Continuity and change in the performance of Pakhtunwali in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan.

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By

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Two major developments dating from the 1970s - the rise of migration to the Gulf and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan – have led to a transformation of Pakhtun areas in Pakistan as well as in Afghanistan, bringing impacts on every aspect of the society, including the Pakhtun code of life, Pakhtunwali. The worsening security situation has led to a dearth of anthropological research in the Pakhtun regions in both countries. Most recent research relies on older outdated works and hence fails to take account of these momentous changes. For example, the dominant perspective still portrays Pakhtunwali mainly as a violent code involving revenge killings in feuds that are carried on for generations, which is no longer the case.

My focus of study is a Pakhtun village in the Lower Dir district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, Pakistan. The village lies outside the tribal areas and the main source of income of the local people is remittances from the Gulf. The remittances have changed the village social structure and resulting in an increase in the number of landholders and an erosion of traditional social structure.

Because of these changes Pakhtunwali has transformed, adjusting to the new socio-economic and religio-political set-up. Under these changed conditions, the complex of customary practises known as gham khadee (sorrows and joys) has emerged as the most salient feature of Pakhtunwali. Gham khadee refers to a number of practises ranging from participation in funerals and weddings to mutual favours among people in various matters of daily life.

The tenets of Pakhtunwali, e.g. badal (revenge), melmastya (hospitality), khegada (doing good), and tarburwali (cousin rivalry) are all performed within gham khadee occasions. However, the prominence of gham khadee does not mean that other tenets, e.g., violent badal, have completely ended; rather, the practise of violent badal has decreased.

This thesis investigates the diverse and changing patterns of social relations among Pakhtuns, with particular attention to the ways in which social relations are guided by the practise of gham khadee. Given that political position among Pakhtuns is tied to honour, this
thesis also investigates how *gham khadee* and the doing of favours help leaders build up their profile as well as create a political following. I take the prominence now given to *gham khadee* to be a manifestation of *Pakhtunwali* in the contemporary Pakhtun society living under the state’s laws.
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Glossary

badal ..................... exchange, revenge killing, reciprocity

bagh ...................... orchard (plural baghuna)

begherata .............. without honour

bekara ..................... worthless

chamyar .............. shoe maker

drun ..................... literally means “heavy” but it points to someone who has a lot of pukhto

dushmani .............. enmity

dwa-kora .............. two houses

ehsas ..................... feeling/ sense of care

gham khadee .... participation in sorrows and joys

gham ..................... sorrow

ghareeb ..................... poor (plural ghareeban)

ghat ..................... big

gherat ..................... one’s courage to defend his honour

iman ..................... faith

ingaran ..................... blacksmith

izzard ..................... respect, honour

kha ..................... good

khadee .............. joy

khafgan ..................... unhappiness
kor ..................... house

hujra ..................... men’s guest house

janaza ..................... funeral

janazga ..................... the funeral place

jirga ..................... council of elders

khafgan ..................... unhappiness

khadee ..................... joy

khegade ..................... doing good

las-niwa ..................... raising hands and asking for a dead person’s forgiveness

makham ..................... sunset time

malak ..................... chief

maskhutan .............. night

maspakheen .............. afternoon

mazigar ..................... early evening

melma ..................... guest

melmastya ............... hospitality

mochian ................. shoemakers

munz ..................... prayer

musafar ..................... migrant

musafari ..................... being abroad

nartob ..................... manliness

nawi maldara .......... new rich
nayee ............... barber

ombaraki .......... congratulations

paighor ............ hearsay/taunt

Pakhtunwali ...... the code of life of the pakhtuns

pat ................... keeping friendship

Pukhto.............. a). the name of language spoken by the Pakhtuns b). it can also be used as an alternative term for the code of life of the Pakhtuns known as Pakhtunwali.

pukhto kawal...... doing pukhto, behaving according to the ideals of pakhtun code of life pakhtunwali

purdah.............. seclusion

qasabgar.......... occupational classes

sahar ............... morning

saray................. literally means ‘a man’, but in pakhtun society mostly points to a person having leadership qualities

sath.................. invitation

sind................... the river

spak .................. light weighed

swara................ exchange of girl in marriage for settling disputes

taluq ................. friendship circle/influence

tapos ................. asking about someone

tarbur .............. patrilineal cousin, holds negative connotations

tarburwali ............ cousin rivalry
thana tahsil ..........helping people in matters of daily life

thra................uncle

thra zwe ............patrilineal cousin, the terms holds positive meanings

jumaat...............mosque

bar jumaat ..........the mosque of the upper part of the village

khanadan ..........family

melmastya..........hospitality

nanwate ............coming in, seeking forgiveness under pakhtunwali and it must be granted

tarburwali.........cousin rivalry

waduki...............small

wrana ................temporary suspension of ties because of some conflict

wrorwali .........brotherhood

zango..........chair lift

zimawar........literally means responsible, but in gham khadee it is used for a person who is responsible for representing his household
Map 1: Regional map of Pakistan
Chapter 1 Introduction

Major themes and key concepts

This research focuses on the Pakhtuns, the ethno-linguistic group that lives in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (previously North West Frontier Province) and Balochistan provinces of Pakistan and in eastern Afghanistan.¹ This thesis explores the lives of Pakhtun men in Dir, particularly focusing on the contemporary ways in which Pakhtunwali (the code of life of the Pakhtuns) is practised. The practise of Pakhtunwali is locally known as pukhto kawal² (doing pukhto), which is synonymous with “doing the right thing”.³ Fieldwork for this research was carried out in the village of Munjai. Migration is the main source of income of the people of Munjai. The villagers migrate mostly to UAE, Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Kuwait. Migration has become an accepted way of life for adults above the age of 20 years. Almost all the households have at least one male member working in these countries.

The concepts, values, and practises associated with Pakhtunwali form a tightly-related cluster. It will be helpful if these are first set out briefly before moving to the detailed ethnography and analysis.

Doing pukhto is related to izzat (honour) and it helps maintain, as well as increase, the individual’s and their family’s izzat (Ahmed 1980: 6; Ahmed 2006; Grima 2004: 4; Mahdi 1986; Widmark 2010). Izzat can loosely be translated as “personal or family honour”

¹ Pakhtuns/ Pashtuns/ Pathans are the different names used for the same ethnic group. The common language spoken in Dir is Pukhto, and the local dialect is similar to what Ahmed (1976: 73) classifies as hard Pukhto spoken by Pakhtun population living north of Peshawar, the provincial capital. The other dialect of Pukhto is known as soft, and is spoken in the Southern areas of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and by the Pakhtuns living in Baluchistan province. In the hard dialect people use kh (for example Pakhtun, Pukhto) while in the soft dialect it is pronounced as (Pashtun, Pushto). Throughout my thesis I shall be using the hard dialect, as it is the one spoken in Dir.

² In this thesis I have used most of Pukhto language words in italics. I would like to clarify a possible source of confusion for the readers; when the word ‘Pukhto’ appears capitalized it means I am referring to the language, while a lowercase and italicized pukhto has been used when I refer to behavior. Also, to make it easy for the reader, while using plural of certain Pukhto words I add ‘s’ at the end for example jirgas is the plural of Jirga.

³ “Doing pukhto” is the literal English translation of the Pukhto phrase “pukhto kawal”. It is commonly used among the Pakhtuns. The majority of the public acts of an individual are referred to using this phrase, for example ‘he did pukhto’ or ‘he did not do pukhto’. Also see Anderson (1979) and Rzehak (2011).
(Chaudhary 1999: 64-68; Keiser 2002: 53; Soni 2013). However, defining izzat is not easy; it is a term that carries in itself a number of meanings and refers to a number of actions. Contrary to Keiser’s (2002) observation which considers izzat only as achieved, izzat in Munjai can be ascribed as well as achieved.

Ascribed izzat involves belonging to an influential family, while achieved izzat involves the honourable actions that lead to the accumulation of more and more izzat. Achieved izzat may also include a person’s wealth, education, job, and elected position, all of which involve getting respect from the community and hence izzat is increased (Keiser 2002: 53). For example, a person’s job adds to his izzat because it is through such position that people can do khegada (help others) and do pukhto. Those who have jobs or influence in some government departments and still fail to help others are considered as bekara sadai (man of no worth).

Similar to Eglar’s observations (1960) among the Punjabis of Pakistan, where vartan bhanji (the system of reciprocal gift exchange) “is of vital importance to people as a means of achieving izzet”, in Munjai too, izzat can be gained/increased via one’s participation in gham khadee (sorrows and joys) events. Gaining izzat through gham khadee participation could sometimes be ascribed (gham khadee relationships inherited from the father) but it is mostly achieved. One has to participate actively in others’ gham khadee in order to gain izzat and only then one can expect others to come to one’s own gham khadee.

Similar to Pitt Rivers’ (1966:1) Mediterranean notion of ‘honour’, izzat is the worth of a person in his/her own eyes as well as in the eyes of others (Pitt-Rivers 1966: 1). The one who possesses izzat is known as izzatdara or he or she may sometimes be called kha saray (good man), kha Pakhtun (good Pakhtun) or drun Pakhtun (heavy Pakhtun).

The word drun literally means “heavy” but here it points to the possession of pukhto and hence the more a person possesses pukhto the more drun he is considered. A drun Pakhtun is synonymous with a saray (a man) or kha saray (good man). Calling someone a saray or kha saray is the highest compliment among the Pakhtuns (Ahmed 1980: 6). Tapper (1991: 212) associates kha saray with someone who is drun, mature and possessing the courage to
defend right against wrong. Drunwalai (being drun) makes one izzatdara and creates num (ibid: 107). A kha saray is someone who qualifies to be a mashar (elder), or a leader.

The opposite of izzat is sharam (shame). The destruction of izzat through deviant behaviour leads to sharam (Boesen 1983: 113). When izzat is lost one becomes sharmedalai (dis-honoured/shamed), a sharmedalai person is also called spak which literally means “lightweight” but it refers to the pukhto of a person, which means that the person has no pukhto or less pukhto. When a person loses izzat he is called sharmedalai (shamed), begherata (without gherat), bai-pukhto (without pukhto) and beizzata (without izzat).

Izzat is always at risk and it is one’s gherat (the ability of a person to defend his own and his family’s honour), that protects izzat as well as it is gherat that restores the lost izzat. Gherat works as a shield which guards as well as restores the izzat. Gherat is a response to threats to one’s izzat and it is the appropriate action to take in response to an event. Anyone who possesses gherat is called gherati or gheratmand.

Gherat is often triggered by the concept of badal (revenge), which is considered to be the only honourable way of restoring izzat. Not taking badal may lead to further loss of izzat. Badal is an important element of Pakhtunwali. Badal is used in a number of ways ranging from revenge killings, to meal exchange relationships, to badlawal (changing something). Previous literature discusses badal among the Pakhtuns mainly as revenge killing, but “badal is a complex system of exchange, of which blood revenge is only one part” (Grima 2004: 72).

Grima (ibid) is of the view that Pakhtun men are familiar with the different meanings of badal other than revenge killings but the other forms of badal do not necessarily play a major role in their lives. Grima confines men’s honour to violent badal (revenge) while, according to her, “women perceive their honour as maintaining relations through visits for gham-xadi” (ibid: 72-73). Grima mentions that reciprocal visits during gham khadee belong to women’s domestic lives and are less significant for men. Contrary to Grima’s observations, men in Munjai were not only aware of the different meanings of badal but

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4 Num literally means “name” but in a broader sense it means “reputation”, “honour”, or “respect”. There are different words interchangeably used for a person having izzat, for example, people may say “he has a num”, “he has pukhto”, “he is kha saray” or he is “kha Pakhtun”.
5 Also See Bokawee (2006) for discussion on Pakhtun masharan (elders).
6 Gherat is the ability of a person to defend his own and his family’s honour.
badal visits during gham khadee occasions also play a major role in their lives. Badal during gham khadee is not only about paying reciprocal visits but it also involves the arrangements/provision of meals and furniture for relatives and neighbours.

There is no separate word for reciprocity in Pukhto (ibid: 75). Badal in Munjai denotes change, reciprocity, exchange and revenge. For example, while sitting with the villagers one may hear them saying that ‘we have badal with each other’ this means that the two parties are involved in reciprocal visits of gham khadee. One does not have to explain what they really mean when they use the word badal because such words are automatically understood.

Badal is the fundamental rule of gham khadee relationships, anyone who fails to equate the badal appropriately is considered as a bekara sadai (man of no worth) because of not being able to do pukhto.

Badal, used in any sense is mostly related to the Pakhtun concept of revenge, for example, if a person A fails to attend B’s gham event without any legitimate reason, B will take his revenge by not paying a visit to A’s gham occasion. Such tit-for-tat action is considered to be part of the practise of Pakhtunwali. Hence the idea of the badal is the same as revenge but its manifestation may be different.

Contrary to previous studies this thesis discusses badal among Pakhtun men both as revenge killing as well as the ways other than revenge killing in which the villagers practise it.

Like other South Asian communities, izzat among the Pakhtuns is typically linked to zan (woman), zar (wealth) and zameen (land) (Chaudhary 1999: 42; Spain 1962: 46). Out of the three, zan and zameen are the two leading reasons for conflict among the Pakhtuns of Munjai.

Women are considered as the izzat of the household. The izzat of Pakhtun men is linked to that of their women (Ahmed 1986 b: 29) and, therefore, men must control their women (Boesen 1983: 107). Afshar (1995: 129) argues that “women are both guardians and guarded”. Their conduct is constantly policed and monitored by the male members of the family so that they do not act in an inappropriate way. Men must control women because

In a similar way to Baluch society where women’s modesty represents the izzat of the men of the household (Pastner 1972: 250-252), it is the conduct of the Pakhtun women that defines the pukhto and izzat of the men as well as of the household. Women must remain in purdah (seclusion) in order to keep the honour of the family. Purdah literally means “curtain” and is commonly used in many parts of South Asia to seclude women and enforce high levels of modesty (Papanek 1973: 289).  

Akbar Ahmed considers Pakhtun women as “the most fanatic supporters of Pakhtunwali” (1986 b: 29). Woman’s honour particularly derives from her sexual conduct (Pastner 1972: 250-252). Because of women’s central position in adding to or shaming men’s honour, Ahmed (2002: 187) conceptualises women as forming two opposite and polar types the Mor and the Tor.

About the position of women in Pakhtun society Ahmed (2002: 187) notes that:

Ideally women are conceptualized in terms of two opposite and polar types. On the one hand is mor, the mother, with emotive echoes from the sayings of the Prophet of Islam. On the other hand, where her chastity has been compromised and the honour of her close agnatic kin—father, husband or brothers—is at stake, she is considered in a state of tor (Pukhto) or siah (Baluch), literally black. Black symbolizes the colour of death, evil and negativity while white symbolizes purity and goodness. Empirically, tor cases almost always approximate to the ideal where both actors, but especially the woman, are killed by the closest male kin.

Ahmed’s model clearly demonstrates two extremes, the mother who is a sign of extreme respect both in Pakhtun culture as well as in Islam, where it is said that paradise lies

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7 Quoting Ferozson’s Urdu-English Dictionary, Rahat (1990: 86) writes that purdah means “a curtain, a cover, a veil, privacy, modesty, and secrecy”.

13
beneath the mother’s feet, while tor refers to the threat associated with sharam that she poses to the family’s honour.

Papanek (1973: 294) argues that “there are two ’instruments’ of seclusion: the physical segregation of living space, and the covering of the female face and body”. The space of the physical segregation in Pakhtun society is referred to as kor (house), which is considered as da khazu zai (women’s place), while that of men is hujra (the men’s guest house).

Boesen (1983: 104) mentions the following Pukhto proverb which perfectly sums up the position of women in Pakhtun society:

\[ Khaza ya da kor da ya da gor \]

A woman is best either in a house or in a grave

The purdah system limits a women’s mobility, which results in keeping her at home (Papanek 1973: 289). Kor (house) is a place where women are considered to be away from the eyes of the outsider and hence safe, because none other than close relatives are allowed inside the house (Boesen 1983: 113). Even when they go out they have to do purdah (ibid). Because of the factor of purdah women do not participate in jirga (the council of elders), or in hujra (men’s guest house) (ibid). Any breach of izzat related to women is mostly avenged with extreme consequences.\(^8\)

Land is another major source of izzat. The importance of land as a source of izzat is confirmed by Eglar (1960: 58-65) who is of the view that land is directly connected to izzat among the Punjabis:

However while the izzat is increased by the kind of property that represents income from the land, it is equally, or even to a greater degree, increased by the purchase of land which adds to the size of his holdings. Land itself is not a type of property which a zamindar would willingly part with. He may share food and money with others but not land for this is the source of his izzat, and he identifies his

\(^8\) Chapter 3 of this thesis discusses through case studies, the consequences of attacking someone’s izzat.
land with his pat, laj, or patlaj, which, like izzat, are words referring to power, honour, influence, respect, prestige, and status.

Land is passed among and shared by the patrilineal cousins. Because of the importance of land among the Pakhtuns the patrilineal cousins are always in constant competition; such competition is locally known as tarburwali (cousin rivalry) and is one of the tenets of Pakhtunwali. The term tarbur holds in itself the meanings of rivalry and enmity. It is rarely used in normal situations and it clearly shows the competition that exists between cousins (Barth 1959: 109). Besides tarbur the word thra zwai is used to denote patrilineal cousins. Tarbur is considered to be a negative word that is used when one feels jealous of one’s own cousin while thra zwai is a word that does not carry any negative connotation. Tarbur is not only a rival but also an important ally. The same cousins are also considered as ‘brothers’ (because they often live in the same house and face external threats together) and the word that is used for smooth relations that do not involve any envy among the cousins is again thra zaman (cousins) or wrorwali (brotherhood) where wror means brother because a cousin is considered both a foe and a brother. The same word wrorwali is also used for relations between two brothers. A wrorwali relation is the opposite of tarburwali.

The close relationship between cousins provides the basis for mutual support and cousins are natural allies against any external threat (Mohmand & Gazdar 2006: 7). Tarburwali is one of the tenets of Pakhtunwali in Dir. Tarburwali exists between patrilineal cousins and not matrilineal cousins because the patrilineal cousins inherit the same land from their grandfathers.

Competition mainly revolves around land ownership and influence in the village and beyond. The level of influence indicates the level of taluq (friendship/circle of friends/influence) and gham khadee relations (participation in sorrows and joys). Tarburwali also includes an overtone of competition in education and jobs, as both are considered as increasing one’s influence.

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9 See Chapter 6 of this thesis for the ways in which tarburwali is practised. Also see Ahmed (1976: 43-45; 1980: 181-212) for discussion on tarburwali.
10 For a similar competition (indrorwali) among Pakhtun women see Ahmed (2006: 36).
Another word that is frequently used is *iman* which literally means faith but it is mostly used in the context of *pukhto*. The usage of *iman* in the context of *pukhto* also points to the fact that *pukhto* is still dominant as compared to *Islam* in the lives of the local people. For example, when a person does not respond to a situation with *gherat*, he may be called *be-imana* (without *iman*). *Iman* is mostly used in a negative way rather than in a positive way.

Besides *zan, zar and zameen*, doing *pukhto* is another major source that adds to a Pakhtun man’s *izzat*. In order to look *drun* in the eyes of ‘others’ one must have a detailed knowledge of *hujra-jumaat*. Hujra means men’s guest house and jumaat means mosque. *Hujra* is a place where the young ones learn about *pukhto* (Khan 2011). It is a place where guests are entertained and *melmastya* (hospitality) is delivered. A Pakhtun who is good at *melmastya* is considered as *melma dost* (guest friendly), while the opposite can either be *bai pukhto* or *shum* (miser) where a miser is equivalent to a *bai pukhto* person.

*Melmastya* provides an opportunity for the host to increase his, as well as his family’s, *izzat*. Besides women’s proper sexual conduct, the *izzat* of Pakhtun men is also linked to the food that she cooks at home. The food saves and increases the *izzat* of the men in front of the guests. Such good food can make men good Pakhtuns by increasing their *izzat* (Boesen 1983: 114).

*Hujra* is also the place where men come together on the occasions of sorrows and joys locally known as *gham khadee*. Participation in *gham khadee* is considered as a sign of a *kha* Pakhtun and people who are active in *gham khadee* are considered to be doing *pukhto* which increases their *izzat*. Such *izzat* gives them the right and ability to become part of the *jirgas* (the council of elders). *Jirgas* are the decision making bodies that resolve disputes among the Pakhtuns. A *jirga* member is known as *jirgam* (plural *jirgamaran*) or sometimes *jirgaez*. *Jirga* is a male dominated forum and there are absolutely no female *jirga* members. Women are excluded from *jirga* because of two reasons a) they are supposed to observe *purdah* from outsider men and b) because they are considered as ‘foolish’ and hence unable to make ‘wise decisions’.

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11 For detailed discussion on *hujra* See (Barth 1959: 52-56; Afridi 2008 ; Khan, M.S.S 2011).
12 See (Boesen 1983) for more details on life of Pakhtun women.
Gham khadee sums up all the qualities a person must have in order to be a kha saray and a kha Pakhtun. The term gham khadee is not only used to refer to attendance at funerals and weddings but also it is used to describe a number of other practises for example khegada (doing good) manda tarda (doing good/helping people) and thana tahsil (helping people). Someone who is active in manda tarda, or khegada, or thana tahsil is considered to be a good Pakhtun. People usually say, “he is active in gham khadee” or “he is active in manda tarda” or “he does khegada with people”.

Manda tarda literally means ‘running around’, but here it refers to the mobility of an elder or politician who is required to run here and there with his supporters to sort out different things for them. Manda tarda involves thana tahsil as well as active participation in gham khadee.

Thana tahsil is used as a single word, although it is made up of two different words (thana means police station and tahsil means court). People come across different problems in their daily lives in thana and tahsil. Sometimes thana tahsil is strictly used for any work in a government department e.g. police, courts, water and power department etc. Gham khadee, thana tahsil, manda tarda and khegada are often used interchangeably. Similarly khegada means ‘doing good with people’. It can include anything ranging from providing food to neighbours to giving jobs to the villagers.

Any Pakhtun having these gham khadee qualities qualifies to be a leader among the Pakhtuns. The more active in gham khadee the more a leader builds a following. Such leaders have their own dala (faction). Every leader tries to strengthen his dala and weaken the dala of his rivals. Dala derives its strength from the number of supporters the leader has.

Gham khadee participation and cooperation helps increase the taluq (influence, friendship) of the people. It is through such taluq that people approach different government departments and get their own as well as other people’s work done.

Lyon (2002: 186) mentions that the state is beyond the reach of a common Pakistani villager. It is the leader who acts as a bridge between the villager and the state. A leader

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13 See chapter 6 for more details.
must be the symbol of pukhto, possessing all the good qualities considered worthy among the Pakhtuns.

People come across different exigencies in government departments as well as other matters of daily life. Anyone who does not have influence or taluq (friendship) faces problems in getting their business done in government departments. To solve such problems people use their taluq. For such reasons people often become part of one or another dala (faction).

Factions may start from a village level and may extend up to the district. The village level heads of the factions have direct and more frequent contact with the head of the larger faction at the district level. Such factions often emerge as supporters of one political party at the district level.

Factions are political groups that are tied together by political affiliations irrespective of people’s family ties. While talking of district level politics, people rarely use the word dala and the word ‘party’ is used instead. The faction members throw their weight behind the mashar (elder), who often happens to be a political leader. Such support is reciprocal: the members of the faction expect their leaders to help them whenever they are in need while the faction leader needs the support of the members in different matters as well as during elections where a victory signifies the influence of a particular faction. If faction leaders constantly fail to deliver for their members, or when the members see ‘advantages’ in switching factions, they may do so and join their former rivals. Such change of loyalties has been observed by Barth (1959: 2) who is of the view that:

Group commitments may be assumed and shed at will. Self-interest may dictate action which does not bring advantage to the group and individuals are able to plan and make choices in terms of private advantage and a personal political career

(Barth 1959: 2)

Such change of factions has two main causes. The first one is to obtain the desired benefit from the new faction. Barth observed that people prefer private advantage rather than group advantage and “this is most clearly demonstrated by the way, in which members of
any group may secede and attach themselves to another when [it] is to their advantage” (Ibid).

Another reason for this could be the emergence of rivalry between two people or parties and, in order to weaken the faction, as a result an individual or party may join another faction, hence strengthening the new faction. This weakening of the previous faction can be seen as taking badal (revenge) against the old faction members who were unable to do pukhto (inability to address the issues of its faction members). Badal here is taken through strengthening of the preferred new faction.

Ahmed (1976: 139) rightly criticises Barth for oversimplifying the change of loyalties. Ahmed (ibid) argues that a Pakhtun is born into “an interconnected number of social matrices that may continue to determine or limit his choice or strategies”. My fieldwork findings are contrary to Barth’s assumption, which considers a change of faction as a whim of individuals, which can be done at any time. Changing factions may harm a person’s reputation and make him untrustworthy in the eyes of the villagers, because standing firm is also considered as the sign of a good Pakhtun.

People in the same faction stand by each other during hard times. On a larger political level strong candidates having wider taluq and gham khadee are chosen to contest elections. In the case of victory, the candidates defend the faction’s interests and help the faction members at local, provincial and national levels whenever they need help.

The argument of the thesis

The main aim of my thesis is to explore Pakhtunwali, the code of life of the Pakhtun people. Pakhtunwali mainly revolves around the notion of ‘honour’ and its maintenance. In order to become honourable one must follow Pakhtunwali. The practise of Pakhtunwali is locally known as pukhto kawal (doing pukhto), which is synonymous to doing the right thing.

Anthropologists who have done research on Pakhtuns often describe Pakhtunwali as a static code where the main tenets of Pakhtunwali, more generally, are: badal (revenge), melmastya (hospitality), nanawate (refuge), tor (female honour) and tarburwali (agnatic rivalry) (Ahmed 1980; Barth 1986; Gima 1998; Hart 1990; Lindholm 1982; Singer 1982 in Ahmed 2006).
Previous anthropological studies mostly portray Pakhtun culture as an amalgamation of only strict blood feuds and aggressive hospitality (Banerjee 2000:208). Banerjee (ibid: 15) argues that Pakhtunwali is not “static but rather the subject of negotiations and innovation”. By providing ethnographic examples, this thesis gives an alternative perspective which contests the previously held notions about the Pakhtun people as ‘blood thirsty’, ‘savages’, ‘uncivilized’ and ‘revengeful’.

Far from being static, the tenets and practise of Pakhtunwali differ with changing social, economic, political and administrative circumstances. In today’s Pakhtun society it is one’s performance in gham khadee (sorrows and joys) through which Pakhtunwali is enacted, observed, judged, discussed and interpreted. Contrary to the received wisdom, this thesis sheds light on how pukhto is performed in non-violent ways, i.e through gham khadee, aside from the more notorious blood feuds and revenge. Moreover, it shows how the imposition of state laws, the presence of state institutions, and the combined influences of migration, education, and Islam give rise to alternative customary practises where the tenets of Pakhtunwali are realised in diverse ways.

Similarly to Ahmed’s (2006: 3) findings, this research argues that “gham khadi has come to assume a priority among Pakhtuns as a contemporary principle of Pukhtunwali”. Taking Ahmed’s findings forward, this thesis argues that in contemporary Pakhtun society gham khadee participation ensures the practise of Pakhtunwali and at the same time the other tenets of Pakhtunwali e.g. badal, melmastya, and tarburwali, are also acted out and observed during gham khadee occasions (ibid). During an informal discussion, an elderly villager used the following proverb highlighting the importance of gham khadee as the most important tenet of contemporary Pakhtun practise: ‘nawee charai pa zarhai laree’ (new things through old ways). The proverb referred, in this instance, to the rising and novel importance of gham khadee as a focus of Pakhtunwali. I attempt to answer how men’s gham khadee participation plays “a central role in the symbolic reproduction of intra and inter-familial relationships and inter-class social relationship and in a representation of ethnic identity (pukhto)” (Ahmed 2006: 47).
This thesis examines the contemporary *Pakhtunwali* as it is practised in today’s settled Pakhtun areas. The main argument of my thesis is that *gham khadee* has assumed significant importance in today’s Pakhtun society and is the leading and most widely practised way in which *Pakhtunwali* is manifested. This study is the first of its kind to investigate the *gham khadee* of Pakhtun men.

This thesis examines what *pukhto kawal* (doing *pukhto*) means in today’s Pakhtun society. Contrary to the existing literature which often associates the honor of Pakhtun men with the symbols of “gun and turban” (Grima 2004: 1) and violent blood revenge and blood feuds, I suggest that even today the identity of Pakhtun men is constantly judged and contested but through transformed ways of doing *pukhto*. Hence, a good and honourable Pakhtun in today’s Pakhtun society is someone who is active in *gham khadee* participation, and who does *khegada* (doing good) with others.

**History and the ancestry of the modern day Pakhtuns**

The majority of the Pakhtuns claim Qais Abdur Rashid as their apical ancestor (Mahdi 1986: 296; Hart 1990: 6-7). It is believed that Qais accepted Islam at the hands of Muhammad (PBUH), the prophet of Islam (Ahmed 1980: 128; Caroe 1958: 7; Glatzer 1998: 9; Hart 1990: 6). The Pakhtun conversion to Islam was without the use of any force (Ahmed 1980: 129). It is since then that Islam, along with other attributes, has become a defining characteristic of the Pakhtun identity. Qais is said to have had four sons: Sarban, Bitan, Ghurghusht, and Karlanri (ibid).

To claim Pakhtun identity, one must be born into a Pakhtun tribe, but in some cases outsiders are granted the status of Pakhtuns only after residing in the *Pakhtun* areas for a generation or two, by practising *Pakhtunwali* and intermarrying with the Pakhtun tribe.

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14 The areas where state’s police and courts are functions, the opposite of settled areas are tribal areas where police and courts are non-functional.
15 For women’s *gham khadee* see Ahmed (2006) and Grima (2004).
16 It was revealed during different discussions with the villagers during my fieldwork.
Such people who are not Pakhtuns by genealogy but become Pakhtuns over time are known as *wasli pukhtana*. 17

**Pakhtun population**

Administratively, Pakhtun areas in Pakistan are divided into three different regions: Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA),18 Provincially Administered Tribal Areas (PATA) and the Settled areas.19 (Below is an introduction to the Pakhtun areas. Settled Area is a term interchangeably used for PATA because of the extension of the state’s judicial and administrative system to PATA).

FATA are located at the Pakistan-Afghanistan border. FATA comprises seven administrative agencies and the Pakistani laws (applicable elsewhere in the country) are not applicable here. It is through FCR (Frontier Crimes Regulation), Islamic teachings and local customs that people run their affairs.20

The Pakhtuns of FATA have been the subject of a number of anthropological studies such as Akbar S Ahmed’s (1980) famous “Pukhtun Economy and Society” and André Singer’s (1982), “Guardians of the North-West Frontier : the Pathans”.

PATA are also known as semi-tribal areas. In the past, PATA had separate civil and criminal laws, unlike the rest of Pakistan. However, today PATA is no different from the settled areas and, like the rest of Pakistan, has courts and police stations. However, some relaxation (for example taxation on vehicles, and age relaxation in civil services exams and jobs) has been given to the inhabitants of PATA as compared to the inhabitants of the settled district.

Fredrick Barth’s “Political leadership among Swat Pathans” (1959), probably most famous of the books on Pakhtuns, was the outcome of his fieldwork in Swat, which is part of the PATA.

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17 The word *wasli* is derived from *wasal* meaning attached; it refers to those outsiders who, despite having different genealogies, have attached themselves to the Pakhtuns over time. Such a status is obtained by the ‘outsiders’ only after they have lived in Pakhtun areas and practise *Pakhtunwali* for years. The opposite of *wasli pukhtana* is *nasli pukhtana*, whereby *nasli* is derived from *nasal* which means race and refers to pure or original lineage.


19 I will be using the term ‘settled area’ for Dir keeping in mind the ideas of local people, who consider Dir as a settled area, and for them the administrative name PATA does not make any sense as, according to them, there are only two areas where Pakhtuns live: the settled or the tribal, where they fall into the former.

20 For a comparative analysis of the different Pakhtun as well as non-Pakhtun tribes living on the Pakistan Afghanistan border see (Hussain 1990).
The socio-economic and administrative variations of the Pakhtun population have direct impacts on the practise of Pakhtunwali. Ahmed (1980) restricts the Pakhtun tribal system and ideal Pakhtunwali to remote and backward areas, or, in the context of Pakistan, the tribal areas. Glatzer (1998) make an important point that the Pakhtun tribal system “permeated and still permeates all levels of the society from the nomad camp up to the royal palace, from the remote mountain village up to the university and to the head quarters of the armed forces”. Pakhtunwali is observed by Pakhtuns irrespective of whether they live in the city or village, in their own country or abroad, and irrespective of their economic, social and religious conditions. However, the way of practising Pakhtunwali varies according to space and time, for example in Dir, the tenets of Pakhtunwali are observed as well as discussed mainly during the occasions of gham khadee. It is one’s participation in gham khadee that gives a person the identity of a good Pakhtun. A study of Pakhtunwali in tribal areas, where the state’s judicial system is absent, may reveal badal (revenge killing) as its most important tenet.

A jirga in another village of Dir made a swara decision about a 16 year old girl. Swara is the exchange of females as compensation to settle feuds. The girl was given to the party who suffered losses. The supreme court of Pakistan declared swara to be illegal and banned it. As soon as the news spread, the court took action and ordered the police to arrest and punish the jirga members. The jirga members were arrested and punished according to the directives of the court.

Here we can see a number of factors e.g. jirga being an important institution of Pakhtun society has been put under pressure where the jirga members cannot make their own decisions because the state’s institutions keep a check on them. Despite the checks, however, many cases go unnoticed.

It is apparent in the above example how encapsulation (using Ahmed’s (1980) word) by the state structure can affect the practise of Pakhtunwali, i.e jirga in the above example. The opinion of some villagers about this case was that had a similar case happened in the tribal
areas there would have been no court ruling or police action because of the absence of both these institutions, and hence the *jirga* would have freely decided.\(^{21}\)

Throughout my thesis I will be using ‘settled areas’ instead of PATA, because it more accurately reflects how the local people perceive their land because of the extension of state laws, police and courts.

**Pakhtun identity**

Who is a Pakhtun? It is a question that has been given different answers and will probably be given still different ones in the future. The reason for such diverse answers to the same question may be the different socio-economic settings that the Pakhtun people live in. This research answers this question in a socio economic setting that has not yet received much attention among researchers.

Dr. Muhammad Taqi a columnist who regularly writes for a Pakistani newspaper quoted a *khudai khidmatgar\(^{22}\)*, Hussain Bakhsh Kosar Ghoriakhel in an interview and said:

“’The word Pakhtun is made up of two words *Pa* (پا) (means at, by) *stun* (ستون) literally means *pillar*. Comparing Pakhtun to a pillar refers to the firmness, and steadfastness and it shows whatever stand they take they remain firm on that’”.

The term Pakhtun (in Pukhto letters) according to many people is said to be comprised of the following words, where each letter denotes the qualities a Pakhtun must have.\(^{23}\)

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\(^{21}\) This is not the only story of its kind; many similar stories come up on regular basis. See [http://tribune.com.pk/story/434018/swara-case-ten-jirga-members-arrested/](http://tribune.com.pk/story/434018/swara-case-ten-jirga-members-arrested/) for another story where the court interfered in a *jirga*’s decisions.

\(^{22}\) *Khudai Khidmatgar* means ‘Servants of God’, was an anti-colonialist and a reformist movement among the Pakhtuns initiated by Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan also known as Bacha Khan.

\(^{23}\) The same formula for explaining the word Pakhtun also came up in discussion with two villagers. See Ahmed (2006: 17) for more details who has also given a similar “formula” explaining the word Pakhtun and the characteristics a Pakhtun must have. Taking the *Pukhto* word پختون Ahmed has analysed the word Pakhtun into its various sub-elements, based on the information of her informants she has given meaning to each single letter that combine together to make the word Pakhtun. In this word Pakhtun; *Pu* (*Puth* means dignity), *Kh* (*khengarha*: goodness) *th* (*thura* means sword but signifies bravery) *U* (*wafa* means loyalty) and *N* (*nang* means honour). Hence all these qualities come together and make a good Pakhtun. Also see Khattak, R.W.S (2008 Urdu version) for a comprehensive discussion on the meaning of the word Pakhtun.
Pey (Pashto letter Pat), which means honour, fellowship or comradeship. (*)

سر دې درومي،مال دې درومي،پت دې نه خي
د سري د چاري کل خوبي یه پت ده

(Let the head be gone, wealth be gone but the honour must not go, because the whole of dignity of a man is due to this honour.) (Khushal in Kamil, 1960, p. 281)

Xeen or Sheen (Pashto letter for Xegarha), which means doing good to others or the needy.

چې د خلقو نيک خواي لري په زړه کښې
مبارك شه بانشاني امري په زره كښي

If you have a passion in your heart for doing well to others, congratulations! You keep a )

(Khushal in Kamil, 1960, p. 379)(.kingdom in your heart

Tey for Toora, which literally means sword and stands for bravery.

چې او نه وهې په دواړه لاسه تورې
چا منکنه په ميراث نه دي موندي

(Unless one fights with swords in both of his hands, no one has won the countries merely by heredity.) (Khushal in Kamil, 1960, p. 874)

Waw for Wafa, which means fidelity to one’s commitments.

Noon for Nang, which means honour.”

(Taken from Khattak, R. W. S., Mohammad, F., & Lee, R: 2008)²⁴

Frederik Barth in his essay “Pathan Identity and its Maintenance” (1969: 119), explains how Pakhtuns, despite living in different socio-economic conditions define and maintain their ethnic identity. Barth (ibid) regards a) Patrilineal descent, b) Islam, and c) Pathan customs or Pakhtunwali as the main identity markers among the Pakhtuns. Barth considers all these identity markers as holding equally important places in the formation of Pakhtun identity.

Ahmed (1980: 84) considers patrilineal descent as the most powerful criterion for the identity of a Pakhtun. Ahmed’s criterion seems problematic when he restricts Pakhtun identity to mere patrilineal descent and undervalues the other markers especially doing pukhto.

My findings are closer to Barth’s findings, as most of the people in Munjai that I met regarded Islam, Pakhtun descent, land holding and doing pukhto as the major characteristics a Pakhtun must have. The list of criteria and especially their relative importance vary across time and region, as for example, the economic impact of migration has changed the relative importance of land ownership to Pakhtun identity. However, doing pukhto was by and far the most important and leading characteristic mentioned by almost all fieldwork informants. Doing pukhto refers to doing the right thing or the proper behaviour of villagers.

Because of living in diverse socio-economic settings doing pukhto is defined and explained differently in different Pakhtun areas. This thesis explains the concept of doing pukhto in Munjai, a small village in lower Dir district. Below I explain the salient features of Pakhtun identity.

**Lineage, land and Pakhtun identity**

The leading criterion for Ahmed, in order to define a Pakhtun, is a person’s ability to trace his lineage to a Pakhtun tribe and in turn to the apical ancestor, Qais Bin Rashid. Why is lineage so important among the Pakhtuns? It is important mainly because a place in the lineage not only gives power and status (ibid: 127) but also access to land ownership (Barth 1959). It is the connection between land ownership and Pakhtunness that explains why a migrant’s first priority in Munjai is to buy land. Today, many of the non-land holding people of the past hold land that they have bought with remittance money mostly from the Gulf, which gives rise to the question, have they become Pakhtuns? Does buying land make someone a Pakhtun, keeping in view the fact that their father or grandfather had no land and hence had no right to claim the status of a Pakhtun. Barth (1959: 67) is of the view that such buying of land by the new Pakhtuns rewards them only with the land and not the status of being a Pakhtun.

While talking about the chamyars (shoemakers) which is an occupational class, who along with nayan (barbers) and ingaran (blacksmiths) are considered to have low status in Pakhtun society, Grima (2004:23) writes that:

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26 People who did not have land in the past are called as non-Pakhtuns, or the local people say, Pakhtun na dai (he is not a Pakhtun).
The chamyars, (shoemakers) for instance, have risen considerably in economic status as many of them have worked in and brought home fortunes from the Gulf countries. However, they cannot take on the name of a khel (a subdivision of a tribe) since this would be an affront to the Paxtun khans.

Barth (1959: 67) also observed that when a non-Pakhtun\textsuperscript{27} buys land, he does not get the title of Pakhtun with it. Any such non-Pakhtun group is denied a Pakhtun identity, although there is no proper mechanism to deny or to give someone the identity, it is hard for a non-Pakhtun to become recognized among Pakhtuns. For example, despite the fact that certain occupational groups have left the occupations of their forefathers whenever the people who previously owned the land talk about them, they are often heard saying ‘da nayee zwai’ (the son of a barber) or ‘da chamyar zwe’ (the son of a shoemaker). In the case of someone affiliating himself with a particular Pakhtun identity, the people around are always conscious of such developments and they “are quick to remind an outsider of the group’s real origin” (Grima 2004: 23). Some people even mock those who try to claim an identity that they do not belong to.

My data from Munjai supports Grima’s data, as in Munjai people who were non-land holding in the past if they gain or buy land, they only get the land and not the status connected to the land.

Ahmed’s criterion seems problematic when he restricts Pakhtun identity to mere patrilineal descent and undervalues the other markers especially doing\textit{ pukhto}.

Some informants use written charts known as\textit{ shajara} to prove their Pakhtunness.\textsuperscript{28}

\textsuperscript{27} Here non-Pakhtun is someone who did not have land in the past.

\textsuperscript{28} During the fieldwork I was presented with one such detailed\textit{ Shajara} of one of the families by its elders, while he was discussing the\textit{ Shajara}, he claimed to have the most authentic record of his lineage. He also claimed that no other family in the village could present such a detailed record of their ancestors.
Table 1: shajara of the Shenwaris living in Munjai and in the neighboring village Baroon, provided to me by Shahab, a retired school teacher.

Speaking Pukhto

For the Pakhtuns, speaking the Pukhto language is another marker of their identity (Rahman 1997: 838). Pukhto or Pashto\textsuperscript{29} is an Indo-Iranian language (ibid 1995). It is spoken in Afghanistan and in the provinces of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and Balochistan in Pakistan (Bausani 1971: 55). Describing the characteristics of the ethnic group as discussed in the anthropological literature, Fredrik Barth in his introduction to the book “Ethnic groups and boundaries” (ibid: 11) mentions the “field of communication and interaction” as one of the important defining features of an ethnic group, hence keeping language in high esteem.

\textsuperscript{29} Pukhto and Pashto both refer to the language spoken by the Pakhtuns. The difference in pronunciation comes from the different dialects spoken by the Pakhtuns. The ‘kh’ format is commonly called the hard Pukhto and is used mainly in the Peshawar valley and the other areas such as Dir, Swat, Malakand, while the ‘sh’ is associated with soft format spoken by people living in the southern districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and in Balochistan province of Pakistan. Throughout my writing I will be using the ‘kh’ format as it was the format of the area where I conducted my research. Also see Bausan (1971) for details on the dialects of Pukhto. The common language spoken in the area is Pukhto, and the local dialect is similar to what Ahmed (1976: 73) classifies as hard Pukhto spoken by Pakhtun population living north of Peshawar, the provincial capital. The other dialect of Pukhto classified as soft, is spoken in the southern areas of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The hard Pukhto uses kh for example Pakhtun, while in soft dialect it is pronounced as Pashto or Pushto.
Although Barth (1981: 105) considers speaking Pukhto as an important diacritical feature, but not sufficient in itself to give identity to a Pakhtun. Barth quotes a famous Pukhto saying “He is a Pathan who does pashto, not (merely) who speaks Pashto” and doing pukhto here means “living by rather an exacting code” which is Pakhtunwali (1969: 118-120). In Widmark’s (2010: 3) opinion the Pukhto language is an “important element of broader Pashtun identity”. Windmark’s and Barth’s findings have been validated by Grima, for her, speaking Pukhto is a part of doing pukhto (1998: 1).

In his survey on Pukhto language, Hallberg (1992) writes that for Pakhtuns, the Pukhto language is a strong mark of identity and pride and is used in four out of six domains of their lives. According to Halberg (ibid: 28) Pukhto is exclusively used in the home, mosque, jirga and when speaking to women, while in the other two domains, which are markets and schools, Pukhto is used along with Urdu. The usage of Urdu in markets is perhaps because of the presence of shopkeepers who are non-Pukhto speakers, and in schools they may speak Urdu because it is a national language which children are expected to speak with at least minimal proficiency.

Speaking Pukhto is such a strong factor among the Pakhtuns that even an outsider or a non-Pakhtun who could speak Pukhto is highly respected for his ability to learn Pukhto. Thorburn (1876: 89) in his book “Bannu; our Afghan frontier” writes:

The delight of a hill Pathan in being addressed by a Sahib in his mother Pashto is always genuine and irrepressible; his whole face, which ordinarily wears a fixed touch-me-if-you-dare almost defiant expression, breaks into one broad grin as he wonderingly asks you, "Eh, you talk Pashto, how did you learn it ?" It is just the sort of question a Highlander would ask did a Southerner address him in Gaelic. The gain in personal influence, besides other advantages, which an ability to converse directly with the people gives an Englishman amongst Pathans is so obvious that I need not dilate on it.
The ability of non-Pakhtuns to speak Pukhto gives them acceptance and recognition. With their ability to speak Pukhto they are able to remove the language barrier. They are not given the permanent title of a Pakhtun, however, they are bestowed upon the title of someone who is “same as a Pakhtun”, such a title is always short lived as the person may not meet the other requirements and hence is not given the status of a Pakhtun.

While I agree with the statement of Barth that the Pukhto language alone is not sufficient to give identity to a Pakhtun, there is no doubt about its importance in the identity construction and maintenance of a Pakhtun. Anyone claiming to be a Pakhtun must be able to speak Pukhto while inability to do so leads automatically to being labelled as a non-Pakhtun.

Ahmed (1984: 86) underestimates the importance of the Pukhto language when he writes that Pakhtun take immense pride in Sher Shah Suri (a Pakhtun by descent who ruled India but could not speak Pukhto), but I remember how my informants would mock the Indian cricket players Irfan Pathan and Yousuf Pathan, who claim to be Pathans (the Indian name used for Pakhtuns). My informants would say that someone who could not speak Pukhto cannot claim to be a Pakhtun. I argue that Ahmed’s definition of limiting a Pakhtun to patrilineal descent is flawed. However patrilineal descent mixed with the other features (some mentioned by Barth 1969: 119) together would give a much better definition of a Pakhtun that would be applicable to many Pakhtun areas if not all.

**Islam and Pakhtun identity**

*Che Pakhtun yi musalman ba yi*[^30]

A Pakhtun must be a Muslim

[^30]: It was said by an old villager in an informal conversation.
Being a Muslim is one of the most important features of Pakhtun identity. “A Pathan must be an orthodox Muslim”, says Barth (1969: 119) in his essay “Pathan identity and its maintainence”.

Similarly Ahmed is of the opinion that:

> He is by definition a Muslim just as by birth he obtains the inalienable right to Pakhtunness. His place in society as a Pukhtun and as a Muslim is thus secure and defined from the moment of birth.  
> (*Ahmed 1980: 107*)

Pakhtuns use the word *hujra-jumaat* in their routine discussions. It points to the importance of the awareness of both *pukhto* and Islam for a Pakhtun. This is because *hujra* is considered as a space used for the display of *Pakhtunwali* while *jumaat* is for display of Muslimness.

The *hujra-jumaat* phenomenon is a symbolic expression of the unity of *Pakhtunwali* and Islam in village social life. Pakhtuns consider ‘Muslimness’ and ‘Pakhtunness’ as embedded in each other and having no difference (Ahmed 1980: 106). In Glitzer’s words, *Pakhtunwali* is “an expression of practical and true Islam” (1998:9); however, my field data suggests that *Pakhtunwali* is not always in conformity with “practical Islam”. Despite contradictions, *Pakhtunwali* and Islam together shape the lives of the Pakhtuns. Realising the importance of both *Pakhtunwali* and Islam, Bacha Khan shaped the ideology of the *Khudai Khidmatgar* movement as a mixture of *pukhto* and Islam and as a result was successful in mustering huge support among the Pakhtuns (Banerjee 2000: 160).32 Barth (1969: 119-120), while talking about *Pakhtunwali* and Islam, also states that the Pakhtuns consider *Pakhtunwali* “to be consistent with, and complementary to Islam”.

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31 Borrowing the word ‘true Islam’ from Glitzer (1998).
32 Bacha Khan was a Pakhtun nationalist and reformist, who struggled for Pakhtun rights both in united India and in Pakistan. He led a well known anti-British non violent campaign known as Khudai Khidmatgar (KK). Khudai Khidmatgar literally means ‘servants of God’, the movement was started by Bacha Khan and the ideology was based on Pakhtun and Islamic ideals. The KK worked to strengthen Pakhtun nationalism and eradication of social evils, and to use their strength in getting rid of the British. One of the main features of the movement was its non-violent nature.
Pakhtuns are also considered to be ‘good practising Muslims’ who punctually practise the rituals such as prayers, fasting, pilgrimage to Mecca, zakat (giving money to the poor), and jihad (Ahmed 1980: 107-108).\textsuperscript{33}

Though Pakhtunness and Muslimness are both considered essential to Pakhtun identity, at times Pakhtunwali and Islam contradict each other, for example, in matters of giving inheritance to women and taking interest on loans. Pakhtuns openly accept this guilt of not following the religion properly (Ahmed 1980: 106) and in cases where they have to choose whether to follow Islam or Pakhtunwali, they usually follow the latter (Liebl 2007: 499). In support of Ahmed’s claim I would mention McMohan and Ramsay’s (1981) use of a few Pukhto proverbs, which illustrate the contradiction between Muslimness and Pakhtunness:

\begin{quote}
A pathan admits one half of the Koran but not the other
and
One foot of a Pathan is in paradise-the other is in hell
(1901:19).
\end{quote}

**Pakhtunwali / doing pukhto\textsuperscript{34}**

Among the Pashtuns the word Pashtunwali implicates everything........ Pashto is the name of their national language, Pashtun is the name of their tribe, Pashtunkhwa is the name of their homeland; and from these words the meaningful name Pashtunwali was created.

(Khadim cited in Rzhak, 2011 : 7 )

*Pakhtunwali*, sometimes called ‘the way of the Pakhtuns’ or ‘the code\textsuperscript{35} of life of Pakhtuns’, governs every aspect of Pakhtun life (Spain 1962: 46). *Pakhtunwali* is an adjective that

\textsuperscript{33}It is a common thinking among the non-Pakhtuns that Pakhtuns are more practising than other ethnic groups in Pakistan. I personally heard many non-Pakhtuns saying this while I was living in Islamabad.

\textsuperscript{34}Also see Khattak, P. (1979) for a detailed discussion on Pakhtunwali among the Pakhtun tribes. The book is in Urdu language.
signifies the qualities a Pakhtun must have. *Pakhtunwali* is made of two words, the noun Pakhtun and suffix *wali*\(^{36}\) which means ‘ness’ or combining both makes it Pakhtunness (Rzehak 2011 : 3).

*Pakhtunwali* is often referred to as simply *pukhto* or *pukhto kawal* (doing *pukhto*). Barth (1969: 119) aptly quotes the proverb ‘*he is a Pathan who does pashto, not merely who speaks Pashto*’. Pukhto is not only spoken but it is also done and doing *pukhto* refers to the behaviour defined by the code (Grima 2004: 4). Whenever the term doing *pukhto* is used we must bear in mind that it refers to adherence to the Pakhtun code of life. People use the term doing *pukhto* while they describe other people’s behaviour or when they teach their children how to behave according to *Pakhtunwali* (ibid). Socialisation of children is carried out mainly in the *hujra* and *jumaat* and the process of socialisation is called *hujra-jumaat* which refers to the awareness of the people about how to behave in public.

