue, Abdurrahman Khan

became a central figure in the Afghan reform movement, as well. Khan demonstrated an

interest in technology and, as a result of his exposure to the British forces and their

capabilities on the battlefield, he opened the door to technological advancement in

Afghanistan (Robson et al., 2002). Khan sought to capitalize on the period of relative

calm by introducing technology into the military and elsewhere in society. After his death

in 1919, his grandson, Amanullah, reigned and continued modernization plans while

embracing social and education reforms for women (Edwards, 1996). Equally important

for the people's sense of identity, however, Amanullah grew tired of fighting with the

British and achieved self-control from the monarchy, thereby setting the conditions for an

alignment with the Russians. Relative stability and political calm came across

Afghanistan up to the 1950s, when General Mohammad Daud Khan became Prime

Minister. According to Goodson (2001), he reversed some of the reform initiatives that

were implemented by prior regimes, and on the diplomatic front, one of Khan's first acts

was to stoke the antagonism between the Soviet Union and the United States.

> Daud Khan turned to the Soviet Union for financial and military assistance.
> The Soviets ultimately became Afghanistan's major aid and trade partner, but
> shared the stage with the United States. The competition between the
> superpowers in aid of nonaligned Afghanistan benefited Afghanistan's
> infrastructure. (Robson, Lipson, Younos, & Mehdi, 2002, p. 22)

> From these agreements, Afghanistan would obtain funding for critical

infrastructure, such as dams, roads, railways, and power (Artem, 2001). Also, the outside

investment spurred other transportation means, allowing goods to be moved by barges

and steamboats along Afghanistan's rivers (Edwards, 1996). This era of economic and

political prosperity, however, would soon end, when Daud Khan sought even closer ties

with the Soviet Union, though achieving this goal would take a demonstration of

considerable commitment by Afghan leaders. This demonstration of commitment would

unfold against the ideological backdrop of Afghan politics. According to Artem (2001)

and Robson et al. (2002), Afghan politics became polarized following the National

Assembly's approval of the 1964 Afghan constitution. As a result, more democratically

elected Afghans were swept into office. To counter this democratic wave and move the

country toward Marxist ideology and practice, Daud Khan abolished the constitution

altogether and solidified his power, creating the Republic of Afghanistan (Sinno, 2008).

Next, Daud Khan appointed himself as chairman of the Central Committee of the

Republic and Prime Minister (Sinno, 2008). These moves solidified the relationship with

the Soviets and opened the door to roughly 15 years of Marxism and communist

ideological rule. Throughout this brief period, the Marxist reformers, known as the

People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan, struggled to maintain power and control

across the country. According to Artem (2001), fearful of a Marxist collapse, in 1979

Soviet troops invaded and began a 10-year occupation in Afghanistan, but, the warrior

spirit that embodied the Afghan people's identity emerged as a rebellion and an

insurgency ensued. As the insurgency escalated, the United States entered the campaign

through proxy (Artem, 2001).

Robson et al. (2002) noted that the United States' involvement was intended to

halt the spread of communism in the region. Using Pakistan as a gateway for military

supplies, the United States provided the rebel fighters with weapons and anti-aircraft

missiles. This direct support helped the insurgents and forced the complete withdrawal by

the Soviets in 1988 and 1989 (Oliver, 1990). Also, while the United States provided arms

to the fighters, the resistance movement became a rallying cry for the Muslim world to

unite and join the Afghan rebels against occupying forces and restore the sanctity of

Muslim land. Robson et al. (2002) write that this rallying cry, or jihad (e.g., religious

war), opened Afghanistan to conservative and fundamentalist leaning jihadists, such as

the Taliban. Ahmed (2001) observed that the recruitment also allowed radical jihadists

inside Afghanistan, including Osama Bin Laden. With its geopolitical and strategic aim

of containing the Soviets and communism achieved, the United States left Afghanistan to

its own devices (Goodson, 2001). With a fragile Afghan state and rebels now pursuing their own tribal interests, the Taliban took advantage of the political and power vacuum by seizing power and providing refuge to Bin Laden. The U.S. official 9/11 report states that Bin Laden's subsequent jihad against the United States would ultimately lead to the attacks on September 11, 2001.

The fate of Afghanistan and its regional "buffer state" predicament was not a consequence of internal demands, but rather of external actors. Robson, Lipson, Younos and Mehdi (2002), argue that none of the external actors shared a modicum of concern for the Afghan nation, its identity, or its Muslim heritage. According to Goodson (2001), these actions had both intended and unintended consequences of leaving the nation fractured, weak and with a central government in name only. In many parts of the country, the national government was a ubiquitous presence; in others, it was, for the most part, a passive and distant annoyance to remote tribes, villagers, and their leaders (Edwards, 1996).

Period of Turmoil: 1978 - 1979

Afghan history demonstrates that on the rare occasions during the twentieth century when the state could rally power and quell unrest (e.g., during the Safi Pashtun revolt in 1947); such demonstrations were usually modest in purpose, short-lived, and the exception. The effect of the weakened Afghan government meant that national leaders struggled to build a broad enough coalition to extend governance outside of Kabul and into the vast and contrasting rural areas (Barfield, 2010). Where external threats were concerned, Afghans gained a reputation as being quick to rally around national symbols

of identity, such as the flag and Islam. Barfield (2010), however, notes that this was not the case for internal conflicts, which were often regarded as legitimate struggles. Shahrani and Canfield (1984) observe that these internal struggles served to regulate the social practices that further strengthened ethnic, cultural, and tribal identity, while lessening national state influence. As a result, the national government was unable to extend control and penetrate the rich sense of ethnic and cultural identity and community that thrived amid the country's complex rural life. This failure would prevent an effective national response once tensions and conflicts started to emerge in the late twentieth century (Shahrani & Canfield, 1984).

Some Afghan scholars claim that the regional circumstances and activities of outsiders throughout the twentieth century set the conditions for a political chasm that was culturally and ethnically debilitating (Andrew & Mitrokhim, 2005). These harmful divisions were the direct cause of a government coup, which stands out because the driving force for change came not from the Afghan people themselves, but, rather, as a by-product of conflicts among Kabul's political elite (Andrew & Mitrokhim, 2005). Radical Afghan groups, such as the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA), led the ouster of the Daoud government on 27 April 1978. The PDPA comprised two factions, Khalq ("Masses") and Parcham ("Banner"), both Marxist, who set aside their ideological differences in order to transform Afghanistan according to the Soviet communist model. Some group members not only received training in the Soviet Union, but inside Afghanistan, as the PDPA enjoyed political favor from Russia, along with other tangible support (Andrew & Mitrokhim, 2005).

The nation woke on 28 April 1978 to learn that not only had a new government been installed, but also one espousing a radically different ideology. Early that morning, the Marxists who orchestrated the coup stormed the palace and slaughtered Daoud and members of his family (Arnold, 1983). A small circle of civilian politicians led the new rulers, the PDPA. Among them, Nur Mohammad Taraki was the designated leader of the so-called "Saur Revolution" (inqilab-e saur), which took its name from the Afghan word for the month April, when the coup occurred (Dorronsoro, 2005). The aim of President Taraki and the PDPA was twofold: exert national control from Kabul's capital outward across the rural areas, and to force a unitary national identity. In doing so, they hoped to achieve a fused national identity throughout those areas that had only known tribal law, operated autonomously, and held steadfastly to their own cultures, eclectic languages, and rich ethnic identities (Arnold, 1983). To implement their Marxist ideology, the new government would have to confront ethnic and cultural traditions that navigated lived experiences and defined disparate identities for centuries.

> The government's behavior aroused much opposition that eventually turned into a rebellion in the countryside. Taraki's overzealous efforts to assert the central government's authority in remote areas that had traditionally been autonomous, to redistribute land, and to impose taxes on a society unused to paying those alienated landlords, tribal leaders, and the peasantry. (Destarac & Levant, 1979, pp. 4-5)

During the latter half of the twentieth century, the Soviets viewed Afghanistan as a good strategic platform from which to project power and exercise control over their

Central Asian republics (Arnold, 1983). However, during the 1970s, the Kremlin became increasingly concerned over the heavy-handedness and brutality of Taraki's regime. According to Destarac and Levant (1979), its fears were justified, as rebellion swept the country and the government demonstrated considerable ineptness in putting down the insurgents and controlling the rural tribal areas. The Soviets concluded that Taraki's top-level officials could not find the right balance between moving forward with ideological changes based on Marxist tenets and coalescing the rural tribes behind them. For this failure, they blamed Hafizullah Amin, Taraki's deputy, and pressed for his removal. In the ensuing turmoil, Taraki's presidency was short-lived; a few months after the coup that brought him to power, he was assassinated on the orders of his deputy, Amin, who considered him too sensitive to ethnic and cultural identity issues of the diverse population groups (Destarac & Levant, 1979).

The Soviets were surprised at the assassination of Taraki, but even more surprised to learn that Amin proved no more capable of quelling Muslim insurgency than his predecessor. According to Dorronsoro (2005), their concerns intensified as the strength of the rebellion increased, fearing that if the insurgents succeeded, they would install a conservative Islamic government. The Soviets believed the rebellion could destabilize the entire region, as conservative Muslim governments in the region would likely be anti-Marxist and present a threat to strategic Soviet interests in the nearby Central Asian republics. Another concern was that a new regime in Afghanistan could turn to the United States, posing another, more-global threat to the Soviets (Dorronsoro, 2005). In December 1979, an invasion of Afghanistan by the Soviet military seemed the only

logical response. While Soviet surrogates were continuously frustrated in their attempts

to build a united Afghan identity under Marxism, paradoxically, a united Afghan state did

emerge in the form of widespread resistance to the Soviet occupation (Robson et al.,

2002).

Afghan armed, organized resistance to the foreign invasion came to be known as

the mujahedeen, or practitioners of jihad. The Afghan mujahedeen symbolized the

nation's diverse population; rich ethnic, cultural, and religious identities; and strongly

held Muslim values. In other words, the mujahedeen held the very attributes that the

communists feared, despised, and worked in vain to eradicate (Dorronsoro, 2005).

According to Roy (1990), this diversity would be a positive force in the early years of the

anti-Soviet insurgency. This was because such diversity, by its very nature, was more

difficult to cut off, even if a branch or tribal element became vulnerable to Soviet

influences (Roy, 1990). Dorronsoro (2005) writes that the same diversity would also

inhibit the group and contribute to its weakening or collapse, as ethnic and tribal

differences eventually made any exercise of power at the national level all but

impossible.

> The mujahedeen reflected the complexities of Afghan society – which is
>
> differentiated significantly on ethnic, sectarian, spatial, economic, and
>
> gender lines – and manifested a number of sharp ideological distinctions as
>
> well. They included parties as diverse as the near-Leninist Hezb-e-Islami
>
> ("Party of Islam"), headed by Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, and the moderate
>
> Islamist Jamiat-e-Islami ("Islamic Society") of Burhanuddin Rabbani, as

well as smaller parties led by figures such as Pir Sayid Ahmad Gailani and Sibghatullah Mojadiddi, who reflected Sufi influences and supported the return of Zahir Shah, and Abdul Rab al-Rasoul Sayyaf, who was much more influenced by Wahhabi tendencies originating from the Arabian peninsula. (Roy, 1990, pp. 98-148)

According to Roy (1990), at its height, the mujahedeen was successful in its long-fought campaign to repel the Soviets from Afghanistan (Zahab & Roy, 2004). The United States and Pakistan militarily financially sustained and supported the mujahedeen in their resistance during the 1980s. The United States' geopolitical concern was the spread of communism; keenly aware of the strategic aims of the Soviets in Afghanistan, the United States was unwilling to see the Soviets expand their power and influence further throughout Central Asia (Roy, 1990). In contrast to U.S. strategic concerns, Pakistan demonstrated a more regional focus over territorial and border issues (Zahab & Roy, 2004). These differences meant that while ostensibly partnering on the Russian-Marxist problem in Afghanistan, both the United States and Pakistan sought outcomes based on state-centric interest - these dissimilar interests would have devastating results a decade or so later (Roy, 1990).

The consequences of the war could not have been more detrimental physically and emotionally to Afghan citizens. The Marxist purge and violence resulted in nearly 250 Afghans being killed a day; and according to Khalidi (1991), this rate continued for 10 consecutive years. Moreover, such prolonged violence created an enormous humanitarian crisis with huge social problems, forced migration, dislocations, and

separation of families (Schmeidl & Maley, 2008). Estimates of the Afghan population at the start of the conflict in 1979 approximated 13 million; toward the end, it was roughly 6 million, with Afghans living as refugees in neighboring Pakistan to the east and Iran to the west (Terry, 2002).

> In 1996, after the Pashtun dominated Taliban rose to power, ethnic minorities and opponents of the Taliban suffered persecution and fled to Pakistan. For many Afghan refugees, persecution continued in Pakistan, where they were threatened and in some cases killed. (Robson, Lipson, Younos & Mehdi, 2002, pp. 4-5).

Scholars suggest that it was this series of events and the connection to Pakistan that ultimately served as the flashpoint for the Taliban. The refugee camps became breeding grounds where vulnerable populations were preyed upon by Islamic extremists, who were tolerated and encouraged by elements of the Pakistan government (Terry, 2002). This meant that the Afghan lived experiences and identities, rooted in centuries-long tradition and recently put upon by Marxism, were about to experience another dramatic shift. However, this time the shift was back towards a brand of Islam. Unfortunately, the shift was toward a radical and fundamentalist brand under Taliban rule (Roy, 1990).

The Afghan scholar Orywal (1999) observed that from the twentieth century onward, conflict and war have been the hallmark of the Afghan life experience. He also noted that where the state is concerned, many observers view the country as a nation in name only. Remarkably, even through this series of crises and identity struggles, ethnic

groups not only survived, but, according to Schetter (2002), also emerged from the turmoil with more power and wider national influence. To better understand this phenomenon requires an appreciation of the Afghan experience and placing that experience into context, beginning with postcolonial rule (Schetter, 2002).

According to Robson (2002), at the inception of the Afghan state in the nineteenth century, the British and Russian colonial powers determined that indigenous Pashtun tribes would be best to carry out the day-to-day rule. Their decision was based largely on Afghanistan's heterogeneous tribal history and language patterns that seemed to neatly intersect Pashtun identity patterns (Rubin, 1995). These patterns extended well into other tribal experiences, recognizing Pashtun tribal origins and giving the group prominence in society that resulted in even wider influence among the colonial forces:

> The Pashtun ruling family employed the ethnic patterns that came into existence in order to regulate access to public goods and offices. Pashtuns were privileged in all areas and dominated the military. Tajiks were left with the economic sector and the educational institutions, whereas the Hazaras were marginalized in general. The different treatment of the people went along with the forming of ethnic stereotypes: Pashtuns were considered "bellicose", Tajiks were said to be "thrifty", Uzbeks were known as "brutal," and the Hazaras as "illiterate" and "poor". Even though the politics of the nation state thus created an ethnic hierarchy, there were surprisingly few ethnic conflicts. (Schetter, 2002, pp. 15-29)

Pashtun Ethnic Identity

The Pashtun ethnic identity is characterized by scholars and researchers who view the group's enduring tribal markers as linked to their past. Schetter (2002) maintains that their ethnic category is further identified by tribal elements that, in the past, resulted in intra-ethnic segmentation, as opposed to coalesced political action. As a consequence, ethnic identity, for the majority of Pashtun tribal members, has become synonymous with tribal loyalty and group connectedness (Kakar, 1979). Additionally, in so far as the state and the national political landscape are concerned, the Pashtun narrative appears inconsequential in Afghan modern history (Schetter, 2002). This appears to be the case because until the close of the nineteenth century, the Pashtun people did not seek power, nor did they attribute any great significance to their own ethnic identity or experience outside of the tribe; that is, not until the colonial imprint led to the birth of the Afghan nation state, and the notion of "Pashtuniztan" or Pashtun land began to develop in the twentieth century (Kakar, 1979). In addition, it was during the 1950s that the Pashtun intellectual community and elite visualized the new state's ideological identity and that of their tribal narrative and orthodoxy as one in the same (Kakar, 1979).

Hazara Ethnic Identity

While the Pashtun narrative sheds light on its position as the favored identity resulting from a colonial past, the narrative also indicates that this was not the case for other less fortunate groups. These groups included Afghan tribal ethnicities that were not of Pashtun affiliation, specifically the Hazaras. As a Shiite minority, the Hazaras were among Afghanistan's most-besieged groups (Ferdinand, 1959). However, just like the

Pashtun experience, the Hazara identity formation was shaped in large part by British colonial bias. According to Robson et al. (2002), the notion that this group was descended from the Mongols was concocted and spread, above all, by the British in the nineteenth century. Moreover, in the twentieth century, the same stories were used by the urban Afghan elite, among whom few Hazaras were represented (Bacon, 1951). Subsequently, with the growing influence of the Pashtun and of Marxist ideology, many Hazaras, feeling threatened, fled to Shiite-dominated Iran and other safe havens outside Afghanistan (Schetter, 2002). In exile, their academic elites thrived and they constructed new strategies based on the group's ancestral settlement patterns. Academics concluded that the settlement patterns of their ancestors dated back some 6000 years, making the Hazaras Afghanistan's oldest and original inhabitants, and, arguably more important, not the descendants of latter-day Mongol intruders (Qamberi, 1987). Additionally, Hazara academics laid claim to territory they believed was wrongly taken from their ancestors by the Pashtun, evincing tribal areas and migration patterns as proof (Ferdinand, 1959). These demands served notice of the Hazara elite's willingness to challenge colonial orthodoxy. Through the retelling of their experiences, and re-capturing their own identity through counter-narratives, they gave voice to silenced minorities whose ancestral heritage had been besmirched (Ferdinand, 1959).

Tajik Ethnic Identity

According to (Qamberi, 1987), among the predominant tribes and ethnicities that comprise the rich landscape of the Afghan territory, the Tajiks are arguably the most culturally and socially disadvantaged. Centlivres (1976) supports this belief, noting that

this is because many Afghans consider the word "Tajik" to be an uncomplimentary term, referring to people with neither history nor heritage. Centlivres (1976) goes on to assert that not only are Tajiks viewed as having no picture of their ancestry, but they also cannot be placed in any ethnic category - that is to say, non-Pashtun or non-Hazara. According to Rubin (1995), among Afghans, to be a member of this tribal group without ethnic alignment results in struggles and conflicts, both internally to define one's sense of self, and externally to prove one's Afghan identity. Their struggle to discern a qualifying pedigree means that as "an ethnic category, Tajik refers ultimately to the residual quality of any Sunni Persian-speaking people with no common ancestral mythology. The Tajiks thus face a difficulty in developing an idea of their own spatial and historical origins" (Centlivres, 1976, pp. 8-13).

For Tajiks in postcolonial Afghanistan, ethnic and tribal alignments could mean the difference between merely existing, surviving, or even thriving. This is because power in Afghanistan is based largely on the tribal relationships, ethnic identities, and the influences of both affiliations (Jenkins, 1994). Furthermore, ethnic and identity relationships matter when one seeks influence or support at the local or national level of government. Without these relationships, significant gains cannot be realized, as competition for relatively few state resources is fierce and often handed out on the basis of tribal and ethnic alignments (Jenkins, 1994). According to Schetter (2002), this is an important reason why political actors are genuinely unable to base any demands for influence on Tajik interests. Moreover, the Tajik narrative that exists, as observed by Roy

(1990), was created not by Tajiks themselves, but, rather by the Pashtun orthodoxy, which further weakened the Tajiks' ethnic identity and their sense of self.

That there was relative coexistence among the tribes is striking, given the nature of war and conflict that seemed to engulf the state from the 1960s onward. Jenkins (1994) attributes this willingness to coexist to the political relationship between the state and tribal areas. Jenkins (1994) maintains that this was despite the weakened state of the Tajiks' identity formation during this timeframe. According to Jenkins (1994), ethnic groups remained blurred concepts for the Afghan population and were not respected as frameworks for collective actions. On one hand, the government in Kabul lacked the ability to interfere in rural areas, and it was of little interest or help to tribal inhabitants. Roy (1990) underscored the lack of trust between the two entities, going as far as to suggest that the state was viewed as yet another threat to their cultural and social identities.

What postcolonial conditions in Afghanistan indicate is that ethnicity (or the lack thereof) became the dominant means by which tribes made economic, political, or social gains. Roy (1986) writes that even though the late twentieth century period was dominated by the antagonism between Marxism and Islam, the belligerent parties increasingly enhanced the ethnic momentum to strengthen their positions. Pstrusinska (1990) asserts that ethnicity was exploited as a deliberate strategy to pull the majority Pashtun toward communism, while minimizing and segregating the Tajiks.

As suggested by Pstrusinska (1990), the twentieth century postcolonial period in Afghanistan resulted in tribal and ethnic group identity issues and value changes for

individuals. These same changes led to differences in the way the state was perceived, both inside and outside its borders. These changes in perception grew as the state increasingly lost power and influence over the people and tribes that it governed. Rubin (2002) observes that as Afghanistan's national power eroded, tribal and ethnic groups advanced their local standing, strengthening their power and demonstrating greater autonomy over their affairs.

Moreover, as the Afghan war progressed, the national borders no longer served as effective barriers against political and economic encroachment by regional actors (Rubin, 2002). The result of this decentralized structure meant a weakening of the state, and the creation of dissimilar entities led by warlords with loyalties only to their own power base (Schetter, 2002). These conditions combined to lay the groundwork for the 9/11 attacks, as the ruling Taliban obliquely encouraged or were willfully ignorant of the ongoing operations of Al Qaeda within Afghanistan (Rubin, 2000). There is a view that outside Afghan borders, the convergence of foreign meddling further contributed to the events that resulted in the 9/11 attacks. Whatever the perspective, the reality is that war and conflict, just as they were during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, were again ravishing the nation during the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

Chapter 4

Afghanistan Modern Conflict and War

Current Conflict

History and scholars remind us that the modern territory of Afghanistan has repeatedly served foreign powers' interests due to the country's battleground location (Tomsen, 2011). The literature of writers like Hosseini (2003) demonstrates that in a strategic sense, Afghanistan's gateway location to Central Asia and Southwest Asia confirms its importance to global trade and industrial opportunities that both sustain and fuel great economies. According to Little (2007), after more than three decades of conflict and war, the Afghan people are weary and fatigued. And, their fatigue and weariness are seemingly only further burdened by foreign and national elements. Mueller (1994) argues that regardless of the source of the people's tension, their fatigue is strong and palpable and there is growing demand for a real chance at peace, security and a future for the generations to come.

Where the country and its people are concerned, the almost-continuous devastation caused to the land for more than 30 years is an embodiment of courage and strength, as well as a testimony to an Afghan identity that values perseverance, according to Hosseini (2003). But wars, by their very nature, are often short-lived, partly due to their cost, devastation, and the incredible emotional scarring of those forced to endure them (Mueller, 1994). If this assessment is true, then why has the Afghan conflict existed well beyond 10 years? Have Afghan experiences and national disparate identities associated with multiple ethnicities and tribal cultures somehow contributed to the

conflict? To this end, Tomsen (2011) found that a key reason the war continues to linger

in a society fatigued by conflict is in large part attributed to the competing influences of

Islam, the state, and ethnicity. Tomsen (2011) further suggests that these competing

interests become exacerbated when the self-serving motives of Afghan politicians and

leaders are injected into the discussion. When combined, factors such as ethnic, cultural,

and tribal differences become incubators exciting emotional fervor in order to position

each group closer to narrow aims, while simultaneously creating national divisions and

cultural fault lines. Edwards (1996) maintains that these faults cause tensions that make it

all but impossible for a central governing authority to extend national reach and authority

across Afghanistan.

> Tomsen (2011) stated the following:
>
> They have had a centrifugal effect on Afghanistan's political community
>
> through their competing loyalties. Loyalties which in turn have been
>
> exploited by domestic actors seeking to bolster their claims to power; as
>
> well as external actors seeking to achieve their own ends in the space
>
> occupied by Afghanistan. (p. 63)

Despite the political tension, researchers and close observers of Afghanistan's

body politics viewed the fatigue of war phenomenon to be prominent and pervasive in the

lived experiences of everyday citizens (Edwards, 1996). This pervasiveness was thought

to be sufficient enough to mobilize a war-weary public into encouraging its leaders at all

levels to cease conflict quickly and end the Afghan war. Thus, in consideration of why

the war has lasted so long, politics and fragmented populations emerge as forceful

contributors. But while these factors speak loudly, they appear to only address the internal problems associated with the lingering conflict. Walt (1987), in an assessment of external reasons for why some wars are lengthy, posited that the people who enter you into the war are not necessarily the best ones to get you out. While referring predominantly to individual actors in the run up to 19th century military conflicts, Walt's (1987) premise does not exclude the military enterprise among the entities that may not be a best fit for ending the war. Walt (1987) further comments that military power may be of least utility in peace and re-construction efforts and, in fact, may contribute to more hostilities in a land so harshly and repeatedly ravaged by long periods of war and conflict.

The military application of power and the theoretical model that frames war and combat are distinct and discernible attributes in certain wartime environments. According to Galula (2005), this military model holds up well when contrasts are made between conventional - or symmetric - and unconventional - or asymmetric - conditions. Military tacticians observe that conventional war means warfare through the employment of heavy weaponry, such as tanks and artillery that are arrayed between opposing forces (DoD, 2001). Typically, such systems are deployed across vast open spaces–unlike the rugged, rolling terrain of Afghanistan (Galula, 2005). In the theoretical model, asymmetric warfare is commonly referred to as low-intensity combat, or, in the current Afghanistan war vernacular, COIN. The Department of Defense is thorough in its description and definition of conventional warfare, calling attention to the external power that undergirds the event:

A broad spectrum of military and paramilitary operations, normally of long

duration, predominately conducted by indigenous or surrogate forces who are

organized, trained, equipped, supported and directed in varying degrees by an

external source. It includes guerrilla warfare, and other direct offensive, low

visibility, covert, or clandestine operations, as well as the indirect subversion,

sabotage, intelligence activities and evasion and escape. (DoD, 2001, p. 556)

The two warfare models are distinctly separate, heterogeneous, and, at the same

time, unique in their employment of warfare strategies relative to the conditions and

surroundings. Put differently, the two theories of war (i.e., conventional and

counterinsurgency) are neither complementary to each other, nor are they intended to be

applied in parallel or in a sequential fashion (Kilcullen, 2009). Unfortunately, such

violations of the tenets of employment appear to be precisely what unfolded in

Afghanistan.

The war in Afghanistan has been likened by some critiques of the U.S.

administration as a ship without a rudder, a reference to the early failure to produce a

clear and coherent military strategy for the campaign. From the beginning of the war, the

United States and its coalition partners struggled to gain traction for a number of reasons

(Galula, 2005). Chief among these was a lack of understanding, appreciation, and

awareness of the country's conditions, people, culture, ethnic make-up, and identity.

The invasion of Afghanistan utilized the modern military of the U.S., and its

success appeared to be quick and easy. However, military and political

leaders were naive to think Afghanistan could be easily occupied and

secured. Not consulting history was the first mistake made by the Bush

administration in its reaction to 9-11 and the lack of understanding that

permeated decision makers would come to haunt the US strategy for years

to come. More tact and study, however late, reveals that Afghanistan is

embroiled in an ethnic struggle and any attempt to reconcile the country

with its own internal problems must address this. (Kilcullen, 2010, p. 203)

Townsend (2011) added to this discourse, noting that no serious review of the

country's condition was made prior to the invasion and, as a result, the United States

found itself in one of the most costly military engagements in its history. After

concluding that the initial effort to wage a conventional war was not working and was

likely to result in failure, changes to the U.S. military strategy were made in 2009, several

years into the war. Peek (2014) observed in a recent newspaper article that in terms of the

endgame, Afghanistan was always a riskier war than Iraq. Both have been routinely

compared to Vietnam because of the counterinsurgency elements of conflicts, the

difficult terrain, and perhaps some national psychological masochism (Peek, 2014). The

change in tactics to counterinsurgency operations meant a commitment by the United

States to tailoring a response to the uniqueness of Afghanistan that was far removed from

the edicts of conventional warfare.

Foreign meddling in the affairs of Afghanistan, and its adverse consequences for

the lives of the Afghan people themselves, has made many of them skeptical and, in some

instances, fearful of outsiders (Little, 2007). This mix of skepticism and fear of outsiders

is buttressed by a recent history that has seen the country and its citizens used as pawns

during much of the last century by external power brokers (Robson, Lipson, Younos, & Mehdi, 2002). These outside forces have superimposed Afghanistan onto their own chessboard and ruthlessly and persistently jockeyed back and forth for their own national interests (Little, 2007). These actions have had a disruptive consequence on the Afghan regional governments that are predominantly concerned with their own self-preservation, according to Peek (2014). Such current realities present a new dilemma and suggest that a multidimensional response is required in the country. If the promise of Afghanistan is to be realized, such a response must incorporate ethnicity, cultural differences among tribes, religious identity issues, geography, and regional politics (Robson et al., 2002).

This new strategic model forced the U.S. military and its coalition partners in Afghanistan to take into account factors such as history, culture, ethnicity, religion, identity, and the region (Kilcullen, 2009). However, this radical transition from conventional to counterinsurgency tactics requires a different set of learned skills, and, as a classroom environment, Afghanistan has proved unforgiving (Little, 2007). To add to these challenges, all too often political strategy from Washington is tactically carried out in Afghanistan by a force trained to respond instinctively to attacks, violence, and mayhem, and with far less training on human engagement and dialog (Kilcullen, 2009). A good case study and example of the problems that arise when a combat-trained force assumes a modified conflict resolution role is shown in the National Geographic documentary, *Restrepo* (2010).

Restrepo (2010) shows how COIN can go wrong on many levels. During the making of the documentary, an embedded film crew and journalist traveled with an

American army platoon from the 173rd Brigade Combat Team. The platoon was

positioned in the Korengal Valley, in the Kunar province of northeastern Afghanistan,

which straddles an insurgent rich area along its border with Pakistan (Restrepo

Documentary, 2010). The platoon's mission was to identify the insurgents who were

using the Kunar area as a gateway from which to launch attacks inside Afghanistan

(Resterpo, 2010). As is tribal and village custom in rural Afghanistan, local populations

were linked together, not only by their community, but also through familial relationships

(Robson et al., 2002). And, according to the *Restrepo* documentary (2010), often the

villages were entirely dependent on single-income sources to meet the needs of large

families and tribal communities. In the case of Korengal, the males have traditionally

made a living from lumber and timber trading (Kilcullen, 2009).

　　Restrepo (2010) shows how the platoon's actions disrupted timber trading

operations, cutting off the meager supply of dollars that sustained families and villages.

This outcome, coupled with a failed understanding of the culture, people, tribal

relationships, and engagement dynamics, created a hostile environment on both sides

(Kilcullen, 2009). The result was a unit that was unable to adjust to the principles guiding

the COIN model – dialog, engagement, and listening (Beebe & Kaldor, 2010). Tribal

members responded with resistant tactics that caused more military and civilian deaths.

According to the *Restrepo* documentary (2010), the effects on the ground in Kunar gave

either direct or indirect encouragement to the insurgents as coalition outreach efforts

became less effective. The conditions on the ground and failed interactions created a

divide, pitting the soldiers of the 173rd Brigade Combat Team and local villages against

each other. The documentary (2010) suggests that as a COIN model, Restrepo was

completely counterproductive. Commenting on the failed COIN actions by the coalition

forces in the region, General McChrystal, former commander of U.S. forces in

Afghanistan wondered of the Korengal fighters: if left alone, would they ever come out

of there to fight. One gets the sense that you create a lot of opposition through operations.

To work effectively, COIN demands close coordination and collaboration with

and among many agencies that can provide needed resources and support where and

when needed. And, often the nature of support is organic to civil organizations as

opposed to military fighting structures (Beebe & Kaldor, 2010). The case of Restrepo

(2010) demonstrates that a combat military unit was asked to straddle the lines between

tactical intelligence gathering (i.e., a combat military role and function), conflict

resolution and, connecting with the local civilian populace by providing road projects,

medical and school supplies, and other community services. According to the *Restrepo*

documentary (2010), the results were disastrous, as the unit's civil engagement training

was inadequate and the military and civil mission tasks they attempted to complete at

times seemed to have conflicting purposes. What this suggests about Afghanistan, in

particular, and COIN, in a broader sense, is that successful human engagement is

absolutely essential, and often the level of engagement is at the lowest possible levels of

tribal, village, and district interactions. Galula (2005) maintains that in this instance,

successful interaction is not necessarily dependent on a weapon. Rather, victory is

achieved through skillful human engagement, dialog, trust, and an understanding of what

types of responses best satisfy human needs. None of these aims are achievable under the

COIN theoretical model without knowledge of the disparate actors involved (Kilcullen,

2009). In Afghanistan, as the literature suggests, the dynamic is complex and presents a

unique set of challenges.

In order to achieve the desired aims in a COIN environment, one must

understand the theoretical model that underpins the principle. Because of the number of

competing forces, the varying dynamics that contribute to or impede COIN outcomes

must be understood (Kilcullen, 2010). In Afghanistan, these outcomes are influenced by

three elements, each of which vies for popular support. As the below COIN model (see

Figure 3) shows, these elements include government forces, insurgent elements, and

external actors.

Figure 3. Counterinsurgency model. Adopted from Seth Jones's report
Counterinsurgency in Afghanistan (2008).

Government Forces

Government forces are vital to COIN efforts, as these elements include indigenous government actors such as the police, military, and specialized security elements (Kilcullen, 2010). Collectively, the government forces not only fight against the insurgents, but they also help the national forces extend central authority by meeting the human needs of the people. According to Fearson and Laitin (2004), in Afghanistan, such needs translate to healthcare, power, transportation infrastructure, and other basic services. However, beyond extending human services and the reach of the national government, these forces are important to suppressing the insurgents' counteractions because they are the legitimate representatives of the people (Hironaka, 1990). In a post-colonial period and an environment with visceral sentiment against foreign occupation, the Afghan government's indigenous forces are the only acceptable option when it comes to stopping the insurgent threat (Fearson & Laitin, 2003). COIN theorists such as Kaufmann (2005) observe that the Afghan government itself will play an important role in the outcome, intimating that the more competent the government is in providing services to its population, the greater its ability to counter support for the insurgents and defeat them.

Independent qualitative research by the Rand Corporation (2008) underscores the fact that poor governance is far more likely to contribute to insurgent wins. The same research reveals that strong governance (e.g., extending human needs services and ensuring public safety) is far more likely to result in victory against the insurgents. The same Rand Corporation analysis also indicates that a government's popularity is

generally measured by two factors: first, its ability to extend means, services, and support

to the people - meeting their Maslovian human needs; and second, the extent to which it

is viewed as the legitimate caretaker of the people's scarce resources. Figure 4 (below)

shows the relationship between government popularity and success against insurgencies.
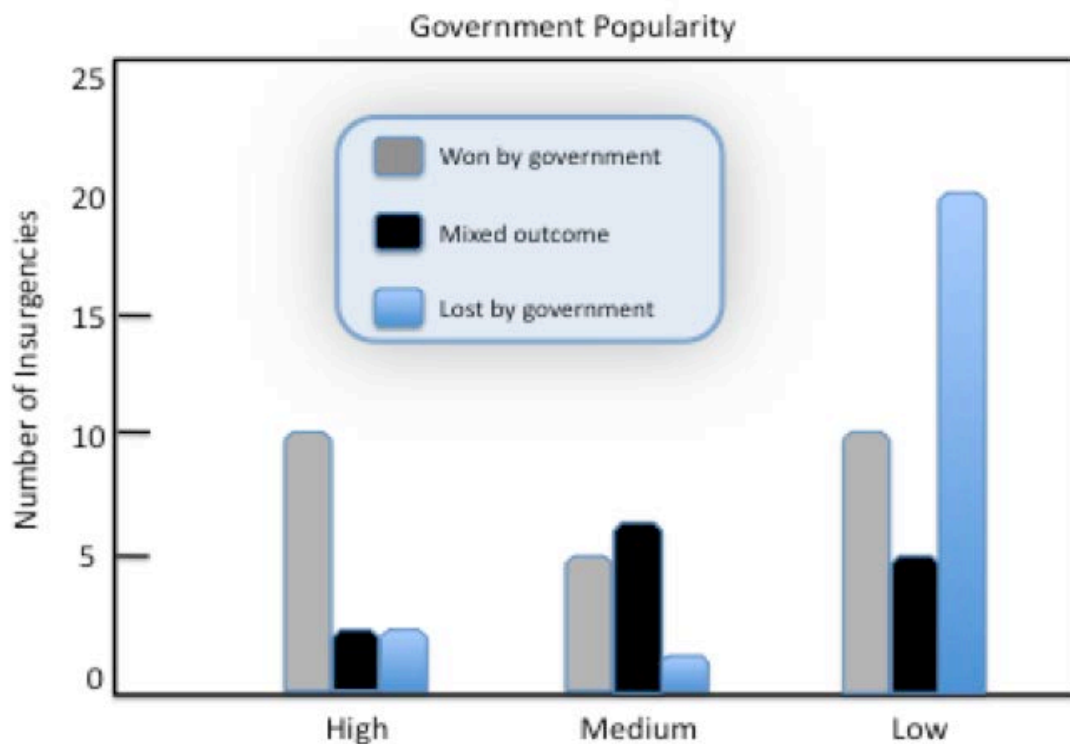
Figure 4. Government popularity and success. Adopted from Seth Jones's report
Counterinsurgency in Afghanistan (2008).

Insurgent Elements

The competition for hearts, minds, and support of the indigenous population does

not end with the government stakeholders. Kitson (1971) writes that the ability of the

insurgents to gain popular support is directly proportionate to their success and gains.

Such support translates into wins over government forces in over half the cases studied

since the Second World War (Galula, 2005). The same report indicates that those

insurgents with support from non-state actors lost nearly 70% of the time, and those

relying on their own resources won less than 20% of the conflicts. In Afghanistan,

support for the insurgents appears to come from non-state foreign governments and

Afghan or state groups that offer money, training, logistics, and sanctuary (Byman,

2005).

> The rise of a transnational jihadist network has created particularly acute
>
> challenges as organizations such as al Qaeda tap into local groups. These
>
> challenges include the flow of tactics, weapons, fighters, ideology,
>
> organization, and leadership into and among local insurgencies; the
>
> increased resort to suicide operations; and the pivotal role of religious
>
> figures in either fanning or opposing violence. (Byman, 2005, p. 53)

Given the numerical advantage enjoyed by the Afghan governmental forces,

recruits join the insurgency mainly for ideological reasons (Rubin, 2002). However, their

ability to present a serious threat to the government is in large measure due to the

government's own weakness. According to Byman (2005), the government's weakness

and inability to effectively extend the reach and authority of the national body has

resulted in some gains by the insurgents. Such gains result in continued support to the

insurgency by both state and non-state actors (Fearon & Laitin, 2004).