*Pakhtunwali* acts as a yard stick for measuring normative or deviant behaviour among the Pakhtuns (Ahmed 1980: 57). People refer to other people’s actions and behaviour within the context of *pukhto*, and anything done in conformity with *Pakhtunwali* is praised while the opposite is talked about negatively.

According to Widmark (2010: 3) doing *pukhto* is basically commitment to *Pakhtunwali* and all the tenets of *Pakhtunwali* are related to honour (*izzat*). *Pukhto* defines the individual (Grima 2004: 4; Ahmed 1980: 6).

Akbar Ahmed while commenting on *Pakhtunwali* writes;

> *Pakhtunwali* is the core of Pakhtun social behaviour. Although unwritten and precisely undefined it is the theme of song, proverb, metaphor and parable and never far from men’s minds; like most codes it is part-fiction and part-reality.

\(^{35}\) There is no exact word used in Pukhto language for ‘code of life’ but during my interview with a politician from the Peshawar valley, who is a retired bureaucrat and has written a number of Pukhto books, he used the word *dastoor* for code. However, *dastoor* is not widely used. People use the word *pukhto* while referring to *Pakhtunwali*.

\(^{36}\) A similar response was given to me during an interview by Hamid, a university professor, who was of the view that in *Pakhtunwali* the suffix *wali* can roughly be translated as ness or hood in English and it signifies the status of being a Pakhtun. Similarly in *wrorwali wror* means brother and *wali* is hood making it brotherhood, hence *wali* is used to signify ness or hood or the condition of being another example is *tarburwali* made up of *tarbur cousin* and *wali* to be roughly translated as hood.
Similarly Willi Steul observes that:

Pashtunwali is comprised of the sum of the total values and social norms which determine the way of life peculiar to the Pashtuns. It is the all embracing regulator for the preservation and conservation of the society and for the behavior patterns of the individual. It is an emic concept which includes everything a Pashtun should or should not do. It is thus a means of ethnic identification and differentiation in relation to other ethnic groups. . . [Pashtunwali] can be seen as above all as the values forced on the individual if he is to be respected member of society and to enjoy its acceptance.

(Steul 1981: 308 cited in Grima 2004: 3)

It is Pakhtunwali that distinguishes Pakhtuns from non-Pakhtuns (Rzehak 2011: 3). In any Pakhtun village a comparison of Pakhtuns to the Punjabis is a very common thing that frequently echoes in the discussions among the Pakhtuns. The contempt and comparison with Punjabis comes from the fact that Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province shares a border with Punjab province (Punjab is the name of the province where Punjabis live and are in the majority), and hence Pakhtuns frequently interact with the Punjabis more than with any other group, for example Sindhis or Baloch. The Pakhtuns judge the behavior and personality of ‘others’ with their own standards and look at ‘other’s’ behavior within the context of Pakhtunwali, and anyone who falls below their standards is ridiculed and taunted as a Punjabi.

The one possessing pukhto is considered as a true Pakhtun and the opposite, which is highly disliked by the local people is bai-pukhto (without pukhto), and bai-gherata (without honour) and sometimes a bai-pukhto person is even called a Punjabai (which means Punjabi, someone who belongs to Punjab, the largest province of Pakistan). The practise of calling someone Punjabai shows the antipathy of Pakhtuns towards the Punjabis, because a
Pakhtun considers a *Punjabai* as a coward and someone lacking honour. They even call the Punjabis cultureless people and not good Muslims.

The Pakhtuns look down on people (Pakhtuns or non-Pakhtuns) who do not follow Pakhtunwali and such looking down upon others is known as *spak nazar kawal* which literally means ‘looking lightly’ but it actually means looking down upon someone. The words *droon* and *spak* are also constantly used in different discussions where *droon* (heavy weight) refers to the amount/quantity of Pakhtunness shown/done by someone while *spak* (light) refers to the opposite. Such ‘heaviness’ or ‘lightness’ can neither be summarised nor explained in simple words.

*Spak nazar* makes one dishonourable or less honourable in the eyes of the villagers, the only way to avoid such *spak nazar* is to behave more and more according to the *Pakhtunwali*. An old villager Afzal while discussing the same topic with me once said the following proverb;

\[Che nan spak she saba wrak she.\]

That who is dishonoured today gets lost tomorrow.

Hence in order to maintain membership of society, it is necessary for people to follow *Pakhtunwali* otherwise *spak nazar* leads to social ostracism. Though, no formal procedure/s are followed to ostracise a villager, he could be excluded from participation in a *jirga* (the decision making body). Because one has to follow *Pakhtunwali* himself and only then can ask others to do so. Hence even if he participates in a *jirga* his say would have no weight and people may not accept it, because he has now become a *spak sadai* (lightweight man) or someone who does not possess *pukhto*.

Previous studies show that the most common tenets of *Pakhtunwali* that are found in the majority of the Pakhtun areas are *badal* (revenge), *melmastya* (hospitality), *tor* (female honour), and *tarburwali* (cousin rivalry) (Ahmed 1980; Barth 1959; Grima 1998; Spain 1962), however, as mentioned above, these tenets could differ in different Pakhtun areas. *Khegada* (doing good) was one more such tenet of *Pakhtunwali* found in Munjai, that has not been discussed in the literature so far.
In my thesis, I will concentrate on *badal, melmastyo, khgada*, and *tarburwali* as these are locally considered as the most salient features of *Pakhtunwali* in Munjai.

**Badal**

Probably the most discussed tenet of Pakhtunwali both in the literature as well as in Pakhtun society is *badal*. Ahmed (1980: 91) calls *badal* the primary law of Pakhtunwali, while Khan (2010: 1) considers *badal* as central to Pakhtun life and for Spain (1962: 44) *badal* is the “first and the greatest commandment of Pakhtunwali”.

*Badal* has been discussed in a number of *pukhto* proverbs for example:

> He is not a Pakhtun who does not give a blow for a pinch


> The Pakhtun took revenge after a twenty years and another said that it was taken soon, hurriedly.

(Khattak, Mohammad and Lee 2008)

Despite having a number of meanings and usages, in most of the ethnographies (Ahmed 1980; Barth 1959; Singer 1982 ; Spain 1962 ; Grima 2004) *badal* has been associated with revenge killing, which is considered a virtue of Pakhtun men.

*Badal* is not only an act of emotion but a responsibility (Philips 2011: 16), for which there is no time limit (Rome 2006: 3) and can be passed from one generation to another. Failure to take *badal* makes one dishonourable and such a person may face *paighor* (taunt) (ibid).

As mentioned earlier that *zan* (*women*) *zar* (*wealth*) and *zamin* (*land*) are the three main reasons for disputes among Pakhtuns, such disputes lead to *badal*. *Badal* is taken in order to restore one’s lost honour. *Pakhtunwali* provides *jirga* as a forum “to mitigate the disadvantages of *badal’” (Mahdi 1986: 299), disputes are solved in *jirga* (Liebl 2008: 499). Wardak (2003) calls *jirga* a successful mechanism of conflict resolution, further saying that:

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37 For details on the meaning and different usages of the word *badal* see Grima 1998: 70-79.

38 *Jirga* is an important part of the Pakhtun social structure but I will not describe it in detail firstly because it falls outside the scope of my study and secondly because in Munjai, *jirga’s* influence has declined (not very much though) over the period of time because of the existence of state courts and judicial system in Dir and thirdly because I was not allowed to sit in a few *jirgas*, each time because of the ‘sensitivity’ of the issues for
The prototype in Afghanistan, the jirga, is the product of Pashtun tribal society and operates according to the dictates of the pashtunwali, an inclusive code of conduct guiding all aspects of Pashtun behaviour and often superseding the dictates of both Islam and the central government. Thus, in the tribal Pashtun areas, local jirga settles (nearly) all issues, unless assistance is requested from another tribe or the government.


The jirga members are usually the people who are well known for their doing pukhto. These are the people who have wider social networks. Jirga members try to make decisions acceptable to all the participants and such decisions are often considered to be in the best interests of the people (Kakar 2004: 2-4)

During my fieldwork I observed that almost all of the jirga members were also active in gham khadee. Gham khadee which is so important that even the village mullah, who is also part of most of the jirgas\(^9\) in Munjai, is also required to be active in gham khadee, otherwise he may not be able to sit as a jirga member.

Calling badal ‘the virtue of Pakhtun men’ is nothing more than a simplistic explanation of badal, which leads to wrong assumptions, because “badal is a complex system of exchange, of which blood revenge is only one part” (Grima 2004: 72). This thesis explores badal in two ways a) how it is practised through revenge killing and b) how badal is practised during gham khadee occasions through reciprocal visits or participation, and through cooperation by arranging meals and helping relatives and friends in other ways. It is badal that mainly guides the gham khadee relationships, as one of the villagers said during an informal chat: “Gham khadee is all about badal, you come to mine and I come to your’s, but if you don’t come to mine, I will never come to your’s because this is what pukhto demands”. The

\(^9\) Though the Pukhto word for plural of Jirga is jirgai but for the purpose of convenience, I am using ‘s’ at the end of the word which denotes plural of Jirga.
remarks of the villager clearly indicate that *gham khadee* is done purely on the basis of *badal*.

**Melmastya**

The giving of hospitality to the guest is a national point of honour, so much so that the reproach to an inhospitable man is that he is devoid of Pakhto, a creature of contempt.

*(Caroe 1958: 351)*

*Melmastya* not only means the provision of food and lodging to friends, strangers *(Barth 1969: 120-121)* as well as enemies *(Spain 1962: 47)* but it may include giving gifts *(Kakar 2004: 4)* and serving food which may help create a political following *(Barth 1959: 77)*. The level of hospitality depends on the financial status of a person, as Spain *(1962: 47)* notes:

> The lavishness of the hospitality varies according to the circumstances of the host. A poor villager will offer tea and stew up a few pieces of goat-meat. A wealthy chief will place his house and retainers at the guest’s disposal and feast him with a whole sheep.

*Melmastya* serves as a means to increase one’s social network *(Kakar 2004: 4)*. This was validated during the fieldwork when I observed people having huge social networks and one of the reasons would be their ability to deliver *melmastya*.

Food must also be offered even to a stranger passing near one’s home at the time of lunch or dinner. The host is responsible for the security of the guest, while the guest is supposed to respect the authority and sovereignty of the host over the property and the persons *(Barth 1969: 120-121)*. Barth (ibid) considers the host-guest statuses as “reversible and reciprocal”, and calls *melmastya* an “idiom of equality and alliance between parties”. The reversible position of the host-guest relationship means that the host of today may be the guest of tomorrow *(Rome 2006: 4)*.

Rome (ibid) mentions a *Pukhto* saying:

> *Pukhtun khpalah dodai da bal pah koor khwri*
Pukhtun eats his own food at other's home.

The saying points to the reciprocal nature of *melmastya* among the Pakhtuns.

In a similar way when the host-guest statuses are not reversible, that is, when only one person provides the other with food or other help it gives rise to a certain kind of dependence and political submission on the part of the guest (Barth 1969: 121). However, the ability to feed people and support them in matters of daily life helps the host gain authority and influence (Anderson 1978).

Besides provision of food and lodging, *melmastya* may include respect and care (Siddiqi & Benson, 2013). Rome (2006: 4) is of the view that an important aspect of *melmastya* is the “warmness with which the guest is received and the manner in which he is served, and not the food stuff served”.

I also observed a similar situation in Munjai where, besides food and lodging, a proper welcome and good-bye to the guest was of immense importance. A guest should be received in the proper way, that is, by standing from one’s seat when a new person enters the *hujra* and leading a person up to the door of the *hujra* when one leaves. Such behaviour shows respect and care. An old villager in Munjai discontinued his *gham khadee* with a local politician who did not welcome him in the proper way, “he did not stand from his seat and he shook only one hand with me” said the old villager.\(^4^0\) Considering it an act against his honour the villager discontinued visiting him and said, “He does not know how to treat a guest and to deliver hospitality”. So, whenever *melmastya* is discussed it must be kept in mind that it is more than provision of food and lodging, contrary to what is portrayed in most of the literature.

*Hujra* is the centre where *melmastya* is delivered. It serves as a site of socialisation, hospitality, politics, and decision making. Most of the information for this research has been gathered in different *hujras*\(^4^1\) in Munjai.

\(^{40}\) Shaking both hands is a sign of respect and young men are particularly taught to shake both hands when meeting elders.

\(^{41}\) The plural of *hujra* in Pukhto is *hujrai*, however, for the purpose of convenience, I have added ‘s’ to the word *hujra* which denotes the plural.
A difference from previous ethnographic studies is how this research focuses, particularly on *gham khadee* occasions, how *melmastya* is delivered to visitors, what role *melmastya* plays during *gham khadee* and what happens if one fails to come up to the expectations of the visitors.

Another form of *melmastya* is *nanawate*. *Nanawate*, which literally means ‘coming in’, is an extension of the idea of *melmastya* and is an extreme level of *melmastya* (Caroe 1958: 351). In *nanawate* the wrongdoer throws himself on the mercy of the other party, admits his mistake, and expresses shame, it is imperative for the host to forgive the wrongdoer (Rome 2006: 10).

**Tarburwali**

*Tarburwali* refers to cousin rivalry. The word *tarbur* is a reference to father’s brother’s son (Lindholm 2008: 181) and the word *wali*, as mentioned above loosely refers to the English suffix -hood or -ness. *Tarburwali* denotes enmity (Ahmed 1980: 182), rivalry, and competition among the cousins. A *tarbur* is one’s “closest neighbour, nearest relative and major rival” (Lindholm 2008: 181).

Among the Pakhtuns, it is cousins who defend and protect each other against any external threats, but at the same time it is the struggle for family power and influence which results in rivalry (Rome 2006: 14).

Landholding is a main reason of rivalry among the *tarburs*, but, besides landholding a *tarbur* is a rival and contender for authority and power (Christensen 1982: 34). A person who does not have a *tarbur* could be more vulnerable to assaults from outsiders as well as distant relatives as he may not have the strength to stand against the threats. In a similar way, a *tarbur* could be an enemy as well as a reliable supporter, who not only provokes jealousy but also evokes pride and confidence (Lindholm 1996: 53) by providing strength and support at times of crisis.

*Tarburwali* can be explained by the following saying;

> I against my brothers, my brothers and I against our cousins, my cousins, my brothers, and I against the world.

(Lindholm 2008: 181-182)
Gham khadee being the main focus of this research, I show how within gham khadee participation tarburwali is practised, how gham khadee affects tarburwali, and vice versa.

**Khegada**

As discussed above, each letter in the word Pakhtun (پبنتون) defines the characteristics a Pakhtun must have. The “kh” in Pakhtun means khegada or doing good with people. This feature of Pakhtunwali is least discussed. Khegada is at times the reason why people cooperate with each other. Khegada is done especially with people who are in need of help and are unable to cope with a situation on their own. Such khegada does not necessarily give rise to any reciprocal expectations, however, the receiver of khegada is the one who remains thankful to those who helps them. Khegada is both part of pukhto as well as the Islamic teachings. Islamic teaching asks its followers to help their relatives, neighbours and friends.

Both Islam and pukhto demands khegada particularly during the gham khadee occasions especially for the first three days during the occasion of death. Similarly, pukhto requires the Pakhtuns to do khegada with one’s relatives, friends and neighbours especially during hard times.

During my fieldwork I also observed that the features of Pakhtunwali such as badal, melmastya, tarburwali and khegada were emphasized as part of Pakhtunwali. However unlike others, I found that it was mainly during gham khadee occasions that all the tenets were practised, observed and discussed. It was gham khadee that came up as the most prominent feature where the tenets of Pakhtunwali were frequently observed, assessed and discussed. It was gham khadee participation and cooperation that would label someone as a good Pakhtun or a bad Pakhtun. Also it was gham khadee relations that would build up the profile of politicians and hence would ensure their success in local as well as regional politics.

**Gham khadee as an expression of doing pukhto**

Following Ahmed (2008), I agree with her and carry forward her argument, that participation in sorrows and joys gham khadee is the most salient and visible feature of
contemporary Pakhtunwali especially in the settled areas. In the settled areas, people are under pressure to lead their lives according to the state’s prescribed laws and to resolve their issues through the government’s institutions such as the police, and courts (Ahmed 1980: 3). This leaves little space for individuals to avenge any wrongdoings especially to take violent badal, which is the most important tenet of Pakhtunwali in order to restore honour. I am not arguing that the state laws have completely wiped away the concept of badal among Pakhtuns in the settled areas; however, the rate of violent badal (revenge involving killing) has significantly decreased. In addition the violent badal is fast being replaced by non-violent badal in the form of reciprocal visits and cooperation at gham khadee and in other matters that rarely lead to death, enmity and destruction.

The gradual transformation of these tenets of Pakhtunwali does not mean that Pakhtunwali is on the verge of disappearing; rather it is evolving into a new form. Thus, during any gham khadee events the Pakhtunwali tenets are enacted in different ways. It is the reciprocal participation and cooperation with one’s friends, relatives, and other villagers that makes an individual a good Pakhtun.

I am not arguing that gham khadee is a recent or a new phenomenon in Pakhtun society; but my point is that it was overlooked by the anthropologists who worked among the Pakhtuns (Ahmed 1980; Barth 1959; Lindholm 1982), maybe because other tenets of Pakhtunwali were more dominant in their respective times and places of fieldwork. Lindholm (1982: 134) superficially talks about gham khadee relations among the people of Swat but failed to link gham khadee to Pakhtunwali. Similarly Barth (1959: 40-41) considers gham khadee relationships as an important part of the factional politics in Swat, and in his view, performing gham khadee with one’s affines holds “great political value”. Barth’s analysis also does not provide a detailed description of gham khadee.

One more reason why researchers have overlooked gham khadee’s importance could be that all these researchers were ‘outsiders’ and hence had no obligation to carry out gham khadee. A similar situation is described by Grima (2004: 107) whose position as an outsider did not bind her with the obligation to participate necessarily in the gham khadee occasions

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42 Revealed by the villagers in different conversations.
43 Badal in Pakhtun society is used in a number of ways for example for exchange, change, revenge, or reciprocity.
or to participate in *gham khadee* networks of the other women, and hence she would not necessarily be informed or invited to different *gham khadee* events. My position in my own community in Munjai was different than that of Grima, I would get information about almost every *gham khadee* (*gham* in particular) event and was obliged to participate because of being a native adult.

Grima (2004) took the lead and through her work shows how Pakhtun women do *pukhto* through the performance of *gham khadee*. She writes that the concept of doing *pukhto* among women varies from that of Pakhtun men’s understanding and performance of the term. Grima’s work mainly focuses on *gham* and the ways in which women’s performance of *pukhto* is linked to the fulfillment of certain “emotions of sadness, grief and suffering in appropriate contexts” (ibid: 2).

Amineh Ahmed (2008) also wrote about *gham khadee* as an important part of *Pakhtunwali* in her work. She has researched *gham khadee* in detail and has linked it to *Pakhtunwali*, but she only focused on the perspectives of the women. She analysed the *gham khadee* of the women of the two royal families of Swat and Mardan.

The present work pioneers researching men’s *gham khadee* and how *pukhto* is done through such performances. During my fieldwork, I observed that in order to understand *Pakhtunwali* we must understand that *gham khadee* is an integral part of it, or *gham khadee* is the main occasion where *Pakhtunwali*’s tenets are practised.

In the past a man would acquire Pakhtunness by his display of manliness through taking *badal*, which would often involve beating or killing one’s opponent/s or rival/s who had caused damage to one’s honour. Today in order to acquire Pakhtunness, in addition to taking *badal*, people must actively participate in *gham khadee* events. Doing *pukhto* through taking revenge is still practised and is linked to the Pakhtunness of a person but *gham khadee* participation overweighs any such behaviour. I will show in my thesis how *gham khadee* makes people good Pakhtuns and how this status of a good Pakhtun is maintained by the people in the midst of constant contestation and observation where people are sharply observing each other’s actions and quickly link it to *pukhto*.

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44 For women and Pakhtunwali also see Khan, A.W. (2014).
I will also write about the importance of gham khadee in the context of enmity or temporary suspension of ties (both are very common among the Pakhtuns). I will show how people who are involved in enmity or have suspended ties, do pukhto with each other if a gham khadee event occurs, and how other people analyse their pukhto.

**Thesis outline**

Chapter two is divided into two sections. The first section discusses my initial plans, the reasons and factors that changed my initial plans, the reasons why I chose Munjai, my different positions as a researcher and the advantages as well as disadvantages of working in a native environment. I also write about the problems that I faced during my fieldwork. The chapter further discusses the methods through which data was collected. The second section discusses a short history of Dir. Later in the chapter I discuss Lower Dir followed by a detailed discussion on Munjai, the village where I conducted my fieldwork. I also provide brief information about the dress and food patterns and the routine activities of the villagers. The section also discusses the sources of income and social organisation.

Chapter three has two sections. The first section demonstrates how pukhto is done in a violent way i.e. through badal (revenge killing). Revenge is taken (pukhto is done) in order to restore honour. Through a number of case studies, I show how people interpret doing pukhto in multiple ways. Later in the second section of the chapter, I show how through ways other than revenge killing people restore their honour even in cases involving tor (adultery). Cases related to women are considered as extremely sensitive and any inability to take revenge is synonymous to loss of honour, but, interestingly and contrary to the existing literature, extensive gham khadee participation can help regain the lost honour.

Continuing my argument from Chapter three where I show that gham khadee is the most salient feature of Pakhtunwali, in Chapter Four I introduce gham khadee in detail. I discuss its importance in everyday life, who carries gham khadee and with whom and different categories of gham khadee events.

Chapter five discusses the Pakhtunwali tenets of badal and melmastya. I show through a number of case studies how badal and melmastya are practised in non-violent ways i.e. gham khadee and how they satisfy the Pakhtun concept of badal. The first section shows
how *badal* is practised through participation, late participation and non-participation in the *gham khadee* of others. The following section shows how people cooperate with each other during *gham khadee* occasions and how *melmastya* is practised as well as assessed during such occasions. The third section of this chapter discusses how *Pakhtunwali* and Islam, the two important identity markers among the Pakhtuns interplay during the *gham khadee* occasions.

Chapter six shows how within *gham khadee* participation *tarburwali* is practised, and how through *khegada* and *gham khadee* political support is gained. I briefly discuss through a few examples the importance of *gham khadee* for the politicians belonging to other areas of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Through the case study of a local politician, I show how *tarburwali* is practised in today’s Pakhtun society and how through *gham khadee* and *khegada* people’s support could be won, influence could be increased and honour could be gained. All these are considered as part of doing *pukhto* and helps one become a good Pakhtun.

By giving a first-hand account of *Pakhtunwali*, this thesis shows that an ethnographically detailed account of a Pakhtun village can re-shape our ideas about *Pakhtunwali*, which has so far been presented as a violent code.
Chapter 2 (a) - Methodology

This research is based on an ethnographic study of Munjai Village in the Lower Dir District of Pakistan. In this chapter, I explain my initial plans, and the factors that resulted in the change of the plans. This chapter also explains the rationale behind selecting Munjai as a field site, and the advantages and disadvantages of being a native. The chapter further discusses the methods through which data was collected. The fieldwork was conducted in two phases; the first in March 2010 until July 2010 and the second, from October 2010 until July 2011.

Map 2: Map of Pakistan with its provinces (Source: www.mapsofworld.com)
I will discuss why it was practically feasible to carry out the fieldwork in the village because of my personal contacts. Later, I will discuss the methods which I used to collect data. While discussing these methods, I will also highlight my “positionality” (Gupta and Ferguson 1997:
38) along with the choice of particular methods and explain the obstacles and the hurdles to my work. This chapter briefly introduces the pre-fieldwork plans, the changes and the factors that made me change the initial plans. This chapter also discusses the advantages and the disadvantages of being a ‘native’ in Munjai.

At the end of this chapter, I discuss some constraints that I encountered during the fieldwork and will explain how my personal insight into Pakhtun culture and knowledge of the area helped me overcome these problems.

The Initial plans

Drawing on the already existing literature (Ahmed 1976, 1980; Barth 1959; Lindholm 1982; Banerjee 2000; Amineh 2006; Grima 2004) on Pakhtuns of Pakistan, I went to the field with the aim of researching Pakhtunwali in a remote area. Following Akbar Ahmed’s (1980) findings that Pakhtunwali could be practised in the “purest form” in the areas where the state’s laws have minimum influence. For that reason, initially, I planned to conduct the fieldwork in the Landi Kotal area of Khyber agency, which comes under the FATA. The worsening security situation, because of the fight between security forces and the Taliban, however, forced me to change my plans.

After this I planned to conduct my research in Sharingal, which is an area in the Upper Dir District. Though, it is not a tribal area and hence the state’s laws are extended to Sharingal, the area is remote and is very close to the tribal areas in its socio-economic and living conditions. For the purpose of my fieldwork, I contacted a friend who is from Sharingal. He happily accepted my request and assured me of his help during my fieldwork.

As the time for fieldwork came closer, the security situation in Dir district also worsened because of the conflict between the security forces and the Taliban. Therefore, I had to

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45 Taliban is the plural of Talib which is an Arabic word and means someone seeking religious knowledge, in Pukhto language it is used for ‘student’ (Ghufran 2009).

46 The Taliban group operating in Pakistan is known as Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and has carried out a number of attacks on Pakistani military, civilians, mosques, social, cultural, political and religious gatherings. Such violent attacks are justified as a way to bring shariat (Islamic system) to the country. The Taliban movement is mostly comprised of the Pakhtuns, both in Pakistan and in Afghanistan. When I was in Dir for fieldwork, it was the time when the Pakistani military launched an operation against the Taliban in the neighboring Swat district. Being the bordering district many militants fled to Dir, where they took refuge with the Taliban from Dir, which resulted in conflict between the security forces and Taliban in this area.
change my mind and look for another locale, even though my friend in Sharingal still wanted me to do my fieldwork there I had to abandon the plan.

Choosing Munjai

Due to the volatile security situation, I had to change all my initial plans. I opted for Munjai, which is also my ancestral village. Abandoning my initial plans of looking at ‘the purest form of Pakhtunwali’, as I was no longer researching either a tribal village or a remote village; I now wanted to look at the contemporary form in which Pakhtunwali operates under the “severe constraints of an encapsulated situation implying different jural and administrative sanctions” (Ahmed 1980: 3).

My khanadan still lived in Munjai. In 1999 we (my parents, siblings and me) migrated from Munjai to Peshawar, the capital of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province. Though we relocated to Peshawar, we would still visit the village for both the Eids, because these are the occasions when all the relatives come to the village and visit each other. In addition to Eid, my parents would pay regular visits to the village for participation in gham khadee occasions, my father being a government servant would take leave from his job for a day or two and would attend these events. At home in Peshawar we were constantly lectured by our parents on the importance of staying in touch with the village. We would be told that though we have moved to Peshawar our ‘real home’ is Munjai because of our relatives, and the relationships of gham khadee with them. Such lectures made little sense at that time but I realized its importance once I was grown up. Topics such as changes in the village.

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47 In Munjai the word khanadan is used in two ways i.e a) when referring to an extended family and b) when referring to qom (Qom means a descent group sharing a common paternal line). I will use the word khanadan specifically for the patrilineal descent group throughout my thesis because of its extensive use in Munjai. For example, in Munjai, Shenwari is the name of a khanadan sometimes referred to as qom and is made up of several extended families and all the members of the khanadan trace their descent to a common ancestor named Mehmood.

48 The Muslim celebration twice a year, once after the month of fasting and the second one after around two months from the first one.

49 When they would go for a gham khadee occasion, they would not take us with them because a) I and my other siblings were too young to participate in gham khadee occasions and b) because we would be busy in our studies.

50 I was told that one must stay in contact with one’s relatives as well as with non-relative villagers because it is those people who stand by you during hard times.
land, *gham khadee*, remittances, and honour would be discussed extensively during the discussion of the elders during the fieldwork.

In a similar way we would be told about the past of our forefathers who were the landowning chiefs of the village and their influence. Our forefathers would be depicted as the powerful men in the village and in the surrounding villages and stories about factional politics would be recounted to us. We would be told how *tarburwali* would be carried out in the past. At the same time we would also be told not to live in the past because the land, sign of honour and prestige, which was once owned by our *khanadan* has mostly been sold and now the only way to maintain our ‘honour’ is through education.⁵¹ This is because, now, after earning money through migration ‘others’ own land (sign of prestige, previously held by Shenwaris, the family I belong to) too. Such lectures also made us develop a sense of ‘we’ and ‘them’ (Shenwaris and non-Shenwaris) since our school days and in a similar way we would be told about ‘we’ and ‘we’ (Shenwari and Shenwari), which would refer to the competition within the family especially in education, ownership of land and jobs.

Besides the taught importance of our connection with the village, my Job at the University of Malakand also made me connect to the village life more than I had previously. I moved to take up the post in 2007, after I had been living in the Pakistani capital, Islamabad, both for work and for studies for around four years. After I assumed the post at the university, which happens to be in the same district as Munjai, I would be visited by the villagers (relatives and non-relatives) as well as by people of the surrounding villages for one or other type of work in the university. Some of the people would come through a recommendation (usually a telephone call) from my father, uncle/s, or another relative. Such recommendations are one of the ways to get one’s job done. I would be told to do my best to solve the issues of the visitors. The issues would often be related to the passing of failed papers or helping people in getting a university admission if the candidate did not have enough marks. My Job would be to expedite the submission of admission forms and to follow up their progress. Even if the candidate did not have enough marks I would still be asked to get them admitted.

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⁵¹ The status of chief required delivering hospitality in the *hujra*. The land owners would rarely work as migrants in the Gulf because it was considered as a job unsuitable for their prestige and position. Now for the sake of maintenance of honour the chiefs would sell their lands and the landless people in the village earned money through migration so they were in a position to buy land and gain honour. They acquired honour by buying land while the chiefs were busy maintaining their honour through selling land and delivering hospitality.
and any failure to help them would result in them labeling me as a *bekara sadai* (useless man). Such cooperation with villagers can broadly be categorized under the theme of *khegada*, (doing good) with others and *kaliwali* (being villagers), which require one to assist villagers whenever they need help and both are considered as parts of doing *gham khadee*.

The idea behind choosing Munjai as my field site helped me because I was an ‘insider’ and had relatives and other contacts within the village. Another reason why I was interested in Munjai was the ease of doing fieldwork amid the volatile security situation in the region, which made it almost impossible for me to conduct research in any other area. Munjai is also the head of the electoral ward and is considered to be a politically important village in the area.

Another reason for choosing Munjai was the emergence of the *nawi maldara* (new rich) class, who mostly became rich in the last two to three decades after migrating to the Gulf countries, mainly Saudi Arabia, and UAE. The impacts of the remittances earned by the migrants are visible in Munjai in the form of new houses, ownership of land and cars, an increasing trend of education among the youth, and increased participation in *gham khadee* because it requires financial means to carry *gham khadee* with people.

During the first phase of my fieldwork I gathered some general information about the village, and its inhabitants. I told the villagers about my fieldwork and almost all of them were happy to assist me. The idea of conducting the fieldwork in two phases was helpful because I got time to go away from the field and work on my notes. I was able to identify a number of themes when I came back to London. While in London, I wrote about the village in general, its people, and a few more events.

While I was in London (after conducting the first phase of my fieldwork), Pakistan was hit by severe floods and Dir district was one of the most affected areas. The floods damaged properties throughout the district including Munjai, the communication system was badly disrupted, most of the bridges of the area were flooded and people faced severe communication problems. The bridge that connected Munjai to the main road was also flooded and villagers had to go through an alternative route from Timergara, which took them more than an hour to reach the village, in comparison to the normal time of twenty

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52 Some elders said this to my face after I was unable to get their work done.
minutes. I was unable to contact anyone in Munjai at that time and I was informed by my family and friends from Peshawar about the situation there. The devastations of the floods especially the damage to the lands, which is a sign of prestige and a symbol of being a Pakhtun made me become anxious about the second phase of my fieldwork. Therefore, I planned my second visit to the field, which was after a three month break.

When I went back to Munjai for the second part of my fieldwork, the devastation was distinctly apparent. The entire map of the cultivable land in Munjai had changed and according to the local people around 60% of it had been flooded.\(^{53}\)

During the fieldwork, I lived and spent most of my time with Iftikhar\(^ {54}\) at his hujra. He acted both as my host and my key informant. The reasons why I chose Iftikhar as my key informant was that he was a very knowledgeable person and had an excellent understanding of village matters. Iftikhar had *taluq* (friendship) with all the elders belonging to different families, with his *taluq* Iftikhar helped me identify and approach key informants among the other two groups of the village: Pukhtana and ghareeban. He was also a *jirga* member. He is working locally for the government and that is why he stayed in the village most of the time.

Iftikhar was also the *zimawar* (responsible elder who represents his household during *gham khadee* occasions) of his household’s *gham khadee*. For that reason he was an active participant in *gham khadee* occasions within Munjai and beyond.

Despite having the option of stating at my paternal uncle’s house I preferred staying at Iftikhar’s house for most of the time during my fieldwork because his *hujra* was a place where I would be able to interact with a number of people from the village. His *hujra* was one of the few functional *hujras* in the village, where other *hujras* were either locked because the owners were living as migrants in the cities or, after the formation of more and more nuclear families, *hujras* were converted into houses.

Another advantage of staying at his place was because of a very knowledgeable man called Shah who is in his 60’s. Shah lost his eyesight due to drinking of toxic alcohol in a Gulf country where he was working as a migrant, and was one of the pioneer migrants in Munjai.

\(^{53}\) It was said by many people of the village during different discussions.

\(^{54}\) He belongs to the Shenwari family and is my relative.
Though blind and limited to the *hujra*, Shah had a thorough knowledge of the village and its affairs. He had detailed knowledge of the village’s history, the land and would be aware of any *gham khadee* events within and outside Munjai. The reason why he would be aware of the village affairs was because many people in the village visited him to smoke hashish and cigarettes because he stayed in the *hujra* almost for the whole day and would be able to listen to the *elan* (announcements made on loudspeaker to inform the people about any event, mostly *gham* events). The people who visited him were mostly from ghareeban, so he would help me to get access to information on other families as well.

Interestingly, Shah would explain things in such a fascinating way that at times I would be surprised by his eloquence of explanation. He had a sharp memory and would know each and every thing that happened in the village and beyond. He would recognize people from their voices and would explain the exact physique of any of the people he knew. He remained unmarried and lived in the same *hujra* for about a decade. He preferred living in the *hurja* because he could enjoy smoking hashish and cigarettes with others, whereas at home ‘outsiders’ would not be able to visit him. Another reason for him staying in the *hujra* was because his room collapsed after severe rains and hence he had no other place in his house where he could enjoy his privacy. He listened to the radio and besides news of the village he was well aware of national and international politics. I was lucky enough to have his company whenever I needed it.

Another of my informants was Dilawar, a knowledgeable person, he was recommended by iftikhar. Dilawar, a retired migrant had an excellent knowledge of the life within the village as well as being one of the pioneer migrants in Munjai. It was through him that I got a clear picture of the *musafari* (being abroad) and life under *musafari* as well as the *gham khadee* relationships people maintain outside the country. He was a *jirga* member as well.

In the ghareeban I had Nazeer as my key informant. Nazeer also had an excellent knowledge of village life. He had been a *musafar* in the past. He was representative of the ghareeban in different *jirgas* within the village and he also had a faction and was therefore a leader of ghareeban.
My positionality in the field

Doing research in one’s own country and area has a particular significance in anthropology, given the discipline’s history and development over time. It is known as “anthropology at home”.

The local people in Munjai saw me in three different ways: for some villagers, I was a native of the village and was well aware of the village life, for others, I was a *melma* (guest) from Peshawar, while for others I was a perfect stranger coming from London. From the latter’s point of view, because I lived in London, they believed I was not well informed about the village and its environment.

My status, depending on how I was viewed, would always have effects on my data collection. For example for those who considered me a native would not give me much details on different topics, as they thought that I already knew all the things about the village such as when I inquired about an issue they would say, “It’s all very simple and you know it very well, so why are you bothering us?” or by saying “Why do you ask these? You know it more than we know”. A similar attitude resulted in many topics where the conversation left out details. My status as a native did not help me gain access to the women of the households. Also, I was very conscious of the fact that I must not discuss women with the men because most of the men who I interacted with were elders and it is considered as against the etiquette to a) ask too many questions from an elder b) discuss women.

For others I was a ‘*melma*’ from Peshawar. I would often face criticism because of living in the city and leaving behind the village of my forefathers. For some people being a Pakhtun means anyone who resides on his ancestral land and possesses the qualities of doing *pukhto* and speaking *Pukhto*. For some of them I had lost the status of being a Pakhtun for a) not living on ancestral lands b) celebrating the joys in Peshawar and sorrows in Munjai and c)

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55 My own wedding ceremony was in Peshawar, and we did not invite all the people from the village, however, we invited the nearest ones. If the wedding had been in Munjai, we would have had to invite a large number of people. In their opinion we acted like ‘misers’ by saving money and being a miser is the opposite to a hospitable person and hospitality is an important tenet of *Pukhto*.

56 Death is the peak of *gham* or sorrow and any dead person is brought back to Munjai and buried there, people believe that the dead must be buried in the ancestral graveyard, because it keeps their name alive even after death and people visit the graves even decades after death.
not being able to attend each and every event of sorrows and joys. This criticism would often take the form of a paighor (taunt) and I would often hear some villagers saying;

“If you won’t live in the village, you won’t know anything about pukhto and Pakhtunwali and the village’s ways of life”.

I even heard some people calling me nimcha Pakhtun (half Pakhtun), which refers to a person who follows some tenets of pukhto and does not follow others for example my speaking of the Pukhto language is one sign of my Pakhtunness, but at the same time my failure to attend each and every gham khadee event in Munjai is seen as against pukhto. Those who combine pukhto and anti pukhto qualities are considered as half Pakhtuns. The issue of multiplex identities has also been discussed by Narayan (1993) who is of the view that such identities could mark one as native as well as a non-native or even “halfies” (Abu lughod 1991 cited in Narayan 1993: 673).

My third identity in the field was that of a complete stranger who left the village for Peshawar more than a decade ago and then left Peshawar for London. Rather than answering my questions such people would ask me questions about England (‘England’ is locally used instead of United Kingdom), English girls and money, and they would expect a detailed answer from me.

**Collection of information**

Information was mostly collected through participant observation, informal discussions, and unstructured interviews. Through participant observation I was able to observe and notice the different interactions among the villagers. It was my belonging to the village of Munjai and my participation in different events of gham khadee, going to mosque for prayers, going on evening walks with the villagers, and sitting in hujras with people of different ages, backgrounds and families, who helped me to conduct this research with a native insight.

In terms of data collection, any informal discussion was more productive than a formal one. By informal, I mean any meeting/gathering/interview which was not pre-planned and the respondents yielded more data because they felt free to communicate. Whereas in any formal (pre-planned) one the respondents would worry more about the collection of the words they would say and would constantly look at my notebook or they would ask me to
turn off the audio recorder in case they might say something inappropriate/sensitive and it become public.

The more time I spent in Munjai, the more the flow of data increased. I realized that I needed to spend more and more time in the field. With the passage of time I discovered that it was the old men who had an excellent picture of the village’s past and who were very informative on many topics, Pakhtunwali being the main one. The young boys were found to be less informative on topics of interest for this study.

The best time to have a detailed discussion with the old men was during the morning before noon when they would mostly come out to the shops and would either read newspapers, listen to the radio or chat with other men. They would discuss a variety of topics; they would always look for attentive listeners, and they posed sharp questions by asking me many questions about the UK and angrezan (English people).

Similarly the evening walk towards the river bank would be an ideal time to communicate with the young boys. While the middle aged men who happened to be busy in their jobs or businesses during the day would mostly be available to talk to after the sunset.

Every villager wanted to present himself as better Pakhtun than the others and they wanted me to write more good things about them and criticise their rivals, if any. They would want me to write about things that interested them, for example, once a politician asked me to write about his life, likes and dislikes and he even wanted, and rather stressed, that he wanted me to write about the benefits of the local government system which was the one from which he benefitted (became famous) and became a counselor.

**Participant observation**

Participant observation, which is considered to be the foundation and central method in anthropological field work (Bernard 2006: 342; Dewalt & Wayland 1998: 259) was one of the main methods used to collect information during my field work.

When I started the second phase of my field work it took me around one month to become a “participant observer”; earlier I would more often find myself to be a “complete participant” (Bernard 2006: 347). After overcoming the initial problems of being a complete
participant, the flow of information increased. This complete participation was one of the disadvantages of working in a native environment.

In order to gather good quality information, I used to socialise with the villagers, attend different gham khadee events, go to the mosque as many times as I could, and sit in the hujra for as long as possible. Presence at all these occasions was very helpful for collecting information.

Though I collected most of the information through participant observation, I also relied on unstructured interviews. Using both of these methods helped me to cross-check the information I gathered.

I also conducted unstructured interviews with people of different familial and socio-economic backgrounds. I gathered a significant amount of information from the men sitting in Iftikhar’s hujra. The striking feature of their company was their regular sitting at least once during a day. Their regular presence in the hujra was always beneficial and I would be able to keep myself updated through them. Consistent with local etiquette I would not participate very much in the discussions with them, and hence it would give me a chance to sit silently and observe their conversations and interactions. If I wanted to ask questions or gather more detailed information on any discussed topic, I would ask about it when I could find an opportunity to speak privately with one of the elders. This way, I was able to obtain more detailed information on the topic.

Similarly, I would talk to the elders, who sit in the village shops during the day, as they do not work and are free most of the time. Conversation with them helped me get some glimpses of the past.

Besides these methods I also used historical documents, such as magazines, and government reports.

The flow of information did not stop with the winding up of my fieldwork. After coming back to the UK, I have been in constant contact with the villagers, as a means to maintain the quality of a good Pakhtun and also to keep myself updated about the events in the village. My phone calls have made my informants happy because any long distance call signifies the importance of the person who is called and being remembered in musafari (being abroad).
The advantages and disadvantages of anthropology at home

In my own view I was a native working in my own village but the respondents saw me as being, to some extent, an outsider. It was only after spending more and more time and interacting with the local people, that I realised that it was only the respondents themselves who could grant me status in their community (Colic-Peisker 2004: 85 in Hume, L. & Mulcock, J. (eds.)).

My positionality as a native of Munjai was advantageous and had some hindrances too. The advantages included that it was easy for me to access anyone in the village be it a mullah, a politician, a government official, a migrant or a farmer because of kaliwali (belonging to the same village). Kaliwali, requires the people belonging to the same village to cooperate with each other in different matters of daily life, which is the essence of the village life. In addition people appreciate those people who help the fellow villagers in one way or the other, which would oblige me to reciprocate the help I received from villagers and a failure to reciprocate would make me a ‘non-cooperative’ or a ‘less able’ person. This would result in the unhappiness of the people, and I would feel their un-happiness when trying to interact with them.

Being my ancestral village where I was brought up, I had no problem to access the different patterns of life in Munjai. My stay was also facilitated by the fact of my knowledge of the Pukhto language, my first language in fact. Also, I wore the traditional shalwar kameez throughout my stay in the village and followed the local traditions, such as standing in respect for an elder or paying salam on entry to any new place.

One of the exceptions from my investigations was the lives of the women, who are supposed to be kept away from the sight of any ‘outsider’57, and if a villager gives access to the women of the household to a male outsider it results in a loss of his earned izzat. I started participating in activities of the village, especially prayers in the mosque and taking evening walks. In both instances, I had the opportunity to build rapport with the villagers.

However, my position as a native helped me obtain detailed information about the conflicts that emerged because of the illicit sexual relations between some men and women. It

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57 ‘Outsider’ means non-family members as well as distant relatives with whom people do not visit.
would have been hard for any ‘outsider’ to get the information especially related to women because such topics are considered to be sensitive and their mere discussion could lead to serious conflicts.

I had no problem in choosing my key informants. I was helped by Iftikhar in choosing them. He kept in mind the depth of their knowledge about the village and village life. I also chose them keeping in mind their availability in the village, therefore, I chose those who would be in the village for most of the time and were readily available. The second thing I kept in mind when choosing them was their influence within the village, because an un-influential person (also known as ‘man of no worth’) is not considered as a much respected person and, therefore, cannot help one gain access to information from the other influential persons. Also such less influential persons are considered to be people who lack the basic quality of *hujra-jumaat*.

It was difficult to talk about homosexuality at first then it was difficult to find out the passive homosexuals and having any type of formal or informal communication with them might have seriously damaged my reputation as a respectable person (being a teacher is considered as one of the respectable Jobs by the villagers). I was careful in preserving my own reputation and had to keep away from the company of such ‘bad boys’, because the elders who were the main source of my data collection might not have been very welcoming towards my research and my constant questioning had they found out that I had connections with the bad boys.

Even such discussions with the passive homosexuals would be made at such a time and place that not many people would come to know. When I first asked some of the young villagers about arranging my meeting with some passive homosexuals so that I could gather data from them, they suspected that I was interested in having sex with them. They would ask me in a humorous way as to which of them (pointing towards a few passive homosexuals) I liked. In order to avoid any such suspicion I would often arrange meetings with them in front of one or two of the young boys, the same boys who would have sexual relationships with the passive homosexuals. They would often be their trusted partners because a passive homosexual does not necessarily engage with many of the boys and men instead he may have a specific partner or a few partners.
Discussing homosexuality was also very sensitive both because of the nature of homosexuality itself, which is a sin in Islam, though it is not considered to be as bad in pukhto as it is considered in Islam, and because any such interest might have given the impression that I was interested in such a relationship with a passive homosexual.

Banerjee (2000: 39-41) also confirms the sensitivity of the topic but at the same time she considers it as something which has a traditional place among the young men. Banerjee further mentions that homosexuality is a way of disipating sexual frustration in the conservative Pakhtun society where mere contact with a woman is seen in the context of honour and revenge.

I was not able to sit in a jirga for quite some time during my fieldwork. It was only during the last few weeks that I was able to participate in a jirga, though I could only attend the first session of it because I had to return to London. I was assured twice, once by Iftikhar and for the second time by the village prayer leader of my participation in the hujra but on both occasions I was unable to participate in the jirgas because the parties in conflict did not want me to be present. Perhaps this was because they did not want me to know anything about their domestic matters or perhaps it was because I was seen as an ‘outsider’ from Peshawar or London.

Another problem that I came across during my research was that the people of Munjai did not understand my position as a researcher staying with them for a long period. They considered that staying with them for one or two days would be enough to record their values and culture and some would consider my work as ‘rubbish’ and a ‘waste of time’. It did not make sense for them that I was doing long-term research on a small village that happened to be my ancestral village.

Without understanding the intentions behind my questions, people would also taunt me for my lack of information on certain basic topics for example when I asked them about their opinions about what they believe to be pukhto? I would be laughed at and my Pakhtunness would be sometimes questioned. My lack of knowledge about pukhto would be blamed on my living in the city and sometimes I would even be asked how I could do a PhD if I do not even know what pukhto is?
Many would ask me why I did not choose another country (USA or a European country) for my research where, besides doing the research, I would have travelled and might have become a citizen there.

The Shenwaris (my family members) wanted me to write more about them, and more on their past life when they were the chiefs of the village and not to write any stories where their collective or individual pukhto was at stake.

Sometimes in the middle of discussions a newcomer would pop in without caring for what we were discussing. Our discussion would either end up without any conclusion or the newcomer, without being asked, would start sharing his ideas and would cause a mix up of the ideas of the earlier discussion, hence leading the discussion to nowhere.

Similarly, most of my informants would not be very punctual and would not arrive at the meetings in time. Once I had to interview Hayat and he came two hours after the scheduled time, as soon as he arrived I said to him “You got here very late” and he simply replied:

“Brother, it is Pakistani time, you must not compare me with the English. They don’t have any life, so they do things in time. I had to meet three more people on way and I was stopped by one of them for lunch. What could I have done? And it’s not very late just a couple of hours but you must have enjoyed the scenery. Come on, you need some time to enjoy nature; you will miss it after you go back.”

It was not the only time that it happened. I faced similar situations many times but each time people would offer excuses and in some cases the respondent would not even come and later they would just tell me “I was sleeping” or “I was very busy”.

My family background, though, helped me a lot during my fieldwork but it also proved to be disadvantageous at certain times. For example, once I went to see a man belonging to the ghareeban (the poor) and I was supposed to see him after the afternoon prayer. I went to his hujra and as I was about to enter the main hall and I could hear him talking to his friend against my grandfather. I stood outside the room and was able to listen to him clearly and, according to him, my grandfather had beaten him in the past because this man had stolen oranges from our orchard. The man further said, “I am not going to tell him anything true, I
will take my revenge by giving him false information, so that whatever he is doing will be wrong”. When I talked to him I found out that some of the information he gave me was wrong, because I cross checked it with other people.

Similarly, on another occasion when I was going on an evening walk with a man named Asad, belonging to the Pukhtana family, he was very helpful and was well informed about various village matters. I came across Ibrar, one of my elder relatives, and when he saw me walking with Asad, Ibrar asked me to accompany him for an important job. I said ‘good bye’ to Asad and joined Ibrar. After walking for a few minutes I asked Ibrar “what it was that was important?”, with which he replied:

“There is no work as such, but you know we recently had an issue about land with his family and we don’t talk to them anymore, why were you walking with him.”

To this I replied:

“I was just asking him certain things about my research”

He said:

“How can he give you information about pukhto, when he does not have it, however you are losing your pukhto whilst walking with him, you are making us weak in front of him.”

After saying good bye to Asad, he never cooperated with me again and he would try to avoid me in different ways.

In both of these cases, and on a few other occasions, it was my family background that influenced my research. Because of the inter familial jealousies I was also unable to spend enough time with people belonging to other families both because of their unwillingness to give me time and because of the way some of my own relatives would stop me from

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58 It happened during different interactions with people from ‘other’ families that they would dodge me by pretending they were busy or unavailable. Once I called a villager belonging to Pukhtana family on his mobile, I was in a shop. When I called him he said he is in Timergara (town, 09 kilometers away), as soon as I ended the call, and went out of the shop, I saw him in the next shop. He was surprised to see me and the embarrassment on his face was visible. Later on I found that because of a land conflict with one of my relative he did not want to cooperate with me.
contacting them because ‘they’ were seen as lesser Pakhtuns compared to ‘us’ and hence unable to give me information mainly about *pukhto*. It was for this reason that I sometimes felt as if I was only focusing on Shenwaris, my own family.

Some people would show their immense dislike when they were told that I am studying ‘anthropology’. They would be unhappy that the government of Pakistan is spending money for me to do such an obscure subject as anthropology. I heard many people saying, “They should train doctors and engineers”. Once a middle aged government servant Habib said to me:

“What benefit could you give to our people; you are exploring things that we already know. I don’t think we need it. For that much money, you should learn how to end the power crises so that we could benefit.”

Besides my family background, my status as a student in the UK also had an impact on my fieldwork. People were expecting me to help them to get visas to the UK. The elders would always ask me questions about sending their children to the UK and the prospects of earning huge amounts of money, similarly the young boys as well as men were also keen to visit the UK and earn lots of money. I would rarely give them any hope, which disappointed many villagers and they started calling me *bekara saray* (man of no worth), because of my inability to help them.

Once during the initial days of the second phase of my fieldwork, while I was on the river bank with some other villagers, a man in his forties came and sat with us. He was a school teacher and belonged to the Pukhtana. He started a conversation with me saying that “I came to know you are doing research on the village.” To which I replied “yes”. The man said to me in a humorous way, “But why do you only research your own family? Do you think that can give you the idea of the whole village, No, I am sure it cannot, you must work with all the *khanadanuna* (families) of the village.” He left me thinking about what had made him say this and I realized that it was a criticism of my stay at Iftikhar’s *hujra*, and my company with the Shenwari boys and men. I later came to know that one of his cousins had told him about my work and the main reason why he spoke to me like this was to help me to present Pukhtana in a good way in my writing about the village. The conversation with him made me
realize that I was focusing too much on Shenwari men and boys because of the ease of access to them. After that day, I tried to mix with almost all the *khanadanuna* of the village.