External Groups

The third component of the insurgency model is external groups. Indigenous

forces must develop the capacity to win against the insurgents for a variety of reasons.

According to Fearon and Laitin (2003), while external forces can contribute to shifting the conflict in favor of either the insurgents or the government, they are rarely able to win the insurgency for either side. This is because the legitimacy of the government is at risk if it is seen as unable or unwilling to fight the insurgents, relying instead on outside forces and groups. This is an important distinction on a number of levels, and one of the more important points to consider is Afghans' hostility to foreign occupation, given their painful and relatively recent post-colonial experiences. Also, given the duration of many insurgencies, the national government is unlikely to receive external support for the duration of the conflict (Little, 2007). Both issues suggest that the Afghan government's ability to win the campaign against the insurgents will be difficult.

> An analysis of all insurgencies since 1945 shows that successful counterinsurgency campaigns last for an average of 14 years, and unsuccessful ones last for an average of 11 years. Many also end in a draw, with neither side winning. Insurgencies can also have long tails: Approximately 25 percent of insurgencies won by the government and 11 percent won by insurgents last more than 20 years. Since indigenous forces eventually have to win the war on their own, they must develop the capacity to do so. (Rubin, 2002, p. 81)

Throughout the Afghanistan counterinsurgency conflict, the focus of the external groups (i.e., United States and the International Security Assistance Forces ISAF) has been on strengthening the capacity of the indigenous Afghan security forces (Fearson & Laitin, 2003). As such, the strategy as of 2013 has been to transfer the lead in the COIN

fight to Afghan forces as soon as possible. According to Zisk (2004), after 11 years of conflict, the indigenous force must be seen by the Afghan people as the de facto COIN force of choice. Otherwise, the risk of delegitimizing these forces and the national government is unacceptably high (Roy, 1990).

Chapter 5

Theory

The literature, research, and participant narratives contained in and cited by this study suggest that the Afghan lived experience and identity formations at pre- and post-immigration stages are multifaceted and shaped by many differences. According to Hall (1990), these differences are the product of occurrences, conditions, and actions that have emerged over time and have been facilitated predominantly by colonial forces. The analysis of these events and their impact on the subject participant group is illuminated and understood when explored in the context of three theoretical models: postcolonial theory, international relations (or Islamic theory), and reactive theory.

Postcolonial theory provides a foundation from which to study and understand the layered individual and national identity that is part of the Afghan Muslim interpreter and translator immigrant narrative. Given the varied responses that have been observed following the conflict ridden period that proceeded the postcolonial era, the Afghan nation's response was to shift towards its Islamic roots away from the political, economic, and social ills presented by Westerners (Reyes, 2009). Moreover, Reyes (2009) went even further as to characterize the resulting violence by native individuals as a direct consequence of colonial actions. Additionally, other social scholars like Fanon (2004) focus on the native Afghan response as reactive in nature to the colonial oppression and experienced marginalization.

To fully understand the depth and scope of the colonial influence on the subject population, this researcher focused on the international relations theoretical component.

To that end, attention was given to the Islamic theory model under the much broader international relations theory design. In order to better understand the Islamic model as applied to the Afghan sense of self and identity, Proctor (1966) maintained that what is needed is to understand the Islamic world on its own term's vice through Western lens. And, researchers like Mohammed Abo-Kazleh (2006) suggest that the utility of arguing for Islamism in the sub-context of international relations theory is that it offers a clear view through which to deconstruct the identities, roles, effects, and behaviors of those involved in the national, regional, and global conflict. Nevertheless, it is not enough to view pre-immigration or Islamism in the context of international relations if the aim is to better understand lived experiences and identity formations for the subject group. To achieve this end, the comprehensive view entails post immigration experiences as well.

To deconstruct post-immigration experiences and identity issues, this research applies the reactive theory model. Achieving a comprehensive understanding of immigrant experiences involves learning how immigrant groups mobilize in an effort to reconstitute broken boundaries and restore or build social standing as minorities. This is because the role of mobilization response gives meaning to the minority group's own distinctive identity, ethnicity, culture, and heritage. Additionally, reactive theory helps unearth identity attributes with higher internalized value, as compared to those that are less important to assimilation or native relatedness. Figure 5 that follows provides a graphic depiction of Afghanistan's modern history, timelines, and themes by period. It also shows how this information correlates to postcolonial theory, international relations,

Islamic theory, and reactive theory models in order to provide the reader with an

improved understanding of the native Afghan and country narrative.

Figure 5. Modern Afghanistan History and Timeline

Historical timeline of Afghanistan, PBS News Hour, May 2011, cited from

http://www.pbs.org/newshour/updates/asia-jan-june11-timeline-afghanistan/

Post-Colonial Theory

According to Jamal (2008), postcolonial theory has provided a fertile ground for

the emergence of theories of identity that are relevant to migrants who have moved to

new regions and countries as part of the increasingly global diasporas and population

flow. In examining the modern history of Afghanistan, its culture and its narrative,

postcolonial theory stands out as a prominent instrument for critical inquiry into the

identity differences among Afghan immigrant citizens. Such differences, as observed by

Hall (1990), are the result of factors and actions that have occurred over time, have been formed and shaped by events, or have been influenced by non-indigenous elements. Before going forward, it is useful to address colonial influences and their impact on individual and national responses.

The colonial impact on individuals, families and tribes in Afghanistan is significant, deeply rooted, and the outcomes are manifested in a variety of ways. According to Fannon (2004), a residual effect of colonial occupation is repression, marginalization, emotional consequences, and psychological consequences. Furthermore, the outcome of these conditions is often violence.

> The colonizer is constantly inflicting violence upon the colonized, Fanon argued - not only is colonization itself an act of violence, but for the colonizer to maintain his power over natives, he must constantly assert it through violent acts - not only physical, but through the infliction of the neuroses which Fanon also considered an act of violence. (McCoy, 2011, p. 6)

In a conflict rich environment such as Afghanistan, the violence component is further complicated by the religious undertones that frame the conflict and war. Thinkers in this field, such as Zulfiqar (2009), observe that violent rebellion connects Muslims in and out of Afghanistan with the struggle undertaken by the Islamic community. This community in Afghanistan seeks to rid itself of the constraints of colonial oppression, but it also provides meaning and purpose where none previously existed.

In a context of oppression like that of Algeria, for the colonized, living does

not mean embodying a set of values, does not mean integrating oneself into

the coherent, constructive development of a world. To live simply means not

to die. (Fanon, 2004, p. 232)

Some scholars like Fanon (2004) and Reyes (2009) focus on the native response

as reactive in nature to the colonial oppression and marginalization being experienced.

These scholars view the resulting violence by native individuals as a direct consequence

of colonial actions. Exploring Fanon's (2004) and Reyes' (2009) work, this study

identifies the violence by the rebel groups in Afghanistan (e.g., Mujahedeen, Northern

Alliance, and Al Qaeda) as similarly reflective of a native people countering the forced

inferiority complexes, emotional burdens, and physical harm done to them. Just as in

Fanon's (2004) and Reyes' (2009) models, the anti-colonial Islamic forces in Afghanistan

respond to the occupation and repression through violence.

It is the violence of the colonizer that has created the colonized," explains

Alvaro Andrés Reyes in his paper, "Can't Go Home Again." "It is through

their 'bayonets' and 'cannon fire' that they have destroyed the very the

social fabric of native life, i.e. economy, lifestyle, and modes of dress. … If

the colonists can say that the native is an animal it is because their violence

has reduced him to an animal-like existence. (Reyes, 2009, p. 108)

This suggests that there are both individual and national considerations to

colonialism in the Afghanistan conflict. Reyes (2009) observes that colonialism as a

response engenders life-changing reactions in many. And, such changes are evident in

individuals who respond to the oppressive colonial dictates as opposed to suffer feelings

of inferiority, despair, and weakness. Fanon's (2004) work informs this researcher that

the Islamic responders to the occupiers in Afghanistan are likely to feel emboldened with

each response and victory against the occupiers, with each victory building upon the

other, creating a sense of empowerment and contribution among those who previously

felt helplessness. In this instance, the occupied responder achieves his own mental,

physical, and emotional well-being. Fanon (2004) believes that this is due to the

colonized re-directing and coalescing his feelings of anger and dissatisfaction into a

single cohesive force. Further, Fanon (2004) states that this force is an anti-colonial

movement, wherein the colonizers are now openly incriminated as the source of all

grievances, whose elimination coincides with the reparation of those grievances. This

argues that the conflict in Afghanistan, like regions in Africa, Asia and the Middle East,

is undergird by the belief that the source of strife and conflict (e.g., the colonial

occupation) serves the individual's wellness, spirit, and sense of self by re-claiming

identity through power and through rallying the oppressed under a single identifiable

cause (Zulfiqar, 2009).

A sense of wellness also characterizes the national response to colonialism, but in

a uniquely different manner, according to Sekyi-Otu (1996). As a consequence of the

struggle against colonial oppression, violence, and marginalization, nations or groups

find unity and collective purpose in their counter actions. Their group or national struggle

is strengthened by their singular cause. The thought of being "in the struggle together"

means that no one individual can claim success (Sekyi-Out, 1996). Instead, that claim and

the national benefits that emerge belong to everyone equally who contributed to the counter action. In Afghanistan, whether the group was the nationalistic forces fighting the British colonial occupation during the nineteenth century or Mujahedeen fighting the Russians invaders during the twentieth century, both groups benefited (Zulfiqar, 2009). Zulfiqar (2009) further suggests that such benefits often extended to tribes, clans, or groups. These benefits included increased power, land, and political standing among other factors as a result of their fight to restore the integrity of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. Also, Zulfiqar (2009) suggests that the national response against colonialism demonstrates that an anti-colonial frame of mind exists among Islamic Afghan militants. Additionally, this response extends itself to violence against other Westerners (e.g., military coalition) who the militants view as working to impose their own economic, cultural, or political will over Afghan-Islamic customs and traditions (McCoy, 2011, p. 9).

The literature reveals that the anti-colonial violence theoretical model is not without criticism. Detractors like Frazer and Hutchings (2008), while acknowledging that violence is sometimes justified, challenged the theory as an inefficient and often an impractical instrument of change. This is because such responses to violence are frequently met with more intense levels of violence. These violent cycles feed on themselves with reactions that frequently spiral out of one's localized control. Frazer and Hutchings (2008) suggested that those who cling to the view of meeting colonial violence and oppression with counter violence fail to understand that the modern world is intertwined and connected. This means that regional violence can easily engulf multiple

nation states in affected areas and potentially spark unimagined and unintended outcomes. As such, using violence as a weapon against colonization or political oppression has inherently unpredictable and catastrophic risks not only the oppressed, but for others who may not be directly involved in the conflict (Frazer & Hutchings, 2008).

Post colonialism theory is, therefore, useful in the study of modern Afghanistan's identity developments. This is because researchers and readers who apply the theory are better able to understand the shifting dynamics and the effects these developments have had on the Afghan people and tribal identities in a broad sense and gain insight into the identity shifts observed in the Afghans' sense of self. Discussions of postcolonial theory that are relevant to immigrant experiences suggest new approaches to understanding group identity, according to Bhabha (1994). These approaches move away from previous conceptions of identity based on essentialist categories of ethnicity, race, or nationalism, while gravitating to a more fluid and dynamic condition state (Gilroy, 1997; Hall, 1990).

The interpretation of pre-immigration and post-immigration life experiences underscore differences and tensions as inter- and intra-conflicts in Afghan Muslim male immigrants move to the West (Centlivres, 1976; Rubin, 1995; Jenkins, 1994). Some researchers, such as Brah (1996), link the existence of these tensions and their current manifestations to twentieth century diasporas and Afghan colonial experiences. Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin (1998) noted that the fact and history of colonization in Afghanistan, particularly in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, resulted in millions of people who were forcibly displaced from their homes and country. As a consequence of colonial interactions, Afghan refugees moved throughout the South Asian region and to the West.

Brah (1996) suggested that the concept of the diasporas is useful as "an interpretive frame

for analyzing the economic, political, and cultural modalities of historically specific

forms of migrancy" (p. 16), and it can be drawn upon to explore ideas of subjectivity and

identity. Such frameworks indicate that as a means to mitigate struggles and tensions

arising from identity conflicts, Afghan Muslim immigrants develop hybrid identities that

are pulled from a wide spectrum of identity categories (Lugones, 2003). Such efforts to

create a composite or hybrid identity gives this researcher a new way to conceptualize

how Afghan Muslim males negotiate their identity differences between their pre-

immigration and post-immigration sense of self. Lugones reviewed this re-negotiated self

or hybrid as a mechanism by which these immigrants navigate the differences and in so

doing "re-imagine themselves in their new landscapes" (2003, p. 23).

Diasporas

A product of colonial interaction in Afghanistan during the late nineteenth

century and throughout the twentieth century was the marginalization, oppression, and

mass displacement of Afghan individuals. What stands out, however, is the fact that

many of these displacements involved Afghan citizens who were not of Pashtun heritage

or origin (Hosseini, 2003). Such forced re-settlements underpin the diasporas

phenomenon, especially as it relates to the effects of war and conflict. According to Brah

(1996), the term diaspora originates from the Greek word meaning to scatter - evoking

notions of movements and journeys. In the social science paradigm and accompanied

discussions of diversity, the term diasporas is a relatively new concept. According to

Cohen (1997), its usage and purpose has evolved over the years to become consistently

associated with the experiences of displacement, dispersal, and migrancy. The discerning

difference is that the contemporary term diasporas is no longer on the peripheral in

debated regarding human migration and mobility.

> The diasporic condition has increased dramatically, indicating not only a
>
> widespread and growing interest in phenomena associated with it, but also the
>
> realization of the potential of the concept to serve as a theoretical tool for the
>
> advancement of qualitatively different perspectives and outlooks in the study of
>
> human migration. (Clifford, 1997, p. 225)

The diasporas phenomenon becomes less foreboding and complicated if evaluated

in the context of identity and ethnicity. Safran (1991) acknowledges that diasporic

communities not only form a collective identity in the place of settlement or with their

homelands, but also maintain a shared identity with members of the same ethnic

communities in other countries. And, it is this transnational character of a globalized

relationship undergird by an interconnectedness that distinguishes the disasporic narrative

and perspective from that of the refugee debate and discussion. Also, in terms of linking

the phenomena to communities or countries, Safran (1991) suggested that the concept of

diaspora hold other characteristics as well. These include a view that they will someday

return home and should maintain support for their native homeland through individual or

collective conscience efforts. Safran (1991) argues that this communal consciousness

offers solidarity and thereby further enables continued efforts and activities.

In contrast, to diasporas, the comingled term refugee has different origins and

contemporary connotations (Koser and Pinkerton, 2002). In terms of refugee, the United

Nations High Commission for Refugees (2012) maintains that the term applies to any

person possessing a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion,

nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion, is outside the

country of his nationality, and is unable to or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail

himself of the protection of that country shall be considered a refugee.

According to Koser and Pinkerton (2002), the conventional notion of a refugee is

viewed as some ethnic, community or national group of individuals being randomly

dispersed and displaced across a territory. Because these groups are by definition

transient, the concept of belonging, or identifying with a home or place is problematic.

For the current research, the more contemporary term "diasporas" is applied and relevant

throughout this study because of the decisive shift from mobility, transient, and displaced

language that both diasporas and refugee terms share. This is in contrast to more focused

attention in this study that explores connections to others through shared ethnicity,

religion, or heritage (Tomlinson, 1999, p. 13).

In addition, what makes the phenomenon of diasporas an intriguing sub-text to the

Afghan lived experience story is the post-colonial context that served as the undergirding

framework for displacement. These same colonial consequences are viewed as directly

responsible for the shifts in identity negotiation for the affected Muslim population.

The journeys that bring migrants to a new land are not necessarily single

journeys, but possibly a series of journeys spread out over time and through

several regions before ending at a particular destination. One of the defining

characteristics of a diaspora is a community that 'maintains a memory,

vision or myth of the homeland'. (Safran, 1991, p. 312)

This may suggest recognition by the immigrant journeyman that despite the

emotional pain, a shift of one's identity toward another definition is an essential re-

negotiation condition of "self-being." Clifford (1994) argued that migrants often mourn

the loss of their identities as they look to their past and to their new homelands. Scholars

of Islam and Muslim experiences, like Rushdie (1991), observed that such reflection

helps the individual rationalize their new-conflicted being. Also, it appears that this new

or re-negotiated being is more coherent, acceptable, and infused with familiar ethnic,

cultural, and national symbols that offer emotional sanctuary and a sense of community

belonging. In this way, the Afghan pre-immigration identity and post-immigration

identity, while still at odds, carry less emotional impact and tension in the new cultural

environment or Western location (Rushdie, 1991). Regardless of the differences between

one's pre-immigration and post-immigration identities, many immigrants successfully

navigate between their native homeland identity and that of their newly adopted settings.

Hall (1996b) stated that immigrants must learn to negotiate these differences in order to

resolve their inner conflicts and socially assimilate, a process he referred to a

"translation":

This [translation] describes those identity formations which cut across and

intersect natural frontiers, and which are composed of people who have been

dispersed forever from their homeland. They are obliged to come to terms

with the new cultures they inhabit, without simply assimilating to them and

losing their identities completely. They bear upon them the traces of the

particular cultures, traditions, languages, and histories by which they were

shaped. The difference is that they are not and will never be unified in the

old sense; because they are irrevocably the product of several interlocking

histories and cultures, belong at one and the same time to several homes -

and to no one particular home. (Hall, 1996b, p. 629)

What this says is that the Afghan Muslim immigrants to the West (i.e., United

States) will carry forth a reality that is fused by two distinct world communities. Scholars

such as Brah (1996) and Hall (1990) expanded on these community distinctions, noting

that a community composed of an original, homogenous, or fixed identity, yet

characterized by plurality, fluidity, and change, should be expected in the minds of the

Muslim immigrant to the West. This further suggests that actual displacement across

physical time and space boundaries from Eastern Islamic society to a Western democratic

land will likely be in a state of constant movement and alteration. To this end, applying

the postcolonial theoretical model to identity formation in the participant group must take

into account the re-negotiated identity(s) with regard to the adopted homeland, according

to Brah (1996). That is, as long as the diasporas' phenomenon is also considered in a

context that avoids Afghan Muslim male identity definitions based solely on ethnicity or

culture. This is because such definitions are an indispensable focus of constructing the

subject's sense of self (Clifford, 1994).

What unifies the Afghan postcolonial lived experiences and sense of self is the

notion that human identity changes and their consequences resulted from colonization

and immigration efforts that occurred during the latter nineteenth century and throughout the twentieth century. These efforts, as noted by Moore-Gilbert (1997), emphasized plurality, differentiation, and hybrid-related compositions that were constructed through historical processes involving physical space, time, and social interactions. Hall (1996b) states that the evolving identity theoretical concepts are best understood through the prism of the preceding identity theories, specifically the enlightenment concept, the sociological concept, and the post-modern concept.

The key concept of enlightenment focuses on the Afghan individual, as opposed to the family or tribal group. However, while individualistic in origin, it establishes a foundation whose features and appearances give rise to the tribal group's characteristics. According to Moore-Gilbert (1997), the individualist view, in which the subject is rational and autonomous, was replaced by the view of the individual as being sociologically constructed in relation to others and through the culture and context of everyday life. What this appears to say about the Afghan experience is that identity, while a central core of the individual, is negotiated through their disparate social surroundings. Mercer (1990) argued that this phenomenon further explains how a diverse society created, to some extent, through colonial imprints, underpins the fragmented nature of identities. These fragmented identities are indistinguishable in a post-modern context that is dynamic, shifting, and not fixed, according to Hall (1996b). Mercer's research remind this researcher that, "identity only becomes an issue when it is in crisis, when something assumed to be fixed, coherent and stable, is displaced by the experience of doubt and uncertainty" (1990, p. 43). In addition,

A stable and coherent identity may be part of a narrative we hold on to for a

sense of security, but from a post-modern view, identity is conceptualized as

being in constant flux – 'a constructed process rather than a given essence'.

(Loomba, 2005, p. 148)

What the claims from scholars such as Moore-Gilbert (1997) and Mercer (1990)

suggest is that Afghan identity is anything but singular and unitary. Hall (1996a) went

even further with his analysis to propose that the best way to conceptualize Afghan

postcolonial identity is to view it uniquely as multiple and fragmented. Afghan identities

are conditions of the environment and the context in which they evolve is constantly

interacting and undergoing change.

Identities are socially constructed and relational, and undergo constant

transformation dependent on specific histories, contexts and locations.

Identities are always constructed through difference, based on the distinction

of what is included and excluded from each identity position. Additionally,

identities are always constructed and enunciated within discourse, produced

in specific historical and institutional sites within specific discursive

formations and practices. (Hall, 1996a, p. 4)

In exploring the postcolonial outcome in Afghanistan as related to human identity

and lived experiences in the context of the enlightenment concept, this researcher is

drawn to the conclusion that the power of discourse plays a pivotal role. Hall (1990)

observed that while immigrants often look back to their pre-migration identities with

nostalgia, their identity is not necessarily anchored to a time or a place to which one can

return, but rather is always in a process of becoming rather than being. This means that

the Afghan Muslim body of experiences and individual identities are entrenched in

history, language, and culture, and is less about who they are and to which tribe they

belong than what they may become (Hall, 1996a). To enunciate the postcolonial impact

on the Afghan Muslim immigrant worldview requires an ability to offer as much

attention and analysis to the Afghan Muslim interpreter and translator migration journey

as to the nature and depths of the identity shifts themselves (Weeden, 1997).

International Relations / Islamic Theory

Emerging from the 9/11 attacks on the United States, the prevailing inquiry for

social science experts on Afghanistan and Islamic scholars remains fixed on helping

Western society understand the motivations of terror organizations and, further, to

examine why these motivations persist. In the literature review section of this document,

the researcher addressed Huntington's (1996) "Clash of Civilization" theory, in addition

to other works that focus on cultural East - West fractures along identity, values, and

religious differences (Saroglou & Galand, 2004). What stands out among these

differences is the increasing role that Islam plays in these conflicts (Proctor, 1966). To

this end, Proctor (1966) maintained that what is needed is to better understand the Islamic

world on its own merits, not on Western terms. As these conflicts and struggles increase

in intensity in places like Northern Africa, and continue evolving in places like Iraq,

Syria, Egypt, and Afghanistan, the question continues to be what social theoretical model

helps deconstruct the nature and dynamics of the conflict. Researchers and scholars like

Mohammed Abo-Kazleh (2006) suggest that the utility of arguing for Islamism in the

sub-context of international relations theory offers a powerful lens through which to understand and crystallize the roles, effects, and behaviors of those involved in the global conflict.

According to Proctor (1966), Islamic theory, as a sub-element of the broader international relations theory, is a systemic theory that does not necessarily concern itself with how states interact with each other or how the "system" affects the state. Instead, Islamic-international relations theory more broadly explores the concept of world order, focusing on the relations between the Muslim/Arab, non-Muslim/Arab, and the non-Muslim/Muslim spheres, and how these should be ordered (Abo-Kazleh, 2006). Proctor (1966) acknowledged critics of the Islamic-international relations theoretical perspective, noting that portraying Islam as working from a systemic level of analysis is intellectually uncomfortable at best. This is because the Islamic theoretical approach and the umbrella of the international relations theory rely heavily on the abstract concepts of community and group emotions. The criticisms notwithstanding, both community and group link essential elements to Islamic practice back to the ontological beginnings that are universal in Islamic theoretical models and provide a theoretical framework that is distinctive.

According to Proctor (1996), what defines the notion of Islamic theory and bonds it to all manner of Islamism considerations is the view that the state's engagement and interaction with the world community surrounding it is paramount. That is, the state is a sovereign entity unto itself and its behaviors are motivated predominantly by internal— not external—considerations (Vatikiotis, 1987). Next, in the community of Islam, less

importance and distinction are given to the existing variations, be they fundamentalist,

moderate, or conservative in nature. For Proctor (1966), what is more important is the

belief and commitment to the Islamic community or state as not only sovereign, but as

one indivisible Muslim entity bonded by an unshakable community of believers and

group feelings. Both Proctor (1966) and Vatikiotis (1987) placed emphasis on the

importance of this common ontology and unwavering faith to the Quran as starting

points, middle, and end positions to all Muslim existences. This suggests that while the

differences may be apparent, the inner and outer Islamic boundaries ensure a collective

Muslim response to any Islamic state or sovereign community threat. In the Afghanistan

conflict, this belief guaranteed a collective Muslim response to non-Islamic interference,

invasion, and occupation events during both the twentieth and twenty-first centuries

(Vatikiotis, 1987). As argued by Proctor (1996), the outcome is that not only does the

non-Islamic world community of sovereign states interact, impose, and interfere with the

Muslim state inner boundaries (e.g., the Afghanistan colonial model), but in much the

same manner, Islamism influences actions of outer boundary non-Islamic sovereign

states.

> There is at once sovereign states and independent non-state actors who
>
> operate around this principle of an all-encompassing concept of community
>
> feeling, be it Islamic or Arab. Quite often and at varying intervals these
>
> actors seek to be the dominant force in efforts to bring the community
>
> together under its hegemony. Hence politics in the Muslim world are often
>
> driven by this concept that has resulted in centuries of power struggles

between competing entities be they the imperialist, Arab nationalists, or
fundamentalists. (Proctor, 1966, p.2)

Put succinctly, the Afghanistan case model and supporting Islam-international relations construct demonstrate the futility in observing Islamism in isolation with respect to outer-boundary effects. However, the same premise demonstrates that Islam interacts with, influences, and or shapes outer-boundary state experiences with equal effectiveness. In this manner, it is important to remember that on the basis of self-help and self-interest, Muslim states behave just as non-Muslim states in the international sphere (Vatikiotis, 1987).

Traditionalism

The nation state of Afghanistan is experiencing an ideological conflict and struggle between two opposing Islamic factions. The factions include those who hold tightly to the traditional teachings of Islam, or the traditionalist approach, versus those whose interpretation is more moderate, open-minded, or the non-traditionalist approach. According to Proctor (1966), the traditionalist school sees the world in a state of constant turmoil and insecurity. At the core of these conflicts and tension are sovereign states with governmental actors who may have as a primary concern their own self-preservation or power over other sovereign entities. For the traditionalist, cooperation is difficult, as trust is normally in short supply and his or her global mission is to spread the doctrine of the ideology (Proctor, 1966). Vatikiotis' (1987) position is that Al Qaeda in Afghanistan, from the late 1990s to their ouster early in the twenty-first century, represented the more radical wing of the Islamic worldview, and they held steadfastly to the traditionalist

school of thought. Victory for Al Qaeda would be the manifestation of their traditionalist

doctrine across the globe - a place where the world (e.g., Western cultures) submits

unquestionably to the Islamic faith (Proctor, 1966). According to Abo-Kazleh (2006),

unfortunately, for much of the West, and for Afghanistan and all other peoples who are

caught up in this ideological conflict, the traditionalist actors leave little room for

compromise or dialog.

The traditionalist's zealot-like adherence to the epistemological origins and

principles of the traditionalist approach focus on the literal text of the Quran (Proctor,

1966). Their strict interpretation and thought regarding the traditionalist view is centered

on and around the readings of the Quran. Proctor (1966) observes that traditionalists

perceive the Quran as sacred and perfect and, therefore, in no need of human

manipulation, as such intervention risks misunderstanding through failed interpretation.

According to Abo-Kazleh (2006), this is because traditionalist believers see the Quran as

the word of God, and that word is delivered through the Prophet Muhammad. Their

staunch defense of the Quran in its puritanical form, absent any amendment, strengthens

a belief that modern-day global events, time, and political conditions are so unstable that

alteration of the Quran to address current day needs is blasphemous (Cox, 1996). The

problem for the traditionalist is that even he/she reads and interprets the Quran in its

classic form - Arabic. According to Shalut (1999), these interpretations of texts to rulings

can be done from a number of positions, be they grammatical, historical, philosophical,

or legal, thereby imposing certain preconceived principles upon interpretation. It is the

refusal to surrender any traditionalist declared Islamic understanding of the Quran that

puts them in violent opposition to any non-conformist, be they Westerners or moderate Muslims. In Afghanistan, the traditionalist reminds the world through his/her actions that the Islamic theory, as related to the international relations model, is superimposed by the notion of jihad against all existential threats (Shalut, 1999).

Jihad

The nation state of Afghanistan has experienced the concept of holy war, or Jihad, within its borders almost continuously since the Soviets were expelled in 1989. The concept of jihad refers to a struggle against non-believers, maintaining a determined effort in the way of Allah, according to Lewis (1988). This determined effort is frequently synthesized in articles as a contrast between inner and outer struggles. Some articles refer to jihad as a kind of moral self-improvement, or the modernist's notion of political and social reform known as the inner struggle (Lewis, 1988). This greater personal struggle demands obedience to religious practices and duties. However, there seems to be a consensus among Islamic scholars that the concept of jihad does include armed struggle against persecution and oppression (Streusand, 1997). This view, the notion of the outer struggle or lesser individual war is at the center of violence in places like Middle East, Syria, Northern Africa, and Afghanistan (Lewis, 1988).

Still, far more religious thinkers identity jihad in the context of war and conflict.

The unmistakable predominance of jihad as warfare in Shari'a writing does not mean that Muslims today must view jihad as the jurists did a millennium ago. Classical texts speak only to, not for, contemporary Muslims. A non-

Muslim cannot assert that jihad always means violence or that all Muslims believe in jihad as warfare. (Streusand, 1997, p. 50)

Whether defined as a fight to improve lived experiences or fighting against tyranny or oppression, the many perceptions of jihad are due largely to the diverse communities of moderates, traditionalist, and fundamentalist that observe the Islamic faith (Lewis, 1988). Unfortunately, more and more policy in the modern era is driven by the fundamentalists who apply their interpretation of jihad more narrowly - that is, in the context of war against all non-Muslims. Led by Osama Bin Laden, Al Qaeda's global assaults against non-believers used Afghanistan as a major flashpoint for its ideological re-birth. In this instance, Lewis (1998) argues that global policy in the modern era is driven by extremism and their violent jihad against the West (non-believers), or to some extent those outside the traditionalist sphere.

Non-Traditionalism

Non-traditionalists and traditionalists hold differing thoughts regarding certain aspects of the Islamic faith and structure. According to Cox (1996), they not only differ on the nature and origin of their respective approaches, they also sharply disagree about the Quran's interpretations. Still, they view the Quran as the absolute guiding text and authority for all social, political, and familial order for Muslim lives (Abo-Kazleh, 2006). The non-traditionalist believes the potential exists that disparate interpretations could result from diverse temporal conditions, particularly as related to time, place, intellect and environment. According to Abo-Kazleh (2006), it is therefore possible that the so-called different understandings of the Quran may not be contradictory, but rather a

consequence of one's own contemporary existence. As such, it is not necessarily the case

that the outright divisions of the world exist, as argued by traditionalists and suggested by

Huntington (1996). If different interpretations of the Quran exist due to conditions, then

the potential for peaceful co-existence among Muslims can be achieved in places like

Afghanistan and elsewhere based on derived common understanding. For Cox (1996), it

is possible for non-traditionalists to arrive at such a judgment because they generally hold

to a position that is more accommodating of the state's roles. Whereas the Quran dictates

social roles under the traditionalist approach per se, the non-traditionalist acknowledges

the nation state's influence in shaping and influencing Muslim lived experiences.

> Civilizations do not control states rather states control civilizations. They
>
> claim however this does not mean the surrendering of Muslim principles.
>
> They believe it is not a betrayal to the faith to be both modern and Muslim.
>
> What emerges is a double faceted concept of sovereignty. They concede
>
> they must accept the state's reasoning but also insist the state adhere to
>
> Islamic principles and hold to an eternal consciousness of spirit (assabiya).
>
> (Abo-Kazleh, 2006, p.41)

What this suggests is a non-traditionalist belief that the radical response and use

of the jihad instrument of violence and terror is, by its nature, extreme, and the use of

such tactics as the means to achieving their strategic aims is misguided (Shalut, 1999).

Alternatively, the moderate view held by the non-traditionalist is that accepting temporal

misgivings allows one to make accommodations and sets the conditions for Muslims to

work constructively within the precepts of Islam to achieve desired goals. This is not to

understate or in any way suggest a weakening of the importance and purpose of Islam in

societal existence. Rather, it is a realization that modernity is vital in an international

relations theoretical environment where East and West tensions and conflict prevail as the

norm against the exception (Abo-Kazleh, 2006).

> Non-traditionalists make these arguments not for the purpose of
>
> marginalizing Islam but rather with an understanding that modernity is
>
> necessary and yet the Islamic world is not suited for Western style
>
> modernity in absolution. What they suggest is needed is an Islamized
>
> modernity that is capable of taking from the West without allowing the
>
> Islamic world to mirror the West and weakening Islamic identity. (Shalut,
>
> 1999, p. 61)

Those who adhere to the non-traditionalist approach appear to be ardent defenders

of Islamist rights. This is particularly true in light of oppression, injustice, and violence

against them as an outcome of colonialism and bigotry against Muslims (Abo-Kazleh,

2006). To counter perceived neo-imperialist aims by the West, Shalut (1999) advocates

for the right of self-determination and freedom to practice their religion without

prejudice. It is this perceived global injustice that shapes the traditionalist and non-

traditionalist Islamic communities' responses under the international relations theoretical

design. According to Bukay (2004), Islam is a universal world construct that shapes

global politics and represents an all-inclusive global view. Despite the belief that this

religious world order means different things to different groups, it remains a complete

system influencing religion and state. While both traditionalists and non-traditionalists

possess different interpretations of the Quran, neither would disagree with the notion of

an Islamic ideal reinforced through an Islamic order framed by political and social

orientations (Shalut, 1999). These orientations appear to differ dramatically, depending

upon which belief one adheres to. For instance, a traditionalist would argue that the

source of all faith is Allah, and this unwavering belief represents the symbol of the

collective Muslim identity (Bukay, 2004). Also, they contend that criticism of this

worldview should be met with the harshest penalty, as any opposition is illegitimate and

amounts to heresy and blasphemy. For the non-traditionalist, achieving political stability

and community order is paramount. Shalut (1999) pointed out that for the non-

traditionalist; stability is achieved through community inclusiveness and social contracts,

vice instruments of jihad and strict sharia law. Additionally, non-traditionalists argue that

as long as the community and social contract reflects Allah's will, the spirit of the Islamic

faith is intact.

In Afghanistan, the notion of social contracts that feed cultural and ethnic conflict

underpins the divide among traditionalist and moderate Muslims or non-traditionalists.

Cox (1996) argued, "these cultural conflicts act as a catalyst for extremist who seek a

return to more familiar Muslim and Islamic values" (p. 17). It was the extremist element

(Al Qaeda) of the traditionalist school that evolved to strike a global blow against the

West on September 11, 2001 (Bukay, 2004). Al Qaeda demonstrated that the

international relations philosophy it followed and helped develop was a far more radical

ideology than even the fundamentalist advocates of the traditionalist school preached

(Shalut, 1999). What this suggests is that as a universal ideological theoretical study,

Islam has emerged from Afghanistan and many other Muslim lands and is proving to be a significant factor in the international relations global environment and world order.

Reactive Identity Theory

According to Aguirre and Proctor (1998), among the many factors that sustain culture, ethnicity, and national identity formations in minority immigrant groups is discrimination. Researchers such as Portes and Rumbaut (1996) supported this view, concluding that intolerance represents an important ingredient in a unified theory of ethnic and cultural relations, in addition to identity development. Also, Portes and Rumbaut (1996) suggested that during the twentieth century in America, the social response to discrimination among immigrant populations came to be known as reactive identity theory.

> Ethnicity, framed by the experiences of the first arrivals rather than class, was to provide the fundamental matrix of American-based politics for subsequent generations. Ironically, the class-consciousness of the more literate immigrants faded away while ethnic consciousness, forced on the peasant masses by native discrimination endured. Hence, ethnic markers were redefined by reactive formation into symbols of pride and rallying points for mass political participation. (Portes & Rumbaut, 1996, p. 102)

According to Aguirre and Proctor (1995), reactive identity theory refers to a particular type of social identity that is characterized by opposition to mainstream values, norms, and social groups, and it involves two key components. First, there is an immigrant perceived, suspected, or actual ethnic and cultural boundary intrusion through

some discriminatory act (Gonzales, 1994). According to Gonzales (1994), in response to this intrusion, immigrant groups mobilize in an effort to reconstitute the broken boundaries and restore or perhaps gain social standing. Critics of reactive identity theory, such as Gallo (1974), maintained that it fails to fully appreciate other factors that contribute to reactions to negotiated identity formations, such as social interactions, economic strength, or pre-existing archetypes of self, group, or community or tribal identification, or 9-11 environment. Still, the approach helped me better understand the patterns, methods, and processes through which discriminatory judgments and labels are used against minority immigrant groups, and how these groups internalize these meanings (Portes & Rumbaut, 1996). In this research on the post-immigration lived experiences and identity issues of Afghan Muslim interpreters and translators, reactive identity theory helps unearth identity attributes with higher internalized value such as trust and mistrust, as compared to those that are less important to assimilation or native relatedness.

The reactive identity theory model has its roots in field study work in New Haven, Connecticut, in the 1930s by Irvin Child, psychologist and researcher. Child's study focused on the second generation Italian-Americans who had difficulties integrating into the mainstream as a result of social bias and discrimination. Child (1943) found that immigrants who faced obstacles integrating into the mainstream demonstrate two distinct characteristics. First, they are more likely to develop strong ethnic identities, while those who encountered less resistance would find cultural assimilation and self-identify easier to navigate in Western or American society. Second, the reactive element seems

responsible for mobilizing a political response, as noted by Gallo (1974), who argued the following:

> The greater the feelings of exclusion among our respondents, the more they will identify as Italian-Americans. To the Italian-American, being a member of an ethnic group produces attitudes that have a bearing on his social and political participation. He senses that he is part of a beleaguered social group and is sensitive to his group's status. It also produces a desire for respectability to be won by political recognition. (Gallo, 1974, p. 123)

During the twentieth century, an often-cited example of reactive identity theory practice was the immigrant population that centered on the Italian-American groups. According to Gonzales (1994), many immigrants who came to be identified as Italians during this timeframe were primarily from the southern portions of Italy, near Sicily. What serves as an important takeaway from scholars like Child (1943) and Gallo (1974) is that these Sicilian immigrants had no pattern of describing themselves as Italians, nor did they show any significant attachment to Italian identity. Further, the researchers pointed out that the immigrants were illiterate and spoke in regional dialects, unable to effectively communicate in English. Gonzales (1994) observed that despite their unique cultural and ethnic identity markers, the immigrants were treated unfairly and singled out as a group and confronted with prejudice and discrimination. Gallo (1974) suggested that the group's response to these judgments was to self-identify as Italian-Americans. In doing so, they encountered less social resistance and began benefiting from mobilized

and organized efforts (e.g., political, economic, social, etc.) on behalf of the structured and better-known Italian-American community (Child, 1943).