The people of the village overall, were helpful and friendly. However, one thing that I came across time and again was requests from many villagers to help them get a UK visa.
Chapter 2 (b) - Area Profile

The area where I conducted my research is a village known as Munjai in Lower Dir District of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province of Pakistan. The people of the Dir District call themselves as “Diroji”. Dir itself was a state governed by a Nawab (King), which was annexed to Pakistan in 1969 (Dirvi 2003: 118).

A short history of Dir

Dir was a princely state ruled (1895-1969) by a Nawab and his family. The Nawab’s policy was based on loyalty to the British Raj and strict adherence of the Pakhtun code of life, Pakhtunwali (Keiser 2002: 47). The Nawab was reluctant to pursue any developmental or educational schemes (Gillett 2001: 271) which in his view could have been a “potential threat” to his state and authority. Swat the neighbouring district, on the other hand, was also a state of a similar nature but the head of the state was pro-development and initiated a number of development projects including schools, colleges, and hospitals (Keiser 2002: 47-48). The attitude of the Nawab of Dir is the reason why Dir is poorer and less important in the region than Swat (Gillett 2001: 272). Comparisons to Swat were made many times during different discussions. The people of Dir see the people of Swat as more developed, modern and educated but possessing less pukhto than the people of Dir.

The state of Dir also did not have “any formal legal code” and decisions would be made by arbitrary decrees. The decisions would be made according to Pakhtunwali and Islamic teachings. In order to crush any strong opponents and to face minimum resistance in public, the Nawab of Dir encouraged a tenet of Pakhtunwali, badal, where parties would engage in

59 Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is the name of the old North West Frontier Province, which changed through a constitutional amendment passed in April 2010 as a result of the long standing demand of the Pakhtun nationalist party ANP (Awami National Party) to rename the province after the majority ethnic group ‘the Pakhtuns’.

60 For detailed history of Dir under the Nawabs, See (Shahid 2005, 2007; Dirvi 2003; Khan n.d ) . Also for a number of essays and information on Dir under the Nawabs see the following magazines of Government college Timergara (Kamran 1995; Panjkorha 1999-2003) and the magazine of Local government department (Rawda dawa 1986).

61 ‘Nawab’ means ‘king’, Oxford online dictionary defines Nawab as a “Muslim nobleman or person of high status”

62 The Nawab’s adherence to Pakhtunwali and reluctance in pursuing any developmental schemes and the “threat” such development posed to the Nawab was also revealed by a senior retired bureaucrat in an unstructured interview.
internal feuds and fight each other. Hence the Nawab faced little resistance in conducting the state’s affairs. *Badal* (revenge) already had an important place in *Pakhtunwali* and was practised by the people of Dir, but its practise further increased after the Nawab encouraged it (Keiser 2002: 47-48).

It was in 1969 that Dir was annexed to Pakistan and the princely status of Dir was withdrawn (Gillett: 2001: 272). After annexation, the government of Pakistan initiated a number of socio-economic developmental programs including administrative offices, educational facilities, hospital, and police posts (Keiser 2002: 50). Migration to the Gulf countries also started after the state was annexed to Pakistan.

After annexation to Pakistan the former states of Dir and Swat became part of the then North West Frontier Province (NWFP), and were given the status of Provincially Administered Tribal Areas (PATA), governed by the provincial governor and the president of Pakistan. The head of each district was a Deputy Commissioner, the highest administrative officer in the district. It was during this period that the laws of Pakistan started extending to PATA, and finally in 1994 the judicial system in PATA was completely replaced by the judicial system of the whole of Pakistan (ICG 2013; 3-4). For administrative reasons, Dir district was split into Lower Dir and Upper Dir in 1996. The fieldwork for this research is conducted in Lower Dir.

**Lower Dir**

Pakistan is divided into four provinces, Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) and Federally Administered Northern Areas (FANA). The provinces are then divided into divisions that are comprised of districts. Each district is divided into *tahsil* (sub units) and each *tahsil* is further divided into union councils. Each union council is comprised of several villages. Lower Dir has 34 union councils and Munjai is one.

There is only one anthropological work on Lower Dir (Watkins 1995). However, the major historical work on Dir includes Macmohan and Ramsay’s (1981) “The tribes of Dir, Swat and Bajaur”. Another book that deals with the history of Dir is a two volume book (2005 and

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63 For more details on PATA see ICG report 2013 “Pakistan countering militancy in PATA”.
64 1998 District census report of Lower Dir (page 13).
2007) ‘Gumnaam Riasat I and II’ and is published in Urdu, and was written by a local lawyer who has the information mostly through oral histories.  

Lower Dir is about 160 km from Peshawar, the capital city of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The local people mostly calculate the distance in terms of the number of hours it would take to travel there, for example, they would say Timergara is three and a half hours from Peshawar. Timergara is the main urban town of Lower Dir.

Map 5: Union councils of Lower Dir district


66 The national language of Pakistan.
Table 2: Source: http://www.census.gov.pk/NWFP/DIR.htm

Timergara

Timergara is the main market town of Lower Dir. Besides being the market town, it is also home to the District Coordination Officer\(^ {67}\) (DCO), District Police Officer\(^ {68}\) (DPO) and the judicial officers. Timergara also has a District Headquarter Hospital (DHQ) and several private hospitals and clinics.

\(^{67}\) DCO is the administrative head of the district and is appointed by the provincial government.

\(^{68}\) DPO is the head of the district police.
Car showrooms, banks, hotels, private schools, colleges, and hospitals are found in huge numbers in Timergara. Timergara has grown more in significance especially after the construction of the popular Zaib city center, which is a plaza having hundreds of shops and is owned by the grandson of the Nawab of Dir who was also a member of the provincial assembly during 2008-2013 and was a minister; he belongs to the Pakistan People’s Party. The construction of the plaza attracted many people from the nearby areas to invest in Timergara. The plaza has shops selling goods ranging from mobile phones to computer hardware and software.

Many private hospitals have been opened in Timergara and many specialist doctors from around the province have settled in Timergara for their practises. Both the doctors and the hospitals are said to have been earning excellent amounts of money. The reason for this, as mentioned by one shopkeeper in Timergara is that:

People have got money. People are willing to spend money on luxury, health and food. Look at the cars in Timergara, the hospitals, and the growing number of hotels, what does it show? It simply shows that people spend money with both hands, where does that money come from? Saudi, Dubai.

Because of the increasing business activity land prices in Timergara have risen significantly and it is almost equivalent to the prices in Peshawar, the provincial capital. The increase in business activity, and land prices is directly linked to remittances coming mainly from the Gulf States. A shopkeeper in Timergara told me that in the past that the price of a shop in Timergara would be much less than the current prices.

Timergara is also a hub of political activities where different political parties have set up their own offices. The main mosque of the Tableeghi69 Jamaat known as Markaz (center) is also present in Timergara. It has occupied a large area in the middle of Timergara and a

69 Tableeghi jamaat is a group of evangelists. Quoting Reetz (2004) they have twofold objectives: “the participants should reform themselves on these tours and they should carry the faith to other fellow-Muslims who so far had remained passive or disinterested in the observance of religious practises. Those preaching tours became the hallmark of the Tablighi movement. Today Tablighi lay preachers practically cover the whole Islamic world and all western countries where Muslims live”.
huge building is under construction mostly funded by donations, because such donations are considered to be rewarding in the afterlife.

People commute between Timergara and Peshawar by public transport using small coaches. Recently a more sophisticated and luxurious, but expensive, car service has been started. It is more expensive than the coach service because of the use of the latest models of cars which have air conditioning for the summer.

Munjai

The popular belief concerning the origins of the name of the village, Munjai, holds that the village was named after Munja Devi, the daughter of King Odi (the Buddhist king of the nearby village, Odigram). No one knows when, but it is believed that this area was given to Munja Devi by her father Odi and the name later on became Munjai.

Munjai is situated at a distance of 9 kilometers from the district headquarter at Timergara. It is located opposite to the main Timergara-Dir road, which leads to Afghanistan, China, and the Central Asian states. The village can be accessed by two different ways: firstly, by a road off the main Dir-Timergara road passing through the villages Odigram and Manzarai Tangai, and secondly by using a zango (small chairlift) in a village called Danwa, crossing the river Panjkora which charges 7 Rupees (equal to 5 pence) per person per trip. There used to be a wooden bridge constructed by the government of Pakistan, but it was washed away when the river flooded in 2005, which also damaged the nearby baghuna (orchards), where fruits, especially oranges, grow. Recently, the Government has once again approved a concrete bridge along with a road connecting Munjai straight to the main road, but it is not known when work will start on the bridge.

The village lies at the bottom of a mountain and the housing is mostly on steep slopes. The mountain surrounding the village is not rich in vegetation, though there is greenery further down towards the orchards and the fields close to the river. The village is divided into two parts Munjai and Kandaru, separated by a dry stream bed, which sometimes floods after heavy rains.

The village has surfaced streets as a result of the community infrastructure project (CIP) of the World Bank in 1998-1999, which was worth 6.3 million rupees (around 50,000 pounds).
Surfaced streets are considered a sign of development and prestige by the villagers; in their discussions they often taunt the nearby villages as being backward for not having surfaced streets. As soon one reaches Munjai, on the left hand side of the main stop, one can see ‘Munjai chota London’ (Munjai: Small London) which reflects how the people of Munjai perceive their village. By comparing it to London, they want to show how developed they are in comparison to the neighbouring villages. Another reason for their pride in their village, besides the cemented streets, is the high literacy rate in Munjai, though no official figures are available. The people of the neighbouring villages also consider Munjai as more ‘developed’.

Figure 1: Munjai, Chota (small) London written on a wall

Upon entering the village, besides cemented streets one can see pakha korona (concrete houses) with black flags, small sign boards of Mashaalla (literally, “Whatever Allah wills”, but also used to express happiness for something), or the horns of the buffalo. All these are considered as strong forces that repel any bad nazar (evil eye). People of the village have a strong belief in the evil eye and some men in the village are feared for having strong evil eye so that many stories are told about them.

In the past the houses were kacha (mud-built) but changed to pakha korona (cemented), especially in the last three decades when remittances started coming into the village from the Gulf States.
The importance of the village can be judged from its status as head of the union council (electoral ward). The population of the village is said to be between 2000-2500, but these figures cannot be taken at face value because the residents do not register their women in the census as they consider it against pukhto, and there is a tradition that people do not reveal the number of women in their household. They are possessive in keeping the number and the names of the women members of the household hidden so that an outsider can know nothing about them. The data collected is entirely from the male members of the village and there seems to be no possibility of collecting data from the female members. Tradition rather than religion is the dominant force in keeping women inside the four walls of a house. This society is strictly patriarchal.

A household is locally known as a kor. There are certain families which live in one compound but with separate kitchens. Hence it is the nagharey (kitchen) and not a building which forms a household.

The village is inhabited by people of different age groups, for example, young boys (aged 12-25), middle aged (25-45), and old men (45 and above). The middle aged people are often away from their homes (mostly in the Gulf States), while the old men can be found sitting in shops and in mosques where they are at almost every prayer.

The common language spoken in the area is Pukhto. The Pukhto spoken in the village seems to be influenced by many words of Urdu and English. For example, I found the following changes in Pukhto: dodae (meal) was often called “rotae” which is an Urdu word; similarly jaamai (clothes) were often called “Kapdai”, which is again an Urdu word. People also rarely use Pukhto’s characters and instead mostly the use the characters of Urdu. Similarly, speaking fluent English is the dream of many young people in the village, and some English

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70 A union council is comprised of several villages and one village is the head of the union council, after which the union council is named, for example, Munjai Union Council comprises the villages Munjai, Banda, Baroon, Manzarai Tangai, and Odigram but Munjai has been the head of the union council and therefore this union council is named as Munjai Union Council. Similarly a tahsil, is the combination of several union councils and the combination of few tahsils make up a District. The combination of a few Districts make a Division for example the following districts make up Malakand Division; Dir lower, Dir upper, Swat, Buner, Shangla, and Malakand.

71 Pukhto here means the moral standards set by Pakhtunwali.

72 This became especially true after dozens of national and international NGOs started working in the district as a result of the government’s war against terror in the area against the Taliban. This resulted in the displacement of more than 90,000 people from different parts of the district. The NGOs preferred to employ local people having some knowledge of English.
words are also spoken regularly by the local people without even understanding their meaning, for example, “OK” was a common word used in discussions but whenever I asked them no one ever knew what it means. Similarly, “Hello” was one more such word which could be heard regularly in telephone conversations but the majority of the villagers did not actually know what it means. I even noticed the village mullah (prayer leader) saying “Hello” once when I called him instead of saying Assalam-u-alaikum (“Blessings be on you”), though he always advised other people to start conversations with Assalam-u-alaikum, which is an Islamic way of greeting someone.

The inclusion of such words in the Pukhto language is a result of media (TV and radio, which are mostly in Urdu) and connections of the local people with the rest of the country and abroad.

**Dress patterns**

The dress pattern of the village is similar to the larger Pakhtun population in the province: the old men wear kamis-partug (baggy trousers and long shirt) along with a pakol (Chitrali cap) in winter, while in summer the Chitrali cap is replaced by dirojae topae (Dir’s cap) which is white in colour and made of thinner material. The old men also wear a heavy sadar (shawl) in winter but in summer they replace it with white silk shawl. The old men often wear white clothes, which they consider to be the colour liked by the Prophet (P.B.U.H). Dark coloured clothing is not liked by the people and some colours are considered feminine, especially red, pink and green.

Young boys and middle aged men also wear kamis-partug. Young boys used to wear caps in the past but now that tradition has diminished. I saw some boys wearing clothes having different colours, for example, with black top and white bottom, and I always heard the masharan (elders) saying “punjabai khkaree” (“He looks like a Punjabi”), “zaan ye sharmawalai dai” (“He is making a mockery of himself”). Elders would always blame television for this change in dressing patterns and behaviours.

Young girls (aged 1-10) could be seen on the streets of the village wearing kamis-partug often with a dupatta (head scarf) while girls aged above 10 and women could be seen
wearing either bolqa (burqa) or saadar (long head scarf covering a women from head to knees).

Food

The villagers have simple food customs: the rich take parathas (oily bread) and butter or eggs for breakfast, while the poor eat simple bread made of wheat along with tea, and for lunch, people eat dodae (bread made of wheat) with shorwa (meat or chicken curry) or vegetables. Most people cook a single dish but in large quantities because of the large number of family members. As the afternoon approaches, all the households prepare black tea. The majority of the households cook wriji (rice) for their dinner.

A guest is always entertained in the best possible way and chicken and polaw (oily rice) is added to the menu. Every guest is told that the food presented is without formalities and without much preparation; with these words the host wants to cover any possible shortcomings in the food.

A typical day at the village

The day at the village starts quite early, before dawn with the sahar munz (morning prayers), though this is attended in the mosque by very few people, around 15-20, which is a fairly small number if compared to the attendance at other prayers. As the sun rises children start going to their schools: the poor send their children to the local government school while the rich send their children to the English medium schools, both in the village, and in the local town Timergara. The majority of the boys and men could be seen at the local stops waiting for public transport to go to Timergara. People go to Timergara for different activities, ranging from business to shopping to politics.

It is very quiet in the village until 1pm: one could see only shopkeepers busy in their shops. There are about 15 shops in the village. Shopkeepers listen to the radio, often Pukhto songs, and read Urdu newspapers. They read Urdu newspapers because Pukhto is not used so frequently in reading and writing, mainly because it is taught in Government schools only, and only up to the 5th year. The newspaper arrives at midday because the boy who brings the newspaper covers the nearby area as well.
The shopkeepers would always welcome me. They loved to discuss London; especially girls and the money. In their view, one could become a billionaire in just a year’s time in London and one could have sex with almost every second girl because of the way they dress (as they see on TV, and how the West is portrayed by the Mullah in different sermons). Many also approached me to help them get a visa to the UK and the visa is considered a money-making machine.

The shopkeepers would always curse the WAPDA (Water and Power Development Authority) for severe load shedding of electricity, and they would always ask me why I came in summer, without understanding what I was there for. They compared me to the immigrant villagers in the Gulf States who usually come back on vacation after the summer ends or on the occasions of Eid (Islamic festival, twice a year). Almost all the shops close for the *maspakhin munz* (noon prayers).

After the rest, men wake up for *mazigar munz* (the afternoon prayer), take tea and come out of their houses. The old men either sit in shops or in *hujras* while the young ones either play cricket, volley ball, or go on evening walks towards *sind* (the river). Men mostly go in groups towards the *sind* and one can come across a number of groups while walking it that direction. They either sit on the river bank for chit-chat or for smoking hashish and cigarettes, and some may take a bath in the cold water of *sind* during summer. Evening walks proved to be a great time for collecting information on different topics and it was also a good time to get updates about events in the village.

Men leave the *Sind* after the *makham munz* (sunset prayer). They go back to their homes and eat their dinner. After dinner the people offer the *maskhutan munz* (the night prayer). Some boys sit in different *betaks* or *hujras* until late while other’s go back to their homes to have a good sleep and be ready for the next day.

**Sources of income**

Migration to Arab countries is the main source of income for the men of Munjai. A large number of men have migrated outside and inside the country. In international migration, they move to the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Qatar. They work as labourers and drivers. Some also own shops. The remittances are sent to the head of the
household who runs the family expenditures. The money is invested in the construction of brick houses, buying land and buying cars, which are all considered to be signs of prestige in the village; anyone owning these is considered a man of influence locally. A recent trend for education can also be found in the village, where every family wants to invest a large amount of money in the education of their children.

A migrant returning to the village can be identified by the way he dresses and the long-lasting smell of perfumes. Commonly, they wear clean white clothes with *arabae chapal* (arabic sandals). They also keep telling their stories and recounting their experiences. The ones in Dubai talk more about the buildings and cars, while those in Saudi Arabia would talk more about the mosques they visited there. They would always compare Pakistan with the Gulf and praise the latter in terms of development and rule of law. When a migrant comes home on vacation, after spending the first day at home, he often visits nearby relatives and friends. He also pays condolences to the families of those who have died in his absence. The first sentence after greeting someone that he would say is about his health,

\[ Alaka dair ghat shawe ye \]

“You have gained much weight”

Or

\[ Alaka kamzorai shawe ye \]

“You have become weak”

The immigrants used to bring gifts for his own children, the children of his brothers and sisters and gifts for his friends and cousins. This trend of gift giving has declined as a result of the growing individuality among the villagers. When a middle-aged immigrant who was on vacation was asked why the trend of gift giving decreased with time, he answered:

“These days it is not possible to bring so many things for the relatives: things have changed, we need to overcome our expenditures. Inflation is so high that we hardly fulfil our own requirements. Also things are not very favourable in the Gulf States; jobs are not as good as they were in the past”.

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The stories of migrants are full of *gham* (sorrows), which depict how they lead their lives, earn money and support huge families.

**Social organisation**

In Munjai, the family is the basic institution of social organisation. It is a group of people in which the middle-aged male members of the house earn and the rest of the members depend on them. The family provides support to its members in the matters of feeding, clothing and education. Members of the family have different rights and obligations in the family. At the time of marriage the bride moves in with the family of the groom’s parents. The bride becomes a new member of the family. The joint family system is the system most common in the village. Monogamy is very common in Munjai, however polygynous marriages are also observed. Polygynous marriages occur especially when a couple do not have male children, so in order to have a male child, the husband remarries. Male children are considered a strength of a family: the more male members there are in a family, the stronger it is considered.

Endogamy is the most common type of marriage practised in the village. People always prefer their sons and daughters marrying within their families. The main reason behind endogamous marriages are a) the factor of *purdah* (seclusion). Almost every family wants to keep their *purdah*, because marriages outside the family create relationships of *tlal ratlal* (coming and going) with the respective families, where outsiders are sure to see one’s female members of the household. This is considered as an act against *pukhto*. (b) ‘Others’ are usually looked down on, especially among the Shenwaris and Pukhtana, and one is not supposed to give daughters to someone belonging to a lower status. It is highly unlikely for families to give daughters or marry the daughters of the lower occupational classes such as barbers, shoe makers, and blacksmiths, even if their economic and social conditions have changed with the passage of time, it is considered as an act of shame. Barth (1959: 19) also observes that the people of Swat find it shameful to marry their women to a social inferior and c) because a marriage within one’s own family may not require excessive spending as it is commonly required in an exogamous marriages. There are few cases of exogamous marriages in the village.
The society of the village is patriarchal in authority pattern. The head of the family exercises the authority, who is usually the senior living male member of the family. The elder male members are also the decision makers within the family. Death of the parents or any conflict about land between the brothers leads to the formation of nuclear families.

Pakhtun social organisation plays an important role in guiding gham khadee relationships of people outside the kin groups. In order to understand the nature gham khadee relationships practised by the villagers, one must understand the nature of social organisation present in Munjai.

Pakhtun social organisation has been discussed in the existing literature (Ahmad 1980; Barth 1959; Singer 1982; Lindholm 1982). In this thesis I am giving a brief overview of the social organisation in Munjai, which will help understand the practise of doing pukhto and the gham khadee relationships existing among the villagers.

Borrowing Chaudhary’s criteria (1999: 10), I too consider the people of Munjai as involved in two layers of ties particularly in gham khadee relationships 1) kinship ties 2) territorial ties. Both these ties could happen within, as well as outside the village, for example one may have kinship ties either within or outside the village and the same is the case with territorial ties. The people of Munjai keep ties with their kin as well as non-kin. Having a ghat taluq (large circle of friends) is considered to be honourable, but at the same time it is a hard job to carry out gham khadee with a large number of people.

- **Kor** (Household)

**Kor** refers to the household where a father lives with his children and his wife or wives. Ahmed (1980: 236) identified three types of households among the Mohmand Pakhtuns: the nuclear family, the joint family and the extended family. The joint family system commonly prevails in Munjai.

**Nuclear family:** A nuclear family is the one which consists of husband, wife and their unmarried children. Nuclear families do not come into existence immediately after a marriage; after 5-8 years of joint residence, a joint family divides into nuclear families. A

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73 Kor is used in two ways either it refers to the building one lives in or it refers to the household including the members.

74 There are no exact words in Pukhto for nuclear, extended and joint family.
nuclear family at an early stage after marriage is looked down upon by people because the male member who forms the nuclear family is considered as one who weakens the family by his actions. Sadiq separated from his brothers after a few months of his marriage. His brothers had financed his visa to Dubai as well as his marriage expenses. When he separated from his brothers and formed a nuclear family, people started talking negatively about him, some would call him a weak man who listens to his wife. His brothers would speak negatively about him as he changed after his marriage. They too would call him bekara (worthless) because he was allegedly supposed to have separated at the behest of his wife. Such a separation is seen as a weakness because it weakens the wrorwali (brotherhood) which is considered to be the strength of the family and such unity serves as a deterrent against the outsiders as well as relatives.

While living in the joint family system, the wives of the brothers often develop differences leading to quarrels and arguments. The differences are developed both intentionally and unintentionally so that the wives could have their own nuclear families and are able to exercise authority. Such quarrels often lead to the disintegration of the joint family and the distribution of land among the brothers (Zaidi 1970:41). In Pakhtun society ‘ideal men’ are supposed not to listen to their wives, the men who succumb to such pressures from their wives are considered as bai-gherata (without honour) or bekara (worthless) because they are the ones listening to their wives and are considered to be the ones who cause na ittifaqi (disunity) among the brothers.

Abid was the main sponsor of his family. His wife was not happy with his spending habits. Because of supporting his siblings, Abid did not save enough money for his own children when they were grown up. Abid’s wife initiated quarrels within the house which eventually led to the formation of Abid’s nuclear family. The villagers who previously were appreciative of Abid’s lifelong support for his siblings turned critical and were calling him da khazi ghulam (wife’s slave), which indicates that though Abid wanted to stay with his siblings he followed his wife’s wishes and opted for a nuclear family.

**Joint family:** The joint family system is the most prevalent one in Munjai. It is a group of family members sharing the same residence and economic pool. This type of family consists
of a married couple with married and unmarried children, whether earning their income or not but living in the same family and sharing joint income and property.

- **Koranae**

*Koranae* is the combination of a few *koruna* (plural of *kor*). *Koranae* is often used for the patrlineal cousins living in separate households. After failing to find any exact English word for *koranae*, in this thesis, I will be using the word ‘family’ for *koranae* as well as for for *khanadan*. The word ‘family’ has also been used by Chaudhary (1999: 19) while referring to the extended family representing paternal uncles, aunts and their children.

- **Khanadan**

*Khanadan* literally means ‘family’. It is formed by the combination of different *koranae*. *Khanadan* is used in two ways a) when referring to an extended family and b) when referring to *Qom* (*qom* means a descent group sharing a common paternal line, *qomuna* is it’s plural). I will use the word *khanadan* especially for the members of particular descent groups throughout my thesis because of its extensive use in Munjai, for example in Munjai, Shenwari is the name of a *khanadan* sometimes referred to as *qom* and is made up of several extended families and all the members of the *khanadan* trace their descent to a common ancestor named Mehmood.

The ability to trace ones ancestors is considered as the sign of a good *Pakhtun* in Munjai and Ahmed (1980: 84) considers it is an important part of defining a *Pakhtun*. The maintenance of “such records are often a source of pride” (Alavi 1972: 2). During my fieldwork one of the members of the Shenwari family provided me with a detailed kinship chart, prepared by him of the whole family and I also remember some of the people memorised the same chart orally.

It is through the usage of the word *khanadan* that people differentiate between ‘us’ and ‘them’ for example’ by saying zamung *khanadan* (our family) and *da aghu khanadan* (their

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75 Another term used for an extended family or a household is ‘kor’ which means ‘home’, the same word *kor* is also used for nuclear family.

76 The Shenwari tribe can also be found in Afghanistan and the Khyber agency of Pakistan. The main Shenwari tribe is divided into different sub-tribes known as ‘khels’ and each khel is named after its senior agnates, the sub-tribe of Shenwaris living in Munjai is known as Mehmood Khel where Mehmood is their common ancestor. The name of sub tribe is rarely used and people often use the name of the main tribe i.e Shenwari.
family). It is through *khanadan* that people show their strength in different matters, because the family members are supposed to stand by each other during hard times. It is through *wrorwali* 77 (brotherhood) within the *khanadan* that people cooperate with each other. The *izzat* (honour, respect) of an individual in *khanadan* raises the *izzat* of the whole *khanadan* and similarly any act to dishonour an individual can dishonour the whole *khanadan*. All the members of the *khanadan* actively participate in each others’ *gham khadee* occasions unless they have a *wrana* or a *dushmani*.

In Munjai, it is the responsibility of the *mashar* (often the elder brother) of the family to earn a livelihood for the rest of the family members. For this purpose, the male members mostly go to the Gulf States. After marriage, it is the responsibility of the parents of these men to look after his wife and children. The male members return to their homes later, depending on the nature of their jobs and what holidays they can take.

- **Qom** 78

The difficulty in explaining the word *qom* in the context of Pakistan has been faced by the anthropologists who have worked in different communities, and hence it has been discussed extensively (See Donnan 1988: Lyon 2002; Chaudhary 1999; Eglar 1960).

It is not possible to give a precise meaning to the word *qom*, as the meaning could vary from context to context and area to area (Chaudhary 1999: 11). For Donnan (1988), *qom* is used for “tribe, nation, sect, people, religious or ethnic group, and caste”, In a very broad context it is used for the entire population of muslims around the world (1988: 47-48). In another sense, at times the word *qom* is used for the whole of the Pakistani population, for example, ‘Pakistani quom’ (Pakistani nation) (Chaudhary 1999: 11) and yet at other times the word *qom* is used to refer to the different ethnic groups living in Pakistan. For example, Pakhtuns are one of the *qom* living in Pakistan others being Punjabi, Sindhi, Seraiki and Baloch. Barth

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77 *Wrorwali* means ‘brotherhood’, it is a term used to denote the relations between brothers. If they have good relations, they have ‘*kha wrorwali*’ (good brotherhood) while if they do not have good relations and are not cooperative in different matters of life, people call them *wrorwali bekara wrorwali* (useless or bad brotherhood). Since the members of a *khanadan* are all considered to be the children of the same ancestors technically they are considered as brothers and are hence expected to have a ‘*kha wrorwali*’ among them. It is through *kha wrorwali* that a *khanadan* shows strength to outsiders, and is a sign of their unity. Similarly the competition between the sons of brothers is known as *tarburwali*, which is competition for authority, and land.

78 *Qom, qaum, quom or qaam*, it can be written and pronounced in a number of ways depending upon the way the local people of an area use it. In Munjai people pronounced it as *qom*. 81
(1969: 114-115) citing Raverty (1867) writes that the general meaning of the word is ‘tribe, sect, people, nation, family’.

Barth (1959: 16) notes that Swat society is divided into different status groups where each is known as qom. Barth has used the word ‘caste’ for qom in Swat. Membership in each qom is determined by birth. Drawing parallels between qom and caste, Barth argues that qom differs from caste mainly because a qom has no ‘rituals or religious importance’ and are therefore secular (ibid). Unlike Barth, who used the word ‘caste’ for Swat Pakhtuns, I will use ‘family and/or khanadan’ for the different social groups in Munjai. These words are used by the people themselves and I even heard the English word ‘family’ being used by some people while referring to khanadan. The word caste is freely translated as zaat among the Pakhtuns and it is not used in routine discussions. However, I noticed its usage in a negative way while referring to an undesirable act by someone, for example, one may hear others saying “this action shows his zaat”, which refers to the action and not the caste or family of the person.

Eglar’s analysis of the word biraderi (1960: 90-94) seems somewhat closer to the way a qom is defined in Munjai.79 A biraderi in Eglar’s work is a patrilineage, where all the men can trace their relationship to a common ancestor, no matter how remote, belong to the same biraderi. A similar example for Eglar’s biraderi could be the Shenwaris in Munjai, who are dispersed in different areas of Pakistan and Afghanistan. In Pakistan the majority of the Shenwaris live in Landi Kotal, in the tribal areas bordering Afghanistan. The Shenwaris of Munjai, despite having no or less contact with the Shenwaris of Landi Kotal, consider themselves as yaw qom (one nation/tribe). I remember when I introduced a Shenwari friend of mine from Landi kotal to my fellow Shenwaris, most of the them were of the view that he was one of them saying “khpal kas dai” (“He is one of us”).

Similarly the term qabila is used for a patrilineage in some of the tribal areas of Pakistan which is much closer to the English word ‘tribe’. The term qabaili elaqajat is used for the tribal areas. The word qabila is used in the tribal areas because in most of the cases a particular patrilineage lives in an area and is divided into different clans and sub clans. In most of the cases, the whole of the region is known as a tribal agency that is named after

79 Eglar worked in a Punjabi village in Pakistan. The terms she has used are mostly Urdu or Punjabi words.
the patrilineage, for example, the Mohmand tribal area is named after the Mohmand tribe, which is then divided into different clans and sub-clans (see Ahmed 1980). A distinction is necessary to be made here; I observed in Munjai that the people belonging to the same sub-tribe of Shenwaris, for example, the Mehmood Khel is considered as one _khanadan_ whether they live in Munjai or in the nearby villages, however, the term _yaw qom_ would be used for Shenwaris outside the sub-tribe Mehmood Khel. So _khanadan_ is more of a family and _qom_ is more of a tribe.

**Familial composition in Munjai**

There are three families in the village Shenwari, Pukhatana, and ghareeban. In terms of kinship Munjai has two _khanadnuna_ (families) Shenwaris and Pukhtana. However, a third group has recently emerged, its members are not genealogically related and hence use fictive kinship as a means of solidarity among the group members for example they say ‘we are all same people’. However, they do not use any kin terms (for example, ‘brother’, ‘father’) for un-related people within the group. But the usage of fictive kinship has practically proved to be a binding a force among the ghareeban, and it has united (most of) them on one platform.

The main factor uniting the group together is their socio-economic condition in the past. So, this group was landless in the past and hence they were known as ghareeban. Another reason that unites the group is their urge to create a space for themselves in the village’s affairs. Today ghareeban includes members of different kin groups. The ghareeban also includes members of the _qasabgar_ (occupational classes) which includes _nayan_ (barbers), _ingaran_ (blacksmith), and _mochian_ (shoe makers), _mulyan_ and _syedan_ are also part of ghareeban.\(^8^0\) The _qasabgar_ have mostly left the occupations of their forefathers and now are working in the Gulf States. Among the Shenwaris and the Pukhtana it is common to hear statements such as “he is a barber” or “his father was a shoe maker”, such statements are said in order to contest any upward social mobility of the occupational classes. Barth (1959:21) also observed such discussions in the Swat valley, where people used to talk about the

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\(^8^0\) There two religious groups among the ghareeban, mulyan are the group that the current prayer leader of _bar jumaat_, Maulana Aziz, belongs to and _syedan_ are another religious group who have no formal status of prayer leadership. Besides holding the prayer leadership of _bar jumaat_ the _mulyan_ are also active in politics and belong to the _Jamaat-e-Islami_ (JI). On the other hand, the _syedan_ are not active in politics.
ex-occupations of the *qasabgar*. Barth finds that this upward social mobility is a slow and time consuming process. My observations in Munjai also reveal such a situation where people who left their professions, for example, barber two decades ago are still considered as barbers, while the members of ex-occupational groups try to get rid of the old occupational names, but it certainly will take time. Hence the group ghareeban provides them with a new identity which is considered to be better than the previous one. Thus, for someone who is labelled as being a barber, or for some others who did not belong to any occupational class and hence had no identity at all, this identity has made them more respectable.

Though, today the majority of the ghareeban are landowners and are no longer poor they are still called ghareeban. I shall refer to them as the ghareeban family throughout my thesis because the ghareeban consider themselves as *yaw khanadan* (one family), where the majority live in one side of the village which is known as *ghareeb abad* (The place inhabited by the poor).

The following chart shows the three families living in Munjai.

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**Table 3: Khanadanuna (Families) in Munjai**
Ghareeban outnumber Pukhtana, and Shenwaris the three leading groups in the village striving for authority and to create a political following. Today, it is the vote of the ghareeban which decides victory for the candidates in the electoral processes.

The three main groups have affiliations with the three different political parties. For example, the Pukhtana are affiliated with the Awami National Party (ANP), which is a Pakhtun nationalist party and was the ruling party in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province from 2008-2013. The Shenwaris are affiliated with the Pakistan People’s Party (PPP) of Bhutto. The PPP led the federal government from 2008-2013. The mulyan and ghareeban are (mostly) affiliated with Jamaat-i-Islami which is a religious-political party that boycotted the last general elections held in February 2008; however, they held power in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province in the period 2002-2007 and are coalition partners in current provincial government. The reason why majority of ghareeban are with Jamaat-i-Islami (JI) is because of the mulyan, who were already a part of the JI and successfully pull together the support of the ghareeban by assuring them that they (mulyan) are also a part of the ghareeban. The reason why the mulyan make such arguments is that traditionally the mullah belonged to non-landholding khanadan and it was the Shenwaris on whom they were economically dependent. Hence the mulyan consider themselves to be the same as ghareeban because both were landless and dependent upon the landholding Shenwaris.81

During the past the ‘status and position’ of the different khanadanuna (plural of khanadan) were clear because there was only one khanadan, the Shenwaris who owned land and who used to run the village affairs. They were split into different dali (factions), and were always engaged in tarburwali (cousin rivalry). Having financial means and taluq (large circle of friends) they were also active in gham khadee participation. It was their wide circle of gham khadee and taluq that helped them gain influence.

After the Gulf migration situation changed and the landless khanadanuna acquired land which resulted in the erosion of the status of the Shenwaris, because they sold their lands to the ghareeban which resulted in the reduction of the size of their land holdings. A similar

81 Because of land holding and closeness to the Nawab of Dir, the Shenwaris are also called ‘Malakan’. Malakan is the plural of Malak which is an honourary status and was given by the Nawab to his loyal supporters. This status was also accompanied by authority and influence. After other groups in Munjai bought land and acquired authority the status of malaks became only nominal.
connection between land holding and social status has been observed in Punjab, where loss of land results in erosion in the social status of the farmers (Chaudhary 1999: 8). The reduction in size of land holdings was accompanied by a reduction in influence and authority of the Shenwaris, and at the same time this new situation gave rise to a new class of people commonly called as nowi maldara (new rich). The nowi maldara now, were in a position to challenge the authority of their ex-landlords.

The villagers also do not elect candidates on the basis of ideology, but vote for candidates with whom one has taluq (friendship) or dala (grouping), gham khadee (participation in sorrow and joy) and the one who does thana tahsil (helping people in courts, police stations and other government departments).

Gham khadee relationships are not only maintained by the people living in the village but also by those villagers who have migrated to the Gulf States and Peshawar for economic or educational purposes. For those outside the village, gham khadee is considered as a way of maintaining their traditional relationships and way of life which is Pakhtunwali. Someone who lives in the city and does not fulfil the obligations of gham khadee is also called kharai (a city dweller) as a taunt because the city dwellers are usually considered as the ones who have forgotten Pakhtunwali due to adopting the dominant culture of the city which, according to the villagers, lacks pukhto and Pakhtunwali.

Anyone who is unable to do pukhto is considered to be a bai-gherata and bai-pukhto. Gham khadee is not only between the members of a family or a village but it can be between people of different villages, and even districts.

I also had participated in the village gham khadee. Once during the fieldwork while I had a fever, I did not go to the mosque or go on evening walks for two days. I was enquired about by 3 friends, one of them also brought some fruit, while another one brought “sakhtuna” from the Mullah of the Mosque and asked me to drink it with water, with the firm belief that it will surely make me healthy. All this made me bound also to visit them in return if they were to suffer a similar misfortune.
Migration from the village

The Gulf migration not only changed the social structure of the village but it also had profound impact on the behaviour of the people.

Two things were considered synonymous to izzat (honour/respect), land and guns. Land was expensive, while a gun was cheaper. The first batch of migrants, after earning some money abroad would buy a gun, that was considered as a sign of izzat (being worthy of respect). A gun could be taken anywhere openly without any fear of police as there were no police and no extension of state laws. Guns were also prioritized as a gun would enable one to take badal (blood revenge) from anyone who might dishonour him or his family, while at the same time it also played the role of a deterrent that would stop others from disrespecting them. Afzal, one of the pioneer migrants told me “I bought gun as soon as I came back from Kuwait, I was only 23, and I would always carry it with me, I thought as if I have accumulated Izzat once I had it”.

Many cases of killings and badal (revenge) occurred once people had started buying guns. The local people claim that there was an increase in cases of violence, once the Gulf money helped people buy guns. The violence was a result of the maintenance of honour, for which people are always in competition. The absence of state laws in Dir was one more reason why people were more inclined to buying guns, because in those days (until mid 1990s) people themselves had to take care of themselves as well as the security of their family. In Tribal Dir taking badal was an individual’s duty in order to maintain honour.

After years of the extension of state laws to Dir (that was previously a Tribal area where government laws did not exist) people’s behaviour started changing. The newly implemented laws banned the open display of arms and police and courts started functioning. The presence of police and the ban on carrying arms openly helped change the priorities of the local people. The public display of izzat through guns was minimized and, hence, the trend of buying guns changed. Police would arrest those who carried arms publicly. Arrest by the police is considered to be shameful and against pukhto. Though there were, and still
are, people who invest their hard earned money in buying arms but the state’s presence has changed people’s priorities to a large extent.

Buying land was now at the top of the list of the migrants’ priorities. Ownership of land would confer the status of being a Pakhtun which meant being honourable and hence people started buying land. As soon as people bought land they would construct a house as well as a hujra alongside it. The houses would be decorated in such a way that they would attract the eyes of outsiders and people would usually paint their houses in bright colours. The number of hujras also increased considerably. Because of the flow of remittances people started participating in politics.

Along with money the migrants also brought a different understanding of Islam which many of them call ‘the real Islam’ I was told by Dilawar: “I learned the real Islam when I went to UAE, and only then I realized after I went abroad that pukhto is jahalat (ignorance)”.

Now the question arises how all these changes impacted Pakhtunwali in Munjai? The extension of state laws discouraged violent badal which was associated with ‘doing pukhto’. It was now contradicted by the police and courts and any action that could take one to the police station is considered as ‘against pukhto’.

The Gulf migration resulted in the emergence of the new rich class in Munjai. The new rich bought land and hence could now claim the status of Pakhtun, because they now fulfilled the basic criterion (landholding). With the passage of time they bought more land, started doing politics and challenged the traditional leaders, the Shenwaris. Some of the ‘new rich’ migrants were now holding more land than any of the maliks. They also invested money in educating their children.

After the class difference diminished, because of the land buying by the new rich, and spending money on the education of their children, it was one’s taluq (friendship circle) and gham khadee that became the gauge to measure the Pakhtunness of the people. The new rich started to be engaged in politics and now they were a further threat to the status of the maliks.

Such competition for power, authority and taluq among the villagers is one reason that gave rise to the importance of gham khadee, because people started expanding their friendship
circle (toluq), and to achieve this they had to do gham khadee. Gham khadee became so important that today it could be the main reason for the success of a politician in general elections for local, provincial and national level seats (see chapter 6 for more details).

The Place of the Mullah (Prayer leader) known as ‘Maimber’ inside the mosque
The main hall of the mosque

Mullah’s room
A Village Shop

A kat (bed and pillows) in a Hujra
A young village boy in “Kamees partug”

Cemented village streets
River Panjkora

A view from middle of the village
Zango (small chair lift) for crossing the river Panjkora to Munjai

Shorgar (cultivable land below) and the Sharha (the mountainous land above)
Chapter 3: Doing pukhto through revenge

Introduction

This chapter focuses on badal\(^{82}\) (physcal revenge) which is one of the main tenets of Pakhtunwali. I will discuss how the word badal is used in different ways (and contexts) in Pakhtun society and how, through practising badal, people do pukhto. This chapter has two sections. The first section discusses doing pukhto through revenge, whereas the second section discusses alternative ways of doing pukhto when it is not possible for someone to take revenge.

There are three main reasons for conflict in Pakhtun society: zan (women); zar (gold) and zameen (land) (Ali 1966; Coen 1971; Spain 1962, 1963; Swinson 1967, cited in Ahmed 1980: 183).\(^{83}\) Out of the three, zan cases are of the most serious nature and threatening to a family’s izzat. “Women are both guardians and guarded” (Afshar 1995: 129) and considered by men both as izzat of the family as well the ones who can shame the izzat of the whole family by the slightest inappropriate act.

In the first section, I will discuss how izzat (honour) is retained through taking badal and while doing so people take the risk of any legal consequences against them. Besides this, people risk their hard earned money and also put their lives at risk. They take badal; otherwise they are called bai-pukhto (without pukhto) or bai-gherata (without honour) and it becomes difficult for them to live in the village because of people’s taunts. This section discusses two case studies where izzat is retained through taking badal.

One of the case studies in the second section of this chapter demonstrates how izzat that is lost in a matter involving zan (woman) can be maintained or restored without taking badal or during the waiting period of taking badal.

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\(^{82}\) This chapter discusses badal (revenge killing) as an important tenet of Pakhtunwali. Badal is interpreted in different ways among Pakhtuns. Badal (revenge killing) has been discussed extensively in the existing literature, however, for badal as it is practised/interpreted in other ways see chapter 5 of this thesis. Also see Grima (2004: chapter 5).

\(^{83}\) Also see Chaudhary (1999: Chapter 2) for a discussion on zan, zar, zameen as sources of conflict among Punjabis in Pakistan.
It is *gham khadee* participation that helps retain the lost *izzat*. People actively participate in *gham khadee* events within and outside the village.

My argument in this chapter is that, because of the extension of state laws, taking *badal* through killing has become less common compared to the past, but it is still practised especially when the revenge undertaken involves women. However, alternative practises help retain the *izzat* of the individual as well of families.

My main focus in this chapter remains on *Pakhtunwali* that involves revenge (killing) or violent *Pakhtunwali*. I will mention some case studies involving revenge in order to retain *izzat*. I will write about how the villagers analyse the *pukhto* of both the parties in conflict. The chapter includes men’s responses to different cases of ‘revenge’ and killings. In addition, the ways in which people reconcile their enmities will also be discussed.

**Badal in Pakhtun society**

It is very difficult to explain or understand *Pakhtunwali* or doing *pukhto* without taking into consideration the concept of *badal*. *Badal* is used in a number of ways in Pakhtun society. Besides its common usage for ‘retaliation’, *badal* is also used in the context of change, reciprocity, and exchange marriages (Widmark 2010: 3).

Grima (2004: 70-73) is of the view that the word *badal* has very different meanings for men and women. ‘Retaliation’ according to her, is more commonly used in relation to men, while for women *badal* means gift exchange and reciprocal visits during *gham khadee*.

This chapter focuses on *badal* as ‘retaliation’ or ‘blood revenge’ (Barth 1959: 83) and its importance in men’s lives for building up their profile as *kha pukhtun* (good Pakhtun) and saving themselves from *beizzati* (dishonour). Within this understanding, undertaking *badal* is compulsory once someone has been dishonoured. Depending on the seriousness of the matter *badal* may involve beating, killing, and encroaching on another’s land by using force (Barth 1959: 82). Grima (2004), like Barth (1959), has overlooked the fact that *badal* for Pakhtun men is practised in other ways as well, for example, *gham khadee* participation, and *khegada*.
Later in a section of this chapter and in my coming chapters, contrary to the views of others (Grima 2004; Ahmed 1980; Lindholm 1982; Barth 1959; Singer 1982) who have worked among the Pakhtuns and who see badal among Pakhtun men as being limited to retaliation and to violent ways of practising it, I show how Pakhtun men practise badal in non-violent ways, that have been overlooked by past researchers.

The qualities of a Kha pakhtun are evaluated in terms of the polar opposites izzat and sharam⁸⁴ (Barth 1959: 81). Conflicts arise once a Pakhtun feels that his, or his family’s, izzat has been attacked and he has been sharmadalai (shamed). A sharmaidalai (shamed person) is considered as equivalent to bai-pukhto or bai-gherata. Such a shame can be removed and the status of a good Pakhtun be restored by taking badal. It is gherat (dignity) that enables people to take badal, restore izzat (honour) and save oneself and one’s family from sharam (shame).

On the importance of badal and its practise among Pakhtuns, Alamgeer, a retired migrant once said:

“Pukhto is all about badal, and badal is not only limited to blood revenge but it is also practised in other matters e.g a visit is reciprocated by a visit, a good deed by a good deed and a bad by a bad one’’.

Any attack on a person’s izzat must be responded to in an equal or more severe way. Failure to take badal is considered as against pukhto and people who are unable to take their revenge, especially in the case of women, are considered as bai-pukhto (without pukhto) or bai-gherata (without honour).

Through the following case studies I will demonstrate how cases involving the izzat of women are dealt with in contemporary Pakhtun society; how people do pukhto and restore their izzat by taking badal, and what are the consequences of not taking badal.

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⁸⁴ For discussion on Izzat, sharam, gherat, iman see chapter 1.
Section ‘A’ : Doing pukhto through taking revenge

Siz’s case

On a cold January evening I, along with some other villagers, headed towards the river bank, and even though fewer people visit the river bank during winter, we did not want to miss this opportunity to enjoy the beauty of nature and the splendid landscape. Another reason why we wanted to go to the river bank was that some of the boys would take hashish and the river bank was the best place to do so, as it is away from the sight of the elders who consider it extremely inappropriate if a younger person smokes a cigarette or hashish and an elder sees him. This day I was accompanied by three friends. Anyone visiting the riverside would have to pass through the shops or - as it is known - the bazaar (market with many shops).

After performing the makham munz (sunset prayers) on the river bank we headed back to the village. On our way we saw a group of around forty men gathered on the main road near the shops, and many could be seen running towards the crowd. Initially I thought it was a vegetable seller with a van who usually promotes the vegetables through using a loud speaker.

As we walked further towards the crowd, I heard someone saying, “they are going to kill me”. After getting closer to the crowd I saw four men beating a man who was aged in his fifties. The man was crying for help, but no one approached to save his life because the men beating him were all armed with Kalashnikov rifles. The man was beaten severely with stones and he received injuries to his head and his face, so much so, that it was difficult to recognize him. In the meantime, I kept asking my friends what was happening but I did not

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85 Muslims pray five times a day facing Makkah. Prayers are not only meant for spiritual cleanliness but there is also a stress physical cleanliness, and ablution is obligatory before prayer. See http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/islam/practises/salat.shtml
86 Some people from Timergara (main town) ‘vegetable market’ come to the village to sell vegetables at cheaper rates. They come with vans equipped with a loudspeaker on top. Because of buying vegetables directly from the main market, their rates are cheaper than those of the shopkeepers in the village. The vegetable sellers who come with the vans are not liked by the fruits and vegetable sellers in Munjai, because their arrival affects their businesses and they are able to attract many customers because of their cheaper prices.
get an answer immediately. The only thing I could hear around me was people murmuring to each other, but no one tried to stop the attackers.

Later, the armed men killed the man by firing at his body with their Kalashnikovs. Upon their departure they left a warning message saying no one should come close to the injured man as they did not want anyone to save his life by calling a doctor or taking him to the hospital in the town of Timergara. The man breathed his last in front of all of us. The men who had killed him went away in a white coloured non-custom paid car.87

The beaten and shot man was lying helpless and nobody came forward to help him, keeping in mind the warning of the killers. However, out of the whole crowd one tall old man with a white beard came forward, sat near him, checked his pulse and said, “he is dead”. Others in the crowd stood behind looking at the dead body. After approximately twenty to twenty-five minutes the relatives of the dead person came and took the body home. People dispersed and I, saddened and shocked by this event, asked my friends, “Who was the dead man? Who were his killers? And, why had they murdered him?” I was briefly told the story after which the boys left for daag.88 I went straight to my informant Iftikhar’s hujra89 (men’s guest house), where the elders (who usually sit in this hujra after the sunset prayer) also arrived after a while. They discussed the whole incident and seemed shocked at the way the man was killed. Iftikhar shared the whole story in detail with me.

The dead person was named Siz. He belonged to the Pukhtana family. His death became a topic of discussion among the villagers and I heard many commentaries about his death and people held different opinions on the matter. Some villagers were critical of the way he was killed because he faced extreme distress before his death.

87 Non custom paid cars or NCP are the cars that are not registered with the motoring authorities. They are imported from Afghanistan, and are cheaper than the custom paid cars. Being a semi-tribal area people of Dir have permission to use such cars within certain geographical limits, beyond which the cars are confiscated by the police. Because there is no registration with the motoring authorities many illegal activities (killings, thefts, kidnappings) are carried out in NCP’s because it is difficult for the police to identify and trace such unregistered vehicles. Exemption from tax on certain vehicles is one of the differences between settled areas and the Provincially Administered Tribal Areas. NCP cars are illegal in the jurisdiction of the settled areas.

88 Daag literally means open area but here it refers a small place in the middle of the village surrounded by shops and houses where people gather in evening often after the evening walk. It is called daag also because it was an open area many years ago.
Siz was married to one of his distant relatives and had three children. He was a *musafar* (migrant) in Dubai and would visit his home often after 2-3 years. He retired from *musafari* (being abroad) in 2006. Siz was suspicious of his wife’s character and he is said to have caught her in bed with another man. After this incident he went to his father-in-law and asked him to advise her to stop such activities. Months passed and his suspicion still persisted until he realized that his wife’s bad character was bringing him *sharam* (dishonour) and a bad name. He killed her with a pistol and ran away to an unknown location. In the meantime he went back to Dubai with a friend’s help. His wife’s family vowed revenge at any cost as it was a *sharam* (shame) for them because their daughter was blamed for adultery, which was never proven by her husband. Hence their *pukhto* was invoked and they were obliged to defend it. The only way to restore their *izzat* (honour) and defend their *pukhto* lay in *badal* (revenge), by killing Siz.