From these reactive efforts, political mobilization stands out as providing a basis from which Afghan Tajiks, Afghan Hazaras, Afghan Pashtuns, or Afghan Muslim marshal diverse members of the Afghan immigrant community to be more responsive to majority discrimination (Espiritu, 1992). Also, scholars like Stryker and Burke (2000) remind readers that reactive identity theory's recognition of the role of mobilization responses gives public meaning to the minority group's own distinctive identity, ethnicity, culture, and heritage. Such recognition seems linked to how one responds to questions that ask who you are, what you are, and what global community you belong to.

What this theoretical framework suggest is that the constructed self-identity of the Afghan male Muslim interpreter and translator population in this study may be infused with lived experiences that are defined and influenced by cultural, ethnic and religion relationship interactions and their boundaries. Also, these interactions are likely not rigid and fixed, but more correctly characterized as multidimensional and dynamic. Undergirding all these factors and conditions, the theoretical constructs describing post-colonialism, Islamic and international relations, as well as reactive theory models each contribute in defining and explaining the desperate influences that affect identity outcomes and changes among the studied population. And, these identity changes and outcomes surface at pre- immigration and post-immigration periods. Hall (1990) and Huntington (1993) both argue that these differences are the product of occurrences,

environment and events such as colonialism, rise in radical Islamic fundamentalism, and post 9/11 attitudes. As such, the analysis of the study participant's identity change is best understood when examined and explored in the context of postcolonial theory, international relations (or Islamic theory), and reactive theoretical models.

Chapter 6

Methodology

To understand the lived experiences and identity issues of Afghan Muslim

immigrants who went to the "West" (i.e., the United States) from the "East" (i.e.,

Afghanistan), qualitative narrative studies would be most suitable as a research

methodology. Many scholars observed that narrative research has had a profound impact

on qualitative studies. Ruby (1982) writes that the study of narratives has linked the

sciences with history, literature, and everyday life. This linkage also reveals an increasing

reflexivity that characterizes contemporary inquiry and furthers the postmodern

deconstruction of the already tenuous boundaries among disciplines and realms of

meaning (Ruby, 1982). Other scholars such as Polkinghorne (1988) add to this discourse,

maintaining that people without narratives do not exist and life itself might thus be

considered a narrative inside which we find a number of other stories:

> As we make our way through life, we have continuous experiences and
>
> dialogic interactions both with our surrounding world and with ourselves.
>
> All of these are woven together into a seamless web, where they might
>
> strike one as being overwhelming in their complexity. One way of
>
> structuring these experiences is to organize them into meaningful units. One
>
> such meaningful unit could be a story, a narrative. For most people,
>
> storytelling is a natural way of recounting experience, a practical solution to
>
> a fundamental problem in life, creating reasonable order out of experience.
>
> Not only are we continually producing narratives to order and structure our

life experiences, we are also continuously being bombarded with narratives

from the social world we live in. We create narrative descriptions on our

experiences for others, and ourselves and we also develop narratives to

make sense of the behavior of others. (Zellermayer, 1997, p. 56)

To help orient and understand our daily interactions and experiences, we add

order to events to ensure clarity and meaning. According to Zellermayer (1997), one way

of structuring these experiences is to organize them into meaningful units. These units are

presented in storylines and narrative forms, and these narrative forms help people retell

their experiences. Zellermayer (1997) maintained that not only are we continually

producing narratives to structure our life experiences, but we are also constantly being

bombarded with narratives from the social world in which we live. One can argue that

narratives serve a crucial role in our lives, not just an ancillary function. We use this

instrument to make sense and apply order to our surroundings. We create narrative

descriptions about our experiences for others, and ourselves, and we also develop

narratives to make sense of the behavior of others (Zellermayer, 1997).

The use of narrative methodology offers another important consideration, which

is the potential to hear from the silenced participant population themselves – or "giving

voice." Bogdan and Biklen (2006) described giving voice as "empowering people to be

heard who might otherwise remain silent" (p. 204) or who have been silenced by others.

Many journalists, scholars, and military experts understand the important roles

interpreters and translators have played throughout the Afghan war. Yet, very few have

heard the voices of these people, know their narratives, or understand the depths of their

internal conflicts and interpersonal struggles. Frequently, life stories are told about people who have had their voices silenced, rather than by those people. Mazzei and Jackson (2009) stated, "Qualitative researchers have been trained to privilege this voice, to 'free' the authentic voice from whatever inhibits it from coming into being, from relating the truth about the self " (p. 1). Too often, the emphasis is on the voice of the professional, not the voice of the person who owns the narrative (Taylor & Bogdan, 1994; Biklen & Bogdan, 2006). The goal of the narrative approach is to allow the individual stories to come through in an authentic manner. This is done by adhering to established qualitative control methods that ensure process integrity and stands up to best industry practices and professional scrutiny.

The current study reveals a pattern in which some Afghan Muslim participants report being silenced in multiple ways. Britzman (1989) stated, "A commitment to voice attests to the right of speaking and being represented" (p. 2). The interpreter and translator participants' voices have been silenced through institutional practices as a result of helping non-Muslim coalition forces defeat other Muslims in the war. Also, their voices have been quieted within interpersonal spaces out of fear that their own safety and that of their families and friends will be placed at risk should their work with the coalition become known. Adding to this conundrum, the participants reported being silenced during the post-immigration phase, as they were not able to self-identity as Afghan Muslims given the post 9/11 environment and animus toward Muslims in the United States. This researcher's goal is to give a voice to their struggles. To this end, their narratives become powerful and useful instruments that inform the research community

of their ordeals, while at the same time returning power through discourse back to the silenced participants themselves.

In addition to giving voice, narratives are important not only because they help us to understand individual experiences, but also because they help others understand these experiences in the context of the narrator's own perspective. Heikkinen (2002) asserted that these perspectives are important and cannot be viewed simply as "abstract structures" isolated from their cultural, social, or even political contexts. What this construct offers is the view that one's experiences are connected with the environment in such a way that once removed from that environment, the perspectives and experiences are significantly altered. In this manner, individual attributes such as knowledge and identity continue to evolve and re-construct themselves (Bruner, 1984). As part of this evolution, we find that narrative inquiry can be applied broadly in order to understand both the social and environmental conditions that underpin people's lived experiences. At the same time, the intimate understanding of experiences that empower people is delivered through narrative methods. Marshall and Rossman (1999) wrote that among its (narrative) strong attributes in qualitative study is the construction of multiple perspectives, the existence of context bound and social realities that shape relationships and contribute to individual identities. Combined, the effects researchers can have during the analytical phase of qualitative design by leveraging narrative methods remain unique to this domain.

Still, Gudmundsdottir (2001) stated that narrative research is an elaborate collaboration between both the interviewed participant and the researcher. The researcher for the current project employed the qualitative narrative method because it helps to give

shape, form, and substance to the interactions and relationships that support the rich

collection of experiences that comprise individual lives. Some researchers apply the ends-

to-a-means mindset, adopting the narrative approach as the primary method of inquiry

(Carter, 1993; Connelly & Clandinin, 1990; Gudmundsdottir, 1997, 2001). In contrast,

there are those in the field of qualitative research that maintain that the narrative approach

is not a method or means, but rather a frame of reference in the research process, where

life stories are seen as producers and transmitters of reality (Heikkinen, 2002). This

researcher believes that as opposed to competing constructs, the frame of references

discussed in this instance actually complements one another. Both constructs are

important to the narrative methodology and validate the importance of narrative research

in presenting the phenomenon and the methods used to uncover occurrences. In the

simplest form, narrative exploration helped this researcher gain an improved

understanding of the meaning(s) applied to identity by the participants by shifting voice

and focus to the participants themselves (Moen, Gudmundsdottir, & Flem, 2003). In this

manner, the chosen narrative method employed in this study closely follows the approach

used by Gudmundsdottir (2001). This approach concentrates on the kind of meaning(s)

culture and environment imposes on identity and events. Thus, this researcher explored

the storytelling methods that assist participants in recounting and creating order out of

experiences that began at the start of the Afghan War (2003) and continued through

various stages of lived existence.

Methodological Objective

This researcher used narrative methods to extract the rich life stories and eventful occurrences that make up the participants' experiences. The brilliance of narrative design is in its ability to link current lived experiences, through contemporary inquiry and the power of "story," to ordered events in a coherent fashion. Existing research informs us that narration constitutes a kind of a) causal thinking, in that stories are efforts to explore questions of human agency and explain lives; b) historical understanding, in that events cannot be explained except in retrospect; c) moral enterprise, in that stories are used to justify and serve as models for lives; and d) political undertaking, in that individuals often struggle to create new narratives to protest a perceived storylessness in the old ones (Freeman, 2004; Rosaldo, 1994).

This researcher's methodological objective was to both describe and explain how study participants' pre- and post-immigration lived experiences were shaped and informed by their identity, and how these identities were influenced by the environments themselves. Further, narrative study afforded the researcher the latitude to focus on conditions that contribute to, or conflict with, the participant narrative. Polkinghorne (1988) pointed to narrative lines of inquiry that informed the researcher's analysis in connecting the participants' stories to the cultural context. Using Polkinghorne's (1988) approach, this researcher worked to crystallize the relationships between life's episodic events that contribute to assimilation outcomes among Afghan Muslim individuals because of identity formation.

Where narrative research draws its strength is the voice and story or the narrative belonging to the participants themselves. As a method, it fully and completely embraces the life and stories of the participants as the center of focus. Czarniawska (2004) explained that narrative is understood as a written or spoken text giving an account of an event/action or series of events/actions that are chronologically connected. As a method, this research approach relied on the narrative model because it allows the participants to tell their own story and communicate their own experiences, and in so doing, provide meaning to what is important while placing other data into proper context.

Within the methodological approach strategies available to the qualitative social scientist, narrative research offers advantages and perspectives concerning issues and problems unlike other traditional qualitative methods. However, because the field of narrative research is so broad, a narrowed application is necessary to ensure structure and cohesion, in addition to problem focus. Denzin and Lincoln (2005) correctly explained qualitative research as "a set of interpretative, material practices that make the world visible," and further suggested that, "qualitative researchers deploy a wide range of interconnected interpretive practices, hoping to get a better understanding of the subject matter at hand" (pp. 4-5). Taking the same logic and applying it to lived experiences, Cole and Knowles (2001) argued that structuring data in such a manner as to analyze it in chronological terms enhances analysis.

To ensure the narrative methodology was accurately applied, this researcher turned to biographical narrative methods to add focus and clarity, as well as to work towards research trustworthiness and validity. Hiller (2010) suggested that biographical

narratives occupy a prominent position within the qualitative research spectrum. Just as qualitative research has evolved encompassing a broad array of sub-specializations, methods, and techniques, so too has the field of narrative research. Deferring to Creswell (2007), he maintained that biographical narratives researchers distinguish among the following: (a) biographical studies, where an individual's life story is studied through research of archival documents and records; (b) autobiographies, where persons write their own life stories; (c) oral histories, which focus on personal recollections of events, their causes, and their effects, from the perspective of one or more individuals; and (d) life histories, which reflect socio-cultural, personal, and institutional themes in an individual's life. This researcher relied heavily on biographical methods. However, the researcher employed features of oral histories, life histories, and chronological processes to give fuller meaning and context to life experiences explored in this study. This researcher concentrated on both pre-immigration and post-immigration lived experiences to ensure context, breadth, and scope of narrative understanding. However, to prevent the scope of this study from being too broad (or narrow) and to ensure focus, pre-immigration analysis began in 2003 (at the start of the war), as opposed to when the United States special immigration visas were first allowed (National Defense Authorization Act, 2006).

At its core, biographical research furthers human understanding through social scientific methods. This is done through data collection methods, analysis, and interpretation of the lived experiences of the participant study group. The appeal of biographical research is that it explores, in diverse methodological and interpretative

ways, how individual accounts of life experiences can be understood within the contemporary cultural and structural settings, and thereby helps to chart the major societal changes that are underway (Roberts, 2002). Bryman (1988) focused on the empirical contribution of biographical studies, noting qualitative researchers tend to espouse an approach in which theory and empirical investigation are interwoven during or at the end of fieldwork, rather than being a precursor to it. The current research was informed by the positions that one can derive meaningful theoretical approaches through the deliberate and careful application of biographical methods.

The current researcher's use of biographical narrative as the qualitative research method was driven by the desire to understand structural and seismic shifts in social, ethnic, and cultural environments. This researcher also sought to unearth the impact such changes had on self-identity. Such an understanding is particularly important in regards to East and West interactions and relations. Also, such seismic shifts can be well understood through the lens of Eastern and Western participant experiences, along with careful analysis of perceived identities. Using biographical narrative as the research study model imposes minimum limits on the participants and, according to Roberts (2002), is undergirded by both belief and practice that individuals are the creators of their own meanings. Such meaning forms the basis of daily existence and helps participants interpret and make sense of their social existence. Moreover, by studying pre- and post-immigration experiences in identity, structural shifts in social, ethnic, and cultural environments (e.g., East and West) can be understood within space and time dimensions.

Lastly, this researcher does not fully subscribe to the belief that employing biographical narrative models alone are sufficient for learning about the authentic stories of the participants. According to Becker (1970), biographical research is viewed as not measuring up, as compared to established reliability and validity criteria. In research on personal and social context, Hiller (2010) compensated for this perceived shortcoming by introducing chronological mapping to support and enhance the biographical narrative model. This researcher believes that such an approach helped elucidate the narrative facts and biographical images presented by the study participants. And, to further the theoretical soundness of this research and to enhance research understanding and visualization, this researcher examined chronological mapping and its use as a possible tool to help the participant narratives take form and maintain a sense of continuity. Others have similarly used chronologies and chronological mapping to support their research. According to Creswell (2007), the approach is often used to uncover life-course stages or seminal actions or experiences involving childhood, marriage, employment, place of residence, and sibling interactions, for example. Also, because narrative-structured inquiry involves large volumes of data, one can easily become overwhelmed by the magnitude of the analytical process. In capturing the life events that shape individual experiences, this research provides a wide girth of information and material. The objective was careful synthesis and management of data, transforming collected information into a framework for effective analysis. The key to these considerations is the focus on data visualization that facilitates and enhances, not detracts from, the biographical narrative analytical process (Marshall & Rossman, 2010).

Restated Problem Statement

The trajectory from the Eastern migration experience to the Western assimilation process causes interpersonal struggles and intergroup conflict for this population. Afghan Muslim male interpreters and translators experience interpersonal struggles and intergroup conflict as they migrate from the East to the West. In yielding to Western assimilation and acculturation pressures, interpersonal tensions emerge between and within native family units who seek to honor and hold on to traditional tribal and ethnic beliefs, values, and customs. Additionally, intergroup conflict arises as Afghan Muslim male interpreters and translators attempt to reconcile those native traditions and associated identities with the customs, values, and beliefs of their new host land. The problem is defining and understanding the disparate identities for this population group during their immigration to the West. To this end, are the identities the same and or static across both pre- and post- immigration periods? Also, does finding the right balance between bridging the native social, cultural, and religious constructs matter? Research needs to be conducted to better understand the identity issues of this Afghan Muslim male group and the nature of their interpersonal and intergroup conflict. The aim of such future research must be to design more constructive methods that help participants mitigate this problem as well as enhance cross-cultural awareness.

Restated Research Questions

To explore the rarely-researched issue of the Afghan Muslim male interpreter and translator "conflict and change" issue of identity, the primary research question of the current study is the following: "What are the lived experiences during pre- and post-

immigration of Afghan Muslim interpreters and translators who migrated to the United

States during the Afghanistan War (2003 - 2012)? Supporting research questions include

the following: 1) How do these Afghan Muslim males conceptualize identity? 2) How do

these experiences shape, inform, and affect their developed identities, and 3 How does

intergroup conflict shape experiences and influence identity dilemmas within the study

group?

Data Sampling

In grounded theory, a range of 20 to 30 participants may be used for interviewing

purposes (Creswell, 2007). By contrast, case studies may involve a single event, program,

or activity (Creswell, 2007). According to Patton (1990), as compared to quantitative

inquiry, "qualitative inquiry typically focuses in depth on relatively small samples and

even single cases (n = 1)" (p. 169). As in any qualitative study, the ultimate goal of

sampling is to obtain cases deemed information rich for the purposes of study (Creswell,

2007). To ensure validity and credible research outcomes where small samples are

involved, the purposeful sampling method becomes a useful instrument. Purposeful

sampling involves selecting study participants "based on a specific purpose rather than

randomly" (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003a, p. 713). In the current qualitative narrative

biographical research study, the researcher used a purposeful sample range of five Afghan

national Muslim males who emigrated from their native Afghan land to the United States

during the Afghan War (between 2003 and 2012). In addition, the study sample included

participants who have resided in the United States for at least one year. Having a

minimum period of residency in the United States was intended to ensure proper

orientation and experiences that contrast participants' pre-immigration activities with

their post-immigration activities. And, while a small sampling size of five participants

does not achieve diversity or population representation, selecting participants who were

among Pashtun, Hazara, and Tajik groups serves as an ethnically distinct research group.

This is because the majority Pashtun participants and minority Hazara and Tajik

participants would each hold different self-identity references and contrast based on their

ethnic grouping. Thus, this researcher's aim in utilizing this sampling approach was to

select an ethnically distinct group (e.g., Pashtuns, Hazaras, Tajiks, etc.) of Afghan

interpreters and translators for study. And, for this study, nine participants were initially

considered, and five interviewed based on the sampling approach and rationale stated

above. Three of the subjects were of the Pashtun tribal majority, one subject was a

member of the Hazara tribe, and the last subject was a minority Tajik member. Also, the

subjects were from geographical areas from the east, south, and center (capital) of

Afghanistan. In terms of their post-immigration domicile in America, western, eastern,

southern, and northern states were identified as home.

> Those who were granted asylum in the United States began to settle in
>
> California (mainly the Los Angeles-Orange County area and San Francisco
>
> Bay Area) and in the Northeastern United States, where large Muslim
>
> community centers keep them closely bonded. Fremont, California, is home
>
> to the largest population of Afghan Americans in the U.S. Smaller Afghan
>
> American communities also exist in the states of Texas, Illinois, Florida,
>
> Washington and elsewhere. According to the United States Census Bureau,

there were approximately 65,972 Afghan-Americans living in the country in 2006. By 2011, this number grew to 89,040. According to the Embassy of Afghanistan in Washington, DC, the over-all Afghan population in the United States in 2011 is around 300,000. While 30,000 reside in Northern Virginia, approximately 65,000 Afghans comprise the diaspora community based in the San Francisco Bay Area. Some figures estimate that there may only be about 80,000 Afghan-Americans but the actual number may be 200,000 to as high as 300,000. (Mujahid, 2007, para. 2)

Marshall and Rossman (2010) maintained that such purposeful sampling approach not only strengthens research and, ostensibly, the body of knowledge, but it also provides rich data that in this case defines and characterizes the eclectic cultures and populations that comprise the heterogeneous Afghan nation. Moreover, in this qualitative, small sample, such ethnic richness offers some guard against threats to quality. A key to this sampling approach, as noted by Patton (2002), is the selection of participants who possess "case rich data" for in-depth study and analysis.

Thick description of the phenomenon under scrutiny requires detailed descriptions. Detailed description in this area can be an important provision for promoting credibility as it helps to convey the actual situations that have been investigated and, to an extent, the contexts that surround them. Without this insight, it is difficult for the reader of the final account to determine the extent to which the overall findings 'ring true.' (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 69)

Researchers have stated that population sizes for narrative research are significantly smaller and sometimes involve only one or more participants in narrative biographical research. As previously stated, this narrative biographical study contains a research sample comprising five participants. To draw a rich comparison and contrast between pre- and post-immigration experiences, the researcher sought participants who were born in Afghanistan and migrated to the United States during the war (2006-2012). This researcher sought volunteers for the study via two methods. The first method can best be described as "word of mouth." That is, this researcher reached out to the local translator and interpreter center and office in Kabul, Afghanistan. The researcher did not seek interpreters and translators who are currently in Afghanistan working for the coalition because this could present ethical conflicts. However, members of this office and visitors who learned of the study and were in contact with interpreters and translators passed the information along. This process resulted in nine separate lines of inquiry from individuals who migrated to the United States and who generally fit the researcher's selection criteria. To that end, the researcher provided the office with flyers and posters (see Appendix B) about the research with the researcher's contact information (i.e., phone and email). The flyers provided information concerning the purpose of the research and asked members of the office to reach out to any interpreters and translators currently in the United States who may be willing to participate in the research. Those who requested further details and had additional questions were provided a letter (see Appendix A) about the goals, intent, purpose, and aims of the research. The letters were

sent either through email and US mail delivery to that person's place of residence and business address in the United States.

The second method for seeking participants for the study was through centers in the United States with strong Afghanistan populations and communities. According to the U.S. Census Bureau report (Hoefer, Rytina, & Baker, 2012), there are some 90,000 Afghan immigrants living in the United States. The San Francisco Chronicle (Miller, 2010) stated that Fremont, California holds the largest American-Afghan community, with approximately 30,000 Afghans. Additionally, the City Journal reported that smaller Afghan populations are found in Texas, Illinois, Florida, and Washington (Oeppen, 2011). Because a goal of this research was an ethnically distinct and data-rich participant sample, Fremont, California was used as the primary source to seek volunteers for the study. This narrowed the interview sites and preserved limited research resources. To reach out to volunteers for this study, the researcher sent the letter, along with a flyer (see Appendices A and B), to Afghan-American publications, Afghan-American cultural organizations, Afghan-American organizations, and Afghan-American community outreach agencies. Again, as in the word of mouth process, the researcher asked interested individuals who met the baseline criteria to contact him via email or phone.

In addition to the purposeful sampling as described above, this researcher used criterion sampling to focus on the design and make-up of the participant group. Patton (2002) defined criterion sampling as using a sample that meets predetermined characteristics. This approach allowed the researcher to formulate criteria that facilitated data development and analysis. The developed criterion included the following identity

attributes: native Afghan male interpreters and translators who are practicing Muslims and migrated to the United States between 2006 and 2012 and who also remain in contact or in relationships with family, friends, or colleagues in Afghanistan. This researcher sought Afghan Muslim men who are either single or married and between the ages of 28 to 48 years of age and who arrived in America via the special immigrant visa law (Congress, U.S., 2006). The age criteria ensured that participants were adults at the time of their mission work with the coalition. The special immigrant visa status ensured that they were properly vetted by the US Department of State as an interpreter or translator for the coalition.

This researcher chose to study the Afghan Muslim male population because researchers are rarely able to apply qualitative narrative methods to analyze life experiences in an authentic, real-time manner, especially when actual conflict and war are involved. Because the Afghanistan war is so current in historical terms, much can be learned about immigrant Muslim experiences and the complexity of identity issues and effects across a non-Western, non-secular population group. Further, this participant group is particularly intriguing as a study sample because some of these men appeared to suffer identity conflicts as they sought balance in honoring cultural traditions in their conservative Muslim country while striving for acculturation and assimilation in their new secular Western host home. Only men were selected for participation in this study because in Muslim society, interaction among non-married men and women is a violation of traditional cultural taboos. And, while such research related discussions and meetings could reasonably take place in the West, traditions and practices in Afghan culture even

today make such actions restrictive and frowned upon. What the literature informs the reader about this population of Afghan Muslim men is that they demonstrated great courage and commitment by assisting the Western military coalition in a war against other Muslims. This commitment to stand against other Muslims came at great risk and resulted in a wide array of conflict and subsequent identity issues that this researcher sought to unearth and bring to light. Not only were identity conflicts found in the pre-immigration stage, but conflict identity issues were observed during the post-immigration phase, as well.

Data Collection

This researcher used narrative methods to extract the rich life stories and eventful occurrences that make up the participant group's experiences. To ensure the narrative methodology approach was optimally applied with focus and clarity, the researcher used biographical narrative methods. As previously mentioned, this researcher's use of biographical narrative as the qualitative research method is driven by a strong desire to understand structural shifts in social and cultural environments and the impacts these cultural changes have on identity. And, as mentioned earlier, biographical research is viewed as not measuring up, as compared to established reliability and validity criteria (Becker, 1970). In research on personal and social context, Hiller (2010) addressed this issue by introducing chronological mapping to strengthen the biographical narrative model. The current researcher believes that such an approach could help readers better understand the narrative facts and biographical images presented by the study participants. The key to these considerations is the focus on data visualization that

facilitates and enhances the biographical narrative analytical process (Marshall &

Rossman, 2010). Finally, this researcher used face-to-face or the direct interview process

as the data collection method for the study. Each initial interview lasted from one to two

hours, depending on the subject's desire and willingness to proceed to conclusion during

one interview, as opposed to multiple sessions. No more than two interview sessions with

each participant were used. The interviews had two parts. Part one focused on pre-

immigration experiences and identity. The second part focused on post-immigration

experiences and identity issues, as well as additional questions or clarifications from part

one. The interviews were conducted in safe, private yet public spaces, such as university

environments, libraries, and cultural center offices. The locations were conducive to the

interview process and were selected by the participants because they were safe and had

minimal distractions. To ensure clarity, full disclosure, and participant understanding, the

researcher provided each participant with an informed consent form (see Appendix D),

which addressed their rights throughout the research process. Participants completed and

signed the informed consent form prior to the interview (Mauthner, Birch, Jessop, &

Miller, 2003; Patton, 2002). The interview sessions were recorded via a digital audio

device. No real names were ever used or recorded, only pseudonyms and subject titles,

such as Participant #1, Participant #2, Sir, Subject #1, or Subject #2. To ensure security,

the digital device was in the researcher's possession at all times and when not in use for

the interview, was secured in a locked combination file container in the researcher's

private quarters until the device was used. Further, only the researcher had the container

combination, and the recordings will be kept for one year from the day and month the

data was collected as per IRB protocols. Finally, all interview sessions were conducted in a one-on-one semi-structured format.

During the initial interviews, a hybrid of open-ended and probing questions (see Appendix C), based on the approach prescribed by Patton (2002), was presented to each participant. The questions were structured in this fashion to solicit thoughtful and focused responses involving pre-immigration and post-immigration periods: during the Afghan war, during the migration process, and during cultural assimilation into the United States. Also, the questions were designed to engender trust and make the participants initially comfortable with more general questions. The initial questions were crafted to solicit participant responses about their native lived experiences during the pre-immigration phases. Gradually, the questions became more focused and targeted on disparate identity types (e.g., ethic, cultural, and Muslim or Islam religious factors) that were at the center of the current research. Finally, descriptions involving identity formation between pre- and post-immigration conceptualization and about their own sense of selves was presented. Minimum interruption of the participant responses was made by the researcher, and only when necessary to solicit amplification or clarification to a provided response. Through these open-ended questions, the participants were better able to provide fuller information and richer descriptions about their own lived experiences (Patton, 2002). This effort was further served by providing the participant's with a copy of the questions prior to the interview. The pre-immigration focused questions (see Appendix C) were followed by post-immigration focused questions, and possibly additional clarification questions based on information presented by the participants

during part one of the interview. Once the data from the initial interview was collected, reviewed and analyzed, a time for follow-up questions and closure was offered to each participant. The questioning, interviewing, and follow-up data collection process continued until information data saturation occurred; meaning, when the researcher began hearing the same themes, patterns, and responses to questions. At this point, the likelihood that significant additional gains would be made was not expected. (Saumure & Given, 2008)

Prior to face-to-face meetings, the interview questions were field-tested. Field testing the questions helped to ensure, a) the questions made sense to like-minded representatives, and b) buttress the data collection strategy and rationale for the study, as encouraged by Sampson (2004). The field test also helped this researcher by providing mitigating techniques for deconstructing barriers that could surface during the actual face-to-face interviews with the Muslim male participants. To accomplish the field tests, this researcher asked three interpreters and translators who are currently in Afghanistan working for the coalition to review the questions and provide feedback on their soundness and sensibility, as well as to provide recommendations for changes. Aside from their current post in Afghanistan rather than the United States, all other selection criteria were met. The strong pool of existing interpreters and translators in the Kabul base made this process relatively easy. Based on the field test, no changes were made to the questions, but the researcher did note that one or two of the pre-immigration questions engendered emotional responses from 2 of 3 field test participants. As a result,

the research interviewer's questioning technique was modified and part one questions were slightly re-sequenced.

The intent of the field test was to ensure the best possible question set that allowed the participant's lived experiences and stories to evolve through story inquiry. The questions centered around "family history, their family's individual move to the United States, their experience in education, war, and conflict, and their views on culture, ethnicity, religion, gender, and immigration" (Aryan & Guzman, 2010, p. 72). While a connection between interviewer and interviewee may be established during the interview process, Patton (2002) suggested a significant connection is created as one examines the world of the participant through an explorative process of mining narrative data. It is at this point that critical meanings and themes are exposed that help orient and give perspective to the participant's world. Once the actual interviews were completed, participants were presented with a copy of their transcripts, and at that time, the researcher afforded them the opportunity to review the transcripts and make changes.

According to Creswell (2007), this approach helps ensure accuracy of information, as well as maintain contextual integrity and security of participant data. Upon completion, follow-up interviews were made available to each subject. Additionally, a final meeting and discussion was offered to each participant. These sessions were available via Face-Time, Skype, or telephone. The researcher used whichever method was available and most convenient to each participant. The goal of the final session was to close the interview process, answer any lingering questions the participants may have had, and give the participants an opportunity to discuss their

feelings about the process. As Aryan and Guzman (2010) suggested, this was also an opportunity for the participants to raise themes or concepts that were not previously explored. As also noted by Rubin and Rubin (2005), this process adds depth to the interview activity and helps ensure a richer body of data is carried forth. Three participants took advantage of this closing activity.

Data Analysis

The approach used to conduct data analysis involved interpreting narrative data by unearthing patterns, occurrences, metaphors, and meanings of each participant's biographical story. The researcher's goal for this study was to explore the individual biographical narrative case and then examine the data across all five cases or groups. To this end, this researcher used qualitative data analysis (QDA MINER) software to support manually discovered frequencies of information, sequences, and established relationships that emerged. Because of the expected volume of data, the researcher used, but did not completely rely upon, the QDA MINER computer-assisted software. The software is labor intensive and required a significant learning curve in order to achieve a basic level of proficiency. Still, the limited use of the software did help identify or confirm manually selected topics and other relevant factors that exist within single interview data fields and data information that extends across other narratives. This approach helped identify how the five participant Afghan Muslim immigrants conceptualize their identity and understands their life experiences. The use of QDA MINER technology did add to the analysis activity by showing clusters, co-occurrences, and patterned sequences that were captured in biographical interviews.

In an attempt to understand how people conceptualize identity and view their own lived experiences, the researcher followed the constant comparative model (CCM; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This model calls for the deconstruction of data - breaking it down into smaller units through coding techniques in an effort to make thematic sense of the story. The CCM was originally designed to serve as an analytical tool that would yield theory formation in grounded methodological research. However, today it is more widely accepted as a method of analysis within the qualitative research framework. According to Maykut and Morehouse (1994), CCM requires the researcher to take one piece of data (e.g., an interview, a statement, or the theme) and compare it to all other pieces of data that are either similar or dissimilar. At that point, the researcher can begin to contrast the data, seeking ways in which the data are either alike or different to other pieces of collected information. Comparing and contrasting data underscores the inductive nature of the approach and it can result in discoveries of new meanings and interpretations. These new discoveries and the analysis process used exposed unique differences between the constant comparative model and narrative methodology. The constant comparative model attends to the smaller components or elements of a story, whereas the narrative method is theme-oriented and focuses holistically on the elements that contribute to the participant's life events and experiences.

For the current study, the researcher draws upon Glaser and Strauss' (1967) CCM as it originally related to grounded theory data development. Tesch (1990) found relevance in the CCM well beyond grounded theory. Roberts (2010) observed that an important element in contrasting and comparing data is in presenting collected data

through broad lenses and carefully sifting through or synthesizing the data in a logical manner. At the conclusion of this process, salient positions are represented and linked as appropriate through coding comparisons to other fragments of data. In advocating the CCM, Tesch (1990) evolved to a position that the CCM can also serve effectively as an intellectual framework that underlies many other qualitative theoretical designs:

> The main intellectual tool is comparison. The method of comparing and contrasting is used for practically all intellectual tasks during analysis: forming categories, establishing the boundaries of the categories, assigning the segments to categories, summarizing the content of each category, finding negative evidence, etc. The goal is to discern conceptual similarities, to refine the discriminative power of categories, and to discover patterns. (Tesch, 1990, p. 96)

By comparing discrete units of data, as well as through categorizing, coding, creating sub-categories, and connecting them through patterns, this researcher arrived inductively to the discussions, discoveries and conclusions in this study. Further, the CCM approach assisted in offering more complete and thorough analytical work through constant reflection on the collected data. The technique of an applied cycle of frequently comparing old and new data was used not only as it relates to a single participant, but also as that single-source data was then compared to another participant's information. Finally, as suggested by Boeije (2002), this approach delivered rigor within this study, while simultaneously strengthening the study's validity and findings.

This researcher's objective was to apply the principles of both narrative research methods and the CCM in the current study. This approach provides greater definition to participant meanings while offering even more granularity to developed categories and the relationship between the two factors. The researcher encountered complex, multi-layered data that led to multiple, if not competing, interpretations. By advancing narrative methods and the CCM, this research offered greater depths of understanding regarding lived experiences and identity properties and meaning. Such understandings, according to Boeije, Bromberger, and Duijnstee (1999), are reflected in the relationship to elements of each single interview and the distinctiveness of these elements, as compared to other participants' data. In terms of the interview procedures, the current study follows Taylor and Bogdan's (1984) work that captured comparative elements of a qualitative research study on Multiple Sclerosis patients. Similar to Taylor and Bogdan (1984), this researcher used first-cycle coding at the beginning of the interview process as a technique for comparisons of a single interview. In order to fully understand what was said, the researcher examined individual passages for analysis by comparing different parts of the narrative with other elements. By comparing different parts of the interview (fragments), the consistency of the interview as a whole was examined (Boeije, 2002). The objective during this process was the creation of a thorough summary and delivery of a set of comparisons that serve the internal analysis process. Again, this analytical process leads to established categories that helped identify and contrast salient data for meaning and interpretation.

Once the comparison coding and interview analysis was complete for the first interviewee, the researcher followed the same procedures in comparing the narrative data of the second interviewee. Once two sets of separately analyzed data became available, the researcher was able to compare and contrast the first set of data against the data from the second interview. This resulted in an exploration and analysis of the lived experiences and identity formation from within a participant source, followed by a rigorous evaluation across two participant narratives. The strength of this model is in having access to narrative data belonging to individuals who share the same Afghan pre-immigration and U.S. post-immigration experiences. Eventually, all study participants' and group's narrative data was analyzed in the same manner. Boieje (2002) advised that once several interviews and coding analysis is on hand, subsequent participant interviews can be selected based on responses and answers to questions by the comparison process. Among other considerations, comparing fragments of data allowed the researcher to use triangulation and confirm information, events, and activities that contribute to the researcher's own understanding, interpretation, and meaning definition. The purpose of this step is to produce clusters from generated codes and further develop the interpretation and conceptualization of data by seeking out indicators that re-enforce themes (Boieje, 2002).

In terms of process mechanics, the researcher began this analytical stage by listening to the recordings of the direct interviews, followed by re-reading the related transcripts, making notes, and repeating these steps many times. During this stage, the researcher focused on interview patterns, themes, speech, non-verbal communications,

storylines, and emotions, among other factors. Such observations were captured in the researcher's notes taken immediately after, and in some cases during the actual interview session. A copy of these notes will be maintained with the transcripts in the secure locked box mentioned previously and destroyed in accordance with IRB protocols for this research (see Appendix D). At this point in the interview process, suppositions were formed about the transcript's meanings and experiences taking place. Also, at this stage, the researcher considered what gaps exist in the transcripts and what additional questions were needed in order to fill these gaps in the follow-up interviews. Because large amounts of data were collected from the participants during the narrative interviews, managing the data became an important concern. To mitigate this problem, this researcher adopted the approach by Chaitin, Linstroth, and Hiller, who cautioned, "not to lose sight of the forest for the trees" (2009, p. 16). The researcher followed their approach by selecting no more than five major themes and three to five minor themes in each biographical narrative.

The next stage in the process entailed listening (again) to the recording of the interview session and re-reading transcripts. Developing a time event chronology followed this step. Adopting the methods used by Chaitin et al. (2009), this research proved to be an exploration of the biographer's experiences in life: birth, education, occupation, marriage, employment, war, immigration, and peace. Biographical displays enhance individual narrative experiences by adding clarity, understanding, and linkages through a linear account that depicts social, political, individual life events expressed chronologically (Roberts, 2002).

Data Coding Methods

Coding is among the variety of instruments available to researchers to analyze data qualitatively. Coding allows researchers to combine, differentiate, and reflect on data through the creation of themes and patterns (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996). When this researcher began to reflect on the qualitative research method, the problem statement and research question of the current study, he dealt with the issue of selecting the appropriate coding design. Patton addressed this issue, stating "because each qualitative study is unique, the analytical approach used will be unique" (2002, p. 433). Dey (1993) held to the view that prescribed methods of coding are altogether futile and purposeless. He recommended becoming more absorbed in the data as opposed to coding that frequently resembles shorthand note taking. However, other scholars, including Saldana (2009), have taken the position that depending on the nature and goals, a single coding method may be insufficient in revealing the complex phenomenon at work in one's data. Also, the issue of when to decide on the coding methods must be acknowledged. Conversely, there are those who believe heavily in coding, but delay selecting a method until the initial data collection and review process are well underway or complete before making a decision on a coding method. For the current study, the researcher decided on the coding method early in the process. In so doing, the researcher believes he was best able to harmonize the study's theoretical design, analysis, and research goals, as suggested by Saldana (2009). This researcher's coding method goals included giving the silenced a voice after years of conflict dominated by tribal, ethnic, cultural, and institutional

oppression; capturing their overarching identity beliefs, values, and sense of self; and providing rich details through thick narrative stories about lived experiences.

This researcher used descriptive coding as a means to ensure detailed descriptions. Saldana (2009) stated that the purpose behind descriptive coding is to provide summaries or short phrases about a narrative segment or passage. Tesch (1990) stated that descriptive codes identify topics, as opposed to being content focused. The topic is what is talked or written about; the content is the substance of the message. This researcher used descriptive coding methods because they allow readers to share in the research experiences. This was accomplished by offering a sense of what the researcher observed and heard through the direct telling of the participant's narrative story.

When complex social issues interact, solitary unit coding may not offer adequate understanding of what is occurring. Glesne (2005) and Saldana (2009) suggested that coding is most effective in deconstructing complex issues when two or more codes overlap and are combined to strengthen one's understanding. To this end, this researcher used "value" codes in addition to descriptive coding. Applying value coding supported the discovery and emergence of beliefs, values, and the sense of self that belong to the study participants. Simply put, value codes reflect the importance participants place on people, things, and events. Saldana (2009) explains that value codes are applied in qualitative data to reflect a participant's values, attitudes, and beliefs representing his or her perspectives on worldviews. Saldana (2009) further stated that value is reflected in the priority placed on oneself, others, and ideas. Conversely, attitude is how we feel about the same set of factors. Wolcott (1999) stated that beliefs are included in our values and

attitudes in addition to our personal knowledge, experiences, opinions, prejudices, morals, and perceptions of the world.

Value coding served the current research because, when combined, each of the associated value elements (e.g., values, attitudes, and beliefs) comprises who one is in terms of their individual and collective identities. The interest in the participant's identity connects back to this researcher's original research questions: How do experiences shape and inform identity? What role does identity play in pre- and post-immigration outcomes?

The third and final coding or "first cycle" coding method used was In Vivo codes. The researcher used In Vivo codes to give voice to the silenced and honor those who emerged from an environment of prolonged war, conflict, and oppression. The primary goal of In Vivo coding was, "to frame the facilitator's interpretations of terms that participants use in their everyday lives, as opposed to applying terms derived from the academic disciplines or professional practices" (Stringer, 1999, p. 91). The strength of this method is the literal coding that is applied to prioritize and respect the participant's own thoughts, meanings, and interpretations.

Developing Thematic Text

The final analytical coding step involved creating data themes. In this step, the researcher conducted analysis of extended data with longer statements that explained paragraphs and passages with thematic text. This approach differs from the CCM where smaller fragments of data are analyzed. DeSantis and Ugarriza (2000) refer to data themes as, "abstract entities that bring meaning and identity to a recurrent [patterned]

experience and its variant manifestations. As such, the theme in these findings captures

and unifies the nature or basis of the experience into whole" (p. 362). In the current

study, the researcher performed two key thematic coding tasks. First, the researcher

sought out the major themes that emerged from each individual biographical narrative

interview (Chaitin, Linstroth, & Hiller, 2009). With these developed themes, the

researcher then conducted a cross-sectional analysis of the thematic patterns and

frequency of occurrence that were common to each of the five participants. Exploring the

developed patterns and the frequencies helped improve understanding of participants'

holistic experiences while offering suitable depth and insight into the shaped identities

that were pivotal to this study. To help accomplish these steps, the researcher used

technology and employed qualitative data analysis (QDA Miner) mining software to help

retrieve, code, and assist in combing through the mounds of data to ensure thoroughness

and accuracy of findings.

　　　　This type of research technique moved from shortened phrases and nouns that

captured descriptive and value codes, to In Vivo codes that frequently unearthed broader

interpretative themes across narratives. These narratives generally reflected much larger

meaning and analysis. Boyatzis (1998) stated that a theme, "at a minimum describes and

organizes possible observations or at the maximum interprets aspects of the phenomenon.

A theme may be identified at the manifest level that is directly observable in the

information" (p.139). The researcher's goal for any themes that emerged in the current

study was to unveil recurring descriptive and value patterns and identify the common

experiences across studied groups: Afghan Muslim males who had immigrated to the

United States. In this way, providing well-developed data themes helps readers better understand the lived experiences of the participants and identity issues that occurred during their immigration process.

The same factors that make data collection appealing to researchers also serve as potential pitfalls during coding and thematic text development and design. This researcher was reminded that researchers need to collect extensive data about the participants and ensure a clear understanding of the context of the individual's life (Creswell, 2007). Stern (1985) stated that researchers need to be able to identify the critical material associated with the participant's experiences, separated from the researcher's own experiences. Stern (1985) also commented about the importance of uncovering what he called the "figure under carpet" that explains the multilayered context of life. Also, active collaboration is necessary between the participant and researcher, but such activities can lead to shaping how the researcher conveys the story. Still, it is vitally important that collaboration occurs because such activity undergirds data credibility. The goal was to reach and maintain proper balance of roles as researcher and participant. To this end, data checking directly enhances a research study's credibility. Guba and Lincoln (1985) recommended that member checking and verification should take place as often as necessary:

> Checks relating to the accuracy of the data may take place 'on the spot' in the course, and at the end, of the data collection dialogues. Informants may also be asked to read any transcripts of dialogues in which they have participated. (Guba and Lincoln, 1985, p. 69)

The basic aim of this verification effort was to use member checking as an instrument to ensure what had been captured correctly reflects not only what was spoken, but the intent, as well. Guba and Lincoln (1985) suggested that recorders can be very helpful making sure the words match the participant's narrative. Also, in this method of probing into the biographical interview data of the participants, the researcher can effectively use the interviewee's own story to analyze meanings, and such meaning can be unearthed by coding (Henwood & Pidgeon, 1996).

Ethical Considerations

This researcher's approach throughout this project has been to develop and ensure an environment that both honored and respected the privilege afforded to him by those who volunteered to participate in this study. Honor and respect begins with the recognition that participants entrust to the researchers that which cannot be returned and can be misused: their time, story, and voice. By devoting time to this research, the participants allowed the researcher to take part in their narratives, albeit briefly. This researcher returned their commitment with respect and beneficence.

Marshall and Rossman (2010) cautioned that a researcher should refrain from using participants as a means to an end. Instead, this researcher's approach respects the participant's ownership of their narrative and the researcher's role in conveying their voice and analyzing their lived experiences in an authentic and truthful manner. Throughout this process, ensuring the participant's anonymity and safeguarding the data was a constant priority and focus. Thus, the researcher used every possible measure to protect participants' privacy by not divulging any data with names, addresses, telephone

numbers, or social media contact data in any form that could possibly be linked back to the participants and reveal their identities. Among a researcher's most crucial responsibilities, along with adhering to established ethical practices, is the protection of research participants (Patton, 2002). To this end, this researcher used pseudonyms to conceal and protect the identity of the participants in this study. Further, the interpreter and translator organizations and institution names were not provided as an intentional measure to provide added protection and promote confidentiality. Also, another issue that factored into the concern for the participant's protection and confidentiality was the publicized use of chronological mapping data in this study. In the data collection section of this document this researcher addressed Hiller's (2010) chronological mapping technique as an enhanced method to display biographical data. However, during the quality assurance final review, this researcher concluded that the published use of such data could potentially link a subject to a location, and job / occupation, and family, etc. Further, if such connections were established, the participant's identification could be determined. While the risk remains low given the density of interpreters and translators who immigrated to the United States, caution prevented me from including the chronological mapping data into the final published study.

The other component to this researcher's ethical methods involved beneficence, or the notion of doing no harm. In this regard, it was the researcher's obligation to respond to cues from the participants when they were unable to continue. Further, it was the researcher's responsibility to take the required steps and pull back from an interview or line of inquiry when he sensed the interview was intruding in an area that the

participant was not yet ready to address. This approach was important because after more than a decade of war, and an extensive occupation at the hands of the Soviets (in the 1980s), many Afghan people have suffered obvious physical wounds and deep-seated emotional scars. Following this foreign occupation, the Afghan people suffered under the brutal dictates of internal forces jockeying for power, such as the Mujahedeen and Taliban. Due to these circumstances, this researcher's experiences in Afghanistan have made him aware of the possibility that one or more study participants could or may harbor images of a relative, friend, colleague, or even a neighbor who witnessed violence upon them. Knowing when and how to pull back if these images emerged during the interview process was vital in doing no harm.

While respect and beneficence served as hallmarks of this researcher's ethical approach, other considerations included openness and transparency. Steps taken to satisfy these objectives involved obtaining permission and approval to contact participant volunteers and refraining from deception to elicit interviews (Creswell, 2007). Also, being forthcoming about the motives for this research and sharing how the collected data would be used was a commitment this researcher honored. Another step, noted previously, was to share the transcripts of the narrative data with the respective participants. This ensured accuracy and thoroughness with respect to what was captured and understood during the interview and transcription process. This act also served to establish trust with the interviewees by letting them know the researcher honored their voices and narratives. In fact, in two instances changes to the final transcriptions were made as subjects addressed transcription corrections and or modified their initial

statements. Explaining the purpose, goals, and intent of the study also helped to develop

trust while easing apprehensions surrounding the interview process and anxiety over what

was communicated. Finally, this researcher worked to ensure integrity in the project. This

was done by not only presenting the information in an unbiased fashion, but also by

ensuring trustworthiness and by communicating both positive and negative information,

as presented by the participants during the data collection process. Trustworthiness

during the current study's data collection phase was important, as this researcher's goal

was to treat negative data with the same neutrality with which he handled data that

seemed to affirm expected discoveries and findings.

Research Quality

 Trustworthiness. The trustworthiness of qualitative research is often an issue

because prevailing validity and reliability concepts are not as easily addressed as in

quantitative research study methods. In qualitative research, one must identify the risks

and threats and implement mitigations that guard against these threats to research

trustworthiness.

> Qualitative researchers, on the other hand, rarely have the benefit of formal
>
> comparisons, sampling strategies, or statistical manipulations that "control
>
> for" the effect of particular variables, and they must try to rule out most
>
> validity threats after the research has begun, by using evidence collected
>
> during the research itself to make these 'alternative hypotheses' implausible.
>
> (Maxwell, 1998, p. 240)

The view taken in this study is that research without rigor is doomed at inception and will not be accepted into the governing body of literature due to having failed to achieve acceptable standards of practice in qualitative research processes. Due to the challenges inherent in qualitative methods, Altheide and Johnson (1998) recommended applying reliability and validity techniques in research methods as a way to ensure research thoroughness. According to Meadows and Morse (2001), strategies that ensure both reliability and validity of data include ensuring methodological coherence, sampling sufficiency, and thinking theoretically.

To accomplish these strategic aims, this researcher sought to link the method to the research question, thereby connecting the data and the analytic methods. Morse, Barret, Mayan, Olson, and Spiers (2002) called this "methodological coherence" and stated that it ensures congruence between the research question and the qualitative methods used, but also helps the process unfold in a linear fashion. In the current study, the researcher used the narrative research approach to unearth the participants' stories. Further, this researcher adopted narrative biographical methods that are more fully capable of capturing and translating the rich narratives into image form.

The next strategy involves sampling. The goal was to interview study participants who had rich lived experiences and represent the research topic (Creswell, 2013). Throughout this process, the researcher remained mindful of reaching data saturation, which cautions researchers of the futility of continuing when the information ceases to add further amplification to the line of inquiry or investigation (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). As such, the aim of this approach was to account for all aspects of the phenomenon. This

was accomplished by developing information from the participant's narrative interviews that facilitates the model's development (Creswell, 2013).

The third strategy adopted in this research was the concept of "thinking theoretically." According to Meadows and Morse (2001), ideas emerging from data are continuously affirmed and give rise to new data and ideas. In the current research, this approach was exercised through constant member checking and re-validation of collected data. Thinking theoretically requires remaining open to new abstract ideas and demonstrating a willingness to make cognitive leaps, achieve information saturation, and use as many interviews as needed to validate and confirm new ideas.

Triangulation. The lived experiences of the study participants were examined in this study from a wide vantage point. That is, the researcher used a diverse collection of resources, including articles, books, published studies, journals, and the participant narratives and stories as a framework that provided balance and, in some instances, offered an assessment of the theories and ideas themselves. According to Fielding and Fielding (1986), this approach works to mitigate the risk of chance associations and systematic biases due to over reliance on a specific method, and it facilitates better assessments of the developed explanations.

Triangulation was used to serve this research, as it helped to apply and practice the premise of drawing from multiple perspectives as an investigative technique. Not surprisingly, the narrative approach itself supported this aim, as the individual stories of the lived experiences contributed to theoretical underpinnings, discoveries and findings. The triangulation technique strengthens the quality assurance efforts. According to

Maanen, "individual viewpoints and experiences can be verified against others and, ultimately, a rich picture of the attitudes, needs or behavior of those under scrutiny may be constructed based on the contributions of a range of people" (1983, pp. 45). Moreover, some practitioners go as far as encouraging researchers to seek out ways to verify elements of study participant information via other participant narratives as a means of comparison, corroboration, and validation (Dervin, 1983). This researcher used this approach as thematic codes were developed within each individual narrative. Additionally, verification and validation of information was conducted through analysis of derived common patterns and themes found as cross-sectional threads in the study.

Transferability. Transferability is the ability to apply the findings of one study to another and the extent to which a study invites readers to make connections between elements of the study and their own experiences (Merriam, 1998). Firestone (1993) cautioned that while no two studies are alike, researchers must provide adequate contextual data to allow others to make transfers. The current research provided sufficient details while avoiding inferences and supposition, enabling contrast and comparisons to other research studies of Muslim immigrant experiences and identity development. This researcher's goal was to give other researchers and readers sufficiently thick descriptions of the phenomenon to enable proper comparisons and analysis. This approach generally aids trustworthiness and enhances research reliability, acceptability and validity (Merriam, 1998).

The challenge with transferability is in the prevailing concern that the results of research cannot be "readily" applied to other studies (Merriam, 1998). One approach used

in the current research was to offer adequately detailed descriptions surrounding the

contextual information. Even with these mitigating steps, researchers acknowledge

situations and populations are too dissimilar to draw total comparative meaning from one

study to another. It is difficult to demonstrate that the findings and conclusions are fully

applicable to other situations and populations. Scholars believe that, in practice, even

conventional generalizability is never possible, as all observations are defined by the

specific contexts in which they occur (Erlandson, 1993). However, this view is opposed

by the belief that while the current study of Afghan Muslim male interpreters and

translators' migrating to the West is unique, it is also representational of interpreters and

translators supporting the coalition in Afghanistan. According to Stake (1995) and

Denscombe (1998), the sub-group's reflexive nature of the broader group can set the

conditions and establish the potential for transferability.

Credibility. A study's credibility is threatened by errors in which research

subjects respond with what they think is the preferred social response; that is, data is

based on social desirability, rather than on personal experience (Kirk & Miller, 1986). As

such, the researcher for the current study sought to demonstrate that the integrity of the

data is based on the research design aims. Krefting (1991) stated that prolonged

engagement assists in detecting response sets where informants consistently either agree

or disagree with the questions. Further, Krefting (1991) recommended enhancing

research credibility by using numerous interviews and observation periods. The

researcher for the current study adopted prolonged engagement methods, better enabling

the researcher to strengthen the study's integrity. Other activities the researcher used to

defend against this risk involved peer reviews, member checking, and adherence to the tenants of trustworthiness and reflexivity.

In the introduction section of this document, the researcher use reflexivity to inform readers of his background and considerable time spent in Afghanistan working in a coalition environment that relied heavily on Afghan interpreters and translators. This researcher's reflexive approach sought to enhance his research goals by acknowledging his participation and understanding of the phenomenon. Kielhofner (1982) supported the importance of intense participation, suggesting that it enhances research findings through intimate familiarity and discovery of hidden fact. Agar (1991) noted that the researcher's background dictates the framework from which he or she will organize, study, and analyze the findings. For example, in the researcher's experiences in Afghanistan, he directly observed and interacted daily with interpreters and translators working in support of the coalition. These experiences were based on interactions across a myriad of events, activities, and contextual settings. These experiences both serve the researcher's credibility goals, while guarding or mitigating the issues involving creditability.

Just as prolonged researcher engagement can be a benefit to one's research study credibility, paradoxically, it can also be a detractor. Marcus and Fischer (1986) warned that a major threat to the truth-value of a qualitative study lies in the closeness of the relationship between the investigator and the informants. Here, the concern is the loss of researcher neutrality. The researcher's bias could be injected into the analysis process and, subsequently, impair the findings. Thus, throughout the process, the researcher focused on not becoming so engaged with the participants' narrative stories that it

becomes difficult to separate their experiences from his own (Marcus & Fischer, 1986).
To prevent this from occurring, the researcher used reflexivity and member checking as
useful tools to guard against this potential threat (Good, Herrera, Good, & Cooper, 1985).

     Confirmability. A key consideration throughout the current study was the
concern of maintaining the researcher's own objectivity. The researcher's goal was to
deliver findings that were rooted in the ideas and experiences of the informants, rather
than the researcher's predilections. Krefting (1991) stated that the concept of
confirmability is the qualitative investigator's comparable concern to objectivity. Guba
(1981) gave several strategies that help the readers determine how far the data diverges
from the informant's constructed experiences. One such strategy encouraged this
researcher to admit his own predispositions. Beliefs, underlying decisions, and methods
adopted should be acknowledged within the research report, the reasons for favoring one
approach when others could have been taken explained, and weaknesses in the techniques
actually employed admitted (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

     Confirmability techniques used in the current research included triangulation in an
attempt to minimize the researcher's own bias by comparing data against other
participant reference points. In providing details that defined all aspects of this research
process, the researcher aimed to show the linkage between the research questions and the
succeeding work. Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggested employing reflexivity to uncover
emerging theories and information that were not developed from the data. A different
approach used to ensure confirmability is auditing. This strategy allows an observer to
trace the course of the research methods from collection, analysis, and findings through

the decisions made and procedures described (Guba, 1981). This strategy involves an external auditor attempting to follow through the natural history or progression of events in a project to understand how and why decisions were made. In addition, auditability suggests that another researcher could arrive at comparable conclusions given the same data and research context (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The researcher for the current study ensured that notes, records, and all manner of documentation were maintained and available for key and contributing aspects of interpretation and discovery.

Chapter 7

Participant Narratives

Explanation. To help readers better understand how the individual summaries in Part One and shared themes in Part Two were derived, the following descriptions and explanations are provided. Although the participant narratives and accompanying transcripts are not part of the main body of this research report, coding data taken from these narratives will assist readers in understanding the process used by this researcher. Sharing the coding data also strengthens research quality by lessening concerns about how outcomes, findings and conclusions were arrived at. To the same end, including the participant narrative transcripts at Appendix F serves to better inform the reader and researcher.

First-cycle coding methodological techniques were used to extract meaning, elicit discovery and to ensure sound interpretation and analysis of narrative information. This researcher used "descriptive" coding (DC) as a means to ensure detailed understanding of the narratives. The purpose behind its use was to provide short phrases about what was happening (Saldaña, 2009). The descriptive codes focused on topics in the stories, as opposed to the content. The second code applied was a "value" code (VC). This supported the discovery of beliefs, attitudes, and the sense of self that belonged to each of the participants. The last code applied was the "in vivo" code (IVC). The in vivo codes were used to give voice to the silenced while prioritizing and respecting the participant's own thoughts, meanings, and interpretations. After the narratives were transcribed, topics that captured the narrative text were listed chronologically for

referencing purposes, and to connect them back to their narrative source.

Once all coding was complete, the data was captured in paragraphs in the first cycle coding section. This section lists each of the three codes separately, along with their corresponding DC, VC and IVC topic number listing. Also, observations made during the interview process along with the narrative data enabled theme development in addition to framing the individual summary analysis of each of the five participants' stories. This process facilitated the creation of shared and common themes found in Part One. The same parallel process resulted in the development of patterns and supported the overarching analysis in Part Two.

This process and the research quality control techniques used allow the reader to better understand what text was identified for coding and the rationale for coding it. The process also shows the links between the actual coding and participant meaning. Further, it demonstrates the connections between the individual summaries and shared themes, and the discoveries or findings themselves.

Part One

Themes, Codes and Analysis

Participant One:

A. Themes: Pashtun ethnicity, Tribalism, Islam religion, Muslim, Family, Afghan
Nationalism

B. 1st Cycle Coding:

Value Code (VC): VC1. Lived experiences; VC2. Afghan citizen; VC3. Differences;
VC4. Hollywood misperceptions; VC5. Not paying attention; VC6. Not understanding
the west; VC7. Pashtun history; VC8. West not knowing Afghan ways; VC9. Good or
bad conduct; VC10. Pashtun customs; VC11. Elders and Jirgas; VC12. Protecting
welcomed guest; VC13. Meaning of guest; VC14. Differing perspectives; VC15.
Understanding people; VC16. American helping others; VC17. Policy changes; VC18.
One Afghanistan under Pashtun beliefs; VC19. Pashtun as defacto ethnicity; VC20. Only
Pashtun narrative; VC21. Pashtun worked for country; VC22. Die a Pashtun; VC23. Die
an Afghan; VC24. Western media misrepresents Pashtun people; VC25. Controlling
minds VC26. Afghan and Muslim condemnation; VC27. Working with the people;
VC28. Know Idea; VC29. Misunderstanding each other; VC30. Questioning cultural
awareness; VC31. Normal life; VC32. Life's effect; VC33. Immigrant; VC34. Keeping
religion and Culture; VC35. Freedom of speech; VC36. Everyone is proud; VC37. Not
judging; VC38. Proud Muslim Afghan; VC39. Her choice; VC40. Male roles; VC41. My
woman; VC41. Male escorts; VC42. Afghan identity; VC43. Cultural protection; VC44.
Freedom of practice; VC45. Strength.

Descriptive Code (DC): DC1. War; DC2. Refugees; DC3. Returning home; DC4. Silenced; DC5. Working with the coalition; DC6. Picked Chicago; DC7. Assimilate culturally; DC8. Growing up in Afghanistan; DC9. Multiculturalism; DC10. Different religions; DC11. US in Afghanistan; DC12. Tribal men; DC13. Tribal laws; DC14. Infidel; DC15. Tribal code; DC16. Osama Bin Laden; DC17.British (colonial) perspective; DC18. Cultural understanding; DC19. US's intention; DC20. Mixed groups; DC21. No ethnic differences; DC22. Taken as terrorist; DC23. Taken as killers; DC24. Careful divulging Afghan identity; DC25. Tough fighting the media; DC26. Changing their minds; DC27. Complete difference; DC28. American schools; DC29. Can't speak; DC30. How it works; DC31. School bombing; DC32. Dying; DC33. Stress; DC34. Detained; DC35. Limitation; DC36. Deception; DC37. Different language; DC38. 99 percent Muslim; DC39. Only Islam; DC40. Nice Muslim; DC41. Whole religion; DC42. Knowing Afghanistan; DC43. Women; DC43. Law; DC44. Security; DC45. Practicing religion; DC46. No different Afghan ethnicities; DC47. Shared identity; DC48. Fear; DC49. Religious identity; DC50. Source of misinformation.

In Vivo Code (IVC): IVC1. Changes; IVC2. Differences; IVC3. Not being heard; IVC4. Mixed Chicago; IVC5. Cultural awareness; IVC6. Third World; IVC7. American way; IVC8. Afghan meaning and reference; IVC9. Pashtun majority; IVC10. British history of Afghanistan; IVC11. Dispute settlements; IVC12. Seeing events differently; IVC13. Pashtun vs Islamic laws; IVC14. American invasion; IV15. Proud Pashtun; IVC16. Working for country; IVC17. Asian identity; IVC18. Sometimes tough; IVC19. Careful identifying oneself; IVC20. Knowing the people; IVC21. Family background; IVC22.

Mistakes; IVC23. Mission; IVC24. Listening; IVC25. Not caring; IVC26. Growing up in the war; IVC27. Coming home alive or not; IVC28. Peace; IVC29. Drones; IVC30. Insurgents; IVC31. No concept of living; IVC32. Reborn; IVC33. Trust; IVC34. Mistrust; IVC35. Proud American; IVC36. Freedom; IVC37. Muslims kill; IVC38. Know the religion; IVC39. Muslims not terrorist; IVC40. Terrorist and bomber; IVC40. Will not allow her…; IVC41. Culture with him; IVC42. Community focus; IVC43. He is Afghan; IVC44. Hazaras; IVC45. More proud of Pashtun; IVC46. Stronger in faith; IVC47. Fear of losing faith; IVC48. Conquering fear; IVC49. Deeper into Islam; IVC50. Beep, beep, beep; IVC51. Understand each other; IVC52. Better person; IVC53. No Afghan choices.

C. *Summary analysis:* During our pre-interview phone call, I sensed that this subject had minimal opportunities to speak about his lived experiences. He had been silenced and left without a voice. As it turns out, a pattern of being silenced, powerless, marginalized and not recognized or respected was an undertone throughout the interview; in his words, "No one listened to me, people had to listen to me, and I couldn't say anything."

What stands out during his story is the sense that until 2003 and 2004, all life experiences were described as normal in Afghanistan for this subject. In his world, peace was abnormal and war, violence and conflict were part of the routine fabric of society. He stated that under the Soviet occupation he had seen so much violence that he had become numb to it. As a consequence of foreign presence in Afghanistan, he and his family were often forced to move. Understandably, he projects blame for the conflict on outsiders, mainly the Soviets, British and Pakistan. In addition, he frequently denounces the media

portrayal of Afghanistan, to which he attributes internal strife and tensions. These images, he maintains, are often spread by people who do not know Muslims or Afghanistan: "These people willfully follow false narratives written by colonial actors." To this end, he observed that much of what is written about his country was framed by "those British". And he goes further, commenting that "given the multiple wars with the British [19th and early 20th centuries], there is a hatred they [the British] have for Pashtun people." This animus appears deeply lodged into his being. He quickly works to counter the narrative and regain power by responding that "The real history of the Pashtun people and Afghanistan can only be captured by Afghans themselves."

The participant views his identity as constructed internally and externally in a Pashtun existence. Moreover, this view of Pashtun existence extends above all else and is underscored by a belief that the tribe is most important. This is evident in his pre-immigration identity reflection. The only tribe worthy to hold such claim are the Pashtuns who have sacrificed repeatedly throughout history for the nation of Afghanistan. In the more than 13 thousand words of his narrative, there are but nine oblique references to the minority Tajiks and Hazaras. Conversely, there are more than 60 direct references to Pashtuns.

Pashtun tribal heritage, culture, and his Muslim being underpinned his pre-immigration sense of self. The Pashtun code of "guest", honor and respect are frequent occurrences, focus and comments. His motivations to work with the coalition forces appear rooted in altruistic aims, namely, to help the West understand Afghan culture, traditions and people in addition to ethnic/tribal practices and beliefs. These factors

contributed to his pain and trepidation over the loss of Afghan and specifically, Pashtun lives during the war.

In terms of his post-immigration sense of self and experiences, Afghan nationalism, family and tribal belonging emerge as key identity markers. As for Afghan nationalism, this identity characteristic surfaces from interactions and responses with Western individuals. He states, "I am proud of being an Afghan, but I would be careful to represent myself as such." This view is underpinned by his feeling that the West has been influenced, if not corrupted by false narratives and images of the Afghans as warlike people, killers, extremists and terrorists. In response to this false narrative, he aligns himself to the larger group of Southwest Asians or at times to a Muslim identity.

Identity concerns notwithstanding, I noted that the participant wore jeans, a colored shirt (Western clothes), and a large blue topaz ring on his right ring finger. This is typical of the kinds of jewelry and native stone found in Afghanistan. He also wears a black-and-white checkered scarf around his neck, customary wear for Afghan males.

A key post-immigration theme is his religion - the practice of Islam. His commitment to Islam guides and shapes his authentic self: a Muslim, Pashtun, family person, and an Afghan. He communicates his fears over these core beliefs - losing his identity was a recurring issue. And, in his worldview, the first step toward losing his identity would be to fail as a Muslim. Remaining true to his religious convictions by going "deeper into his Muslim faith" enables him to remain aligned and true to his history, culture, ethnicity and ancestry.

Participant Two:

A. Themes: Tribe, Hazaras, Freedom, oppression, violence and marginalization, family, freedom, enlightenment, culture

B. 1st Cycle Coding:

Value Code (VC): VC1. Against my religion; VC2. Mixed feelings; VC3. Ethnic pride; VC4. To live free; VC5. Don't care; VC6. Hazaras culture; VC7. Blended identity; VC8. Family; VC9. Two cultures; VC10. Maintain a cultural link; VC11. Keeping cultural links; VC12. Be a good cultural model; VC13. Education.

Descriptive Code (DC): DC1. Lived experience; DC2. Family worrying; DC3. Danger; DC4. Help people; DC5. Working with coalition mentors; DC6. What can be done; DC7. No options; DC8. Hazaras treatment; DC9. Different life now; DC10. American; DC11. American experience; DC12. Assimilation; DC13. No religious freedom in Afghanistan; DC14. Struggling to belong; DC15. Integrating into society; DC16. Fitting in; DC17. Don't care about tribal identity; DC18. In Kabul some mixed communities.

In Vivo Code (IVC): IVC1. Normal; IVC2. Nervousness; IVC3. Life good, but…,; IVC4. Take of your country; IV5. Proud of some gains; IV6. Being targeted; IV7. Home; IV8. Different selves; IV9. No full Afghan identity; IV9. No full Afghan identity; IV10. Mixed cultures; IV11. Religious freedom in the west; IV12. Children not comfortable with native language; IV13. Feeling safe; IV14. Tension; IV15. Better life.

C. *Summary analysis:* This participant seems desensitized to war and the associated violence. He speaks generally about life and his lived existence as being "alright, even normal" until 2005. The questions of values and identity are assessed as undergoing

significant change within a relatively brief period. His pre-immigration self was characterized as a practicing Muslim, proud of his Hazara family heritage and tribal belonging. It is this affiliation to his tribe that appears most strident among his identity beliefs/traits. He states that his focus in working with the coalition was to bring relief to his people. By "his people" he means the Hazara tribal family, rather than the wider Afghan people. This distinction underscores a connection to a minority and his thoughts on surviving marginalization, oppression and physical violence at the hands of the majority Pashtun tribes because of their ethnic differences. While his pre-immigration self is framed by his relatedness to the Hazara group, it is equally surprising to hear his adverse views regarding the majority tribe in Afghanistan, and for that matter, the country itself. As such, it was not a major revelation to hear him describe his current identity as a Hazara, or American, not as an Afghan.

He communicates a passion for and a deeply rooted connection to the West (i.e. the United States) and suggests a feeling of indebtedness for his freedom and welcome after a harsh lived experience during his pre-immigration phase. While it is possible that he has come to terms with his pre-immigration self, conflicting comments give way to doubts. What is evident is that separation from his native Afghanistan has not shaken his feeling of belonging to his tribal community. This seems to satisfy his need for belonging and connection to his native home, as he maintains awareness of and devotion to the traditions, cultural practices and customs that frame Hazara identity.

What is less certain in his post-immigration self is his acceptance of either Eastern or Western identities. Instead, this subject describes a feeling of being between two

different cultures. He comments on the use of English at home with his children while attempting to honor the language of their past (Dari). The feeling of religious freedom surfaces as another thematic pattern, with subtle references to religious oppression during pre-immigration, and some indications of pain/trauma. More significant is the belief that his identity is a hybrid between two distinctive cultures: East (native) and West (adopted). This hybrid at least sets the conditions that enable safe negotiation between two cultures.

The last theme that emerges in his narrative and appears to offer insight into his self-identity is enlightenment. To this end, the family serves as a key instrument as he and his wife ensure that the children grow up without discriminating against or judging others simply on the basis of looks or differences. This is particularly important as the subject made subtle references to being targeted by others in his pre-immigration past simply because he looked like a Hazara, and not part of the majority. This issue is further bolstered by a comment that "people should be allowed to marry whoever or whichever tribal members they wish". For Afghans in rural villages, such open-minded thinking is likely to carry penalties inside and outside of one's own tribe.

Participant Three:

A. Themes: Fear, Tajik tribe, western values, Family, openness, freedom of religion

B. 1st Cycle Coding:

Value Code (VC): VC1. Connecting to Afghans; VC2. Seeking out other Afghans; VC3. Religious meaning and practice; VC4. Chooses universal values; VC5. Universal value is good; VC6. More freedoms in the West; VC7. Modifying your views.

Descriptive Code (DC): DC1. Experience; DC2. Work with troops; DC3. Helping NATO; DC4. Introduce one's self; DC5. Ethnic identity; DC6. Help from westerners; DC7. Religious values; DC8. Challenging Afghan values; DC9. East – west value differences; DC10. Speaking to Afghan or Western identity and values.

In Vivo Code (IVC): IVC1. Fear; IVC2. Our nation; IVC3. Being human; IVC4. Don't care; IVC5. Freedom to practice religion; IVC6. Feeling free in the west; IVC7. Islam is not only for Afghanistan; IVC8. Religious choice; IVC9. US identity; IVC10. Feeling his western freedom; IVC11. Going with the flow; IV12. Dual selves; IVC13. Leaving mother behind; IVC14. Live in peace.

C. *Summary analysis:* This subject's post-immigration self appears uncomfortably positioned towards a non-Afghan, pro West self-identity. He defines Afghanistan in the abstract, centered on cultural, historic and national meanings. His posture throughout the interview presented an individual struggling with words, tense, uncomfortable and with defensive body language: fist closed, facial muscles tightened at times and constantly looking away, avoiding eye contact. His responses appeared measured, somewhat guarded and shrouded in reflections of what Afghanistan should be. In these descriptions

he referred to a society and culture forced to conform to an identity "others" defined as correct or acceptable. Freedom of choice surfaced as an issue with regard to both religious practice and societal norms.

The theme of the pre-immigration phase was identity: "Most Afghans," he says, "do not care who you are." His closed, defensive body language underscored his membership of a minority Afghan group - the Tajiks - targeted and harshly treated by the Pashtun majority. His responses seemed conditioned to minimally acknowledge his ethnic, cultural and national being, including his ancestral heritage. Whether his response served as an outright rejection of his old self, or defensive mechanism that allows him to negotiate it with a new identity, the language (e.g. verbal and non-verbal) demonstrated a level of anxiety, discomfort, and perhaps even guilt. Negotiating his identity, conflict and guilt seemed evident when he stated, "I felt bad leaving my mother in Afghanistan." This seems to frame his internal conflict with the fact that his departure meant leaving much of what he felt was connected to his being. Negotiating his pre-immigration and post-immigration self seems unresolved.

The comment "With non-Westerners you get less help", reveals at worst a level of frustration, antagonism and struggle, or at best a past disappointment during a pre-immigration lived experience or body of experiences. Given his minority Tajik status during the height of the war, the potential difficulties are easy to conceive. As such, not getting help from non-Westerners could mean that Afghans, or even broader groups of Muslims, did not offer help to him or his family when it was most needed. In his belief, such help can only come from the West and, more specifically, from Americans. Placed

in context, such responses seem to explain a pro-Western and seemingly anti-Afghan stance.

Regarding post-immigration values, religion and being accepted are recurring themes, along with freedom of choice. While expressing feelings regarding freedom to practice Islam as he chooses, he emphasizes the importance of Islam over the state. His view appears more expansive regarding Islam. Alternatively, his view could reflect an overt or subconscious distancing from his native Afghanistan. This observation is underscored by the participant's comments such as, "Islam belongs to the Muslim world, it is a religion and that religion is not in Afghanistan." Further, the subject views those who self-identify as Afghan Muslims as limiting themselves or diminishing their own value. To this end, he comments, "But, if you call yourself Afghan, you give yourself a definite value… and that value is limited."

Participant Four:

A. Themes: Religious fundamentalism, violence and oppression, freedom, fear and anger, Pashtun, Islam, family, honor and respect, freedom, tradition, nationalism

B. 1st Cycle Coding:

Value Code (VC): VC1. Among his own people; VC2. Pride; VC3. Hope and aspirations for Afghanistan; VC4. Tribal responsibility; VC5. Tribal and family honor; VC6. Responsibility is important; VC7. Family and Tribal pride; VC8. Focus on the group; VC9. Pashtun values; VC10. Relationships are important; VC11. Reverence for elders in Pashtun culture; VC12. Equality; VC13. Dishonor; VC14. Family and tribe; VC15. Live as we choose; VC16. Ethnic traditions; VC17. Individual responsibility; VC18. Core identity values; VC19. Maintaining relationships; VC20. Respect for religion.

Descriptive Code (DC): DC1. Forced to grow a beard; DC2. Taken into custody; DC3. Detained like others; DC3. Driven away by authorities; DC4. Knowing the imprisoned; DC5. Imprisoned for 3 days; DC6. Walking to freedom; DC7. Being mistakenly shot; DC8. Getting out of Afghanistan; DC9. Lived experience in Afghanistan; DC10. Living under extremist laws; DC11. Not measuring up; DC12. How things get done; DC13. Maintaining tribal connections; DC14. Achievement; DC15. Clinging to old ways; DC16. They relate to their own; DC17. Pashtun stay together; DC18. Equal social status; DC19. Hardest decision; DC20. Cannot go back home; DC21. Hard time; DC22. Burdens of carrying for the family; DC23. Freedom; DC24. Suffering; DC25. Our space; DC26. Friendly people; DC27. Don't interfere; DC28. Not in Wardak Village; DC29. Family members correct.

In Vivo Code (IVC): IVC1. Bound; IVC2. Leave Afghanistan; IVC3. Not being heard;

IVC4. Being helped; IVC5. Fear of being stopped; IVC6. Never harmed anyone; IVC7.

Importance of God; IVC8. Do not mix ethnicities; IVC9. Marginalized; IVC10.

Overwhelmed emotionally; IVC11. Easier life in the west; IVC12. Not in Afghanistan;

IVC13. Being ignored; IVC14. Cannot acclimate oneself.

C. *Summary analysis:* This subject demonstrates what appears to be an authentic

commitment to a sense of self that reflects tribal (Wardak), religious (Islam) and national

(Afghan) identities. Remarkably, his sense of self-identity appears consistent at both pre-

and post-immigration phases. The condition is realized despite fear, verbal abuse and

physical detention, along with more overt threats to his life by Taliban officials. What

stands out is his seemingly authentic and deep relatedness to tribe even through war and

conflict. Recurring themes for this participant include honor, respect, family and

freedom. Of these values honor, respect and family are particularly important attributes as

they represent non-negotiable identity traits for the tribe. In the subject's view, even at a

time of deep emotional distress the tribe is what you have, and it was they who helped

him when it was most needed. He recounts that when he was forcibly detained by the

Taliban for not obeying sharia law (i.e. facial hair not long enough), the response from a

tribal member was "I will try and help you out." In the end, tribal relations are most

important.