The brother of Siz asked some influential members of the village - including the village mullah (prayer leader) - to go to Siz’s father in law and ask him to pardon Siz for what he had done. The *jirga*90 (council of elders) was called three times but each time the father in law insisted that his daughter was innocent. He argued that if she had been caught ‘red handed’ with another man Siz should also have killed the man. If this had been the case he would have forgiven him, but as there was no proof of his daughter being involved in adultery he could not pardon her killer.

Years passed and all the efforts and initiatives made by Siz’s family went in vain. In mid-2010 Siz came back to Munjai with the hope that things would return to normal. He lived peacefully for almost six months during which time his brothers in law silently planned his killing. They also took into their confidence Siz’s son. They planned to kill him publicly so as to take *badal* of their sister and to restore their *izzat* in the eyes of the villagers. The need for such publicity was because villagers do start talking negatively about anyone who does not take *badal* in case of death, dishonouring or quarrel, and who do not reciprocate *gham khadee* visits etc.

Siz was killed on the main road of Munjai at a time when there were more people in the shops than at any other time of the day. The reason for choosing this particular place and

90 Discussed in detail in Chapter 1.
time for the killing reveals that the killers wanted a public display of doing *pukhto* and hence restoring their lost *izzat*. Through their actions they could demonstrate to a large number of people that they were doing *pukhto*. *Furthermore*, through the brutal manner of the killing they wanted to call the revenge a *kha badal* (good revenge). A good *badal* is the one that gives equal or more loss to the enemy. In this case as both the families lost one member each, but Siz’s family suffered a greater loss because of him being a man. In Pakhtun society, a male member is considered as superior to female both by men and by women. Hence, Siz’s in-laws did more *pukhto* by killing a man (symbol of power of a family), whereas Siz ‘only’ killed a woman (considered weak and subordinate) and therefore did less *pukhto* in comparison to his in-laws.

In Munjai people act with others in mind. It is the view of others that makes things good and bad: according to *pukhto* and against *pukhto* respectively. Others are the judges of one’s actions, and any action is done keeping in view the opinions of other people in the village. It is common to hear in discussions, *da khalak ba sa wae* (What would the people say).

Others are always observing people’s actions, and words. Therefore, other people’s opinions hold an important place in motivating the actions of villagers. Be it a wedding, revenge, engagement, prayer, or other *gham khadee* occasion all are designed keeping in mind the factor of *pukhto*. An ideal situation is considered as the one in which the close relatives, friends and the villagers praise those performing the actions. In the case of the killing of Siz the killers publicly took revenge and hence restored their honour that was taken from them by Siz when he killed his wife.

This incident created many questions and discussions for the villagers. I heard different points of views regarding this topic. That night, and for the next few days, it was a hot topic to be discussed by the men of all ages, and it was discussed in the shops, streets, and in the *hujras*. I later on came to know that the women were also discussing the issue in the houses.

There was a mixed reaction of the villagers to the killing of Siz. To some it was a cruel act defying both *pukhto* and Islam, while for others it was an act of *pukhto* and if the in-laws of Siz had not taken this *badal* they would be taunted and labelled as *bai-gharata* (without honour). The villagers put all the events in the context of *pukhto*. They would speak individually of all the actors involved in it.
According to most of the villagers, Siz’s killing of his wife was justified because he took the step in order to protect his izzat (honour) which was at stake. His action was seen as perfectly in accordance with Pakhtunwali and after doing so he was considered to be a good Pakhtun.

Afzal said to me:

“What else was he left with? How would he have an honourable life if his wife was having a bad character? A man’s pukhto is a reflection of the character of the woman of the household. We might say it was wrong to kill his wife but at the same time we must think of his izzat (honour). He had to choose between two evils a) risking his Pakhtunness b) killing his wife, and he chose the lesser evil, because, if he had not killed his wife he would be killed by the taunts of the people and then he would be a living dead, which is worse than a dead person, He has lost this life for a cause and that cause is none other than to preserve his honour so he has died defending his honour”.

Hence, in that sense Siz risked his life (by killing his wife as he must have known that he would be killed) in order not to risk his Pakhtunness, because by losing his Pakhtunness he might have become a spak sadai (dishonourable man), and hence it would have been difficult for him to live a peaceful life because of people’s taunts for the rest of his life.

Other people criticized Siz and called him a weak man who had killed a woman, because a woman is considered to be a weak and inferior creature compared to a man. They would blame him for his wife’s immoral activities because of his inability to control her. A man must show nartob (manliness) and must be able to control his wife in order to protect his izzat so as to be called a Pakhtun, in which he failed. As one informant noted:

“It’s a cowardly act, killing a woman is not the solution, he must have questioned himself as to why he failed to control his wife, it was his duty, solely his, and if he was suspicious he must have killed the man/men lying with her”.

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Siz’s in-laws were also both appreciated and criticized for killing him and some even suggested that Siz deserved a harsher death. Whereas others would label their act as a cowardly act because of the way he was killed and some would look at the incident from the Islamic point of view, thereby arguing that forgiveness would have been a better option than killing.

In contrast, the action of Siz’s in-laws was according to pukhto, because they killed him to restore their izzat otherwise they would not have been able to live an honourable life and the taunts of the villagers would haunt them.

According to Iftikhar:

“Siz’s in-laws were left with no choice but to restore their izzat, which was seriously damaged by Siz’s allegation and killings of his wife. Siz was unable to justify his step, because he did not kill the man that he thought was involved with his wife, even though he had enough time to defend himself by at least pointing out that person, but he failed, and I must say it’s a country ruled by pukhto so his in-laws live on the land of pukhto91 and in that case they must do pukhto, and they did it and have been able to restore their izzat”.

However, there were people who were not happy with the way Siz was killed. As Hayat the shopkeeper said:

“They could have killed him with a single bullet away from the people, all this was so bad because I saw it myself. I couldn’t sleep that night. Believe me I can never imagine humans can be that cruel to each other. It was inhumane. They might have restored their lost honour but in my eyes they have lost honour more than they have gained”.

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91 ‘Land of pukhto’ (Da pukhto watan) literally means pukhto’s country. Watan means ‘country’. Pakhtuns interchangeably use watan (country), zmaka (land/earth), khawra (soil). All these words when used with a suffix ‘da pukhtano’ (meaning ‘of or belonging to the Pakhtuns’) or ‘da pukhto’ (land of Pakhtunwali), for example da pukhtano watan, da pukhto zmaka and da pukhtano khawra signifies the whole Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and the tribal areas. Some people also use the same words referring to the Pakhtun areas of both Pakistan and Afghanistan.
Those who were not present on the occasion would criticize those who were present and would raise questions on the pukhto of the crowd who did nothing to stop the killers. Therefore, the crowd was termed as bai-gherata (without honour) and their choice to remain silent was termed as bai-gherati (cowardice). Many people were heard saying that ‘pukhto ye mda wa agha wakh’ (“Their pukhto was dead at that time”) referring to the cowardly act of those who were standing there and did nothing to stop the killers. Their pukhto was viewed as dead, by some, because it did not wake up to stop the killers.

Also in the context of the definition of Pakhtun92 in terms of its letters, where the second word of the Pukhto language ‘kh’ means khegada (doing good), the crowd failed to do any good to the individual as well as to the community. The killing led to an enmity and hence chaos in the community. Afzal, an informant said the following when we discussed this case:

“That is where pukhto has changed, that is why I feel ashamed when I call today’s Pakhtuns as real Pakhtuns. Where was pukhto when a man was killed in front of so many people? They (the crowd) should have stopped the killers. They were watching them kill him and how come these people talk about gherat where was their gherat hiding when all this was happening? Today they did not stop people from killing Siz, tomorrow others won’t come forward to save them. You will reap whatever you sow and that’s how pukhto works”.

But another old man Nazeer had a different opinion of the events that happened;

“It’s not about pukhto but if someone would have jumped in the middle to stop the killers it might have led to another killing as well because they had made up their mind to kill Siz. They did warn people not to come forward, so why would someone risk his own self as well as initiate an enmity for himself?”

Nazeer’s point of view was endorsed by many other villagers as well those who were of the opinion that it was a matter between Siz and his in laws so why should someone else come between them?

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92 Discussed in chapter 1.
The situation could ideally be summed up as Siz risked his life rather than risking his izzat, so he killed his wife, did a ‘respectable’ job and hence did pukhto. Similarly his in-laws suffered a blow to their izzat when Siz killed his wife and accused her of having illicit relationships with others. Their pukhto or restoration of izzat was the driving force to kill Siz. They killed Siz and hence did pukhto by restoring their lost izzat. In the same way the crowd that was standing there remained silent and did not stop the killers from killing the man. This behaviour of the crowd can be summed up as against pukhto and one of its basic tenets: khegada’s to do collective good.

Through a recent telephone conversation with Iftikhar I was told that the two families have agreed to end the enmity. The agreement involved payment of money as compensation to Siz’s family by his in-laws. The reason why Siz’s family demanded money from his in-laws is because of the male dominance in Pakhtun society where a man is considered as superior to women. Hence Siz’s family is considered to have incurred more loss in comparison to his in-laws, which they fulfilled by paying compensation money. It is the decision of the jirga which tries to stop further bloodshed and arbitrates in the conflict. A Pakhtun must accept the decision of the jirga as it is one way of doing pukhto. Payment of money by the aggressor though does not completely wipe out the shame associated with the crime; however helps restore the izzat to some extent.

While discussing the pukhto done by Siz’s in-laws, by killing him, people would refer to some more cases where they were awaiting for pukhto to be done or where revenge was yet to be taken. Below is another case which was one of the most discussed cases.

Sabir’s case

Sabir a young man in his early thirties belonged to the Shenwari family. He started an affair with a girl named Zarga, who belonged to the maidani family. 93 Zarga was already engaged to one of her cousin’s Nim. Sabir and Zarga decided to elope as they knew that they could not marry each other whilst living in Munjai, because of Zarga’s engagement. They therefore escaped from the village to an unknown place.

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93 Maidani are people who migrated to Munjai from Maidan area of Dir District. The villagers consider them to be part of the ghareeban (the poor). Ghareeban include all the current and ex-landless people and the occupational classes such as shoe makers, barbers, blacksmiths etc.
Soon after the elopement, people in the village came to know, and different stories started to be told about the situation. This kind of scenario is considered to be extremely embarrassing for the girl’s family because a girl is considered as *da kor izzat* (honour of the house), and her actions were seen to have dishonoured the whole family. The girl’s family coped by remaining hidden from the villagers, until the issue was resolved.

Sabir’s father was a *musafar* (migrant) in Saudi Arabia, for more than 30 years. It is still unknown where Sabir and Zarga went initially, but most people assumed that they were in Islamabad, the capital of Pakistan which is considered to be a peaceful\(^4\) city. Also, because of the 24 hour enhanced security, people’s lives are safe compared to other cities of Pakistan. Only Sabir’s family knew where they were staying because he was in contact with his family by telephone. Sabir was also supported by his family financially. They probably stayed in guest houses and hotel rooms initially and later on in a flat. If they sensed any danger they would change their location quickly so that no one could trace them. After almost a year, Zarga gave birth to a son and their news reached the village through one source or the other. Knowing that the girl’s family would take *badal*, Sabir’s father made some efforts for reconciliation but failed. The reason why the reconciliation efforts failed was because even if Mat (Zarga’s father) had reconciled with Sabir’s father, the girl’s ex-fiancé Nim would never have agreed. This is because as his wife to be, her act of eloping with another man dishonoured him.

Years passed and the honour of Mat and Nim remained suspended, which led to questions being raised about their Pakhtunness and that made the family members ‘unable’ to face the villagers.

In order to understand the situation more clearly, it is necessary to examine the historical relationship of dependency between the rich and the poor in Munjai. Until the mid-1970’s ghareeban (the poor) were totally dependent upon Shenwaris for food, shelter and clothing, because the Shenwaris were the land holding chiefs.

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\(^{94}\) Islamabad is the capital of Pakistan. It is the where the country’s Prime minister, President and many other high officials live. Islamabad also hosts the embassies of different countries and their staff. Islamabad is highly patrolled and guarded by the security forces. Because of the strict security measures, compared to other cities of Pakistan, Islamabad is safer.
The authority and influence of the chiefs started declining after two major events. Firstly, the land reforms introduced by the Pakistan Government in the 1970s, gave tenants the right to own the land of their chiefs if they had been cultivating for long enough (see for details Rashid 1985; Herring 1979).

Secondly, the immigration of villagers to the Gulf States resulted in better economic conditions for the ghareeban. The ghareeban were thus no longer dependent on the chiefs for food and shelter. Locally, a servant must remain loyal to his chief or master even if he no longer serves him because he is considered to have eaten the rizaq (food) of the chief’s house, which he must repay by remaining loyal to him and his family. Such loyalty involves: respecting the female of the chief’s household; standing by the chief whenever he needs help; and keeping in contact with the chief and his family through participation in sorrows and joys.

In the same manner Mat had served Sabir’s family, but he went to Dubai and was therefore no longer dependent upon his chief. He made a handsome amount of money abroad which enabled him to buy some land in Munjai.

After buying land Mat’s status increased and he became more honourable than in the past. Some villagers were expecting that Mat may not take badal (revenge) because of his ex-chief-servant relationship, where a servant must pay back to the chief through loyalty. Another reason why some people thought Mat should not take revenge was that the Shenwaris were more influential in different government departments, local politics, and had more power. Therefore, an act of revenge could lead to an unending enmity or a ghata dushmani (big enmity).

Mat had already planned what he was going to do. He consulted his brother, Nim and some other family members. It was difficult for him to take badal on a strong opponent. Sabir’s family accepted that Sabir’s act was against pukhto, but because he is a male their izzat was not lost. Instead they supported Sabir because one does not desert close relatives during hard times.

Following the birth of their baby boy, Mat sped up his hunt and started contacting different people who could trace and kill them.
Zarga’s family finally traced them in the Punjab province of Pakistan. They were both killed with the help of some ‘rented killers’, but the couple’s son was not killed. It is said that Mat paid a huge amount of money to the killers, so much that he even had to sell the land that he bought many years ago. The little boy was not killed because he was innocent in the whole affair and it was enough that those who had done wrong (Sabir and his wife) were punished, for the restoration of Mat and Nim’s izzat. Others thought that by killing the baby boy Mat would have killed two male members of Sabir’s family, and hence it would have become a very big enmity which is considered to be a bala (curse), which is always harmful and continues for generations. By killing two male members Mat would have had to risk two male members from his own family being killed which would have been devastating, as male members are considered to be major assets of any family.

By looking at Sabir’s case in terms of pukhto, Mat and Nim were dishonoured when Zarga eloped with Sabir. In order to avenge the loss of izzat, Mat had to kill both of them. Sabir belonged to an influential family and killing him was inviting a big dushmani. Mat had to choose what he considered the lesser of ‘two evils’: He could choose to live with the situation by forgiving them both and avoid any dushmani, or he could choose to have them both killed and restore his family’s izzat. By killing them he suffered a heavy financial loss but he did pukhto and hence restored his izzat. He sold his land, which was also a symbol of prestige and izzat. Nonetheless, the izzat he restored through taking badal was seen as more appreciable, because he could buy land anytime but he could not restore the family’s izzat easily. The act of Mat is considered as worthy of appreciation because he took revenge on a strong opponent and hence is considered to have performed ghata pukhto (big pukhto).

Sabir’s family suffered a heavy loss because they lost two people, Sabir and his wife. The biggest loss is losing a young son who is considered as the ‘might of the family’ and also is

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95 Professional killers are available in different parts of Pakistan, who kill for money. It is not very easy to find such people. One has to go through taluq (contacts/friendships) to use their services. These killers have taluq with the police and with other government officials, and they support and protect them at times.

96 The term ghata pukhto is used when a person does an exceptional act of pukhto and receives praises from his fellows. This word is not used very commonly. Paying money to the killers does not affect one’s izzat, because had the badal been taken by Mat or one of his family members directly it could have ended up in going to the prison, which is another act of shame.

97 The marital residence pattern among Pakhtuns is virilocal and the girl after her marriage into a family is considered to be part of her husband’s family.
the bread winner when the parents are old. However, cases where a couple is involved in extra marital relationships do not necessarily invoke badal (Ahmed 1980: 202). Even so, some villagers are now waiting for pukhto to be done by Sabir’s father, but no one knows when. Many people in Munjai are of the view that he will definitely take revenge for his son’s death in order to restore his own honour.

Sabir’s case is totally different than Siz’s case because here, Sabir developed two enmities, one with Mat and the second with Nim. This case was more complex both in the context of pukhto and Islam. This is because in pukhto one cannot justify elopement as a good act, and in Islam any female who is in a male’s nikah can remarry only after taking divorce from her first husband, though they (Zarga and Nim) were not formally married but the ceremonial nikah was performed which makes a couple a husband and wife. Zarga was already in nikah to Nim and hence her re-marriage to Sabir could not be justified as valid until Nim had divorced her.

People discuss such events from their own perspectives. While discussing Sabir’s case at different occasions with different people I got a range of views. For example, an old man, Afzal, said:

“The act of elopement is both against Islam and pukhto, what other option was Mat left with? He had to live in this village and how could he live here by being a bai-gherata? People would not only taunt him and his coming generations and even his own sons might have no respect left for him, because in the end Mat himself was the decision maker in the household. Therefore, it was his responsibility to restore that honour or stay being a begherata (without honour), he incurred financial loss but he restored his honour, did pukhto and can walk with a high head now’’.

The mullah (prayer leader) of the local mosque, Aziz, looked at the issue from a religious point of view:

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98 Nikah means an Islamic religious ceremony. It is often performed by the mullah in the presence of two witnesses. The mullah asks for the consent of both man and woman. Some people arrange witnesses and do it in a hidden way through a mullah. Sabir is believed to have done a hidden nikah. For details on nikah see Thanvi (n.d).
“That is where we need to follow Islam because Islam teaches us to ask the girl’s consent before giving her hand to someone. We do not ask girls because we consider it a sharam (shame) but what if we face the big sharam (elopement) whilst escaping from a small sharam (asking girl’s consent), and then to do away with that sharam we develop enmities, which involves killings and aren’t such killings more shameful?”

A comparison of pukhto and Islam is dragged into different discussions by the villagers. People are very concerned about the teachings of Islam and they do tell others to follow the teachings. However, whenever the Islamic teachings result in a slight loss of izzat people prefer to do pukhto. One example of it is that Islam tells its followers to ask both the boy and the girl before making any marital arrangements, but it is pukhto that stops people from asking the consent of the females.

In Pakhtun society a girl’s consent to marriage is rarely considered, because the father wants to exercise his unquestionable authority because he is the head of the household. It is his decision that holds immense importance in almost all the daily matters and his words are usually considered to be final. It is also considered shameful for fathers or brothers to go and ask their daughters consent in marrying them off, because, firstly, they fear that the girl may refuse and such a refusal would be dishonouring for her father or brother; second, females are considered as less important and kam aqli (half-brained), which means that girls and women are seen as incapable of making good decisions for themselves and third, because of having no familiarity and interaction with the men, it is understood that a girl cannot know who is better for her and who is not.

Nazeer, an elder and a member many Jirgas in Munjai, said:

“Allah teaches us to ask both the girl’s and the boy’s consent, but because of our pukhto we don’t do that because if we do that we think we become dishonourable. In Sabir’s case how good it would have been if the girl’s consent was asked while she was engaged to her cousin. She might have refused her cousin and she could have married Sabir in a proper Islamic way without risking their lives. But
the girl was never asked and that may have been the reason why she eloped. So just to satisfy our pukhto we lose izzat and then to restore that izzat we lose many other things’’.

In Sabir’s case most of the people think that had Mat asked his daughter’s consent before giving her hand to her cousin, she might not have eloped. Sabir might have asked for her hand through his parents and things would have remained normal, but because Mat’s pukhto stopped him from asking his daughter’s consent, he suffered from a greater loss of izzat. Though he later on restored that izzat but at the expense of losing land, money and developing an enmity that is potentially endless.

Section B: The inability to take revenge and the alternative practises to do pukhto

Once, while standing in the daag⁹⁹ of Munjai, after the maskhutan munz (last prayer of the day), a scuffle suddenly started between some boys and they started physically attacking a man. The man was beaten up by four other young boys. In a matter of minutes, as it usually happens, the close relatives of both parties came to support their respective kin. Many boys and men came, some came with wooden sticks in their hands to ‘enjoy’ the scuffle. Shopkeepers stopped trading and came out of the doors of their shops to watch.

The man who had been attacked was wounded on his nose. Some ‘other’ people came in and scattered among the crowd. Some boys just stood there and were joined by some more boys with sticks in their hands. The opposing party did not show up with enough strength and disappeared from the scene. The reason why the fight occurred was because the man named Razi, who was the one who was beaten, had accidentally hit the shoulder of one of the boys involved in the fight.

This fight was between two khanadanuna (plural of family) belonging to ghareeban. Razi, who was beaten up was Hadi’s younger brother, while those who attacked him were their neighbours.

⁹⁹ See footnote 12 chapter 3.
Hadi is a man in his early fifties. He owns a shop in Munjai as well as another in Timergara. Considered financially well off, both the families are much discussed in the village. The reason why they are discussed is not because of their business or financial condition but a serious and complicated feud involving a zan (woman). As noted above, zan is one of the three reasons for conflicts among Pakhtuns.

Hadi lives in an extended family with five more brothers and their children. Their ittefaq (unity) and wrorwali (brotherhood), according to the villagers is exemplary. The other family is also financially well off and is headed by Aman, who is a retired migrant, whose sons are now working abroad. The ittefaq and wrorwali among his sons are also considered to be good.

Seven years ago Aman’s son Muk started an affair with the daughter (named Parveen) of Hadi. They are next door neighbors. Parveen was already engaged to one of her relatives, Izaz, from a nearby village. Rumours of Muk and Parveen’s affair were in the air. Knowing that it was impossible for them to get married within the village, as the girl was already engaged, they eloped to an undisclosed location.

The elopement resulted in Aman’s family developing two enmities, one with Hadi and another with the fiancé of the girl Izaz. Both Hadi and Izaz vowed to take revenge on Muk. Besides the girl’s father, the girl’s fiancé had also lost pukhto and izzat because his would-be his wife who fled, rejecting him. Additionally, his gherat (dignity) also required him to step forward and take badal.

The couple, according to villagers fled to Bajaur, which is a tribal area and borders the Lower Dir district. The reason why they went to Bajaur was the lack of police who could locate them. Also the tribal areas are a refuge of many other ‘outlaws’ who, after committing different crimes in the settled areas, go there to avoid any police action. In the tribal areas they ask for panah (shelter) under Pakhtunwali and one must give panah to anyone, including one’s enemies if it is asked. Once panah is given the host becomes responsible for the protection of the guest.

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100 See chapter 1 for more details on federally administered tribal areas and the administration there.
In Bajaur the young couple lived with one of Muk’s relatives. The elopement left Hadi’s family in despair; under pukhto their izzat was lost and they were shamed. Now, the only way to restore their izzat was to trace the eloped couple and kill them. Despite many years Hadi and his brothers couldn’t take their badal, and their inability to take badal led to negative talking among the villagers and questions were raised concerning their pukhto.

Muk was helped by his relatives and a visa was arranged for him to go to Dubai. People do not usually take their wives with them while they are in musafari (being abroad); the main reasons are the high cost of keeping a family in the Gulf countries and another reason is that is considered as shameful for Pakhtun men to take their wives along with them. This is because, normally it is considered a threat to the unity of the extended family. However, in Muk’s case it seems to be that his inability to financially support his wife and children, because he had already left his extended family and was living as a nuclear family. By the time Muk was leaving for Dubai the couple had three children and until then they were financially supported by Muk’s family.

Parveen was still living with her children in Bajaur, when Muk went for musafari. Now, when the young mother was alone with her children, Muk started sending her money from Dubai. Parveen was not happy with her life because she was living alone with her children and had to rely on ‘outsider’ men for bringing things from the shops or for any other work outside home. She was approached by some men who wanted to take advantage of her living alone. Already in trouble and fearing for her life and that of her children she could not tell anyone what she was going through, not even her husband because this might have led to other enmities. Parveen was unhappy with the way things were going in her life.

One day Parveen managed to find the telephone number of her ex fiancé Izaz. After talking to him a few times, she called him to her house with a promise that he will neither disclose the address to anyone else nor would he kill her. Izaz agreed and visited her in her house. This meeting led to a number of meetings and finally Parveen in the absence of Muk decided to go with Izaz and marry him. Parveen still had the fear that Izaz might kill her one day, in order to do away with that feeling she took an oath from Izaz on the Quran that he will not kill her. Taking an oath on the Quran means that the promise is unbreakable in any
eventuality. Without letting Muk know of her decision the girl went\footnote{People did not use the word ‘eloped’ this time because in many people’s view the girl was now doing the right thing hence they would use the word lada (went) and not watakhteda (eloped).} with Izaz to an undisclosed location.

When Muk got to know this, he immediately left Dubai for Pakistan. He came back to take revenge and kill both the girl and the boy. Unable to find the couple and take revenge, he filed a case in the court. His inability to take revenge as well as his filing of the case in the court is seen as against pukhto because people who are unable to restore their izzat and go to court submit to the state’s authority, which is considered as weakness and against pukhto.

Izaz and Parveen went to an unknown location and in Izaz’s absence because of fear of badal from Muk, Izaz’s brother was representing him in the court. One day while Izaz’s brother was on his way to the court for a hearing of the case he had a scuffle with Muk, who opened fire on him. Muk might have done it out of impatience and sharam (shame) of being unable to take badal from Izaz.\footnote{Any case in a court takes a very long time and one has to visit the court time and time again.}

Izaz’s brother was injured in his leg. The police intervened and took Muk into their custody, making Izaz’s case stronger. Perceiving the matter to be going nowhere, the two khanadanuna (Muk’s family and Izaz’s family) sat together in a jirga.\footnote{The reason why the girl’s family did not sit in the jirga is that the matter was now between these two families.} Keeping in mind the sensitivity of the issue, the jirga was attended by masharan (elders) from all the khanadanuna (families) of the village.

Both Muk’s and Izaz’s families sat together and after a few sittings of the jirga came to a decision. The elders decided that the girl, as according to her own wish should be allowed to live with Izaz while the children (Muk’s and Parveen’s children) should be given to Muk’s family. Jirga always tries to minimise the risk of loss to both the parties in a conflict. This jirga was also attended by the mullah who looked at the case in the light of Islamic teachings.

After the success of the jirga, Muk was released from jail, because if two parties who are involved in a conflict that has resulted in any member being jailed by the police gives a
written agreement to the police stating that the parties in the conflict have settled the issue through the *jirga* with some witnesses signing the deed, it results in the jailed person being freed. Similarly a written application was filed by both of the parties signed by the *jirga* members and Muk was released.

The *jirga* also decided that Muk and Parveen should not enter the village for six months which was just a precautionary step to avoid any mishap. Though the *jirga* solved the matter between Aman and Hadi’s family the families still have no *gham khadee* relationships.

Muk and Parveen’s case is different from the other two cases already mentioned in this chapter. *Badal* was taken in both of these cases, *izzat* was restored and hence *pukhto* was done. This case is more complex: initially it was Hadi’s family and Izaz who had to restore their *izzat* through killing the couple. After Parveen’s decision to go with Izaz, it was Muk who lost his *izzat* in the eyes of the villagers because his wife left him. Such a man, who is abandoned by his wife, is considered *sharmedalai* (shamed).

Izaz had two options either to kill Parveen which would have led him and his family to a more severe *dushmani* (enmity) or to compromise with the situation. He chose the later. Many villagers think that he acted intelligently and saved his *pukhto* by giving a severe blow to Muk by taking his wife away from him. With Parveen’s decision of marrying Izaz, and the oath Izaz gave on the Quran, now Hadi does not have to kill her. Parveen’s decision has also restored Hadi’s *pukhto* (not fully, but to some extent) because now Aman and his family have to face the taunts of not being able to do *pukhto*.

Many villagers still think that Hadi has to take *badal* in order to restore his *izzat* fully. Though they have ended the *dushmani*, many villagers are of the view that this *dushmani* might re-emerge any day in the coming years. The fight that took place between Muk’s brothers and Hadi’s brother was one such attempt to renew the *dushmani* from Muk’s family. Until the decision of Parveen to marry Izaz, Hadi’s *pukhto* would be questioned more, while now it is Muk’s *pukhto* that is always discussed and questioned.

Now, when Hadi has not undertaken *badal* by killing Parveen and Muk, how can he be considered a good Pakhtun? How will he restore the *izzat* lost when his daughter eloped with a boy, married him, and had children with him?
According to the majority of people I spoke to, in order to regain his lost pukhto, Hadi must perform khegada (doing good) with the villagers and must actively participate in gham khadee within and outside the village. This will help him build his profile as a good Pakhtun as well as increasing his taluq (friendship).

Hadi, though is yet to take badal from Aman’s family, but he is still struggling hard through gham khadee participation to ensure that his pukhto remains intact. Another reason why he participates in gham khadee is to make taluq (friendships) with the local people and beyond. Such taluq could be manipulated later if he takes his badal. He can use his taluq in courts and police stations; such taluq can also be used to get financial assistance from his friends.

Naeem, a close friend of Hadi, told me in an informal chat that:

“Hadi is still planning to take badal but he cannot, because he has to abide by the rules of the jirga but he is very cool and calm. He is doing pukhto through gham khadee regularly and may or may not take badal one day”.

Despite his inability to do pukhto through taking badal, Hadi still practises Pakhtunwali in a different way i.e via gham khadee (participation in sorrows and joys). Almost everyone I spoke to is sure that Hadi will gradually restore his izzat with time, all he will have to do is to stay calm, practise gham khadee and khegada.

As far as the pukhto of Muk is concerned, though the issue has been resolved by the jirga some villagers still think that Muk will have to take badal and kill both Izaz and his wife to restore his izzat. On the other hand one must obey the decision of the jirga once one agrees to its decision, though Muk was in jail at that time but the consent of his father means he too agreed to the jirga’s decision. No one knows what will exactly happen in future but it is sure that Muk is not going to take his badal soon because of the jirga’s decision and because of the fear of the police and courts. As Iftikhar once said:

“There is no other way, you cannot live shamed for life, and people will taunt your coming generations. Muk will take his badal one day. He is probably waiting for a right time and once that time has arrived

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he will go for it. He will not care about any loss because izzat is dearer than any other thing. Muk has got money; he has got men in his family; he can afford badmashan (rented killers)".  

Money and men are considered as equally important for a family’s izzat, because it is through money that one can extend melmastyaa (hospitality), increase one’s taluq (friendship circle), bribe the police to remove any case against themselves, bribe the judges for the same purpose, buy land, do gham khadee as well as become a leader because a leader must possess all these mentioned qualities.

Men are considered as the power of the family so the more men a family has, the stronger are they considered in the eyes of the outsiders, and people avoid confrontation with such families. Also, in case of any attack on their izzat it is the men who will restore the family’s izzat. Similarly the more men in a family the more it is expected to be well-off because earning money is considered to be the job of the men of the family.  

Muk, whose family has many men (his brothers and cousins) is considered as strong in that sense. They also have a good business in the Gulf and earn a good amount of money on a regular basis. The influence of money in such cases cannot be underestimated because it is very expensive to hire professional and rented killers to restore one’s izzat. The same was done by Mat in Sabir’s case and it is said that it cost him a lot of money.

Disagreeing with Iftikhar’s comment (above) on Muk’s case, Shahwas of the view that:

“But why shall he take badal if jirga has decided he should not? If his case is decided by jirga he is not shamed, even if he does not take badal”.

“How can he maintain his pukhto if he does not take badal?” I asked, to which Shah replied:

“The reason why many people think Muk should take badal is to restore his izzat, but he has to abide by the jirga’s decision; this is also pukhto. He can restore his izzat by other means for example

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104 Taunts by other people are considered to be shameful and it challenges one’s gherat to react. If one still fails to react, the person is considered as bai-gherata. A taunt could lead to quarrel, or even deaths at times.

105 Not all the think so, however many people in the village are of this view.
khedda (doing good) with the villagers. He has to do gham khadee and with such practices he can lead his life as a good Pakhtun. He will not take badal, I am sure”.

The jirga holds immense importance in Pakhtun society; all of its decisions must be accepted and anyone who does not do so is not considered a good Pakhtun. Shah’s views were shared by many other people and in their opinion Muk does not have to take badal to restore his izzat. In their view, all he needs to do is to abide by the jirga’s decision, do khedda (good) with the villagers, and actively participate in gham khadee within, as well as outside, the village.

Some people were of the view that until Muk undertakes badal he should practise gham khadee as an alternative to maintain his pukhto. Akbar, a school teacher belonging to Pukhtana was of the view that:

“Badal among Pakhtuns is not an act that should be taken in a hurry, it sometimes takes years. You have to be very calm and act with maturity, because you have to think of the whole family, who will get affected in one way or the other. You not only have to take badal but you have to defend yourself as well as your family from your enemy, police and courts”.

This case became the centre of discussion especially after Siz’s case in which Siz was killed and his in-laws restored their izzat. Muk came under criticism for being unable to protect his pukhto and izzat.

People’s negative talk always acts as a catalyst in expediting people’s responses to certain events. There is a commonly used pukhto sentence, “da khalak ba sa wae” (“What will the people think/say?”) that leads to certain actions and responses and to different events.

There is also a consensus among the villagers that taking badal has become difficult because of the presence of state laws along with the police and courts. Also, the worsening security situation in the Tribal areas has made it difficult for the perpetrators of different crimes

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106 In almost all the seven agencies that make the tribal areas, the Pakistan army has been fighting the Taliban for almost a decade now, this fighting has led to huge number of local people’s displacement, and killings. The
to manipulate Pakhtunwali and take refuge with someone there, hence making badal more risky to practise. Another reason is the impact of the remittances\textsuperscript{107} from the Gulf, with the flow of money some people look at pukhto as a clash with Islam and hence they opt for Islam, saying that pukhto is ignorance. Remittances have also helped people to gain access to education within the village, district, other cities and some even study abroad. People think that the increase in the literacy rate is one reason why badal as violence is becoming uncommon.

Discussing the same case an elderly villager, Mumtaz who has been a jirga member for many years, summed up the whole case in a single proverb:

\textit{Patkai che ugo tha shi prewathai ye ma ganra.}

Translation: When the turban falls from the head but remains on the shoulder do not consider it fallen.

The proverb indicates that despite losing pukhto, Hadi, as well as Muk, can still maintain their pukhto but the only way to do so, as was said by the elderly man, is to ‘engage in extensive gham khadee within and outside the village’. That is how they can remain izzatdar (honourable).

A Scuffle with a different revenge

The impact of the military operation in the area can still be felt by any visitor to the district or even the Malakand division. Any entrant to the Malakand has to pass through several military, police and paramilitary check posts, where almost always they check the Pakistani ID card and asks different questions of people. They often ask where a traveller is from and where he is going. Anyone who does not have a valid identity is detained for further questioning. One can use taluq and pass the check posts in case one forgets or does not have an id card.

\textsuperscript{107} The impact of remittances has been discussed in chapter 2.
According to the local people, the paramilitary personnel sometimes ask questions which are in contradiction to *pukhto* e.g. asking men to get out of the car especially in front of their women, using harsh words in front of women or performing body searches. All these things are considered to be against *pukhto*.

Such scuffles and arguments with the security personnel have become a routine matter because until recently there were just a few police check posts in the area. The check posts would often be guarded by local police personnel who knew the local people as well as the values of the area. The local policemen would also know the ‘influential’ people in the area, and hence would be careful in dealing with them. However, things changed after the military operation[^108] in the Maidan area of lower Dir and now the paramilitary forces have set up many check posts in order to ensure the security of the area.

The local people are severely critical of the check posts and consider these humiliating because of the behaviour of the soldiers who man the check posts. Another reason why the people are not happy is that besides local policemen, the soldiers of the paramilitary forces mostly belong to other areas (the ones I came across were from Chitral and Waziristan). Being ‘outsiders’ it is hard for such people to understand how to behave appropriately with the local people, though the ones from Waziristan are Pakhtuns the Chitralis cannot fluently speak and understand Pukhto.

While I was in the field a villager, Azim was stopped by a paramilitary soldier at a check post. The villager was accompanied by his wife and nephew. The soldier waved his hand indicating to them to stop the car for security checks. Azim’s nephew was driving the car moved forward unable to see the soldier. The soldier informed his colleague who was standing some distance further on and he stopped the car. The soldier came running to the car and started arguing with Azim and his nephew. The soldier was angry because they had not stopped the car despite him waving his hand. The soldier asked both the Azim and his nephew to get out of the car and clarify their position. Considering this request of the soldier an insult to his *izzat*, Azim resisted. The soldiers called his colleagues to come and take them out of the car so both Azim and his nephew were taken out of the car into the security room situated a few yards from where the car was stopped. After much arguments

[^108]: The military conducted many operations in Dir and its neighbouring areas against the Taliban.
and the intervention of a local influential politician (Bhaijan the politician discussed in chapter 6) both were released.\textsuperscript{109}

Feeling embarrassed and dishonoured, Azim and his nephew came back to the car and drove away. The news reached the village soon and the villagers started interpreting the incident in different ways. People were anticipating Azim’s response to his be-izzati (dishonour).

But what did Azim actually do to restore his izzat? And, how was his response was evaluated by the local people?

Azim used his taluq (friendship/influence) first to get out of the security room where they were initially taken by the soldiers, and he further used his taluq and had the official transferred to a far off area, where he was unable to travel frequently to his home. The ‘transfer’ is seen as the ‘revenge’ in this case.

The taluq which Azim used to transfer the soldier was mostly created through his gham khadee within the village, the district and beyond. Hence, it was his gham khadee through which he made taluq which caused the transfer of the soldier and maintained his izzat.

The decision of Azim to use his taluq and get the soldier transferred who had dishonoured him was seen differently by different villagers.

According to Shah:

“\textquote{If it had happened 20 years ago the revenge would involve killing or at least beating up the soldier and only then one would have been able to restore honour but today, because of the presence of security forces, police and active administration people rarely take the risk of revenge through violence}”.

Similarly, Iftikhar, when I asked him if Azim’s izzat has been restored or not with the transfer of the soldier, said:

\textsuperscript{109} Bhaijan used his influence, called the head of the military in the district who released both Azim and his nephew. Here also we can see how taluq can be manipulated at times.
“It’s hard to fight with the state, we have to accept that they are strong and hence we have to compromise our pukhto, or I may say we have to do pukhto this way in such cases. No one can raise questions on our pukhto because such things happen with all of us; it is not limited to an age group or a family or a village. The best thing in such cases is to be patient. Azim did the right thing and yes that is the right way to do pukhto. Today when he drives past that area no soldier mis-behaves with him because of the fear of the transfer to a far flung area”.

The above story has raised certain questions concerning the pukhto of the local people and the respect shown to local values by outsiders. As mentioned above, soldiers often come from other parts of the country and know little about the local culture and values. From the villager’s perspective, the soldier had dishonoured Azim, and in order to regain his izzat must take revenge on the soldier. The first step taken by the soldier which was viewed as dishonourable was that he stopped the vehicle with a female inside it. Furthermore, the soldier ‘misbehaved’ with the villager in front of the female, which is against pukhto and local values. According to some people who consider the pukhto of the past where blood revenge was common as ideal, Azim should have retaliated without considering the results, but he could not retaliate because the soldier has authority and is backed up by the government. The behaviour of Azim (not retaliating) according to people who hold such views is against pukhto.

On coming out of the compound the villager vowed revenge, in one way or another, but until today he has not been able to do anything because of the unquestioned authority the military and paramilitary forces enjoy. According to the villagers had the incident happened in the past either the soldier would have been beaten, or murdered, or the soldier would have apologised in public to the villager. However, the end result, where both parties reconcile is according to the ideal Pakhtunwali. The soldier should have apologised to Azim but he failed to do so, which is again an act against pukhto.
The same story clearly mentions the transformation that *Pakhtunwali* is passing through. This is not the only time when the people of Dir have had confrontations with the forces. Indeed, it has become a routine occurrence.

The transfer of the soldier illustrates taking *badal* in ways other than revenge killing and it shows that there are alternative ways to practise *badal*. The old way would have been killing or beating up the soldier, while now ‘transfer’ is seen as the ideal way to respond to such an occurrence, which was also approved by almost all the people I spoke to and was considered as a perfect *badal*. But, at the same time, many also said that the main factor that helped Azim restore his *izzat* was his *gham khadee* that led to the making of *taluq* and it was his *taluq* that helped him take ‘revenge’ i.e the transfer of the official.

**Discussion of Section ‘A’ and Section ‘B’**

After discussing the case studies above, one can see that in section ‘A’ *badal* involving killing is taken by Siz’s in-laws and Mat, *pukhto* is done by them and *izzat* restored.

But questions arise as to what happened to the *pukhto* of Sabir’s family who lost Sabir as well as his wife? Also, what of Siz’s family who lost Siz but did not retaliate but rather compromised? In a society where *badal pa badal khlasi* (tit-for-tat) is the rule to lead honourable lives and in order to be a good Pakhtun, you can only lead an honourable life if you take *badal*.

Another point that raises questions on the *pukhto* of Sabir and Siz’s family is that both the families suffered ‘heavy losses’ because of losing ‘male’ members whose lives are considered more precious than those of the women. As Iftikhar once said:

“The loss of Sabir’s father is huge, he lost a young son, who was his right hand and he should definitely take *badal* of his son, though Mat has also killed his daughter but in our society a man’s life is more precious than a women and Sabir’s *badal* can only be levelled when one of Mat’s male family member is killed”.

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110 It is a common proverb among the Pakhtuns.

111 *Khayi laas* is a term used for the right hand; it signifies the immense importance of a person.
Each member of a Pakhtun family holds a significant place in terms of the izzat of the family. Each of them contributes to or can be a potential threat to the izzat of the family according to whether his behaviour is appropriate or inappropriate.

Old women often in the shape of mor (mothers) are considered as a source of dawa (prayers) and the one who brings blessings to the home. Islam also stresses the respect for mothers through the proverb which says that ‘paradise lies under the feet of the mother’. The loss of a mother means the loss of ‘da dawa zai’ (the prayer place) and hence the blessings. It is common to hear the villagers saying ‘da mor dawa warsara da’ (mother’s prayers are with him), hence any such dawa brings blessings which results in an increase in izzat.

Conversely, a young girl is considered as a potential threat to the izzat of the family, while at the same time her modest behaviour increases the izzat of the whole family. Ahmed (1980: 202-204) presents two opposing models for different roles of Pakhtun women, the one involved in adultery known as tor (black) as opposed to mor (mother), who is ‘the symbol of exalted status in Pakhtun society’. The tor and mor model clearly describe the two opposing roles a female member of household can play concerning the overall izzat of the family. The tor label is not only specific to females, as the male who is involved in adultery or elopement is also called tor. Hence it is the act of adultery or elopement that is called tor, and the label is applied to those who perform such acts.

Tor cases are the only exceptions in Pakhtun society where badal is not necessarily invoked (ibid). So, in the case of Sabir and his wife, who committed tor, Sabir’s family was not bound by pukhto to take badal from Mat. However there is an underlying enmity between the two families which was apparent in their absence from each other’s gham khadee events.

The loss of male members, especially mashar (elder) and young men are both considered as a great loss. This is because the mashar is considered as a source of inspiration for the whole family because he has led his life doing pukhto and, as we have seen, doing pukhto is

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112 By each member I mean mashar (elder), kashar (younger), men and women all have different roles in the household, and by extension the village and beyond. For example the women cook food for men and their guests which is served to the guests in the hujra. Such food is directly linked to the izzat of the men of the household and it shows their melmastya. A similar well defined role/s is/are assigned to other members as well.
the main requirement for any leader at any level in Pakhtun society. Similarly, a young man is considered the ‘defender’ of the family’s izzat, and he is the one who will be prominent if the family is involved in any feud. He is also a source of pride for the family. A male member is also the one who through his gham khadee participation creates taluq for the family which results in the increase in the izzat of the family. He also assumes the responsibility of bread winner as soon as enters his early twenties.

In both cases (Sabir and Siz) one is a young man (Sabir) and the other one is a mashar (Siz). Hence both the families have lost da kar sadee (men of worth), considered locally as a great loss. In Sabir’s case, the couple eloped, despite the girl being engaged to one of her cousins. An engaged girl according to pukhto is ‘as good as married’ because the moment the couple gets engaged, they are considered as husband and wife. Hence it was both Mat and Nim who were shamed and who had to take their badal.

In the case of Siz, his family is reluctant to take badal because he killed his wife without providing any proof and he was even unable to name the alleged people his wife had extra marital relationships with. He could not satisfy his in-laws despite the jirga’s interference and hence was killed. The issue was settled among Siz’s brothers and his in-laws after the payment of compensation money through a jirga.

On the day Siz was killed, his murder became the most discussed topic in the shops and hujras of Munjai. But interestingly, the next day when the funeral was held, most of the people started discussing the number of people that attended the funeral; the people who came for the funeral and the number of people visiting Siz’s family for his las-niwa. I heard people discussing the funeral and las-niwa in shops, on the river bank and at Iftikhar’s hujra. Such discussions among the villagers after a case of badal involving killing were also an indication that the gham khadee events are becoming increasingly important and that these events are becoming the measure of one’s Pakhtunness. Besides the killings and their

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113 Las-niwa literally means ‘holding hands’. Las-niwa during a gham occasion refers to the gathering of male mourners to offer prayers for the dead ones in their hujra or in the hujra of a neighbour, the process may last for from three days up to a month but the ideal period to do las-niwa is the first three days after the death of the person. Las-niwa may include reciting some small verses of the Quran and some Pukhto words both in favour of the deceased so that they are blessed and their sins are forgiven. The other words used for las-niwa are dawa which means prayer and fatiha (Arabic word) which refers to a verse of the Quran that is recited while praying for the dead.
impact on the *pukhto* of Siz’s family, the villagers were discussing their *pukhto* in the context of the participation in the funeral arrangements at their *hujra* and *las-niwa*.

The second section discussed two case studies: the first one is of a serious and sensitive nature i.e involving *zan* (woman) but the matter has been resolved by a *jirga* and *badal* has not been taken yet, but both the parties are still maintaining their status of being ‘good Pakhtuns’ by doing *pukhto* through the alternative practises of *khegada* and *gham khaadee* participation.

The influence of state authority on *Pakhtunwali* is visible in the case study of Azim, who did not take *badal* from the soldier by beating or killing him, but rather used his influence to have the official transferred; thereby restoring his *izzat* and taking *badal* in a non-violent way.

**Conclusion**

This chapter discussed two main issues in two different sections. The first section discussed doing *pukhto* through taking violent *badal*, while the second section discussed a situation showing the inability of the villagers to take *badal* but still doing *pukhto* through alternative ways, acceptable to the local people. I have demonstrated through a number of case studies the importance of doing *pukhto* through taking *badal*, as well as the alternative practises in case *badal* is not taken for some reason. One of the main reasons for avoiding taking *badal* is the fear of police arrest and court trials, which are both considered as *da sharam khabara* (shameful).

This chapter has shown how *Pakhtunwali* is practised through taking *badal*, also I have mentioned how through *gham khaadee* participation, people who have not taken their *badal* struggle and maintain their Pakhtunness. It does not mean that their inability to take revenge does not affect their Pakhtunness. However, while they are not taking their *badal* they have an alternative way to stay ‘honourable’ in society. The alternative ways are participation in *gham khaadee* events and *khegada* (doing good) with the villagers. The case of Hadi in particular, shows how he struggles to restore his lost *izzat* by active participation in *gham khaadee* events despite his inability to take *badal*. 
Having shown the transformation of the practise of doing pukhto from revenge killing to participation at gham khadee events, I now turn to introduce the practise of gham khadee, including its importance in village life. By examining further case studies this thesis will illustrate how the practise of gham khadee is the most prominent form of doing pukhto and how it supersedes doing pukhto through revenge killing. It therefore serves as the most important gauge for measuring men’s Pakhtunness in Munjai and a leading source of collecting and increasing izzat. It will also be shown how participation in gham khadee confers status and izzat to men as well as their families. The term kha Pakhtun (good Pakhtun) is locally used for individuals with status and izzat.
Chapter 4: Understanding gham khadee

Beghama yawazi da Khudai zaat de.114

Only God is without sorrows.

Introduction

This thesis is about Pakhtunwali or doing pukhto. Doing pukhto is synonymous with doing the right thing. Doing pukhto increases or restores one’s honour among the villagers. The previously identified tenets of Pakhtunwali includes badal (revenge), melmastya (hospitality), tarburwali (cousin rivalry), nanawatai (seeking forgiveness), and tor (female honour) (Ahmed 1980; Barth 1986; Grima 1998; Lindholm 1982; Singer 1982 in Ahmed 2006: 2). Gham khadee emerged as the most salient feature of contemporary Pakhtunwali or doing pukhto. Ahmed (ibid) in her study of the Pakhtun women also suggests that gham khadee “has come to assume priority among Pakhtuns as a contemporary principle of Pakhtunwali”. It is through the performance of gham khadee that people see the Pakhtunness of others.

I consider it important to focus on men’s gham khadee because this is the first anthropological study which takes into consideration men’s gham khadee. Hence, this chapter will examine the basics of gham khadee.

The two major contributions on gham khadee focus particularly on Pakhtun women, whose gham khadee relationships are strikingly different from those of men. Grima’s (2004) work is, she writes, the outcome of “dissatisfaction with the existing literature” on the Pakhtuns. Grima considers women’s gham khadee participation and performance as part of their doing pukhto. For Grima, laments and narration of their sufferings form the basis of women’s honour, and hence their way of doing pukhto. Ahmed’s (2006) observations also reveal that participation during gham khadee is part of doing pukhto among the Pakhtun women of the wealthy royal families in Swat and Mardan. Ahmed did her research at “home” and hence had “unparalleled access” (Lindholm: 2010) to gham khadee occasions,

114 A Pukhto proverb.
while on the other hand Grima worked as an “outsider”, and hence did face problems getting information about certain *gham khadee* events and breaking “into the information networks” (Grima 2004: 88). My research was also done at home and hence, with the exception of a few events, I, like Ahmed, had access to and could obtain information about most of the *gham khadee* events (*gham* in particular).

*Gham khadee* literally means “sorrow-joy”. In Pakhtun society the term *gham khadee* is used to denote participation and performance in sorrows and joys or funerals and weddings. In some cases the word *gham khadee* refers to one’s participation in different communal matters of the village and co-operation with the fellow villagers when they need it; hence *gham khadee* refers to a range of actions that the Pakhtuns consider important to perform in order to lead honourable lives.

This chapter aims to answer certain important questions regarding *gham khadee*:

- How are the *gham khadee* relationships created and maintained as part of social organisation? Who carries out *gham khadee* and with whom? And, what among *gham* and *khadee* events is more significant for the people who practise *gham khadee* and why?
- What happens if one fails to attend a *gham khadee* event without a genuine reason?
- How *gham khadee* helps build people’s profile as a ‘good Pakhtun’?
- The differences between the *gham khadee* practised by men and women?
- The burden (financial and social) involved in doing *gham khadee* and the risk involved in not doing *gham khadee*?