Above all, ensuring honor and respect are critical values for the family. Not

harming the family name or bringing shame is a valued principle. More importantly,

these values extend beyond the family to the tribe. For this subject, the tribe and the

family are connected. To underscore this point, his 7200-word narrative contains 68

references to his tribe and 35 direct references to tribal relations and/or connectedness.

At the post-immigration phase, identity value is intertwined with his tribal self,

his Pashtun self, and his Afghan self-being. What connects him to other native Afghans is

not only these traits, history and customs, but also the violence from which the Pashtun

group emerged. The participant often refers to the collective suffering "we" have

undergone, meaning that Pashtun and tribal members like him have suffered and

sacrificed for their country.

Participant Five:

A. Themes: Pashtun ethnicity, tribe, respect and honor, belonging, Islam, family, war and conflict.

B. 1st Cycle Coding:

Value Code (VC): VC1. Respected family; VC2. Pashtun family; VC3. Mind and soul; VC4. Pashtun heritage; VC5. Keeping this identity; VC6. Pashtun; VC7. Islam and family; VC8. Shameful acts; VC9. Identity; VC10. Have to live; VC11. Don't have respect; VC12. Own culture; VC13. Keep tribal identity; VC14. Pashtun and Afghan; VC15. Rest of my life.

Descriptive Code (DC): DC1. Government collapse; DC2. Fighting starts; DC3. Pakistan; DC4. Germany; DC5. Mujahedeen Mind and soul; DC6. No food; DC7. Father displaced; DC8. Soviet work; DC9. Killed by Mujahedeen; DC10. Killed bunches of people; DC11. Mother; DC12. Lose respect; DC13. Keep away from bad cultures; DC14. Doing bad things; DC15. Sister; DC16. Love New York; DC17. Felt bad; DC18. Watching the news.

In Vivo Code (IVC): IVC1. Avoiding conflict and war; IVC2. Unknown; IVC3. War closing in; IVC4. High school destroyed; IVC5. Tribal reflection; IVC6. They killed him; IVC7. Free country, an illusion; IVC8. Wives taken; IVC9. Torture; IVC10. Mother disrespected; IVC11. Called different names; IVC12. Waiting on news; IVC13. Life destroyed; IVC14. Very hard; IVC15. Going back home; IVC16. Passed away; IVC17. Terrorist; IVC18. World; IVC19. Doors slammed; IVC20. Respectfully; IVC21. Keep your identity; IVC22. Afghanistan; IVC23. Forced to move.

C. *Summary analysis:* The pain and scars of surviving a war are evident with this subject. As Pashtun tribal members, he and his family found themselves running from house to house in an effort to avoid mujahedeen fighters battling over territory in a place that could be described as ground zero: Kandahar province. Nothing underscores the trauma and terror more than the subject's own words: "As the government collapsed and an insurgent bloodbath occurred, we ran from place to place to protect my mother and sister from rape. They killed my father because he refused to join them… I remembered days – two and three at a time – when we didn't eat and barely drank water."

Through the struggle of war, strength emerged and - most importantly to the participant - his identity, girded by honor, dignity and respect served and guided him and his family. For this participant, honor, respect and dignity form the core of his identity and characterize his sense of self. In terms of his identity representation, his Pashtun ethnicity is a source of pride and belonging. Surprisingly, the traumatic events he experienced were at times committed by his fellow Pashtun, albeit different factions within the larger tribal group. Even an apparent awareness that Pashtun were responsible for acts of oppression and violence against other Pashtun people brings no condemnation of his fellow Pashtun. Instead, there is displaced and projected anger against colonial influences for disturbing the tribal customs and practices of the majority Pashtun. Also subject to his anger and disdain are members of minority tribes: Hazaras and Tajiks. He repeatedly intimates that the problems of Afghanistan ignited as tribes began to mix and integrate. Such references are underpinned in his own words: "There was once an educated majority (Pashtun) in Afghanistan. Now, people are uneducated, and everything

has changed." The contextual implication is that minority groups are to blame for much of the decay the country has experienced, and that the decay began once different cultures and tribes starting mingling.

As a majority tribal member, his identity is evident as he asserts that his name, family, honor and place in society were achieved on the backs of his father and grandfather. He views his legacy as intertwined with carrying on that heritage. Losing respect and honor is equated with not adhering to his Islamic traditions, which define and frame the family, tribal and Afghan national meanings, beliefs and values. Another component to this participant's self-being is the narrative that speaks to the importance of land and family/tribal heritage. To this participant, land represents value and worth, and this is undergirded by his comments about the land's importance to the family. This is evident as he describes his time as a refugee in Pakistan and later in Germany as "emotional torment. I missed my land, it was hard, my life was destroyed and my soul was in Afghanistan." In many ways, land represented not only who they were, but what they are and the legacy that was passed along to them. He indicates that a successful lived existence is in Afghanistan, honoring his ancestors by passing what he was given down to others.

Post-immigration, he exhibits a conflicted sense of self. Negotiating the West, he tolerates slammed doors, piercing stares from neighbors and whispers from others as he walks to and from his apartment. He admits to feeling disrespected and intimates that he feels that he does not belong, admitting that no one talks to him. Loneliness is a factor and contributes to not feeling connected to his new home. He shares how he was stopped

in Maryland by the police, and questioned about the car he was driving. In his words,

"Everyone thinks I am a terrorist here." Partly out of survival, and to counter loneliness,

he and his family moved to a multi-cultural community in New York. He wants to fit in,

but admits that as his family becomes adjusted to New York, that presents conflicts. He is

proud that his children speak and understand their native Pashtun Dari language, but

shares concerns that their competing Western lived experiences will overcome any pull

vis-a-vis the language, customs and practices of his native land. He states that a big fear

is keeping his identity: Pashtun, the Muslim religion, and Afghan nationalism. This fear

is underscored by an internal conflict as he works to assimilate and fit in to his new

home.

Part Two

Overall Themes, Patterns and Analysis

In terms of common or shared themes and patterns, five attributes/values routinely surfaced across each of the five study participants. These include family, ethnicity/tribe, religion, marginalization/voicelessness, and Islamophobia. These patterns reflected deep-seated beliefs, attitudes and cultural orientations that were evident through the narratives during the pre- and post-immigration periods.

Family. Identity issues surrounding and involving family conflict emerged in both pre- and post-immigration timeframes. This common Afghan identity value is not surprising to this researcher because literature cited in this study found that the core of Afghan society, culture and individual identity is the family. According to Canfield (1986), the Afghan social structure can best be understood by analyzing and deconstructing the family units, traditions and societal customs. However, even with the family established as a fundamental value and attribute of Afghan culture and society, the manner in which "family" was interpreted and the beliefs and values these participants attached to it were remarkably dissimilar and wide ranging. These differences extended to individuals, families, and ethnicities/tribes, in addition to inter-group boundaries. For instance, the narratives of the majority Pashtun members focused on the family in the context of a more holistic body structure and an integrated unit. In other words, their individual identities are intertwined and comingled into the family identity construct. Moreover, the family's own identity is further nested into their respective tribal identity. This integration is so established and socialized that the participants' narratives each

underscored their existence only in contextual terms as members of their family groups, not as individuals. Further, the narratives suggest that individuality and/or uniqueness of personality is less important and even frowned upon by these Pashtun participants. Furthermore, the comments about the family support a larger narrative that was shared across all Pashtun ethnic participants involving the family gender roles. This narrative speaks subtlety to inter-group conflict issues between the Pashtun majority and the minority Hazaras and Tajiks. To this point, Participant One stated:

> Afghans, especially Pashtun, they're more protective of their families and especially the women. In America, and other Afghan groups, it's totally different, where men and women are equal. If a woman is 18 or 21, she goes to get her a job or has certain independence. She does what she wants. She gets married. She finds her own husband or boyfriend or whatever. She lives with her boyfriend and does stuff her own way – whatever she chooses to. But in Afghanistan, it's different. My sister wants to get married. As a brother, I have to know whom she's marrying. Is he able to provide for her? Is he able to protect her? If he is able to provide protection, and all that she needs, would she be able to bring that happiness in her life? That's why a kind of man gets control of her. It's kind of the task and duty of being the elder of the family or being the elder of our tribe. We are very protective of women, especially with women – they're able to be accompanied by a male whenever they go somewhere. In general because I see different ethnic groups and family different

standards and everything. But if you go to downtown Kabul, you will see

girls walking in jeans – the same way that they do in America in different

towns. You wouldn't see this if you go to Pashtun areas, their stuff is

different. I won't allow my woman to go outside by herself. It's not

because I don't trust my sister or my wife. It's because I don't want other

groups or anybody to harm her. I need to be with her. I want to be the

brother. I want to be the cousin who will be able to provide security when

she needs it. That's why whenever there's a Pashtun woman going

anywhere; a male escorts her. It's not because we don't give her freedom

to do whatever she wants.

This belief is contrasted by personal struggles and family tensions as subjects

sought to maintain a balance between identity changes stemming from pre- to post-

immigration transition and its impact on second-generation family members. Participant

Two stated:

We are between two cultures. It is getting mixed between two cultures. At

my home and every Afghan's home in America, you cannot say you are

completely Afghans. I will give you a small example. When I am talking

to my family, my kids answer me back in English. So in that case you feel

that you are mixed because your children are going to school where they

are talking in English. With daddy they are not comfortable. They cannot

answer you in the correct way that they want. They are looking for words

from like, "OK dad, what do you mean?" I just gave you a small example

to understand what it is being Afghan-American. You are already mixed and you are between two cultures, two languages and two different societies. So it is my life experience being in America. That is why I mentioned that everything is changed when you move from Afghanistan to the United States. Even if you want to try to keep everything, you can't because if you are living in a society you will observe, if not today tomorrow, you will see the difference in your family. You will start to think differently.

This conflict of two worlds and cultures is further evident in the voice of Participant Two:

Right now, my wife and me are always talking and trying to teach them Dari. Whenever the kids are around, we are not talking in English because we want to teach them Dari. Somehow, we still have a link and family in Afghanistan that we want our kids to communicate with them in Dari because nobody in Afghanistan can speak English like them. So there will be a language barrier problem. So we want to teach them Dari. We are talking to them in Dari but their response sometimes is in English. So, we are like, "In Dari, they call these words this." They are trying to learn. In the future, they might appreciate us, but right now they are not feeling comfortable because in school they are communicating in English. So they are more comfortable in English.

Participant Three also shared the difficulties he and his family experienced as they sought to honor their heritage, while undergoing a societal pull toward Western culture. He comments:

It's very hard. We celebrate more Christmas than New Year. We celebrate Thanksgiving than different culture in Afghanistan. It is just because the environment, it's just because your kids goes to school. They talk about the things they received, what you got for Christmas? That's kind of so, and we, no matter what, what you can do, when you live in a society, you follow the – you're going to the flow. It's just like you're driving the freeway. When you drive on the freeway, everybody drives 65 miles. You go 65 miles. You're following the flow. So, it doesn't matter when you go over there, you can't separate yourself from the society. You're going to society and there's nothing wrong with it. It's nothing wrong with it to celebrate certain things that are not on your culture. But just because of you are raising kids and your kids thinks of you that way. It's pretty tough to show your kids do this one. You are an Afghan. The kid says, Dad, I'm born in the US. I'm an American. How can I be an Afghan? I can't speak Dari. I can't speak Pashtun. I don't know the language. I never wear Afghan traditional clothes. How could I be an Afghan? I'm a US citizen. I'm an American. I'm in New York.

Ethnicity/tribe. The next most pervasive theme that emerged is ethnicity/tribal identity. This attribute seemed to underscore beliefs and values related to the participants'

need to belong. Factors such as nationalism and marginalization demonstrated value

differences between Pashtun and Hazaras, or Pashtun and Tajik participants. The shared

belief and values relative to the respective ethnicities and tribal attachments appeared

strong. The narrative comments seemed to suggest that nothing is more synonymous with

this group of participants than their concept of identity framed in ethnic and tribal

connections. Participant Five stated:

> What is important for me and my family while we are here in the United
>
> States is to keep our identity. So, of course, they don't have a problem, but
>
> still they are looking for each other what they are doing. They're watching
>
> each other if they kept their identity or not. So, right now I have two
>
> daughters, eight years old and four years old. If somebody comes to my
>
> house on special occasions like holidays and that, and they see my
>
> daughters, they were born in America and they raised here, and they are
>
> talking to me Pashtun and to them also, they are surprised. You keep your
>
> identity.

This view supported by another participant (Four) who addressed ethnic and tribal

meaning. He commented:

> As a Muslim, love my country, as a Pashtun. I'm proud of that ethnicity as
>
> well. I am a Pashtun – very much Pashtun, and proud of my history and
>
> hoping for the people of Afghanistan, and our own tribe, and our own
>
> people, and my own family to be something others see as good. I am

proud of being a Pashtun Afghan – to be a person having a family that has

pride. That I am able to provide economically for my family is important

to me. This is my sense of identity too. This is what I like, to always work.

I hope that my hand stretches not to another person in anger. In fact, if

somebody asks me to help, I will be able to help them. This is the

expectation from me, and this is what I hope my family and children

become. At the same time, I expect from the tribe that I am part of to be a

good tribe at the same time; I expect my country to be a country like that

of our history. I expect my country to be a country that we are proud to

say that I am from Afghanistan and a country with a good name and a

good reputation.

Shared sacrifice was introduced by some participants, and this attribute appeared

to underscore and help explain the strong identity bonds and connections among ethnic

group and tribal members. Participant One declared:

If you go deep into Pashtun history, what we did for this country, for the

land, for the people – you will understand the whole thing about being a

Pashtun or being an Afghan. If I am among different people, I would say

I'm proud of being a Pashtun because I knew my history. I knew my

background and who I am and what I did for this country. We did

military-wise, economically, from these points of view. The Pashtuns or

Afghans did a lot. But throughout the Cold War era and after that,

everything is misrepresented to different things. I was born as a Pashtun. I

am Pashtun, and I will die of a Pashtun – regardless of where I am, regardless of my citizenship, as I'm an Afghan citizen or US citizen. But I am Afghan. This is something that cannot change. It is in my blood.

Finally, being a member of an ethnic group carried for each of the participants certain responsibilities, which some even termed duties and obligations. Many of the subjects seemed incapable of separating themselves from their ethnic and tribal orientations, and equally incapable of divesting themselves of their duties and roles of their ethnic or tribal groups. Participant Four commented,

This where we keep our way. Let me say it this way. Like I'm the protector, the savior of my family – the little bigger of the village sub-tribe – of the bigger tribe, which is Wardak. And this way goes to the Pashtun tribe. Our relation is the closest start from the very small of the degree – this way go up and up and up and up. This is something like traditionally we feel a responsibility or obliged to remain committed to your family, this is an obligation. And this is – if you are a person that everybody look down on – you cannot support your family. Or if you have a family of children going in things, you are looked down. And everybody at the little tribe and also the village and also – is pointing towards you. Why you cannot look after your children in your family because we look down on you. If you say this is my children and my family – you cannot because we are connecting the smaller family and a bigger and bigger things like this – we are connected. If your children are doing bad, God forbid, bad thing,

that is bringing a bad name to our family. People will say this is from that

tribe. So this where our relation goes down – connected like the parts of a

tree – everybody's either talking for himself. But here, is not like this.

Here you go to the – you know – the tribe. And you are responsible

towards the tribe. The tribe is also having a responsibility towards you.

The tribe even protects you. The tribe tries to protect your children. But

then in this country – and see why you're not doing this – cannot see it. I

don't want to do – don't care. You cannot say this because the family, the

tribal, the sub-tribal and the tribal relation – you know – they're all kind of

interconnected with one another.

Religion. Religion emerged as the third shared theme and identity designation among all the study participants. As cited in this study, 99% of Afghan citizens are Muslim and the practice of the Islamic religion is ingrained and institutionalized at all levels, including public and private entities of the nation state. Islamic religious self-identity across the participant narratives is unique in this study as it is the single common pattern that permeates all identity definition through pre- and post-immigration timeframes. In this regard, no native conflict surfaced through the participant narratives during the pre-immigration phase. Tapper (1984), cited in the literature in this study, suggests that this is due in a large part to the non-secular atmosphere that acknowledges and accepts public demonstration of the Islamic religion in addition to traditional Islamic-related practices. The conflict for these participants surfaced in the post-immigration period as the subjects resisted the cultural and societal tendencies of their new Western

environments. To these participants, such secular practices, norms and traditions sometimes clash with their non-secular Islamic orientations, ideals and beliefs. To this end, Participant One stated:

> I had no idea what the American society would look like. All I knew was based on the few Hollywood movies that I watched. In the beginning, it was still that I was going to a different part of the world. What I was concerned about was my religion, and the most important thing with my culture. I was going to a different part of the world. Would I be able to keep my religion? Would I be able to practice what I believe in? Would I be able to do my cultural stuff that I believe is good for me if I go there? But when I arrived, the most important thing that I met people from my religion all over the world. I saw Americans. They were white and Muslim. I saw black Americans… I saw people from the Middle East. I saw people from Canada. You name it. I saw people from Europe. They were all practicing the same religion that I was practicing. When I saw that, I was real happy. At the beginning, I thought that in Afghanistan, I practice my religion with my own people. But going to the US, and you are practicing the same religion with the people that speak different languages, they come from different cultural backgrounds in countries and different cultural background systems. It's kind of really the feelings that make you really happy and be proud of being part of an American society. That's what America is about, and that's what makes me real happy that I

am really proud of being. People in here – in general because there are some stereotypes that Americans have about Afghans, and Afghans have about Americans. When you go there, you have to do whatever Americans do. If you want to practice religion, you have to practice their religion. Islam is totally out of the concept of America. That's what Afghans believe. When you go there, you see all those things – the freedom of religion, freedom of speech. All those constitutional rights that you would be able to have in any other part of the country, you have in America. These are my feelings – you are really proud and happy of being part of such a society and community.

Sometimes comments also addressed the universal nature of religious identity. Participant One stated:

99 percent of the people are Muslim, and everybody practices. The 1-percent minority are Hindus that we have there in Afghanistan. The only religion that we are exposed to is Islam. Everybody is Muslim. I am Muslim, my cousin, my father, my grandmother – everybody is Muslim. The whole village in the tribe – we practice the same religion. Going into America, when you see a synagogue, mosque, a church on the same street – you realize that there are different people in this world and how they could be together in the same place, worshipping. Everybody is proud of their identity, who they are. Everybody is proud of their religions and who they are. But at the same time, they practice their religion, and they have

that love to share with each other – not to harm each other. That's one of

the things that I went in there. I was born and raised in a Muslim family.

I'm a Muslim, and I practice my religion.

The comments sometimes addressed the issue of religious choice. Participant

Three stated:

From when you were a child and even if you're not practicing, it's still

with you. Your name, when you have your name, it just shows them from

which ethnicity you are. Which religion do you have? But something to

me, religion is always for me. Religion is something that's you. It's inside

of you. That's you practice religion for yourself, not for the society, not

for your environment. Religion is something inside you. If you practice it,

you practice on yourself.

Marginalization/voicelessness. While the previous shared identity factors existed

during pre- and post-immigration periods, marginalization was most evident from the

narratives as a pre-immigration condition. While the factors contributing to

marginalization were presented in the literature and theory sections of this research, the

phenomenon was due in large measure to colonial intervention in Afghanistan during the

19th and 20th centuries. However, it is likely that the events, activities and conditions that

contribute to group marginalization existed much earlier, as alluded to by Participant

One:

I say everybody lives in Afghanistan – they are a mixed ethnic group. They're called Afghans by the new standard. But back then, the term Afghan was first used by the Persians for Pashtun tribes who were attacking the Persian Empire at that time. Before even the Pashtuns knew they were given the name Afghans. During the 18th century, the Pashtun king – he brought all those different ethnic groups from, Tajik, Hazara, Pashtun, a small Arabic tribe. It didn't speak Arabic, but they were immigrants from their long time ago. He brought all those tribes together under the name of Afghan. Right now, everybody here in Afghanistan is called Afghans, but that day – just the Pashtuns were called Afghans. For me, being an Afghan is to be a person who likes this country, who loves his country, who works hard for improvement of his country.

On the same subject of Afghan identity, Participant One lamented:

The people who do not understand the Afghan culture so far. If there are things that have been written about Pashtun people, these are either by British people who were involved in the war that we had back then. Those British – whatever they saw, write those histories. There's a little bit of hatred toward the Pashtuns because there was fighting going on. The real history of Pashtuns was written by Pashtuns and was recorded by Pashtuns – by Afghans who have not been studied or been understood by Americans or Europeans or in general the Western countries. The Afghans

have their own way of life. They have their own culture. That's why they

are different.

In contrast to these majority views, Participant Two addressed the minority beliefs

regarding the effect of marginalization on identity. He stated:

When you are born with a tribe you don't have an option to change that.

First of all, I am proud of being a Hazara in Afghanistan, but if you are in

such a community that is among the minority people in Afghanistan.

Actually, seeing the news back then, especially during the Taliban and all,

it was hurting to see how they are treating you. But, nowadays, everything

has changed in there. As a Hazara, now, I am feeling very good. We do

have opportunities to go to school now. We have a Hazara, like in, Vice

President of Afghanistan. You have a Hazara as a government officer at

state, especially women. We have doctors, we have engineers in there.

That actually makes me feel much better because we cannot say if there

was injustice with us but there was a situation back then that being a

Hazara you had to worry all the time about what is going on when you

were stopped somewhere because it was easy to recognize your face there

to some people. Now I am really happy for my brother Hazaras there.

They are living freely and have more opportunities there. So I am feeling

good about being a Hazara now.

And finally, in regard to feeling both marginalized and silenced, Participant One

expressed his frustration in attempting to assist and inform the coalition regarding Afghan

customs and traditions. His desire to help them be more effective and thereby diminish

the by-products of war and conflict was repeatedly ignored because of his identity and

position. He commented,

> I have to help people. The only simple reason for that is not understanding
>
> each other, not understanding the culture. That was one of the things that I
>
> went in there and I joined the federal contract to come there and turn those
>
> people – "Hey, this is how this stuff is done." I was able to avoid a lot of
>
> incidents in general and different areas. Here I sat – or the coalition forces
>
> were doing stuff differently in their own ways – American ways or
>
> Western ways. But because I was in a position, I was in the rank in the
>
> position that people had to listen to me. This is a stuff that needs to be
>
> done. As I said about that DLI (Defense Language Institution), those
>
> people that were working for DLI – those are people, as I said, Americans.
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> Because of my position, I couldn't say anything. I said – sir, this is my
>
> thing to do it, but if you want to do it, we can do this. He said he wanted to
>
> do it. He knows the culture, and he knows the religion. I told him okay. He
>
> did the class and everything. After the class, I asked him how do you
>
> know about the religion of Islam? How do you know about the culture? I
>
> asked him if he was deployed to Afghanistan. He said that, no, he was not
>
> deployed to Afghanistan at all. I said how do you know about the culture

better than I do? You decided to give the class and teach the class – not me because you thought you knew better than that. He said because his wife's family background is Afghan. His father-in-law and mother-in-law were Afghans. He thought that he knew somehow the culture and everything of Islam better than I do. That's one of the things that I try hard to tell the people that – this is why. This is what I do. This is my message for you guys. This is how we work. This is how stuff works there. In a lot of places, people listen to me, and they change the stuff.

Islamophobia. The only shared identity attribute that consistently emerged in the participant narratives was the perceived dislike, fear or even hatred felt by the immigrants themselves during the post-immigration period. Participant One commented that:

In Afghanistan, I am proud of being a Pashtun. But in America, the American media complex – it represents the Pashtun specifically in a different way. In America, if you say that I am a Pashtun, then you are taken – or if you are an Afghan in general. If you say "I am Afghan," you are taken as a terrorist because that's what the media put it into the people. What they said – if you can control the media, you control the mind of the people. The media is controlled by people who represent these people as we are bad people, people who like to kill, people who are extremists and like that. But here, I'm proud of being an Afghan. But when in America, I would be careful to say that, or represent myself. When I was out, people

ask where do you come from? I would say from South Asia. If you see

from the geographic point of view, I am Asian. I would say I'm Asian.

Participant Five recalled:

For two years, we moved away from New York because I got married, and

my wife didn't like to stay in Queens. She said let's go to Maryland. It's

close to New York. Anytime you can come back. That time I didn't have

any kids so we went there. For two years, we lived there. You know why I

left Maryland? Everybody was looking at me as a terrorist, as a bad guy.

Whatever happens in the world, I felt like I did it and actually I didn't do

anything wrong. Even my neighborhood, every morning I was going to

work, and I left the apartment, everybody looked like they slammed their

door, and I decided to come back to Queens.

In closing, this small qualitative research sample does not allow one to draw

sweeping conclusions about other male Muslim interpreters and translators migrating

from the East to the West. It does however contribute to the wider body of research and

knowledge by helping social scientists better understand the multiple layers, complexities

and dimensions of these shared/common patterns and themes that emerged from this

participant group's lived experiences. At first sight, these themes of identity, values and

beliefs appeared to differ according to majority or minority group values and

social/cultural orientation. Once deconstructed, the overarching themes and patterns were

found to be common across the entire studied populations.

Chapter 8

Discussion and Discoveries

The discoveries from this research suggest that while not constant, fixed, or one-dimensional, the self-identity formation of this Afghan Muslim male interpreter and translator population is complex, multi-layered, and adaptable. The adaptable nature of their sense of self emerged as a pattern and an important personal strength, particularly during their migration to the West. This strength is supported by a determination that helped them self-navigate the challenging social environment and ethnic circumstances that developed during pre- and post-immigration. Additionally, the participants, in order to better understand their environments and to accommodate their own beliefs and attitudes, used dissimilar identities in the context of their sense of self. Both minority members of the participant groups shared this distinction. Research suggests that the Hazara and Tajik minority participants reflected attitudes with seemingly deeply-rooted and developed ethnic identification, beliefs, and values. More often, their post-immigration identity was 1) Hazara, 2) Tajik, or, least often, 3) Hazara or Tajik from Afghanistan. The shared responses by two separate minority sub-groups appear to be an attempt to nurture the need to belong to a common ancestral community, and the identity responses demonstrate a belonging to a specific tribal or ethnic group. What is more significant in both participant groups is not simply that they self-identified as ethnic members of their respective native lands, but that neither necessarily related themselves to the dominant "Afghan" identity national sense of being. Rarely was their identity defined as that of an "Afghan" - their birth home and origin. In other words, they each

viewed themselves as ethnic group members first, and tertiary linkages to their Afghan sense of being, if they considered themselves Afghan nationals at all. While it is beyond the scope of this research to determine what motivates these responses, exploring the themes can enhance the reader's understanding regarding beliefs, attitudes and lived experiences that emerged in the respective narratives.

The participant's narrative themes reflect identity definitions that while shared across all study subjects, are not necessarily equal to one another. The lesser or less strident identity definition is nationalism, and issues of trust and Islamophobia impact it. The more significant shared identity themes resonate around re-negotiated and hybrid self-identity, religion, and ethnicity. And, each of these factors appears to be influenced by, and impact social connectedness and relationships. However, before examining the layers embedded in their respective responses and deconstructing the common threads and patterns, the researcher for this study addressed the majority identity differences.

The minority participants' self-identification was framed in their ethnic sense of self. The Hazara-Tajik attitudes contrast greatly with the majority responses from Pashtun tribal participant attitudes. Here, the three Pashtun study participants unequivocally identified themselves as Pashtun first, but unhesitatingly acknowledged their Afghan heritage in language, dress, and cultural manner. The identity, sense of self, and lived experiences of both the majority Pashtun and minority Hazara and Tajik participants showed that taken as a whole, self or national identity designs for these groups are not straightforward, nor can overemphasis in stability or fluidity be drawn as suggested in some social scientific studies about identity development (Cornell & Hartmann, 1988).

Additionally, what this research shows is that the way that this specific studied

population self-identifies is variable and adapting, and these adaptations are 1) driven by

social conditions and individual interactions with outsiders, and 2) uniquely different

across other group members depending upon their identification with the majority or

minority population within their native Afghanistan. The reason behind these differences

in self-identity definition is important because collectively, it can speak to why members

of a whole group see themselves differently (Cornell & Hartmann, 1998). Further,

Cornell and Hartmann (1998) described that the differences in self-identity explain how

people view their environment and how they may respond to changes in their social

circumstances. On the individual level and as reflected in most of the participant

narratives, trust and mistrust are major factors in these social issues and areas of concern,

as well.

> At a micro level, the ways in which people identify themselves and one
>
> another has important implications for whom they trust and whom they don't
>
> and the ways in which they interpret social interactions. Decades of research
>
> on in- and out- group dynamics by social psychologists show that people are
>
> more likely to trust others who they believe to be members of their social
>
> group and to hold them in greater esteem than group outsiders, who are
>
> routinely regarded with greater suspicion. At a macro-level these
>
> associations help us understand social solidarity and its limits, to identify
>
> potential fault lines along which social conflicts might emerge and make

sense of how people respond to appeals to their group values and interests

(Brown, 1986, p. 9).

The results of this study suggest that trust and mistrust were important boundary factors for the participant group, as identified in Brown (1986). In one narrative, the participant told of meeting another Pashtun member in Chicago and being asked for help via a monetary loan. Given their shared ethnicity and common Pashtun experiences, as well as being an Afghan countryman, the participant chose to trust the other Pashtun and loaned that person the money easily. In another narrative, a minority tribal member (Tajik) subtly referred to the mistrust he had for the majority Pashtuns, given the kinds of mistreatment his minority ethnic group received by the Pashtuns during the war, and decades of conflict in Afghanistan that followed. Another participant's narrative told of not trusting post-colonial nations (e.g., England) to tell the story of Afghanistan, insisting they held bias because of the wars fought between the nations during the 19th and 20th centuries.

For this studied group, it appears that trust and mistrust are best understood in this context if viewed through their post-colonial theoretical lens. As described in Chapter 5, tensions, friction, and conflict were created among and between the tribes during the colonial period. During this time, Pashtuns were deemed by the British as more suitable to carry out the governance roles over all other ethnic tribes and groups. This action caused competition among the tribes and resulted in conflict. Seeking favored land, or land that had been taken away, rights and other privileges often pitted one ethnic group against another. The remnants of these tensions exist today in the narrative undertone by

some participants referring harshly to another ethnic group. These narrative tones became even more deliberate and vocal when two Pashtun participants commented in their narratives that the country's social problems began to develop when the tribes began to mix and interact with each other.

Challenging the narrative orthodoxy seemed a major recurring pattern and an issue for the majority Pashtun participants, and a lesser concern for the minority Hazara and Tajik participants. Still, all participants seemed keenly aware of the environment and media images depicting Afghanistan, Afghans themselves, and Muslims, at large. Also, the awareness of the Muslim religion and social perceptions, particularly following 9/11 in the United States, seemed to dictate different identity-related behaviors, beliefs, and attitudes. As such, most participants demonstrated a concern for the way the Western media manipulates the public and project related images and stories.

According to several narrative stories, media images that denote Islamic experiences and Muslim identities are often one-sided. Predominantly, such images play on the fears and stereotypes of Westerners, particularly in the post-9/11 era. As noted by Cesari (2004), the media presents a view of Islam that exploits events in the Muslim world, characterized by vague terminology, language differences, violence, and fanaticism. Consequently, the Western perception considers Islam dangerous and synonymous with terrorism, giving those who need little reason to hate more justification to do so (Huntington, 1996). Unfortunately, the actions and emotions by a few in the aftermath of the 9/11 attack demonstrated unbridled intolerance for all Muslims.

One of the most disturbing manifestations of bigotry today is Islamophobia – a new word for an old phenomenon. The Crusades and colonialism are just two examples of a poisoned past in which Muslims were first portrayed as hostile or dangerous, and then subjected to aggression and domination. In more recent decades, some have viewed Muslim countries as culturally unsuited to democracy… Since the 11 September terrorist attacks on the United States, which were condemned throughout the Muslim world, many Muslims, particularly in the West, have found themselves the objects of suspicion, harassment and discrimination. And, too many people see Islam as a monolith, and as intrinsically opposed to the West – when in fact Western and Islamic peoples have a long history of commerce, of intermingling and inter-marrying, and of influencing and enriching each other's art, literature, science and much else besides. Despite a discourse of centuries, caricature remains widespread, and the gulf of ignorance is dangerously deep (Kofi Annan, as cited in Haddad & Golson, 2007, p. 487).

In this study, the researcher observed instances through narratives and participant stories that seemed to coincide with the findings on Western migration patterns of Muslim males relative to how immigrant identity formations are affected. More broadly, the post-9/11 environment in the United States created conflict and tension among the majority Pashtun ethnic participants over Afghan Muslim identity. Frequent responses from the majority Pashtun study participants reflected tensions and apprehensions involving self-identifying as an Afghan during post-immigration. This is contrasted with

the discovery that the minority study participants (i.e., Hazara and Tajik), while not

necessarily self-identifying as an Afghan, showed no such tension or apprehension. The

participant interviews and analysis seem to demonstrate that while the present Western

environment influences Muslim identity, the native Afghan land serves as the lynchpin

from which the participants sought to make sense of their non-Muslim interactions. In

this regard, much like family, tribe, and ethnicity, factors and circumstances constantly

affect the sense of self-identity and lived experiences. In terms of these differences, the

minority Hazara and Tajik participants' narratives showed that their developed identities

do not appear to be exclusively reflective of their native experiences or new Western host

experiences. This is because these participants appear to have developed re-negotiated

selves. These re-negotiated self-identities indicate a connection to their heritage, culture,

and religious and ethnic past. But, at the same time, both minority participants convey

unmistakable reverence and ownership of their "American identities". This position may

explain the appearance of a kind of disconnection from their birthplace's national sense

of being and identity.

Throughout the narrative interviews, a pattern emerged regarding the way each of

the participants used or referred to their own ethnic being and sense of self. Collectively,

the majority Pashtun members referred to their ethnic heritage with verbal and non-verbal

language and cues denoting pride, favored status, and ancestral legacies. In their pre-

immigration discussions, the description "Pashtun" was almost always linked to their

Afghan heritage or nationalism. In contrast, in narratives and stories from the minority

Hazara and Tajik participants, communications and non-verbal indications were

strikingly different. While both minorities revealed a sense of oneness and solidarity with their respective ethnicities and cultural heritage, the tone and language was more somber and downhearted. When they used the terms Afghan or Afghanistan, they seemed to project these identities onto others, as opposed to owning the descriptions themselves as a "Tajik-Afghan or Hazara-Afghan." In exploring their responses and revisiting the literature contained in this research and other materials, the burdens of a beleaguered social group takes shape and the narrative responses among this participant group seemed in concert with previous research findings.

> The greater the feelings of exclusion among our respondents, the more they will identify as Italian-Americans... To the Italian-American, being a member of an ethnic group produces attitudes that have a bearing on his social and political participation... He senses that he is part of a beleaguered social group and is sensitive to his group's status... It also produces a desire for respectability to be won by political recognition (Gallo, 1974, p. 123).

Appearing content, one of the minority group members found it difficult to contain the joy and pride that Hazaras now represent prominent roles in key governmental positions. He went further, proudly noting that there are now engineers and doctors in Afghanistan who belong to the Hazara ethnic tribal community. When this response is taken in the context of a majority Pashtun group member who suggested that much of the social problems in Afghanistan can be traced back to minority inclusion and their member's ignorance and lack of education, then the reactive theoretical model addressed in the chapter 5 (Theory) takes on greater shape and meaning. More

specifically, sub-group solidarity as related to self and national identity is found to be largely a function of imposed boundaries when discrimination, hostilities, prejudice, and social categorizations are applied. This unique understanding offers powerful insight for social conflict mitigation approaches. This is particularly important when exploring the lived experiences and identity development at varied immigration stages for this study population and potentially for similar groups, as well.

Suleiman (1994) argued that such identification among Afghans immigrating to the West is not uncommon and is a response to the needs of these individuals. Further, Suleiman (1994) suggested that whether in response to past marginalization, oppression, or being silenced and without voice, they seek something from the West, eagerly looking to their new identity even in the multifaceted and confounded pluralist, Western society for normalcy, belonging, and acceptance.

For this small Afghan Muslim male participant group, sanctuary and emotional balance appear to have been achieved as they have integrated cultural and social elements of both worlds. From this discovery, this researcher concluded that the debate about Muslim ethnic and cultural identity seems more complicated and complex than previously argued by Canfield (1988) and Cornell & Hartmann (1988). The nature of this complex orientation is evident in the contrasting narratives belonging to the majority Pashtun participants as compared to the minority study participants.

In this study, the minority participants appear to have arrived at a re-negotiated self-identity, while the majority Pashtun participants demonstrated a consistently strong attachment to their national identity. This self-identity attachment is in addition to the

more common cultural, ethnic, and religious identity priorities. In this case, the majority

participants seem to have assumed a hybrid identity—encompassing elements of their

nationalistic past, but sensitive to and adopting certain cultural and social identifiers

found in their new adopted homeland. Hechter (1974) suggested that, in this instance, as

identities become more influenced directly and indirectly by family members and others,

it is reasonable to expect identities to become more reflective over time of the new

cultural environment. However, for this participant group, tensions and conflict were

reflected in the stories and narratives as these majority members attempted to reconcile

their hybrid lived existence. According to Lugones (2003), Afghan Muslims use

composite identities as a means to settle conflicts arising from post-immigration

activities. As a result, struggles can emerge as they seek to resolve these identity conflicts

with their surroundings. In response to and in an attempt to mitigate the conflict, they

often select from a wide array of identity categories.

Recognition by the Muslim immigrant and journeyman that despite the emotional

pain, an identity shift toward another definition is an essential condition of an

uncomplicated "self-being," according to Rushdie (1991). Rushdie (1991) and Canfield

(1986), scholars of Islam and Muslim experiences, observed that such reflection helps the

individual rationalize their new, conflicted self. Regardless of the differences between

one's pre-immigration and post-immigration identities, many immigrants successfully

navigate between their native homeland identity and that of their newly adopted settings.

Hall (1996b) stated that immigrants must learn to negotiate these differences in order to

resolve their inner conflicts and socially assimilate.

Identity differences could be found among the participants in this study, and the researcher found categories that connected and bound the disparate groups. Family, ethnicity, culture, and religion are the main areas of the shared identity likeness between the participant groups. However, even though there are attributes that intersect around shared values and beliefs, for a variety of reasons, the divergent constructs cannot be overlooked. Most importantly, among these reasons are the boundary differences that result in a kind of self-identity social struggle. While the struggle and related tensions seem most apparent among the Pashtun majority ethnic participants in this study, this is not to suggest that the minority study members did not experience similar conflict and distress. Rather, the minority study participants appear to have acquired different and perhaps more effective coping strategies. These strategies helped them mitigate identity conflict struggles and tensions. While these conflicts do exist, the participants' abilities to compromise and employ other coping techniques reduced concerns within the respective Hazara and Tajik narratives.