**A gham (sorrow) Attended**

On a cold morning in December, whilst having breakfast with Iftikhar who was preparing to leave for Timergara for his job, an *elan* (announcement) was made on the loudspeaker of
the *kandaru jumaat*[^115] (the second largest mosque of the village). The message started with the following words:

*Khudai mu obakha yaw zaruri elan wowrae*

“God bless you. Listen to an important announcement”.

(This is how all the announcements in the mosque begin, be it announcing death or any other thing).

There are three *elanuna*[^116] (plural of *elan*) announced for a deceased person; the first *elan* is made to ask the people to participate in digging the grave for the deceased. There are many people who volunteer in the process because of the *sawab* (accumulation of merit that will be rewarded in the afterlife). The first announcement mentions the name of the deceased, and the graveyard location. The timing of the funeral is announced in the second *elan*, and when the funeral is ready the third and the final *elan* is made.

I heard many such announcements during my fieldwork in the village. In some announcements, the name of a person is associated with the name of his or her father, elder brother or son. The same is practised in the case when the deceased is not very well-

[^115]: The second largest mosque of the village. *Jumaat* (mosque) holds a significant place in Pakhtun society. Besides its importance as a place for prayer, *jumaat* is considered as a place where young men can socialize, see people and learn from their elders. *Jumaat* holds as much much importance as *hujra* and that is why people use the word *hujra-jumaat* whenever they refer to proper behaviour, for example in order to praise someone they would say “he is unaware of *hujra-jumaat*”. For details on the role of the mosque see (Cheema 2012).

[^116]: *Elan* means announcement and *elanuna* is its plural. Death is not the only occasion which leads to *elan*. Other occasions when *elan* can be heard in Munjai include the arrival of the staff of International or local NGOs, labour work on the stream near *shorgar* (irrigated land), announcing new prayer times (prayer timings changes with calender), decisions about the widening or surfacing of the roads and organising people for *sawkai* (security patrolling at night done by the villagers as the security situation worsened after the military operation against the Taliban in the neighboring Swat district) of the village. These *elanuna* start with the same words as an announcement of death and the place and time are also announced. If it is a collective matter, all the people are requested to participate in it, so as to ensure a smooth solution of the problem. In case of physical work some people who could not personally attend the occasion send either their *nokar* (servant) or a hired *mazdoor* (labourer).The elan could be made by anyone having access to the loudspeaker of the mosque. The loudspeaker is usually kept locked and the *moazzin* (the one who gives call for the prayers) is in charge of it. Another set of keys are also kept somewhere in the mosque just in case the *moazzin* is absent so that someone else could perform his duties.
known in the local area or if the death has occurred in another village where the people of Munjai have blood relationships or friendships. For example, one such announcement noted:

The father or brother of Dawood of Baroon (a nearby village) has died.

Because of their lesser or non-involvement in village matters, migrants who have spent most of their lives abroad are not very popular among the villagers. Their lesser participation in *gham khadee* is also a reason why they are not known very well by many people in the area. One reason why people practise *gham khadee* with each other is to know and to be known by the people of the local areas. On the one hand a less popular person holds less respect in social circles and on the other being known by the people signifies that a person has respect and is known for upholding *pukhto*.

The announcements of the deceased women are also made in the same manner but their names are not announced. Instead the names of their sons or husbands are announced, for example, “the mother of khial has died”. The reasons for this protocol in announcements are, firstly, it is against *pukhto* if outsiders come to know one’s wife’s, sister’s or even mother’s names; secondly, because they do not participate in men’s *gham khadee* and are mostly confined to the houses their identity is linked to the name of their husbands, fathers or sons. If unmarried, her identity would be linked to the name of her brother with whom she lives, and if she was young and unmarried her announcement includes the name of her father, if he is alive.

Each mosque in the village has designated certain members of the community for saying *azan* (call for prayers in Arabic) and *elan* (announcement through loud speaker) but others in the village can perform such duties. The person who does *elan* is known as *muazzin*¹¹⁷ and he performs the same duties five times a day for all prayers. The *muazzin of bar jumaat* (mosque of upper part of village, also the largest mosque in the village) is named Tayab, who is also a local medical practitioner and has a shop not very far from the mosque.

The initial sentence of the *elan* makes the people stop their usual discussions or any other business. People try to come to an open area where they can listen to the *elan* more clearly.

¹¹⁷ *Muazzin* is an Arabic term used for someone who makes the call for prayers.
The *elan* is repeated for a second time. Iftikhar immediately said, “Khudai di kher ki” (May all be well), and then walked to the small lawn of the *hujra* so that he could listen to the announcement. It was about the death of a man in Kandaru, (the other half of the village). Iftikhar also recited the Arabic prayer “*Inna lillah-i-wa inna ilaihi rajioon*” (From God we come, to God shall we go).\footnote{The translation has been taken from Ahmed (1986: 130), according to him, such words are used by Muslims after hearing about someone’s death.}

Iftikhar shared the news with me and we arranged to attend the funeral together, upon his return from Timergara, in the afternoon, when the funeral was to be held, after the prayers. He usually finishes his work at 3 in the afternoon, but that day because of the *gham* he came back in the middle of his work. The main reason why he came back earlier is that he is the *zimawar* for his household’s *gham khadee*, and hence his presence is noticed by others.\footnote{Zimawar literally means ‘responsible’. In *gham khadee* it is used for the people who represent their households and whose presence is noticed. Zimawar are the ones who mostly live in the village and in order to carry out *gham khadee* which requires financial means, these people are supported by other members of the household. There is often one zimawar person in each household for *gham khadee*, but it is highly appreciated if someone other than the zimawar person also attends the occasion along with him. Lindholm (1982: 56) used the word ‘representative’ for the person who attends the funeral but I am using the word ‘responsible’ because of the multiple roles besides *gham khadee* being played by the zimawar, and also because of the word being used by the local people. The word zimawar comes from zimawari which means responsibility. The distribution of zimawari is gendered, for instance, men of the households are responsible for certain things mostly outside the house while women are responsible for domestic arrangements i.e making food for the guests when male guests come to the *hujra*. Similarly younger sons and children serve this tea or food to male guests in the *hujra*.}

After the *elan* that I mentioned above, Iftikhar left for his job and I went to the shops where people had good things to say about the deceased. All the men were planning to go to the funeral, as attendance is obligatory and their participation was later on confirmed when I saw most of them at the funeral. It is only the families that have enmity who do not attend each other’s funerals. People even take 2-3 or even more days of leave from their jobs to mourn the death of a close relative or a close friend.

Iftikhar came back early from his job, after we had carried out ablution and with two other friends of Iftikhar we went to the place of the funeral. The funeral was held at the boy’s school ground, which is at the back of the government high school in Munjai. On the way a lot of other people could be seen going towards the school ground. The school ground was selected for the funeral because it has a smooth surface and is very close to the graveyard.
It is not the only place for funerals in Munjai but it is the most common. People were waiting in groups and discussing different issues of their day-to-day life. Some men were noticed saying to their fellows “bas dagha Jwand dai” (Alas this is the reality of life) by reminding themselves as well as their fellows that death is an inevitable part of life. The local villagers also try to go to meet those who have come all the way from the neighbouring villages. They are also given an advance invitation for tea or lunch after the funeral.

Janazgah (the funeral place)

The prayer leader of bar jumaat, Maulana Aziz, was already present in the janazgh (funeral place). He was the one who led the funeral prayers. I saw many prominent political figures of the area coming to attend the funeral prayer.

All the men were gathered in rows in order to offer the funeral prayer. After the prayers the body was buried and Maulana Aziz gave a short sermon in Pukhto while quoting different verses from the Quran in Arabic. Afterwards people went back towards the hujra of the
deceased’s family. Some men were heard extending sath (invitation) to other men from the nearby villages for tea or lunch, but most of the guests made an excuse by saying “bia ba she” (perhaps some other time). Such invitations are often extended as a formality and failing to do so may lead to khafgan (unhappiness) of the guests who may think that they have been ignored. Such invitations are usually considered as a display of melmastya.

After greeting guests from outside the village, we headed towards the hujra of the deceased. The hujra was located at a steep location at a distance of five minutes walk from the place where the funeral was offered. As soon as we reached the hujra, we could hear the voices of the women of the deceased’s family who were mourning and their cries could be clearly heard because of the close proximity of the hujra to the house. The cries stopped and restarted at intervals, depending on whether a new woman or a man went inside the house. It is against pukhto if the voice of the women reaches the hujra especially if there are outsiders sitting in the hujra, however, gham khadee occasions are an exception.

Grima (2004: 160) calls such laments during gham as women’s “temporary autonomy” that could be a threat to the “order as established and controlled by men”. Grima (ibid: 158) further says that men “try to suppress women’s funerary laments, calling them unnecessary and unislamic”.

Contrary to Grima’s observations, I found that men’s response towards the women’s voices and laments could be heard in the hujra, where the men did not try to suppress the women but would justify this, by saying “gham de kher de” (It’s ok because it’s a sorrow). Such laments during the occasion of gham (sorrow) are considered in conformity with pukhto and the host does not feel embarrassed or dishonoured by the voices of the women of his household reaching the ears of the outsiders.

A similar difference in men’s responses to women’s funerary wailing has also been discussed by Halevi (2004: 7) who traces the history of laments and wailing of women in Islamic history after the death of the prophet of Islam. Halevi is of the view that men responded differently to women’s wailing in different areas of the Muslim world. Halevi mentions that in Kufa (a city in Iraq) men tried to regulate women’s funerary behaviour, however, the men in Madina did not.
After we reached the *hujra* a number of people were present for the *las-niwa*. The *hujra* was a three room building with a small lawn in the middle with the rooms and the verandah located towards the left side of the main entrance. It was on the verandah where all the elders were sitting, probably because of the cold weather. A tent was erected on the lawn so I along with Iftikhar and his friends took a seat in it close to the main entrance gate.

Every new entrant into the *hujra*, after taking a seat, would say loudly “*dawa ba wakoo*” (please raise hands for prayers) and then all the sitting persons raise their hands for a while and make a *dawa* with their hearts by saying “*khudai di ubakhi*” (may god bless the deceased). The guests enquire about the cause of death, the time and whether anyone was with the deceased in the last moments. After sitting for around 10-30 minutes people start to leave and shout out “*yaw dawa ba bia waku*” (Please raise your hands again) and the *dawa* comes to an end. Besides asking people to do *las-niwa* such shouting out plays an important role in attracting the attention of the people present there and it marks the presence of that person in the *gham* occasion.

More than focusing on *las-niwa*, Iftikhar and his friends were discussing the ‘guests’ who came for *las-niwa*. The discussion also revolved around the insufficient seating arrangement in the *hujra*. Iftikhar and his friends criticized the deceased’s family for being unable to do proper and timely arrangements. One of Iftikhar’s friends also pointed to the dust on the chair saying that “this shows their level of hospitality and flow of guests to their *hujra*”.

They talked negatively about the cousins of the deceased who also happened to be their next door neighbours and were the ones who made all the arrangements for the occasion. The number of people in the *hujra* as well in the funeral was also ‘low’. The reason cited for this was that the deceased as well as his sons were not too active in *gham khadee* participation.

After sitting in the *hujra* for an hour, we left going towards Iftikhar’s *hujra*. On the way we were discussing the number of people in the funeral, and the people who came for the funeral and later for *las-niwa*. Iftikhar and his friends discussed Hadi (discussed in chapter 3) and his brother who also came for the *las-niwa*. Hadi was praised for his active participation in *gham khadee*. Though, they also discussed their *pukhto* that is dishonoured by Hadi’s daughter who eloped with a neighbour. The issue was later settled through negotiations.
Hadi did not kill the boy and the girl, did not take *badal* and hence his *pukhto* was suspended until he takes *badal*.

Commenting on Hadi’s *pukhto*, Iftikhar said:

“*He is working hard to restore and increase his izzat (honour) and he is doing great for that*”.

I asked Iftikhar, If Hadi can restore his *izzat* that is lost in the case of woman of his household. To which Iftikhar replied:

“*Indeed he can. I must say he has restored his izzat; he is actively involved in gham khadee*”.

People visit the *hujra* until late at night and the hosts wake up early in the morning the following day because people start coming for *las-niwa* very early after the morning prayers. The same routine continues for at least three days.

On the same night when I was sitting with Iftikhar and a few more *masharan* (elders) in Iftikhar’s *hujra*, one of the elders Din asked Iftikhar to accompany him to the *hujra* of the deceased for a second visit for *las-niwa*. Iftikhar at once said:

“*He had come just once, when my father died. I have been for las-niwa once and that’s it*”.

But going again for *las-niwa* is not a bad thing, Din said, to which Iftikhar replied:

“*It’s a matter of badal, he came once, and I reciprocated that. They are not better than us. If my father was worth one visit, I don’t care about them. They know it well*”.

Din asked me to accompany him for the *las-niwa* so I accompanied him but Iftikhar did not go with him. Keeping in mind the reciprocal nature of *gham khadee*, Iftikhar was reluctant to pay a second visit. The main factor that pushed him do so was the concept of *badal* that stopped him from visiting again.
Close friends and family members stay with the deceased’s family for up to three days. The presence of close relatives on such occasions confirms the family’s solidarity in the eyes of outsiders, and prevents unwanted suspicions of suspended ties amongst the family.

It is in the deceased’s *hujra* that people start discussing the presence of certain people. People particularly notice the presence of ‘others’. The presence of political leaders is especially noticed and discussed. I revisited the *hujra* of the deceased with Din. When we went around 15-20 people were already sitting there. After a while Maulana Aziz came in, and sat in the middle of the verandah. Many people stood in respect for him as soon as he reached the *hujra*. Aziz, after a while, stood and delivered a sermon mainly focusing on the afterlife and the punishments and the rewards promised by God to humans. The same sermon was delivered for three consecutive nights. This practise did not exist in the past and previously people would only come together, drink tea, and remember the deceased. Tea was served to all the sitting guests as a sign of hospitality by the relatives of the deceased. The trend of delivering a sermon was initiated by Maulana Aziz and through this sermon he successfully increased his influence within the village and beyond.

![Men gather to do las-niwa during a gham](image)

*Figure 14: Men gather to do las-niwa during a gham*
Gham khadee events and the practise of the tenets of Pakhtunwali

Through the occasion of gham one can see how Pakhtunwali is practised or pukhto is done in different ways. For example when Iftikhar and his friends discussed the number of people at the funeral and the reason why there was only a few, they mentioned that it was because the deceased family do not attend the funerals of others, while such participation is purely based on the principles of badal.

Their talk about chairs and seating arrangements was an observation on the melmastya displayed by the deceased’s family. Melmastya does not only include serving food to the guests but it also involves proper seating and sleeping arrangements for guests, having a proper and well maintained hujra, and entertaining guests at the hujra.

Such observations by the visitors are quite common in any gham khadee event. All these observations are then linked to the pukhto of the hosts. People who come up to expectations are called kha pukhtana (good Pakhtuns) and those who do not, are called bekara (useless) or bai-gerata (without courage).

It is not only during this gham khadee event that I came to realize the variation in practise of different Pakhtunwali tenets. I noticed similar practises and discussions of badal and melmastya at almost all the events. Those who would have more guests would be called good Pakhtuns because it shows their active participation in the gham khadee events of others, and the presence of a large number of people means that they have been active in gham khadee too. A large gathering of people also reflects the host’s “status and importance in the larger world” (Barth 1959: 35).

Similarly melmastya is also critically observed at some occasions and any shortcoming in seating arrangements or food is linked to the pukhto of the hosts. In today’s Pakhtun society it is performance during the gham khadee occasion that is considered as the gauge for measuring the pukhto of individuals.

120 For a comparative analysis and for relationship between number of visitors and prestige in Tunisia see (Abu-Zahra 1974).
I will now move on to define *gham khadee*, its importance, the ways of cooperation during *gham khadee* events and the *gham khadee* relationships between different groups of people.

**Gham-khadee (Participation in sorrows and joys): An introduction**

*Gham khadee* itself is a combination of two words where *gham* means sorrow, and *khadee* means joy, but it is usually read and spoken as a single word. The word is used extensively in the Pakhtun society. *Gham khadee* could be used as an adjective or to depreciate one’s personality e.g. as an adjective it could be heard as, “*Pa gham-khadee ki takda de*” (He is very good in attending the joys and sorrows of people) or as a negative against one’s personality by his lesser or non-participation in the sorrows and joys. One would frequently hear a sentence such as, “*da gham khadee na nade khabar*” (He is unaware of gham khadee). Such unawareness of *gham khadee* puts people in a bad category of Pakhtuns, who are unaware of the etiquette and rules of the social world they live in, which could further put a question mark on the Pakhtunness of an individual. Hence it could be assumed that *gham khadee* is not merely about participating in sorrows and joys, rather it is a personality trait and crucial for someone to be called a good Pakhtun by the villagers.

**Typologies of gham khadee**

*Gham khadee* occasions are classified into different categories for example the *gham* occasions include death, illness, loss in elections etc. Similarly *khadee* occasions are weddings, the birth of a male child, victory in elections, success in examinations and making a new home are some of the *khadee* occasions.

Such occasions are further divided into big and small events, for example, death is *ghat gham* while the birth of a female child is counted as *wadukai gham*. Similarly *wada* is a *ghata khadee* but circumcision of a male child may or may not be a *ghata khadee*. 
a) Gham

The events in *gham* range from a minor illness to death. *Gham* is locally classified as, *ghat gham* (big sorrow), *wadukai gham* (small sorrow), and *pat gham* (hidden sorrow).

Death is considered to be the peak of *gham*. The other occasions of *gham* are: illness (serious and minor), birth of a female child (hidden *gham* or it could be a *ghat gham* (big sorrow) if the parents have no male children and the girl already has one or more sisters), or the ousting of a migrant from *musafari* (small *gham*). A small sorrow is the one that could be put right at some stage of life by a *khadee* while a big sorrow is one which people find hard to recover from in life.

*Pat gham* is the sorrow that is not mourned very publicly but people are unhappy with its happening. It does not necessarily involve the visits of relatives. *Pat gham* could be categorized under small sorrow as both could be used interchangeably. Failure to offer condolences may not necessarily lead to *khafgan* (unhappiness) but a failure to participate in *ghat gham* (big sorrow) may lead to *khafgan* and even *wrana*.

### Table 4: Classifying *gham khadee* occasions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gham khadee</th>
<th>Gham</th>
<th>khadee</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Death</td>
<td>Illness</td>
<td>Wedding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Gham</em></td>
<td><em>Gham</em></td>
<td><em>khegada</em> with people by using one's influence, authority.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Ghat gham</em></td>
<td><em>Wadukai gham</em></td>
<td><em>Pat gham</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Death</td>
<td>Illness</td>
<td>Daughter's birth</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 5: Classifying *gham*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><em>Gham</em></th>
<th><em>Ghat gham</em></th>
<th><em>Wadukai gham</em></th>
<th><em>Pat gham</em></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Death</td>
<td>Illness</td>
<td>Daughter's birth</td>
<td>Election defeat</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
b) Categorizing Khadee

Like gham, khadee is also categorized into ghata khadee (big joy) and waduki khadee (small joy). Big joy could be the birth of a male child, especially if the child is a first male after few female children of a couple. Ghata khadee could also be the marriage of a son especially the eldest one and youngest one. The eldest because the family expects the family line to grow and the marriage of the youngest among siblings is also called ghata khadee because he is the last child of his parents and usually is considered as the last khadee for the parents, as they may or may not live long enough to see the marriages of their grand children. The marriage of a single brother of many sisters is also ghata khadee as he is considered as the one who will perpetuate the family line.

Waduki khadee may include passing an exam, and sunnat (circumcision of a male child). Some people have started celebrating their children’s birthdays these days, though they are not very public and may include only very close relatives (I did not come across any birthday celebrated while I was in the field).

Table 3: Classifying khadee

Gham khadee circle: Who keeps gham khadee with whom?

As mentioned in the introduction of this chapter that gham khadee is the salient trait of Pakhtunwali in today’s Pakhtun society. It confers honour, status, and even authority through making people jirga members and leaders. Gham khadee is maintained through social interaction. But the question is who carries out gham khadee with whom?

Gham khadee relationships are of varying degrees and at different levels. You may inherit gham khadee relationships from forefathers, as well as develop your own over time, for example, Figures 2 and 3 show the gham khadee relationships of two generations so it is
clear from them how the *gham khadee* obligations increase with each generation because every new generation not only maintains its own *gham khadee* relationships but also those of their fathers and grandfathers. Those who are unable to preserve the *gham khadee* relationships of their forefathers are called *bekara khalak* (useless people), while those who maintain such relationships are praised.

Table 7: A’s circle of *gham khadee* relationships

Table 8: B’s circle of *gham khadee* relationships

Inam, a man in his early fifties once said:

Gham khadee is all about badal. We do it with those who do it with us.

Not doing *gham khadee* with such people is considered as against *pukhto*. Consistent failure to reciprocate at someone’s *gham khadee* occasions leads to the break up of *gham khadee* relationships. Inam also pointed to his *gham khadee* relationships with his father’s friends in the nearby village. He said:

“I used to go to their *gham khadee* to keep my father’s relationships alive, but they never reciprocated. After a few times I also stopped"
doing *gham khadee* with them, because they were not doing it with me”.

**Levels of *gham khadee* relationships**

*Gham khadee* relationships are at different levels: a) *gham khadee* with relatives (both in the village and outside), b) *gham khadee* with non-relative villagers, c) *gham khadee* outside the village, but within the district d) and *gham khadee* outside the district.

![Levels of gham khadee relationships](image)

**Table 9: Levels of *gham khadee* in hierarchy of importance**

The *gham khadee* with close relatives is the one that is considered as the most important one, because, besides attendance at *gham khadee* occasions it is the relatives who cooperate with the *gham khadee* household (for more details on cooperation see chapter 5) in informing people within the village and outside, arranging seating and providing food to the guests, it is these things (number of people attending the event, seating and food arrangements) that determine the Pakhtunnes of the *gham khadee* household.

Attendance of all the relatives at such occasions is of immense importance and is taken very seriously. Inability to attend such occasions leads to *khafgan* (unhappiness) and *khafgan* may lead *wrana* (temporary suspension of ties). Such *khafgan* is removed only after a visit is paid to the *gham khadee* household and when the person who missed the occasion admits
his mistake. If the _khafgan_ is not removed and if a _gham khadee_ occasion comes, these people are mostly reciprocated in a similar way (by not paying a visit to them), which reflects the practise of _badal._

Besides visiting each other at _gham khadee_ occasions, relatives have meal exchange relationships as well. One does not have the meal exchange cooperation with all close relatives but with a few, often 3 to 5. Such meal exchange relationships are called _badal_, because meals among the relatives are exchanged in a similar way (Chapter 5 of this thesis discusses meal exchange relationships in detail). The numbers are not fixed and can vary. Also, there are no fixed criteria for making meal exchange relationships with people. Such relationships are often carried forward from one generation to another.

During _gham khadee_ occasions _badal_ is apparent in almost all these areas; for example, the attendance of guests depends on one’s ability to be active in _gham khadee_ relationships so relatives reciprocate the food and seating arrangements keeping in view the arrangements the same household made for their _gham khadee_ occasions. Hence in order to preserve one’s own _pukhto_ one must work hard and preserve other relatives’ _pukhto_ through good arrangements. If, the relatives live outside the village, attendance is obligatory but meal exchange cooperation does not exist because of the distance. People who live outside the village, especially in other cities, also come for _gham khadee_ with relatives.

_Gham khadee_ with non-relative villagers is also very important. It is _gham khadee_ with non-relative villagers that makes the profile of a person as a good Pakhtun within the village. Except people who are in _dushmani_ (enmity) the funeral is attended by almost every adult villager present in the village. The households are represented by respective _zimawar_ (responsible persons). People from the cities may or may not come for such occasions as the _zimawar_ person represents them at such occasions.

The _gham khadee_ relationships within the district are also mostly maintained by the _zimawar_ person and such people who have a _gham khadee_ across the districts are usually political leaders. Such _gham khadee_ creates _taluq_ and that _taluq_ can later be used for getting the votes of the people. Such _taluq_ is also used in other matters related to daily life. Bhaijan (the politician discussed in chapter 6) had _gham khadee_ relations throughout Lower
as well as Upper Dir. He would try to attend almost every gham khadee of the people he knew.

Gham khadee relationships outside the district are also mostly developed by an individual member of the household, and in such cases the person and not the zimawar will attend the occasion. Such relationships are often the result of being in the same college, university or jobs. For example if A from Munjai develops gham khadee with B from Peshawar, where both are classmates at a university in Peshawar, it is A’s responsibility to attend the gham khadee occasions of B and not of the zimawar person of his household. Such taluq is appreciated by the people.

The importance of gham-khadee in the everyday life of Munjai

_Pakhtun agha de che pukhtana kayi_ 121

Pakhtun is the one who does _pukhtana_ (asking about others or visits others at times when needed i.e. participation in sorrows and joys).

The Pakhtun village is a world of social interaction with one’s relatives, colleagues, villagers and close friends. The social interaction includes participation at the times of death, marriages, circumcision, construction of a new house, victory in election, passing an examination, any financial loss, coming back from pilgrimage etc. All of these are summarized as **gham khadee**.

The participation in such occasions signifies the friendship between two or more people who stand by each other in gham khadee. The network of gham khadee is not only between the male members of the society but the women as well. In Munjai some of the men were of the view that gham khadee has been made difficult by women because they reciprocate gifts with other women they do gham khadee with, while the gham khadee relationships maintained by men do not necessarily involve gift exchange.

According to my informant, Iftikhar:

_Ghalat aw graan riwajuna dee._

121Interview with Professor Abaseen yousafzai, a Pukhto language professor at Islamia College Peshawar.
(Their (women’s) customs are wrong and expensive).

Iftikhar also pointed out that the women of his household spent 8,000 Pakistani Rupees\textsuperscript{122} in a single month alone on gham khadee gifts and visits. But he also admits that one has to do gham khadee and cannot act differently than the larger society, and if one does act differently he is taunted and talked about negatively.

But, the question arises as to why in Pakhtun society, which is patriarchal in nature, women successfully carry out their gham khadee with gift giving despite men’s disapproval?

Women do pukhto through the gift giving during gham khadee. Men provide for women’s gham khadee gifts which keeps the pukhto of the women alive. In response women also keep the pukhto of their men alive. Women keep the pukhto of men alive through their good behaviour and modesty. Also, it is the women who provide food to men guests in the hujra, and it is through such food that men’s melmastya is judged. Hence despite being a financial burden, men provide for women’s gham khadee, keep their pukhto alive among their peers the way women keep men’s pukhto alive among theirs. Hence, the practise of badal can be seen here as well among women as well as among men and women.

The more people participate in one’s gham khadee the more the host is considered to be influential. Attendance at any funeral is discussed afterwards and people express their views such as “ghata janaza wa” (the funeral was attended by a large number of people) or “der khalak paki nawu” (there were not many people in the funeral). Because of the development in communication channels (telephone and transportation) the number of people attending funerals and las-niwa has significantly increased in the last 5 to 6 years. Also, at the same time, due to engagement in economic activities some people find it difficult to attend each and every gham khadee within their circles of relationships and friendship. People are also very conscious about the presence of influential people such as the politicians, bureaucrats and anyone from outside the village. The same people are also discussed and the family of the deceased, or the deceased himself, is praised for having ghat taluq (large circle of friends).

\textsuperscript{122} 1 GB Pound equals 170 Pakistani rupees.
Once on the occasion of the death of the father of an officer, while praising the occasion a villager was heard saying:

“The janaza (funeral) was huge, people came from everywhere. You see the afsaran (high officials) coming in their cars having body guards. His father lived with izzard (honor) and also died with izzard. It was his son’s ghat taluq (large circle of friends)”. 

At all the occasions food is an important item which is served to the guests. The food served also signifies the melmastia (hospitality) of the host. A lot of food with variety makes the food kha khwarak (good food). Good food must include chicken, and beef or mutton. The deceased’s family does not cook food for the first three days and it is the close relatives, tanzeem123 (intra-familial associations that help its members during gham khadee ) or friends who feed the guests.

Lunch and dinner are both served for men at the hujra, and all those present in the hujra (men’s guest house) are invited to eat. The guests from outside the village are preferred as in the local sense they are seen as true guests rather than one’s own villagers. In the same manner any guest from outside the district is more of a guest than someone from within the district. Hence hospitality is prioritized to those guests coming from far off areas and they receive more attention compared to a local guest. For a few of my informants I was seen as an insider and I was not considered a guest. For others I was treated as a guest, coming from Peshawar and for many others I was a guest coming from London.

One may hear the villagers saying, “Zamung da yaw bal sa gham-khadee da” (we have the relationships of attending the sorrows and joys of each other). It holds such an important place in the lives of the villagers that they even say, “Gham khadee che na kai nu sa ba kai?” (If you won’t do gham-khadee, what else would you do?).

The social interaction is a feature of Pakhtun society that exists both in villages and in cities to varying degrees. In cities it exists, but, to a minimum level because people are busy with their jobs, businesses, and education. Also the limited housing facilities are a barrier to extending social interaction with one’s near ones, because most of the houses in the cities

123 See chapter 5 for more details on tanzeem.
are without any guest rooms for ‘outsiders’. The outsiders are the ones who are not close blood relatives and from whom the women of the hosts do purdah (seclusion). City people do interact with one another in times of sorrow and joy but on both these occasions the degree of interaction is less compared to the way they interact in their villages.

During the fieldwork I also encountered the same problem whilst living in Peshawar, the capital city of the province. My informants would pay regular visits to Peshawar, and would expect me to extend my hospitality in the same way they extended it to me whilst I was in Munjai. However, as mentioned it is not as easy to accommodate outsiders in a place where there is no hujra, and hence, they were unhappy with me as I could not live up to their expectations. Their criticism about my lack of hospitality taunted me upon my return to the village.

Those who intentionally do not participate in gham khadee are associated with women. This is because women are supposed to stay inside the home and they cannot participate in male gatherings. Another reason for not doing gham khadee may be that one may consider the family in grief as inferior to themselves. For example, rich person may not do gham khadee with a poor person because he may consider the poor family as inferior and not worthy of his visit. Furthermore those who do not do gham khadee are those who do not socialize and perceive it as a waste of time. This is contrary to the majority who view the occasion as one which brings people together and forms a bond of cohesion within society. Nonetheless, even if they do not participate in the others’ gham khadee, the people of the village do not leave them alone and during the time of distress they expect them to participate even if it is limited i.e. walking to the funeral place or a single visit to the hujra or betak (one bed and small male guest house). The people living outside the village (in other cities) are criticized for not being active in gham khadee.

**Why participation in gham matters more than participation in khadee?**

Participation in gham events holds more significance than khadee (Grima 2004: 49; Lindholm 1982: 156; Ahmed 2006: 2). A similar priority was given to gham events in Munjai. However, my observations and that of Grima, Ahmed, and Lindholm (ibid) are contrary to Akbar Ahmed’s (1980: 242) observations which termed marriage or khadee “as the most important of the rites de passage in Pakhtun society”. Ahmed’s findings maybe
different because he carried out his fieldwork in an area that is part of the Tribal area, where the state’s presence is minimum and hence practises in the tribal areas may be different than those in the settled areas.

After living in Munjai continuously for a longer period I noticed that the local people emphasized the participation in *gham*. The main reason for such participation is because people consider it as the *sawab kaar* (rewarding act in the life hereafter). Also people attend the *janaza* (funeral) or the *las-niwa*, so as to reassure the family of the deceased that they are supporting the bereaved family in such hard times. People present different excuses to the family of the bereaved for not attending the funeral. They mostly blame it on a lack of proper communication, and say that they were not informed in time otherwise they could have made it to the funeral. Such excuses are not always true as these days mobile phone networks have made it easy for people to pass on messages to each other but people say such things in order to avoid any *khafgan* (being angry with someone).

The news of death would spread quickly in the local areas even before the start of mobile phone networks as Lindholm (1982: 56) notes that it was astonishing how the news of a death would spread quickly to other areas despite a lack of telephones and mobile phones at that time. Mobile phones have, however, made it quite easy for people to communicate messages of death to people in other villages and districts. Besides informing other people of any *gham khadee* event, people also use mobile phones to ask about the health of any ill person, or even to congratulate someone. Wedding invitations can also be extended through telephone calls. The use of phone calls at certain *gham khadee* occasions cannot replace physical visits, which carry more honour and prestige (Grima 2004: 46).

Participation in *gham* is more important for the villagers than in *khadi* (occasions of joy). The main reason why participation in *gham* is emphasized more is that, firstly, the family needs close friends and relatives in such times and secondly, those who stand with a bereaved family during hard times often become long-term friends and the act is reciprocated.

The failure to participate in a *khadee* may be covered later on by a late visit, which is known as *ombaraki* (felicitations), but failure to participate at the appropriate time in *gham* (first three days in the case of a death and if the deceased is a close relative participation in the
funeral), may lead to a longer or unending khafgan and even to the break-up of ties between families or between individuals. The only exception in gham may be someone who is either seriously ill or in a far off area for business or official work and is unable to come to the occasion. However, he must visit soon after recovering from illness or returning home.

In the same way a migrant who, returns home later for a visit could offer condolences to the families of the relatives who have died while he was abroad, but he must contact the deceased’s family by telephone from abroad during the initial days of the gham otherwise it could result in a khafgan. Whenever the migrant returns home he must pay a visit to the deceased’s house. Physical visits are so important and cannot be replaced by telephone calls (Grina 2004: 46) even migrants are supposed to pay a visit after they return home.

During a routine discussion with an aged villager, in his late seventies, on why participation in gham is given more importance than participation in khadee, the old man answered that:

“Look at the word gham khadee, in which gham precedes khadee. Similarly in daily life it is participation in gham that is given more importance. In khadee there are many people around you, while it is gham when you need people to be with you because you need to lighten the burden of grief, and you cannot do that on everybody’s shoulder. You must have the very close ones around you, and also for a longer time than in khadee. They don’t take gham away from you but they can be a source of relief”.

Besides the family that is suffering from gham, other visitors also notice and talk about the absence of certain people who are expected to be present at the occasion. It is the relatives as well as the friends who are expected to be present with the deceased family and share their grief.

Gham khadee occasions attract a large number of people from within and outside the village. As mentioned in chapter (2a) many families in Munjai have moved to Peshawar, Mardan and some to other provinces as well. They visit the village for holidays, Eid\(^{124}\), and any gham khadee occasions. Despite the financial burden, time management and physical

\(^{124}\) The Muslim festival celebrated twice a year.
tiredness people regularly come for such occasions, especially if the deceased ones are close relatives or friends. For those who are working in other cities, attendance at such occasions is even more tedious, because besides travel they have to take time off from their jobs, which is not always easy.

Amin, in his mid forties, works and lives in Lahore, Punjab. After I met him on the occasion of a gham we discussed his coming to the village, and he said:

“’It’s the second time in the last two weeks that I am coming for gham. I don’t have a car, and I don’t get leave from the office but still I have to attend the occasions. It is not only a financial burden for me but it is tiring as well as a risk to my job. On this occasion though my other family members were here but my presence was important because the deceased was my childhood friend. Had I not come here people would have mocked me’’.”

Daily usage of word gham

The word gham is used in a number of ways and on a number of occasions ranging from usual informal chats to formal events of sorrows. Gham means ‘sorrow’ and it could be heard being used on different occasions for example, one would hear the villagers saying “gham makawa” which literally means “don’t do sorrow” but here it means “don’t worry”. They would also say “der gham de warsara”, which literally means “he is carrying a lot of sorrow” but it means “he is worried or he is feeling the responsibility”. In the same way gham is sometimes used for a hard task that one faces in life, for example; if someone is asked how is your job?; he might reply with “gham de mada” (it is hard), which enables the person to expresses his unhappiness and dissatisfaction with the job.

Once while going to the main town of Timergara in a villager’s old car that broke down halfway, the owner immediately said “gham mi aghaste de” (I have bought gham) meaning that the car had broken down many times and given him trouble, that is why here he was referring to the car and equating the condition of the car to sorrow, and he was saying that he himself has invited (bought) the sorrow (car) to be with him.
White hair on a young boy/man is locally considered as a sign of ghamuna (plural of gham) on that person and it is also common to hear villagers saying “your white hair indicates that you are surrounded by ghamuna, but what could be your ghamuna? You are too young”\(^{125}\). During the fieldwork, I was reminded many times that: “you should not have any white hair because you live in England, why would you have any gham?” In the view of the villagers England is a place free of ghamuna because of the money one can earn and because of the enjoyment one may have in England.

Gham is also the theme of many Pukhto proverbs and Pukhto poetry. For example a Pukhto proverb that is often used is;

\begin{quote}
Gham da Pakhtun jama da
\end{quote}

(Sorrow is a Pakhtun’s clothing)

Also cited by Tair and Edwardes (1982: 244) and Bartlotti (2000: 234)

Similarly Roghanai, a poet from Swat, depicts life in his poetry as full of sorrows and having no joys;

\begin{quote}
wrak di da jwandun shi khadi na lari
gham na paki his wazgareda nishta
\end{quote}

(To the hell with this life having no joy

The sorrows are always around )

\textit{Gham, Islam and Pakhtunwali}

Death, which is the peak of gham, is a topic discussed extensively in Islam. Many verses of the Quran talk about death and the Quran also says that “every soul must taste of death” (Ahmed 1986 a: 130) . Grima (2004:144) considers gham among Pakhtuns as part of their religious belief and ideology.

\(^{125}\) Young age 14-20, is an age free of ghamuna where one needs not to worry about the financial responsibilities and is dependent on the elder brothers or father.
The idea of *gham* as a test from God and showing patience has been mentioned in the Quran (Surah 2: 155-156):

“Be sure we shall try you

With something of fear and hunger

And loss of wealth and life

And the fruits (of your labour);

But give tidings of happiness to those who have patience,

Who say when assailed by adversity:

“Surely we are for God, and to Him we shall return.”


Similarly the deceased’s household as well his relatives and friends are expected to practise *sabar* (patience). People are told that *gham* is the will of God and one should not complain about *gham* as it will be considered as going against the will of the God. The practise of *sabar* makes one *sabarnak* (one who practises patience) (Qureshi 2013: 126). The villagers would consider *gham* events as a test from God (ibid: 129) and hence a part of religious belief. The sermon of *mullah* at the occasion of the *gham* event would also be full of such themes.

During my fieldwork, I observed that *gham* was indeed considered a part of religious belief but at the same time it would be discussed extensively in the context of *pukhto* as well, for example *gham* as an event would be considered as a test from God where people were supposed to show *sabar* and not be disappointed. However, the performance during such events would be entirely seen in the context of *pukhto* for example one’s participation and cooperation would be seen through the lense of *pukhto* by saying, “He did *pukhto* by attending the funeral”, or “He did not do *pukhto* by not coming for the funeral”. Grima’s work on the Pakhtun women also confirms the same findings as one of her informants told her “The event itself is *shariat* but what we do with it is *riwaj*” (Grima 2004: 46).
Similar to the Pakistani women in Britain who consider *sabar* during *gham*\(^\text{126}\) as a religious phenomenon, which carries religious merits, and makes one a good Muslim as well as part of their femininity and pious character (Qureshi: 2013), in Munjai also *sabar* is considered not only part of the religious teachings but also a part of *pukhto* where *sabar* signifies men’s strength to cope with the hardships of life. Lindholm (1982: 156) in his study of the Pakhtuns of Swat notes that during a *gham* event “men are forbidden by custom to show any grief”. The strength of resisting *gham* through *sabar* is equivalent to masculinity and is a necessary component of being a ‘good Pakhtun’. Masculinity is at the centre of any discussion on *pukhto* (Ahmed 1980: 6). The role of Islam in *gham khadee* occasions cannot be under estimated. *Gham khadee* is a mix of *pukhto* and Islam. Behaviours are divided between the categories of Islam or *pukhto* (Grima 2004: 46).

Islam asks its followers not to over spend money but in *gham khadee* occasions people often spend more than they can afford. They do so, in order to protect their *pukhto* because lavish spending is associated with *melamstya*, and is keenly observed by the visitors especially during *gham khadee* occasions.

Carrying out *gham khadee*, particularly participation in funerals and *tapos* (asking about an ill person), is also a part of the Islamic teachings. Few people claimed they do *gham khadee* merely to please Allah, but the majority of the people would link it to *pukhto* rather than Islamic teachings, as I was told by Abdul:

“*If someone says they do gham khadee for the sake of reward, I would doubt it, because they may do it once or twice but if the other party won’t show up at their gham occasion, they would stop doing it. Because of the badal, we cannot stop doing pukhto as it makes our image in front of the people. If we don’t do something according to Islam we can seek forgiveness and God is a great forgiver but humans are not; they judge our pukhto more than Islam*.”

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\(^{126}\) Here I am using *gham* in a broad sense referring to any hard time.
Emotions and clothing during *gham khadee*

**Gham**

Unlike women, who emphasize dress even during *gham* and for whom ‘clothing matters’\(^{127}\) (Ahmed 2008: 97-99), male visitors for *las-niwa* neither take into account how men of the bereaved family dress at such occasions, nor do they link it to the *pukhto* of the bereaved family. However, I noticed an immense difference in the outlook of the bereaved family’s members, especially the son, father, close friends and so on. In the case of a father’s death, a son would usually grow his beard for 3-7 days; some close relatives were also seen not wearing very clean clothes because of *gham*. If the *gham* has occurred in the winter, the close family members could be seen wearing *pakol* (chitrali cap) and *sadar* (thick shawl). They also do not laugh loudly and usually sit in the middle of the *hujra* where they can meet and mix with all the guests easily. This is because during *gham* the closest of the relatives are the focal persons and people from outside the village try to be seen by the focal persons. The close friends of the deceased and the guests from far away are accompanied to the gate of the *hujra*, which is seen as a sign of respect and *melmastya*.

The son of the deceased father or the father of a deceased son is embraced firmly by the guests, which signifies that the guests are firmly standing by the deceased’s family. Embracing someone firmly also represents the affection and sympathy shown by the guests to the family members in distress. The environment of the *hujra* is totally changed from how it usually is, and no gossip can be heard for a few days after the death. The family of the deceased does not watch television and also does not attend any entertainment. Any marriages in the family in the near future are delayed by saying that *gham shawe de* (death has occurred). While some marriages are celebrated with simplicity where there is no music played and the participation of guests is kept minimal. Such marriages cannot be delayed mainly because of migrants who have come back to the village for the purpose of marriage and any further delay may result in them not getting married until their next visit from *musufari* (being abroad), which could be a number of years. Therefore, they prefer a simple marriage to a delayed one.

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The family members of a deceased person will not turn on the TV because it would be considered as a gunah (sin) but this practise is diminishing and people compare the past and present in such cases by saying that in the past people had ehsaas (feelings/care) but these days people do not care about each other’s gham.

Death is taken very seriously and people try (even if they are not) to look more sad. The death of a young person (below 40 years of age) is considered as a ghat gham (big sorrow). Almost everyone shows his surprise and sadness over the death, as such a young age is not locally considered a suitable age for death. The death causes further sadness if the deceased person did not have any children, or more importantly, male children.

The very common words the villagers use for families that leave behind no sons is that “his sok ye nishta” (they don’t have anyone). A son is the one who perpetuates the family of the father and again it is his son who does so for his father’s family. If the father of a dead young man (married or unmarried) is alive, his life is considered ruined, because it is the young son who is considered as the replacement of the father in matters of social dealings such as gham khadee and earning money. Also, it is the sons who are expected to stand by their fathers in every matter of life. The father enjoys great control over his sons and the sons are always expected to be obedient to their fathers. The death of a person who leaves behind children below the age of 20 is also considered a big gham because people say “da bachi ba ye sa kayee” (What will his children do?) This points to the problem of how the children of the dead person will survive in terms of getting an education, earning money and supporting their own family. Another reason for passing such comments is tarburwali (cousin rivalry) where the first cousins may claim ownership of their property or may get the best share in the collective land inherited from their forefathers.

The death of the head of a household is also considered as a big gham but not as big as the death of a young person. In the same way the death of a woman is also a gham but it is not discussed very much in public as people know less about the women of others.

Non-seriousness at the occasions of gham is noticed and people who do not show proper respect are mocked and negatively talked about. At the occasion of death of Kiramat, a Shenwari man, some of his relatives sitting in the lawn of his hujra were severely criticized for laughing aloud and making jokes at the occasion of death.
As I was told by Ilyas, a relative of Kiramat:

“They were behaving like senseless humans. There were people from the village and outside who were observing them, and they must be talking negatively about them”.

He further said that:

“Pa gham ki da gham jama”

“(Literally means one should wear the dress of sorrow at the occasions of sorrow). It means one should behave according to the occasion”.

**Tapos**$_{128}$: (asking about someone)

*Tapos* literally means ‘asking’, but in *Pakhtun* society it is widely used for asking about a sick person.$_{129}$ *Tapos* comes under the umbrella of *gham khadee* and locally it is considered as an important element of the *Pakhtunness* of an individual, which again is shaped by an individual’s participation in *gham khadee*.

The practise of *tapos*, as observed by Grima (2004: 82) is a mixture of Islamic teachings and *pukhto*. The local people in Munjai also relate *tapos* to Islamic teachings by terming it an act of *sawab* (reward), but at the same time they negate the Islamic teachings by maintaining relationships of *tapos* only with those who do it with them, which is doing *tapos* by *badal*. Grima (ibid) also considers *badal* as the most important criterion in determining whether one should go for a *tapos* or not. One can see that it is through the practise of *badal*; the main factor pushing people to do *tapos* of others, and hence by practising *badal*, people do *pukhto*.

The word *tapos* is also used to ask about someone even if they are not ill, either by telephoning them, or by personally visiting. Doing such *tapos* helps in maintaining and creating *taluq*. Visiting someone is known as *tlal ratlal* (Literally means coming and going

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$_{128}$ For more details on the origins of the word *tapos* and its place in Islamic teachings see Grima 2004: 80-114.

$_{129}$ For more detailed discussion on *tapos* See Grima (1985).
but here it means visiting each other). The maintenance and continuity of friendships and relationships are both dependent on the participation of individuals in the events of each other’s gham khadee.

The opposite of tapos is ombaraki (felicitations/congratulating someone). Tapos is done mostly at the occasions of sorrows (which includes illness, unfortunate events, financial loss), while ombaraki is always given at the occasions of happiness, which could be the marriage of a son, the birth of a male child to the family, success in examinations, making and moving into a new house etc.

The tapos (involving a physical visit) starts with a visit and the visitor enquires of the hosts about the whole event, be it illness or any other unfortunate event. The whole story is described in detail by the hosts and the visitor expresses both surprise and sadness. The hosts are also given some suggestions on how to deal with particular events. In the case of illness the patient or his family is given suggestion on where to get treatment or they are told of any other modes of medication. Tapos ends with a dawa (prayer) in which the visitors often raises hands and pray to God for the health of the ill person. In a typical dawa words such as “khudai di kha ka/khudai di sehat darki” (may God grant you health) are said, to which the ill person responds with “bas dawa rata kawae” (remember me in your prayers).

The duration of tapos could range from between five minutes, to a few hours. Some of the men also take taweez (amulets), or some sakhtuna (Quarinic text written on paper, considered as good for treating many illnesses). Taweez are mostly prepared by the mullah or by another religious figure. The ill person is also given advice on how to use the sakhtuna or the taweez.

Doing tapos is mostly the responsibility of the zimawar. Sometimes, tapos is done through a third party, so, in the case when someone is unable to do tapos himself, the person may send his son or his servant to do the tapos, for example, doing tapos for a poor man might be thought of as being beneath their status for some people so they send their servant or son to do it.
Tapos ensures \textit{tlal ratlal} (coming and going) between different people and families. Its extensive following in Pakhtun society enables the local people to compare themselves to their fellow countrymen, the Punjabis, and they consider themselves superior because of having strong social bonds. They tend to criticise Punjabi society as being too individualistic and materialistic in the sense that they do not uphold familial ties in the same the way that Pakhtuns do. However, the Punjabi \textit{vartan bhanji} (system of reciprocal gift exchange) as discussed by Eglar (1960) reveals that the it is similar to \textit{gham khadee} among Pakhtuns.

Social interaction among Punjabi villagers is surrounded by reciprocity as it is with Pakhtuns (ibid; Chaudhary 1999: 68-71)

The villagers also criticise those living in cities as having less interaction and maintaining a minimum level of doing \textit{tapos}. At times I was taunted by the villagers (especially people who used to go for evening walks with me) for behaving like a \textit{kharai} (city dweller). I also noticed that by paying less attention to \textit{tapos} in the first few months of my fieldwork I lost the cooperation of some villagers who were not happy when I did not ask about their health or about some other issues at the appropriate time.

One may go for \textit{tapos} to a hospital, \textit{hujra} or with close relatives to the house of the ill person. \textit{Tapos} could be both with and without gifts; people take some fruit or sugar as gifts. \textit{Tapos} done by women more often involves gifts or money in cash. The amount of money paid by the women is the same as it was paid to them while they were visited by the same family for \textit{tapos}. Some women also take sugar with them for the \textit{tapos} of an ill person. Sugar symbolizes sweetness and good will.

Though I do not have a lot of data on the \textit{tapos} done by the women at different times during discussions with the villagers I noticed that the women are very active in doing \textit{tapos} and at the same time they are very quick to notice who visited them and who did not when there was such an occasion in their own house.

According to my informant, Iftikhar:

“It is more than often the women of my house who remind me to do \textit{tapos} within the family, in the village or beyond. They have their own way of doing \textit{tapos}”.
Going *tash laas* (empty handed or without gifts) is considered as *da sharam khabara* (an act of shame) by the women. For this, they face severe criticism within the circle of women so the women would postpone their visits for days in order to go along with gifts\(^{130}\).

Another villager, Saeed, said:

“’The women are very conscious about the gift giving at all the occasions. Once the women of my house had to do *tapos* of a relative who was seriously ill, but because of being unable to arrange a gift, the women had to postpone the *tapos* to the next day. The ill person died that same night and not doing the *tapos* led to *khafgan* (unhappiness) with the ill person’s family’.”

Such *khafgan* (unhappiness) is often only between the women family members and the males continue their interactions unaffected by the women’s matters.

In a wider political sense *tapos* is an obligation that a politician has towards the people of his constituency. Here it refers to the visit of a politician to his constituency when he asks the people about their collective or individual needs and problems. Such *tapos* by the politicians especially after their success in an election is appreciated and could help create further political support.

A brother must also do *tapos* (here it refers to being in contact with) of his married sister/s and must be on good terms with her/them. Such a *tapos* is considered as a *haq* (right) of a sister from her brother/s. This *haq* increases when the sister is widowed or if she is financially weaker than her brother/s. Such *tapos* is also considered as rewarding and it is locally perceived that those brothers who take good care of their sisters always succeed because of their prayers. One of the major *haq* a sister theoretically has over her father or brother is a share in inherited land, which is also stressed by Islam. However, it is often denied to daughters or sisters and not given to her. The main reason why this *haq* is not given is because land is important for social prestige and a reduction in the size of a plot of land is equivalent to reduction in honour. Hence, people ignore religious teachings in order to save their *pukhto*.

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\(^{130}\) Such gifts are not very expensive but they could turn expensive if the women have to give such gifts several times within a short period of time.
The migrants abroad are also expected to do *tapos* of their relatives and friends at times of illness or any other event. The migrants are considered to be the people whose *dawa* (prayers) are accepted by God because of being in *musafari* (being abroad). Those, especially ones in Saudi Arabia, are sometimes asked by the ill persons or their families to go to *kaaba* and pray for the ill person. The reason for such a request is that it is the holiest site in Islam, and people have a belief that God answers the prayers of those who pray there.

Some migrants do the same without being asked by the ill person or their families, and this mostly happens when the ill person is the migrant’s father or mother or any other close relative. In the past migrants would do *tapos* through letters and audio cassettes or would send verbal messages through another migrant visiting the village. However, these days the old modes of doing *tapos* have been replaced by telephone contact.

In Munjai an individual’s presence is usually noticed at the mosque, shops, *gham khadee* events and evening walks. In the case of when someone is not seen by the villagers or friends for few days, he is asked about his absence. Such absence from the village could also lead to *tapos* (asking) by the villagers, most of them would ask, “*charta wrak ye na khkare?*” (you seem to have disappeared, where were you?) and when they are told about why one was away they reply by saying, “*che kha ye nu*” (fine, if you were away for good reasons). Such *tapos* are very common and one could come across this frequently while meeting the villagers.

**Financial aspects of *tapos***

In case of a serious illness when the patient is taken to the main city, Peshawar, the close relatives start visiting the patient soon after. If the patient is not financially sound, he will be given money by relatives. The money is given to the son/s of the patient, who accompany the patient to the hospital. If the patient has no sons or if they are migrants abroad, any other close relative who accompanies the patient receives the money. The money is given in a hidden way so that others cannot come to know about it, because getting money from

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131 *Kaaba* is the most sacred site in Islam, located in Makkah, Saudi Arabia. The Muslims turn to pray towards *Kaaba* five times a day. This is also the site which is visited by the Muslims for *Hajj* (pilgrimage).

132 Here *tapos* would mean just “asking”.
someone in a sympathetic way is considered to be against *pukhto* and also because it is considered as equivalent to begging which is an act of extreme shame among the Pakhtuns.

The ones who give money call it *sawab dai* (giving money to a needy is its own reward). Especially in the case of an ill person’s family being unable to treat the patient for any illness due to financial constraints, the close relatives should support the ill person. If the same person dies without any treatment, people would talk negatively about the relatives who are well off financially, because they did not meet the expectations of *pukhto*. Such cooperation is locally attached both to Islamic teachings and *pukhto*.

Besides financial cooperation, friends and the close relatives also offer their services in the hospital. They spend days and nights with the patient. While going back from the hospital the visitors pray to God for the patient to get well soon. The patient also asks the visitors to remember him in his prayers. The same process exists for a women patient as well. She is also visited by the close family members while for overnight stays she is accompanied by a woman (mostly by a daughter, sister, or daughter in law) but because of the *purdah* the number of male visitor is minimal.

It is expensive for the villagers to visit a patient in the cities, as it costs them a lot of money for a single visit, which could be saved by telephoning them. For the purpose of honour and in order to avoid *khafgan* (unhappiness) people personally visit the patient. Instead of considering this to be a financial burden the villagers would simply say, “*bos gham khadee khu ba kai nu*” (you have to do *gham khadee*), as not doing it puts you in the category of *bekara khalak* (useless people), or in a category of people described as having less *pukhto*.

If the ill person gets well, those who have already paid a visit to the hospital repay a visit to his home while those who were unable to visit the hospital also ask after his or her health at his or her home.

During fieldwork people would do my *tapos* and that would make me bound to visit them if such an occasion to give *tapos* arose. It was difficult for me to meet the expectations of all of them but I tried my best to do *tapos* wherever and whenever I could. Whenever I was out of sight I would receive calls and the villagers would ask about why I was absent from prayers or from the evening walks.
I faced some of the villagers who were unhappy with me because either I was late in doing *tapos* on them or their family members, or I did not do any *tapos*. Not doing *tapos* or doing *tapos* late, leads to *khafgan* (unhappiness), because the patient and his or her family think that they have been ignored. This ignorance means less importance is being given to the family, which is often unacceptable.

**The life of women, gham and gham kahdee**

*Khaza tol gham gham dai*

A woman’s life is nothing but sorrows from birth until death.¹³³

My information about women is incomplete because I could not gain access to them. Even if I had access, gender boundaries would have been a barrier. Here I present the little that I have learned about the lives of women.

The birth of a female child is considered as *pat gham* (hidden sorrow). Women are the first to express their unhappiness on such occasions. No *ombaraki* (congratulation/felicitation) is given or taken on the birth of a female; the unhappiness exists to an extent that some women (often grandmothers and aunts) even do not want to look at the child’s face. Haris’s grand mother did not look at the face of his second daughter until she was a month old. Such practise shows extreme sorrow, though it is not very common.

They express their *gham* with the words ‘alas; it’s a girl’, or ‘it would be great if it was a boy’, or ‘alas, we are ruined’. For a mother, a son is the source of her strength, because it is the son’s wife over whom she can exercise her authority, and it is the son’s wife who supports and helps the husband’s mother and father when they are old. Also it is the son who perpetuates the family.

The birth of a female begins a life full of the events of *gham*. Starting from her birth (which is a pat *gham*) a female’s life is surrounded by the events of *gham* for most of the time. After she grows up, she suffers from discrimination in favour of her brothers at the hands of her parents, because male children are given preference in every matter of daily life so, for

¹³³ This sentence was said by an elder in a discussion with him.
example, they are given the best share of food and they are provided with quality education (which means the private local schools).

A girl’s honour is considered to be the honour of the family (Boesen 1983: 107). It is another reason why a girl is considered as gham. Any wrong step could defame and bring dishonour to the family. In order to avoid any such incident the family is in constant gham. Such a worry is a reason why girls are engaged/married at an early stage so as to avoid any such incident. The elopement of a boy and a girl is a big gham for the families of both the boy and the girl. The same gham gives rise to dushmani (enmity) and hence the magnitude of gham increases. The dushmani may be severe if the eloped girl is already engaged to someone else, because in that case the boy’s family faces the enmity of the girl’s family as well as the family of her fiancé and both may vow to take revenge.

Marrying a girl demands that her parents or brother arrange a huge dowry for her as it is considered to be a sign of respect to the husband’s family among the villagers (women mostly) and bringing a smaller dowry to the husband is considered to be da sharam khabara (an act of dishonour) for the wife’s family. So, a girl is considered as a gham in the sense of a financial burden. The practise of arranging a huge dowry is one of the reasons for late marriages in Munjai.

The marriage of a girl itself is an event of gham because the girl leaves her parent’s house. Again on such occasions no ombaraki (congratulations) is given or taken. After the start of her married life she starts expecting khadi (joy) coming in her life in the shape of a male child. If she gives birth to a female child she is again surrounded by gham and if she does not give birth to a child at all she may be in gham for a lifetime. In this case her husband may take a second wife and this looms over her head as gham besides the gham of having no children.

One of the khadi (joys) a female gets in her life is by giving birth to a male child. Her khadi afterwards is linked to the khadi of her son/s (and even daughters) as their marriages are the next source of khadi for her. When a girl gets married and starts living in a joint family she becomes involved in quarrels with other family members on different issues. If her

134 Here gham means worry, the family is worried about the girl so that she does not take any step that could bring a bad name to the family.
husband is the eldest amongst brothers, he usually shares a huge proportion, or all, of his income in the collective finances of the household with the help of which the house runs. She is not often happy with her husband sharing his income with his family and this is when she wants to have a separate kor (household). Such tension within the joint family gives the women more gham. It is not easy for a son or brother to leave his dependents to form a nuclear family, if he does so he is talked about negatively and he faces criticism for following his wife’s wishes. Such an act would be seen as his subjugation to his wife which locally is thought to be not ‘manly’ (or they may also use the word bai-gherata which means ‘without honour’).

In case a women gives birth to a daughter (especially if it is a second or third) and having no male child she is again surrounded by multiple ghamuna for example a) the gham of the female child’s birth and b) the gham of her husband’s remarriage to produce a male heir.

A woman may also face gham if her husband dies because it is very rare for a woman to remarry after the death of her husband. I did not come across any cases where a widow remarried with someone other than her husband’s brother. If any brother of the dead husband is unmarried his marriage to the widow is considered to be sawab (reward). Such a marriage is celebrated in a hidden way.

In the case of an unmarried girl, her life is also full of gham because not getting married is itself a gham, both for the girl and her family. In that case she lives with her parents while they are alive. After the death of her parents she lives with one of her brothers. In this case she has to live with his wife and children. In most of cases she suffers a hard life because of constant quarrels with the brother’s wife, who considers her husband’s sister as someone who challenges her authority (the authority for which she has long struggled) within the house, which is unacceptable for any married woman living in a separate family.

**Women, mobility, purdah (seclusion), and gham khadee**

Despite being a native I was unable to communicate with the women of the village. Those with whom I could occasionally communicate with were my relatives. Even with them I did not frequently interact because according to the village tradition a man should not spend a

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135 In Munjai most of the migrants who are elders within their families are responsible for running the household expenditures.
lot of time in the company of women as it could make him develop girl-like habits, actions and behaviours. The men who spend a lot of time in the company of the women of their household are considered to be ‘weak men’ and are looked down upon. From childhood boys are taught such things and are told that the place for boys is *hujra* and not home.

Women are not very visible in the village. They mostly stay at home and come out only when needed. Girls are supposed to practise *purdah* (seclusion) at an early age (8-10 years) and are policed by the men as well as the women of the household as any improper behaviour could lead to *beizzati* (dishonour) for the whole family. In contrast, boys have more independence and are not policed the way girls are. However, old women (fifty and above) can be seen in the streets of the village, some of them even do not cover their faces, and some even come to the shops to buy things. Old women are associated with motherhood and are accorded extreme respect.

![Figure 15: Girls on their way back from School](image)

The main occasions when woman can be seen in the village is for *gham khadee* occasions or when the girls go to school or college or to go to hospital. While going to the hospital women are accompanied by men. Women mostly go to *gham khadee* occasions in groups and they try not to go at peak times when men are on the streets, in the shops, or when men come out of mosques from their prayers. If they have to go at such times, they do not
go through the main streets and take other routes that are not crowded or where they do not come across many men.

Doing *gham khadee* is not only limited to the male family members but the women also actively participate in the events of sorrows and joys (See Grima (1998) and Amineh (2006) for more details on women’s *gham khadee*). Women, mostly in groups, cover themselves with white shawls, and can be seen walking on the streets of Munjai either going or coming back from an event of *gham khadee*. Their network of *gham khadee* is not only in Munjai but they may have *gham khadee* relationships outside of Munjai. While going for any such events outside Munjai they are often accompanied by a male member of the household, or the male family member may arrange a vehicle for some women who pay for the fare collectively and go for the event. If the event is of a close relative, the women may stay overnight or may come back the same day. If the women are going for the event of a *gham* and plan to return on the same day they may not take their children (aged 1-5) along with them and they leave them with someone within the house or with the maternal grandparents of the children. Such children are often persuaded to stay at home by giving them money, with which they buy chocolates and toffees from the shops. However, children accompany their mothers on the occasions of Joys.

Women’s emotions (expressions) at both the occasions of joy and sorrow is extreme in comparison to the men. In *gham* they may cry a lot, while in *khadee*, e.g. marriage they start preparations much earlier than men and also dance and sing to celebrate the event to the fullest. Similarly any non-attendance at the occasions of *gham khadee* may lead to unhappiness. The unhappiness among women is much higher than in men, for example, if one of the female relatives does not attend the funeral rituals, it will be noticed by all the women and she will be talked about negatively and will be informed indirectly through others of their unhappiness. When I asked Ahmed about men’s *gham khadee* and the role of women, he told me that he once attended the funeral of Dar, his friend’s father, who had enmity with them in the past. The enmity was developed because of a feud over land which resulted in the killing of Taj, a cousin of Ahmed. The issue was later settled by the *jirga*. After Taj’s mother came to know that Ahmed had attended his son’s killer’s funeral, she temporarily suspended ties with Ahmed’s family. Ahmed’s father intervened to solve the
matter, and Ahmed had to stop his gham khadee with Dar’s son. This example shows how women (though rarely) can use their authority and affect men’s gham khadee relations.

Women’s gham khadee involves more exchange of gifts than that of men. On the occasion of the birth of a child (either male or female) women exchange cash gifts ranging from 100 Rs to 2000 Rs. Such relationships usually exist between women belonging to the same family, who often happen to be cousins. The women keep an oral record of the money given or taken. The money is reciprocated to the givers either with the same amount of money received or with a little more, for example, if A pays 500 Rs to B on the birth of her son, B will repay 500 Rs or 700-1,000 if a child is born to A. Such an increase in the reciprocated money is considered as an act of honour among the women. However, men criticize women for ‘retaining their honour’ through excessive spending during the occasions of gham khadee.

As in the case with men, women are sensitive to protecting and increasing their honour among other village women. They have their own ways to preserve it: morally, by their good conduct, socially by attending the gham khadee of the villagers, financially, through their proper management of money and through gift giving; religiously by being pious, by reciting the holy Quran by heart or by understanding the translation of the Arabic or by being obedient to their husbands and their parents and domestically, by being one who knows cooking. Her cooking expertise is the basis for the melmastya (hospitality) that her husband or brother or father extends to guests which results in increasing the their honour.

Inside the house women’s work is confined mostly to cooking, and bringing up children. I asked Iftikhar what women mostly do inside their homes.

“Iftikhar replied: Back-biting, what else would they do?

I asked him again: But men also do the same in hujra.

Iftikhar replied: Men’s back biting is different—they mostly do it for humour, while the way women do it is sinful and creates quarrels.

Iftikhar went on by saying: Women are the main reason for disruptions of familial ties between brothers. They are the main
reason for ‘be-ittefaq’ (disunity) among brothers, and the trend is increasing. Real-men are not trapped by such conspiracies. They make the women understand and I think anyone having a little honour can make them understand”.

Quarrels among women are mostly common in the joint families of the village. The reasons for such quarrels arise either because of unequal distribution of chores among the household women, where one woman may do more work than another and that makes her angry and she initiates a quarrel. Another reason for quarrels are the minor fights between children where every woman tries to defend her own children and put the blame on the other children then the same blame is avenged by the mother or sister of those children. Some men believe that such quarrels are intentionally initiated by some women who actually plan to set up their own nuclear families, where they can exercise their authority because in joint families the authority rests in the hands of the mother-in-law and husband’s unmarried sisters. If the mother-in-law is dead and the husband’s sisters are married, it is the wife of the eldest brother who is in charge of the domestic affairs. Women complain to their husbands about the domestic quarrels and present a picture of life in the joint family that living together appears to be no longer possible.

Quarrels are always verbal and they rarely involve any physical attacks. They may lead to a temporary suspension of ties which are usually restored after a few days. Men do not participate in such fights as such an act could label them as ‘weak’, which is a taunt that challenges and puts as question mark against their manliness. Some quarrels are so intense that the voices of the women can easily be heard. Men may only interfere when guests are present in hujra as it is against pukhto if the voice of the quarreling females reaches hujra.

The lives of the women are changing, but at a very slow pace. They are now going out for jobs as well as for education. Teaching and work as a medical doctor are the two acceptable and respectable jobs for women locally. Women in NGOs are seen as working in azad (independent or mixed) environment where males and females work together and this leads to the women having less respect or no respect at all. Such girls also face problems in getting married because people are suspicious of their supposed extra marital affairs because of the nature of their job. Interestingly the female doctors also work with male
doctors and other colleagues but they are seen with less or no suspicion. Many women are heading their households in the absence of their husbands. Akmal’s mother is respected among the villagers because she brought up her children after the early death of Akmal’s father. She managed the household, the education of her children and even finding suitable matches for her children. Not that she did it all alone (her brothers were beside her), but she definitely did it in an environment where it is difficult for a woman to do such things. She is considered to be a brave woman and also an authoritative woman who still holds a grip on her domestic affairs despite the fact that her sons are now grown up.

Similarly women (sisters and mothers) often exercise their authority in matchmaking for their brothers, sisters, daughters and sons. Mothers look for a daughter-in-law who is not only beautiful but does not pose a threat to their authority.

**Conclusion**

This chapter discussed *gham khadee*. It is necessary to have an introductory chapter about *gham khadee* as it is mostly through *gham khadee* that a person’s *pukhto* is judged, observed and assessed. Another reason why it is important to have a whole chapter to discuss *gham khadee* is that this is the first work of its kind discussing men’s *gham khadee* as an important marker of being a Pakhtun. I have attempted to show the importance of *gham khadee*, who carries *gham khadee* and with whom, different levels of *gham khadee* relationships, and the consequences of being unable to attend a *gham khadee* event. I also showed briefly the ways in which men’s *gham khadee* differs from women’s.

The next chapter discusses how the tenets of *badal* (revenge) and *melmastya* (hospitality) are enacted in *gham khadee* events. I show through ethnographic examples how, unlike the past, people practise *badal* through participation and cooperation in *gham khadee*. The chapter further discusses how *melmastya* is practised during *gham khadee* occasions and what happens if a person fails to extend *melmastya* in an appropriate way.
Chapter 5: Doing Pukhto through participation and cooperation during gham khadee

Introduction

The people in Munjai confer status and honour on people practising the tenets of Pakhtunwali. Such tenets are especially observed during gham khadee occasions. This chapter discusses the tenets of badal and melmastya within the context of gham khadee. This chapter discusses two ways (participation and cooperation during gham khadee events) in which people do pukhto. I argue that cooperation and participation are purely based on badal with one’s relatives and friends. The badal which this chapter talks about is not revenge killing but badal through non-violent ways. However, this chapter talks about how violent badal affects the non-violent badal.

The main aim of this chapter is to show how in today’s Pakhtun society Pakhtunwali is practised. My findings differ from the dominant perspective (Ahmed, 1980; Barth 1959; Lindholm 1982; Singer 1982) that defines Pakhtunwali as a static code (Banerjee 2000: 15) and which portrays badal (revenge killing) as the most important tenet of Pakhtunwali. Since gham khadee has assumed priority and it is through one’s performance during such occasions that one’s adherence to pukhto is determined. I show in this chapter, how the Pakhtunwali tenets of melmastya and badal are practised and assessed during gham khadee occasions.

The previous chapter introduced gham khadee and discussed its importance in Munjai, and the levels of gham kahdee relations people maintain with others. This chapter discusses the most prominent occasions (gham khadee) in which people do pukhto in today’s Pakhtun society. Since gham khadee has assumed priority among the events in which the pukhto of people is judged. People gauge the Pakhtunness of others mostly, by looking at their performance during gham khadee occasions. Performance during gham khadee means how one participates and cooperates with others.
In order to write about both participation as well as cooperation, I have divided the chapter into three sections. In the first section of this chapter, I discuss how *pukhto* is done through participation in *gham khadee* which shows how *badal* is practised in *gham khadee* through participation. While the second section discusses how during *gham khadee* occasions people do *pukhto* through cooperation with each other, such cooperation during *gham khadee* events signifies the *melmastya* of the host. Both the sections discuss how the *Pakhtunwali* tenets of *badal* and *melmastya* are acted out through cooperation and participation in *gham khadee* events. In the third section I briefly discuss whether it is Islam or *pukhto*, or both, that motivates people to do *pukhto* via participation and cooperation.

Because of the immense importance given to *gham* by the villagers, my focus remains mainly on the cooperation extended during *gham* occasions. The next chapter will discuss the practise of *tarburwali* and *khegada* in the context of *gham khadee*.

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**Table 10: The different ways of doing pukhto through gham khadee**
Section A:

Doing and assessing pukhto through participation, late participation and non-participation

After discussing the importance of participation in gham occasions in chapter 4, I will now discuss how people do pukhto through such participation, late participation and non-participation in gham khadee events. I will show how the concept of badal (reciprocity/exchange) serves as the motivation behind such participation.

Assessment and contestation of each other’s pukhto is very common in Munjai. At every social gathering such assessments and contestations may come up. Any shortcoming in doing pukhto is discussed later on. Such failure to do pukhto may also lead to paighor (taunts).

But how is pukhto assessed? Besides looking at who comes for the funeral, the hosts assess the pukhto of the visitor/s by looking at the timing of the visit, number of visits by a person or family, the length of the stay, the number of people from a particular khanadan (family), and the distance one comes from for any gham khadee event. Similarly, the visitor also assesses the pukhto of the host by looking at the number of guests, who comes for the funeral and las-niwa, the seating and the food arrangements.

Though the zimawar person is usually the one who participates and represents his khanadan, it is highly appreciated if someone in addition to the zimawar person also attends the occasion. Arif while talking about the participation of Zubair’s family in his mother’s gham remarked that:

“Zubair knows well how to do gham khadee, he came with his three sons, one of them came from Peshawar just for the las-niwa. He spent the whole day with us”.

The timing of the visit is appreciated especially if the visitor attends the funeral. The length of the stay in terms of how many days and for how long each day the visitor comes to the hujra of the deceased person is noticed. An early visit and a long stay with the deceased’s
family shows the closeness of the two people. In a similar way staying for a longer period with the relatives of the deceased person signifies the closeness between the two people or families.

Inayat’s brother, while appreciating the presence of Momin, once said:

“Look at Momin, he was here for three days consecutively and that also from morning till night., I will have to do the same if God forbid he faces a gham”.

Discussing the timely presence of Bhaijan (the politician discussed in chapter 6) in almost every gham in Munjai, Misbah said:

“Many people come for the gham but the reason why I appreciate Bhaijan is because he comes much earlier, as soon as he gets to know. This shows the respect that he keeps for others. He visits people multiple times and that is why people like him”.

Timing is so important that keeping in mind the day of the visit people sometimes reciprocate in a similar way, for example, Akram visited Maab’s father on the fifth day because Maab did the same when Akram’s father died.

The distance covered is also taken into consideration by the people. The further the visitor travels, the more the deceased’s family members appreciate it. Such visitors are considered as having done pukhto. The distance covered means that the visitor spent money, took out time, left other job/s and came to show sympathy and solidarity with the deceased’s family.

After the death of Hashim, on the first day Sadir came from Lahore, a city in Punjab, where he works. His visit was much appreciated by the Hashim’s brother who told me afterwards:

“They were friends and were class mates but I appreciate his timely visit. He covered a long distance from Lahore to Munjai”.

Gul also received similar appreciation for his visit when he came from Dubai after the death of Rak. Here doing pukhto means performing a hard task (visit from far areas/spending money) and the more you take pains the more you are appreciated.
Case study 1: Ayaz’s doing pukhto through participation in a gham

Once, on the third day after the death of an old man in Munjai, when most of the elders went for the afternoon prayer, I was asked by Ayaz to accompany him for a short walk. Ayaz works in a government department in the capital Islamabad. Ayaz, wanted to smoke a cigarette but he could not do so in the hujra (male guest house) because of the presence of elders and also smoking is against the local etiquette, along with talking loudly, or laughing during the occasion of gham. Violations of the etiquette, gives the incoming guests an impression of being happy which is not appropriate for a sad event. After walking for five minutes, and getting out of sight of the people who were sitting for las-niwa, we had a brief discussion about the deceased person and he said positive things about him.

After a while I asked Ayaz when he had arrived from Islamabad. He said that he came the day before, but he missed the funeral because it was late in the night on the first day after the death. He said it was difficult for him to ask for leave from his office because it was his second visit to the village in a week (his first visit was to attend the funeral of a female). However, he had to come because the deceased was a close relative and a close friend. On the importance of his participation on this occasion of gham he said:

‘Joys may be celebrated individually but in Sorrows we (close relatives) are all one.’

Ayaz participated in the gham despite the fact that it was difficult for him to take leave from his job, the reason why he risked his job and travelled a long way is that the deceased had active gham khadee relations with Ayaz’s family, and the obligation to reciprocate such visits was the main reason why Ayaz risked his job, covered a distance and spent money on travel, as Ayaz said;

‘He would come to our gham in time, and would be there for three days, so I and my father were bound to come here and reciprocate the good he has done to us when he was alive’.

He further said that:
“Had it been a khadee and if I were invited, I would not have come because of my job, but in ‘gham’ you have to forsake your job, money, and time because it is what pukhto demands, because if I can come to you, you can come to me, and I will do it because I don’t want to die alone, which is a death with disgrace. My colleagues (mostly Punjabis) always keep asking me about my frequent visits to the village but by now they have realised the importance of gham khadee and I face little resistance from my boss, because they know even if they don’t grant me leave and if I have to go, I will go, without caring about anyone, even my boss”.

Ayaz works in the police department of Pakistan in the capital Islamabad, where the police officer’s duties and presence are constantly monitored by the high officials of their department. This ensures the security of Islamabad, the capital of Pakistan. They can only take emergency leave or scheduled leave from their jobs. Ayaz visited Munjai for the second time in a week, and if the high officials knew of his constant absence he may be suspended for an unknown period. Ayaz justifies risking his job in the following way;

“I am doing this job to lead a honourable life, but at the same time my participation in gham khadee is to lead a honourable life among my people. I want to leave this world in an honourable way when I die (by honourable here he meant so that he could attract a large number of people to his own or to any of his family member’s funerals). The biggest loss I may face in my job is suspension which is temporary but if I fail to do the gham khadee I might lose my status of being a good Pakhtun, which is an irreparable loss and could hardly be re-gained”.

Ayaz, believes that risking his job is a better option than risking his status of being a good Pakhtun. Besides risking his job, any visit to the village requires him to spend money and also leave or re-schedule any other commitments. Ayaz’s ability to participate in almost
every gham khadee of the village was highly appreciated and later on discussed by the villagers, as was said by my informant Iftikhar:

“He is doing pukhto each time he visits the village. I must say he is doing more pukhto than all of us who live in the village because it is difficult for him to travel all the way from Islamabad and forsake his job, as well, which is of sensitive nature”.

Jameel, a friend of Iftikhar interrupted him and said:

“But he has no other option because if he does not come to our gham khadee, we won’t go for his either, and that’s how pukhto is done. It’s all about badal. One has to do pukhto in order to let people do pukhto with him, and in order to live a life in the land of pukhto”.

Ayaz’s participation in the event is seen as a perfect pukhto act and he is considered a good Pakhtun. In doing pukhto he is accumulating more izzat in comparison to the other villagers who came from the village or nearby villages. In addition the people view such participation as an important way of staying a Pakhtun, regardless of whether someone lives in the village or outside the village.

The villagers would often use the following proverb for the migrants (including me) which perfectly sum up the situation;

“Da kali uza khu da narkha ma uza”

“Stay in touch with the village life (particularly focusing on the traditions and participation in sorrows and joys) even if you live outside the village”.

Ayaz’s participation on the occasion of sorrow earned him izzat in the eyes of the villagers because he lives in Islamabad, the capital of Pakistan, and has to travel for hundreds of miles, risk his job and spend money on travel, just to do pukhto and stay in touch with the village life, which is considered to be an obligation of any Pakhtun in order to maintain his status of being a Pakhtun. His participation may not give him any financial or political benefit but it is surely giving him izzat and the whole idea of doing pukhto is either to
accumulate izzat or to preserve it. Ayaz successfully did both. Ayaz clearly did not do it according to the teachings of Islam where such acts are rewarded in the afterworld but he did so because of pukhto, and that too because the deceased’s family regularly attended his family’s gham khadee events.

Case study 2: Gul’s visit and the display of badal

Gul, a man in his early fifties belongs to the ghareeban but has earned money, become rich, and now holds land. He has earned money after living in Dubai for two decades. Before migration to Dubai, Gul was Rak’s servant. Rak was from the Shenwari family. He was not only his servant but a close confidant. After Rak died, Gul was in Dubai and as soon as he learned the news he travelled to Pakistan the same day. His job required him to inform his employers well in advance for any leave to be taken. He, after hearing the news of Rak’s death did not get a chance to inform them. He risked his job in order to do pukhto. Once in a conversation Gul told me:

“‘My first visa was arranged by Rak. I worked with him. He never treated me like a servant, rather I was treated as a family member. Today, if I have any money, any status, it’s only because of Rak. How can I forget that khegada. All my life I couldn’t pay back for his khegada so if I had not come to his death it would have been improper and against pukhto’’.

His visit from Dubai was often discussed by the villagers and he would always be remembered in good words. Iftikhar had the following words to say about Gul:

“‘Gul has proven himself as a loyal person, full of pukhto. He could have pretended and not come for the gham, but he came and did pukhto’’.

Another elder villager said:

“‘Now other people would easily trust Gul and would come forward to help him because he has proved himself to be a
good Pakhtun. He, through his visit showed that he does not care about money, his job or other things but the relationships are important for him”.

Gul’s case clearly shows the importance of *gham khadee* as well as the practise of *badal* where Gul realizes the importance of participation in Rak’s *gham khadee*, risks his job, and attends the occasion to share their grief. Gul reciprocated the *khegada* of Rak and hence did *pukhto* with Rak’s family as Rak did *pukhto* with him by arranging a visa for him. Gul’s attendance at Rak’s occasion exemplifies the practise of the *Pakhtunwali* tenet of *badal*, which made him do *pukhto* and earn *izzat* in the eyes of the villagers.

**Case study 3**

When I was in Peshawar during the fieldwork one evening I received the news of the death of a friend’s father who was from Shangla (an area at a distance of 6-7 hours from Peshawar). Along with a friend, I made a plan to go for the *las-niwa*. It was the third day after his father’s death. We decided to go by our own car and for this purpose my friend came in his car. We started the journey early in the morning, so that we could get there in time and come back to Peshawar the same day. We wanted to come back because it is not considered very good to stay at a *gham* household, because they are already passing through a period of grief and such giving us hospitality would only add to their burden.

We reached Shangla at around 2 in the afternoon; we offered *las-niwa*, had lunch there and sat there for around two and a half hours. Our visit was highly appreciated by the friend, his elder brother as well as by his uncles and he would time and again tell us that we did a great *takleef*\(^{136}\) (formality/putting oneself to trouble). We left the place at around 4:30 in the evening and returned to Peshawar at 11.

A month after our visit, the friend visited Peshawar and called both of us to say that he had arranged a meal for us in one of the best restaurants in Peshawar. After the dinner, as a sign of thanks, I asked him why did you do this *takleef*, he replied:

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\(^{136}\) Sentences such as “You did takleef” are typically part of the conversation especially during *gham khadee*. It shows the gratefulness of the hosts towards the visitor. It is an indirect way of appreciating the visit and assuring the guests that such visit will be reciprocated. The visit increases the *pukhto* of the visitor while such sentences signify that the visit is acknowledged by the hosts and hence they are happy with the *pukhto* of the visitors.
“No, this is not a takleef, you people came to my village for las-niwa. My relatives saw that and appreciated that, which also increased my izzat in front of them, so this is nothing in front of that visit and takleef.”

Our visit to the village was appreciated as well as reciprocated because the village was very far, and the hosts knew it so it added to the pukhto of the friend in the eyes of his family as well the villagers. Our visit was reciprocated with the meal.

**Badal in case of late participation and non-participation in gham khadee events**

Ability to attend the gham occasions indeed results in the accumulation of izzat. The Pakhtunwali tenet of badal is the main reason why people participate and cooperate with each other. In the same way that people reciprocate timely participation in gham khadee visits, they also practise badal for late attendance or a failure to attend the gham khadee occasions. Failure to attend, a late attendance or non-cooperation during the gham khadee occasions results in khafgan and or similar behaviour towards the offender. The following case studies will show how people in Munjai practise badal during gham khadee in case of the non-participation or late participation of others.

**Late participation and its consequences**

Badal is practised in an exacting manner. The gham khadee household notices and remembers the visiting people and the timing of their visit. Such visits are noticed in order to see if the other party is reciprocating the gham khadee relationships in a proper way. The following case study shows how a late participation resulted in an exacting response from a villager showing the practise of badal.

**Case study 4**

It was a sunny winter afternoon, on the occasion of Kim’s death when people in Iftikhar’s hujra were getting ready to visit his hujra for las-niwa on the second day after Kim’s death. Shahab who was sitting in the same hujra reading an Urdu newspaper was also asked by Iftikhar to accompany them. He refused in an angry way and said:
“I will do las-niwa on the fifth day”

“Fifth day”, asked Iftikhar, “but why?”

Shahab went on, saying,

“Because Kim’s son came to my uncle’s las-niwa on the fifth day, if he can do this to me and dishonour me in front of the people, I, too have to do pukhto with him”.

Shahab did not move from his place and I accompanied the others for the las-niwa. On the way Iftikhar justified Shahab’s argument and said that one cannot say he is wrong because that is what his pukhto demands, that is how he has to respond and let Kim’s son know that gham khadee is all about badal. Later on I found that Shahab went for las-niwa on the fifth day of Sim’s death. He exacted his badal and did pukhto.

Non participation and its consequences

Similar to late participation, non-participation is also reciprocated with non-participation, where badal is practised. Those people who are unable to attend the gham khadee occasions without any genuine reason are said to have not done pukhto and people respond to such behavior by intentionally avoiding their occasions. Such non-participation can result in the complete breakdown of gham khadee relationships between people.

Case study 5

Bakht belongs to Pukhtana and he runs a medical store in Timergara. His elder brother is a migrant in Dubai. Bakht earns a handsome amount of money from his medical store. Because of his business he is least active in the gham khadee occasion at Munjai. People always used to talk negatively about him and his family. Their absence at gham occasions would frequently be discussed among the villagers and they would be called bekara (useless) and bai-pukhto (without pukhto). The reason why Bakht would not participate in the gham khadee of others was because of his business, as any closure of the business would have given him a financial loss. For financial gains he risked his pukhto.

When their father died, no one came to dig his grave despite multiple elanuna (announcements). Afterwards a few people helped Bakht in digging the grave. Because of
his non-cooperation his own family members even did not cooperate with him. The number of people at both the funeral as well in the las-niwa was incredibly low. His prioritizing of business in comparison to gham khadee participation made him lose his pukhto, and lead to non-cooperation and non-participation from the people. He was shamed because he hardly found any people to dig his father’s grave, the job that people do without any request because of the sawab (reward in the afterlife) involved in it. He was also shamed because of the very low number of people both in the funeral as well as for las-niwa.

On his inability to do pukhto with others Naeem said:

‘‘He did not come to my father’s las-niwa, so I did not go for his father’s las-niwa and why would I, am I not a Pakhtun? He did not do my izzat, how can he expect it from me’’.

Bakht’s case shows how a person’s inability to attend ‘others’ gham occasions without any proper excuse can lead to non-cooperation and non-participation from the fellow villagers. It is through one’s participation and cooperation in gham khadee that makes people assess and reciprocate each other’s pukhto. Bakht’s failure to participate in another’s gham khadee occasions isolated him from the villagers.

**Conclusion of section A:**

In section A, I showed how badal, an important tenet of Pakhtunwali is practised in ways other than revenge killing. Badal through revenge killing has been outlined as the most important tenet of Pakhtunwali in the literature so far; however, this research found that it is during gham khadee occasions that the tents of Pakhtunwali such as badal and melmastya are practised and observed. It is through the practise of badal and melmastya during gham khadee that people’s pukhto is observed and people become honourable.
Section B

Doing and assessing **pukhto** through cooperation and **melmastya** in **gham khadee**

Cooperation with each other is the theme of the village life; an ideal village life according to the people of Munjai should be one with cooperation and **khegada** with each other, which is a tenet of **Pakhtunwali**. It is such cooperation that differentiates the village life from the city life, and the villagers are proud of their own way of life, and taunt the city dwellers for living useless lives, for example, they often say “in the city you don’t even know who is your next door neighbour” and hence in their view city life lacks or has minimum cooperation as well as interaction among the people. Cooperation in the local sense means giving a hand to those who need it, be it in **gham khadee** or at other occasions. A villager is expected to help and cooperate with his fellow villager, for example, if he needs any help in the police station, court, or any other official work, a villager tries to get his work done through someone from his own village. In case a villager does not help his fellow villager he is put in the category of **bekara sadai** (man of no worth) and people keep minimal **gham khadee** relationships with such people.

Cooperation during **gham khadee** means helping each other in making arrangements for the **gham khadee** event. Arrangements are important because, it is through such arrangements that the visitors judge the **pukhto** of the host and any shortcoming means that the host lacks **pukhto**. Arrangements are taken into consideration because they represent the **melmastya** of the hosts.

At the event of **gham**, the **gham** household is not supposed to cook. Cooking is forbidden both according to Islam and also because **Pakhtunwali** stresses helping one’s neighbours, friends and relatives during such occasions. In order to save their **pukhto** through proper seating and food arrangements, people develop meal exchange relationships with their close relatives.

The meal exchange relationships are also called **badal**. It is called **badal** because people exchange meals in an exacting manner. In **gham** people cooperate with each other both because of Islamic teachings as well as well as **pukhto** are the basis for helping each other.

\[137\] Such cooperation with the villagers is called **manda tarda** or **khegada**.
This is because in Islam the deceased’s house is prohibited from cooking for the first three days, which signifies mourning. Despite Islam’s stress on helping each other during gham khadee, it is pukhto that guides the gham khadee practises of the people of Munjai. Cooperation is more evident during gham khadee and is stressed more than in other matters of daily life. It is the relatives, friends and the neighbours who cooperate the most. Cooperation may involve the granting of permission of using one’s hujra, sharing the furniture, arranging meals for the guests, or through tanzeem. Furniture (chairs and string beds) are often brought from the relatives’ or neighbours’ houses and in the case that more guests are expected on the occasion further chairs and tents are brought either from Timergara (main town) or from a recently opened shop on the main road in Munjai. If the weather is too warm tents are erected, while in case of rain people sit inside the rooms and the verandahs of the hujras.

Every household keeps badal relationships usually with their close patrilineal agnates. Such cooperation involves arrangement of meals and arrangement of accommodation for the guests who attend the gham khadee occasions. These are the factors on which people judge the pukhto of others. Such badal relationships help preserve the pukhto of the gham household. Keeping in mind the reciprocal nature of the badal relationships people try their best in making the arrangements.

During the events of gham khadee the quality and quantity of food, seating and sleeping arrangements for the guests, the number of the guests, who attends, and the expressions of the hosts are noticed by the visitors. Expressions are noticed especially during the gham, where the hosts are expected to look sad, otherwise they are ridiculed for

138 Tanzeem is an intra familial association with an aim to facilitate its member on the occasions of the gham khadee. Each tanzeem in Munjai usually has a formal body consisting of a president as its main leader. He is also known as da tanzeem mashar (head of tanzeem), general secretary, and finance secretary. These positions are either handed over to the members by some elders or they themselves volunteer for the job. All the roles in tanzeem are non-salaried and a strict check is kept on the spending during any occasion of gham khadee. People who live in the village permanently are given such roles and there is no specific time period for the different positions. Tanzeem is run by the collective funds of the member. The funds are either collected on a monthly basis or after the gham khadee event the overall spending on the events are calculated and divided up between the members in the tanzeem. The money is given to the man in charge of the finances. The non-cooperation of certain members in financial matters is a major hurdle in the smooth running of tanzeem activities.

139 A visit from a high government or military official, or a politician, is appreciated and the host is considered as a man having wider talug (circle of friendship).
being insensitive. The seating arrangements and food given is linked to the honour of the hosts. If they are not properly served and seated at the occasion of *gham*, people talk negatively about the hosts.

After the failure of Deedar and his cousins who could not treat the visitors properly and in an honourable way when Deedar’s mother died, Iftikhar once said:

“’The weather was hot and some people were sitting in the sun, because Deedar and his relatives (referring to the ones with whom he had *badal*) did not provide good seating arrangements, he should have erected some tents on the lawn of his *hujra*. It was a shame for him as well for his *khanadan*’.”

The reason why food and seating arrangements matter during *gham khadee* occasions is that they demonstrate the host’s *melmastya* towards his guests, where *melmastya* signifies the *pukhto* of the hosts.

The meal exchange relationships are not necessarily for both the occasions of *gham* (sorrows) and *khadee* (joys) and some people keep such *badal* only during the occasions of *gham* and not during *khadee*. This again signifies the importance given to the occasion of *gham* (for more details see chapter 4) by the villagers, where cooperation during the occasion of *gham* is stressed more than the occasion of *khadee*.

Each household may have meal exchange relationships with one to six households within their own families. The meals are arranged both for lunch and dinner for the deceased’s household and the guests. The households who are supposed to arrange the meals agree on the timings when each should provide the food. Normally relatives who are very close to the *gham khadee* household arrange meals on the first day. The number of guests on the first day of both *gham* and *khadee* is greater, and it decreases with each passing day. One does not have a meal exchange cooperation with all one’s close relatives but only with a few, typically 3 to 5. The numbers are not fixed and can vary. Also, there no fixed criteria for making the meal exchange relationships with people. Such relationships are often carried on from one generation to another.
Iftikhar, has *badal* relationships with his four patrilineal cousins who also live in his neighbourhood, which means that at any *gham khadee* occasions his neighbours will cook for him four times (two lunches and two dinners) which provides for two days of the *gham khadee* occasions. As the *gham* household is not supposed to cook for three days, I asked iftikhar what he does on the third day of the *gham*. He told me:

““All the four relatives with whom I have *badal*, collect money and make arrangements for the third day, and I along with other cousins and repeat the same thing in case any one of them faces a *gham* occasion”.”

The failure to arrange the meal especially at *gham* occasions leads to *khafgan* (unhappiness) of the *gham khadee* household. Some people end the meal exchange relationship by calling the same party as *bai-gherata* (without honour) and without *pukhto* since they fail to do *badal*, in the proper way. Such an act leaves a bad impression and gives them a bad reputation among the family members. After failing to arrange the meal, such families fail to uphold one of the major purposes of the relationships of *badal* which is to keep *khpalwan* (relatives) in contact and to maintain *khpalwali* (relationships) through cooperation during hard times.

The following case study shows how *badal* is practised through meal exchange during *gham khadee*. I will further show how people observe the *pukhto* of the hosts through their arrangements or *melmastya* in *gham khadee*.

**Case study**

After attending the funeral on the first day after the death of a woman who belonged to the ghareeban, I went to do *las-niwa* on the second day of the death. Usually I would go to such occasions in the company of Iftikhar, but on this particular day I went alone because he was in Peshawar for some work. I went to the deceased’s *hujra*, and took a seat on the small lawn of the two bedroom *hujra* of the deceased’s son Alam. As I entered I saw Mani, cousin of Alam, who I had already had a chat with at the river bank. He came and sat near me, and

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140 Such failures rarely happen and I did not come across anyone who faced such failures, because people are well aware of the consequences of it.
we spoke informally after the las-niwa. Mani runs a shop in the main town and is in his mid-thirties.

According to a villager, who revealed the information in later conversations, the guests were not very numerous. After sitting there for some time, a relative of Alam came, pointed to a room and asked me and a few more people next to me to go there for lunch. The young boys and a few men were serving the guests.

Inside the room the walls were decorated with different posters and the room was carpeted with a few chairs in it. I sat with a group of elders, who were discussing different topics. The food was good both in quality and quantity, as one man sitting next to me whispered to me “Eat well, it seems they have spent a lot of money”. After the lunch was over I along with the other men offered the afternoon prayers in the same room.

All the men left the room after the prayer. Mani and I were still there. He told me he was tired because he was working since early in the morning, arranging the meal because the deceased was his close relative and they have badal (meal exchange) relations with each other. I praised the meal and told him that both the quality and quantity were good. He immediately said, “Alam also arranged a good meal when my father died”. “But is it badal the main reason why you people made good arrangements?” I asked.

Mani: Yes, because any badal must be reciprocated in a similar way.

Me: But does that mean if they had prepared not so good food, you would have done the same.

Mani: Well, it doesn’t usually happen, because we (patrilineal first cousins) are all dependent on each other. We don’t have a tanzeem like others have because we don’t need one. We only have badal among few households.

Me: But how much is this badal different than the other badal (I was referring to revenge killing and he got my point without even letting me complete my sentence).
Mani: Both the badal have one thing in common, and that is pukhto kawal (doing pukhto), but one is violent and the other is not.

Me: Roughly how much did you spend on this meal?

Around 18,000 PKR

Me: That’s a lot, No?

Mani: They did pukhto with me when my father died, to reciprocate that I had to add one more dish to the menu, I hope they will be happy with it. I will get to know their response few days after the gham khadee as now they are more busy as well as in grief.

Me: But normally people don’t care about the food in gham?

Mani: Who told you this? They may not say anything to your face and at that time but they talk negatively later on, and dishonour you in front of other villagers, so it’s better to be on the safe side. It’s not an individual matter but something that reflects the izzat (honour) of the whole khanadan (family).

After a while, I left the place and later on I found that many people were discussing the gham event with good words about the food but many people were heard talking negatively about the low number of visitors.

In this case study one could see that meal is arranged on badal. It is not only the arrangements that are reciprocated but also the quality of food is determined by badal, and good food is reciprocated by good food while not so good food is reciprocated by not so good food. People take into account every aspect of the gham khadee event and judge it as being according to pukhto or not according to pukhto, for example, the low number of visitors observed in this case study is against pukhto as it shows that the hosts did not participate actively in others’ gham khadee and that is why people did not turn up. But the food served was good both in quantity and quality and hence was according to melmastya. However, in the above gham the arrangement of food by Alam’s relative was praised, which signifies that Alam as well as his family did pukhto.
Cooperation without *badal*

*Badal* is indeed the most potent reason for cooperation but it is not the only reason behind cooperation among Pakhtuns. *Khegada* which means ‘doing good with each other’ is at times the reason why people cooperate. Such *khegada* does not necessarily give rise to any reciprocal expectations, however, the receiver of *khegada* is the one who remains thankful to those who helps him. One who is not thankful is considered to be a non-loyal person.

During my entire fieldwork I could only spot one such occasion when relatives helped a young cancer patient who was very weak financially. Many of his relatives donated a huge sum of money for him, though the young man died after a month. Although the cooperation of the relatives was without any hope of reciprocity, I heard some people referring to the Islamic teachings where one is supposed to help his or her relatives when they need help,
while others were of the view that it would have been shameful had the patient not been helped. So, for some people the help was doing pukhto with the patient, and lack of cooperation might have led the people of the village talk negatively about the relatives.

**Tea exchange relationships**

In addition to meal exchange, family members also have tea exchange\(^{141}\) relationships (da chai badal). The tea exchange relationships also exist between the families who may or may not have meal exchange relationships. A discussion about tea exchange relationships is important because it signifies how people who do not have formal meal exchange relationships maintain close gham khadee relationships.

On such occasions people send tea, roasted chicken, oily breads, and biscuits. Such tea exchange relationships exist both at the occasions of gham and khadee and are called da chai badal (tea exchange). Tea exchange relationships also exist when a migrant comes back home from musafari (being abroad), which is categorized as an occasion of khadee.

Tea is brought in big trays by the male servants or by an elderly female domestic worker. Women are preferred to take the tea as they can go inside the house and tell the women of the gham khadee household who has sent the tea. If the tea is sent through the male servant, he cannot go inside the house because of the purdah (seclusion) factor. He may ask

\(^{141}\) Tea exchange relationships are part of the meal exchange relationships. For example, A and B if are involved in meal exchange relationships they also will have tea exchange relationships. But one can have tea exchange relationships with members of families who are not involved in meal exchange relationships, for example A and B may not have meal exchange relationship but they could still have tea exchange relationships. It signifies the closeness of the two households even if they are not engaged in meal exchange relationships. The elder women of the household keep a verbal record of all the houses that sent tea. The pot in which tea is brought is immediately emptied, the tea is shifted to the house’s own pots and the emptied utensils are returned along with fruits and/or peanuts. Sometimes the utensils are not returned immediately and are kept for a day or two and returned afterwards with fruits and/or peanuts. If the utensils are returned without fruits/peanuts it is considered as an act against the badal and da sharam khabara (act of dishonor) by the women. The tea exchange relationships are entirely managed by the women and only they know where to send and when to send the tea to any gham khadee household. The records of exchanges during gham khadee are not kept in a written form but are orally maintained by the elders (both male and female) of the households; the relationships are often maintained through years of cooperation. The food in gham khadee is cooked by professional cooks and then the food is either delivered to the gham khadee household through domestic female servants or by the male/female of the household on trays to the gham khadee household. In some cases the khadee household visits the ‘badal’ household and eats the meal at their house. Men, in gham as well as in khadee eat their food in the hujra; the men’s guest house.
another member of the *gham khadee* household to take the tray inside the house. In such a case the message may not be properly communicated as to who sent the tea and the name of the same household may not come into the records of tea receiving household which leads to *khafgan* (unhappiness) because of miscommunication and misunderstanding.

**From house based meal exchange to *tanzeem***

A new trend has been observed in Munjai, where people have made different small bodies known as *tanzeem*. *Tanzeem* is an intra-familial association consisting mostly of close relatives or, in some cases, distant relatives are also members of the same *tanzeem*. *Tanzeem* literally means ‘association’ and it is a recent trend in Munjai where people make a *tanzeem* with other relatives. The members of the tanzeem pay a monthly subscription to finance the *tanzeem* which is run by the head and finance supervisor. In any *gham khadee* (mostly *gham*) event they arrange the food and catering for the visiting guests using the collected money and a professional cook known as *degmar’* is arranged from the main town Timergara. In case the expense is more than the money present in *tanzeem’s* account the respective member households cover the extra cost between them. The idea of *tanzeem* is said to have come from the Gulf, where the majority of the villagers who are living as migrants are. Every migrant is a member of one or other *tanzeem* and these *tanzeemuna* (plural of *tanzeem*) abroad are also run with money collected on a monthly basis. The money they collect is spent when a need arises e.g. accident, death or illness of a member. The *tanzeem* members abroad also help each other during the *gham khadee* occasions.

The meal exchange relationship was successfully running until it was recently replaced by the *tanzeem*. The main reason for the increasing number of *tanzeem* based reciprocal relationships was the absence of male members who had gone to study to other cities or as migrants to the Gulf states, or because of migration to big cities such as Peshawar and Mardan.

After moving to a city, a migrated family lives in “*dwa kora*” (two houses) (Hart 1990: 3; Ahmed 1980: 219-222), the one in the city and the other in the village. The house in the village is either locked or, in the case of a shared house, it is still occupied by other members of the family.
The concept of *dwa kora* is becoming very common especially among the Shenwaris of Munjai. Doing *gham khadee* is considered to be essential in order to stay in touch with the village and is considered to be an essential quality that any villager must possess in order to be called a true Pakhtun.

The villagers would often quote the following proverb (also mentioned in another section of this chapter) which perfectly sums up the situation of the *dwa kora*:

*Da Kali uza khu da narkha ma uza*

Stay in touch with the village life (traditions and participation in sorrows and joys) even if you live outside the village.

The number of visits a migrated family pays to the village depends upon the number of *gham khadee* events occurring in the village and their close relationships with their relatives. It is often the *zimawar* of the respective families who pays visits to the village. The financial constraints and the physical stress in the wake of the visits to the village are the main worries of those visiting the village frequently for the *gham khadee* events.

Said, who is living in Mardan once told me:

“Once I had to come to the village three times in a week. Just imagine how hard is it to drive on this treacherous road, and besides that I spend money and each visit costs at least three to five thousand rupees (equivalent to 30 pounds)”. 

The migration from the village makes it difficult for the people to continue the old mode of *badal* because it becomes difficult for the city-dweller to make proper arrangements in the village, where they do not live anymore and also they come to the village when they are informed and have little time to make proper arrangements. For this reason, the elders have introduced the idea of *tanzeem*.

The introduction of *tanzeem* was called *da wakht zarurat* (the need of the time)\(^\text{142}\) and it replaced the previously practised *badal* system. *Tanzeem* like the *badal* system saves *pukhto* through *melmastya*. Any shortcomings on the part of the hosts is considered as being

\(^{142}\) Told by Iftikhar while discussing the introduction of *tanzeem* and its roles.
against pukhto and leads to negative talking, which is seen as shameful and equivalent to loss of honour/pukhto.

Ibrahim the head of the Shenwari tanzeem, when asked about how tanzeem was started, told me:

“Once when there was a gham in our family, I was observing that the arrangements were not going well. The food was not served in a good way, the seating arrangement was not as good and later on I came to know that people were talking negatively about us. That was when I arranged a meeting of many family members and gave them the idea of tanzeem, which basically came to my mind from Dubai where I was a migrant and was the member of tanzeem, impressed from the functioning of it I thought it would be a better idea to implement it here and this could help us in doing pukhto as well as maintaining pukhto. This idea of tanzeem making was liked by others as well and today you see almost all families have tanzeemuna for gham khadee”.

I heard the same justification from a few more masharan (elders) that such tanzeemuna are made to save and maintain the pukhto of the members in the eyes of outsiders. The formation of tanzeem as the new way of maintaining and saving pukhto shows how Pakhtunwali is adaptable and changes to meet new conditions by using new means to serve traditional values.

It is usually the relatives, neighbours and friends who help the gham khadee household in making arrangements for the guests, because the hosts especially in the case of a sorrow are not supposed to do such arrangements as it is considered inappropriate for the gham khadee household both according to the teachings of Islam and pukhto. Islamic teaching asks its followers to help their relatives, neighbours and friends for three days during the occasion of death. Similarly pukhto requires the Pakhtuns to do khegada (doing good) with one’s relatives, friends and neighbours especially during hard times, for example death.
The role of *tanzeem* is not only limited to the occasions of *gham khadee* but one of the aims of its formation was to unite the members of each family against any external threats (other families within and outside the village), be it a land dispute, a quarrel for any reason, *dushmani* (*enmity*), or lending political support. The secondary aim of *tanzeem* is to make sure that all the members vote for their agreed candidate. Members of each *tanzeem* also try to gain the support of their friends and non-relative villagers, for example, the members of Shenwari *tanzeem* in Munjai would try to gain the sympathies of the non-Shenwaris by helping them in different capacities. While I was working at the local university, the head of the Shenwari *tanzeem* would send people to me with references from him and I would be strictly advised to solve their problems by legal or illegal means., His aim would be to do *pukhto* (helping people) with the villagers and in turn gain their support during elections, because people are supposed to reciprocate *pukhto* (by giving their vote) with those who do *pukhto* (here helping the people is *pukhto*) with them. In some cases I was asked to do things that were nearly impossible but I had to do such favours as well as I could so as to protect my own, as well as my family’s, *pukhto*.

**Does making a *tanzeem* help the villagers maintain their *pukhto***?

Does making a *tanzeem* really help the villagers maintain their *pukhto*? What about the people who are not members of any *tanzeem*, have lost their *pukhto* or has their *pukhto* been affected in any way by not being members of a *tanzeem*? These are the questions that shall be discussed below and will give us a picture of the underlying processes in *tanzeem*.

*Gham khadee* events not only include happiness or sorrows but are also accompanied by the idea of *pukhto*. Be it a death or marriage or any other event the visitors are sharp observers, their observations specifically focus on the *pukhto* displayed by the hosts during these events. *Pukhto* is looked at from different angles and includes the number of the guests and visitors, food and seating arrangements at the occasion, the unity of the relatives, who the guests are, and so on.

In order to know the role of *tanzeem* in saving and doing *pukhto* I will illustrate a *gham* event that I attended and where I observed the functioning of *tanzeem*. The event shows how people practise *melmastya* through *tanzeem* during *gham khadee* occasions.
It was a late summer night, while I was chatting with my informant, Iftikhar. We were up until late in his hujra because of breakdown powercut. The terrace of his hujra provided relief from the warm weather. Iftikhar’s phone rang and he looked at the screen to see who was calling him. Iftikhar said, “What does he have to say to me at this time?” He answered the call and started talking. After a short while he said Arabic prayers¹⁴³ which are the ones said when one hears about the death of a person. It is a rewarding act for both the dead and the one who recites. After finishing the call I asked him “kher de?” (Is everything OK) and he replied that Shamir had died and I also recited the Arabic prayer.

Shamir was a Shenwari and was the father of the most highly ranked officer in the village and most probably in the district. At the time of his death Shamir was at his son’s house who was officially stationed in Lahore, the capital of the Punjab province, a city hundreds of miles away from Munjai.

The telephone call was from Ibrahim, who is the head of the Shenwari tanzeem. Iftikhar is also an active member of the tanzeem. The news of the death spread quickly through the village and within an hour of the news, people with their electric torches were seen going towards the house of the deceased’s family. Usually people sleep early, but at the occasions of gham khadee people stay up late and wake up early. The voices of some women were also heard who were on their way to the gham house.

The officer has two brothers who both reside in Europe, one is a doctor while the other has his own business, and the officer himself was mostly out of the village because of the nature of his job. There was no one at his home when this gham happened and that was the reason why the son contacted his relatives as well as the head of the tanzeem to make arrangements for his father’s funeral and the seating and food arrangements for the guests.

Iftikhar asked me to accompany him to the hujra of the officer. I accompanied him and saw that Ibrahim and a few more relatives were already there. My visit to the hujra was an act of doing gham khadee, and at the same time it helped me get answers to some questions that were unanswered. The discussions mainly revolved around the deceased and the timings of the funeral. Timings were finalized through consultation with the son of the Shamir, who

¹⁴³ The translation of the Arabic prayer is “verily, unto God do we belong and, verily, unto him we shall return.” Translation taken from http://www.suhaibwebb.com/islam-studies/aqeedah/dealing-with-loss/
along with the body of his father was on his way. It was decided to make the public announcement early the next morning.

Ibrahim, Iftikhar and others contacted the *degmar* (professional cook) who was in Timergara. He was sleeping at that time, but he woke up with their call and he was told to come to Munjai. It was early in the morning when the cook along with his assistants and all the required items arrived in the village. The *tanzeem* members usually have specific people for such arrangement and the reason why they have specific people is that they are the ‘trusted and the responsible ones’ and the ones who are ready anytime when called upon.

After the replacement of the old house based system with *tanzeem* there was an increasing demand for crockery in Munjai, and that was why a villager started a crockery business on the main village road. He is earning a handsome amount of money with his business because the location of his shop attracts the people of the nearby villages who also use his services, otherwise they would go to Timergara, which is both distant and expensive. Also, some people who are unable to give cash payments on the spot are given enough time to pay the money later on when they have it, because it is considered as a *khegada* with each other.

Ibrahim sent some young boys to the house of the crockery store owner who woke him up and was kind enough and provided the crockery they needed. Waking up for someone especially during *gham khadee* events is also considered as *khegada* and doing *khegada* means doing *pukhto*.

Some relatives also brought chairs, and string beds as a sign of standing by their relatives in their *gham*. The *hujra* of the officer was recently constructed and had four big rooms, a verandah and a space in front of it which could accommodate many guests. The construction of the *hujra* was seen as a timely act and the act that saved the *pukhto* of the officer and his family. Before the construction of the *hujra* the officer had a *betak* (one bedroom guest house), and the relatives as well as the villagers would often discuss the

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144 Besides food, people would also exchange beds, chairs tables, and utensils. It still exists but to a minimum extent.

145 Locally the word “*carakary*” is used for for crockery, and it includes utensils, chairs, tables, and tents (that are erected in the lawns or open areas to protect the guests from sun and rain).
household’s wealth\(^{146}\), and status and they would talk negatively about them. It was such negative talking (or I may say attacking the *pukhto* of the officer and his brothers) that led to the construction of the *hujra*. By doing so he preserved their *pukhto* as well as that of his family by stopping ‘others’ talking negatively about them.

The body reached the village early in the morning, and relatives with some other villagers were already there to receive it. The body was taken to the house where it is usually kept in an open area in the middle of the house surrounded by females and visited by the male relatives but usually for only a short time.

Early in the morning the *elan* (announcement) was made on the loudspeaker of all the three main mosques of the village. The nearby villages, and relatives who live outside the village, were also informed by telephone. The time of the funeral was 11 am. A large number of people were coming in for *las-niwa*. The other two sons of the deceased could not reach the occasion, though they came on the next day of the funeral.

The officer was accompanied by his subordinates and some people even said that many intelligence agency personnel were also present at the occasion. The presence of the intelligence personnel was because the officer had been involved in the military operation that was carried out against the Taliban in Swat, the neighbouring district. Because of a fear and possibility of a suicide attack the officer would be surrounded by his men. Most of the funerals are usually held in the open ground of the boys high school as this ground is more accessible because of its location on the main road. Because of the security risk the funeral was held inside the school ground and people could only enter after being checked by the intelligence men. Not participating in his father’s funeral was seen as an act against *pukhto* by many, while others said it was a rational step so as to avoid the possibility of a suicide attack. Nevertheless, the officer came to the graveyard when his father was about to be buried.

After the people came back from the funeral, they headed towards the *hujra* and sat there and would do *las-niwa*. After a while the lunch was ready and people were invited to eat with guests coming from distant areas given precedence, followed by local guests. Ibrahim himself supervised all the food and would enquire if the guests had had their lunch or not?

\(^{146}\) Having two members of a household in Europe gives an impression of having a lot of money.
Asking the guests about lunch is one of the ways in which *melmasya* is delivered and another way to do so is to ask the guests if they need any more food or not?

Many bureaucrats, politicians and army officials were seen coming for the *las-niwa*. In the discussions later on among the people of the village the officer was praised for his *ghat taluq* (large circle of friends), because he with his *ghat taluq* can help people in different matters.

While talking to Ibrahim about the role of *tanzeem* in *gham khadee* he said;

> No one of their household lives in the village. The officer is hardly at home, the other two brothers visit the village once a year and sometimes more than that, see, he is a man with status, a man who is at the highest official position in the village. He has *ghat-taluq* with people from everywhere. We do not bury the dead outside of Munjai, and that’s why he brought his father here. He could have done it anywhere but that’s not the *‘riwaj’* (customs) and anyone, be it a student, an officer, a teacher, a farmer has to live with *‘riwajuna’* (customs), otherwise you lose your status of being a Pakhtun. One must be connected to the village. Now see how *tanzeem* helped us all in saving our pukhto. It did not only save officer’s pukhto but of all of us, mine, your’s and all the family. If there was no *tanzeem* how could all these arrangements be made? It was difficult, I must say.

Looking at this particular *gham* occasion, *tanzeem* did save the *pukhto*, because the officer did not have any family members living in the village and so they were unable to help other relatives with ‘the old house based system’. Because of the practise of *badal* among the villagers in almost every matter of life, if the family of the officer did not cooperate with the relatives in return they must not expect the same from them, because the villagers follow the rules of “*har sa pa badal dee*” (every thing is on *badal*).

The *tanzeem* made all the arrangements, saved the bereaved family from *sharam* (dishonour) and saved the *pukhto* of the entire family by providing food and seating arrangements to the guests. Even informing the people of the nearby villages was the
responsibility fulfilled by *tanzeem* and hence it effectively communicated the message through which a large number of people came and attended the funeral as well as the *las-niwa*. A large number of people also added to the *izzat* of the officer as well as the rest of the family and proper and timely communication of the death added to the *pukhto* of the family.

The three aims of the *tanzeem* that are a) to make food and seating arrangements for guests as well as for hosts during *gham khadee* b) to unite the family and show strength to avoid any attack and to deal with any argument or problem in a way that does not harm the *izzat* of the family, and c) the formation of *tanzeem* is to strengthen the position of the family within the political scenario of the village, by bringing together the family members to vote for the same candidate as is decided by *tanzeem* through their meetings.

All the three main functions of *tanzeem* reflect the importance of doing *pukhto*, which requires its followers to act in an ‘honourable’ way by providing hospitality to the guests, avenge any loss to honour, and cooperate with relatives, friends, and even non-relatives. Likewise during different discussions with the members of different *tanzeemuna*, I got to know that the very idea of the formation of *tanzeem* is to save as well as to do *pukhto*.

Nazar a leading member of the *tanzeem* of *ghareeb abad* (the other side of Munjai inhabited by the people belonging to ghareeban family) said

“*Tanzeem* performs several functions, not every one understands these but the main function it performs is to save our *pukhto*. It makes us think collectively for the whole family as well as for the benefit of the village”.

Nazar thinks that *tanzeem*’s role is not only limited to *gham khadee* occasions but it is also helpful in resolving the different conflicts within the village and beyond. Some other people also agreed with Nazar and according to them *tanzeemuna* are performing their role for the well being of not only the respective families but for the whole village.
Section C

Gham khadee and the interplay of Pakhtunwali and Islam

Islam and Pakhtunwali are two important identity markers among the Pakhtuns. The two overlap at different times. When Islam and pukhto are in contradiction, it is the latter that is mostly followed.

Case study

It was during the funeral of an elderly man from Pukhtana that I found the largest shop in the village closed for three consecutive days. The man who died was an uncle of the shop owner, Alamgeer. For all the three days Alamgeer, along with his other brothers, could be seen in the hujra of the deceased. They were also seen doing khidmat (serving the guests). After the three days Alamgeer opened his shop and I got a chance to speak to him and asked him why he had to keep the shop closed for three days

“It’s gham khadee, and you have to do it. Not just because he was my uncle but also his sons had to take time off from their jobs when my mother died. Now I have to”.

Alamgeer opted for a loss in business in order to maintain his pukhto. It is how badal is mostly practised in today’s Pakhtun society. Badal in gham khadee is taken as seriously as badal in other matters, rather it would not be wrong to say that gham khadee is purely based on the concept of badal, as Shahab said, “Gham khadee pa badal da” (Gham khadee is all about badal). He also said, “If you come to my gham khadee occasions you honour me hence as a Pakhtun I am duty bound to honour you back. If I don’t, I am not a Pakhtun or I am not doing pukhto”.

This example clearly mentions that gham khadee is mainly premised on pukhto and not Islam.

Similarly, on the third day after the death of Kiramat, a Shenwari man in his mid forties who died of cancer, I was sitting on the main lawn of the hujra, under the tents to avoid the scorching heat. I was surrounded by elderly men, mostly Shenwaris. Because of Kiramat’s

147 For a discussion on broader national and historical context of religious politics see appendix 1.
active participation in others’ *gham khadee*, a huge number of people were visiting the *hujra for las-niwa*. People were saying all good things about Kiramat, his services\textsuperscript{148} for the village, and the neighbouring villages. His cheerful personality and his activeness in the *gham khadee* was also discussed by many people sitting there. In the midst of such discussions a Shenwari man named Ilyas asked his cousin Ibrahim, if he has seen Asad (a notable member of Pukhtana) coming for *las-niwa* or at the *janaza* (funeral). People keep a sharp eye on the visitors because they have to reciprocate the visit.

Ilyas: Have you seen Anwar and Bacha coming for *las-niwa*

Ibrahim: No, I didn’t even see them at the *janaza* (funeral). Maybe they are out of the village.

Ilyas: But I saw them yesterday in the village. They were near the shops.

Rahat, jumped into the discussion and said: I know why they aren’t here.

Ilyas: Why?

Rahat: Because, neither Kiramat nor his brother went for the *las-niwa* or *janaza* of Anwar’s father

Ilyas: Ok, I see.

Because people keep their eyes and ears open to any events in the village, Rahat knew exactly what had made Anwar and Bacha not attend the *las-niwa*. After knowing the reason which was a failure of Kiramat and his brother to attend the *las-niwa* of Anwar’s father, Ilyas did not say much because he knew that a *gham khadee* is done on *badal*.

It was two weeks after Kiramat’s death when I had a chance to meet Anwar. I saw him on the river bank with Bacha. We sat together and after discussing many other things I asked them as to why they did not attend the *las-niwa* or *janaza* of Kiramat.

\textsuperscript{148} Working in a World Bank project at a officer level he brought a project to Munjai, which cemented all the streets of Munjai. The cemented streets of Munjai was one such reason that the people of Munjai would consider themselves as superior to the neighboring villages. Though later on he approved such a project for another village as well.
Anwar: Do you know we (him and bacha) did not attend the las-niwa because we had a genuine reason. Kiramat did not come to my father’s las-niwa.

Me: But he died, and you could have given a good impression by attending it?

Anwar: But isn’t it all about pukhto?

Me: But Islam stresses to participate in such events without any badal

Anwar: What does pukhto say about it? Come on you are working on it you must know?

Me: In pukhto is all about badal

Anwar: Then, what could I do in that, I prayed and still pray for him that Allah may give him place in heaven. When they did not come to my father’s gham my khanadan took it seriously and asked me as to why did they not come? I had no answer, and now I wanted your khanadan (Shenwari) to know the reason why I didn’t come. I took my badal. Now the game is levelled. God forbid if any gham happens again I will attend it as soon as possible.

Anwar’s case clearly demonstrates how the tenets of Pakhtunwali, especially badal, is upheld within gham khadee. Kiramat’s inability to attend Anwar’s father’s las-niwa compelled Anwar not to participate in his. It is the concept of badal that stopped Anwar from attending the las-niwa. However, Islam asks its followers to participate in other people’s gham while placing no emphasis on badal but Anwar chose to act in accordance with pukhto not Islam. The reason pukhto is commonly chosen over Islam is mainly because his honour was at stake. Had he attended the las-niwa, his own khanadan members might have questioned his pukhto.
The interplay of Islam and *pukhto* during kherat (religious feast)

Donations to the poor (*kherat/zakat*) are one of the five pillars\(^{149}\) of Islam. *Kherat* is also considered as a donation to the poor.

As a sign of respect, reward and remembrance *kherat*\(^{150}\) (religious feast\(^{151}\): a meal arranged to reward the dead) is arranged on the first Friday after the death and on the fortieth\(^{152}\) day of the death. Kherat benefits the dead person in two ways: firstly, it is considered as an act of *sawab* (reward) because it involves feeding the poor and, secondly, the people who receive the food are supposed to pray for the dead.

The deceased’s household arranges *kherat* for their relatives and the poor people of the village. Through such a meal the family members can pass *sawab* (reward) onto the deceased person. The increased *sawab* can make the afterlife as well as the stay in the grave more tolerable (Doving 2009: 223).

Interestingly, the practise of *badal* (reciprocity) also comes up in arranging *kherat* for the poor and the relatives, in the words of Doving (ibid 223) ‘that meal is not simply a gift to the poor, but a gift which entails a return favour in the form of prayer’.

Besides *sawab*, such *kherat* (meals for reward) also comes under the premise of *pukhto*, because *kherat* involves the display of *melmastyā* (hospitality) and generosity and hence can increase the social standing of a family in the village. *Kherat* can be served in the *hujra* of the deceased’s family or in the mosque. The one that is arranged in the *hujra* is announced on the loudspeaker of the mosque, while the one that is arranged in the mosuqe does not involve any announcement on the loudspeaker but one person stands up after the prayer and asks the people to eat the food placed outside on the verandah.

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\(^{149}\) The five pillars of Islam are 1) kalima (the meanings of which is : *There is no god but Allah, Muhammad is the messenger of Allah*, reciting the kalima is the first and foremost requirement for being a Muslim 2) praying five times a day 3) fasting during the month of Ramazan 4) pilgrimage to Makkah, 5) giving charity to the poor. (See also Ahmed 1980: 107-108).

\(^{150}\) *Kherat* is derived from *kher* which means peace, wholesomeness and goodness (Ahmed 2006: 93).

\(^{151}\) I would prefer using Watkins’s (2003) term rather than Ahmed’s term (*gham khadee* meal) because *kherat* is not arranged only at the occasions of *gham khadee* and also because the local people in Munjai consider it as more of a religious act.

\(^{152}\) Friday, because it is a blessed day while I didn’t get any satisfactory answers as to why people arrange a meal on the fortieth day of the death of a family member.
Figure 17: *Kherat in a hujra: The kashar (young one) can be seen serving the elders*

Despite the fact that people consider it more of a religious act, the factors of *pukhto* come up in *kherat*. An incredible change of attitude is developing in Munjai, which discourages such practises as *kherat* for celebrating the deceased person. The Gulf migration, is one such factor that created this ‘Islamic awareness’. As some of the villagers would say ‘we came to know real Islam there’. Besides its impacts on the other spheres of daily life in Munjai this ‘Islamic awareness’ is now affecting the practise of arranging *kherat* for the reward of the dead relative, because the migrants consider it as *biddat* (innovation in religious practises, which are considered to be a sin). 

According to Aziz the mullah of the bar jumaat:

“All these practises are *biddat*, we had many more *biddats* in the past but *Alhamdulillah* (with the grace of God) such practises are now not so common. People are now becoming educated and also there is an increased influence of Islam on their lives”.

153 For a discussion on the reformist and Islamic movements among the Pakhtuns see appendix 1.
It is not only Aziz, but during various discussions many other villagers were found to have the same views. For example, Dilawar once told me that certain practises are “nothing but negating the teachings of real Islam. It is biddat”. In the view of Dilawar the real Islam is the one that is practised in the Gulf, and that ‘real Islam’ discourages such practises, according to him.

The same point of view is also held by the members of the Tableeghi jumaat, who are trying to rid society of ‘negative customary practises’, kherat on the fortieth day being one of these. However, they encourage giving charity in other forms such as cash or food to the poor irrespective of any particular days or occasions.

The practise of kherat may have decreased with such changes but it has not finished completely, because on the one hand kherat represents the factor of faith, while at the same time it is is seen as an act consistent with pukhto. It is considered an act according to pukhto because such generosity and consumption of the surplus in order to create social relations is part of melmastya (hospitality) (Watkins 2003: 76-77) which is an integral part of Pakhtunwali.

Assessing and doing pukhto does not stop after the three days of death and people keep an eye on how the family members of the deceased person honour him/her with kherat after his death. Having the means and not arranging a kherat for a deceased family member labels one as a miser and hence affects the status of the whole family. Such kherats connect people to the dead ones and are also considered as correcting any wrongdoings the living people might have done to the dead ones. In Islam one can even do a hajj (pilgrimage) for a dead family member, in case they did not have a chance to do it. The idea of kherat after the death of family member may also have a link to the issue of hajj in absentia. Hajj in absentia is in accordance with Islamic teachings, but there are differences on the issue of kherat among the villagers.154

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154 Such practises are looked at differently by different Islamic scholars, however, the increasing influence of Wahhabism (mostly practised in Saudi Arabia) which sought to purify the religion by returning to its original principles discourages such practises and terms these as innovation in religion. See appendix 1 for discussion on a brief history of Wahhabism in Pakhtun areas.
Case study

When I asked Hayat, as to what between Islam and pukhto is followed by the villagers, like many other people in Munjai he replied pukhto. I asked why and he replied as follows:

“I was late for a funeral within the village. My elder brother was away and he asked me to attend the funeral and represent the household. The same people had gham khadee relationships with our family. I was in Timergara and before I was back in Munjai, the funeral was ready. I had no ablution, and I had no other option but to attend the funeral prayer without ablution. I did a sin in order to do pukhto”.

According to Islamic teachings funerals require one to do ablution. Without performing ablution one cannot pray or attend funeral prayers and doing so is sinful. Hayat, in order to do pukhto (reciprocate the gham khadee with the deceased’s family) attended the funeral without ablution, which means preferring to do pukhto despite a sinful act. He happily accepted his sin and was proud of saving his pukhto and doing pukhto.

Similarly Hayat was asked to go and show his presence to the deceased’s sons. After the funeral he went and stood near them, so that they could see him and he could show them the pukhto he has done by attending the funeral. ‘I was desperate that they see me and acknowledge my presence’ said Hayat.

Conclusion

This chapter discussed two main tenets of Pakhtunwali; melmastya and badal. Badal is often referred to as revenge killing, but this chapter explained badal as it is practised in non-violent ways in Pakhtun society which has often been ignored by researchers. I have shown the most prominent ways in which badal is practised in contemporary Pakhtun society. During the fieldwork I found that it is particularly during the occasions of gham khadee that the Pakhtunwali tenets of badal and melmastya are practised and observed and people’s Pakhtunness is assessed. Later in the chapter I briefly discuss whether it is Islam or pukhto, or both, that motivates people to participate and cooperate during gham khadee occasions. It is indeed pukhto that guides the gham khadee of the people. Be it participation, or
cooperation, *pukhto* supersedes Islam and despite several Islamic injunctions regarding *gham khadee* events, people follow what *pukhto* demands, despite the Islamic influence from Gulf migrants.

The next chapter discusses the role of *gham khadee* in building up the profile of leaders. The chapter discusses how *tarburwali* and *khegada* are practised in today's Pakhtun society.
Chapter 6

Doing Pukhto through gham khadee, tarburwali and khegada (in politics)

*Che shmla tarhee hazar dee, da shamlai sarhi pa shmar dee*

Those who wear the turban are in thousands but those who deserve the turban are few.\(^{155}\)

**Introduction**

The state is beyond the reach of a common Pakistani villager and is seen as “incompetent, benevolent, or malicious” (Lyon 2002:186). It is the leaders (also called *masharan*) who work as a bridge between the villager and the state. For example a villager may not be aware of the culture of *thana* (literally means police station) or he may be illiterate and may not able to communicate with the policemen or with judges in the courts. Such a situation forces him to have a patron-client relationship with an influential person.

Politics being a central activity among the Pakhtuns, is linked to honour. Frederik Barth’s “Political leadership among Swat Pathans” is a detailed account of the Pakhtun political structure.

Barth explains the multi-layered and temporary allegiance between followers and leaders. Barth states that ‘allegiance is regarded not as something which is given to the groups but as something which is bartered between individuals against a return in other advantages’. Barth further explains:

> Allegiance to a chief is expressed by the mere act of visiting his men’s house. This allegiance is reinforced and deepened by the acceptance of hospitality from the chief. The chief is constantly giving food, and occasionally other

\(^{155}\) The turban is a sign of respect and prestige. This saying means that though many people claim to be the leaders few deserve it and who know the know-how of leadership.
valuables, and thus creating debts and dependence on the part of the persons who sit in his men’s house.

(Barth 1959: 11)

Hence, what counts for Barth is a leader’s performance in the *hujra*, where he competes for authority through gift giving, reciprocity and feeding people. The above mentioned qualities mixed with control of land and defence of honour are the bases of authority for the leaders (ibid: 108). Barth does mention the importance of doing *pukhto* in gaining political support but his focus mainly remains on the provision of hospitality by the leaders.

Barth is of the view that ‘commitments can be shed at will’ and the Swat Pakhtun is free to change loyalties according to his individual benefits. Ahmed (1976) criticizes Barth for this view and argues that a Swat Pakhtun ‘is born into an interconnected number of social matrices that may continue to determine or limit his choice or strategies’. One cannot just change loyalties merely because of ‘individual advantages’; people may do so when they are not honoured in a group because they consider it against their *pukhto*.

Barth (1959: chapter 4) explains how an individual’s neighbourhood, kinship and marriage relations and his performance in the life of the community affects the ‘alignment of persons’. It is the publicly expressed *gham khadee* rituals where one’s participation affirms alliances and solidarity. It is also through participation in *gham khadee* events that people make *talAQ* which is of great political value.

At the time when Barth carried out his fieldwork (1950s) the socio-economic as well as the political situation was different from what exists today. Things have considerably changed over the last four decades, mainly because of migration, education, the prominence of religio-political ‘reformist movements’ and remittances from abroad. Hence there is a need to re-examine the current political situation.

Land in the past was controlled mainly by chiefs known as *khans or maliks* while the tenants were known as ghareeban (the poor), who were dependent on the chiefs. With migration to the Gulf countries, the poor earned money, bought land and hence were now in a position to challenge the chiefs. Acquiring land was accompanied by acquiring status and authority.
The competition was now not only between the chiefs but between the chiefs and the ghareeban.

Land remains a strong base of authority but doing *pukhto* is another important criterion for anyone aspiring to be a leader. In today’s Pakhtun society one of the salient ways of doing *pukhto* is through practising *gham khadee*. As mentioned earlier, *gham khadee* covers a range of meanings and practises. This chapter discusses how through *gham khadee* performance leaders get support and following and how *gham khadee* performance builds up the profile and stature of a leader.

Four main tenets or modes of *Pakhtunwali* were identified during the fieldwork: *badal*, *melmastya*, *tarburwali* and *khegada*. After discussing *badal* and *melmastya* in the previous chapter, this chapter discusses *khegada* and *tarburwali*. I discuss in this chapter how *tarburwali* is practised in today’s Pakhtun society and also how *khegada* and *gham khadee* participation help people to become leaders.

This chapter shows how within *gham khadee* participation *tarburwali* is practised, and how through *gham khadee* and *khegada* political support is gained. Starting from some other areas of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa where I briefly look at the importance and the prominence of *gham khadee* in Pakhtun politics, I show how and in what form *gham khadee* and *tarburwali* co-exist for the Pakhtun in Dir.

This chapter shows how active participation in *gham khadee* and *khegada* helps people become *izzatdara* and makes them leaders.\(^{156}\)

The political significance of funerals and weddings exists throughout Pakistan. Lyon (2002: 191-193) explains how Punjabi landlords make use of the funerals and weddings as political opportunities for keeping tabs on local political processes and for lobbying. But the importance of *gham khadee* participation for the Pakhtun population is probably the highest in Pakistan. The Pakhtuns will not pay heed to development if *gham khadee* is not maintained by their leaders. Anatol Lieven (2012: 143-144) while describing the life of Pakistani politicians and Pakhtuns in particular consider *gham khadee* participation to be of immense importance for “political deal making and alliance maintenance”.

\(^{156}\) See Lyon (2002: 188-194) for more details on Punjabi landlord’s role in state politics and the importance of informal political gatherings.
Through the case study of a local politician, I show how he gathered huge support for his active participation in *gham khadee*, and how his *gham khadee* performance helped him win success.

I further show how *tarburwali* (cousin rivalry) is practised in today’s Pakhtun society and how *tarburwali* and *gham khadee* are inter-related; how practise of one affects the practise of the other.

This chapter discusses how, through *gham khadee* and *khegada*, people do *pukhto*, build up their profiles as *kha saray* and how the status of a *kha saray* enables them to become *masharan* (elders). Such *masharan* are the backbone of the political structure in every village and by extension the Lower Dir district. Being a *mashar* enables a Pakhtun to participate in the village *jirgas*, and have a say in different matters of the village life. Being a *mashar* is synonymous to being honourable. The status of a *mashar* requires a person to display hospitality, to do *gham khadee*, *thana tahsil* and *khegada* with the villagers and beyond.

This chapter shows the role of *gham khadee* participation in the lives of the politicians. Through the case study of a politician, I show how his active participation and cooperation in *gham khadee* enabled him to become a district level politician and gain the support of the masses. How his active participation in *gham khadee* occasions allowed him to build up his profile as a ‘good Pakhtun’ that led to his success as a businessman and rising to become deputy district mayor. His active participation in *gham khadee* is considered to be the main reason behind his success in politics.

The case study in this chapter will also help us understand the practise of *tarburwali* in the context of doing *pukhto*. I analyse how the *tarburan* (cousins) acted in certain ways to do more *pukhto* than their cousins.

**The politics of Gham khadee in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa: glimpses from other areas**

Politics is a central activity in Pakhtun society. The people of Pakistan in general love discussing politics. It is talked about in *hujras*, hotels, public transport, universities, and at formal and informal gatherings. Politicians in Pakistan in general, and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in particular, are successful only if they can keep in contact with the masses. The main
reason why Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is different from the rest of the provinces is the relative absence of structured feudal systems like the ones found in other provinces (Duncan 1989: 154). Any detachment from the masses could cause the failure of the politician’s career, and there have been many such cases that demonstrate this claim.

For example, in recent political history in Pakistan’s Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, some people I spoke to were of the view that despite having massive support, the head of the Awami National Party (ANP), Asfandyar Wali Khan, lost his native seat inCharsadda because he did not keep in contact with the masses of his constituency. The reason why he did not keep in contact was because he leftCharsadda after a suicide bomber attacked\textsuperscript{157} his hujra and killed a few other people while Asfandyar Wali khan luckily escaped (Wilkinson 2008). \textsuperscript{158} When the suicide bomber attacked Asfandyar’s hujra, it was his bodyguard who gave his life and saved Asfandyar. Now, Asfandyar was supposed to attend his funeral as well as the funerals of those killed in his hujra, because pukhto demands this. He was also supposed to do tapos of all those who were injured. After the attack, Asfandyar Wali Khan moved to Islamabad (the Pakistan capital) and did not come back to his home until the start of 2013, and that was for a pre-election campaign. This move was seen by the local people as against pukhto and it put off many of his supporters. Also he did not do any gham khidee visits during those few years while he was away in Islamabad.

Another politician, Aftab Sherpao, the head of Qaumi Watan Party (previously Pakistan Peoples Party Sherpao)\textsuperscript{159} who also belongs to the same district,Charsadda, faced a similar situation when he was attacked by a suicide bomber and many people were killed while he himself survived\textsuperscript{160} (Subramanian 2007). However, unlike Asfandyar Wali Khan he stayed inCharsadda and attended the funerals of those who were killed, and hence his act was seen

\textsuperscript{157} Asfandyar Wali Khan is the head of the Awami National Party that was the ruling party in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa from 2008 to 2013. Different military and para military operations were conducted against the militants in their tenure. Because of their anti-militant stance, they are considered as pro-US and hence their supporters in the war on terror. ANP has been massively targeted by the militants and hundreds of their members have been killed. This attack on the house of the party head was one such attempt to take revenge for the military operations carried out against the militants.  

\textsuperscript{158} http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/pakistan/3123657/Suicide-bomber-attacks-Pakistan-politicians-home.html

\textsuperscript{159} Sherpao is the name of the village where the head of the PPP (S) comes from, and he uses the name of the village as his last name hence his full name is Aftab Ahmad Khan Sherpao.  

\textsuperscript{160} http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-international/sherpao-attends-funeral-of-victims-killed-in-suicide-attack/article1835851.ece
as according *pukhto* as he put his life at risk by attending the funerals. Sherpao also did *tapos* of those who were injured in the attack.

These two cases are often discussed among Pakhtuns (Yusuzai 2011), where Aftab Sherpao is said to have done *pukhto*, while Asfandyar Wali did not. The consequences of the two events also show how people evaluate their actions. Aftab Sherpao was successful in retaining his seat because of his connection with the people and his participation in their *gham khadee*, while Asfandyar Wali failed to secure his seat mainly because of his inability to participate in the *gham khadee* of the people of his constituency.

Besides the above mentioned cases, there are numerous accounts from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa where participation in *gham khadee, khegada* and *manda tarda* helps politicians build up profile and emerge victorious in the elections. One such example is the Tarakai family in Swabi. Swabi is traditionally considered as the stronghold of ANP. The Tarakai family, because of their strong public links that they have created through their active *gham khadee* participation, have taken over the ANP’s stronghold and it would be a hard task for the ANP to hit back. A local PhD researcher of Swabi District, who supports the ANP told me in a telephone interview:

“The main reason for the popularity and success is their *gham khadee*. They go to every one’s *gham khadee* be they their supporters or not. They also do *thana tahsil* for the people and are always available whenever people need them”.

Besides their participation in people’s *gham khadee* the Tarakai family garnered support when they hosted thousands of families who were displaced from the neighbouring Buner area, when the army was conducting an operation against the militants. This act is seen both as ideal *melmastya, panah* (refuge) as *khegada* and people from all walks of life appreciate their efforts. As a resident of Swabi, Saim said:

“They did the best arrangements for those who fled their areas during the military operations. Their arrangements were much better

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than the arrangements made by the government. They provided food, shelter and health facilities to thousands. They did not do it for politics because Buner is not their constituency. This was the biggest _khegada_, when the people of Swabi saw this they were more impressed and started supporting them more than before”.

The _khegada_ of Tarakai family, to assist the displaced people of Buner, further strengthened their position. “This _khegada_ was regardless of any political gains, as displaced people belonged to another district and fell outside their constituency” said Saim. Such acts are considered to be in accordance with _Pakhtunwali_ and are reciprocated by the local people in the form of electoral support and reciprocal visits during _gham khadee_ participation.

After giving a few general examples of how _gham khadee_ participation and cooperation leads to gathering support and success in politics, I now move on to discuss the role of _gham khadee_ participation and cooperation in the local politics in Dir. To do so, I present the case study of a local politician.

**The case of Bhaijan**164 (Zahir Shah)

On the same night after attending the funeral in Kandaru (in the other half of the Munjai) and while sitting in Iftikhar’s _hujra_ with three of his friends, the _janaza_ (funeral) and the people visiting the deceased’s family were the topics of discussion. A man named Bhaijan was praised by two of the people sitting there. They linked his political success to his active participation in _gham khadee_ and for being _takda_ (competent/active) in _manda tarda_ (helping others). During the discussion Hamid (Iftikhar’s friend) praised him as follows:

“I wonder how he manages all the _gham khadee_ in different parts of the district. He is present in everybody’s _gham khadee_, be it rich or poor, his friend or not. That is the reason why people like him. He knows everyone by name. Who else among the politicians is like him? I think no one amongst the local politicians is energetic enough to reach all the occasions in time. He is a threat to all the politicians because of this active participation in _gham khadee_ and _thana tehsil_.”

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164 _Bhaijan_ is an Urdu word used for ‘elder brother’, and is a sign of respect. Throughout the area Zahir Shah is known as ‘Bhaijan’.
He has defeated his rivals in the past and is surely going to defeat them in the future”.

Listening to Hamid’s praise Shah jumped into the discussion and started criticizing Bhaijan;

“I agree that he is very active in gham khadee and he reaches all the occasions in time, but he is so superficial in all that and he is doing this in order to grab the vote of the people and I would appreciate him if he would do it to please Allah. Will he ever go to the funeral of those who he knows he would not benefit from? I must say no, this is not just him, but all the politicians are the same. They would reach to the hill top and would travel for hours for their votes. I don’t believe in anyone; politics is nothing but a joke, a game of money mixed with cleverness to fool others”.

Hamid:

“Whatever, but, people like him and he helps almost everyone who asks his help. Because of his leadership qualities he is a member of different jirgas and in the same capacity he has settled scores of conflicts in the area without any hope of political gains”.

Shah:

“But don’t you see that his behaviour and even the way he talks has changed after he has jumped into active politics. He was a nice man before but now I feel he is a little proud of being a big man (referring to his political successes)”.

The discussion was concluded after realizing that it was too late and it was best to go home and sleep. Iftikhar and I continued the discussion, with Iftikhar saying that:

“He is a nice man, very active in gham khadee but he lies sometimes for political gains, but otherwise he is good. At least for me he is
good. He receives me by standing up from his chair, what else do you want from him? He will do whatever he can with his authority. He is not the prime minister so he is not able to do everything. He is better at any sort of work within the district”.

Background and economic conditions

Bhaijan was a businessman but entered politics fifteen years ago. He was in his mid-fifties and used to wear a semi-white beard. He was the only politician I saw at almost every gham khadee event during my fieldwork. His family owns land in the orchards, fields and in the shada. He set up a business agency in Timergara town and before that, he remained a musafar (migrant in the gulf) and spent a couple of years in Saudi Arabia. He was supporting an extended family which comprised his three brothers, their wives and children. He was the second amongst his brothers. His eldest brother is a recently retired bureaucrat in the provincial government, while the brother younger him was an MPA (2008-2013), while the youngest of them all is a medical doctor settled in Ireland.

Bhaijan’s sources of income were his agency in Timergara, income from baghuna, pati (orchards and fields) and the remittance money sent by his brother (medical doctor) living in Ireland.

History of his political career

Bhaijan started his political career in 1996 as a worker in the Awami Nationa Party. The reason why he joined ANP was because his thra zaman (first cousins) were leading the party in the district and he could see that his opinion and voice would be heard in the same party. In the local government elections of 2001 he was elected as nazim of Munjai union

165 Welcoming someone with standing up from one’s seat is considered as respect given to the incoming person, and people in Munjai are very keen observers in such matters.
166 Shada is the non-cultivable land in the mountains, often used for making houses.
167 Member of Provincial Assembly, one becomes an MPA through public vote.
168 Awami National Party or ANP is a Pakhtun nationalist party, and has less supporters in Dir district because of the hold of the Jamaat-i-Islami, a religious political party.
169 Thra zawe means patrilineal cousin and is used in Pakhtun society in a good way that shows no hostility and competition between the two cousins. While tarbur also means patrilineal cousin but it is used in the context of competition and jealousy among the cousins. Tarburwali or cousin rivalry is an off shoot from tarbur. Tarbur holds negative connotations.
170 The political head of the Union Council (electoral ward) which comprises several villages.
council (electoral ward). He defeated the candidates of both PPP\textsuperscript{171} and JI\textsuperscript{172}. His victory came as a surprise especially to the JI, who have strong support throughout Dir (upper and lower). Bhaijan’s victory was seen as a threat to JI, as well as PPP. His cousins were supporting him in all his activities. Bhaijan’s cousins were supporting him for two reasons, a) a close relative having support in the local areas could help them strengthen their grip on the administrative matters of the party within the district, and b) so that his cousins could create a following through Bhaijan, which would help them in the elections for the provincial and national assemblies. Bhaijan’s cousins would keep the higher authoritative political positions (the seats of national and provincial assemblies) for themselves.

The 2001 election for the seat of nazim (councillor) in the Munjai union council had three major contestants a) Hashmat from the PPP and belonging to the Shenwari family, b) Sher Mohammad from the JI and also belonging to the Shenwari family and c) Bhaijan belonging to the ANP.

Munjai being the head of the union council remained the center of political activities and the vote was divided on the basis of factions i.e. Pukhtana voted for Bhaijan because of their political affiliation with ANP. Some Shenwaris also voted for Bhaijan because of his marital ties with the family. In the same way the vote of Shenwaris was divided into three parts i.e. some voted for Bhaijan, others voted for Hashmat and Sher Mohammad because of belonging to the Shenwari family, and hence both the Shenwari candidates lost to Bhaijan. Ghareeban (the poor) voted for Sher Mohammad of JI because most of them supported the local mullah (prayer leader) who has affiliation with JI.

In order to maintain and increase his political following, Bhaijan became increasingly active in gham-khadee and manda tarda (helping others). Bhaijan also had to create taluq (friendships) with the government officials (including district administration, water and power officials and police department) because most of the people’s matters are associated with the above mentioned departments. Such taluq of the leaders with the state apparatus is of immense importance in order to create a following (Alavi 1974: 420).

\textsuperscript{171} PPP is Pakistan People’s Party which is Pakistan’s largest political party and was the previous ruling party (2008-2013).
\textsuperscript{172} JI stands for Jamaat-i-Islami (literally Islamic party), it is a religious political party having strong roots in Dir district.
One of Bhaijan’s supporters once told me:

“Bhaijan knows each and every influential person we face no problem when we go to any department with his reference”.

Having taluq with influential people is one of the qualities a leader must have. The increased circle of gham khadee and taluq (friendship) does not only require time but it requires financial means as well. This is because any political leader has to spend money on his supporters as well as the government officials in the form of melmastya (hospitality) and thana tahsil (helping people). He must be able to feed them in his hujra, to drive the people in his own car to accompany them to Timergara, Peshawar (provincial capital) or even Islamabad (the capital of Pakistan). In any such case the expenditure must be borne by the leader. He should also be able to keep the government officials happy by providing them with gifts and inviting them to lunch or dinners.

In less than a month I participated in three different lunch and dinner parties arranged by Bhaijan for the government officials. Lavish hospitality was witnessed during all these occasions. One of the dinners was for a newly transferred official. Such invitations give rise to taluq, which is used to get different works done. I later on found that the official who was invited developed very good terms with Bhaijan and used to assist him and all people who would go to the officer through Bhaijan’s recommendation for different matters.

Similarly, an official who would be transferred to some other place from Dir, would also be given a farewell party. This farewell would be a gesture of keeping the taluq in future. The taluq would not be one way, that is, it was not always Bhaijan and his supporters who would benefit from it, but the official would also use such taluq on different occasions. Once in a blood feud that resulted in the loss of two people, Bhaijan was requested by the official to help the government in settling the dispute. Bhaijan used his taluq in that village to arrange a jirga and averted a dispute that could have claimed many lives. The taluq once established is maintained in future, as it is the sign of a good Pakhtun as well as the same taluq would be used to approach other government officials when possible. It is mainly maintained through participation in each other’s gham khadee occasions.
Bhaijan while working as nazim, successfully completed his tenure in 2004. He became famous for his awami siasat173 and was willing to participate in the 2005 elections. His cousins who were leading the party in the district were also very close to the main party leadership. Realizing the fact that Bhaijan was becoming popular and was quickly replacing them in the district and considering him a threat to their own political future, they created obstacles in his way.

The relationship between Bhaijan and his cousins changed from thra zaman174 (cousins) to that of tarburan (plural of tarbur). The change from thra zwe to tarbur came about because of the emergence of the struggle for position between the two. Because land was the only source of authority in the past it was the major reason for tarburwali. These days, besides conflicts on land, it is political position accompanied with gham khadee reltaions, taluq, and status through government jobs for which cousins are in competition. Competition for status in politics was the main reason why Bhaijan and his cousins started tarburwali with each other.

According to Bhaijan the main reason for these obstacles was the tarburwali between him and his cousins. Bhaijan’s views were not given importance in different party matters, and his cousins tried to push him back. Bhaijan, in one such conversation, told me a Pukhto proverb ‘Even if your cousin be a donkey don’t ride him’.175 By referring to this proverb, Bhaijan was probably pointing to the unreliable relationships between cousins, who supported him when they needed him but later put hurdles in his way.

The differences increased in the upcoming local government elections which were held in 2005. His cousins wanted to nominate another candidate for the union council of Munjai. They wanted to nominate another person for the election of nazim. This situation reminds me of the Pukhto proverb which says:

Keep your cousin poor but use them to your own advantage
(Tair & Edwards 1982: 97).

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173 Awami siasat, refers to the politics of common people which involves extensive amalgamation with the masses, and which also involves increased participation in gham khadee and solving people’s problems.
174 Plural of thra zwe which means patrilineal cousins. It is the commonly used word for patrilineal first cousins in Dir, however, at times the word tarbur is used which shows negative feelings and competition for authority between cousins.
175 The translation has been cited from Tair & Edwards 1982: 98.
Bhaijan’s position was exploited well by his cousins who, through Bhaijan’s support, introduced the ANP in an area where it had had no presence previously. Bhaijan and his cousins were together so that no one else in the district could take over the party affairs and together they did it successfully. Realising the opposition within the faction, Bhaijan started searching for more allies within the faction, so that a large number of members support him, which will enable him to take the slot of nazim.

However, after increased lobbying within the party ranks Bhaijan finally succeeded in getting the slot and in the same election he became nazim once again and later on naib nazim e aala\(^{176}\) (deputy district mayor). Some people are even of the view that his cousins already did not support him, in order to make him lose the elections, but despite their opposition Bhaijan won his seat. Bhaijan’s act of lobbying further severed his ties with his cousins.

Bhaijan realized that he cannot succeed while being affiliated to ANP, but he waited to see if things would get better. Changing alliances frequently is not the sign of a good Pakhtun or leader and that was what made Bhaijan take time before switching to another party. In the meantime, he was negotiating his entry with the leaders of two major political parties: the PPP and the Jamaat-i-Islami. He was also waiting for his cousins, who are considered very influential and close to the ANP president, to oust him from the party because it would enable him to claim that he had not left the party, but rather he was expelled, and in future he would not be blamed by the public for shifting alliances frequently.

According to the local leaders he made a secret deal with another party and was successful in getting the naib nazim e aala’s slot. All this happened without the approval of the ANP leadership (his cousins and their dala). By now, Bhaijan was successful in forming a sub-faction within the faction. The sub-faction emerged as a result of his gham khadee, khegada and manda tarda. His sub-faction not only emerged as a big threat to the faction but also to the political careers of his cousins.

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\(^{176}\) Nazim is the head of an electoral ward while the head of the district is Nazim-e-ala (District Mayor) and the naib nazim-e-ala is second to Nazim-e-ala. District Mayor and Deputy District Mayor are both elected by the votes of the nazims from all the electoral wards present in the district.
His move of bypassing the party line and becoming *naib nazim* is seen as an act of cleverness by many. Bhaijan himself claims it to be his success but his opponents call it the politics of opportunism.

Bhaijan made a secret deal with other parties and got the slot of *naib nazim* (deputy district mayor). On his act of bypassing the party leadership in making a deal for the slot of *naib nazim* without the party’s consent, his cousins now had a reason to oust him from the party. He was ousted from the party and along with his sub-faction. His allies within the sub-faction supported him and left the old faction because one cannot be a member of two factions at the same time (Barth 1959: 106). Bhaijan along with his allies held negotiations and after mutual consultation and public declaration (Ibid: 107) joined the PPP.

Considering the ousting from ANP, a blow to his *pukhto*, all the existing *gham khadee* relationships were suspended between Bhaijan and his cousins. Prior to this, Bhaijan and his cousins, being next door neighbours had active *gham khadee* participation as well as cooperation relationships. They also had the meal exchange relationships with each other. The conflict that caused the ousting of Bhaijan from ANP led to the severing of ties and suspension of *gham khadee* relationships.

One of Bhaijan’s nephews got married, and keeping in mind the *tarburwali* factor, Bhaijan and his brothers did not invite their cousins. No invitation leads to no participation in *khadee* (occasions of joy) and hence no one from their cousins showed up. Not sending invitations to someone means ignoring them or giving them less importance. Not inviting someone means taking revenge on them for any of their deeds in the past. But such show of *pukhto* is often limited to *khadee* occasions, where people do not participate in each other’s occasion, but when it comes to *gham*, especially of close relatives, people often participate keeping aside their differences. However, *Bhaijan* did not suspend his *gham khadee* relations with other members of the ANP, rather he acted smartly and enhanced his *gham khadee* relations with them so that he could get their sympathies and may attract more supporters from his old faction. He successfully drew more supporters through his tactics of active *gham khadee* participation and his *khegada*.

Being from the same union council (electoral ward), his joining the PPP was not welcomed by many people already affiliated to PPP in Munjai because his entry was considered as a
threat to their political careers and to their popularity within the PPP ranks. A Shenwari elder Abid told me that:

“Allowing Bhaijan’s entry into PPP is a big mistake committed by the local PPP leadership. They shouldn’t have allowed him to join PPP because if he could leave his cousins and his old party for power he could leave anyone at any time. Politics is not the name of shifting alliances and rolling like a ball. It needs consistency and he lacks it”.

Despite the reservations of many of the PPP people, Bhaijan joined the PPP. However, not all the people think this way. He has many supporters and they considered his entry into PPP as a welcoming sign both for Bhaijan and the party. Some people in Munjai and in other parts of the Dir, changed their party affiliation with Bhaijan and many of those previously in ANP along with him shifted to PPP. The reason for this change was to stand with the leader because according to them “dai ham pa sakhto ki zamung sa walad wo”177 (Bhaijan also stood with us in hard times). The magnitude of such shifting of alliances depends upon the social circle of the leader and his closeness to the people. The wider the social circle of the leader is, the more people will go with him.

Bhaijan, who gathered a huge number of supporters through gham khadee participation, thana tahsil and khegada was successful in bringing a large number of people to his new party. This act of breaking people away from ANP is seen as Bhaijan taking badal with his cousins. Badal here is manifested in a different way and does not involve any killings, however it involves weakening the other party and hence a perfect act of doing pukhto on behalf of Bhaijan. Here pukhto is not only done by Bhaijan, but also by the people who have left the ANP with him, because they reciprocated for the services Bhaijan had already delivered to them. As Bhaijan once said:

“I always stood with my dala, and I am thankful to them that they stood by me when I needed them, only because pukhto begets pukhto. I did pukhto and I was reciprocated with pukhto”.

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177 This justification was given by many of Bhaijan’s supporters who changed their party with Bhaijan.
But Bhaijan’s revenge does not stop here, because he considered his ousting from ANP as da sharam khabara (act of disrespect) and this act was done by his cousins, so he vowed further revenge through more pukhto via politics, while his strength in politics was his gham khadee participation. The real test of Bhaijan and his cousin’s pukhto began now, and any success or failure in future would decide the pukhto done or not done. But on the other hand his cousins, who were already influential within the party ranks were also getting stronger as one of them became a senator\textsuperscript{178} in the upper house of Pakistan.

Keeping in mind the challenge of his tarburs (plural of tarbur), Bhaijan increased his gham khadee relations and became more active. Previously he would rely on his own as well as the taluq of his cousins for getting different requests from his supporters done. Now he started creating his own taluq, this competition among the cousins (tarburwali) can also be seen as badal against each other.

Creating taluq needs money, because one has to show constant hospitality and spending on the people with whom one wants to establish taluq. Though, not very strong financially, in comparison to his cousins, Bhaijan invested huge money and energies in creating such taluq. The money spent by Bhaijan included the money spent on melmastyaa in the hujra, fuel, and keeping nokaran\textsuperscript{179} (servants). The nokaran would do multiple tasks for him, i.e. they would perform duty as Bhaijan’s drivers and as his armed bodyguards. Bhaijan would sometimes keep a man with a gun because of the threat of the Taliban\textsuperscript{180} in the area. Keeping bodyguards with guns is also considered as a sign of an influential person. Arrival at any

\textsuperscript{178} In order to become a senator in Pakistan, one does not have to get public votes. Rather senators are selected indirectly via the members of the provincial and national assemblies.

\textsuperscript{179} Having or keeping nokar is the sign of an influential person. The prestige in keeping a nokar has been inherited from the past where land holding people would have tenants working for them as nokar. This trend of tenant as nokar has now declined because of the continual distribution of land among the family members, which results in a small amount of inherited land, where the yields are not enough to support the family as well as tenant’s family. For ploughing land people usually hire labourers for a specific time or they give the land on ganra (giving the land to someone in return for cash, the land is ploughed by the concerned person and the production belongs to him. As soon as the original land owner is in a position to return the money, the land is given back to him. Ganra is considered as being against the Islamic teachings because of the involvement of interest which is forbidden by Islam. But some people still practise it or ijara which is considered in accordance with Islamic teachings and it involves the giving of land for ploughing on the basis of share in the production. Another reason for not keeping a nokar is that the nokar demands salary in cash and most people do not want to pay it.

\textsuperscript{180} Talib means student and Taliban is its plural. The Taliban movement gained momentum in the Malakand division (The area that includes Dir, Swat, Buner, Shangla and Chitral) after 2007. Afterwards a military operation was conducted and the area was cleared. Threats still prevailed and many leaders belonging to different political parties as well as non-political elders were killed. Such masharan (elders) were killed because the Taliban considered them as a threat to themselves. Influential people are always their targets.
place and occasion with a few supporters is also considered as a sign of respect and a mini show of force.

As soon as Bhaijan joined PPP the national elections in Pakistan were to be held. Bhaijan continued his efforts and through strong lobbying within the PPP, he was successful in getting a ticket for his brother Zamin. Many in the PPP opposed this decision of the party but failed to reverse it. Getting a ticket from the PPP platform was seen as a success. One of his cousins, Ayub, was also contesting the elections for the national assembly the same year.

The constituency, Maidan,\textsuperscript{181} which Bhaijan’s brother was contesting was considered to be a stronghold of the religious political party, Jamaat-i-Islami but Zamin won the seat. There were many factors in him winning the seat, for example, Jamaat-i-Islami boycotted the elections and left the field open for ANP and PPP. Another reason was Bhaijan’s \textit{gham khadee} in the Maidan area, and yet another reason was their \textit{khpalwali} (relationships) established with an influential local family after Bhaijan’s younger brother married a girl from the family.

Ayub, the cousin of Bhaijan lost his seat with a massive margin to another PPP candidate. The elections proved to be \textit{ghata khadee} (big joy) for Bhaijan and his brothers; firstly because of the victory of Zamin and secondly because of the the defeat of Ayub. This was when Bhaijan took his \textit{badal} from his \textit{tarburs} and hence did \textit{pukhto}, though they were not contesting against each other.

Due to \textit{wrana} (temporary suspension of ties) and because of \textit{tarburwali} neither Ayub nor his brothers came to congratulate Bhaijan and his brothers on their victory, nor did Bhaijan and his brother go to offer condolences for the defeat in the elections with Ayub.

Bhaijan’s \textit{hujra} was flooded with guests, who came to congratulate them; all the guests were provided \textit{melmastya} by offering tea, lunch and dinner. Bhaijan also arranged a \textit{kherat}\textsuperscript{182} (religious feast) which was attended by hundreds of people. This public display of hospitality further built up his profile.

\textsuperscript{181} The hometown of Tehrik e Nifaz e Shariat e Muhammadi (TNSM) chief Maulana sufi Muhammad, who is the father in law of the Swat Taliban chief Fazlullah, and himself was involved in many anti-government protests in Dir and Swat.

\textsuperscript{182} \textit{Kherat} was arranged in order to thank God for the success and bestowing honour upon them.
Once while narrating the story of the success of his brother Bhaijan told me that:

“That day I thanked Allah on his blessings of success. Our pukhto was saved. All those who supported us in one way or the other had a role in saving our pukhto. We were proud in front of our tarburan”.

The tarburwali between Bhaijan and his brothers and Ayub and his brothers did not stop here. Afterwards the elder brother of Ayub, named Zahid, used his taluq and became a senator in the upper house of the Pakistani parliament. Zahid lives in Rawalpindi (a city in Punjab, located next to Islamabad the capital). Though he comes to the village for gham khadee occasions, and his brother Ayub is zimawar and is stationed in the village. Ayub also attends gham khadee events but he is not as active as is Bhaijan.

Not that Ayub is not active in gham khadee but he is not as active as Bhaijan is. Their participation in gham khadee is even talked about by local people. Once Imad a supporter of Bhaijan in Munjai told me:

“Bhaijan reaches to such places where Ayub may never have gone, starting from Chakdara pul (start vicinity of Dir District coming from Peshawar). He has taluq all over the district and he keeps it through his ability of reaching to the occasion. Ayub also goes to gham khadee but he is not as active as Bhaijan is”.

Throughout Bhaijan’s story, we saw how tarburwali, badal and melmastya are enacted in Pakhtun society today. Unlike in the past when land was the main reason for tarburwali, in today’s Pakhtun society in addition to land, it is political status, taluq, and holding of a government position that are the main reasons behind the practise of tarburwali. In Bhaijan’s case the competition between him and his cousins for political status became a source of conflict and which not only led to wrana (temporary suspension of ties) but also led to non-attendance at each other gham khadee occasions. The major factors behind Bhaijan’s ascendance in politics was gham khadee participation that was driven mainly by tarburwali with his cousins, which not only led to severe political competition but also temporary suspension of ties with his cousins. It was Bhaijan’s active participation in gham
khadee mainly driven by tarburwali with his cousins that helped him get followers, strengthen his faction and weaken the rival factions.

**Tarburwali and gham khadee**

Because of the suspension of ties between Bhaijan and his cousins they would not meet or greet each other in public or in private. They also abandoned attending the gham khadee events with each other. In the 5-6 years of suspended relations there were two wedding ceremonies (one was of Bhaijan’s nephew while the other one was of Ayub’s nephew) but they did not invite each other and likewise no one participated because participation in any event without a proper invitation is considered an act of shame. As Bhaijan once told me:

> “Why should I go when I am not invited and I do not have to invite someone who does not invite me. It’s a matter of badal, and I did all according to pukhto”.

Both the cousins were performing politics in their own way and were always busy mediating between rival factions and increasing their own following. It is always the politics of personalities that people follow, ideologies play little role in local politics. A follower of Ayub in Munjai told me that their party (ANP) suffered a loss because Bhaijan was able to take approximately 30-40 members with him when he left so their tarburwali made the party (ANP) suffer.

Some people do not participate in each other’s gham khadee occasions because of dushmani (enmity) or wrana (temporary suspension of ties due to some conflict). In the case studies mentioned elsewhere (Chapter 3) the parties are either in dushmani (Sabir’s case) or in a conflict (Hadi’s case) and the members of those households do not participate in each others’ funerals or weddings. On the participation in gham khadee of a dushman (enemy) Sabir’s father once said:

> “How could I go and share the grief of my enemy, the enemy who has given me a life long grief (as revenge Sabir was killed by Mat because Mat’s daughter eloped with him). How could I go to his wedding? Will the villagers not laugh at me, and at my pukhto?”
Similarly there was Hadi whose daughter eloped with a neighbour and the elopement resulted in a *dushmani* with the boy’s family. They used to have good *gham khadee* relationships in the past but *dushmani* does not allow them to carry on the old relationships because doing *gham khadee* with a dushman is seen as a defeat and an act against *pukhto*.

Hadi once said;

“*We don’t do gham khadee* with dushman, because *gham khadee taluq* exists between friends or at least someone who is not an enemy. *Dushman’s gham* (sorrow) is our *khadee* (joy)”.  

Participation in *gham khadee* of friends, relatives and non-relatives on the one hand is an important requirement in becoming a true Pakhtun. On the other hand, *tarburwali*, (ego/competition) are also the key features in doing *pukhto*; sometimes people face situations where they have to chose one or the other option, participation in *gham khadee* or keeping up the suspended ties or enmity.

People would express mixed views on the participation or non-participation of people who are either engaged in enmity or have a conflict. To some non-participation is not seen as an act against *pukhto*, rather it is seen as an act in conformity with *pukhto* while any member of the conflicting parties seen attending the event is negatively talked about and people raise questions about his *pukhto*. Similarly for others the participation is seen as *da aqal kaar* (a rational act) on the part of those who participate because they are known to be the one’s who set aside differences and value *khegada*.

**Forsaking pukhto for the sake of pukhto**

One day just after sunset, Ayub was sitting in his *hujra* along with a few supporters. Because of being anti-Taliban and in favour of themilitary operations, the ANP is the prime target of the Taliban. Many of their MP’s, office bearers and workers have been attacked and killed by the Taliban in a bid to take revenge on the ANP members for their anti-Taliban stance.

Being the brother of the central information secretary of the ANP whose main job is to defend the party’s policy in the media, and also because of the ANP’s open stance against
the Taliban and their success in getting the Taliban out of Dir, Ayub was attacked in his *hujra* by an unknown gunman. The gunman opened fire on Ayub and those sitting with him. As is usual Ayub was accompanied by his security guard who is provided by the government a) as there are many influential people in the district and b) to protect them from any threats. The security guard was killed on the spot while several others were injured. The shots were heard by people in the village as well as surrounding villages. The gunman was said to have run away to the orchards just beneath Ayub’s *hujra*, but it was difficult to find him in the orchards especially after dark. Despite a search operation by the local police the attacker safely ran away and could not be traced.

At the time Bhaijan, was in his *hujra* that is located next to Ayub’s *hujra*, as soon as he heard the shots he came running to Ayub’s *hujra*. After the suspension of ties it was Bhaijan’s first visit in six years to Ayub’s *hujra*. Looking at Ayub’s condition he immediately arranged a car and put Ayub in the car to the Timergara hospital and from he was referred to Peshawar because of his critical condition and lack of facilities in the local hospital. Setting aside their differences, Bhaijan accompanied him to Peshawar. On his way Bhaijan informed his family and asked them to make prior arrangements for Ayub in the city hospital. Ayub was received by his family members in Peshawar and was provided with the best medical care because of his brother’s position in national politics. He was later visited by many big figures including the chief minister of the province who belongs to the same party as Ayub.

Bhaijan later told me:

“We don’t have any *taluq* anymore and we don’t attend each others *gham khadee* but this was a big happening. Firstly he is my *tarbur*, an attack by an outsider on him is an attack on me, his insult is more like my own insult, and the villagers would laugh at me if I am there and don’t support him. Whatever our differences are at such events we set aside the differences. That’s what *pukhto* demands. One has to forsake *pukhto* (referring to *tarburwali*) for the sake of *pukhto* (doing good with a *tarbur*)”.
Most of the people I met after the attack on Ayub were of the view that Bhaijan did an excellent job by helping Ayub because it not only saved Ayub’s life but Bhaijan also saved his own pukhto by helping Ayub.

**Bhaijan’s death**

After being successful in 2008 in getting the election ticket for his younger brother, Bhaijan using his *taluq*, successfully secured the ticket for the second time for the 2013 general elections.

Bhaijan’s brother Zamin, was contesting the elections for the provincial assembly seat from his old constituency for the elections to be held on 11th May, 2013. As mentioned earlier in this chapter that the main reason behind Zamin’s victory in the 2008 elections was Bhaijan because of his *gham khadee* and *taluq*. Bhaijan was once again busy in campaigning for Zamin. The last time I had a telephone conversation with him was in the first week of May, 2013. At that time, when I called him, he had just finished his meeting. I called him to ask certain questions related to my research and he also gave me few updates about the election. He was confident about Zamin’s victory.

Just few days before the elections while campaigning in the Maidan area of Lower Dir, Bhaijan’s vehicle was attacked (Afzal & Khan2013) and he along with his bodyguards and two supporters were killed. The Taliban claimed responsibility for the attack and claimed it was part of their warning to attack the ‘secular and liberal’ (Warraich 2013) parties.

Iftikhar, my informant, while telling me about the incident said that:

“The news of his death spread in a matter of minutes in the whole District. People from all over came to his hujra. Emotional scenes were witnessed during the janaza, many men were seen crying. Despite severe threats, Bhaijan’s funeral was one of the largest in the history of the Dir”.

Another villager told me that:
“Martyrdom was the most suitable death for him. He was a jannati (one who earns paradise) and that’s what he deserved. He lived with izzat (honour/respect) and he died with such an izzat, the rich, the poor, men, women, all were mourning his death”.

He further added:

“I saw many men who were crying, it included even those people who were his opponents”.

The high attendance at his funeral despite threats of further attacks are a sign of how people do pukhto with those who have done so with them. The number of people who came for his las-niwa was also one of the highest in Dir. Similarly despite wrana the funeral as well as las-niwa was attended by Ayub and his other brothers.

Iftikhar while talking about Bhaijan’s death said:

“Nawaban (Kings) receive such izzat, he lived like a king and died like a king”.

Conclusion

This chapter showed how a leader can gain success by doing pukhto. It is through their extensive gham khadee relationships that they get success, create a following and become honourable. This chapter also looked at the ways in which tarburwali is practised and how tarburwali and gham khadee interplay in national and local politics in today’s Pakhtun society. Through the case study of Bhaijan, I showed how his active participation in gham khadee and khegada helped him succeed in politics and how, through his gham khadee, he did tarburwali with his cousins and left them behind in politics and public support.

The story of Bhaijan and Ayub shows the interplay of different Pakhtun ideals such as tarburwali, badal and khegada. It is possible to see how through tarburwali they cooperated with each other at different times (Ayub’s brother in Ireland helping Bhaijan’s brother get a

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183 In Islam a martyr is considered as one who is blessed by God and martyrdom is considered as the best way of death.
job there); how the same tarburwali made them split where Bhaijan and Ayub were both doing pukhto with each other and against each other; when they were competing with each other (tarburwali), both stood against each other as staunch rivals and inflicted loss (trying to gain the sympathies of other person’s supporter) on each other, they did not attend each others khadee or the events of joys during all these years. But at the event of gham they set aside all their differences and helped each other because not attending a gham occasion of your cousin in hard times is against the Pakhtun ideal and it is considered an act of shame in front of outsiders. The old Arabic proverb finely sums up the cousin rivalry among Pakhtuns ‘me and my brother against my cousin. Me, my brother and my cousin against the outsider’.

As discussed in chapter 4 gham holds more importance than khadee so we saw how, despite having wrana, Bhaijan attended the gham occasion of his cousin when Ayub was attacked, a similar response was seen from Bhaijan’s cousins who attended his gham.
Figure 18: Bhaijan addressing *jirga*

Source: Bhaijan’s nephew

Figure 19: Bhaijan meeting the parties in conflict after resolving a decades old feud between them.
Figure 20: Supporters gather in Bhaijan’s Hujra

Source: Bhaijan’s nephew

Figure 21: Bhaijan (2nd from left) with the spokesman (3rd from left) of Ex-president of Pakistan, and Bhaijan’s brother (4th from left) who was Member Provincial Assembly from 2008-2013.

Source: Bhaijan’s nephew
Chapter 7: Conclusion

Most of the literature available on Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (previously North West Frontier Province) presents the region as ‘home to a distinctive kind of violence’ (Marsden 2005: 196). The British colonialists overlooked the positive Pakhtun qualities and stereotyped the Pakhtuns as “subhuman savages, uncivilized brutes, and treacherous murderers” (Johansen 1997: 57). Lindholm (1996: 3-16) presents a detailed account of how the Pakhtuns were seen by the colonial administrators as “either brave and honourable or as treacherous scroundrels”.\(^{184}\)

After 9/11, the US invaded Afghanistan in its hunt for the al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden, who was operating or sheltering in what was then Taliban-ruled Afghanistan. Osama’s stay in Afghanistan was regarded by many people as an instance of both melmastya (hospitality) and panah (asylum) under Pakhtunwali (Ahmed 2013: 22).\(^{185}\)

After the US invasion of Afghanistan the ‘mujahideen’ (holy warriors) from Afghanistan fled to the tribal areas of Pakistan. This development consequently led to the formation of Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) in 2007 (Bajoria & Masters 2010). The main aim of the group is to implement ‘sharia’ (Islamic law) in Pakistan. These Taliban are not a separate entity but, as Khan (2010) argues, they are “part of the global movement that subscribes to a puritanical interpretation of Sunni Islam”. Although majority of the Taliban are Pakhtuns. However, considering the Pakhtun customary practises as ‘anti-Islam’ the TTP has violently attacked the Pakhtun social institutions of hujra, jumaat, jirga, gham, khadee and for them, Islam is the complete code of life while Pakhtunwali is its contradiction.\(^{186}\)

Consequently, various interpretations of the Pakhtun code of life, Pakhtunwali, developed that were mostly second-hand and came from journalists, political scientists and people working in international relations, most of whom relied on the research carried out decades ago and hence failed to take the enormous changes which have taken place into account.

\(^{184}\) For more details on “Colonial and contemporary sterotypes” see Titus (1998).
\(^{185}\) For counter argument to such claims see (Taj 2009) and Saigol (2012).
\(^{186}\) The conflict between customary practises and the ‘reformist ideologies’ is not new among Pakhtuns. For historical and contemporary religious politics see Appendix 1.
The recent literature on Pakhtuns in general and Pakhtunwali in particular is mostly “impressionistic, superficial or incorrect”. It has led to wrong understanding of Pakhtunwali (Taj 2009: 191).

There is a severe lack of up-to-date reliable anthropological work on Pakistan in general and Pakhtuns in particular. The main reason for the scarcity of the anthropological literature is the security situation which keeps away any hopes for long term fieldwork, which is the basis for any ethnographic research.

Even today, a stereotypical image of the Pakhtuns and their code of life persists among scholars and academics, both non-Pakhtun and even Pakhtun. The standard descriptions of Pakhtunwali refer to a rigid and static tribal code of honour, swordsmanship, hospitality and blood revenge (Ahmed 1980: Lindholm 1982, 1996 in Marsden 2005: 196). But this is only one side of the coin.

The dearth of up-to-date ethnographic literature based on first-hand information has also been noted by Yusuf (2012) who points out that most of the books on Pakistan are written by foreign journalists, diplomats and former military officials and mostly focus on geopolitics, security and terrorism. She further argues that:

Serious academic research on Pakistan — involving extensive datasets, historical contextualisation, scientific evidence or ethnographic research, particularly in the social sciences — remains hard to come by. It is even more rarely conducted by a foreigner as opposed to a Pakistani citizen or expat.

The recent literature has also failed to contest standard essentialist views regarding the Pakhtuns. Dr. Taqi, a US based columnist, while reviewing Akbar Ahmed’s (2013) recent book ‘The thistle and the drone: How America’s War on Terror Became a Global War on Tribal Islam,’ questions Ahmed on his ‘static’ views about the Pakhtuns and criticises him for not taking into account the enormous ‘changes’ that have taken place both in the lifestyles of the tribal as well as settled Pakhtuns. Dr. Taqi questions whether the Pakhtuns “are frozen in time or is it a view of them that has not kept pace with the changing ground realities”.

187 Borrowing Peisker’s words (2004 : 85) in Hume, L. & Mulcock, J. (eds.).
188 See Zaidi (2002) for more details on state of Social sciences in Pakistan.
second Dr. Taqi’s views, and believe that it is the view of the observers/researchers that has not changed with the changing realities on the ground.

The existing anthropological literature on Pakhtuns made me realize that very little has been written about them. “Dissatisfaction with the existing literature” (Grima 2004: 1) and my personal motivation to add to the ethnography on Pakhtuns were the major reason behind this thesis. My dissatisfaction with the current studies was mainly because these studies assign some permanent and fixed attributes (Khan 2014) to Pakhtuns and Pakhtunwali. Such a fixed set of features results in them looking at Pakhtunwali from a particular point of view that focuses on violence through revenge killing.

Much of this thesis concerns doing pukhto, which refers to one’s commitment to Pakhtunwali (Widmark 2010: 3). Doing pukhto is locally considered to be the most important of all the identity markers (discussed in chapter 1). It is through doing pukhto “that the villager will define himself and his culture to outsiders, and it is by adherence to Pakhtunwali that a man makes his claim to a place of dignity among his peers” (Lindholm 1982: 210).

It is through one’s doing pukhto that the personality of a villager is assessed. Anyone who comes up to the standards of Pakhtunwali is considered to be a good Pakhtun who deserves respect and honour while a person who fails to do pukhto loses the right to be called a Pakhtun (ibid :211).

Taking a synchronic approach, I argue that in contemporary Pakhtun society gham khadee is central to doing pukhto and Pakhtun identity. It is during gham khadee that the tenets of melmastya (hospitality), badal (revenge), khegada (doing good) and tarburwali (cousin rivalry) are practised. This development is connected to a number of factors, e.g., extension of the state’s laws, migration, war, and Islamic revivalism, all of which have enormously affected the practise of Pakhtunwali.

The implementation of state laws has resulted in a decrease in the practise of violent badal, while the remittances from the Gulf have resulted in increased awareness about education which has also reduced the importance of violent badal. Another factor considered to have
affected Pakhtunwali is the influence of Islam that migrants have learned in the Gulf, which contradicts Pakhtun customary practises.

This work is the first of its kind to research men’s gham khadee. Gham khadee involves range of practises from attendance at weddings and funerals to ‘doing good’ to people. Giving ethnographic examples, I show how one’s active gham khadee performance helps them build their profile, give them a following and success in politics.

This thesis is not an attempt to deny the existence of violent practises of Pakhtunwali especially in the form of badal. The reader must not conclude that because of the prominence of gham khadee, badal through violent ways has completely ended. Rather, I argue that people still practise violent badal but its frequency has decreased.

Badal is still an important element of Pakhtunwali, and people’s izzard is directly linked to it, but there are other prominent and public ways, for example gham khadee, in which people practise badal. It is through gham khadee (participation and cooperation) that leaders strengthen their factions and weaken the rival factions. All such relationships of gham khadee are based on the Pakhtun concept of badal.

Because of a focus on gham throughout the thesis, the reader also must not conclude that khadee (joys) occasions hold no significance, or that researching gham was a “preconceived agenda”: it was rather the “field situation” (Grima 1998: 162) where gham emerged as the most important of all the gham khadee events. The fact is that gham occupies a more central position than khadee. Recall Ayaz’s words — “Joys maybe celebrated individually but in sorrows we are all one” - which perfectly sums up the importance of gham among Pakhtuns. Another reason why I did not focus on khadee is that in order to attend khadee one must be invited and going without invitation is against pukhto; I did not receive many invitations for khadee. One reason why I did not receive many invitations was my failure to invite many people to my own wedding, hence by practising badal many people in the village did not invite me. On the other hand gham occasions are open to everyone and there is no need for invitation, hence access to a gham is more easy and open.

My data strongly support the idea that Pakhtunwali is a flexible code (Banerjee 2000; Taj 2011: 1). The flexibility of Pakhtunwali is not only reflected in the prominence of gham
khadee and the demise of violent badal but also in the way the tenets are practised particularly on gham khadee occasions. The formation of tanzeem which has replaced the meal exchange system also shows that Pakhtunwali is a flexible code of life and is adjustable to changing circumstances.

I hope that this work has contributed to a number of debates and discussions. Firstly, to the anthropology of Pakistan, which has long been a neglected area both amongst researchers within Pakistan as well as abroad. Secondly, this thesis provides a detailed account of the lives of the people living in areas that are physically inaccessible to ‘outsiders’. Thirdly, this research could prove to be of significant relevance to scholars and policy makers in Pakistan, Afghanistan, and in the United States which is currently engaged in the ‘war on terror’ in Afghanistan, particularly in the Pakhtun inhabited areas, the centre of the ‘Islamic revivalist movement’ in the region.

As an anthropologist, studying the practise of Pakhtunwali in Munjai offered considerable insights into my own community. I became aware of the ways in which Pakhtunwali is practised, izzat is increased, a following is created and leadership is won. The focus of this study on Munjai does not only narrate the story of this small Pakhtun village but the findings can be generalised to other Pakhtun villages in the settled areas. Munjai is just a case study which can help us analyse doing pukhto in other Pakhtun villages as well. Another significant finding is that despite the ‘state’s encapsulation’, widespread migration, education, Islamic revivalist movements, and erosion of traditional social structure, Pakhtunwali remains an important element that shapes the lives of the people of Munjai.

As it is the first study on men’s gham khadee, there is immense room for further anthropological research. Future work could focus on women’s gham khadee practises, which for practical reasons I was not able to investigate in depth. As this work has focused on gham in particular, future works could engage in researching the role of khadi (joys) events. Future research could also link gham khadee and Islam. Another aspect that can be researched is the importance of gham khadee among the Pakhtuns of the tribal areas, where findings could be different because of the different political and administrative conditions.

By way of conclusion, I want to show the prominence of *gham khadee* through a personal experience of inability to participate in a *gham occasion*.

I was in London when a friend’s (Amjad) elder brother died (December 2012), I called him up to express my condolences and also spoke to his father, who was pleased with my call and asked me to pray for his dead son. On my return to Pakistan in February 2014, after spending a few days at home, I started contacting my friends and met a few of them. I also contacted Amjad and we spoke normally about various things. I had known him since my college days and he is one of my friends with whom I am in regular contact. I asked him for a meeting whenever he came to Peshawar (where I was based). Amjad did not contact me for many days - even when we had a gathering of friends from college who arranged a dinner for me because I was the ‘guest’ who recently returned from the UK. Amjad, who was also invited did not come and pretended that he was busy (as he later revealed to me when I asked him why he did not come). I contacted him many times and asked him again for a meeting; each time Amjad would either not answer my call or would not talk to me normally. After two months of my stay in Pakistan, I got to know through another mutual friend, Inam, that Amjad had been married a week before. Inam also asked me why I was absent from Amjad’s wedding.

After two months, I finally met Amjad at the wedding of another mutual friend Arbab. We met normally and discussed different issues. I congratulated him on his wedding and also complained for not inviting me. Amjad whispered in my ear that he would talk to me about all this later.

For around three hours all the friends were sitting there; Amjad spoke very little to me and tried his best not even to look at me. The situation, as time passed, put me into more confusion and anxiety. I was waiting for the moment when I would see Amjad alone and we could talk about the matter. When most of the guests left, Amjad and I went to some empty chairs in the corner of the tents where the wedding meal was served.

When I asked Amjad what had gone wrong and why did he not invite me to his wedding, he immediately said “You should know what has happened” and then added: “you don’t have any pukhto because you did not personally come to offer condolences for my brother”. I immediately apologized, but in vain. Amjad said, “If you cannot attend my gham occasions I
am not supposed to invite you to my khadee occasions as well, you shamed me in front of my father”. For Amjad, I shamed him in the eyes of his father because his father knew that I was in Pakistan and did not personally visit them to offer condolences. I did not go to his house because I thought it had been a long time (more than a year) since the death of his brother.

Two other friends came and sat with us, they already knew what the problem was, because they had noticed my absence from Amjad’s wedding. They tried to mediate between us. Amjad was still reluctant but finally the friends persuaded him. I once again extended my apology to him and he taunted me by saying, “You better learn to do pukhto rather than being apologetic”. Saying this was not only a show of anger but also a taunt at my lack of pukhto.

My personal experience mentioned above shows how inability to attend a gham can affect the social relations between individuals. My inability to attend Amjad’s gham resulted in a temporary suspension of ties and hence I was not invited to the wedding. Had I not apologized, Amjad may not have restored the taluq (friendship) with me. The story also shows that a telephone call cannot replace the importance of personal visit in gham khadee. The importance of gham khadee can also be seen in the case study of Siz in chapter three. The next day after Siz was killed, the discussion among the villagers was mainly about the funeral, people who came to the funeral, people who did not, and the number of people who attended. The centrality of gham khadee in people’s everyday discussion also points to the transformation of Pakhtunwali.

Throughout this thesis, I have emphasized that gham khadee is the most prominent way of doing pukhto in contemporary Pakhtun society. My personal experience further adds to the ethnography.
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APPENDIX 1

The broader national context of religious politics

In this section I give an outline of the wide-ranging impact of national Islamic politics, in particular the resurgence of Islamism, on Pakhtun society. This is a very complex topic that can only be sketched here.

Islamic revivalism is not only a reaction to the West but an ongoing process over a long time (Esposito, 1983: 14; Ahmed 2002: 4). It has surfaced and is still surfacing in almost every Muslim society irrespective of the social, political, cultural and economic situation (Dekmejian 1980: 1-2).

Shah Waliullah (1703-1762), Jamaluddin Afghani (1837-97), Muhammad Abduh (1849-1905), Rashid Rida (1865-1935), Abdul Wahhab (1703-1787), Hassan Albana (1906-1949), Syed Qutb (1906-1966), Muhammad Iqbal (1877-1938), and Syed Maududi (1903-1979, have all contributed to the common cause of reforming the Muslims and bringing them to the ‘correct path’. For these ‘reformists’, Islamism is the only way for Muslims to recover the glory of the past.

The arrival of the British led to the end of Muslim rule in India (Haqqani 2005: 12). The advent of colonialism also led to the imposition of Western political and economic systems in the Muslim world (Esposito 1983 ;3-14). Through the revivalist movements Muslims

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190 For more details on the history and objectives of Islamic revivalist thought between 1750-1850 see (Dallal 1993).
191 'Islamism is the term given to the extreme form of politicized Islam that argues that Islam is in a state of constant conflict with the West, non-Muslims, and other Muslims who are not seen to be sufficiently pious by revivalist thinkers and Islamist ideologues. Islamism has been compared with the other “isms” of the previous century. Following fascism, Marxist Leninism, and Nazism comes Islamism, a twentieth century belief system or political ideology of ordering power and wealth and trying to create a “just” society with the imposition of Sharia law by regimenting people according to a perceived plan but only this time with an Islamic orientation’ (Mukherjee 2010: 330).
responded to their decline and tried “to sharpen an Islamic identity” (Haqqani 2005: 13). It was particularly during the twentieth century that religion re-emerged in the Muslim world as a response to colonialism (Esposito 1983: 3-14). In the Indian subcontinent too, Muslims started movements not only for independence from the British but also independence from the majority Hindu population. Muslims such as Muhammad Iqbal called for Muslim majority areas to be made a separate country. Islam was used as the basis of separation from the Hindus and it successfully led to the creation of Pakistan in 1947 (ibid). Egypt and Pakistan in particular have witnessed the rise of two prominent Islamic movements: the Muslim brotherhood in the 1930s and Jamaat e Islami in the 1940s. These two movements have provided the “ideological and organizational models for contemporary Islamic movements and organizations” (Esposito 1997: 8-9).

**Reformists and the Pakhtuns**

Historically, religious people have led many uprisings in Pakhtun history. Syed Ahmed, Pir Roshan, Sartor Faqir, Powindah Mullah, and Faqir of Ipi are all such examples. But the leadership of the religious people was only temporary and as soon as the battle was over the traditional Pakhtun chiefs would assume leadership once again (Munir 2012).

Many people think that Wahabbism came to the Pakhtun land after the Soviet invasion, which led many Arabs to come to Afghanistan and fight the Soviets. In fact, Wahhabism first entered Pakhtun territory in the first quarter of the nineteenth century. It was not through Arab invasion or mass migration but through a *Talib* (student) named Syed Ahmed who was studying in Shah Waliullah’s *madrassah* (religious school) in Delhi. Syed travelled to Mecca with hundreds of other pilgrims to perform *hajj* (pilgrimage). He came back with the Wahhabi ideology. The ideology later became part of the curriculum of Shah Wali Ullah’s

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192 Named after its founder Muhammad ibn abd al-Wahhab (d. 1792), the word Wahhabism is widely used today. It refers to the ‘Islamic reformist’ ideology of Abd-Al Wahhab. The Wahhabi ideology is based on the strict interpretation of the Quran. Any practices falling outside their interpretation is regarded as *bidda* (innovation) or *shirk* (idolatry) and could put a Muslim outside the circle of Islam. Wahhabism has taken two different directions. Firstly, in the form of the official religion of Saudi Arabia where the religious police, under the interior ministry keeps an eye on any ‘immoral’ practises that are responded to with strict punishments. Secondly, Wahhabism since 1970 has taken another shape, which is also known as neo-Wahhabism or Salafism and its proponents support the implementation of Sharia even through *jihad*. Al-Qaida is one such example of this kind of *Wahhabism* (Campo 2009: 704-706).
madrassa. Following the Prophet’s traditions of hijrat (migration), Syed Ahmed migrated to the West of India where Muslims were in the majority. He chose the Pakhtun land to wage jihad against the British because of the rugged terrain which seemed to be an ideal for it. The Pakhtuns extended him pragmatic, but not ideological support, in return for Syed’s military help against the Sikhs whom the Pakhtuns were fighting at that time and the Pakhtuns were in need of allies (Burki 2011). This practical help shows how the Pakhtuns provided hospitality to a non-Pakhtun guest as well as how the concept of badal was being practised by the Pakhtuns when they agreed to support Syed against the Sikhs.

Syed’s supporters were fast growing in number and mostly included people coming from the east of India. Soon Syed started imposing strict Sharia, which was at odds with the customary practices of pukhto. His distribution of the Pakhtun land among his disciples reformation of marriage customs led to outrage among the local people (Jalal 2008: 102). In doing these things, Syed did not take into account that zan (women), zar (gold) and zameen (land) are the three leading reasons for disputes among the Pakhtuns, of which, he violated zan and zameen. Another reason for the outrage shown by the Pakhtuns mentioned by Burki (2011: 160) is the xenophobic nature of Pakhtuns “who resent any foreign attempt to dictate to them how they should lead their lives”.

The Pakhtuns, hence turned against Syed and the hospitality was over (ibid). Syed was provided hospitality according to Pakhtun customs but when he tried to attack the very customs of the Pakhtuns he was shown the door. As the Pakhtun philosopher and poet Ghani Khan (1947: 30-31) said, “Custom does not allow protection to a breaker of custom”. Syed wrongly assumed that the Pakhtuns would prioritize their religious affiliation over their ethnicity. Muslimness would override Pakhtunness, notwithstanding that for the Pakhtuns, identity was all about lineage and not religious affiliation. The Pakhtuns acted in badal, sided with the Sikhs and disclosed to them the location of Syed and his men and finally after a ferocious battle Syed was killed at Balakot (Jalal, 2008: 103-104). The main theme of Syed’s story is that in case of conflict between Islam and Pakhtunwali, the Pakhtuns chose the latter.

Khudai Khitmadgar movement (KK)
The most successful anti-colonial and reformist non-violent movement among the Pakhtuns was led by Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan also known as Bacha Khan. Banerjee (2008: 97) calls it the “longest lasting civil disobedient movement anywhere in the world”. This movement was called the Khudai Khitmadgar (KK) movement.

The KK had roots both in Islam and *Pakhtunwali*, without this combination of both, the movement would never have succeeded (Sørensen & Vinthagen 2012: 455). Mukulika Banerjee’s book “The Pathan Unarmed” explains in detail the KK, their activities, their formation and the life of Bacha Khan.

Though the ideology of KK movement was not Islamic, the founder Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, also known as Bacha Khan, did use religion and *Pakhtunwali* to teach his people. Banerjee (2008: 97) mentions that Bacha Khan would use *surahs* (verses) from the Quran and would also appeal to the Pakhtun concept of honour and courage to face the enemy unarmed.

In a society where violence was a means to be honourable and held a central role in society, Bacha Khan taught the KK members that being non-violent did not compromise Pakhtunness (Bangash 2014), while doing so Bacha Khan drew upon the traditional elements of *Pakhtunwali* but applied to them to new contexts which changed their meanings (Banerjee 2000: 154). Bacha Khan at times appealed to and challenged the Pakhtun sense of bravery, honour (ibid), manliness and masculinity (ibid: 157; Sørensen & Vinthagen 2012: 457).

Because of Bacha Khan’s close relations with the Indian National Congress and with Gandhi and because he did not favour the division of India, Bacha Khan was labelled as a traitor and an Indian agent. For the same reasons Bacha Khan was put behind the bars and even his land was confiscated (Banerjee 2008: 95). Today, the Pakhtun nationalist Awami National Party is an offshoot of Bacha Khan’s movement.
The creation of Pakistan

In 1947, the North Western Indian Muslim majority territories of Punjab, North-West Frontier, Sind, Balochistan, Western Kashmir- and East Bengal were declared as part of the newly independent state of Pakistan. Despite being predominantly Muslim, these units were ethnically, culturally and linguistically different from each other (Nasr 1992: 83).

The major ethnic groups within the new state of Pakistan were Bangalis, Pakhtuns, Punjabis, Sindhis and Muhajirs. Except for the Punjabis who are content with the state structure as they are “over represented” in the military and civil bureaucracy, all other groups have “contested the legitimacy of the administrative structure of the state”, and out of these groups the Bangalis were successful in creating their own state, Bangladesh (Khan 2005: 15).

Pakistan was founded in the name of Islam. The appearance of Pakistan on the map of the world is seen by many people as a symbol of Islamic resurgence (Ahmad 1983: 220). Since independence, Pakistan faced a ‘threat’ from India, and due to the lack of a common national culture that could bring together the different ethnicities living in it, Islam was seen as the only potent factor capable of “fostering national unity”. Placing Islam at the centre of national politics produced Islamic revivalism (Nasr 1992: 84). Pakistani leaders have appealed to Islam whenever their power bases lack legitimacy (Mukherjee 2010). Such appeals paved the way for the religious political parties to enter into mainstream politics (Nasr 1992: 84).

Soon after independence Pakistan’s constituent assembly declared that the main objective of Pakistan’s creation is “ordering their lives in accordance with the teachings and requirements of Islam” (Haqqani 2005: 14). The same year the World Muslim Conference was sponsored by Pakistan which led to the formation of the Muslim World Congress “which has since played a crucial role in building up the feeling of Muslim victimization that has subsequently fed the global Islamist movement” (ibid).

The Pakistani state has supported the Islamic groups since independence (ibid). The process of incorporation of the religious political parties reached its peak in 1970s and 1980s during
the rule of General Zia-ul-Haq, a military dictator who wanted to legitimize his dictatorial rule (Mukherjee 2010: 342). Zia pursued the policy of ‘Islamization’; however, according to the critics of Zia, the policy of ‘Islamization’ “was just a cover for the undemocratic regime rather than a genuine desire” (Talbot 1998: 252). This policy left a profound impression on Pakistan’s society and politics (Nasr 2001: 130) where sectarianism is just one consequence of this policy (Talbot 1998: 270). It was through Zia’s ‘Islamization’ that he was able to make religious political parties his allies, Jamaat e islami in particular. Such alliances led to the incorporation of these religious parties into the state structure (Mukherjee 2010: 342-343).

When the Soviet forces invaded Afghanistan, the Afghan ‘jihad’ (holy war) received immense support from the west (Ahmed 1998). The US and Saudi Arabia spent more than 3.5 billion dollars during the Afghan war to defeat the Soviets (Stern 2000). Zia ul Haq sided with the USA to fight the ‘godless’ USSR and Pakistan was used as a conduit (Khan 2010). People from around the world came to ‘liberate’ Afghanistan and those fighting against the USSR were called mujahideen (the freedom fighters/holy warriors) (Ahmed 1998).

These mujahideen, who came from different parts of the world, were mostly trained in Pakistan. They also brought a “culture of religious extremism and violence” (Khan 2010). After the war finished these people were not welcome back in their countries and stayed in Taliban-ruled Afghanistan. Many of them were considered to be close allies of the Pakistani spy agency Inter Services Intelligence (ISI).

The Soviet invasion led to arrival of around three million refugees in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (previously North West Frontier Province), and in Balochistan province (Qadeer 2006: 70) which offered unique challenges to the social order. This time melmastya was selectively provided to people of the same group so that the group’s honour could be saved. Many other refugees were living in the camps and because of lack of traditional social structure, the mullah, mostly through the funding of Saudi Arabia rose to prominence and the Islam

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193 “Islamization included steps like compulsory prayers in government offices during working hours, the review of text books to conform to Islamic teachings, emphasizing Pakistan’s national Islamic ideology, making Urdu the official language and medium of instruction, and the compulsory wearing of national dress at government functions, feasts, and banquets and even in theory by judges in court” (Mehdi 1994: 25–26 in Mukherjee, 2010: 343).

preached resembled the rigid Deobandism (Burki 2011: 163). Zalmay (2011) observes that the mullahs’ rise to power not only provided him with a role in Pakhtun society but also weakened the role of the landholding khans and traditionalist ulama (people of knowledge) who would preach Islam directly to the masses.

**Jamaat e Islami, Islamic revivalism and politics**

Jamaat e Islami has been one of the oldest Islamic reformist parties. Founded by Syed Maududi in 1941, the party has been active in politics since independence. The party aims to Islamise politics and shape the country’s laws according to the teachings of Islam (Nasr 1997: 136-137). However, the Jamaat’s role has been one of dissent and opposition and the party has failed to gather wide support among the masses. It was during Zia’s rule (1977-1988) that Islamic activism gained further momentum. Zia not only allowed them space in politics but also in the bureaucracy, the military, and other state-led institutions. Many of his advisers were people belonging to the Islamic parties. The Jamaat secured four ministerial positions (1977-1979) in Zia’s government. Zia made the Islamic parties his junior partners in the power sharing arrangements. It was through the Islamization that Zia legitimized and institutionalized martial law (ibid).

Besides getting legitimacy for martial rule, Zia used Jamaat’s religious stature to win over public opinion and depict the Afghan war as jihad. The Jamaat was used by the intelligence agencies of Pakistan to channel funds and arms to the mujahideen. The Jamaat benefitted from funds and arms both from Saudia Arabia and the USA and also developed close ties with the Pakistan army and the intelligence agencies (Kumar 2001: 276-277). Through these funds many madrassas (religious schools) were set up especially in North West Frontier Province (now Khyber Pakhtunkhwa) which recruited young men to fight the Soviets. Six madrassas alone were set up in Dir, close to the Pakistan-Afghanistan border (Malik 1998: 208-209 cited in ibid). After the Afghan ‘jihad’ Jamaat’s focus shifted to the Kashmir ‘jihad’ and formed different organizations such as Hizb-ul-mujahideen and Al-badr. They trained

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195 White (2008: 52) classifies the ‘Democratic Islamist’ groups in Pakistan into two: The Deobandis, who trace their roots to Dar-ul-uloom Deoband in India, Jamiat-e-Ulama-Islam is the leading party in this group. The Second group consists of Jamaat-e-Islami and “is distinctively modernist in its organization and ideology, recruits technocrats rather than clerics into its ranks, and draws its support predominantly from the “devout middle classes” of Pakistan’s urban centers”. I am focusing on Jamaat-Islami in particular because of their strong presence in Dir upper and Dir lower. The other religious political parties do not have a strong vote bank in both districts.
men and sent them to fight the Indian forces in Kashmir with the aim of ‘liberating Kashmir from the illegal occupation by the Indian occupation. Many young boys from Munjai obtained training in such camps and some men from the nearby villages were reported to have fought on the frontline in Kashmir. Some are even reported to have been ‘martyred’ by the Indian forces (Kumar 2001: 278).

Jamaat has a strong vote bank in Dir upper and Dir lower. In the election of 2013 it won a large majority in both districts (Mahmood 2013). Another distinctive connection between Dir and Jamaat is that the current Ameer (head) of Jamaat hails from Dir.

Taking into account the neo-Islamist movements in Pakistan, Pattanaik (2011) classifies the Islamists into a) old Islamists and b) new radicals. The new radicals are the ones who believe in enforcing Islam from a position of strength, and believe in a top-down approach.

The old Islamists, however, are not critical of the ‘new radicals’ (Pattanaik 2011: 582) rather they patronize them. An example of such patronage is the support the religious parties extended to these ‘new radicals’ while they were ruling two provinces, Balochistan and NWFP in the 2002-2007 period. Contrary to the old Islamists, the new radicals do not participate in the electoral process because to them it is *haram* (forbidden in Islam). They also consider the education of girls as *haram*.

The new radicals are classified into three groups a) the Tehreek Taliban Pakistan (TTP) having links with the Afghan Taliban, al-Qaeda and with other Sunni fundamentalist groups in Pakistan and ideologically TTP is more inclined to Wahhabism b) the groups are based on sectarian divisions and c) the group is more involved in ‘*jihad*’ in Kashmir.

**9/11 and the situation afterwards**

The perpetrators of the 9/11 attacks were traced to *al-Qaeda* in Afghanistan. Pakistan at that time was ruled by General Parvez Musharraf, a military dictator who had overthrown the democratically elected Prime Minister Nawaz Shareef in 1999. Pakistan became the ‘frontline state’ in the ‘war against terror’. After the US invasion of Afghanistan, the ‘*mujahideen*’ fled to the nearby tribal areas of Pakistan.

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With American and NATO forces in neighbouring Afghanistan, Musharraf held ‘elections’ in 2002 which led to the victory of religious political parties in the then North West Frontier Province and in Balochistan. The main reason for their victory was their ‘anti-Americanism’ and support from the establishment. Their rule further strengthened religious extremism among the Pakhtuns; however, they failed to deliver and hence were ousted in the election of 2008. The rise of the Taliban in Swat during 2002-2007 is one such example of growing ‘religious extremism’.

In 2007 thirteen militant outfits came together and formed Tehreek e Taliban Pakistan (TTP) with Baitullah Masud from South Waziristan as their leader (Bajoria & Masters 2010). TTP has since then adopted violent means to pursue their goal of implementing *sharia* in Pakistan. Their violent activities have caused thousands of deaths. The TTP also silences any voices opposing it. In the 2013 parliamentary elections, their opponents and open critics, namely Awami National Party, Pakistan People’s party and Muttahidda Qaumi Movement, considered as the ‘secular’ political parties were warned of attacks on political gatherings, while certain other parties were free to campaign. Pakistan is still blamed by Afghanistan and India for pursuing a policy of strategic depth through these ‘proxies’.

The TTP has shaken the very social fabric of Pakhtun society and the ‘martial’ Pakhtun has been silently bearing the wrath of the Taliban. All his important social institutions *hujra, jumaat, jirga, gham, khadee* have come under attack from the TTP. These Taliban are not a separate entity but, as Khan (2010) argues, “these Taliban are part of the global movement that subscribes to the to a puritanical interpretation of Sunni Islam”.

**The current situation**

Despite striking differences between the Taliban ideology and *Pakhtunwali* (Khan 2010), many see the two as one and compatible. Some even believe that Talibanization is an expression of Pakhtun nationalism (Saigol 2012). Harrison (2008) notes that “the radicalisation of the Pashtun areas straddling the Pakistan-Afghanistan border has intensified both Islamist zealotry and Pashtun nationalism”. An example of this is the

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198 Haqqani (2005: 14) is of the view that “strategic depth is a euphemism for Pakistan’s efforts to make Afghanistan a client state of Pakistan—and to put pressure on India for negotiations over the future of Kashmir, the Muslim majority Himalayan region that has been disputed by India and Pakistan since their partition”.

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parliamentary elections of 2002 and 2008. In 2002 the Mutahida Majlis e amal (MMA) was voted into power and in the subsequent elections in 2008 the secular Pakhtun nationalist, Awami National Party (ANP) along with the Pakistan People’s Party were successful in getting popular support and forming the government. The ANP is the only party in Pakistan that has openly criticised the ongoing Talibanization and because of its anti-Taliban stance they are on the hit list of the Taliban and many of its leaders and party members have been attacked, killed or kidnapped. The ANP strongly believes in Pakhtunwali and claims to prefer the Pakhtun identity over any other identity.

The fact that a majority of the Taliban are Pakhtuns, and are mainly operating from Pakhtun inhabited areas both in Pakistan and in Afghanistan has led to the belief that the Pakhtuns are all Taliban and that the Pakhtun land is governed by Taliban style Sharia. Such views exist among policy makers as well as academics (Saigol 2012: 198). Some even argue that the Taliban attacks are a Pakhtun tribal backlash seeking badal from their enemies (Hussain 2010). Such a view portrays the Taliban activities to be in accordance with Pakhtunwali. While those arguing against this are of the view that though most of the Taliban are Pakhtuns, most of the Pakhtuns are not Taliban. Khan (2010) calls the formation of anti-Taliban lashkars (armies of volunteer) through the Pakhtun jirgas as the practise of badal according to the teachings of Pakhtunwali.

The central aspect of Pakhtun identity is Pakhtunwali, the Pakhtun code of life. After 9/11 many people presented Pakhtunwali in distorted ways often through second-hand information and through media reports. Such reports often did not have any validity and contradicted the realities on the ground.

Besides the religio-political conditions, Pakhtun land has experienced economic changes in the last three to four decades. Besides migration to other cities within Pakistan, migration to the Gulf has left profound impacts on the lives of the Pakhtuns and they not only bring wealth from the Gulf but also religious ideology, which reflects the Wahhabi ideology practised in Saudi Arabia. Zalmay (2011) also observes infiltration of Wahhabi Islam into Pakhtun life because of the migrants. Zalmay (ibid) also mentions how some migrants argue with the local people in the mosque saying that they should pray like the Saudis, which is

199 MMA was a group of religious political parties who ruled the provinces of Balochistan and NWFP from 2002-2007.
considered by them as the “right way’. Ahmad (1981: 15) explains that two distinct religious traditions exist in the Muslim societies. One is the theological and scriptural and the second one is the “proximate and the local” which is validated by customs. Ahmad further argues that because of being an integral part of lives of the people the indigenous traditions were not wiped out, rather these were accepted and retained by Islam by putting Islamic contents into them and they co-exist (ibid). Robinson (1983: 201), however, argues that there is an equivocation of the Indian Muslims “between the visions of perfect Muslim life and those which ordinary Muslims lead”.

In Pakhtun society such a trend towards the ‘perfect Muslim life’ would mean undermining Pakhtunwali and hence the Pakhtun identity and what will take precedence is the concept of umma (one Muslim nation). But Khan (2007: 7) argues that even in the most Talibanized region of Wazirstan “Pashtun traditional style and culture can be seen”.

It is a fact that this ideology is widespread, but my fieldwork findings contradict the idea that Wahhabi ideology has replaced the Pakhtun code. It has evolved into a new form which is adjustable to the socio economic and religious realities of the region.

Pakhtuns are at the centre of the ‘War against terrorism’ as well as of the ‘Islamic revivalist trend’ in the region. The current global, as well as regional, situation has given rise to a number of questions especially among the Pakhtuns. What changes are taking place in Pakhtun society? Has Pakhtunwali being replaced by the Islamic revivalist ideology? If not, how is Pakhtunwali, that is central to Pakhtun identity, shaping itself in the midst of all these happenings? Has it changed compared to the past and, if it has changed, what form does this code take in today’s Pakhtun society?

This thesis seeks to contribute to the debate on Pakhtunwali amidst the chaotic socio-political and religious happenings in the Pakhtun areas. In the broader socio-political and religious environment outlined above, this thesis seeks to analyse the practise of the contemporary Pakhtun code of life, Pakhtunwali. Has it diminished, has it been superseded by the Taliban ideology or Wahhabism? These are the questions that this thesis explores.