According to Canfield (1986), self-identity among Afghans is complex and the essence of these identities is grounded in their social existence. Canfield (1986) pointed out that it is correct to view self-identity among Afghan immigrants as a social struggle, creating tensions between reality and their sense or understanding of what is real. According to Canfield (1986), identity entails a confrontation between the ideal and the real and affects both the construct and the contextual situation within which it is used. These constructs sort events into something familiar, understandable, and, therefore, less threatening to the individual. To this end, Canfield (1986) pointed out that the actual

circumstances intercede and interrupt what has been shaped into the familiar. Over time, the construct is accommodated and re-shaped to fit the kinds of situations that occur during human interactions.

Another discovery that surfaced as a shared response among the participants is their awareness and response to narrow-mindedness and intolerance. This issue accounted for the reluctant and or veiled identity responses when confronted in various social settings. Repeatedly, participants shared the lengths to which they went to conceal their Afghan, Islamic, and Muslim true self. Such acknowledgement to non-Afghans or Muslims typically came well after social bonds had been established in the community, social setting, or work place. This reaction demonstrates that Muslim immigrants, as members of a minority population facing greater outside pressure, prejudice, and discrimination, would likely respond by experiencing greater solidarity with one another and identification within their minority identity (Bradford, 2008). Whether driven by media portrayals of Afghan Muslim extremists, bias, discrimination, or simple discomfort, this researcher found that for this group, identity disclosure to other minorities who shared similar cultural, religious, and/or ethnic bonds was uniquely different, as compared to disclosures made to Westerners. According to Bradford (2008), Muslims in America frequently live and socialize in communities defined by ethnic attachments and boundaries. And, the establishment of ethnic institutions, as well as religious and cultural practices, often reinforces these boundaries and drives their social interactions.

The last significant discovery involved religion. The research findings from this small participant sample suggested that for these Afghan immigrants, their shared self-identity and orientation as Muslim males was supported by their commitment to the Islamic faith. According to Borchgrevink (2007), for this Afghan group, their religious identity is vitally important and an essential element of who they are, and in many instances, crucial to their primal orientations and lived experiences. Anderson (1983) and Hinde (1999) indicated that for the diverse tribes and ethnic groups of Afghanistan, Islam is particularly relevant for identity formation. Even though the country is deeply divided along tribal and ethnic positions, the single unifying denominator above all other factors is Islam. As such, Islam and tribal customs and practices work together, according to Anderson (1983), to strengthen and support individual and cultural identity. In this study, the participant narratives revealed eclectic views and beliefs across ethnic, cultural, and familial lived experiences. Even with these differences, the participant stories indicated that the senses of unity, purpose, and social connectedness that link these incongruent Pashtun, Hazara, and Tajik study participants involve their belief in and commitment to Islam. Additionally, this characteristic serves as a shared experience, which develops formations that seem higher in priority, and importance among this participant group, as compared to other discovered identity attributes. According to Robson (2002), this group's identification with other attributes and characteristics, such as Afghan nationalism, is of lesser importance to their sense of being and belonging. Consequently, Islam emerges as an essential self-identity characteristic during pre-immigration and is a key attribute and self-identifier during post-immigration. This is because the Islamic

identity and faith appears to help these individuals navigate secular social conflicts and ensure their own temporal, emotional, and psychological well-being during their adjustment to the West (Hinde, 1999; Piedmont, 1999).

Research Contributions

It must be reiterated that the relatively small sample in this studied population does not reflect ethnic/cultural diversity, nor is it necessarily representative of the Muslim male population at large. As such, it cannot stand alone as a basis for definitive academic or social comparison. In terms of its limited contributions to the accepted social scientific body of knowledge, the researcher considered how this study's findings may inform analysis, research, practice, and teaching in the field of conflict analysis and resolution. In an attempt to address this, three primary areas stand out as possible contributions. First, it is important to understand the nature and intensity of the pull from one's home of origin relative to cultural, ethnic, and the national sense of self for this population. The key to position is nested in the determination and belief that a pull toward native identity may override identity formation from the new host land. Left unresolved, these issues could emerge as internal conflicts that adversely affect identity definition and meaning. Second, at what point in the immigration process does self-identity conflict actually begin? From this area, researchers may be better able to discover the optimum point at which to inject cross-cultural intervening measures. Finally, research contributions may help better define Islam identities and the problem's Muslim men face in Western assimilation and acculturation processes.

Limitations of the Current Study

The focus of this research was Afghan Muslim men who immigrated to the West (United States). The studied sample was small and not totally reflective of the true ethnic and cultural mosaic comprising Afghanistan. Future and more in-depth research must be conducted with a larger, diverse population. Future research must also include Western-immigrating Afghan Muslim women, utilizing the same or similar research question(s) and problem statement that drove this investigation of Afghan Muslim men. In this study, the cited literature often refers to the role and impact women have in the Afghan Muslim experiences. Future research should seek to uncover the lived experiences and identity issues facing Afghan Muslim women and how, if at all, these beliefs, values, and identity outcomes affect Afghan Muslim male/female identity. Further, sampling Afghan Muslim women will serve to validate and test the reliability of discoveries and findings regarding gender identity formation, and lived experiences of Afghan Muslim men, women, and the core family unit. Also, while Muslim assimilation in the West was not a primary focus of this study, understanding how assimilation processes affect identity development serves the greater social scientific good. While this research underscores the immigration experiences to the United States, uncovering and learning why some Afghan Muslims choose to return to their native land, as opposed to continue to live and experience Western culture, should be a major area of future research. In this instance, the opportunity exists to learn more about the negative aspects of cultural assimilation and identity formation by this population. Also, is this formation design the same across age differences? Meaning, are older Afghan immigrants more likely to self-repatriate to their

native Afghanistan, as compared to younger Afghan immigrants? Lastly, additional

research is needed to learn more about this population, as compared to the discovered

outcomes in other, broader explorations of Western nations. These studies include, but are

not limited to Saroglou and Galand's (2004) study of identities, values, and religion

among Muslim immigrants; Bisin, Patacchini, Verdier & Zenou's (2007) study of

Muslim immigrant differences in terms of cultural integration; and Alba's (2005)

examination of Muslim barriers to inclusion in Western Europe.

Chapter 9

Conclusion

The researcher for this study examined the lived experiences of an Afghan Muslim male participant group, exploring their immigration from a Southwest-Asian, highly non-secular society to a Western-style, liberal, secular nation-state. This research was an examination of Muslim male identity as an attribute that is closely related to lived experiences, environment, and cultural assimilation. Additionally, the researcher looked directly at the meanings that this Afghan Muslim male immigrant group attached to identity through their own perspectives, and explored their unique story narratives during pre-immigration and post-immigration timeframes. The research objective particularly focused on how this select group of Afghan Muslim males conceptualized their own sense of identity and how their notion of identity was further influenced by their pre- and post-migration life experiences. To this end, the researcher for this study sought to explore the migration experiences in the context of defined self-identity. As the discussions and findings in this study indicated, identity, sense of self, and lived experiences of these participants reflect that when taken as a whole, self-identity formations for this population are not uncomplicated, nor can overemphasis of stability be taken as absolute truth.

This researcher was reminded by Canfield (1996) and Saroglou & Galand (2004) that for an Afghan, identity is not a simple proposition, rather it can be found to be complex, dynamic, and enduring all at once. More specifically, the nature of the identities for the majority group (e.g., Pashtun members) appears more blended, embracing certain

aspects of the cultural, ethnic, and social elements of both their old native home and their new host environment. This phenomenon is contrasted by this analysis that finds that the nature of identity development in the minority group (e.g., Hazara and Tajik members) has assumed a "non-blended," somewhat disconnected or re-negotiated identity formation. Put differently, an identity that is newly created and takes on more of their adopted homeland, a unique phenomenon for first generation immigrants (Hall, 1996b).

The aim of this study was to become better informed about the construction of identity and its outcome in human interaction among this study group. To achieve this goal, understanding how their immigration experiences affected the study participants' sense of being and identity was important. Additionally, as suggested by Hoare (1991), learning more about the constructed relationship between religion, culture, ethnicity, and environment helped frame the entire research undertaking. This framework was regularly referenced and applied in an effort to learn more about the associated concept of identity for several reasons. Least among these reasons was the examination of the under-investigated notion of identity related to the studied population: Afghan Muslim male interpreters and translators who immigrated to the West from their native land. Equally important, if not more so, this researcher looked closely at how identity has holistically informed their Muslim experiences in the West and the static or the flexible nature of the self-identities of this studied group. Understanding the function and interaction of identity is essential to learning more about the multiplicity, types, complexities, and nature of Afghan Muslim identities of this research population. In addressing these issues, this study was guided by the following research question: How do Afghan Muslim male

interpreters and translators who immigrated to the United States during the war (2006–2012) reconcile pre-immigration and post-immigration ethnic, cultural, and Muslim (religious) identity conflicts? This is important, as the notion of conflict arises as this studied population attempts to reconcile those native-born traditions and associated identities with the customs, values, and beliefs belonging to their adopted Western land.

As established in the sampling section in the methodology portion of this study, researchers acknowledge the viability of a sampling size with as few as five participants in a narrative methodological design. However, while this research study's population fits within the established criteria range for the design method, this researcher took a cautious approach, resisting generalizations from this small, non-diversified, single study's discoveries and findings.

The existing body of literature and this study's results demonstrate that identity for an Afghan Muslim male is not homogeneous, rather more heterogeneous in nature and being. Canfield (1986) argued, Afghan identity is complex, dynamic, enduring, and multifaceted, all at once. This research supports the social scientific argument that when descendants of immigrants leave their ethnically-homogenous areas, they may assume an ethnic hybrid, while at the same time, their identities become influenced and shaped, and over time, begin to reflect more of their new cultural environment. In fact, this hybridism involves more than gradual assimilation into one's new environment. How the immigrants negotiate their past social practices in relation to the new processes influences the nature of the conflict and tension they experience. Arguably more important, and an intriguing and insightful discovery, was the understanding that the minority studied

participants appear to have taken on a "new" renegotiated sense of self and identity, one that is less connected from, and committed to their land of origin: Afghanistan.

The fundamental reasons for exploring this topic were twofold: first and more narrowly, to give a voice and platform to those interpreters and translators who provided so much during the war by partnering with the West and the coalition. Their sacrifices, like those of the coalition, resulted in violence and threats of violence, retribution, and risk of ostracism by fellow Muslims, family, and friends. Second and more broadly, examination of these consequences and the effect on identity emerged as intra- and inter-conflicts. It is the nature of these conflicts that compelled this research. Beyond these points, Braibanti (1999) argued that Muslims themselves can be a force behind the way the West understands and views Islam. Immigrant Muslims may fit that role much better than any other Muslim representative because this population left lands embroiled in conflict while also constrained by economic, social, and ethnic conditions and realities. Their arrival in the West offered freedom from these conditions.

> As immigrants who fled from both economic and social tribulations of their native lands, they are liberated from many of the less favorable behaviors of their birthplace. They also become aware of the social deficiencies of the new home, even though it provides unparalleled economic opportunity and personal liberty. Thus experiencing Islam from a liberated perspective, they can see its pristinity separated from the cultural modifiers, which have distorted it elsewhere (Braibanti, 1999, p. 28).

Adding to this view, the opportunity for improved understanding and increased respect between and among the Christian and Islamic groups is a possible outcome of the Muslim immigrant shift from East to West. These are not abstract or overly idealistic constructs, as some suggest. Countering these views, Arkoun and Bowden (1995) argued that the potential for Muslims in the West presents an enormous opportunity for better religious cooperation through mutual understanding and trust. Such opportunity can usher in the realization that improved understanding between the East and West and between Christianity and Islam is not unrealistic. Rather, such conditions are achievable and ensconced in the shared belief in mutual respect and dignity for all people.

As the discussions and findings in this research suggest that if identity is malleable, fluid, multi-dimensional, and context-dependent, then why should theorists and social scientists be overly concerned? Doing so is important because understanding how populations identify themselves offers greater insight into their individual orientations. What was learned from the discoveries in this research was that these orientations are frequently established around trust, or mistrust where Afghan Muslims are concerned. Further, as other researchers have pointed out, people are more likely to trust others from their own social group, cultural, religious, ethnic, and or national background, while regarding non-members of these groups with apprehension (Brown, 1986). This phenomenon speaks to the importance of shared history and boundaries and how non-members of a group may be perceived as violating group values, beliefs, and interest. This dynamic is important to understanding self-identity structure, complexities,

and development, particularly for Muslims immigrating to the United States and the West.

Finally, at a macro level, social scientists should be concerned with how Muslim immigrants to the West perceive their new host land. The United States and its Western partners hold important interest in critical Eastern and Muslim regions. The newly arrived Muslim immigrants in America and the West can serve as an effective bridge, helping to diffuse East-West tensions. According to Izeltbegovich (1984), America's relationship with the Islamic world suffers greatly from misunderstanding and a trust deficit. To this end, Muslim immigrants in the United States can help bridge this divide through various outreach strategies in Muslim societies and by shaping domestic and foreign policy. Helping ensure said policies are clearly understood in the Muslim world, less incendiary and serving constructive universal aims could be promoted by Muslim immigrants. Finally, improved understanding of the Afghan Muslim immigrants' identity issues will aid their assimilation into the West. At the same time, this improved understanding helps the Muslim population maintain desired social practices (e.g., cultural, religious, and ethnic), while adapting to a considerably different social environment. For America and the West, these actions can support the successful integration of Muslim cultures into modern society and work to fuse cultural fractures that, according to Huntington (1993), have inflamed violence and conflict between the world communities for centuries.

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Appendix A. Invitation Letter to Participate in Research Study

Hello:

My name is Michael Solomon; I am currently working on my dissertation research for the PhD in Conflict Analysis and Resolution at Nova Southeastern University, Fort Lauderdale, Florida. This summer, I will be conducting a research study on the lived experiences and identity issues of Afghan Muslim Interpreters and Translators (IT) that migrated from Afghanistan to the US during the war. My study uses the narrative research method and I will interview 5 to 7 Interpreters and Translators for this project.

Please accept my invitation to participate in my dissertation research study.
In this study, I will be conducting two face-to-face interviews; each will run approximately one to two hours. I will record participant's lived experiences during of the Afghan War and pre immigration to the US, and after the war during post immigration in the US. The focus of my narrative study will be based on the analysis of participants' individual stories of their lived experiences and how these experiences shape and impact identity development.

Please be assured that there will be no intrusive questions asked of you during the interviews. All interviews will be audio recorded and transcribed by me, and all documents, including the interview recordings and transcriptions will be securely stored and kept confidential throughout the research process. This proposed research project has been thoroughly reviewed for approval by the Nova Southeastern University Institutional Review Board – the Board enforces ethical standard in research and ensures the safety and fair treatment of research participants.

It is my hope that you will consider my invitation to participate in this research study. A small monetary payment will be provided for your participation in the study. If you are interested in becoming a participant, or have further questions regarding this research study, please contact me by email at: ms2165@nova.edu

If you chose to participate in this study, I will contact you directly to discuss further details of the study and requirements to sign a voluntary consent form that fully explains your rights as a participant, including the right to discontinue participation in the study at any time with absolutely no repercussions to you.

Thank you for your consideration to participate in my dissertation study, and I look forward to further communications with you soon.

Yours Truly,

_____
Michael T. Solomon

Appendix B. Flyer Seeking Volunteers to Participate in Research Study

Interpreter & Translator Volunteers Needed

- <u>Research study</u> on the lived experiences of Afghan Muslim male interpreters and translators who migrated to the U.S. during the Afghanistan War (2003–2012)
  - Study explores experiences and identity effects before and after immigration
  - Study explores group conflict that arises as a result of western assimilation
- Five to seven participants are needed and two interviews lasting from 1 to 2 hours will be conducted with each volunteer
  - Questions will be provided in advance and the audio responses recorded
  - Monetary payment provided for completing both face to face interviews
- No participant names will be used, and measures to ensure privacy and confidentiality will be taken.
- Letter of consent agreements must be signed

If interested please contact Michael Solomon at ms2165@nova.edu, Nova Southeastern University or Skype; Michael.solomon5

Appendix C. Research Questions

Based on the approach prescribed by Patton (2002), the initial set of open-ended and probing questions include the following:

1. Please tell me about your lived experiences from your native homeland (2003 until departing)?

2. In terms of your sense of self, describe what it means to you to be an Afghan?

3. How do you think of your own self-identity?

4. Describe your lived experiences during the war and how these experiences impacted your identity?

5. Please describe your immigration experiences from Afghanistan to the United States?

6. Describe your feelings, emotions and or thoughts about the immigration process?

7. Describe your Muslim sense of self? Is there a difference between your Muslim being in Afghanistan, as contrasted to your Muslim self in the US?

8. If you were talking to an American, how would you self identify? And, if you were talking to an Afghan man or woman? And, if you were talking to your boss?

9. Describe your cultural identity as reflected in your post immigration experiences? Is there a change from your pre immigration cultural identity?

10. Please tell me about your community experiences in America and how these experiences impact your sense of self?

11. Regarding your assimilation experience, how did you resolve your identity issues as related to your ethnic sense of self?

Appendix D. Consent Form for Participation in the Research Study

Using Qualitative Research Narrative Methods to Examine Pre and Post Immigration Lived Experiences and Identities of an Afghan Muslim Male Population During the Afghan War (2003–2012)

Funding Source: None

IRB protocol #

Principal Investigator: Co-Investigator:
Michael Solomon   Toran Hansen, PhD

For questions/concerns about your research rights, contact: Human Research Oversight Board (Institutional Review Board or IRB) Nova Southeastern University (954) 262-5369/Toll Free: 866-499-0790
IRB@nsu.nova.edu

What is this study about?
You have been asked to participate in a research study. The goal of this study is to understand the lived experiences during pre- and post-immigration of Afghan Muslim interpreters and translators who migrated to the United States during the Afghanistan War (2003–2012). This study explores the tensions that emerge between and within native Afghan Muslim males and their family units as these men seek to honor and cling to traditional tribal and ethnic beliefs, values, and customs. The intergroup conflict arises as this population attempts to reconcile those native traditions and associated identities with the customs, values, and beliefs belonging to their new host land. Understanding these conflict dynamics serve as a primary goal of this research.

Why are you asking me?
You have been asked to participate in this study because you have been involved in the Afghan conflict, and while in support of the coalition you immigrated from Afghanistan to the United States. You are invited to participate in this study because you meet the selection criteria. The selection criteria for participants will be:
- Adults between 28-48 years of age

- Afghan national Muslim males
- Immigrated from their native Afghan land to the United States during the Afghan War (between 2003 – 2010)
- Interpreters and Translators working for the coalition
- Individual with at least one year residency in the United States following Department of State VISA acceptance and migration to the US
- Remain in contact or in relationships with family, friends, or colleagues in Afghanistan
- Married or single
- English Speaking / reading
- Civilian
- Proposed subjects are willing to participate in the study

The number of study participants will range from 5 to 7.

What will I be doing if I agree to be in the study?
If you agree to participate in this study, the researcher, Mr. Michael Solomon, will interview you face to face and he is a PhD candidate from Nova Southeastern University at Fort Lauderdale, Florida. He will be asking you questions about your lived experiences during the war before you immigrated to the United States. He will then ask about the lived experiences during the time after you arrived in the US. Related to these questions are inquiries that address how Afghan Muslim males view and conceptualize identity. And, how do these experiences shape, inform, and affect their developed sense of selves. And, what values, beliefs and attitudes do you reflect. Once an agreement on the research is made (e.g., signed consent form) the researcher will provide you with the questions in advance of the interview for your study, and consideration. This approach will hopefully allow more reflected thought on your part and ensure that when we meet face to face that you are able to fully and thoroughly respond. The aim of this approach (e.g., questions in advance and translated copy) is to make sure that you fully understand the questions and your response best represents what you intended to say during your interview. Mr. Solomon will be interested in hearing your stories, your narrative and your voice regarding your pre- and post immigration experiences. There will be two face-to-face interviews and each will take from one to two hours depending on your availability and comfort. Questions will be organized based on pre immigration timeframe while you were in your native Afghanistan from 2003 at the start of the war. The next series of questions ask about your immigration experiences and identity(s) issues while in the United States. You can choose not to answer questions, but if you stop the interview any questions answered and information provided may be used as part of the research analysis, and you will not receive the monetary payment unless you conclude both interviews. Our meeting can occur in a location that is convenient for you and mutually agreed upon. The requirement is for a meeting area that is both conducive to the interview process, quiet with minimum disturbance, and in

a private safe setting. Alternative settings can be colleges, universities campus areas, libraries, and cultural centers, as examples. If during the interview Mr. Solomon learns that you are unable to continue with the interview for whatever reason, he will end the interview. Following the second interview Mr. Solomon will check the transcripts for accuracy and validity. If you agree to consent, he will provide a copy to you for accuracy checking.

Is there any audio or video recording?
This research project will include audio recording of the interview. This audio recording will be available to be heard by the researcher, personnel from the IRB, and the dissertation chair, Dr. Hansen. Mr. Solomon will transcribe the recordings into his private password protected computer and he will use earphones during transcription to guard your privacy. The recording will be stored securely in Mr. Solomon home office in a secure safe box that is locked inside a locked cabinet. After 36 months from the end of the study, the interview recordings and transcription will be destroyed. You will be identifiable by anyone who hears the recording; as such your confidentiality for things you say on the recording cannot be guaranteed, although the researcher will try to limit access to the recording as described in this paragraph.

What are the dangers to me?
The risks to you by participating in this research are minimal, however, due to the fact that the interview will be recorded your confidentiality while a primary concern cannot be fully guaranteed. Also, sharing your opinions about personal lived experiences during the Afghan war may evoke unpleasant memories that may cause anxiety or nervousness. If this happens, this researcher will make all efforts to be helpful and supportive. Should you need further help, he will assist you by providing referral sources for counseling, but you will have to pay for that yourself. Even though confidentiality for things you say on audio recording cannot be fully guaranteed, all documents and recordings from your interviews will be safely stored in a safe box inside a secured locked cabinet in Mr. Solomon's home office - the recordings will be deleted and all documents will be shredded 36 months after the completion of the study.

If you have questions about this research, your research rights, or any issue you would like to discuss regarding the research, please contact Mr. Solomon at (678) 625-   . You may also contact the IRB at the numbers indicated above with questions about your research rights.

Are there any benefits to me for taking part in this research study?
Potential benefits include developing better understanding of past experiences that may enhance both cross-cultural awareness and conflict management skills. Also, better definition of identities and the problems Afghan Muslim men face during Western assimilation and acculturation processes can be expected.

Will I get paid for being in the study? Will it cost me anything?
There will be no cost to you and the monetary payment for participating is $100.00. This gift will be provided at the conclusion of the interview or follow up questions process. The gift will be via an American express check. The gift will be presented no more than 14 days after the PI analyzes the participant responses. All gifts will be sent to the participant's specified addresses.

How will you keep my information private?
Your responses to the interview questions and the transcriptions of the recording will be kept secured in the researcher's home office. Confidentiality is maintained unless law requires disclosure. As noted, all recordings and information obtained in this study will be destroyed 36 months after the study ends. The IRB, regulatory agencies, and Dr. Hansen may review research records.

What if I do not want to participate or I want to leave the study?
You have the right to discontinue participation in this study at any time. If you decide to discontinue your participation, you will not experience any penalty or any negative consequences from the researcher or anyone associated with this project. If you chose to terminate participation, any information collected about you **before** the date you leave the study will be kept in the research records for 36 months from the conclusion of the study and may be used as part of the study. However, if you decide to terminate the interview you will not receive the monetary payment.

Other Considerations:
If this researcher learns of any new information that may affect your decision to continue participation in this study, you will be notified of this information promptly.

Voluntary Consent by Participant:
By signing below, you indicate that
- this study has been explained to you
- you have read this document
- your questions about this research study have been answered
- you have been told that you may ask the researcher any study related questions or contact him in the event of a research-related injury
- you have been told that you may ask Institutional Review Board (IRB) personnel questions about your study rights
- you are entitled to a copy of this form after you have read and signed it
- you voluntarily agree to participate in the study entitled "Using Qualitative Research Narrative Methods to Examine Pre and Post Immigration Lived Experiences and Identities of an Afghan Muslim Male Population During the Afghanistan War (2003–2012)"

Participant's Signature:_____ Date:_____
Participant's Name:_____ Date:_____
Signature of Person Obtaining Consent:_____
Date:_____

Appendix E. Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative

COLLABORATIVE INSTITUTIONAL TRAINING INITIATIVE (CITI)
HUMAN RESEARCH CURRICULUM COMPLETION REPORT
Printed on 08/27/2013

LEARNER	MICHAEL SOLOMON (ID: 3662380)
DEPARTMENT	DCAR
PHONE	404 6302865
EMAIL	ms2165@nova.edu
INSTITUTION	Nova Southeastern University
EXPIRATION DATE	08/23/2016

7. SHSS

COURSE/STAGE:	Basic Course/1
PASSED ON:	08/24/2013
REFERENCE ID:	10995547

MODULE	DATE COMPLETED	SCORE
Introduction	08/16/2013	No Quiz
History and Ethical Principles - SBE	08/17/2013	5/5 (100%)
Defining Research with Human Subjects - SBE	08/17/2013	5/5 (100%)
The Regulations - SBE	08/18/2013	5/5 (100%)
Basic Institutional Review Board (IRB) Regulations and Review Process	08/18/2013	5/5 (100%)
Assessing Risk - SBE	08/18/2013	5/5 (100%)
Informed Consent - SBE	08/18/2013	5/5 (100%)
Privacy and Confidentiality - SBE	08/18/2013	5/5 (100%)
Records-Based Research	08/19/2013	2/2 (100%)
Research with Prisoners - SBE	08/19/2013	4/4 (100%)
Research with Children - SBE	08/19/2013	3/4 (75%)
Research in Public Elementary and Secondary Schools - SBE	08/19/2013	4/4 (100%)
International Research - SBE	08/19/2013	3/3 (100%)
Internet Research - SBE	08/20/2013	4/5 (80%)
Research and HIPAA Privacy Protections	08/21/2013	5/5 (100%)
Vulnerable Subjects - Research Involving Workers/Employees	08/22/2013	4/4 (100%)
Conflicts of Interest in Research Involving Human Subjects	08/24/2013	4/5 (80%)
Nova Southeastern University	08/27/2013	No Quiz

For this Completion Report to be valid, the learner listed above must be affiliated with a CITI Program participating institution or be a paid Independent Learner. Falsified information and unauthorized use of the CITI Progam course site is unethical, and may be considered research misconduct by your institution.

Paul Braunschweiger Ph.D.
Professor, University of Miami
Director Office of Research Education
CITI Program Course Coordinator

Appendix F. Participant Narratives

Participant One:

Interviewer: Please tell me about your lived experiences from your native homeland from 2003 until departing – your lived experiences.

Interviewee: I was born and raised in Afghanistan. I was born during the 1980s in Afghanistan. You asked specifically about 2003 until departing. Until 1991 to 2002, we were living in refugees in Pakistan – because of the civil war inside of Afghanistan. The mujahedin – different parties that they were fighting, they started the civil war in Afghanistan. As like everyone else, we went to Pakistan as a refugee. We lived there until 2002. After the US invasion at the end of 2001, we came back to my home province. In the beginning, everything was different compared to Pakistan. My life experiences there and here – the schools that I went to as a kid before going to Pakistan, all those were used as a military base either by Afghan forces were US coalition forces at the time. Stuff changed, and it worked out for the Afghan people. There were a lot of improvements when it comes to education. After that, I got a job working with coalition forces. One of the main reasons for my job working with coalition forces was to work with them to let them know that these people are different, specifically about the culture – when it comes to culture and all that stuff. That's one of the basic reasons I started working with the coalition forces. I started with one province, went to another province, two different provinces. But as you know, I was an Afghan local national, so whenever I would see people, they might listen – they would not act on whatever I was saying. They would just sometimes – some people would listen, and some people wouldn't care at all what I was

saying. Ultimately this is how it is done in Afghanistan. The culture and everything is different. But it was overall of the good experience working with the coalition forces until 2009. 2009 was the year that I got my special migration visa to the United States. That was the time in March 2009 – that I went to the United States. The state I decided to go to a Chicago, Illinois. I had a choice where to go and where not to go. One of the reasons I picked the city of Chicago was I had some military friends that I was working with, and also some – because from the culture point of view, you see Chicago as a mixed city. You have people from all different ethnicities, different groups, and different parts of the world. That was one of the reasons I picked Chicago. I thought I would be new into those cultures, so I didn't want to go straight to the US culture. I wanted to understand culture first. That was one of the reasons I picked Chicago. In Chicago, I went there because you have Indians, Middle Eastern Arabs, Persian, Iranians, people from Poland, Asian, Chinese, and Korean – you get people from all over the place. That was one of the reasons that I wanted to go there and learn the culture before I was exposed to an American your culture. That was one of the reasons that I went there.

Interviewer: Going to Chicago, did it provide that environment the ethnic pot that you described it – a little bit of comfort, as opposed to being exposed to all of the USA and the West?

Interviewee: Yes. Growing up in Afghanistan is a totally different environment. It's called the Third World country. The cultural, the religions – everything is different, the belief system. Everything is different compared to the United States. Everything I knew about America is what I learned from Hollywood movies, but a Hollywood movie is not

what America is. Sometimes in Hollywood, they put more Hollywood actions and

exaggeration into it. But in general, American community is way better and different than

what is presented in Hollywood. All I had was the concept of Hollywood. But when I

went in there to Chicago, I saw different people. I had Muslims from all over the Muslim

countries. I had the Hindu community there from India and Pakistan – the Christians

from Pakistan and India. The Persians, there were Jewish, Muslims. It was my first time

that I was exposed to multicultural society. It kind of gives you or gives me more

relaxation, and it made me understand every different religion and how to work together

with different people from different ethnic groups different belief systems.

Interviewer: You stated earlier that in trying to explain about your community or

village or your tribe – you used the term to explain "these people are different." If you

recall that, can you elaborate a little bit on that? What did you mean by that?

Interviewee: The United States was deeply involved in Afghanistan because of the

Soviet invasion. But after the Soviets withdrew from Afghanistan and Afghanistan

election – United States did not pay more attention to it to know these people, who they

are, where they come from, and what they do. When I say these people are different, in

Afghanistan there people do stuff different. The term Afghan is used for everybody who

lives in Afghanistan, but you see in Afghanistan we have different ethnic groups. They

came from different backgrounds, but the majority – as we call them, Pashtuns – they're

the majority in Afghanistan. The people who do not understand the Afghan culture so far.

If there are any that have been written about Pashtun people, these are either by British

people who were involved in the [three and five] war that we had back then. Those

histories are written by those British – whatever they saw. There's a little bit of hatred toward the Pashtuns because there was fighting going on. The real history of Pashtun's was written by Pashtuns and was recorded by Pashtuns - by the Afghans who have not been studied or been understood by Americans or Europeans or in general the Western countries. The Afghans have their own way of life. They have their own culture. That's why say they are different. They do stuff differently. Their belief systems and their way of life totally depends on a non-written code system that came from generation to generation to generation. A good example that would be if you read the book "Lone Survivor." It was a Navy Seal guy who was wounded, and one of the tribal men helped them out. He didn't have to help them out, but because of his tribal law he helped them out. The Navy Seal was there to kill the other Afghans. Either they were bad or good. We will leave that to the history – who was good or who was bad. Time will judge. The main point is that we had our own things, our own different belief system, code system – the rules and laws, how we have this problem, how we solve the problem. We call them Jirgas. The elders of the village – there that people that take care of the problems. It's not like in America, where if you have any problems with the law enforcement – with anybody, you go to law enforcement. The agency – they come if there's a trouble. That is the Pashtun code. Based on the Pashtun code – that guy (Lone Survivor), he thought "This is the guy I have to protect. It doesn't matter what it cost me." So he took him home. The Taliban came and "This is a bad guy. He's an infidel. It is against our religions. It is against our people. He is against our country. He killed other Afghan civilians and insurgents and militants. He's against all the things. We want him back."

But that – Pashtun is like "No, he needed help and I provided him help. I would provide him help as long as I'm alive. You cannot take this guy back." That is one of the tribal code systems. This guy – when they protected this guy, and finally the search party was able to go there and locate the guy or send a message to the American, like "Hey, I have one of the Americans here with me. He's wounded." So they went there and found him, and he was alive. I think he's still doing good. He's in Texas somewhere.

Interviewee: But we see the same thing – almost the same incident when it happened with Osama bin Laden. When Osama bin Laden – he was involved in the New York attack or whatever you call it – 9/11. In America, George W. Bush was president then. They asked Mullah Umar, who was the leader of the Taliban regime of Afghanistan at that time, to hand him over to America – Osama bin Laden. "Either you provide me hard evidence that he was involved in that. If he is involved in you provide me evidence, I will give them to the third neutral country so you can put them on trial. If not, I cannot give them to you because he is my guest, and he is in my protection." Even Mullah Omar – he was a religious leader, and they were opposing strict Islamic laws. But here, he didn't care about Islamic laws. He went by the Pashtun code – "He is my guest, I have to protect him regardless if you think he's wrong. If you provide me evidence, he is not a bad guy. I cannot give him to you." George W. Bush told him "If you don't give that guy back to me, get ready for the invasion and everything." In both incidents, they are the same. The Navy Seal – to protect the life of the Navy Seal, and they made that Afghan like he's a hero. But another case, when it's Osama Bin Laden, they make that [inaudible] as a bad guy. What I mean is we need to go not as our Western culture, in order to understand the

people of this culture. They need to go deep into it. They need to study exactly. They

need to hear this from the people who practice those questions – not from a British guy

who wrote a book 200 years back or 100 years back, who was here for reasons for the

colonization of this land. We need to understand the culture of these people from close

proximity. We need to study and work with these countries in order to understand who

they are and how we can work with them and how we cannot offend them. I know

Americans, they had the right intention to help; but they were helping the people in the

American ways. That here, it needs to be different. You need to understand these people.

You need to not offend them. We need to change some policies and some stuff.

Interviewer: Thank you. We're going to move to number two. In terms of your sense of

self, your identity, what does it mean to you to be an Afghan?

Interviewee: In general, I say no everybody lives in Afghanistan – there a mixed ethnic

group. They're called Afghans by the new standard. But back then, the term Afghan was

first used by Persians for Pashtun tribes, who were attacking the Persian Empire at that

time. Before even the Pashtuns knew they were given the name Afghans. During the 18th

century, the Pashtun king – he brought all those different ethnic groups from, Tajik,

Hazara, Pashtun, a small Arabic tribes it didn't speak Arabic, but they were immigrants

from their long time ago. He brought all those tribes together under the name of Afghan.

Right now, everybody here in Afghanistan is called Afghans, but that day – just the

Pashtuns were called Afghans. For me, being an Afghan is to be a person who likes this

country, who loves his country, who works hard for improvement of his country, working

with different ethnic groups together as a unit – like we call it "United Afghan" in

general. For me, we are proud of who we are. We are proud of our history. I know there's

not a lot of history written or studied by the Americans or other Westerners. Whatever the

history is present today is, as I said, has come is there from British or somebody else. It's

not from the Pashtun. If you go deep into the Pashtun history, what we did for this

country, for the land, for the people – you will understand the whole thing about being a

Pashtun or being an Afghan. If I'm among different people, I would say I'm proud of

being a Pashtun because I knew my history. I knew my background and who I am and

what I did for this country. We did military-wise, economically, from these points of

view. The Pashtuns or Afghans did a lot. But throughout this Cold War era and after that,

everything is misrepresented to different things. I was born as a Pashtun. I am Pashtun,

and I will die of a Pashtun – regardless of where I am, regardless of my citizenship, as

I'm an Afghan citizen or US citizen. But I am Afghan. This is something that cannot

change. It is in my blood. The other thing that I would like to say is about being a

Pashtun. Here, I'm proud of being a Pashtun. But in America, the American media

complex – it represents the Pashtun specifically in a different way. In America, if you say

that I am a Pashtun, then you are taken – or if you are an Afghan in general. If you say "I

am Afghan," you are taken as a terrorist because that's what the media put it into the

people. What they said – if you can control the media, you control the mind of the people.

The media is controlled by people who represent these people as we are bad people,

people who like to kill, people who are extremists and like that. But here, I'm proud of

being an Afghan. But when in America, I would be careful to say that, or represent

myself. When I was out, people ask "Where do you come from?" I would say from South

Asia. If you see from the geographic point of view, I am Asian. I would say I'm Asian. I am proud of being an Afghan, and I would be.

Interviewer: You get emotional speaking about the subject of Afghanistan and Pashtun heritage.

Interviewee: As I said, it's because people are being represented. It's sometimes hard – who you are, and you cannot represent yourself because of the stereotypes – because of all the other things in Western countries. If you are Muslim, especially Afghan – guess what. All Americans – they bring 9/11, killing people, beheading people, and everything like that. But they don't actually go deep into it to understand these people. The stereotypes sometimes make me be careful when I talk about myself. I say I'm Pashtun or I'm an Afghan.

Interviewer: Did you agree to do this with the thought that your narrative, your story out there in a true sense can help to address this misperception or misunderstanding? Quite frankly, maybe it exists not only in the US, but maybe even here in Afghanistan.

Interviewee: Yes, that's one of the reasons that I decided to work with the new [inaudible] head Afghanistan – to change what they had in their mind. Let me tell you, even right now I had US Army officers. They asked me where I was from. I said I was from Afghanistan, and he told me [shakumaku]. I told him "Okay, what does that mean?" He told me "I've been to Iraq, and I know that means 'How are you?'" I told him that Iraqi people speak Arabic, and we are a totally different system. The only thing that we have in common is our belief system – the Islam. We speak a different language. We are totally different people. We don't do the same stuff that they do. Something that we do,

we are proud of. They won't do it. Whatever they do in Iraq that's, they might be proud

of doing that; but here, we would look at it at with a different point of view. That's one of

the things that when I had four years of a pretty good job in America. My job's main

thing was that because I thought I was an immigrant to the United States, as the new

immigrants to the United States. I was born and raised in Afghanistan. I know the culture.

I knew the people. I knew the history. I knew everything about being an Afghan. One of

my things was to get a job – to work with those people who were born in Afghanistan, to

let them know this is how things work. Whatever you guys have is a totally different

thing. What happened was, especially in DLI, Defense Language Institute, there were

people – the linguists or interpreter or specifically the cultural advisors – the Americans

they brought with them to Afghanistan, they were the Afghans who were born and raised

in the United States, and they were away from the Afghan culture for so many years that

they did not know how to read and write the language. They were just able to speak

because of their family background. They had no idea what was going on in here. Or

either the Afghan who went to the United States when they were little kids in the 1980s

during the war, so they grew up there. They went to the American schools. They grew up

in American society in American culture. That was one of the biggest mistakes that

people who listen to those guys. One of the things is I want to change is that. I got the

federal job – even when I was offered a civilian contractor job that was $180,000 a year.

But the federal job that I applied for was around $30,000 the year. This is a huge

difference if you see from the money and the point of view. It's a huge difference, but I

declined this contractor job. I said "I have a mission. I have to people." The only simple

reason for that is not understanding each other, not understanding the culture. That was one of the things that I went in there and I joined the federal contract to come there and turn those people – "Hey, this is how this stuff is done." I was able to avoid a lot of incidents in general and different areas. Here I sat – or the coalition forces were doing stuff differently in their own ways – the American ways of the Western ways. But because I was in a position, I was in the rank in the position that people had to listen to me. This is a stuff that needs to be done. As I said about that DLI, those people that were working for DLI – those are people, as I said, Americans. Because of my position, I couldn't say anything. I said "Sir, this is my thing to do it, but if you want to do it, we can do this." He said he wanted to do it. He knows the culture, and he knows the religion. I told him okay. He did the class and everything. After the class, I asked him "How do you know about the religion of Islam? How do you know about the culture?" I asked him if he was deployed to Afghanistan. He said that, no, he was not deployed to Afghanistan at all. I said "How do you know about the culture better than I do? You decided to give the class and teach the class – not me because you thought you knew better than that." He said because his wife's family background is from Afghan. His father-in-law and mother-in-law were Afghans. He thought that he knew somehow the culture and everything of Islam better than I do. That's one of the things that I try hard to tell the people that – "This is why. This is what I do. This is my message for you guys. This is how we work. This is how stuff works there." In a lot of places, people listen to me, and they change the stuff. For the most part, they were very successful. Some did not care. But I did my part to make the change.

Interviewer: Before we transition to the second half of the point of the discussion – that being in the US. The last questions – you may have touched on this somehow. I'll ask you to expand just a little bit. Your experiences during the war – you talked about earlier in Pakistan and coming back. By the way, you describe this area of Khosts. Geographically, this area – it's in the news a lot lately. Maybe you can connect it. If you care to connect that to the war experiences in that region?

Interviewee: I was born during the war, and I grew up during the war – during the 1980s when I was born. There was a mujahedin and the Afghan local government. The local government was backed by the Russians, and the mujahedin was backed by the ISI of Pakistan and the CIA and the United States. Growing up in this area during the war – it was a really hard experience to go to school and do different stuff. Everything you do in an environment – you don't know that you are coming back home alive or not. When you wake up in the morning and you decide to go to work or school as a kid, you might think that this is the last day of your life because you see people working with you together or people who are going to school together with you – you see them today, the next thing you know there's a bomb dropped on the school or an explosion or something. It was really hard during that time. As I said, in 1991 – in the early 1990s when the mujahedin took over, they started a civil war, so we went to Pakistan. At that time, there was a kind of peace. We had an experience how to live a normal life. It was relaxed and enjoying school and doing different stuff. When we came back in 2002 – the beginning of 2002 or the end of 2001. It was the same experience but from a different perspective and a different point of view. There was still a war going on, still explosions, still IED's.

People were under a lot of stress because you don't know who's your enemy and how you will die and who will kill you and what will be the cause. People are dying. They don't know the reason why they're dying and who is killing them and why they are getting killed. That is one of the stressors of the people, especially right now. People are being killed by drones. People are killed by the insurgents or IEDs driving to school are going place to place in the market or roadside bomb. There's a lot of stress. If you see the public and in general when you see the people, they are really stressed. It has a really huge psychological effect on their life.

Interviewer: As a young man in this environment, how did you cope? How did you deal with that daily stress – not knowing you'd be back home that day?

Interviewee: Until the 1990s, for me there was no life. I had no concept of living in a different society without war, without bombing, without explosions. I thought the whole world worked like this. I had not been outside of that situation.

Interviewer: Okay. Now we transition. Five points left. Now you have immigrated. However you want to say about – good, bad, indifferent – about how you immigrated, that process.

Interviewee: The migration process for me. The immigration process for me was OK – because I was working for the military here, the military had a process after 2005 or 2006 in Afghanistan in that timeframe. I got selected for the special immigration visa. I was a special immigrant. I thought it might be some kind of trap that if I go there that I might get captured by Pakistan officials and get detained in there. The whole process now has changed. At my time, the hard part was traveling to the country of Pakistan for entry into

the US Embassy, but now everything is conducted in Kabul. The process is not that long. Since I started it, within three months I was able to finish everything, get my visa, and go to the United States. Overall, the migration from Afghanistan to the United States was like you are reborn as a different person in a different part of the world. Here, as I said, you just see war.

Interviewee: Trust is one of the most important components of the society – the best thing about the Pashtun code system. I will tell you a limitation about the migration process. There were a lot of promises that were made by coalition forces – either by Americans or by different countries. "We will do this. We will do this. We will do this and this and this." But what happened was all those promises were broken. There was kind of mistrust between the people and the coalition forces. And, as I said, there are different ways of doing stuff. Our ways and the Afghan ways or the Pashtun ways and the American ways of doing stuff. As I said at the beginning, I trusted them what they said about the whole process. But the only thing that I was concerned about in my safety was the Pakistan part. I trusted the Americans, but I did not trust the Pakistanis. If you see throughout the history of the relationship with the Pakistan to the US, the Pakistanis are always the ones who deceive other people. I think in the beginning that it might be Pakistan involved in this process – to see who is going to America or what are they doing in there.

Interviewee: As I said at the beginning, I had no idea what the American society would look like. All I knew was based on the few Hollywood movies that I watched. In the beginning, it was still that I was going to a different part of the world. What I was

concerned about was my religion, and the most important thing with my culture. I was

going to a different part of the world. Would I be able to keep my religion? Would I be

able to practice what I believe in? Would I be able to do my cultural stuff that I believe is

good for me if I go there? But when I went in there, the most important thing that I met

people from my religion all over the world. I saw Americans. They were white and

Muslim. I saw black Americans that were white and Muslim. I saw people from the

Middle East. I saw people from Canada. You name it. I saw people from Europe. They

were all practicing the same religion that I was practicing. When I saw that, I was real

happy. At the beginning, I thought that here in Afghanistan, I practice my religion with

my own people. But going in there and you are practicing the same religion with the

people that speak different languages, they come from different cultural backgrounds in

countries and different cultural background systems. It's kind of really the feelings that

make you really happy and be proud of being part of an American society. That's what

America is about, and that's what makes me real happy that I am really proud of being.

People in here – in general because there are some stereotypes that Americans have about

Afghans, but Afghans have about Americans. "When you go there, you have to do

whatever Americans do. If you want to practice religion, you have to practice their

religion. Islam is totally out of the concept of America." That's what Afghans believe.

When you go there, you see all those things – the freedom of religion, freedom of speech.

All those constitutional rights that you would be able to have in any other part of the

country, but you have in America. Those of the feelings – you are really proud and happy

of being part of such a society and community.

Interviewer: You are not asked to violate who you are and give up your religion and your culture. Your being is nested in those two things.

Interviewee: That's right.

Interviewer: Okay, sir. Speaking of the religious element, that's a good segue. Talk to us for a second a little bit more about your religious self, your Islam self, your Muslim identity.

Interviewee: 99 percent of the people are Muslim, and everybody practices. The 1 percent minority are Hindus that we have there in Afghanistan. The only religion that we are exposed to with Islam. Everybody is Muslim. I am Muslim, my cousin, my father, my grandmother – everybody is Muslim. The whole village in the tribe – we practice the same religion. Going into America, when you see a synagogue, mosque, a church on the same street – you realize that there are different people in this world and how they could be together in the same place, worshipping. Everybody is proud of their identity, who they are. Everybody is proud of their religions and who they are. But at the same time, they practice their religion, and they have that love to share with each other – not to harm each other. I was born and raised in a Muslim family. I'm a Muslim, and I practice my religion. One of the good things about being Muslim – people have a different concept of it because of 9/11. "All the Muslims, they kill people." I had one guy who approached me. He was – I think they call him, if I'm not mistaken – Jehovah's Witness. They said "You cannot be a Muslim." I said "Why? Why can't I be a Muslim?" "Because you're so nice and so good. People just buy one." I said "What do you understand about Muslim?" Immediately she said "The 9/11 people." I said "No, that is not – the whole religion is not

represented by a few insurgents." I said "What about the Oklahoma City bomb? It was done by Christians." Nobody said that Christians were terrorists. Or the abortion clinic bombing – that does not represent the whole Christianity. I cannot blame his religion for that one person, or I cannot blame the whole today is them for what a few Israeli forces do with the Palestinians or with the Palestinians do to the Jewish people in there. In order to understand religion or people, you need to study the religion itself. You have to understand a religion, not a person. There are two different things – being a Muslim or Islam. You cannot judge the whole faith by judging my actions, what I do. Once you understand the religion, once you understood everything, you will be able to see the difference – where the people come from or what that religion actually says.

Interviewer: If you were talking to another Afghan in America, you would identify yourself – how would you identify yourself?

Interviewee: If I was talking to another Afghan in America, I would identify myself where I come from as being an Afghan, a Pashtun, and a Muslim. As you see, the religion has a huge impact on the Afghan culture. There's the culture, and there's the religion. Sometimes there's a huge difference between these two. Religion goes one way, and the culture goes another way. But still, the Afghans are proud of being Afghans and Muslims. If they still say "I'm Afghan," 99 percent would say "I'm a proud Muslim Afghan." The religion comes with it. I go by my name, by my tribal last name. Introducing myself to a different person, and Americans or person who's never been outside of America, who doesn't know about Afghanistan – the only thing that he knows about Afghanistan and Muslims is about the terrorists. I introduced myself to them that I

am from south-central Asia. For south-central Asia, they don't know where I come from. They have the knowledge of where south-central Asia – all those things in south-central Asia, like "Afghanistan, what tribe are you?" But they don't know that. I told that [inaudible] to them might confuse, but at the same time, I'm not lying to them. At the same time, based on his stereotypes that has limited knowledge and information about Afghanistan, I'm not making myself – according to him – a terrorist, like "I'm a terrorist. I'm a bomber."

Interviewer: And the media portrayed it.

Interviewee: Yes.

Interviewer: To an Afghan woman, how would you introduce yourself? The same? Is it different?

Interviewee: It's just tribal. It's the same. Afghans, especially Pashtun, they're more protective of their women. In America, it's totally different than Afghanistan, where men and women are equal. If a woman is 18 or 21, she goes to get her a job or has certain independence. She does what she wants. She gets married. She finds her own husband or boyfriend or whatever. She lives with her boyfriend and does stuff her own way – whatever she chooses to. But in Afghanistan, it's different. My sister wants to get married. As a brother, I have to know who she's marrying. Is he able to provide for her? Is he able to protect her? If he is able to provide protection, and all that she needs, would she be able to bring that happiness in her life? That's why a kind of man gets control of her, not control. It's kind of the charge of being the elder of the family or being the elder

of our tribe. We are very protective of women, especially with women – they're able to be accompanied by a male whenever they go somewhere.

Interviewee: Yes, tribal law. In general because I see different ethnic groups, everybody has different standards and everything. But if you go to downtown Kabul, you will see girls walking in jeans – the same way that they do in America in different towns. You wouldn't see the difference. If you go to a Pashtun area, their stuff is different. I won't allow my woman to go outside by herself. It's not because I don't trust my sister or my wife. It's because I don't want anybody to harm her. I need to be with her. I want to be the brother. I want to be the cousin who will be able to provide security when she needs it. That's why whenever there's a Pashtun woman going anywhere, she is escorted by a male. It's not because we don't give her the freedom to do whatever she wants.

Interviewer: Can you speak to your cultural sense of self?

Interviewee: There were different occasions, especially a cultural thing or on the religious things – in America, we dress differently. You go in dress differently. You dress like a Western man. Everything is different. One day we had this cultural day, as I said. The people that I was working with, there were people from all different backgrounds, from different countries. I was the only one – because we had food and all kinds of stuff to show to the local community who we are in what we do. I was the one who dressed up completely based on my culture. I had the turban. I had the white Afghan dress, and I had the head wear. I had everything from head to toe. I was definitely – I just totally differently. Everybody was like "Where you from? What you do there?" The whole focus of the whole community meeting I think was on me and why this guy is different.

For me, I didn't see the difference. I didn't say "He is Pashtun, and he is Tajik." But in Chicago, an Afghan that I never met him, he was an Afghan. He was my brother for me. It was a little bit different in Chicago that – it was a different culture that would bring together in the Muslim community. You would see people from Pakistan, Punjab, India, and different places – India, Iran, and the Arab countries. Everybody has their own culture. There were a lot of Afghans there. The only few Afghans that I knew were Hazara, but they were good people living in Chicago. I saw a few Tajik people. I did not meet any people from Pashtun tribes, and the only Pashtuns I saw were from Pakistan. They were from across the border. Overall, to me they were still part Afghans. I am more proud of being a Pashtun than being an Afghan. It started with my family. I'm proud to be who I am, and I brought up my family. To the cousin, to the tribe. In other tribes, I go by my tribe name. "This is who you are. This is who I am. I go by tribes." When I was out of Afghanistan, I didn't look for Pashtuns. I was being proud of an Afghan identity. I am Afghan. That was all it meant for me at that time. He had the same thing that he had to leave Afghanistan because of the war, and they came to Pakistan as a refugee. We shared all those things. Coming back to my province – because of my father, he has a job in law enforcement here in Afghanistan. His job – he moved to Kabul.

Interviewee: In Afghanistan, I see an Islamic society and Islamic community when I was born, but then when I moved to America I had that kind of fear. Would I be able to maintain my religion? Would I be able to practice my religion? Being exposed to all those religions, they are different places in different communities; make me a stronger believer in my face. It makes me go deeper into my faith. It makes me study my faith. At

the beginning, the only religion I was exposed to was Hinduism. The Hindu that we had

in Afghanistan, they practice different religions when it comes to religion, but they share

the same exact culture with us – especially within the provinces. They speak my

language. The only thing is a different religion. I had no idea about Buddhism or Judaism

or Christianity or atheist or all those kinds. I was exposed to that. At the beginning, I felt

like I would lose, but when I saw people with different ways, it made me think. It made

me believe and my religion from a different perspective.

Interviewer: And get deeper in your faith.

Interviewee: Yes, to see it from a different perspective what other people think and

what my religion says. In Afghanistan, everybody here is a Muslim. My cousin of is a

Muslim. My whole villages in Muslim and everybody around me is Muslim. We didn't

have the fear of losing it. But going to America, it makes you more protected or makes

you more determined to go deeply into religion to make sure you understand completely

who you are and what you practice and what you do because you have that fear.

Interviewee: It might be different for other people. I have seen Afghans that they

migrated a long time ago to the United States are different countries. They completely

lost their religious identity, and they were totally lost in who they were and who they are

right now. But there are other people that when they go in there – as I said, based on my

culture, we are very protective of our stuff – our properties, our beliefs, our morals, our

way of life. As a Pashtun, when you go there – because I had a concern that "Let me see

what they think about me and who exactly I am in order to understand myself as a

Muslim. I need to go deeper and deeper and deeper in Islam to understand what they

think." There were a lot of stereotypes. Let me tell you – a friend, he was from Morocco. We were training in one place, South Carolina. Whenever that guy would come, the other guys – when he was walking toward the group of other people who were Muslim Americans, they would be like "Beep, beep, beep," like this guy is going to explode himself, he's a suicide bomber that's coming. It was kind of a joke on that guy, and that guy was a guy who gave up on everything – like "This is not who I am, but these people do." He would introduce himself like a different person. There are a lot of Jewish people in Morocco – he wouldn't say "I'm a Muslim." He would say "I'm Jewish." In the beginning, I didn't have a similar experience like he did. I said "This is who I am. This is what I practice." I told him from the beginning "If your source of information is from Western media, specifically CNN and Fox news, you are wrong. In order to say all those things, give me the source quote from a book or different point of view – not from the media industrial complex. One of the things in America, they bring all the people from different communities and different backgrounds. The most important thing is to understand each other. That is the most important thing – that you do not listen to what the media says. As I see for myself today, I am a better Muslim. I am a better Pashtun and Afghan then I was a few years back before my migration to the United States. It made me a better person than I was before.

Interviewer: Thank you.

End.

Participant Two:

Interviewer: Please tell me about your lived from your native homeland in Afghanistan.

Interviewee: In Afghanistan, I actually used to live in there for a long time but since 2003, because my job was with the United States Army back in Kandahar and my family was in Kabul. Living experience was all right until 2005. At the end of 2005, there was little bit problem. My family was worrying me about me travelling from home to work and from work to home. Because of my job, my life was always in danger. Until 2005, the life and everything was normal. I was just going to work and come back home. Life was normal but there was always a little bit nervousness because of the security risk in Afghanistan and I got my SIV visa at the starting of 2006. That changed my life. I had my junior high school education there. Life experience was good but because of the security situation in Afghanistan, I was always worrying about what is happening with my family and me.

Interviewer: May I ask you, please, can you explain what your feelings were as a Muslim supporting the coalition? Can you elaborate or discuss your feelings at that point of time?

Interviewee: To be honest, I was-- As a Muslim, I felt it was my job to help the people in Afghanistan. I know it, as an educated guy; at least in high school I learnt how to actually help my people there and how to help my family. Actually I was working with the mentors of the Afghan National Army. It was my every day experience. I was experiencing how the mentors were trying to teach the Afghan people how to take care of your country. I was feeling really good that I was at least on the right side to help country. At the same time, I did not feel like I was doing something against my religion

as a Muslim. First of all, I was a Muslim but I never thought that I was doing something wrong because I was helping my people, my country and the Afghan army. So I was feeling good.

Interviewer: In terms of your sense of self, that is to say who you viewed yourself as; can you please talk a little bit about what it means to be an Afghan?

Interviewee: Being an Afghan is a good feeling but the only problem is what you can do for your country as an Afghan. It was really important for me. Actually taking this step to and my goal was to help my people in there and also my family. So being an Afghan actually feels good but sometimes you feel something is wrong with the community you are trying to help. I hope it is not going on the different side but as an Afghan the feeling was good.

Interviewer: Would you take that same question, since you yourself identified in the questionnaire as a Hazara, what then are the self beliefs in terms of how it feels to be an Azhara?

Interviewee: When you are born with a tribe you don't have an option to change that. First of all, I am proud of being a Hazara in Afghanistan but if you are in such a community that is among the minority people in Afghanistan - actually seeing the news back then, especially during the Taliban and all, it was hurting to see how they are treating you. But, nowadays, everything has changed in there. As an Hazara, now, I am feeling very good. We do have opportunities to go to the schools. We have a Hazara, like in, Vice President of Afghanistan. You have a Hazara as a government officer at state, especially women. We have doctors, we have engineers in there. That actually makes me

feel much better because we cannot say if there was injustice with us but there was a situation back then that being a Hazara you had to worry all the time about what is going on when you were stopped somewhere because it was easy to recognize your face there to some people. Now I am really happy for my brother Hazaras there. They are living freely and have more opportunities there. So I am feeling good about being a Hazara now. Everything has changed now. I am in the States, so my life is different now. When I go back there, we actually talk about how it is in United States. In United States, you are American. My life has changed. When I enter United States, I am an American. They are saying, "You are from Afghanistan." So they don't care about who I am but I am American now.

Interviewer: So you identify yourself as an American or... complete that.

Interviewee: My identity now has changed. I feel more American than Afghan because I am seeing my future and my family's future in United States. We are all citizens of United States. It has changed. We have an Afghan community. We also have our own culture. We follow up all these Muslim festivals like Eid, New Year and all kind of festivals but at the same time I am an American. I am thinking more about being an American now because my life, family, children and everybody is in United States. So my home is here in the USA.

Interviewer: Within your community, when you meet a fellow Afghan, how do you identify yourself in that community and in that setting?

Interviewee: When we are seeing, to be honest, we seeing each other as an Afghan-American. We have some traditional Afghan culture with us. We greet the family group

as Afghan but at same time we are Afghan Americans because we are in the United States. Something has changed. We don't care about lots of stuff that we do cared about there like who are you, you are Hazara, you are this and that. We just greet as an Afghan community. We respect each other as a Afghan-American because only the value, when you are going outside of Afghanistan, feeling is that there will be separation of who are you basically. Are you a Hazara? We are greeting all the time as Afghans. If there is wedding, or if there is a funeral, we don't care about who or where he is from Afghanistan. We just respect that family as Afghan and we do Afghan stuff that we are doing there. Marriage style and everything has changed over there because of the culture. We are between two cultures. It is getting mixed between two cultures. At my home and every Afghan's home, you cannot say you are completely Afghans. I will give you a small example. When I am talking to family, my kids answer me back in English. So in that case you feel that you are mixed because your children are going to school where they are talking in English. With daddy they are not comfortable. They cannot answer you in the correct way that they want. They are looking for words from like, "Ok dad, what do you mean?" I just gave you a small example to understand what it is being Afghan-American. You are already mixed and you are between two cultures, two languages and two different societies. So it is my life experience being in America. That is why I mentioned that everything is changed when you move from Afghanistan to United States. Even if you want to try to keep everything, you can't because if you are living in a society you will observe, if not today tomorrow you will see the difference in your family. You will start to think differently. It is not religion wise. Religion wise, I am

going to the mosque more freely than when I was in Afghanistan. In United States, you

can go to the mosque whenever you want and nobody can stop you. In United States, it is

freedom of religion. You want to go or you don't want to go is up to you. So I am not

talking about religion because I feel greater freedom in United States than in Afghanistan.

The mosque doors are open 24 hours and you can go and pray anytime, nobody can stop

you. So that was the religion part.

Interviewer: Can I ask this, since we are on the theme of United States, with regards to

identifying yourself within the Afghan community...? What if you are outside of the

Afghan community? What when you meet an American boss or a friend on a street? How

would you identify yourself?

Interviewee: Actually in the first year, wherever I go, because I was new and there were a

lot of changes in my life that it was a culture shock. In the first six months, you feel like

you are in a new country and you don't belong here. Then you start feel like you are

American and this is your hometown. Now whatever is happening in this is country is

affecting your life too. Then you start feeling like you are more American. When you see

an American you can feel that he is my neighbor and we are on the same society. While

going to school on seeing the teacher of your kids, you feel like we are same and belong

to the same society. We feel like you are American.

Interviewer: You referenced school with your kids. In your home, is Dari spoken. Is it the

majority language or is it English that is spoken?

Interviewee: Right now, my wife and me are always talking and trying to teach them

Dari. Whenever the kids are around we are not talking in English because we want to

teach them Dari. Somehow, we still have a link and family in Afghanistan that we want

our kids to communicate with them in Dari because nobody in Afghanistan can speak

English like them. So there will be a language barrier problem. So we want to teach them

Dari. We are talking to them in Dari but their response sometimes is in English. So, we

are like, "In Dari, they call these words this." They are trying to learn. In the future they

might appreciate us but right now they are not feeling comfortable because in school they

are communicating in English. So they are much comfortable in English. That's my idea.

Sometimes I tell my family, "Yeah let them talk in English because the society

requirement is.... They can solve their problem with the language. We cannot force them.

We will just try to teach them."

Interviewer: Do you find or is there a difficulty in trying to maintain that balance? For

example, the kids in the social setting--You brought up language, they speak in English.

Coming home or coming into your home and balancing that, trying to respect honor and

holding onto the heritage.

Interviewee: Actually that's a good question. I want to explain that a little bit. The

Afghan community, when we have a gathering as a party or when we see my uncles and

their family that helps a lot to keep the culture of Afghanistan. They will know about how

the Afghans are meeting each other. So just we are teaching to our kids what out

background behavior is. What you are seeing is what we do back in Afghanistan. So that

helps a lot. So no, it's not difficult to maintain that because you have all the opportunities

over there, must be easier but still you have some time to catch everything with the

culture. In every culture there is something good and something bad. Whatever is not

good, we don't want to touch that. We want the theme of the culture to be as good

Afghan-American.

Interviewer: In the mid-western community, you mentioned the afghan community, are

there differences?

Interviewee: Basically, we see all around. We have some Hazara families also and we

have also other ethnic groups. Whenever we see each other at the park, like playing

volleyball, there are no differences. Whenever you are going to one community, there is

an Afghan wedding party. There is everybody over there. You will see Afghans. You like

to be there because it is not a big community but a small community of Afghans. So

whenever you are going to a mosque, you will see everybody, all the Afghans.

Interviewer: Now, contrast that in Afghan. Your native community - is it all one tribe or

mixed? Some mixing in the big cities but not in the tribes.

Interviewer: But in the rural areas, you will still see...

Interviewee: It's still the same there.

Interviewer: Is there anything that we have omitted that you would like to discuss?

Interviewee: I am not saying that there is a bad community in Afghanistan. It is not like

that but the lifestyle is different. It is very different. If your kids are going to school in

Kabul, you will be thinking about what is going to happen. There might be suicide

attacks, there might be a bomb but now, in US, I feel like they are safe in the US. They

are going to school and I am pretty sure they will have good high education. They are

safe. My family is safe. There is nothing that is bothering me regarding their safety. I am

taking good care of them. I drop them to school and talk to the teacher to make sure that

they are doing. In Afghanistan, if you have one challenge there is another challenge there. In there, safety is a challenge. You are trying to keep yourself and your family safe from accidents that happen outside like suicide attacks, kidnaps, etc. In United States there is a goal – you have to work hard to achieve your goals to provide a good life for your family. So goals have changed but you are still trying your best to keep your family happy. In there, there was a lot of tension. If you have a job, it is good but safety is still a big question for your family and for you because you are travelling and going on. People worry about feeling safe but in the United States you need to have the higher education to have a good job. Why at least you have something to do to have a better life or if you have money to start your own business to make more money and support your family.

Interviewer: You talked about family and the need for education. Those are certainly values. You talked about Hazara community. Is there enough value that you would add to that group, higher, lower or anything else?

Interviewee: On that value... I grew up in Kabul. So I had actually seen all of this civil fight and everything in here in Afghanistan. So when you achieve this goal to actually move your family from here to United States, you feel you are a strong man as you at least helped your family. You at least succeeded in providing your family a better life. In here, as an Afghan, I know that there are not many opportunities to go to schools or be as a working individual. Even if you can do it, it is limited. In big cities you can have. So whenever you achieve these goals like getting your visa, going to United States, moving your family, etc. You will feel good that, at least you helped your family.

Interviewer: Back in your community, does your spouse work?

Interviewee: No. She stays home as I have 3 kids, all girls. So that's a full-time job for her.

Interviewer: Anything else you would like to add.

Interviewee: No. Thank you so much. I hope I answered what you needed.

End.

Participant Three:

Interviewer: Please tell me sir, about your lived experiences, your experiences from your native homeland, the time that you were in Afghanistan, your early experiences.

Interviewee: My military translation duties was for me, it was a great experience because when I left Afghanistan when I was 20 years old and I came back and see a big change for me, working with coalition forces on a different part of Afghanistan, different region of Afghanistan. It was a great experience and the only thing that keeps me doing it with all trapped and fear and it's a war zone. It is getting more experience. It's a good experience.

Interviewer: With that—the draw of that experience and the experience drawing you in have to do with your sense of being an Afghan coming back to the country and helping from that sense or what?

Interviewee: Not really. Not a sense of Afghan. In the sense of human being too involved, society, to coalition forces, to help our nation, to help US troops, to help NATO troops. My main thing is to help coalition forces because without translator, without somebody to explain what's going on, it's helped for the tour so actually it is something like every day when I go out with US troops and work and get something for them, inform them something, that pleased me.

Interviewer: Okay. You said to help the nation or it may have been "help my nation." Which nation were you referring to?

Interviewee: NATO nations.

Interviewee: US nations. They need us.

Interviewer: And us being—they need us, us being?

Interviewee: They need translators.

Interviewer: Okay, all right. To help understand what's happening culturally, help understand how the Afghans are.

Interviewee: Understands culturally, understands how the Afghan are, understands how the language works, understand body language of some peoples. On the meetings, some people talk, but language is difference and that's culture for me.

Interviewer: Shifting slightly, in terms of—I use the term sense of self, who one is, in terms of your sense of self, can you tell me just a little bit what it means to be an Afghan something? What it means to be an Afghan to you?

Interviewee: An Afghan, it is a nation. Afghan, it is a culture. Afghan, it is human beings. Afghan, it is history.

Interviewer: History?

Interviewee: History. So, that's all as combined of an Afghan. There is a good part of them. There is a bad part of them. There is a weak part, a strong part, but that's called Afghan. You can't just say Afghan just language.

Interviewer: Yes.

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: If you have western clothes, nobody knows you're an Afghan unless you tell them you're Afghan. To me, the first things, it's being a human being is more than being an Afghan, but to show them I'm an Afghan, the way you talk, the way you approach

people, the way you say "Sala Malecon", the way you shake hands with people, the way

you grab people's hand, the way you stand on your side, you stand on your right side, on

the left side, how old is the guy, he's learning people's or learn people, it depend how

you choose your Afghans to a different type of people. So, it's kind of a different

situation too. But to me, if I show myself I'm Afghan, more likely when I introduce

myself, my name, my last names shows Islamic different cultures, all yeah.

Interviewer: Okay. Just elaborate a little bit more on that. Let's say you were speaking

to another Afghan, okay, another male Afghan? How would you introduce yourself to

him?

Interviewee: To introduce him, I just probably the best things I can do as to tell him my

names and I tell him where I'm from originally and where I grow up, which high school I

went, that's good enough to introduce yourself and especially in Afghan society, this is

small society and the minute you tell them your last name, the people know where you're

from.

Interviewer: So, there's a distinction? I'm hearing and understanding, if I do understand

correctly, there is a distinction in terms of identity in how you introduce yourself to an

Afghan brother as opposed to a non-Afghan or a non-Muslim? There's a difference.

Interviewee: There is a difference, yes. Mostly likely, when Afghan brothers, we need

Introduce yourself of in the matter of a minute, you will for detail of your background.

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: But for non-Afghan, you just say your names and your last name.

Interviewer: Okay. You start to relate. You start to—

Interviewee: Start to relate, yes.

Interviewer: Why do you feel—have you ever thought or can you elaborate why you make a distinction as to introduction to an Afghan vise or versus a non-Afghan?

Interviewee: It's just the needs to—Afghans know you and your background and where you come from. Most of non-Afghans, they don't care what's your background is. Afghan culture, it is some kind of question. I'm talking to, I'm probably have lunch with you and I like to know what's your background is and this is, it is culture. But non Afghans, they don't care. You're okay here and your name is so and so and I have lunch with you. But, for Afghans, when they meet each other, the first things they are on their mind is, who I'm talking with them. Which ethnicity he is? Which part of country he is from, which school he went? Who is his father? That's culture. That's how you connect to another Afghan. That's the way you connect to another Afghan. Yeah.

Interviewer: Okay. In the west, in your live experience in the west, you live in an Afghan or a Muslim community or how would you describe your community?

Interviewee: I lived more likely in a mixed community. I was with Afghans and I was more with westerns community. On my work area, I was always in a western work community. On my family area, I was always with Afghans. Yes. It was kind of mixed.

Interviewer: Okay. Initially upon entry into the west, what nature of community was it? Mixed or singular, unitary, Afghan, Muslim or how—can you describe that?

Interviewee: Yeah, mixed got in. I was directly in the 2 westerns community. After a while, I find out a small Afghan community. For 6, 7, 9 months, I was in a westerns community with different peoples. After 6, 7 months, I find out oh, there is an

Afghan. Yeah. So, then I connect.

Interviewer: So, your assimilation or entry into the west, you didn't necessarily look for a community that can, that shared your experiences, your Afghan experience, your Muslim experience. That wasn't a consideration?

Interviewee: No. Most of people they are getting into westerns community is because of the language, or finding a job. More likely, my experience they're working with westerns to connect them with non-westerns. With non-westerns, you get less help. When you connect with westerns, then you get help — somehow you get a job. You just start learning the language with them. This is the best way to do it and that was my experience. Interviewer: So, you found that assimilation, of course, a driver with economic well-being jobs and caring for the family. I presume that's what you mean.

Interviewee: Yes.

Interviewee: Economy, finding a job put yourselves in that situation and you can learn the culture, you learn the language. You learn the area you live and that was my experience was that. They go away to westerns cultures because you're there anyway.

Interviewer: We've been talking about identity in your sense of self and you talked powerfully about Afghans sense of self and Afghan identity culture over the ethnicity. You mentioned about a couple of times. Can you focus a little bit on religious identity or Muslim identity? Can you talk about that in terms of your being or your Muslim being?

Interviewee: From when you were a child and even if you're not practicing much, it's still with you. Your name, when you have your name, it just shows them from which ethnicity you are. Which religion do you have? But something to me, religion is always

for me. It's not a top priority chosen in this society. Religion is something that's you. It's inside of you. That's you practice religion for yourself, not for the society, not for your environment. Religion is something inside you. If you practice it, you practice on yourself.

Interviewer: On that same theme, is there in yourself, do you sense in you a difference within, in terms of your Muslim religious identity, difference in the west and the difference in Afghanistan? Is there a difference for you?

Interviewee: For me, no. There is no difference. Like I said, if you being a Muslim or you being a Christian, it doesn't matter where you are. Your belief is what you and your name is left with you and you are left with your belief and it doesn't matter where you are. You don't need to hide it. You don't need to destroy it. It's something inside your heart and it's something like you can leave on it and it doesn't matter where you are. It's just with you and there is no difference.

Interviewer: Do you see in the west a different view of Muslim identity?

Interviewee: In terms of the west, it depends where you go, which country you go. Yes, it's different countries. I believe France just passed a rule that woman, they cannot wear veils. Also, I feel totally free what I'm doing and there is no reason that I can see anybody need to tell me that's doing this wrong or this is America. It's the story. It's an open country and that's the reason I live here.

Interviewer: Look, I'd like to shift a little bit as we wind things down, as we're closing down. In terms of your belief and feelings toward values, you talked about a number of values in mind. You just talked about Muslim values and earlier it was an ethnic or

Afghan values and practices. What would you say, from your perspective, are the guiding

values that you hold dearest?

Interviewee: It's different, you know, there's a 2 type of value on what it is. To me,

Afghan is different value. Have religion has a different value. Afghan, being an Afghan

in having value - being an Afghan is like you're talking about your nation or history of

Afghan. The history of Afghan as done in the past that religion is something doesn't

count from Afghan. The value of religion it belongs to a Muslim world, the whole world

of Islam.

Interviewer: World?

Interviewee: The whole world of Islam. That's the value. So, if you call yourself a

Muslim, it is religion and that religion is not only in Afghanistan. It's all over in the

world. But if you call yourself Afghan, you give yourself a definite value and you

put yourself on a geographic area. So, the value that's in Afghan, it's that geographic

area you're born. You're raised. You're growing up. But if you give yourself a

Muslim's value, then you give yourself a worldwide value.

Interviewer: Universal value.

Interviewee: Universal value. So, that universal value, there is no limit. It's all up to you

from a good human being you are.

Interviewer: Did you say which one —is there one that's more important to you, the

universal value or the Afghan value?

Interviewee: I believe the universal value as a human being, that's good. And you're a

human being. It doesn't matter which religion you have. It doesn't matter where you're

born. That's all it is, it's being a human being. That's all it is.

Interviewer: Do you see a difference then in the western value, okay? You just described the Afghan value. It's clear. Ancestral history the boundary. You're very clear about the Islam value. Is there a slightly different western value?

Interviewee: Western value as far as Westerns, yes.

Interviewer: It's very right for yourself sir.

Interviewee: Western value for myself, yes. I can see a different value when I travel with an American passport. That's given me a different value. I'm an American. I'm a US citizen. I can travel free. It's a high value than I can even imagine it. Yes. Western value, it's a totally different than an Afghan value. Western value is totally different.

Interviewer: You have mentioned a number of times the word freedom and I'd like if you would how that impacts your life. I mean, you went to west. The question I want to ask, when you left Afghanistan, why did you go to west, but now you keep bringing the word freedom in relationship to the west in.

Interviewee: No, it is, it's reality. When it's reality, we just bring it up, even if you don't have any attention. You have more freedom of anything in the West, than East. So, this is part of the culture. It's part of the religion. It is part of the way the society is, that what I'm talking about from even the worst, it is something like I can experience it. I touch it. I feel it and that was I raised my kids in the west because I know they are guaranteed they have a better life.

Interviewer: The last question here, Last question and it regards the family. In your home, in your group, do you practice and share with them the Afghan traditions?

The Afghan histories, the Afghan cultures within the house?

Interviewee: Fifty/fifty. It's kind of hard. It's very hard. We celebrate more Christmas than celebrate New Year's. We celebrate Thanksgiving than different culture in Afghanistan. It is just because the environment, it's just because your kids goes to school. They talk about the things they received, what you got for Christmas? That's kind of so, and we, no matter what, what you can do, when you live in a society, you follow the – you're going to the flow. It's just like you're driving the freeway. When you drive on the freeway, everybody drives 65 miles. You go 65 miles. You're following the flow. So, it doesn't matter when you go over there, you can't separate yourself from the society. You're going to society and there's nothing wrong with it. It's nothing wrong with it to celebrate certain things that are not on your culture. It's a good part of culture is you can capture things on a culture and again, it's western culture or one of different other countries culture. But just because of you raising kids and your kids thinks of you that side. Some parents or most of the parents, they're following their kids. It's pretty tough to show your kids do this one. You are an Afghan. The kid says, dad, I'm born in the US. I'm an American. How can I be an Afghan? I can't speak Dari. I can't speak Pashtun. I don't know the language. I never wear the Afghan traditional clothes. How could I be an Afghan? I'm a US citizen. I'm an American. I'm in New York. But as far as the cultures, the only things honestly which follow is the food, the Afghan food. Most of them cook, we cook some rice. It's the brown rice.

Interviewee: When you go to a different culture, different society, different atmospheres, you need to adjust yourself. But it depend how much open mind do you have to

accept it? Some people they accept the change pretty hard. Some people they accept the change easily. It depend what type of personality you have. I did have some experience, hard experience. You know, I can adjust myself as far as who I am and where I am right now. So, it takes time. I remember I had hard times to forget my mother left, but after a while when you live in society then you leave everything behind and you follow the flow and of the side.

Interviewer: You found in yourself ways to cope with or mitigate the struggles that you were dealing with?

Interviewee: Yes.

Interviewer: Okay. Well, sir, I thank you very much for your time.

Interviewee: I know what—

Interviewer: I just want to say if there's anything more that you'd like to add as we are done here, anything else you'd like to comment on?

Interviewee: So, it's a great experience and it's not that easy to change yourself from well culture to a definite culture, from one society to another and one man leads to another language. But, especially get married and we raise kids, but the thing is, if you want to live somewhere in peace, you want to live somewhere in comfortable, then you have to accept whether it is the weather, whether is the culture, whether is the rule of know, whether is the religion, it's you take the good one. You leave the bad one.

Interviewer: You take certain things from the culture. You have a lot of those. Thank you very much. Interviewee: Oh, you're welcome.

End.

Participant Four:

Interviewer: Please tell me about your lived experiences in Afghanistan at pre-immigration.

Interviewee: My immigration to the West – 2004 basically was the last time that I was in Afghanistan. But before 2004 you know in 2003, I was bound. I was forced to have a long beard. And I was practicing a long beard. Even though when I was living in the country, my beard was not long according to the government at that time, with the Taliban. It was not long enough. Before entering Kabul, at one checkpoint, they stopped me and told me I was violating law. I told them for what reason. He says we have received an order to take you up there and sit with for someone to talk to you. Clearly, I was ordered to that extreme limit – you know what happened, something will happen. And also my ticket and everything to fly away from this country was also with me. And that was also afternoon I was having flight in Kabul airport. When I spoke they took me to – literally, to a confined area. And I sat there. Some other people were sitting there also. I asked what is going on here? Who is the person I'm going to talk to? He says, "We are all detained. And you are also one of us." And that was a big shock to me. I told them because I have my ticket with me and my passport with me, I am leaving. This is a problem for me because I have to leave. This type of voice nobody can hear it you know, just some person will come and talk to me. I didn't know what to do, but still,I was detained. I was not sitting. I was standing. After about one and a half hours, somebody came and said, "You have to come out and sit in that truck and go to the

checkpoint detention area" the Taliban – my God. I told them I am leaving. It is

becoming a problem for me. My children are also waiting for me. I called and told

my children because I wanted to prepare for them the things and the children to

come. Unfortunately, there was one person – he was dealing with me very rude.

And they by force took me to the truck. They took me to detention center. But this

was you know at the detention center there was some person. He was from our own

 locality. He recognized me. He says, "We know who you are. But this is the

situation. Your beard is small. It is not long enough. And you will be dealt with.

You will stay in detention here three days. And after three days, you will be taken

from here. In future, the next time you come again, you have to have long enough

beard." Anyway, I told them because of my ticket and these things – I will. But I

want to go. He told me that the situation you are in. But I will try to help you out.

I'll do what I can. And then, by chance, he disappeared for like 15-20 minutes. He

come back and told me you swear to follow the rules – not swear not talk. Like in

future – in leaving from here, you will keep your beard long enough. I told him I will.

He took me out – not from the main jail because there was some other people that were

complaining – that why helping this person – what is the reason? What's his name?

From a side door they took me out – walk like one and half hour I was feeling that

someone would hit me because I escaped the jail – that was my fear that somebody

will just shot thinking he escaped from jail. That doesn't happen – came to the main

road – waiting for a few minutes. Somebody came in. I think that was also the

government official. But he was, to be honest, gentleman. He stopped the car for

me. He recognized that this person is not a person that came from the desert. Something

And when he look at me, he understood that I had been at the prison. Then they took me

to Kabul. And I came to Kabul. Finally, thanks God, we make it out of the country. That

was the last memory that I was having from this country. At any time you can expect

somebody will stop you for different reason. It could be beard. It could be prayer time

and you are in the car or could be some other reason – just to make it out – insulting or

beating or punishing – detention – these things, all possibility to receive from that time.

It was a hard time. We make it from Kabul out. And we were safe and sound. We say

thanks God because then in our own community – even the Taliban were from our own

community.

Interviewer: So under the Taliban rule, the strict dress demands – beard growth for

me, how the women must dress and who they will or will not be accompanied by –

they were enforcing that strictness not only in Kabul but as far as you know across

all of Afghanistan?

Interviewee: Across all Afghanistan. Basically, it was all Afghanistan. In fact, we

were living under extremist rules like we were knowing the strict regulation they

will have. My wife and my daughters were wearing the black shrewd-type of things.

Their face was not visible, these we were wearing scarves.

Interviewer: Over the head to cover –

Interviewee: Over the head to cover the whole body which we were wearing. For me, I

was also considering because even I was having beard. But the beard cannot make it

lengthen in one month. It requires six or seven months to reach to their standards – as

long as out of this much. That was the thing. We were observing, just to make it and not

give some excuse to maybe attack you. But something you can – something you can't.

But out of here – out of Kabul city – some cultural thing we have to observe as well

because – like women's mostly are not opening their veil or showing their face. This is

somehow applied – the religion as well, is not applied but is good to have it. Not that

strict when you reach your own village, your own locality, your own people – other

people they live. The women are wearing kind of scarf, covering the hair and kind of

scarf, and the face is open. That's fine. That is the perfect thing. The women all do it –

the village that they are not wearing that whole long thing – to cover the whole body. If

you are wearing a scarf – like from this point up – the face is open. And the hands are

open. That's no problem. But in Kabul, things were different.

Interviewer: In which village was this?

Interviewee: This is in Wardak province.

Interviewer: Was the village mixed? You mentioned that some Taliban recognized

 you from your village because they were in the village. Was this your village?

Interviewee: The province that I came from also Wardak. And the village Taliban – they

were not like encouraging thing. Somehow because they knew us – we knew each other

so they are somehow helping. They were saying that this is the Taliban from Kandahar.

And we have to listen to, we have to apply it, we have to obey. Because those Taliban

that were living with us, they are looking to the future as well because we are living in

the same area. Today if they are having a stronger hand, they are helping, that is good for

keeping the relation for the future relation. You know – tit-for-tat – if you do something

good to me, I'll do something good to you. If you do something bad to me, then this is always – okay. Time will come – things like this. So this type of relation – that is part of our tradition.

Interviewer: Let's talk a little bit about the individual, the self, the sense of who you are, the sense of person. And if you can just talk a little bit about your view and your sense of self during this era – pre-immigration, how would you consider or characterize your sense of identity?

Interviewee: As in a – as a Muslim, love my country, as a Pashtun. I'm proud of that ethnicity as well – like I'm Pashtun – very much Pashtun and proud of my history and hoping for the people of Afghanistan and our own tribe and our own people and my own family to be – as to be country that I am proud of being of one – to be a person having a family that need to be proud that I'm having and to be economically stable, this is my sense of to be like – like I always work. I hope that my hand stretch to not other person to hurt – in fact, if somebody ask me to help, I will be able to. This is expectation from me myself and this is what I hope from my family and children to be. At the same time, I expect from the tribe that I am living to be a good tribe, same time I expect my country to be a country like, our history is expecting a country to be a country that we are proud to say that I am from Afghanistan and a country with a good name and a good reputation. Unfortunately, right now, is not what we suppose to.

Interviewer: Can you go back – you mentioned tribe a number of times now – expand just a little bit about the tribal connection and your tribe – your tribal identity, your tribal relations?

Interviewee: Relation – you know – our tribe for example – my tribe, they call it

Wardak.

Interviewee: Wardak tribe is also having three sub-tribe – smaller tribe. A relation

this way – as close as you go to the very sub-tribe and also the village – to the very

village. This where we keep our way. Let me say it this way. Like I'm the protector,

the savior of my family – the little bigger of the village sub-tribe – the bigger tribe,

which is Wardak. And this way goes to Pashtun tribe. Our relation is the closest

start from the very small of the degree, this way go up and up and up. This is

something like traditionally we feel a responsible or oblige to remain committed

to your family, this is obligation. And this is, if you are a person that everybody

look down on, you cannot support your family. Or, if you have a family of children

going in things, you are looked down. And everybody at the little tribe and also the

village and also – is pointing towards you. Why you cannot look after your children

in your family because we look down on you. If you this is my children and my

family, you cannot because we are connecting the smaller family and a bigger and a

bigger things like this – we are connected. If your children are doing bad, God forbid,

bad thing, that is bringing a bad name to our family. People will say this is from that

tribe. So this where our relation goes down – connected like other part of the tree –

everybody's either talking for himself. But here, is not like this. Here you go to the tribe.

And you are responsible towards the tribe. The tribe is also having a responsibility

towards you. The tribe even protects you. The tribe tries to protect your children. But

then in country and see why you're not doing this – cannot see it. I don't want to do –

don't care. You cannot say this because the family, the tribal, the sub-tribal and the tribal

relation – they're all kind of interconnected with one another.

Interviewer: Respect and honor not only home but also the respect extends to the tribe.

And the tribe extends to the family?

Interviewee: Exactly. For a person doing a good deed, a good job, his family's proud. His

sub-tribe is proud. And the bigger tribe is proud of because he did a good job; he did a

good thing. So this way is appreciation. We are more important to us is which tribe that

person is from or what tribe that person is from and how we keep our relation. Because

basically, we are connected, we are feeling connected more to a tribal thing than to an

administrative things.

Interviewer: So in Wardak or in your Afghan view, your Afghan national view, it's

not at all about the individual. It's much bigger than that. It's about family. It's

about tribe and sub-tribe. It's about who you are in relationship to those things.

Interviewee: Exactly. That is why those things – especially in Pashtun areas,

how things are going. The family, the sub-tribe and the tribe in this way. This is that

connection going up. And this is throughout the whole country it is like this. Let me

say one example. Like Wardak is located in center of Kabul. Mangal, another tribe,

is in Paktia – is too far away. But historically, our written history is connected. But

we assume that Wardak and Mangal were brother, though they are far located to

each other. Mangal feel responsible for Wardak protection and feel proud of Wardak

– Wardak the same thing. I feel proud of Mangal achievement and Mangal protection.

This type of relation we are having, even on that scale. Like right now, this is maybe

some 900 to 1,000 years before – this immigration of Wardak from Paktia to Wardak

province.

Interviewer: You said stubborn?

Interviewee: Yeah, stubborn. They're very hard fighting people – not easy. They don't

like education much. And they are difficult people, very difficult. Some time – mostly the

government in Kabul will get negative answers from these people. They give the support

to the government, the soldier of the people. And they fight government efforts. I'm from

Wardak. You help me out. It is this way. And the Mangal tribe would listen. Even

Karzai, he chose this Juma Khan Hamdar – the Wardak person there. Because this trick –

someone has told him that this tribe is having this relation with this tribe. So you choose a

person because in Wardak, you can find mostly educated people. In the Mangal tribe, you

can't find many educated people to learn the job for you. So you have to find someone

from Wardak. Of course, if you send someone like Wardak spoken dialect, will not work.

If you send Wardak dialect, it will never work, never ever – or someone from, will never

work. But they choose – even from Kandahar – they don't choose a Kandahar there

because easy for them is to take someone from Wardak and put there. So this is why I say

– like in a bigger this type of relation we are keeping on a bigger, bigger level and a

higher, higher level.

Interviewer: So the root of the tree – you described this beautiful tree. It's a very

complicated tree system. And the roots of this tree matter because you talked in terms of

 those relationships to Mangal and Wardak that are history – if not decades.

Interviewee: Yeah, of course, more than hundred years.

Interviewer: And those relationships matter just because of ancestral ties and connections.

Interviewee: Exactly. Still we keep that.

Interviewer: That's important.

Interviewee: Yeah.

Interviewer: I wanna ask you this clearly. Your pre-immigration self – and you describe – you've mentioned a few things. If you were to meet another Mangal tribal relative or a Wardak tribal relative, how would you identify yourself to that person?

Interviewee: I will introduce myself Wardak. And the Mangal will assume me as his brother. As soon as he understand he's from Wardak – like we know. Is not taught in a schooling-type of way. But these are things that remain from generation to generation. Our elders always talk about this. The younger children listen. We have one thing here in Afghanistan that when the elder talk in a shura in a mosque, anywhere, there is no barrier. We all participate. And this is – I don't know what type of special having. When they sit in a Loya Jirga – in a bigger Jirga – like bigger gathering, everybody sit there, everybody.

Interviewer: Everybody's at the table.

Interviewee: We don't have table. We have like an open space. As long as the accommodation and the space is there – even our children sit there. And nobody's stopping them to go – you are bad – you are not of this level – here, they're all the same.

Interviewer: On the same level.

Interviewee: On the same level. So this somehow is having two positive impacts. One is that because you feel like a sense of equality. There is no good. You are bad. You are not of this level. There is no good Pashtun. There is no bad Pashtun. There is no strong

Pashtun. So this type of equality we are having. And for the children – we are not segregating children. We want the children go there and sit there. But they have to behave. If misbehave, a slap is also there. Anyone can give a slap. Do this. Sit down. But this type of – like if you, for example, a person, a Pashtun for not entering a gathering, this is a big question – is a big dishonor you have done to someone, whoever, whatever economic level he is having – he's being a Pashtun. He's the same. And this type of equality we have – democracy we are having.

Interviewer: I wanna shift a little bit to start to look at the post-immigration. We focused on pre – immigration time. Before we do, you mentioned in terms of Wardak and Mangal –Interviewee: Mangal.

Interviewer: Mangal, that the tribes kind of separated probably hundreds of years ago over some issue. The question comes up – in your pre-immigration timeframe, were you always settled in Wardak? Were you or your family moved around? Or were you always static in one place?

Interviewee: Well, that is another thing. Again, traditionally, the families, the tribe stays together. This is our tradition. But it's not something to say – as far as I'm concerned, I stay always in Wardak. And I stay connected to the Wardak where I've been born, I've been grown up, I have learned there something there like the smaller thing that Afghani people are having.

We are not very rich people. But still all my hopes even now in Wardak in my little village. Even now what I can support. That is like to Afghans, especially to the Pashtun tribe, migration is not easy decision to make it. We are not immigrants – Pashtuns are

staying together. We believe that God is provider. Stay with your family. Stay with your tribe. Stay with your people. You are safe. You are protected. Immigration is not a welcome state for someone to take it. But that doesn't mean migration hasn't happened. Basically, Pashtuns – this is our habit – like to stay with your people. That is to stay with your people, close with your people. Stay with your family. Stay with your sub-tribe. And stay with your tribe. Something wrong we are having and that is if someone like a smaller number of tribe is living in a bigger tribe area, they feel kind of marginalized. These things are there because those who are having a closer tribal relation – and not easy to mingle with them or disintegrate with them. Like this that is not easy. So in Pashtun, if you are moving from one place to another, you assume yourself – you are still drop down. Traditionally, anyone can have a hardship, you accept it– stay with your family because of social status and remain equal.

Interviewer: Your body language changes greatly. Your facial contortion changes. The big, broad smiles on your face are evident when you talk about Wardak and when you talk about your tribe. In that context, in that context you were just talking about the difficulty in moving and you didn't use this word maybe the anxiety of migrating. How did you deal with that anxiety from here now into post-immigration – you face with immigration to the West?

Interviewee: To ask me, immigration – the hardest decision to make it in my life – the hardest and the hardest job to do it. That is immigration. I started immigration because how I got the courage to immigrate. That probably was my education. That give me the courage that you can. To immigrate to west, it was really a different part of the world.

Based on my education – all that thing – immigration to the west. It was not an easy to

make it and also not easy to settle here. I make it through my all hard work. When I saw

that the hardship here in Afghanistan – finally, my family was also – they were very strict

towards me that you cannot make it back. You can't go back Afghanistan – you will face

further problem. Because they saw me that the first time when I returned to Wardak to

visit family. I told you at the beginning how difficult it was for me. I couldn't explain all

to you. But because I told you very short, but I was really having a hard time in

Afghanistan. And we were not thinking that Afghanistan will to stability. We say these

people came here. Difficulty was I cannot accept my wife to go and work. She was not

good at English also. I have to take this entire burden on my shoulder and my children

and all those things. Job opportunities were headaches. But always hard work pays off.

You can go sit in there. I did not know many people. I don't know much people here.

And nobody's waiting for me outside, – to accompany me. Where I go now? The

immigration told me the whole country is yours. You can go anywhere you want to. And

then I just lost all, I just cried – what to do now. But finally, thanks, God – because I was

having so many emotions with me that was one support – the language skill I was having

– another thing. And then the confidence that I will make it somehow. It will be difficult.

Then finally, thanks God, we make it. We settle down here. Now after 08 years, my

family feels as they are from that society. It was not easy for my wife. It was not easy for

my children. But we continue life. We suffer a lot. But finally, we got our space in the

society. And that is all good.

Interviewer: You mentioned the west specifically as being multicultural. Were you aware

of their multicultural state? And how did that make you feel knowing that you were about to go to amulticultural environment?

Interviewee: By multicultural, part of that word I mean – you know – we find cities and towns to accommodate us – can give us a space to live according to what we want to live. As a Muslim, my wife is a Muslim. And we are practicing that. Mosque was there for us. Nobody stop us while praying at mosques. The way the dressing – my wife cannot wear the mostly European-type of dress – we were not used to. So, we were using half veils – yeah, half scarf's.

Interviewer: Was this dress in accordance to your Wardak dress or modification of that dress?

Interviewee: A modification of that dress – grand modification of that dress. So just to convince my wife – because it's easy, those changes all of a sudden. And for my children, it doesn't matter. For my wife, it was not easy. But modification worked. You will find some people wearing Pakistani Punjabi dress. It's not our tradition. We have our different things. Even the blue, huge type of things they are wearing – the whole burkas they are wearing – mostly in the villages we are not wearing it.

Interviewer: That being the burqa.

Interviewee: Not burqa, the other thing, which is having a kind of holes to the eyes – the whole thing – in the villages you cannot find it. The villages – moving, doing work and back, they are just wearing a little scarf – scarf is part of our tradition. But those things are not part of our Pashtun tradition. We wear the same thing, the man may be – he is talking, but the women wear long hair in our area. Some people wearing the European

things cover the whole – but away from Kabul city, things are totally different. We are having much easier life.

Interviewer: So in this multicultural environment you're now in, post-immigration, the nature of the community that you found yourself in – talk about the nature of the community.

Interviewee: Well, not much – everyone was just looking after his own life, not much concern about us. As for the other, we find people very friendly. They were always talking with us. They wanted to help us because everyone not knowing what to do – how to – you know – sort out our things. They help us. There were some people that dislike us – not because they dislike us we were not knowing how the people lived there. I had one experience. For example, once we came out of the building that we were living – like here in Afghanistan, we are very much sympathetic to younger children. The parent or someone having him in his lap – you go there and talk with the – that is not my thing. You say your sympathy, your endearment. I was with my family. We came out of the building and going to the market, I think. We wanted to purchase like the weekly things. There was a little slope area – a little child. He pulled his hand from the mother hand and start running downhill area. He lost his control. I wanted to help this little child not to let him fall. The mother yelled – "Don't touch my child. Don't touch my child." I quickly fall back. What is wrong? I understand that the people live here are different than those. I must not approach the child of someone because you are not in your village. You are not in your tribe. People don't know you. People are afraid of their family, of their children. You have to be in very much reserved in this – things like – my elder son, he says,

"Daddy, in this country, you don't think you're in Afghanistan. You're in a different country. Keep away from these things. The children falling down is not your responsibility." I said, "This was a child. I want to help." "It's not your responsibility." Do what you are responsible for. And just keep away from other family or you will be in trouble." Many things like this – many times we have some – like cultural shock was there for us more. And difficulties were there. But with the time we work on. Now is all good.

Interviewer: So you quickly learned through that episode and maybe a few others that no longer the code of the tribe where everybody was responsible. You're not responsible. You said you're responsible for everybody. Everybody's responsible for you.

Interviewee: Exactly.

Interviewer: That means in childrearing with children out in the West, in this community?

Interviewee: You are for yourself.

Interviewer: You said, sir, that you were helped by people. You mentioned the negative things that – but you were helped by some people. And they helped you because why?

Interviewee: Just like human being – when we ask them some information or something how to do, they help us very honestly – lead us, guide us. I can't forget the help of these people. There were people like us. There were people that would just ignore us. There were ones not much concern about us. They were looking at us – these people – he can't speak English. They are okay. They will find out their way. Like at the beginning, the first few months when I arrived I was totally blind. I was feeling I'm just – and many time I decided let's go back. We cannot make it. But my little children were saying,

"Daddy, stay. We will go to school here." Basically, the schooling stopped me from returning. I cannot make it. I think very difficult life here. But my children were insisting I listen to them. And finally, they were okay. They were correct. I was wrong.

Interviewer: They were correct, did you say?

Interviewee: They were correct. I was wrong.

Interviewer: If in the post-environment it was less about Afghan or even Pashtun connectedness, what other sustained you in terms of who you are that – you described before I'm the tribal relative. I'm a Muslim. I'm an Afghan, a Wardak. What sustained you now in the West in terms of your earlier conditions or characteristics to your identity? Can you talk to that?

Interviewee: Honestly, right now, those things that we are of one religion. We are Muslim. That two things – we are Pashtun. We are the three things Afghan – Pashtun, Afghan – the three things we have. And people know us by this also that they are Afghan. They are Muslim. And they are Pashtuns. We obey the law. We are obedient people.

Interviewer: So that's your identity. Your community experience – we talk just a few minutes about that post-immigration, your community experiences. Do you find a sense of community? You obviously came from an environment where there was a strong sense of community based mainly on Wardakism and Pashtunism.

Interviewee: Yes, exactly.

Interviewer: Did you find those things at all in your new community?

Interviewee: The Afghan is there in those area – somehow we have to keep our connection with them. And we have to provide the support to one another somehow –

very limited. In the west, mostly everybody on his own. But for a community – keeping

relation for like the – we are having for someone deceased or some wedding or

something – that is basically – mostly not on Pashtun basis, Afghan basis – we have a

community – that there is a funeral ceremony participating – condolences something –

we always continue to keep – and the other with the neighbor – keeping a good relation.

We promote it. Interviewer: Well, the last question I have is about omission. You hadn't

mentioned this in this timeframe about non-Pashtun tribes or ethnicity groups whether

post or pre. And I wonder if you could just talk a little bit about your feelings on the non-

Pashtun tribes?

Interviewee: Yeah, exactly. One is – you know – something that traditionally – that is we

how to – like for example, from the family – from the bigger family and from the bigger

and from the bigger and the tribe – things like this – we are committed to have kind of

responsibility to family. Then finally, we are reaching to the Afghan side. By law, all the

people who live inside this country are all Afghan. Afghan means Pashtun. They call

Pashtun Afghan. That is basically – Afghan is also – the name started from Pashtun. So

the bigger scale, we are having – you know – good relation with all those other non-

Pashtun people as well. Like when the [inaudible] situation was there in our country, the

people who work in our agricultural land. The working – people that were there in our

land. So we respect them. We respect their religion. We respect their honor and

everything – that we kept. At the same time, we give more privilege to those people who

are working in our area – you know – for them to get satisfaction – some neighbor of our

tribe.

Interviewer: I thank you, sir. It's been a lot of data. Your narrative's so strong and so rich. Is there anything last you'd like to say in closing?

Interviewee: I thank you very much for giving me the opportunity to open up myself to you. I gave what information came in my mind. I what came in my mind I share with you very honestly. I hope it help you in your research.

End.

Participant Five:

Interviewer: Can you please talk a little bit, about your live experiences in your

native homeland before '03 or 2004?

Interviewee: I was in Afghanistan in 2005, before that I was a high school student,

so the Mujahideen came in and the government collapsed and insurgent blood and bath

every day. So, everything burned the hospital, our schools and everything. We were

running around the city every night, like from this place to that place, with my mom and

2 small brothers and my sister, so my father was away at that time. So, we have to move

to different districts. Once the fight starts there, the war, we moved to another state or to

another district. We'd been displaced for one year. So, after that we left Afghanistan to

Pakistan for two years. We were in Pakistan. I was studying English out of the west in the

little schools. Then we tried to move to Germany. We had some land. We came back to

Afghanistan. So, we sold that land and made some money and paid to leave to Germany.

So, before that, it was a good living style, lifestyle in Afghanistan for us because we've

been a middle class family and respected family. My father was a Pashtun, you know,

Pashtun was like a little bit respected in those times. But I went to foreign countries like

Germany and Pakistan. Nobody knows you. No identity, nothing. I was missing my land

always until now. So, was big difference when I left Afghanistan, I went to the west. I

was very bored. As a teenage boy, always I was, I was not paying attention to the studies

and everything. I couldn't learn anything because my soul was away. My mind was in

Afghanistan. I was like I lost a good life over there.

Interviewer: Thank you, so much there. In moving from, you described you and your

mother and siblings as moving from place to place, district to district, because of
Mujahideen and activities.

Interviewee: Yeah. There were different groups and they came in the area of the
face to face, the tribes or the Mujahideen groups. They fight each other, so in this
fighting, like civilians were in the middle of the war. They use rockets and everything
and civilian houses. So, we had to move the area, by walk or anything. It's different
there. Then the war moves to that area. Then we came back. So I remembered the days,
like 3 days or 2 days, we didn't eat. We didn't drink because everything was closed.
There was no market, no bizarre. So that's why we were moving around.

Interviewer: Which area of Afghanistan are you referring to?

Interviewee: My father was from west of Carbo.

Interviewee: They call it Harmon. So, I was raised in Carbo. I was born and raised in
Carbo.

Interviewer: And the school there —

Interviewee: School, yeah. High school and after high school, it was destroyed.

Interviewer: Is it correct to say that when you're in Carbo, within this time frame, were
you a part of your tribal community or no? Were you a part of your tribe community in
Carbo, living within the tribe or—

Interviewee: Before there were no tribe issues in Afghanistan. There were
plenty of educated people. If you see right now, it's a big difference. When I see now,
there's a lot of precision that people are uneducated too. Everything is changed. They
went like hundred years behind.

Interviewer: Yeah. Let's talk a little bit about the individual or I refer to it as a sense of self, who you are your sense of identity and I'd like to hear you speak, what does it mean to you, your sense of identity? Who you are as a person in pre-immigration context?

Interviewee: Yes. I'm, as I told you, as a Pashtun family, respect this family in Afghanistan. Respect the family always and my part of life was to keep this identity. My father and grandfather made it. Don't destroy it. Follow being respectful to people – always avoid bad things. Always walk straight, respect people because that was the identity. I left my family in Pakistan. I was the first go to Germany. Always I was helping them. Still I'm helping my family, my sisters and my brothers because this is our Pashtun identity. I didn't want to lose that. So, which is self-respected in your family safe, you know? Keep your brothers safe, get an education. Give education to my sister, that's why I didn't study always. I was working for them.

Interviewee: And still I have a family and 2 kids.

Interviewer: Sense of self in that term is clear with regards to family orientation, what family means to you?

Interviewer: You've talked to the fact of tribal respect and honor. Are there any other points, characters or characteristics in terms of identity—who one is? Maybe it could be, maybe it is religion, Muslim faith.

Interviewer: And those meant what to you?

Interviewee: Those meant a lot to me. That's why I've been raised to keep the value, Islamic values, which and my family, yeah.

Interviewer: Okay, all right. So—

Interviewee: Since start of Afghanistan, there have been two tribes. Durrani and

Oranzi. I'm from the Organzi part. If you do anything bad, a shameful act so it loses all

your tribe or your family. That's why you have to be careful.

Interviewer: It's reflective of the tribe?

Interviewee: Yeah. Not just on you. So, who you are reflects on the tribe. The

tribe reflects on you also?

Interviewer: Can you give examples or talk about how the war and you've

talked about the war in the Mujahideen time frame, post occupation of the Soviets. The

Soviets were moving out. The Mujahideen came in. Can you give examples of how your

identity issues surfaced during the Mujahideen period, during that period of time?

Interviewee: Yeah. I was too young. First of all, my father was displaced

because he was a government worker. He didn't want to work under the Soviet Union.

He left the job. He moved to Darshan. After that, so we were living with my mother and

he was taken off apparently from there until they killed him over there. My father was

killed in Nagi Ibrahim before Mujahideen. In Mazar. They killed bunch of people over

there, so one of them was my father. He was a high-ranking civilian.

Interviewee: The Mujahideen came in so there were different rules. We thought

that's got to better situation, you know - a free country. Maybe it's an illusion the

Russian legend that Mujahideen collapsed. My mother was so happy. But it wasn't that.

So, before Mujahideen come in, somebody like Prince Hazzara tried to target different

countries. They support them to beat each other. At that time, everybody wants to

destroy, you know? Anyway, they can, you know? They kill you. They take your wives

away. These things, you know? They torture you. So you lose your identity. That's why I

left the country. My mother didn't want to be disrespected by some other tribe or some

other people. You know strangers to come to your house to rape them or something like

that. And it was happening every day. That's why we moved to Pakistan and after there,

we moved to west - Germany.

Interviewer: How long were you in Pakistan?

Interviewee: For almost 2 years.

Interviewer: How was the experience there?

Interviewee: That was a new thing over there also. You lose their respect.

Everybody calling you different names. Somebody call you Communists. I was just

ignoring them, you know? When you go to the market to buy something, everybody call

you oh, Russian is here. Because they knew you from your face, from your skin, you

know? So, we are talking. They call us different names. But a lot take it, you know?

But it was different. We have to live, you know? I was going to school with them with

the Pakistani kids. I would listen to a lot of bad things about me, about our families, all

that stuff.

Interviewer: What type of community was this in? Was it a Muslim community or what

type?

Interviewee: Yeah, because we had some money, you know, to live. Yeah.

Interviewer: Your time spent to the west, your immigration to the US, what were your

feelings about the immigration process? Specifically, your feelings if they were stress or

anxiety about leaving Afghanistan and going to the west?

Interviewee: So, there is a lot of stress.

Interviewee: Yeah. So, one you miss your land and secondly, it's a long

process, maybe takes one year or two years or maybe more than five years. Always

you're waiting for good news. You never hear good news, mostly bad. It's mixed.

Actually, that waiting in the US and Germany, it destroyed my life. My age is not that

much, but I look, I'm 37 years old, but I look like maybe 45 or 50, something like that.

So, always I was waiting. Always I lived with stress.

Interviewer: You talked about the land, your connection with the land and your actions

based upon your family, caring for your mother, doing, making sure that there was honor

in your sisters and everything.

Interviewer: But the time came to move when you go to the west. How did you

deal with that conflict with family and yet you're going to the west? How did that, how

did you deal with that type of stress?

Interviewee: It was very hard, yeah, because my sister was with me, my mother

and my little brothers because they were three when they left the country. So, for two,

three years, each of them they went to school and they came back and they were different

and still my mother and me, we were trying to keep them away from those bad cultures.

 Like they

learned, like as much as you try, they learned it in the school because most of them

they're there in the school and you're at work. You don't see them. It was bothering me.

Like a couple of times, I saw my brother walking with wild kids, you know? They're

doing bad things and the high school call me sometimes. Their school called me and I

went to the dean office. He was there and doing some bad thing, just hard time. Always

show respect, but they don't listen because they were grown up there.

Interviewer: And you're exposed to a different—

Interviewee: Yeah.   Especially I work a lot on my sister. So, what you do is

always explain your culture and your religion. That's the only way you can use it. But I

didn't go so deep. I knew that it's not good for teenagers because if you take them too

deep in the religion, the next day you don't know if they are coming here, what's facing

them. I mean, extremist.

Interviewer: While it was tough and you described the anxiety and the stress

going through to the west, did your family support this move? Did your mother support

this move going to the west or she did not like it?

Interviewee: No, she liked it. She had a decision before we moved. She said

I'm going to take you there after you got your paperwork and citizenship and after a few

years and then I come back and that's what she did. Because she want our future, but she

choose a brighter future for her kids which is me and my brothers and sisters. After I

finished high school. Then, I worked a lot.

Interviewee: My brothers and my sister, she got married. My mother decided

to move back to Afghanistan. She felt her job was done. She got to be safe and to get

education. That's why she went with us all the way there and she spent like 15 or 16

years. Finally, she decides to come back. I ask her one day, why are you going to go

back? Here you have free doctor, you have everything free. Living aside, this and that

and she explained to me, I don't have respect here. Over there in Afghanistan, if I go out, the shops, the drivers, everybody respecting me as an old lady. Over here is nothing like that. Over there I have like neighbors. The country is different. When she returned to Afghanistan after six months, she passed away and that's what she wanted. She knew that and everybody was so absent and my brothers and my little sister. I said no. That she knew that. She is very happy right now.

Interviewer: If we can continue just a few, I thank you very much for sharing that you even took, in the west and in your community, can you talk about your community in which you live in terms of your Afghans or its multi-cultural with other ethnicities or permanently Afghan? Can you describe your western community a bit to us?

Interviewee: The community I lived for a long time it was a multi-national community called Friends in New York City.

Interviewer: Oh yes.

Interviewee: Nobody cares.

Interviewer: No one cares who you are?

Interviewee: Who we are, yeah, as long as you're working and you be a nice person to live with.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Interviewee: Yeah. For two years, we moved to New York because I got married and my wife didn't like to stay in Queens. She said let's go to Maryland. It's close to New York. Anytime you can come back. That time I didn't have any kids so we went

there. For 2two years, we lived there. You know why I left Maryland? Everybody was

looking at me as a terrorist, as a bad guy. Whatever happens in the world, I felt like I did

it and actually I didn't do anything wrong. Even my neighborhood, every morning I was

going to work and I left the apartment, everybody looked like they slammed their doors

like and I decided to come back. I bought a house over there. I paid $25,000.

Interviewer: Was it in Maryland or—

Interviewee: In Maryland.

Interviewer: Maryland, okay.

Interviewee: In Maryland and they called it Columbia District over there. So,

after two years, I decided to move back, so nobody bought my house in that time, 2008,

the market was very bad.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Interviewee: So, I just left it for the bank. I said I'm not going to live over there.

I came back to New York. That's why I love New York. We have our own culture over

there. It is Chinese culture, Mexican.

Interviewer: Let me ask you, probe a little bit more your time in Maryland. Post

immigration and you settled there with your new wife or your wife.

Interviewer: And when you meet someone on the street, you identify yourself as how?

I am so and so names. I am a, how would you identify yourself?

Interviewee: I identify myself as a foreigner here.

Interviewer: Oh yes.

Interviewee: As a definitely like, if you see in the movies somebody that look at

the aliens somehow. I felt like that. Nobody talks to you like respectfully, you know?

Even the police stop you for no reason because my car was a little bit new and he saw

that the immigrant he has a new car. He stopped me in Maryland. This nowhere in

America I know that.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Interviewee: Because later on I studied a little bit. They said Maryland is like

that. The books, you know, I read Islam. Even the police tell me what you do for your

life, this and that. Whose car is this? It's my car and they saw the paperwork, they let me

go. I felt very bad on that day. Why? Because of my skin or my face, you fly in the deep.

I didn't tell them, but that's how you feel. And always you feel stranger in front of

foreigners, you know? They talk to different ways.

Interviewer: Did you feel this burden because of your Muslim identity or your

Afghan identity? What was going through your mind?

Interviewee: The Afghan identity.

Interviewer: Afghan identity. And so you started to associate yourself as an

Afghan American or an Afghan or how would you associate yourself in that city? To not

come under those types of scrutiny's, how would you associate yourself?

Interviewee: Still Afghan.

Interviewer: Oh really?

Interviewee: That was their problem. And so anywhere I go, I have an American

pass and everything, you know? If they ask me that, my answer is Afghan American. In

New York, most of – they think I'm Mexican. You know? But up to now, I have

problems.

Interviewer: Okay. You talked about your identity in a post immigration setting - Afghan, Afghan American. Would you ever identify yourself in terms of your tribal relationship and affiliation?

Interviewee: Yeah, that's among the Afghans. Here, we have an Afghan community because everybody's [inaudible]. This was big and this is from that family. Everybody call you on your family's name. We have a mosque over here that people come together, you know, sometime and everybody knew you, whose son you are. So, my advice even to my kids and my brother, don't do anything on the streets to some other Afghan see and they say Participant 5's brother did that or participant 5's sons did that. That's why they're too careful not doing anywhere like in the Afghan society. So, be in control because you have to keep your tribal identity. You're a Pashtun, you're an Afghan you know?

Interviewer: That honor and respect and not do anything that will bring dishonor and disrespect to the tribes.

Interviewee: That's right, yeah.

Interviewer: I thank you for sharing that. Just a couple more points here. In your assimilation or your settlement in the west, do you maintain an affiliation with your family in Afghanistan, in your travel family in Afghanistan? Or if you do, how is that done, by what means?

Interviewee: Watching the news all night. Especially me, we were watching news.

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: So, of course, they don't have a problem, but still they are looking

for each other what they are doing. They're watching each other if they kept their identity

or not.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Interviewee: So, right now I have two daughters; 8 years old and 4 years old. If

somebody come to my house on special occasions like holidays and that, and they see

my daughters, they were born in America and they raised here and they are talking to me

Pashtun and to them also, they are surprised. You keep your identity.

Interviewer: And your issues you had in Maryland, you felt because you could not

maintain an identity or the conflict itself drove you away from Maryland?

Interviewee: I couldn't, everybody if you talk to in different ways like a stranger or

something like that, of course. Particular to yourself, I was a Pashtun. I had a restricted

family, you know? And right now people are talking to me in this way so it bothers me

from inside.

Interviewer: Can I ask in 10 years if you can think about 10 years from now, where do

you see yourself?

Interviewee: Back in Afghanistan.

Interviewer: And why is that?

Interviewee: Because your soul or your mind is relaxed over there.

Interviewer: You could be at home?

Interviewee: Yeah. It's not for my kids because I took her one time. Not me.

My wife came to Afghanistan and she was telling her let's go home and my wife was,

like this is your home. No, it's not my home.

Interviewer: Yeah, generational differences.

Interviewee: But I'm not someone to live in the west for the rest of my life. It

was like I was forced to live here. I have no drive to be honest with you, sir.

Interviewee: Anytime, my pleasure.

Interviewer: Thank you.

End.

Abbreviations

ANA	Afghan National Army
ANP	Afghan National Police
COIN	Counterinsurgency
HUMINT	Human Intelligence
IED	Improvised Explosive Device
ISAF	International Security Assistance Forces
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NDS	National Directorate for Security (Afghanistan)
NGO	Nongovernmental Organization
PRT	Provincial Reconstruction Team
UN	United Nations
UNAMA	United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan
USAID	U.S. Agency for International Development
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees