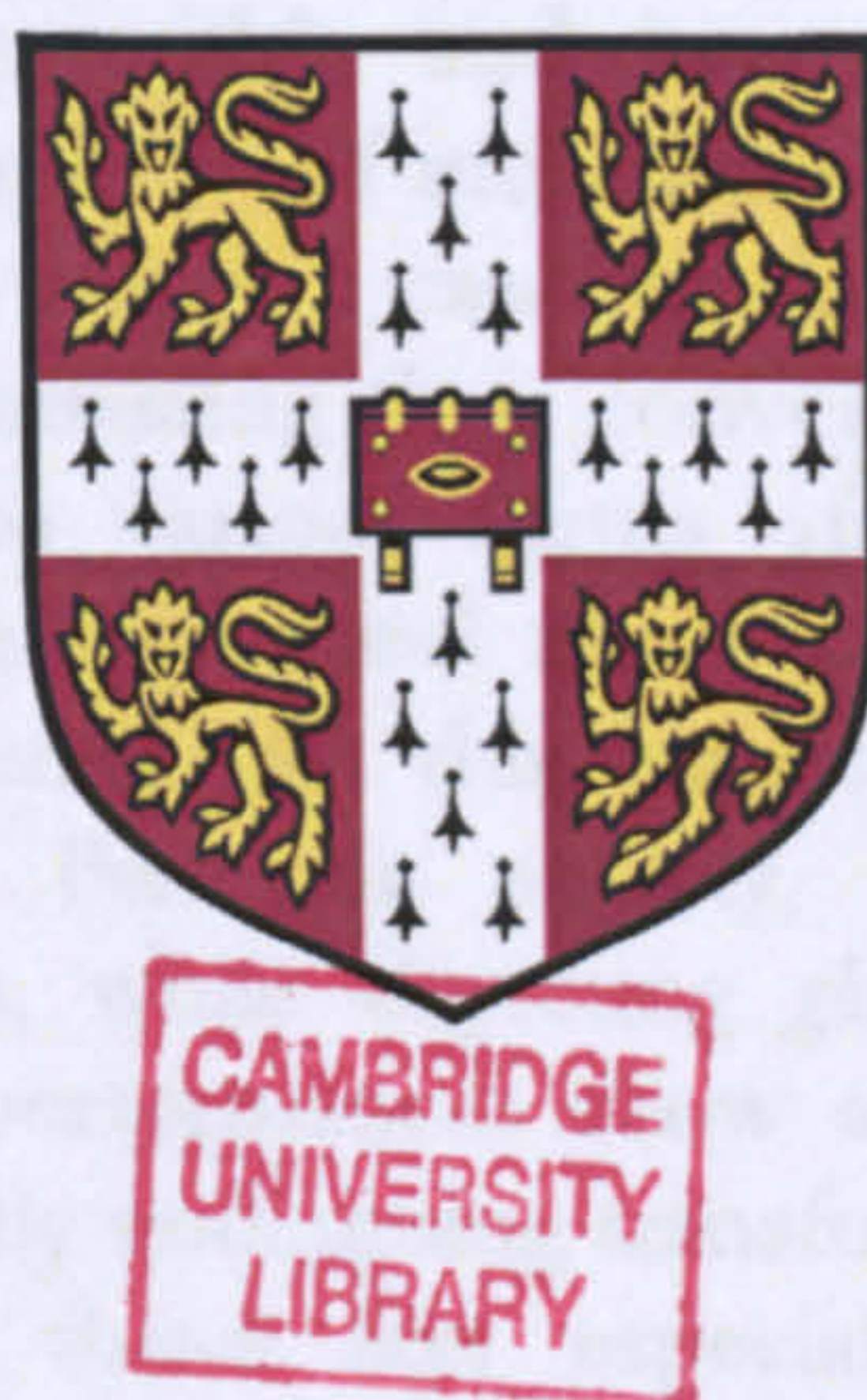


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ABSTRACT

“The World is Established Through the Work of Existence”
The Performance of *Gham-Khadi* among Pukhtun Bibiane in
Northern Pakistan



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ABSTRACT

This thesis explores the social lives of elite Pukhtun women or Bibiane in northern Pakistan, with an ethnographic focus on the enactment of particular life-cycle or *gham-khadi* ceremonies (funerals and weddings). The widely used Pukhto term *gham-khadi* both refers to specific segregated gatherings and designates the emotions of sorrow (*gham*) and joy (*khadi*) which they elicit. In the local understanding, *gham-khadi* comprises a system of life, in which happiness and sadness are understood as indissoluble, and are celebrated communally within networks of reciprocal social obligations. Bibiane's social role entails preparation for and attendance at *gham-khadi*, according to a stylized set of performances thought integral to Pukhtun identity or *Pukhtunwali* (ideal Pukhtun practices). In this sense, the "women's work" of *gham-khadi* links with another indigenous term, *zeest-rozgar*, which I translate as the "work of existence", and through which Bibiane maintain the fabric of life by sustaining social inter- and intra-family relationships. Ethnographic fieldwork, conducted in Islamabad and the North-West Frontier Province (NWFP or "Frontier") regions of Swat and Mardan between 1996-1998 and 1999-2001, suggests the extent to which Bibiane's sense of their *gham-khadi* obligations underpins their understanding of their personhood. In the process, the thesis unfolds a Pukhtun construction of work divergent from professionalism or physical labour, in which work produces not things, but social relations and transactions.

This thesis, therefore, seeks to contribute to anthropological debate on a number of issues. First, it seeks to establish the distinctive sociality of Pukhtun Bibiane in terms of their participation, within and beyond the household, in *gham-khadi* festivities, joining them with hundreds of individuals from different families and social backgrounds. Second, the thesis makes a case for documenting the lives of a grouping of elite South Asian women, contesting their conventional representation as "idle" by illustrating their commitment to various forms of work within familial and social contexts. Third, it describes the segregated zones of *gham-khadi* as a space of female agency. Reconstructing the terms of this agency helps us to revise previous anthropological accounts of Pukhtun society, which project *Pukhtunwali* in predominantly masculine terms, while depicting *gham-khadi* as an entirely feminine category. Bibiane's *gham-khadi* performances allow a reflection upon *Pukhtunwali* and wider Pukhtun society as currently undergoing transformation. Fourth, as a contribution to Frontier ethnography, the thesis lays especial emphasis on *gham-khadi* as a transregional phenomenon, given the relocation of most Pukhtun families to the cosmopolitan capital Islamabad. Since *gham-khadi* is held at families' ancestral homes (*kille-korona*), new variations and interpretations of conventional practices penetrate to the village context of Swat and Mardan. Ceremonies are especially subject to negotiation as relatively young convent-educated married Bibiane take issue with their "customs" (*rewaj*) from a scriptural Islamic perspective. More broadly, the dissertation contributes to various anthropological topics, notably the nature and expression of elite cultures and issues of sociality, funerals and marriage, custom and religion, space and gender, morality and reason, and social role and personhood within the contexts of Middle-Eastern and South Asian Islam.

This dissertation is the result of my own work, includes nothing which is the outcome of work done in collaboration, except as specified in the acknowledgements, and falls within the extended word limit granted by the Board of Graduate Studies.

Amineli

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT..... i

LIST OF FIGURES..... v

LIST OF TABLES vi

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS..... vii

NOTE ON TRANSLITERATION xi

GLOSSARY xii

INTRODUCTION..... 1

CHAPTER 1 *Gham-Khadi*: Framework and Fieldwork..... 13

 1.1. Introduction..... 13

 1.2. *Pukhtunwali*: Pukhtun Identity and *Gham-Khadi*..... 14

 1.3. Village Organisation..... 17

 1.4. Field Sites:..... 20

 1.5. The People: Bibiane..... 28

 1.6. *Gham-Khadi* Networks..... 40

 1.7. Fieldwork: Participating and Performing..... 43

 1.8. Conclusion..... 46

CHAPTER 2 From the Inside-Out: Bibiane’s “Dual Lives” in and beyond the House 47

 2.1. Introduction 47

 2.2. The House from Inside-Out 48

 2.3. Layout of the *Kille-Kor* (Village-House)..... 52

 2.4. Visiting Etiquette: Bibiane Forging Bonds..... 56

 2.5. Household Relationships 61

 2.6. Bibiane in Islamabad..... 72

 2.7. “Double-Rootedness”?..... 81

 2.8. Conclusion..... 83

CHAPTER 3 The Work of Mourning: 86

 3.1. Introduction 86

 3.2. The Sequence of *Gham*..... 88

 3.3. Decorum and Expression in *Gham*..... 97

 3.4. Obligations Upon Kin: Food and Hospitality 103

 3.5. “Clothing Matters”..... 108

3.6. Transcending Seniority: A Case in Swat	110
3.7. Bibiane's Agency in the Heart of Mardan	112
3.8. Conclusion.....	116
CHAPTER 4 Celebrating <i>Khadi</i> : Communal Pukhtun Weddings and Clandestine	
Internet Marriages.....	119
4.1. Introduction.....	119
4.2. Preference and Choice: Finding a Bride	122
4.3. <i>Sath</i> and <i>Tayyari</i> : Invitations and Preparations	125
4.4. Bibiane's Weddings	130
4.5. Wedding Dances: The Work of Entertainment.....	137
4.6. An Internet Love Marriage.....	142
4.7. Birth: <i>Ombaraki</i>	146
4.8. Conclusion.....	147
CHAPTER 5 The Work of <i>Gham-Khadi</i> : "Not to Do <i>Gham-Khadi</i> is Shameful (<i>Sharam</i>);	
to Do it a Burden"	151
5.1. Introduction	151
5.2. Collective and Individual in <i>Gham-Khadi</i>	153
5.3. Reciprocity and Morality	156
5.4. Obligation and Preference: the "Burden" of Performing <i>Gham-Khadi</i> ...	162
5.5. Participation and Exclusion: the Severing of Social Relations	165
5.6. Juggling Professional Work, Housework, and the Work of Existence ..	167
5.7. <i>Rewaj</i> and Islam: Dimensions of Personhood.....	170
5.8. Conclusion.....	177
CONCLUSION.....	179
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	188
APPENDIX 1 Pukhtun Putative Genealogy	214
APPENDIX 2 Kinship Terminology: Affinal and Consanguinal.....	215
APPENDIX 3 Time.....	216
APPENDIX 4 Maid Performing <i>Gham-Khadi</i> on behalf of her Bibi.....	217
APPENDIX 5: The income and household expenditure of a 35 year-old Bibi with three	
children from her matrilineal cross-cousin	218

LIST OF FIGURES

<i>Figure 1 - Pakistan, its provinces and neighbouring countries.....</i>	<i>ix</i>
<i>Figure 2 - The yellow-coloured areas correspond to Swat, (Saidu), Mardan and Islamabad</i>	<i>x</i>
<i>Figure 3 - Pukhto-speaking regions are indicated by the light-grey shade.....</i>	<i>xi</i>
<i>Figure 4 - Swat: View from Bareengal (Badshah Sabib's House).....</i>	<i>20</i>
<i>Figure 5 - Rooftop view of Hoti Mardan from the Nawab's hujra.....</i>	<i>23</i>
<i>Figure 6 - The Faisal Mosque, Islamabad from the Margalla Hills</i>	<i>25</i>
<i>Figure 7 - The Murree Convent (notice the Pukhtun mother in a sazar).....</i>	<i>31</i>
<i>Figure 9 - In (white and red) summer uniform with my convent class-fellows (1988).....</i>	<i>44</i>
<i>Figure 10 - Entrances within the house to the hujra and kor in Hoti, Mardan.....</i>	<i>51</i>
<i>Figure 12 - Saidu Baba's grave inside his mosque</i>	<i>54</i>
<i>Figure 13 - The mashra (elder) Bibi (centre) directing maids while cooking for her guests</i>	<i>58</i>
<i>Figure 14 - A maid called "Babo" (mother), performing the nazar-mat for a little Badshah.....</i>	<i>65</i>
<i>Figure 15 - A two bedroom city flat.....</i>	<i>74</i>
<i>Figure 16 - Bamboo-covered Khan's and Bibi's semi-detached rented house in Islamabad</i>	<i>75</i>
<i>Figure 17 - Swati and Mardani children of Bibiane with friends and maids at a birthday ("minor khadi") in Islamabad. The two women on the left (in sleeveless shirts) are Moroccan neighbours</i>	<i>77</i>
<i>Figure 18 - A maid in white with young Bibiane in "Hot Shots".....</i>	<i>78</i>
<i>Figure 19 - Old qabar (built structure at rear) juxtaposed against new grave</i>	<i>97</i>
<i>Figure 20 - Bibi distributing meat to the villagers from the kor: a maid bags portions of meat, while the Bibi's three year-old holds the list with the villagers' names; the silver cooking pot under the kat (straw bed) is destined for the local mosque</i>	<i>113</i>
<i>Figure 21 - A Bibi (to the left) at the wedding of her dai's granddaughter (her "niece")</i>	<i>129</i>
<i>Figure 22 - Groom's side Bibiane dance as they enter the bride's house with henna (nakreeze).....</i>	<i>132</i>
<i>Figure 23 - Displaying the bridal gold jewellery at the Nakreeza event</i>	<i>133</i>
<i>Figure 24 - Aunt, cousin and mother (in silver) of the groom displaying the bridal jora (suit)</i>	<i>133</i>
<i>Figure 25 - A young male performer (dum) collecting money thrown over the groom's father's younger brother's wife's head.....</i>	<i>134</i>
<i>Figure 26 - The bride's unmarried sisters and cousin in "modern" clothes dance "Indian-style" in Mardan</i>	<i>138</i>
<i>Figure 27 - Young Bibiane and children dance in a Swati wedding to an audience of Bibiane and male performers.....</i>	<i>139</i>

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1 - *Gham-Khadi*..... 5

Table 2 - “Pukhtun” 16

Table 3 - *Gham-khadi* as perceived by Al-Huda Bibiane 80

Table 4 - Food hierarchy 104

Table 5 - A bride’s wedding expenditure 128

Table 6 - Money given by Bibi for *gham-khadi* during a four month period (March-June, 2001) 159

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Pseudonyms

In accordance with anthropological convention I have used pseudonyms in the text. For any shortcomings that may remain I take sole responsibility.

NOTE ON transliteration

In this thesis, I have translated Pukhto words and phrases according to Pukhtun Bibiane's own pronunciation and understanding of them. Pukhto (Pashto or Afghani) is one of the East Iranian group of languages; it has several dialects, and is spoken by seventeen million people across northeastern Afghanistan and North-West Frontier Province, Pakistan (although the national language of Afghanistan, Pukhto has no official status in Pakistan). Written in a variant of the Persian script (itself a variant of the Arabic script) since the late sixteenth century, Pukhto has a number of alphabets modified for sounds specific to it. Pukhto distinguishes two grammatical genders as well as singular and plural with a strict word order being: subject-object-verb. Although primarily borrowing from Persian and Arabic, a number of words in contemporary Pakistani Pukhto are derived from Urdu, the national language of Pakistan, as well as a few from English (e.g. "formality", "Bangla" from bungalow, "raydoo" from radio, and TV). I have tried to capture this linguistic diversity in people's everyday conversations throughout this thesis.

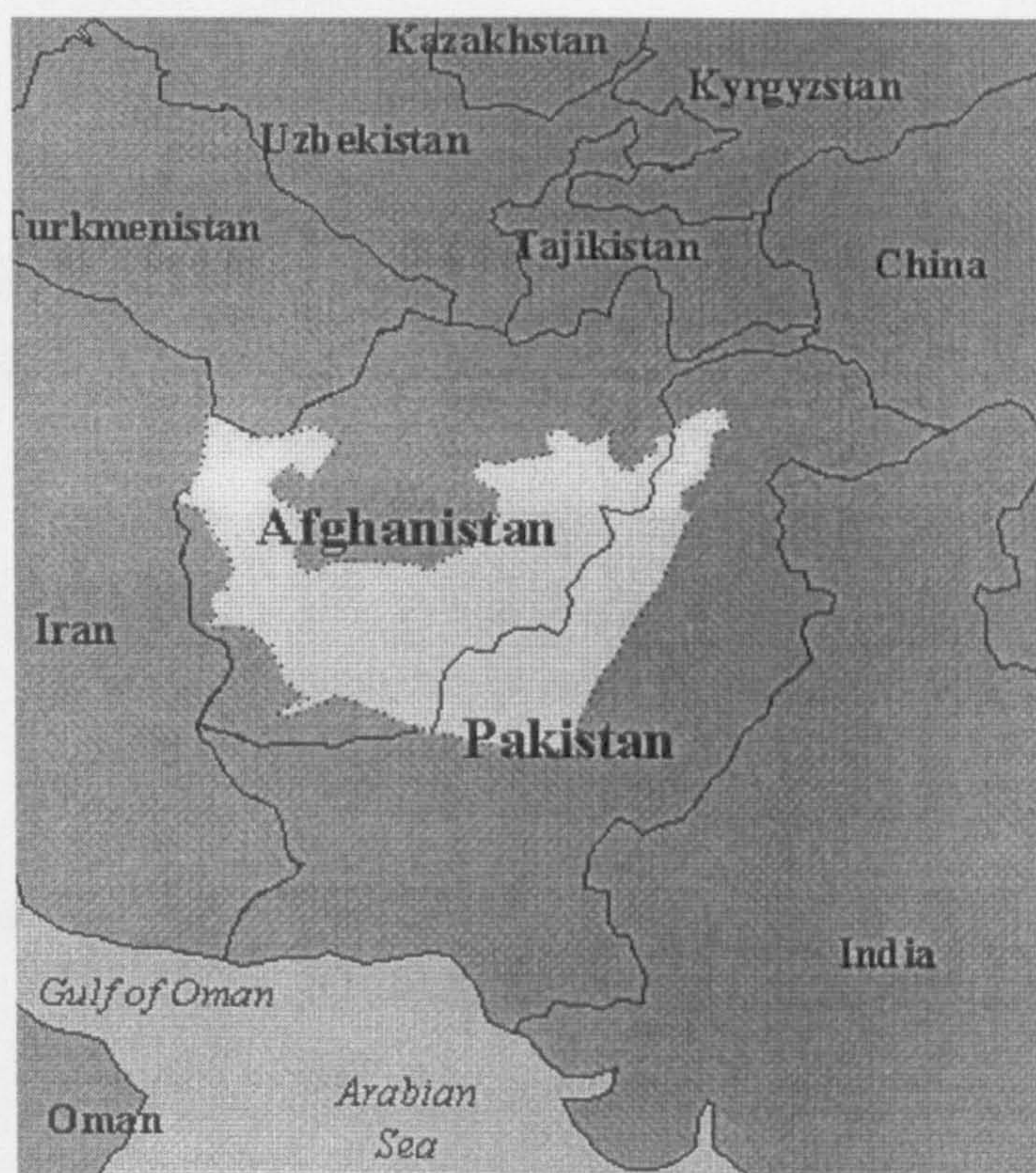


Figure 3 - Pukhto-speaking regions are indicated by the light-grey shade

GLOSSARY

<i>abay/ abaygane</i>	(singular/plural) mother, wet-nurse (also <i>aday</i>).
<i>abaya</i>	Arab-style stitched garment covering a woman's entire body.
<i>adab</i>	respect; comportment; bodily habitus; rules of conduct; civility.
<i>adam</i>	Adam: human.
<i>Akhtar</i>	Muslim festival (Urdu: <i>Eid</i>). (There are three <i>Eid</i> festivals: <i>Eid-ul-Fitr</i> , celebrating the end of fasting during the month of Ramadan; <i>Eid-Milad-un-Nabi</i> , the birth anniversary of the Prophet; and <i>Eid-ul-Azha</i> , commemoration of Prophet Ibrahim's (Abraham's) willingness to sacrifice his son Ismail. Pukhtuns, in general, mainly celebrate the first <i>lakotay</i> (small) <i>Akhtar</i> and last <i>loi</i> (big) <i>Akhtar</i> , and rarely celebrate <i>Eid-Milad-un-Nabi</i>).
<i>aql</i>	social reason, intelligence, and knowledge manifested in actions.
<i>azadi</i>	freedom.
<i>baang</i>	call for prayer performed by a mullah (Urdu: <i>azaan</i>).
<i>bad/ badi</i>	bad/ hostility.
<i>badal</i>	1) revenge – a primary principle of <i>Pukhtunwali</i> ; 2) exchange – marriage.
<i>badikhlaq</i>	immoral person.
<i>badmash/ badmashe</i>	a villainous man/ woman.
<i>Badshah/ Badshahya</i>	(sing./pl.) king; title of male descendants of Badshah Sahib, the Ruler of Swat.
<i>bar Swat</i>	upper Swat (e.g. Sher Palam, Jura etc.) (<i>kooz</i> Swat is lower Swat or Saidu).
<i>Bareeze</i>	Pakistani designed, machine-embroidered, unstitched three-piece suits sold in <i>Bareeze</i> shops across Pakistan; widely worn by Pakistani elite women.
<i>bazaar/ bazaaroon</i>	shop/s; non-segregated public space.
<i>be-aqal</i>	a person displaying a lack of knowledge, social reason, or wisdom.
<i>be-gherat</i>	a person without <i>gherat</i> , courage and honour.
<i>Begum</i>	a title of rank and respect for a noblewoman: such as Madam.
<i>Bibi/ Bibiane</i>	(sing./pl.) 1) a respect title for a woman from a wealthy family.
<i>chalak</i>	clever in a cunning way.
<i>crore</i>	one hundred lakhs: Rs.10,000,000.

<i>daftar/ daftari</i>	Pukhtun lands which enabled the Khan to participate in the council of elders and make major and significant socio-political decisions.
<i>dai/ daigane</i>	(sing./pl.) wet nurse/s.
<i>dalbar</i>	court, women's quarters.
<i>dars</i>	Islamic segregated lectures where the Quran and hadith are translated.
<i>darzi/ darzian</i>	tailor/s.
<i>Deoband</i>	An Islamic movement and academy founded in 1867 in the north Indian town of Deoband which played a reformist role at the time of the British colonial rule in the sub-continent by calling on Muslims to commit themselves to religious and moral perfection and to embody Islam.
<i>dera</i>	a type of <i>hujra</i> ; a men's house in Swat.
<i>dimagh</i>	the mind; the intellect.
<i>dodai</i>	1) cooked food/meal/feast; 2) flat rounded bread baked in a <i>tanoor</i> (oven).
<i>dolai</i>	palanquin carrying brides on the " <i>Rukhsatee</i> " (departure to her husband's house).
<i>dozakb</i>	hell.
<i>dum/ dumman</i>	professional dancer/s; prostitutes, locally of very low status and reputation.
<i>ezat</i>	reputation (public persona); honour and family pride.
<i>faqir</i>	in Pukhto: " <i>pakir</i> "; landless, beggar or mendicant.
<i>fikkar</i>	thought; pondering.
<i>fikkroona</i>	(Plural of <i>fikkar</i>) problems; worries.
<i>geenay</i>	young and often unmarried girl; <i>geenakai</i> girls.
<i>gham</i>	1) specific meaning: death and mourning; 2) general meaning: sorrow, difficulties, sadness, loss, worry, anxiety.
<i>gham-khadi</i>	1) life-cycle gatherings: funerals and weddings; keeping up relations; 2) sadness-happiness.
<i>ghara</i>	1) dirge; 2) literally, throat.
<i>gharib/ gharibi</i>	poor/ poverty.
<i>gup</i>	1) nonsense, gossip, idle talk; 2) friendly conversation.
<i>hadith</i>	the sayings and traditions of the Prophet ﷺ.
<i>haj</i>	pilgrimage to Macca: one of the five pillars of Islam.
<i>haqiqa</i>	celebratory ceremonies of a newborn baby (e.g. shaving of hair).
<i>hijab</i>	headscarf worn by Muslim women to cover the hair.

<i>hujra/ hujre</i>	(sing./pl.) men's house; guest-house.
<i>Janimaṣ</i>	prayer mat.
<i>janaṣa</i>	funeral.
<i>jannati</i>	a person who deserves <i>jannat</i> (paradise).
<i>jaṣbah</i>	the force of uncontrolled emotions.
<i>Jihad</i>	primarily spiritual struggle.
<i>Jirga</i>	council of Pukhtun elders.
<i>juda</i>	separate.
<i>kacha</i>	temporary, or makeshift; raw.
<i>kafir</i>	unbeliever; infidel.
<i>kaal</i>	celebrating ceremony of the completion of a year after death.
<i>kamaqal/ kamaqala/ kamaqale</i>	person/boy/girl who lacks social understanding or wisdom: "foolish".
<i>kaar</i>	work.
<i>kasbar/ kasbaran</i>	(sing./pl.) a person younger in age.
<i>katki</i>	stool.
<i>khaar</i>	city.
<i>kha-bade</i>	<i>Kha</i> -good= <i>khadi</i> ; <i>bade</i> -bad= <i>gham</i> .
<i>khadi</i>	specific meaning: <i>wada</i> , (wedding), <i>sunnat</i> (circumcision), <i>paidaish</i> (birth), <i>koydan</i> (engagement); general meaning: celebrations, happiness, joy.
<i>kha-ikhlaqa</i>	a woman of good virtues and morals.
<i>khairat</i>	charity or meal given to relatives, the needy, and poor. In <i>gham-khadi</i> and other religious ceremonies it often takes the form of a meal or "feast" which is consumed by wealthy guests and the community.
<i>Khan/ Khanan</i>	(sing./pl.) a title for a landlord. Pakistanis in general address Pukhto speaking men (particularly merchants), regardless of class, as "khan". Here the term "Khan" more specifically refers to landlords.
<i>khapa</i>	to be sad; <i>khapgan</i> (pl.) sadness.
<i>khattam</i>	(to finish) recitation of the entire Quran.
<i>khaza</i>	woman/ wife.
<i>khidmatgar/ an khidmatgare/ Naukar/ Naukara</i>	helper/s, male servant/female servant.
<i>khor</i>	sister.
<i>khpal</i>	a complex term indicating a relative or close friend. <i>Khpalwali</i> - keeping up relations as relatives do.
<i>khwashbali</i>	happiness.

<i>kille</i>	village/ town (often <i>kor-kille</i> implies home-village).
<i>kille-kor</i>	village house characterised by courtyards, large spaces, and several rooms.
<i>kor/ koroona</i>	house/s.
<i>lakh</i>	one hundred thousand Pakistani Rupees: Rs.100,000.
<i>laas niwa</i>	holding up the hands in prayer (Urdu: <i>dua</i>) for the deceased; condolence.
<i>lewane/ lewanai</i>	mad man/woman; socially inadequate people.
<i>mairazane</i>	sharing the same father but born from different mothers.
<i>mashar/ mashari/ mashartia</i>	senior/ seniority, older person with authority; <i>masharan</i> elders.
<i>mashara/ masharane</i>	older female/s.
<i>mazhab/ mazhabi</i>	religion/ religious.
<i>meeshtha</i>	the bond that develops as a result of living together.
<i>melmastia</i>	hospitality – a major feature of Pukhtun identity or <i>Pukthunwali</i> : 1) offering one's food, home, and gifts; and 2) on a symbolic level, one's time and self.
<i>mina</i>	love, or affection.
<i>moonz</i>	prayers.
<i>mullah/ mullahyan</i>	(sing./pl.) religious teacher, often based in a <i>madrassa</i> (religious school).
<i>naghare</i>	coal hearth.
<i>Nakreeza/ Nakreeze</i>	1) the first of the three days of a wedding (Urdu: <i>Mehendi</i>); 2) <i>nakreeza</i> is henna which is applied to the bride's palms on the <i>Nakreeza</i> event.
<i>na-mahram</i>	marriageable persons, i.e. not of the men forbidden by propinquity.
<i>Nawab/ Nawaban</i>	(sing./pl.) a Khan of a very large area with considerable power, authority, prominence, and above all land. Bestowed by the British, the title is inheritable by the male descendants of a Nawab.
<i>nazar</i>	1) insight; vision; 2) evil-eye.
<i>nazara</i>	struck by the ill-effects of <i>nazar</i> . <i>Nazar-mat</i> - breaking the <i>nazar</i> by reciting Quranic verses or by burning the leaves <i>nazar-para</i> .
<i>neeat</i>	intentions.
<i>okhyar/ okhyara</i>	(masculine/feminine) clever, perspicacious or having a ready insight into and understanding of things.

<i>ombaraki</i>	congratulations; congratulatory visit in <i>kbadi</i> marking the beginning of a stage in the life-cycle, e.g. following births and marriages.
<i>paband/i</i>	restricted/ restrictions.
<i>pareshani</i>	anxiety.
<i>partoog-kameez-loopatta</i>	(Urdu: <i>shalwar-kameez-dupatta</i>) Pakistani national dress consisting of tunic-like shirt typically with full-length sleeves, baggy trouser, and matching veil.
<i>peeshare</i>	criticising a person to his face; see <i>zghaibat</i> .
<i>peghor</i>	insulting public taunt when one falls short in acts of Pukhto. This is often an effective way of exercising social control and causes great anxiety among Pukhtuns.
<i>pookha</i>	before, previously, in the old days.
<i>pradee</i>	outsiders, strangers, opposite of <i>kbpal</i> .
<i>Pukhtana</i>	the Pukhtun collective self-reference in the Pukhto language.
<i>pukhtanna</i>	a Pukhtun woman.
<i>Pukhto</i>	1) The language of Pukhtun people belonging to Pakistan's North-West Frontier Province; 2) Pukhto is also the synonym of <i>Pukhtunwali</i> , the practices of Pukhtun people such as spontaneous hospitality (<i>melmastia</i>).
<i>Pukhtun</i>	1) a person originally from the North-West Frontier Province in Pakistan or from Afghanistan 2) who speaks and does Pukhto; 2) a landlord (a Khan).
<i>Pukhtunwali</i>	previously defined as a "code"; or practices of Pukhtuns.
<i>pardab</i>	1) curtain; 2) veil of two distinctive types, not limited to gender assignments: a) "literal <i>pardab</i> ", this often applies mainly (but not only) to women taking such forms as covering the body, head and face, and b) "metaphoric <i>pardab</i> " this is <i>pardab</i> of the heart, mind, eyes, ears and soul applying to both men and women.
<i>qismat</i>	fate as decreed by Allah.
<i>quom</i>	tribe/nation.
<i>rishtinee</i>	direct confrontation. This is seen as being equal to open conflict.
<i>rewaj</i>	customary Pukhto practices.
<i>rogh-ranzoor</i>	(<i>rogh</i> - well (e.g. birth, new house); <i>ranzoor</i> - ill (e.g. accidents, miscarriages)
<i>rogha</i>	make up; healed. Opposite: <i>wrana</i> fighting; broken, ruined.
<i>roje</i>	Muslim month of Ramadan: fasting.

<i>rozgar</i>	employment.
<i>sakhta</i>	hard, strong; <i>sakhté</i> hardships, difficulties.
<i>salaam</i>	salutations or greetings (peace).
<i>sahwekhtamma</i>	forty days after burial; part of burial rites.
<i>sarithob</i>	display of masculinity and manhood.
<i>sartor/sartora</i>	1) literally, blackhead; 2) bareheaded.
<i>sath</i>	1) reverence, politeness; 2) invitation.
<i>sattar</i>	veiling/ <i>pardah</i> ; concealing, covering.
<i>sawab</i>	religious merit.
<i>sazar</i>	(Urdu: <i>chador</i>) a large unstitched piece of cloth worn by Pukhtun women in various ways to cover the entire body, head and face and is often white in colour and embroidered. This contrasts with the Pakistani <i>loopata</i> (veil)—a length of cloth varying in size and typically of light material.
<i>shamiana/shamiane</i>	brightly coloured tents which serve to enclose/segregate outdoor garden spaces in <i>gham-khadi</i> .
<i>sharam</i>	1) shame, embarrassment; and 2) honour, self-respect.
<i>speen</i>	1) white; 2) purity; 3) to peel.
<i>sunna</i>	traditions of the Prophet Muhammad.
<i>tajdid</i>	revival of the authentic Islamic practices based on the Quran and hadith.
<i>tapos-pukhtana</i>	to ask; enquiry visit.
<i>tarburwali</i>	agnatic rivalry – primary law of <i>Pukhtunwali</i> . Enmity with <i>tarbur</i> (father's brother's son). An alternative Pukhto word is " <i>thrabgan?</i> " (derived from the term <i>thra</i> (father's brother)).
<i>thamma</i>	expectation.
<i>thor</i>	1) black; 2) a disgraced woman; 3) Impure, or put off food or a person.
<i>tlal-ratlal</i>	"going and coming", reciprocated visiting a basis upon which <i>gham-khadi</i> is built.
<i>tleen</i>	the term tleen is derived from <i>talé</i> which means "gone by", for example, a death anniversary celebrated after a <i>kaal</i> (year).
<i>uzar</i>	to attend or express sorrow at the time of <i>gham</i> (death).
<i>wada</i>	1) the wedding day when the <i>nikah</i> is performed (often the second day following the <i>Nakreeza</i>); 2) A promise.

<i>waak</i>	1) will, choice, authority, command, sway, control, influence; 2) power, might, force, capacity.
<i>Wali</i>	ruler, chief, sovereign.
<i>Walima</i>	the third day of the wedding (celebrating the consummation of marriage).
<i>warwal</i>	bride price.
<i>weenze maraee</i>	a maid who is also a life-long companion.
<i>wesh</i>	a past practice of decadal land redistribution within and between villages.
<i>zamindar</i>	1) a landlord; 2) a man who works the land for a landlord or Khan.
<i>zan/zanana</i>	1) woman/women; 2) women's section of the house; 3) Female, feminine, effeminate, womanly.
<i>zeest-rozgar</i>	1) <i>zeest</i> - life, living, existence; 2) employment. Or keeping up relations by going and coming (<i>tlal-ratlal</i> , <i>zee-razee</i>), reciprocating gifts (<i>warkera-rakra</i> : give and take). <i>Rozgar</i> - employment or work (<i>kaar</i>).
<i>zghaibat</i>	criticising a person behind his or her back.

INTRODUCTION

This thesis explores the social lives of Pukhtun women or Bibiane (pl. of the Pukhto term “Bibi”: lady) from landed, well-off families in the regions of Swat and Mardan in northern Pakistan.¹ Its ethnographic focus is on the enactment of specific life-cycle or *gham-khadi* ceremonies (particularly funerals and weddings). The widely used Pukhto term *gham-khadi* both refers to specific segregated gatherings commemorating death, marriage, birth and other such events, and designates the emotions of sorrow (“*gham*”) and joy (“*khadi*”) which they elicit. *Gham-khadi* comprises a body of ideas and practices of life, in which happiness and sadness are understood as indissoluble, and are celebrated communally within networks of reciprocal social obligations. Preparation for and attendance at *gham-khadi* events is locally understood as “women’s work”, a set of complex activities integral to Pukhtun identity or *Pukhtunwali*.² Conventionally, anthropologists have characterised *Pukhtunwali* as an “ideal-type code” based on such principles as *badal* (revenge), *melmastia* (hospitality), *nanawatee* (refuge), *tor* (female honour), and *tarboorwali* (agnatic rivalry) (e.g. Ahmed, A. S. 1980; Barth 1986; Grima 1998; Lindholm 1982; Singer 1982); this thesis suggests that *gham-khadi* has come to assume a priority among Pukhtuns as a contemporary principle of *Pukhtunwali*. Many of the concepts characterising *Pukhtunwali* (such as forms of hospitality, revenge, agnatic rivalry) are acted out in funerary and wedding events (*gham-khadi*). I will argue that *gham-khadi* constitutes the “work of existence” (*zeest-rozgar*), through which Bibiane maintain the fabric of social life by sustaining inter- and intra-family relationships.³ Bibiane’s

¹ The term “Pukhtun” is widely used in three principal ways. First and more generally, all Pukhto-speaking people, the ethno-linguistic group predominantly living in Pakistan’s North-West Frontier Province, are known as Pukhtun (or Pathan, Pashtun, or “Afghan” [Hoti 1942]) by people living outside the Frontier areas. Pukhtuns are described as “the largest tribal society in the world” (Spain 1995: 23), as 60 Pukhtun tribes comprise 6 million in Afghanistan and 10 million of Pakistan’s total 2002 population of 147,663,429 (Khan, S. M. 1997; Shinwari 2000). Second, though the ability to speak the Pukhto language distinguishes the Pukhtun, speaking in itself is not sufficient; a Pukhtun must also ‘do’ Pukhto, i.e. seek to live up to a set of honour-based practices, also called *Pukhtunwali* (Barth 1981b: 105). Pukhtun identity is thus bestowed by adherence to notions of honour, especially in tribal areas where people are supposed to revert to “ideal-type behaviour” (or *Pukhtunwali*) in order to be recognized as full members of society (Ahmed, A. S. 1980). Third, lineage and genealogy distinguish Pukhto-speakers from Pukhtuns, as landowning persons of the dominant Yusufzai tribe, descended from a common ancestor, and having a right to “full citizenship” on the basis of previous conquest (Barth 1986: 3). In its 258 interviews, at least, this work focuses on the Pukhto-speaking saintly and lordly landed families (particularly the Wali of Swat’s, the Nawabans of Hoti, and Toru, and the Khanan of *bar* [upper] Swat).

² *Pukhtunwali* has been defined as the core of Pukhtun identity, and its social and cultural life (see Ahmed, A. S. 1980: 3, 89; Ahmed, Q. I. 1994; Banerjee 2000; Barth 1970: 119; 1986; 1995: 104; Grima 1998: xi; Khan, A. M. 1994; Khan, G. 1990; Khan, M. 2000; Lindholm, Charles 1982: 210; Mohmand 1966: 44; Singer 1982: 51; Tahir 1980; Tair and Edwards 1982: 71).

³ The western concept of the “family” fits uneasily with indigenous models (see Altorki 1986: 13; Khan, S. A. 1996: 13; compare Le Wita 1994: 118; Shore 2002: 2), which involve extra-familial networks of alliance (Bourdieu 1991: 178). In the vernacular, the term “family” is variably: a) the descendants of a

sense of their *gham-khadi* obligations underpins their understanding of personhood. The thesis identifies and explores a Pukhtun construction of work divergent from professionalism or physical labour measured and quantified by production output. What I seek to show is that the Pukhtun construction considers work as producing not things but social relations and transactions (Strathern 1990: 177).

This thesis, therefore, seeks to contribute to anthropological debate on a number of issues. First, it attempts to establish the distinctive sociality of Pukhtun Bibiane in terms of their participation, within and beyond the household where they observe *pardah*, in *gham-khadi*.⁴ Second, in tracing the extent of the *gham-khadi* networks of the wives of the landed wealthy (“Bibiane”), the thesis adds to the ethnography of the elite of South Asian and Muslim societies (see Shore 2002: 1, 12 on “studying up”). Moreover, it presents an alternative perspective to the characterization of elite South Asian women as “idle” (Alavi 1991: 127) by documenting their role in Pukhtun families in the household and in the wider society.⁵ Third, it contests the conventional academic portrayal of Muslim societies as contexts in which men claim a greater measure of reason or social sense (*aqal*) than women (Anderson, J. W. 1985; Shalinski 1986; Torab 1996). In describing the segregated female contexts of *gham-khadi* as a space of agency, it reconstructs how, in one Bibi’s words in English, Bibiane “call the shots”, exercising minutely differentiated senses of both social propriety and personal strategy in negotiating procedures. Focusing on this agency helps us to revise previous anthropological accounts of Pukhtun society, which project *Pukhtunwali* in predominantly masculine terms, while depicting *gham-khadi* as an entirely feminine category (Grima 1998).⁶ Attention to Pukhtun society’s *rites de passage*, as these represent key elements of social structure and behaviour, makes it possible to re-examine widely held views about Pukhtun society as a domain of male-dominated honour and shame values through considering the role, organization, and actions of its women. Lastly, the thesis is concerned to capture the contemporary dynamism of Pukhtun *gham-khadi*,

single ancestor consisting of some twenty five or more households but sharing one family name; b) a husband and wife unit; or c) a wife.

⁴ The Arabic/Urdu word “*pardah*” denotes curtain (Papanek 1982); *pardah* is an entire system of segregation entailing veiling and avoidance behaviour.

⁵ I use the term “elite” not so much analytically as a local reference to members of landed families; it should not obscure some degree of social mobility only partly captured in my account. For comparative definitions of “elite cultures” see Altorki 1986: 14-18; Altorki and El-Solh 1988: 52; Deutsch 1998; Hoodfar 1991: 122; Gilsenan 1996; Le Wita 1994; Shore 2002: 10; for calls for a redirection of anthropological attention to elites, see Comaroff and Comaroff 1992.

⁶ Elsewhere I have attempted to re-analyse the concept of *Pukhtunwali* (Ahmed, A. 1994; 2000).

which is subject to negotiation, in particular as relatively young married Bibiane take issue with its “customs” (*rewaj*) as offending against Islamic precept.⁷

This thesis is based on fieldwork carried out in three localities of northern Pakistan: Pakistan’s capital city, Islamabad, and two villages (*killee*), Saidu in Swat and Hoti in Mardan, both in the North-West Frontier Province (NWFP).⁸ The districts of Swat and Mardan consist of several villages and may be characterised as segregated *purdah* contexts, in which patrilineal descent is common and marriage is typically both endogamous and virilocal. Swat is dominated by land-owning Pukhtuns, referred to as Khanan; it was governed between 1926 and 1969 as an autonomous State under two Rulers, Badshah Sahib, and his heir, the Wali, who were descended from the famous shepherd Saint, the Akhund of Swat (1835-1877). The Akhund’s male descendants are referred to as Badshahyan (descendants of a ruler). Mardan is also dominated by landed lords or Nawabs, whose families, from the Patriarch Nawab Akbar Khan, were incorporated into British colonial rule as a landed elite. Women of both saintly and landed descent go by the honorific Bibiane.⁹

In both Swat and Mardan, the village (*kille*) is still, as Barth observed in the 1950s, “the most important unit of territorial reference” for Pukhtuns (Barth 1986: 13). The Pukhto proverb: “no matter how far you go, you’ll eventually return to your village” (*che ze ze no Abazai la ba raze*) insists on an ideology of Pukhtun identity being vested in its rural heartlands, as well as in Pukhtun villagers, who are said by many Khan and Bibiane to embody a purer form of Pukhto. While complex, village organization is shaped by the dominant role of landlords on whose hospitality, patronage and land ownership all other categories of villagers depend (Barth 1986: 3, 10). Khan status derives from tenants’ allegiances and patrilineal land inheritances. Land is mainly

⁷ Henceforth, when I refer to “Islam” I am referring to the principles prescribed or proscribed in the Quran and hadith. From a Muslim perspective, Islam as a set of rules is distinct from the diverse and multiple practices and experiences of Muslim peoples. Contrast Gilmartin and Lawrence who use Hodgson’s term “Islamicate” to describe ways of life “not restricted to the practice of Islam as a religion” (2000: 2).

⁸ NWFP lies to the north west of Pakistan with its Western border or FATA, the Federally Administered Tribal Area, contiguous with Afghanistan along the Durand Line. The Frontier covers 41,000 sq. miles. It is one of the four provinces of Pakistan and borders Afghanistan to the west and Punjab Province to the east; anthropologists have variously placed studies of the Pukhtuns under the rubrics of Middle Eastern and South Asian Studies (Grima 1998: 2; Nelson 1974: 552). Donnan (1987: 21) attributes this definitional difficulty to the course of the Indus River across the south-eastern Frontier as it marks off the sub-continent (see also Banerjee 2000: 21). Historically, the Yusufzai Pukhtuns conquered the Frontier in successive waves from 1500 to 1600 (AD). During British rule in India the Frontier served as a neutral zone, interposed between the two Imperial frontiers Russia and British India (Chakravarty 1976: 53; see also Richards 1990). The Frontier has retained its English colonial name despite many attempts to rename it *Pukhtunistan* (the land of the Pukhtuns) (Hanifi 1976: 442; Jansson 1988).

⁹ My use of the plural “Bibiane” refers to Pukhtun women from landowning families, not the Urdu usage, “bibi/an”, a gender-specific respect title for women of various social strata. More widely, see Dalrymple 2002.

agricultural in both the valley of Swat and plains of Mardan. Among the categories of villagers (further discussed in Chapter 1), farmers, tenants, agricultural labourers, shopkeepers, barbers, and dancers are all directly or indirectly dependent politically, economically and socially on landlords' families with whom they share reciprocal visiting relationships of *gham-khadi*. In addition to these, an entire category of male and female villagers belonging to these occupational groups as domestic helpers (wet-nurses, servants and maids) come to hold quasi-familial degrees of prominence and power in Bibiane's houses. Bibiane's performance of *gham-khadi* thus affects their relationships both with other families of equal status and a variety of socially subordinate villagers.

The importance of focusing on the funerals and weddings of Khanan and Bibiane as a social group is not that their embodiment of *Pukhtunwali* is taken to be more authentic than that of the *gharib* (poor), but that their practices have potential to disseminate more widely across village and metropolitan contexts. As many as two thousand people drawn from a broad social spectrum may attend big landlord families' funerals. As this thesis documents, landlords' migration to the capital Islamabad is precipitating transformations in these Bibiane-villager bonds. Transregional patterns of habitation mean that the observance of *gham-khadi* ceremonies in natal villages represents a vital ligature connecting often absent landlords to their traditional dependents and patrimony. Interactions between urban Bibiane and rural villagers demonstrate divergences in the understanding of convention, while the migration of Bibiane to a provincial region outside their own thus challenges some of the core features of Pukhtun "identity". This creates many painful paradoxes for Bibiane as wedding and funerary procedures are revised, and the acceptable forms of ethnic and cultural continuity called into question.¹⁰

Bibiane from Frontier families who have left the village context for the city, for at least some part of every year, form the ethnographic focus of this thesis. Married Bibiane in Swat and especially Mardan rarely leave the home for tasks not connected to *gham-khadi* (principally weddings and funerals, but also covering a range of other procedures of congratulation and condolence). These excursions, which take place as often as two or three times a day during the spring and autumn "wedding season", and as infrequently as once a week in winter, tie them to a wide network of relations with hundreds of individuals from different families and social backgrounds.

According to an interpenetration of personal and social concepts of identity within Pukhtun conceptions of the family and kinship, Bibiane apprehend *gham-khadi* as

¹⁰ On the topic of inherent paradoxes within forms of religion (Islam) and practice (Pukhto), see Ahmed, A. S. 1976; Tapper and Tapper 1986: 65; Titus 1998: 675.

both an enactment of social relations and a source of personal self-definition. A person's identity, as Daniel has argued, in a South Asian context, is not "individual" but includes his or her spouse, offspring, kinsmen and so forth (1984: 103).¹¹ Every adult of a given family—both men and women—occupies a unique position within a thick web of relationships in local, regional and national contexts. Kinship among Pukhtuns is typically conceptualized as dense and multi-filiated. Individuals conceive themselves as having relations not only to immediate kin (parents, children and siblings) but also to a range of distant relatives and affines, usually connected through the marriages of female relatives (who may be cousins several times removed). Bibiane's sense of social identity derives from a married person's participation in circles of *gham-khadi* formed primarily through kinship and marriage, but also through friendship, clientage and political faction. Likewise, families are conceptualized as large corporate structures, belonging to different households but sharing a common ancestor. *Gham-khadi* circle membership bestows on Khanan and Bibiane the obligation to attend fellow members' *gham-khadi* occasions, creating a complex pattern of overlapping bonds, loyalties, allegiances and debts between families (extended and nuclear). Each individual *qua* family member is bound to others by a pattern of reciprocal visiting.

At major *gham-khadi*, funerals and weddings, Bibiane engage in a number of practices of hosting (preparing the house, giving food) and attending (gifting, offering congratulations or condolence), observing "proper" or ritualized forms of procedure and decorum. Bibiane (and not their husbands) in these contexts characteristically offer money, food or gifts in accordance with family status and accounts (*hisab-kitab*) of earlier debts and donations:

Table 1 - *Gham-Khadi*

Pukhto:	<i>gham</i>	<i>rogh-ranzoor</i>	<i>khadi</i>	<i>paidaish</i>
Translation:	(sadness)	(well-ill)	(happiness)	(birth)
Event:	↓ death	↓ illness / accident	↓ wedding	↓ birth
Performance:	<i>laas-niwa</i> (condolence)	<i>tapos</i> (enquiry)	<i>ombaraki</i> (congratulations)	<i>ombaraki</i>
Offering:	↓ money / food	↓ money	↓ money / (cloth)	↓ money (baby clothes)
Offerer:	Wife or mother-in-law on daughter-in-laws' behalf (Iqbal 1997: 85) ¹²			

¹¹ In contrast, quoting Foucault, Rabinow writes: "What is distinctive about Western culture is that we have given so much importance to the problem of the subject ['objectified by a process of division either within himself or from others'] in our social, political, economic, legal, philosophical, and scientific traditions." (1986: 7).

¹² Naveed-i-Rahat, in the context of Meharabad in Punjab (Pakistan) notes: "Transfer of roles from senior to junior generation takes place in Meharabad not from mother to daughter but from mother-in-law to

These activities represent the most pronounced forms of a general social system of *tlal-ratlal* ("going-and-coming"), conceived of by Bibiane as an ongoing "work of existence".

It should be stressed that, although the primary material of this thesis concerns funerary and wedding ceremonies, this analysis only provides an indirect contribution to the anthropology of death and marriage. *Gham-khadi* events among Bibiane are rather understood as complementary aspects of the concept of "existence" (*zeest*). This thesis draws on local understandings of marriage and death that do not rehearse established anthropological distinctions between the two, since Pukhto idioms consider such distinctions foreign. Moreover, as annotated in Raverty's dictionary, usages of "*gham*" (sadness) and "*khadi*" ("joy, happiness ... gaiety") (1982: 670) suppose essentially public or ceremonial contexts for emotions. A speaker may denote a defining condition (say, childlessness or widowhood) as their *gham*, as well as gesturing towards personal feelings. The spoken verb, "*khadi kawal*", denotes the "manifest[ation]" of "gladness" specifically at weddings (*wada*), birth-visits (*ombaraki*), circumcisions (*sunnat*), naming and hair-shaving ceremonies (*haqiqa*), as well as less formal events such as returns from the *haj* pilgrimage, birthdays, election victories, professional promotions and housewarmings. Partly eliding the distinction between ceremonial and everyday visits, Bibiane specifically and Pukhtun people more generally place the term *gham-khadi* within the context of *tlal-ratlal* and a third expression, *zeest-rozgar* (literally the "work of existence"), thus confounding any anthropological attempt to establish a separate ontology of *gham-khadi* ceremonies (compare Humphrey and Laidlaw 1994). Pukhtuns use variants of the word "*rozgar*" in contexts other than *gham-khadi*, referring to professional work ("*kaar-rozgar*") as "employment", which is distinguished from less specified purposive activity, "*kaar*" ("*kor-kaar*", housework). The word tends to relate more to people's roles or identities than to the effort invested in contingent tasks. The two available English-Pukhto dictionaries amplify these verbal transfers in defining *zeest* as "life, existence, employment" (Bellew n.d.: 88; Raverty 1982: 537), and *rozgar* as "employment", "service, earning", and also "time" (Bellew n.d.: 82; Raverty 1982: 516). Bibiane's own discourse suggests that visiting, gifting and attending ceremonial events are all parts of a conceptually single, though highly complex, process of "making kinship" (Carsten 1997) and building social relations—a process, moreover, experienced as a form of work.

Such a concept of "work"—first, a practice of social relations not completely identified with any one task; and second, an array of conceptual (not only physical)

daughter-in-law." (1990: 58). Further, Mernissi notes: "The mother-in-law's role as imitator of *savoir-vivre* is as important as her role as instructress in matters of birth, sickness, and death." (1985: 126).

activities—necessarily complicates and enriches debates within anthropology as to the definition of this term.¹³ In the 1970s-80s, a number of women anthropologists took issue with the broadly Western conceptualization of work as a salaried, professional task taking place in a public sphere, adducing the domestic context of socially meaningful labour (Mackintosh 1979: 175; Povinelli 1993; and Strathern 1984: 13, 18). Others criticized the then-dominant model of work as “patriarchal” (Grint 1991: 33, 40; Kondos 1989: 29; Lewenhak 1980, 1992: 1, 16; Morris 1990: 3-5; Novarra 1980: 35; and Wallace 1987: 1). This thesis builds on this work by presenting an ethnically specific concept of Bibiane’s “work” as they enact “proper” ceremonial observances. Attendance and participation count as Bibiane’s work under a number of headings: first, these actions entail conformity to or negotiation with conventional practices; second, they are physically and mentally arduous (a matter of strategy); third, the participating women collectively perform a “work” as a means of Pukhtun self-representation (“*Pukhtunwali*”); and last, they are understood by Bibiane as an ongoing social effort, characteristic of living itself. The analytical concept of “work” I deploy in this thesis identifies the term with the small- and large-scale, highly organized, transactional activities that make up social relationships. Bibiane’s entry into a *gham-khadi* circle, on marriage, commits them to a category of social relationship with other families in which *gham-khadi* obligations subsume all other ties, as *gham-khadi* and *tlal-ratlal* participants understand themselves to be performing an identity-making practice of “Pukhto”.

This thesis aims to build upon a rich body of anthropological literature about NWFP Pukhtuns, from a female and “social”, rather than political context, for its representation of the actions of individual Bibiane in *gham-khadi*.¹⁴ Most anthropological enquiries in the NWFP discuss “tribal” village contexts (Donnan and Werbner 1991: 3).¹⁵ Barth’s account of political leadership among Swat Pukhtun Khans (“chiefs” or

¹³ Western female anthropologists have been at pains to problematise assumptions about work, e.g. Andersen, M. L. 2000: 144; Franks 1999: 4; Gray and Mearns 1989: 29; Hochschild 1997; Humphrey 1992: 179; Kelly 1986; Mackintosh 1979: 175, 179-190; Novarra 1980: 22-25; Oppong 1994: 1-13; Pahl 1989; Reagan and Blaxall 1976: 1-5; Singh 1992: 3; and Wallman 1979: 12-13. On other activity in the hidden economy as “work” (Daniels 1988), such as voluntary work, see Jahoda 1982: 8-9 and on charitable work, see Reynell 1985: 232-233.

¹⁴ Ahmed, A. S. 1975, 1976, 1980, 1984, 1988; Asad 1972; Banerjee 2000; Barth 1958, 1959/1986, 1960, 1961, 1970; 1981a, 1981b, 1995; Caroe 1992 (1958); Dupree 1978, 1984; Edwards 1996, 1998; Grima 1998; Lindholm 1981, 1982, 1988, 1995, 1996; Safdar 1997; Singer 1982; Shah, S. I. 1993; Shah, S. W. A. 1999; Spain 1962, 1963, 1995. On Afghan Pashtuns, see Lamb forthcoming; Tapper and Tapper 1986; Tapper, N. 1981, 1991; Tapper, R. 1984. Historical and colonial accounts include Bellew n.d., 1986, 1994; Beveridge 198; Elphinstone 1815; Goodwin 1969; Howell 1979; King 1984; Kipling 1987; Merk 1984; Raverty 1982; Thackston 1999.

¹⁵ A Pukhtun “tribe”, in this context, means the group of people who claim descent from a common ancestor, Qais bin Rashid in the 7th century, who had three sons: Sarband, Bittan and Gorgosht, from whom all Pukhtun tribes trace their descent (I shall elaborate on this in Chapter 1). All Pukhtun tribes also share a common “culture” called *Pukhtunwali*; speaking a common language, Pukhto; and usually

landowners) of the Yusufzai tribe (1986)¹⁶ showed that although Pukhtun society, in theory, is egalitarian, in reality, it is structured by caste-like divisions. The “Pukhtun” (conventionally landowning and widely referred to as Khan) forms the apex of such structures, along with certain religious groups (for example the Wali’s Family). Barth argued that Khans derive authority from the ownership of land, provision of hospitality, and reputation for honour. In Swat, Khans, in the capacity of autonomous agents, build support and status by receiving visitors in their men’s guesthouse (*hujra*). In a series of “games”, both the landed (*mōr sar̄*: satisfied men) and their adherents (*wūge sar̄*: hungry men) are granted an individualistic agency in exploiting their respective resources (land or support and labour). Barth argued that in a series of temporary choices, relationships are dyadic, contractual and voluntary (*ibid.*: 3). In contrast, I argue below that although Bibiane are able to exploit relationships within society to further their individual choices through *gham-khadi*, such relationships are, however, characterised by a complex and fluid sense of duty and obligation.

Although Barth’s focus on singular actors, agency, and negotiation marked a new phase in anthropology (from that of Evans-Pritchard’s and Radcliffe-Brown’s models of social structure), and was the first substantial ethnography on “elite” Pukhtuns, his theoretical presuppositions were challenged variously by Marxist, indigenous, and feminist anthropologists. Asad (1972) argued that Barth obscured Khanans’ exercise of systematic domination through their control of scarcity. Second, Ahmed questioned Barth’s western presumption of individual interests, which downplay the emergence of the self-abnegating Ruler (Badshah) or Wali and his Sufi ascetic ancestry in Swat (Ahmed, A. S. 1976; compare Comaroff and Comaroff 1992: 10, 16; Dupree 1977: 514). Third, anthropologists focusing on Pukhtun women and gender issues have also proposed a revision to Barth’s “political” conceptualisation of power, presenting power less as a quality vested in certain institutional offices or factional leaderships (like the Khans), and more in terms of a “particular kind of social relation” (Nelson 1974: 553).¹⁷ In these terms, Bibiane’s activities of “brokering” “information”, “control” and “influence” through the “negotiated order” of *gham-khadi* (Nelson’s terms in her germinal 1974 article on women in the Middle East) achieve new theoretical

occupying a specific geographical area, such as the North-West Frontier Province in Pakistan. For a definition of “tribe” in the Middle Eastern context, see Khoury and Kostiner 1990: 4.

¹⁶ Amongst the Pukhtun tribes the Yusufzai Pukhtuns who make “the class of *khans* and Pukhtuns” (Lindholm, Charles 1996: 78) aspire to “positions of leadership” (Lindholm, Charles 1982: 213). They are one of the most powerful tribes in the Pukhtun hierarchy. Both Mardan and Swat regions are dominated by the Yusufzai Pukhtuns (see Ahmed, A. S. 1976: 7, 1977a: 14; Barth 1986: 7-11, 25-28; Bellew 1994; Caroe 1992: 12-13; Wadud 1962: xxiv).

¹⁷ Following Strathern, I distinguish between a woman’s gender perspective and that of a feminist (1990). My interest in women does not necessarily entail feminism as a theoretical stance (*ibid.*: 36).

visibility (compare Roded 1999).

This account of Bibiane's *gham-khadi* as an important form of Pukhtun social activity explores new dimensions and perspectives only partially investigated by anthropologists.¹⁸ In the context of Frontier ethnography, Barth viewed *gham-khadi* ceremonies as an adjunct to Khan factionalism, understanding the strengthening of affinal ties at weddings and funerals as essentially political acts (Barth 1986: 40, 41; compare Ahmed, A. S. 1980: 177). Charles Lindholm gives greater weight to female agency in describing the activities of "Khan women" in organizing gatherings (1982: 134) in the village. Lindholm describes women's position in terms of "the centrality of the womb in a system that denies the existence of women as independent entities" (ibid: 159; see also 1996). Thus, the organization of Pukhtun society "on the basis of kinship" subordinates women to an essentially transitive role in the transfer of lineages and consolidation of patrimonies (Lindholm 1996: 74). Grima's ethnography of the lives of Pukhtun women offers a more substantial account of *gham* as an emotion centrally "performed" in women's self-conceptualisation and narration. However, in focusing on "poor families" (1998: 28), Grima overlooks the Bibiane; and attributes far more emphasis to *gham*, rather than noting its complementarity with *khadi*.

My account describes Bibiane's *gham-khadi* as segregated but not apolitical.¹⁹ In suggesting places to look for Middle Eastern female agency, Tapper argues that any society prohibiting women's access to a professional sphere tends to develop alternative, quasi-autonomous female networks of circulation. Gossip and gifts between women demarcate a "sub-society" serving as a "psychological outlet . . . in a situation of male domination" (Tapper 1978: 395), as women exercise both tacit and overt forms of jurisdiction over the domestic environment. Yet, in the Frontier, female visiting reflects and underpins Khanan and Badshahyan's explicitly political position-building. In a country in which its elite maintain dominance by controlling appointment to influential political positions (Khan, A. 2003: 31-32),²⁰ Bibiane's canvassing on behalf of male

¹⁸ More widely, however, forms of South Asian and Middle-Eastern women's visiting and feasting have been extensively documented (see Das 1986; Khedairi 2003; Sharma 1980: 234; Tapper, N. 1991, all are gender-specific female activities around life-cycle events in India, Iraq, and in Afghanistan. For Bedouin and Turkish Muslim women's practices of bonding through visiting and exchange, see Abu-Lughod 1986; Aswad 1978; and Delaney 1991: 14 [contrast, also, Sexton 1984; and Strathern 1990]. See Gilsenan (1990) on Arab women's visiting). Striking parallels are Shaw's account (1997) of the Punjabi reciprocity "*lena-dena* (gift-giving)" which corresponds to the Pukhtun *warkera-rakera* [give-take] gift giving; and Nancy Tapper's *khayr-u-sharr* (good-and-evil) among the Shahsevan Iranians (1978) is comparable to the Pukhto *kha-bade* (good-bad).

¹⁹ "Females . . . play a full part in the political and economic life of the Pukhtuns...an aspect of society . . . overlooked for lack of data and therefore . . . unanalysed" (Ahmed, A. S. 1980: 15).

²⁰ On the continuing hold of elite tribal families in Pakistan's national politics, see Khan, A. 2003; Weiss 1991: 2. In 1999, 126 of the 207 National Assembly seats were held by members of the Frontier Khans, the Sindhi *waderas*, Punjabi *zamindars*, and Baluchi *sardars*.

family-member MNAs and MPAs (Members of National and Provincial Assemblies) at Bibiane's ceremonies, brings them into contact with circles of a wide range of people (rich [*malدار*] and poor [*gharib*], from various familial, ethnic and multicultural backgrounds).²¹ Bibiane command a significant degree of respect on the basis of family history but at the same time they must also put much time and effort into the work of reputation-building in the household, village and *gham-khadi* network analogously with their husbands' "political" efforts.

Recognizing that Pukhtun Bibiane practices overlap with a political arena necessitates the reformulation of an idea of the public sphere from the "inside-out" (Gray and Mearns 1989). Female anthropologists have challenged the equation of a governmentally administered work-space in the "public" realm, with the home being considered a lesser, "private" domain. The division deprived domestic women and children of status, self-determination, and even complete personhood (see Colen and Sanjek 1990: 4; Strathern 1984: 31; 1990: 133; also Waterson 1990: 169).²² Both Western and non-Western anthropologists working in South Asian, and particularly Muslim contexts, have tended to apply this framework to indigenous contexts (see Deutsch 1998; Kondos 1989: 165 and 176; Papanek 1982: 28; Sharma 1980: 214 and 226; Weiss 1998: 125), despite the lack of Islamic categories that correspond to Western notions of "privacy" (Cook 2000: 80).²³

The theoretical premise of the "inside-out" approach allows social relationships to be delineated from the perspective of women observing *pardab*. In the context of her work in Papua New Guinea, Strathern (1984) calls for the "dislodg[ing]" of one's thought from a binary Western matrix of "work [inside and] outside the house" if the full complexity of affiliation between kin, affines and dependents is to be captured. This is a perspective that I seek to apply to the Pukhtun house as a place where both male and female (segregated) work, especially the work of *gham-khadi*, assumes a public aspect. At weddings and funerals the familial house is thrown open to all, with men visiting the *bujra* (men's guesthouse) and women the *kor* (house). Rather than dealing

²¹ Donnan and Werbner (1991) also note a large number of Pakistani migrants live in Euro-American and Middle Eastern cities; see Raj 1997; compare Shaw 1997, 2001; and Werbner 1992.

²² On the Greek origins of the western concept of "work", see Grint 1991: 15. On work outside the house as a salaried male occupation differentiated from women's domestic tasks, see Weber 1968: 21-22; Hoch-Smith and Spring (eds.) 1978.

²³ In a South Arabian context, Gilsenan dichotomises gendered space (1990: 17-173), as does Barth (1983: 74). Price furthermore alleges the tendentiousness of many academic appropriations of local (Indian) formulations of the "public" (2000: 28). Compare Reiter 1975. On a critique of the "private-public" dichotomy, see Abu-Lughod 1986b; Habermas 2002. Henrietta Moore suggests "even where such a distinction exists we must not assume that the Western terms...are adequate or reasonable translations of the categories other cultures perceive" (1997: 20). Within the context of Pakistan's Yasin Valley, York argues that the private and public domains are flexible and tend to overlap (1997: 209, 216).

with these spaces according to any implicit hierarchy of importance (Grima 1998: 71, 118; Tiffany 1984: 6), I refer here to the *bazaar* and other external spaces as “the non-segregated public” and the house during *gham-kehadi* as the “segregated public”.²⁴

Having introduced Bibiane’s social relationships as a form of work, I now outline the plan of the thesis. Chapter 1 introduces important contextual material relating to Pukhtun ideology (*Pukhtunwali*) and introduces the Bibiane, my field sites, and methodology in the field. Chapter 2 documents the house, as the centre of Bibiane’s social world, from the “inside-out”. It orients Bibiane’s “dual lives” as they move between Islamabad and the Frontier, and between domestic (private) and public *gham-kehadi* contexts. Chapters 3 and 4 present ethnographies of the procedures observed in Bibiane’s funerals and weddings respectively. My examination of mourning or *gham* in Chapter 3 focuses on expressions of grief as socially expected forms of behaviour which reassert prior relationships against a background of “natural” feeling. It also shows Bibiane’s funerary practices simultaneously taking new and complex forms under the pressure of purist Islamic revision. Chapter 4 extends Bibiane’s sense of self as performed during ceremonies across their lifelong efforts of planning and preparing for weddings, finding a suitable match for offspring and equipping the house. This pattern of weddings is contrasted with an internet love-marriage illustratively contracted outside of social sanction. Chapter 5 details the complexities of *gham-kehadi* by focusing on its inherent contradictions and by describing Bibiane’s anxieties in juggling different kinds of work (professional employment, childcare, housework) with the culturally imperative obligations of *gham-kehadi*. My guiding questions throughout are: how are Bibiane’s performances of specific *gham-kehadi* duties more broadly constitutive of their self-image and personhood? What motivates, and what might justify, Bibiane’s conceptualization of attendance or preparation as “work”? How are wedding and funeral ceremonies related to people’s ideas of their (enactments of) Pukhtun ethnic identity? Like visiting, funerals and marriages are grasped as ceremonies for the transmission of social and ethnic identity through public and communal efforts of building social relations. This thesis argues that an ethnographically detailed account of Bibiane’s funerary and wedding ceremonies, besides its inherent interest, can renew our understanding of the

²⁴ “We call events and occasions “public” when they are open to all, in contrast to closed or exclusive affairs” (Habermas 2002: 1), as *gham-kehadi* is understood to be. In the “all-women context” of *gham-kehadi*, Grima observes: “every social interaction is public to a degree. There is not so much an opposition between public and private as...a continuum stretching from “less public” to “more public”. The interaction between women, even if it takes place inside the house, has a very public aspect to it.” (1998: 71, 118). See also Ahmed, A. S. 1980: 243; Barth 1981b: 28, 1986: 31. In a Middle-Eastern context compare Abu-Lughod 1998b: 260; Altorki 1986; Altorki and El-Solh 1999: 44; Aswad 1978; and Tapper and Tapper who refer to the “public context of hospitality, especially in life-cycle feasts.” (1986: 74).

modes of kin and social organization and cultural continuity among Pukhtuns.

CHAPTER 1

Gham-Khadi: Framework and Fieldwork

1.1. Introduction

This thesis contributes to the anthropological literature on Pukhtun society especially insofar as it seeks to capture its dynamism. This chapter explores some of the issues raised in the introduction of *gham-khadi* by foregrounding a number of significant related material: first, it provides a taxonomic account of Pukhtun concepts of *Pukhtunwali* and *gham-khadi*, and second, socially and geographically establishes the Bibiane whom I observed practicing *gham-khadi* in northern Pakistan.

Before proceeding further, I should clarify the defining characteristics of Pukhtun Bibiane. Bibiane are distinguishable by three main factors: first, family possession and patrilineal inheritance of village lands (Barth 1986); second, birth (through patrilineal descent) or marriage into a Pukhtun family: marriage is, however, typically endogamous, with preference for first cousin marriage and virilocal residence; and third, participation in a web of *gham-khadi* networks. Wealthy Swat and Mardan families who, over the last thirty years, have bought or rented second homes in Islamabad, have retained their ancestral village-houses (*kille-korona*) as the primary sites for *gham-khadi* celebrations. Thus Bibiane's families' funerals and weddings link the village to the city, ideologically connecting city-dwellers to ancestral lands (*zmake*).

Although one might expect that Bibiane speak about their lives as unproblematic, the premise of a seamless connection between Bibiane's metropolitan domiciles and their village roots, by which Bibiane and their families periodically return to their natal lands to replenish their Pukhtun self-identification, is in fact challenged, by the numerous contradictions between "customary" ceremonial procedure and Islamic scriptural precept. These contradictions are being increasingly articulated by the female graduates of an Islamabad-based reformist religious school, Al-Huda. Al-Huda, part of a broader regional and arguably national movement of purist Islamization, attempts to apply Quranic and hadith prophetic teaching to everyday life (Ali, S. 2003; Metcalf, B. D. 1990).²⁵ Contrary to certain academic assumptions (Mumtaz and Shaheed 1987), this reform involves educated elite and middle class women. These women actively impart Islamic ways of living to family members across metropolitan-rural boundaries. The

²⁵ "The all-important, all-encompassing religious law of Islam is the codification of the practice of the Prophet, who realized in his life, more perfectly than other humans ever could, the revealed truths of the Qur'an." (Metcalf, B. D. 1984a: 1). See also Gilsenan 1990: 17.

school's lectures (*dars*, classes) provide a basis for questioning "customary" or Pukhtun life-cycle practices, authorizing some Bibiane to amend visiting patterns in conformity to the Quran. The manipulation of life-cycle commemorations by elite and middle-class women as a vehicle of change, Islamization and a particular mode of modernity furthermore becomes significant in the light of recent socio-political Islamic movements in post-Taliban Frontier Province (Khan, B. 1999).

1.2. *Pukhtunwali*: Pukhtun Identity and *Gham-Khadi*

Gham-khadi does not only lie at the heart of making and sustaining social relationships, but also symbolically resumes Bibiane's representations of their identity (Castells 1999: 6). Many of the women I spoke to invoked an ideal of "Pukhto" or *Pukhtunwali* for the establishment of norms and precedents of "proper behaviour". The Pukhtun as a distinct ethnolinguistic group organize their lives around, what has been described as a defined "code" called *Pukhtunwali* (Ahmed, A. S. 1980; Barth 1985: 104; Caroe 1992: 24; Easwaran 1999: 55). One scholar has observed that *Pukhtunwali* "is an emic concept which includes everything which a Pashtun should or should not do. It is thus a means of ethnic identification and differentiation in relation to other ethnic groups" (Steul; in Grima 1998: 3). Furthermore, *Pukhtunwali* may acquire a normative force as a set of values internalized by individuals (men and women) as an ideal (or "habitus", in Bourdieu's terms [1991: 18]) which they must embody to secure full symbolic legitimacy as ethnic Pukhtuns.

Explaining their behaviour, Bibiane refer to Pukhto (or *Pukhtunwali*) as their "culture" so frequently, especially during *gham-khadi*, that one could be forgiven for seeing ceremonies merely as the instantiation of preexisting codes or "customs" (Lindholm, Charles 1981: 465). The problem for anthropology is to avoid essentialising Pukhto, while taking account of people's constant recourse to it in describing themselves (Thomas refers to "reifications positively upheld" [1992: 213] in his discussion of Samoans' conceptualization of their "tradition"; but see Banerjee 2000 for a statement of Pukhto's dynamism). Werbner argues, "...cultures may be grasped as porous, constantly changing and borrowing, while nevertheless being able to retain at any particular historical moment the capacity to shock through deliberate conflations and subversions of sanctified orderings." (2001: 134). While Pukhtuns insist on a Muslim identity, Pukhto is considered separate from adherence to Islam. Prohibitions of divorce and female inheritance in *Pukhtunwali* are increasingly seen as non-Islamic. My ethnography in this work focuses upon the contradictions between the religious

(Islamic) and customary (Pukhto) forms of mourning practice, such as a forty day period of funerary commemoration. Despite Al-Huda graduates' and others' pointing-out of inconsistencies, in practice many Bibiane defer to the "customary" forms.

With reference to Pakistan's Frontier Province, anthropologists (working in the 1950s and 80s) have defined *Pukhtunwali* on a basically schematic model, which revolves around the key concept of honour (*ezat*).²⁶ Accordingly, the central constitutive features of *Pukhtunwali* are: an intense sense of egalitarianism expressed through hospitality (*melmastia*), agnatic rivalry (*tarburwali*), revenge (*badal*), honour (*nang*), trust (*jabba*), respect for elders (*mashartia*), assembly of male elders (*jirga*), male honour (*gherat*), the men's house (*hujra*), and above all manliness (*saritob*).²⁷ Yet male anthropologists' access primarily to segregated male areas, in a stringent *purdah* society, has resulted in a largely androcentric picture of *Pukhtunwali* (Nelson 1974: 553).²⁸ In contrast to the male view of *Pukhtunwali*, more recent work, such as Grima's (1998), recognises the necessity of overcoming "women's analytical 'invisibility'" (Moore, H. 1997: 3) in conceptualizations of *Pukhtunwali*.²⁹ Yet Grima dichotomises *gham-khadi* into a classificatory scheme of "Men's Paxto [Pukhto]" (the gun, the turban, honour (*gherat*), manliness (*saritob*), feuds or blood revenge (*badal*), hospitality; and granting exile) on the one hand, and "Women's Paxto" (honour (*gherat*), shame, modesty, tears, upping the ante, *gham-xadi* (*gham-khadi*), tapos and gifts) on the other (1998: 73). For Grima, men's Pukhto remains dominated by those features decribed by male anthropologists, while she associates *gham-khadi* primarily with women.

In my analysis of Bibiane, by contrast, contemporary local understandings of *Pukhtunwali* apply broadly but unevenly to both sexes. *Gham-khadi* is incumbent on both men and women, as is hospitality and respect for elders (*mashartia*) within the men's

²⁶ "Honour" argued Pitt-Rivers "is the value of a person in his[/her] own eyes, but also in the eyes of his society. It is his estimation of his own worth, his *claim* to pride, but it is also the acknowledgement of that claim, his excellence recognised by society, his[/her] *right* to pride." (1977: 1). The pursuit and theme of honour lies at the heart of Pukhtun literature and poetry. Khushal Khan Khattak (1613-89), a celebrated Pukhto poet, wrote in a famous couplet: "I despise the man who does not guide his life by honour. The very word 'honour' drives me mad" (Ahmed, A. S. 1980: 91-92; compare Bourdieu 1966).

²⁷ See Ahmed, A. S. 1980: 90; Barth 1986 (1959): 83, 106; Lindholm 1982: 211, 1995: 69, 1996; Singer 1982. On the various accounts of the Pukhtun's "manly warrior" image, see Bayly, S. 2001: 141; Easwaran 1999: 64; Eliot 1963; Elliot 1968: 69; Titus 1998. On *Pukhtunwali* "a tough code for tough men", see Dupree 1978: 328; Keiser 1991 notes that Conan the Barbarian, the American hero, is directly inspired by the Yusufzai Pukhtuns (1991: 9, 14). On the image of the manly Pukhtun homosexual, see Banerjee 2000: 38, 40. Compare Sinha 1995.

²⁸ Contrastively, for the prioritization of a colonialist perspective on the colonized in conventional academic accounts, see Asad 1983: 15. Compare Ahmed, A. S. 1987: 58; Beattie 1985: 4; Boon 1982: 26; Mead 1950.

²⁹ Contrast Ardener, E. 1975; Beck and Keddle 1978; Collier and Rosaldo 1981; Gray and Mearns 1989; Kabbani 1986; La Fontaine 1992; Leonardo 1991; Lewis, R. 1996; Moore, H. L. 1997, 1999; Okely 1996; Tiffany 1984; Slocum 1975 suggests anthropology's emphasis on the "macro" tends to exclude women's accounts of ceremony. On alternative approaches to Pakistani anthropology, see Khan, S. A. 1996; more widely, Broch-Due and Rudie 1993: 8.

(*hujra*) and women's spaces of the house (*kor*). Equally, "*gherat*" denotes modesty, bashfulness, courage, and honour on the one hand, and jealousy and enmity on the other (Raverty 1982: 745). Both women and men talk about their lives and *gham-khadi* practices in reference to *gherat* and honour. In one Pukhtun home, a husband and wife showed me the following formula, which analysed the concept "Pukhtun" into its various sub-elements:

Table 2 - "Pukhtun"

پختون Pukhtun					
ن	و	ت	خ	پ	←
n	u	th	kh	Pu	
(<i>nang</i>) نگ	(<i>wafa</i>) وفا	(<i>thura</i>) تورا	(<i>khagara</i>) خيگره	(<i>puth</i>) پت	←
honour	loyalty	sword: bravery	goodness	<i>gherat</i>	

The gendering of these terms is complex. While some terms are martial, both Khanan and Bibiane recalled childhood images of the women of their households embodying qualities of Pukhto.³⁰ Mothers, aunts, maids and *daigane* (wet-nurses) were idealized as honourable (*ezatmande*), loyal (*wafadare*), brave (*narre*), patient (*sabarnake*), prayerful (*moonzgozare*), modest, strong (*zreware*), and *purdah*-observing (*sattarnake*).³¹ For Bibiane, the relation between different components of Pukhto was arguably less significant than the implication of Pukhto itself in a host of subtly differentiated cognates, respectively *kale-wlas* (village-gathering); *kha-bade* (good-bad); *kor-kille* (house-village); *tlal-ratlal* and *zeest-rozgar*.³² For Bibiane, distinctively ethnic concepts are related to moral ideas, so that a critical measure of honour (*ezat*) for women is their diligence in discharging *gham-khadi* obligations. The interrelation of this evaluative framework for women with the

³⁰ Elderly Bibiane and Khanan stating how mothers influenced childhood behaviour told me, as in Badshah Sahib's 90 year-old daughter's case that she saw her father about four times in her lifetime; and a male elder living in Virginia (USA), General Jilani (born: 1913, died: 2004) said that a Pukhtun's habits and way of life (*Pukhtunwali*) were ingrained by mothers' teachings.

³¹ Contrast Matthews 1996. On the importance of *purdah* as a practice of *Pukhtunwali* for women, see Singer 1982: 74; Rifaqat analyses the Pukhtun veil or *sazār* as a symbol of the honour (*ezat*) of Pukhtun women so that observance confers status and gender identity (*be sadara kharā kha kharā na ee*) (1998: 185-183). On *purdah*-observing Pukhtun female rulers in nineteenth century Bhopal, see Khan, S. M. 2000.

³² The collective aspect of *gham-khadi* is continuous with similar concepts in Muslim societies. Ibn Khaldun, the 15th century Muslim "sociologist of history", analysed society through the concept of "*asabiyah*" (group feeling). *Asabiyah*, like *gham-khadi*, binds groups who are not necessarily related by blood but connected by "long and close contact as members of a group" and through a common language, culture, family, clan, tribe, or kingdom affiliations. Muslims have reverted to the concept of *asabiyah*, and its social life-cycles, in expressing concerns over the breakdown of traditions in modernity. On Khaldun, see Ahmed, A. S. 1993: 62; Gellner 1981: 16-35; Ibn Khaldun 1986a, 1986b, 1986c, 1989.

performance of religiously contentious rites ensures the precarious nature of any innovations which Bibiane may wish to introduce into *gham-kehadi* practices.

With migration to Islamabad, a wide array of Pukhtuns, men and women, rich (*bakhtawar*) and poor (*gharib*), told me that Pukhto has “changed” (“*badalla shawe da*”). A 38-year-old married Bibi living in Islamabad, told me in English, “Modern elements come into it.”³³ Cable television and motorized transport have reduced the remoteness of “tribal” areas. Significantly, many Bibiane understand *Pukhtunwali* in the present context as a “female-oriented” framework, that allows *okhyar* (clever) and *chalak* (adept) women to negotiate the governance of their husbands and households (Mandelbaum 1993: 39).³⁴ The effort of driving three-to-six hours to a Frontier funeral means that *gham-kehadi* has taken a greater prominence among markers of ethnic identity; “*gham-kehadi kawal*”³⁵ (literally, practicing *gham-kehadi*) implicitly means the embodiment of Pukhto for Bibiane and their families who admit feeling estranged from their roots. Spongmai, a Bibi in her mid-thirties with three young daughters, asserted in English:

“I would always want my daughters to do *gham-kehadi* because it ‘is’ *Pukhtunwali*, it’s part of our family, it’s part of our heritage, and it’s part of who we are, which we can’t cut ourselves off from.”

Tiffany writes, “what women are is paradigmatically linked to what they do” (1984: 6), yet, what women “do” also reflects who they “are”, and the conceptualizations of themselves they embody and seek to advance. This is the focus of the thesis—the enactment of the “work” of *gham-kehadi* as it becomes a self-conscious expression of the personhood of Bibiane in northern Pakistan.

1.3. Village Organisation

The immediate context of all Bibiane’s *gham-kehadi* is the natal or virilocal site. Pukhtuns more generally and Bibiane more specifically have conventionally lived in settlements, towns and villages, with village organisation being shaped by two main lines of common mythical beliefs.³⁶ In the first, religious ascendancy as embodied in virtues

³³ The term “modern” is a frequently used word in local English to indicate novelty and also westernization.

³⁴ Women’s real power here illustrates the “double jeopardy” of men in patriarchal societies (Abu-Lughod 1986; Altorki 1986; Tapper, N. 1991), where men are both frequently dominated, and depend for their honour on the continence of supposed subordinate female kin (Barth 1970: 122; Grima 1998: 164; compare Giovannini 1981: 409).

³⁵ The verb “*kawal*” is translated as “to do, to act, to perform... to practice” (Raverty 1982: 821).

³⁶ On the village in an Indian context, see Dumont 1980; and Madan 2002.

of religious learning, piety and devotion confer a variety of social statuses on persons. These statuses are inheritable, and it is typical for a diverse range of decent groups to claim high rank and authority as descendants of the Prophet and saints. Both saints and their descendants are recognised by the occupants of the village as holding an important status in the Pukhtun social order. Holy men can come to hold large amounts of lands donated to them permanently either as acts of devotion or in return for political mediation; they may even acquire the rank of independent political rulers. The second belief that affects village organisation relates to the status of landlords and land tenure. Driven out of the Kabul valley from Afghanistan, the Yusufzai tribe conquered Peshawar (the present provincial capital of the NWFP), and eventually came to dominate Swat and Mardan between A.D. 1500 and 1600. Descendant Yusufzai claimed ownership of almost all lands, but could not organise an equal division of land amongst themselves. An "important and pious" man, Shaikh Malli (in c.1530), was then called to implement an equitable system whatever the uneven quality of the land, dividing the region between a number of sub-tribes (or major segments of the tribes) according to a rotatory system known as *wesh*. This meant that no one lineage segment possessed a permanent right of ownership to land; instead, they held shares in the landed assets of the sub-tribe. This egalitarian system worked alongside another hierarchical set-up. While the periodical re-allotment over long distances (e.g. 30 miles) meant mass migration for the landlords, most of the non-Yusufzai population remained sedentary. The land tenure system consequently came to emphasise the division between the powerful Yusufzai and their tenants (who served a succession of different Khanan under the premise of an egalitarian relationship in *Pukhtunwali*).

The division within the system between landlords and tenants was also underlined by the prevention of intermarriage, so that distinct social groups emerged. Pukhtun parents will ideally give their daughters in marriage to men of equal or higher, but not lesser, status. As a group, then, landlords typically marry endogamously, while also marrying women of lower status. In contrast to the big landlord (Pukhtun or Khan), who may delegate all agricultural activities to his tenant (*zamindar*), men with smaller land holdings work their own lands maintaining their independence. In addition to holy groups (Sayyid, Mian, Miangul) and landholding tribesmen (Pukhtun), at the top of the hierarchy, a diverse range of occupational groups exist in villages, such as the priest (mullah), farmer (also *zamindar*), shopkeeper (*dukandar*), goldsmith (*zargar*), tailor (*darzee*), carpenter (*tarkhan*), butcher (*qasai*), shepherd (*gujar*), musician and dancer (*dum*), and barber (*nat*). This order of social hierarchy in the village context follows the rubric

of Barth's typology, who, most importantly for this thesis, emphasised that, "[a]ll alike are directly or indirectly dependent on the landowners..." (1986: 10).

A village, comprised then of a complex composition of occupational groups, is often led by a recognized "chief", or a big landlord. The landlord, and by extension his wife, maintain a range of relationships with the families of their various fellow villagers and dependents, including the families of other landowning Khanan (these are possible opponents as lineage equals), prominent members of holy families, tenants, dependents, and servants. In the modern context, relations are maintained with local politicians and administrators and their wives. Partly formalized practices of house visiting, usually with the landlord's *kille-kor* being visited, substantially tie these families. Landlords, whose status and sustenance is derived from their title to land and not on physical labour, typically own large, solid (*pokh*) houses, divided in complex ways into the men's house (*bujra*) and family house (*kor*). Each house is built so as to accommodate large numbers of visitors (discussed in Chapter 2). Extended patrilineal families emerge among landowning households, as married sons of landlords are discouraged from engaging in any occupation not befitting their status, and property inheritance is deferred until after fathers' death. Thus in the village context, married sons and their wives (Bibiane) live virilocally as dependents and helpers in the hosting of the houses' various guests. "Allegiance to the chief is expressed by the mere act of visiting" the landlord's house, and further strengthened by the reciprocal hospitality offered by the landlord (Barth 1986: 11). The landlord's status in the village is thus enhanced by the domestic activities of the women (Bibiane and maids) of his house. Through the act of (his household's women) offering spontaneous hospitality, the landlord in the village consolidates his own and his family's reputation, while creating a complex pattern of debts and dependents, which may in turn be drawn upon in times of the landlords' own socio-political needs (such as in national elections).

Bibiane play an active role in hosting the houses' guests and organizing weddings and funerals, but their movement in the village to non-segregated public areas is typically restricted. Village *bazaars* (shops) are dominated by men; women in drastically fewer numbers walk hurriedly behind their men, or in groups under large white veils (the *sazar*) or heavy black shuttlecock *burkhas*. The strict observance of *purdah* for women is a symbol of status in both Swat and Mardan (where *purdah* is comparatively more stringent for Bibiane). In contrast to the women of the village, Bibiane of landowning families are distinguishable by their heavier veiling, avoidance of non-segregated public areas or the *bazaar*, and abstention from walking. Instead, they may be driven in cars to their destinations by male family drivers.

1.4. Field Sites:

1.4.a. The Valley of Swat

Among the Islamabad Bibiane I worked with, some belong to the verdant valley of Swat, which lies at the foot of the Hindukush Mountains 270km from Islamabad. Orderly meadows, green fields, and fruit trees flank the meandering trunk road. To the north, the Swat River (from “Sweta” meaning white or clear, a name bestowed by historians attached to Alexander the Great in 326 B.C.) flows from the crevasses of mountains reaching 18,000 feet for about eighty-six miles. Swat’s history is shaped by the region’s distinctive legacy. It has been progressively settled by the Buddhist Gandhara civilization in c.100 A.D, the Hindu Rajas, under whom Sanskrit was the language of the Swat people, and then a series of conquerors: the first Muslim Mahmud of Ghazni entered in 1001; the first Mughal Emperor Babar in 1505 (Beveridge 1987); and finally, the Yusufzai conquered Peshawar in c.1485, taking over Mardan and Swat.



Figure 4 - Swat: View from Barengal (Badshah Sahib's House)

Some of the Bibiane I worked with belong to the most prominent family in Swat as descendants of Badshah Sahib, whose family transformed itself “from asceticism to kingdom” over two generations. In resisting British rule, the Sufi shepherd and ascetic Abdul Gaffur, known as “The Akhund of Swat”, acquired a large following of devotees who gifted him (*wakf*) lands (*serai*).³⁷ Sherani observes that donors and followers

³⁷ In Islamic law, the institution of “*wakf*”, introduced and practiced at the time of the Prophet, denotes the permanent dedication, by a Muslim, of his or her property for any purpose recognised by Islamic

attribute the saint (*pir*) an almost “superhuman” status on account of “his sacred genealogy and his relationship to God” (1991: 223; compare Fazlur-Rehman 1999). In 1845, the Akhund selected Saidu as his centre, henceforth the capital and focal point of Swat politics (Ahmed, A. S. 1976: xvi); it is now known as Saidu Sharif (holy) after Saidu Baba (father of Saidu). Saidu Baba’s mosque in Saidu is a central place of pilgrimage in Swat transcending boundaries of gender and class; village men and women, beggars, Bibiane and their families pray as equals in devotion.

The Akhund’s grandson, Abdul Wadud, coercively became the first Ruler (Badshah Sahib, or “Wali”) of Swat in 1917 through fratricide; he was recognized by the British colonial authorities in 1926 (Barth 1995: 27, 42, 60; Toynbee 1961: 144). Male descendents of these families, called “Badshah” in differentiation to the landowning Khan, retain a local aura of religious prestige. The term “Khan” as an indicator of social class does not capture the full complexity of landed/saintly, ethnic and family distinctions among Pukhtuns. Mardan and upper (*bar*) Swat are dominated by the Yusufzai Khanan, while the Wali of Swat’s descendants (Miangwalān; “Mian” denotes religious affiliation) are further differentiated from the “Miangān” (pl.) and are not lineally related to the saint Saidu Baba, whose descendants are indicated by the suffix “*gwal*”. Miangulan’s less prestigious Safi Mohmand origin contrasts with the Sadozai descent of the Afghan ruling family. As the progeny of saintly and lordly ancestors, Bibiane distinguish themselves from persons of different tribes and family backgrounds while interacting with them during *gham-kehadi*.

Swati villages (as do those in Mardan) physically comprise a collection of single-storey mud houses, arranged around a central, often white mosque, which serves as the centre of the non-segregated communal life. The Wali’s descendants’ houses are dispersed among the smaller mud and brick village homes in the mountains’ foothills. Some Bibiane’s houses are built overlooking the valley so that, with “load shedding” (power cuts) at night, the gleam of other houses’ *laatain* (lanterns) can be seen as clearly as the stars from their courtyards. Male and female villagers visit Bibiane’s houses daily. While some *ghariban* may resent the rich’s dominance over their lives through wealth and influence (Asad 1972), they may also venerate them as descendants of a saint. Circumstantial connections of charity, trade and retainership tie the community to the

law as religious, pious, or charitable. *Wakf* transfers the symbolic rights of ownership, of the thing dedicated, to God. However, as the nature of God transcends any use of the property, its benefits are reverted to the welfare of people. The recognised motive, in offering *wakf*, is to secure spiritual advancement, reward (*sawal*), and social and political recognition (Asad, I. S. 2003). On the political power of nineteenth century saintly landowners in Sindh, compare Ansari 1992: 63, 101; in Punjab, Gilmartin 1984: 223-224. Contrast Ewing 1988: 2.

kille-kor of Badshahyan. Both marriage connections and the large gatherings at local *gham-khadi* bind Bibiane by reciprocal *tlal-ratlal* to several Khan households in upper Swat, Sher Palam and Jura. Swat proper (excluding Swat-Kohistan³⁸) is divided into *bar* (upper) Swat—where the Khanan of Sher Palam originate—and *koor* (lower) Swat, the natal lands of the Wali's family.

Swat borders Chitral to the north, Kohistan to the east, Malakand and then Mardan District to the south and Dir to the West, comprising a population, in 1998, of 1,257,600.³⁹ The Swat population depends on a complex subsistence economy, growing wheat, rice and maize, potatoes, tomatoes, walnuts, and apples, persimmon and pears. Swat's hottest month is June, with the maximum temperature rising up to 33°C, and its coldest, January, with the minimum temperature falling to -2°C. There are two hospitals in Saidu: medical care in Swat is basic and sometimes inadequate, with emergency cases rushed by ambulance on often fatal four-hour journeys to Peshawar (as the capital, the largest city of the NWFP). Swat has a number of government and private schools including Sangota Convent and Jahanzeb College (named after its founder, the second Wali of Swat). Many Bibiane at primary level attended Sangota Convent day school, where a few have also taught.

While I was in the field, Swat's capital Saidu Sharif was accessible by a 45 minute flight from Islamabad or a six-hour (270 km) car journey. Bibiane rarely travel by transport other than planes (returns cost Rs. 1000, or £10) or their personal cars, while their maids frequently accompany them (otherwise, the bus or "flying coach" costs them about Rs.150). More recently, the unprofitable airport has been closed down. Swat is, however, connected to Pakistan by the visits of politicians, state leaders, tourists, and Swatis who work outside the region and in foreign countries (UAE, UK, USA). Moreover, many houses have telephones, televisions, and a few houses have internet access. Swat is thus not remote from the outside world.

1.4.b. The Plains of Mardan

The Mardan District, with comparatively flat terrain, lies to the south of Swat, through the Malakand Pass. More than eleven different marriages, hence *gham-khadi* reciprocities, join the Swat families to the Mardan Khan Nawabs with whom I worked.

³⁸ The people of Kohistan – Kohistanis – are not Afghans and speak a dialect resembling Khodwari Hindko. In addition, *Gujjaran* (dairymen and agriculturalists) and *Parachkan* (businessmen) inhabit the region. The population however is predominantly that of the Yusufzai clan (Wadud 1962: 1; Wali Swat 1953).

³⁹ 1998 District Census Report of Swat: 21.

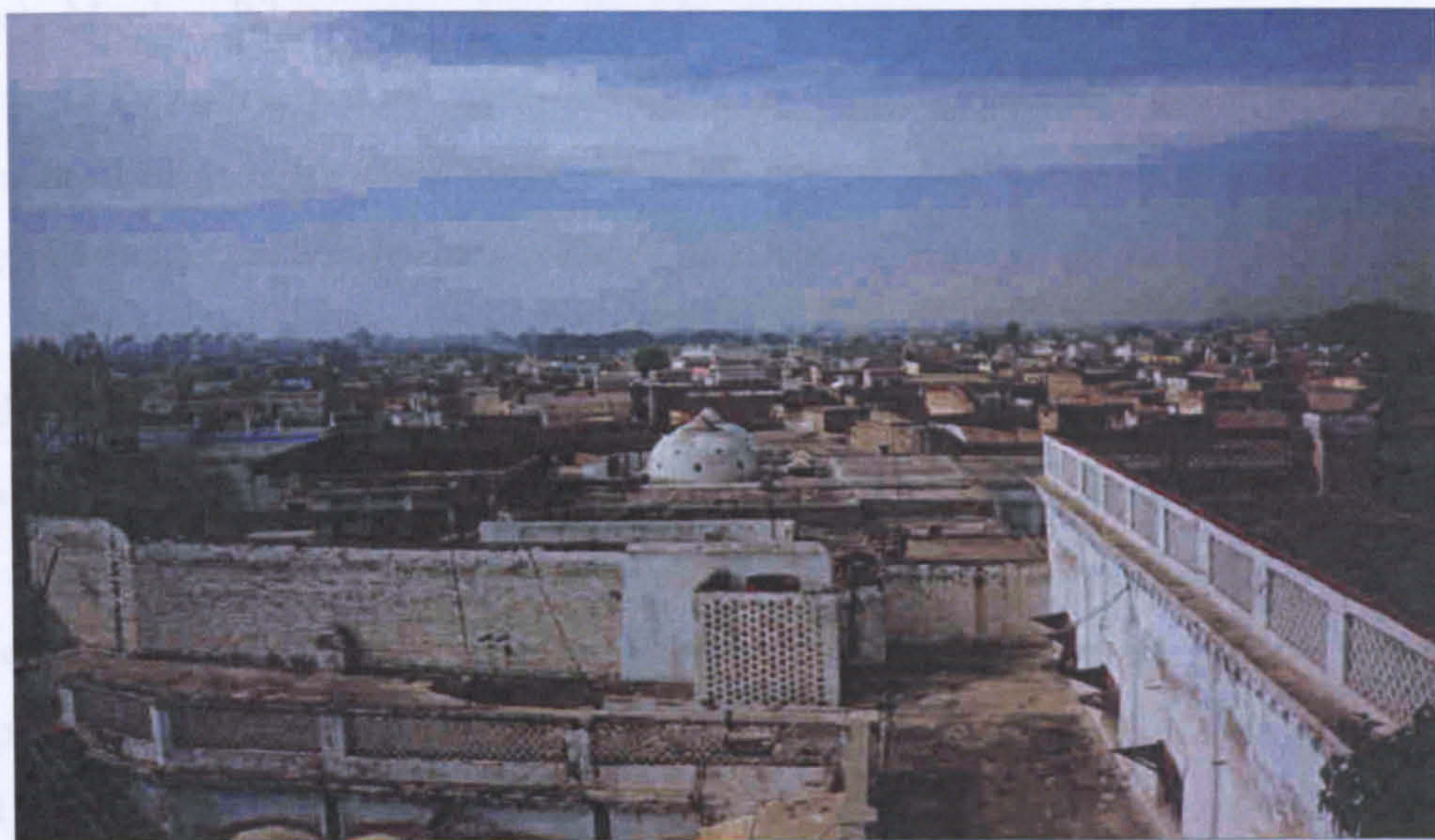


Figure 5 - Rooftop view of Hoti Mardan from the Nawab's hujra

Historically occupied by the armies of Alexander the Great, ruled during the Gandhara kingdom by Buddhist emperors (297 to 321 B.C.) and Brahminical Hindu rajahs, the ancient Buddhist remains, old British colonial railway stations and Victorian buildings of contemporary Mardan attest to its dense historical past.⁴⁰ Established separately from the Peshawar district in 1937, Mardan has housed the divisional headquarters since 1988. The Pakistan army's Punjab Regiment is stationed in Mardan and some may socialize with local Khanan. Mardan's population of over a million (1,050,992) comprises predominantly Muslim Yusufzai Pukhto-speaking client farmers and shopkeepers, who work for small landed Khanan or the big landed and politically influential Nawab Khanan. A small community of Hindu merchants and Christian sweepers work in Khan households and government schools. In terms of wealth, status and prestige the two Nawabs of Hoti and Toru are the most influential families, with members playing national political roles as Governors, Ministers, and Ambassadors. The Hotis and Torus share kinship and affinal relations, yet often distinguish their family boundaries through rivalry: Representatives of each family suspect the other of *kanjoosi* (parsimony), a quality opposite to the Pukhtun ideal, generosity and hospitality (*melmastia*).

In the strict Mardani style of *purdah* for Bibiane, male cousins and servants are avoided, shopping in the *bazaar* prohibited, and visits to schools and hospitals take place outside the district.⁴¹ The curtaining-off of the backs of the Toyota and Honda cars in

⁴⁰ In 1904 only two years after NWFP was officially named, the British sanctioned railways and roads and set up the elite Guides Cavalry in Mardan from which to govern the rest of the Frontier.

⁴¹ On veiling as a practice among upper-class Muslim women, see Ahmed, L. 1992: 5; Brijbhushan 1980. Veiling is relatively loose among women in Frontier villages (Toormang, Dir) who leave their homes to

which Mardan Bibiane travel to *gham-khadi* portrays a notable adaptation of *pardah* strictures to contemporary circumstances.⁴² Bibiane's expected location in the *kor* sets up relays of maids for cloth and toiletries shopping, and summoning family doctors in case of emergency, besides longer filiations for schooling and *thal-ratlal/gham-khadi*.

The temperature in Mardan in summer rises to a scorching 42°C in June-July, while the winter months of December and January are very cold. Both the villagers' small mud houses and the Khanan and Bibiane's large *pokh* (brick and cement) houses are ill-suited to withstand either extreme, necessitating respectively fans or wood-fires. Electric power cuts are common, and the wealthy install home generators. Topographically, Mardan falls into two areas: the plains lying in the south-western areas, and the north-eastern hills. Mardan is reputed to be one of the most fertile agricultural areas in the Frontier, growing sugar cane, tobacco and fruits (oranges, peaches, apricots, pears, apples, plums, persimmons, lychees and lemons). *Ber*, acacia, jand and mesquite trees grow in the fields. The region's Khan proprietors have sold many of the first-stage food processing industry (sugar mills) they owned more than a decade ago; others engage in politics, a few in service, and even in opium and commodity goods smuggling. Apart from agricultural and horticultural interests, the Khanan of Mardan generally own and keep livestock, poultry and guard dogs; some Khanan are said to have previously kept horses and lions in their *hujre* (men's houses). Despite the reputed munificence of Khans' hospitality, there are no hotels in Mardan (which is 180km away from Islamabad). One Khan told me, "Mardan has the population of a city, but not the facilities of a city."

1.4.c. Islamabad: "15 minutes away from [the *real*] Pakistan"

Swat and Mardan's lack of facilities makes Islamabad attractive to its Bibiane and their families on account of its range of "English-medium" schools and colleges, relatively good healthcare, shopping amenities, and a higher standard of living. Overlooked by the range of the Marghalla Mountains (meaning "string of pearls"), Islamabad has carefully planned roads, with relatively few traffic jams, slums and crowds

bring wood from the jungle, water from the wells and fodder from the fields (Mannan 1994-96: 78); compare Shabnam 1994-96; Yasmeen 1995-97. On *pardah* as predating Islam (being practised in the first century A.D. in the Byzantine Empire), see Beck and Keddie 1978: 25. Jacobson, however, points to textual evidence that Hindus practised veiling and restriction on movement of upper class women in the Mauryan period (322-183 B.C.) (1982: 81, 86). On Hindu *pardah*, see Saiyid 1997: 8; Sharma 1980; Papanek 1982; Parry 1972: 217; and among Jains in Jaipur, see Reynell 1985: 72-3, 114-9.

⁴² Curtained cars are perhaps adaptations of the *palki* or *doli*, which was once a common way of travelling amongst (wealthier) women in the sub-continent (Ikramullah 1998: 18). During my fieldwork, I came to think of the curtained back of cars in which I wrote my notes after conversations as a scholarly *pardah*-enclosure in the midst of an otherwise non-segregated public space.

compared to Pakistan's villages (Shah, S. Y. 1980-82). Its relative exemption from power cuts and extremes of climate puts it, popularly, "15 minutes away from [the *real*] Pakistan" (Nizami 2001). More importantly, Bibiane can access social and medical facilities without the same degree of *purdah* observance they face in the villages. Bibiane remarked that restraints applying in rural contexts hold less in the city. For instance, some Bibiane who leave their houses in curtained cars in Mardan do not wear the *sazar* (large Pukhtun veil-like cloth) in the *bazaars* of Islamabad.



Figure 6 - The Faisal Mosque, Islamabad from the Margalla Hills

Khanan and Bibiane's relocation to Islamabad is part of a wider process of urbanization. A vast array of Pakistanis from all ethnic and tribal backgrounds have moved into the city from rural areas, particularly the NWFP (see Donnan and Werbner 1991: 11, 12). Islamabad's heterogeneous cosmopolitan population engages in such activities as commerce, national and state politics and diplomacy under the dispensation of a technically independent capital authority (Capital Development Authority, CDA). The city's population has grown from 204,000 in 1981 to 621,000 in 2000.⁴³ Ethnically, Islamabad's range of Muslim peoples—Baluchis, Kashmiris, Pukhtuns, Punjabis, and Sindhis—sit alongside a small community of Christian Punjabis, whose women work in homes as hourly domestic cleaners or "waxing women" (beauticians) for a large number of Bibiane. There are also communities of Afghan and Iranian refugees, and a community of multinational diplomats (Khan, M. S. 1979-81). Almost all denizens of

⁴³ Pakistan's population, according to the Economic Survey (2000-2001), was 140.5 million and its growth rate 2.1 percent a year (Wasti and Osmani [n.d.]), while the rural population has declined from 71.7 percent in 1981 to 67.5 percent in 1998, which according to the survey "means that every third person now lives in the city or town." *The News* 2001.

the “city” have retained local family homes, so that during the two *Eids*, Islamabad empties like a “ghost city”.

In contrast to Rawal Pindi (locally called “Pindi”), about 15 miles from Islamabad and one of the oldest cities in Pakistan, Islamabad was named and founded by President Ayub Khan only recently in 1960. It attracted its first settlers in 1963; older Khanan and Bibiane in their seventies told me that they regarded Islamabad as a “*shaar*” (uninhabited valueless land) in the 60s and 70s. Houses there were a much less attractive investment than in Islamabad’s more populous twin-city, Pindi (the site of the Islamabad International Airport and General Army HQ). Today Islamabad property is much more expensive than in Frontier villages, and many Bibiane and their families cannot afford houses of the same size as in the *kille*.⁴⁴ With no concept of mortgages, some Bibiane live in rented houses; others have sold substantial amounts of inherited land in their villages to buy small flats in the city. This, as illustrated in Chapter 2, has serious implications for concepts of status, tenancy and dependence for Khanan and Bibiane. Some Swati Bibiane sold their gold wedding jewellery to purchase a place near their children’s boarding schools in the hill station Murree, an hour’s drive from Islamabad.

City houses are relatively modern, fitted with air conditioning and gas heating units to cope with the average 34.2°C heat in May-August and the winter chill of 2°C in February. In the intense summer heat, few people (among those I studied) leave the precincts of their home, families watch television indoors (of 58 households I observed in Islamabad, all Pukhtun houses owned two television sets, while 10 houses contained three, in private bedrooms for the children and maids). In addition, an increasing number of Bibiane own computers; some young and middle-aged Bibiane with sole unsupervised access reported how they acquired information from the internet or “chatted” on designated sites. Furthermore, Islamabad’s leisure industry, particularly its international restaurants and Marriott Hotel, allow Bibiane’s families to host weddings and offer hospitality (*melmastia*) in a context of globalised consumerism. Pukhtun Khanan, Badshahyan, and Bibiane live as a social community in Islamabad and Pindi, and engage in increasing interactions with Punjabi, Sindhi and Baluchi friends and neighbours. Many of the characteristic *tlal-ratlal* practices in the city also intensify the social bonds between kin groupings whose natal lands are distant from each other. It is typical to do *gham-khadi* with all of one’s *tlal-ratlal* connections. City life paradoxically

⁴⁴ In 2000 a Mardan Khan sold 2 *grebs* of inherited land in Mardan for 4 lakh Rupees to his shopkeeper’s son (4 *greb* is estimated as 1 English measurement of an acre). In Islamabad, the same Khan bought a property equal to half that size – 1 *greb* for 100 lakhs (i.e. one Pakistani *crore*).

releases Bibiane from some Pukhto constraints. At the same time, however, anxiety increases as other behavioural expectations increase.

The relative permissiveness regulating the wearing of the *sazār* serves as an example. Some Bibiane choose to forego the garment as they walk with cousins and friends in the Margalla Hills, take picnics on the Rawal Dam, or visit the *markaz* (markets), while others adhere strictly to veiling. An increasing number of Bibiane now participate in clubs, committees, and women's organizations like the International Foreign Women's Association (IFWA) and the All Pakistan Women's Association (APWA). These associations possibly represent an embryonic form of female political organisation and activity in a Muslim country, raising funds through *meena-bazaars* for female education, development, income generation, and rights (Alavi 1991; Mumtaz and Shaheed 1987: 52-54). Bibiane also take courses ranging from cooking to Islamic *dars*.

A particularly significant contribution to the contemporary lives of Bibiane in northern Pakistan stems from the increasing enrolment of many in the "Al-Huda International Institute of Islamic Education for Women" of Islamabad. Dr. Farhat Hashmi, the founder of Al-Huda, from Sargodha, Punjab, took her PhD in Islamic studies at Glasgow University before opening Islamabad's Al-Huda Institute in 1994. Al-Huda operates two main centres in Pakistan, one in Islamabad and another more recently opened in Karachi (Ali, S. 2003; Matri 2003); it advertises itself as an apolitical, non-sectarian, non-governmental organization "actively involved in the promotion of Islamic education and the service of mankind" or *dawa*.⁴⁵ The school claims to offer a unique range of courses on the word-to-word translation of the Quran juxtaposed with the hadith (sayings of the Prophet) in Urdu and English. In the Fahm-al-Quran course, one *para* (chapter) of the Quran is daily expounded, juxtaposed with relevant hadith. A website announces lectures and features articles about the organisation, and on prayers (*dua*) and Islamic practice in weddings and deaths. Dr. Hashmi appears on television and radio and her lectures are sold on audiocassettes. While the school awards diplomas to graduates of other universities after a year's study, its most popular classes are the open two-hour daily *dars* on the Quran during Ramadan, which have been attended by most Islamabad Bibiane. One Al-Huda graduate estimated that 5% of the approximately 1000 Al-Huda students in Islamabad at any one time are Pukhtuns. The reach of Al-Huda spans a broad range of ages, classes, ethnicities and nationalities—Dr. Idrees Zubair, the husband of Dr. Hashmi, offers separate courses for men (however, I know of only a

⁴⁵ Al-Huda's social welfare department provides monthly stipends to widows and orphans, medicines, food and clothes to the needy and wedding items to poor girls, and sponsors students in schools and universities.

few Khanan who have attended these courses compared to Bibiane's attendance to female sections). Several Bibiane enrol their children in programmes for ages two to twelve, introducing prayers and tales of the Prophets. Al-Huda also offers correspondence courses to women and men; and former Al-Huda students outside Pakistan—in USA, Canada, Australia, and UAE – are also said to be taking an active part in the proselytisation of a down-to-earth, textually responsible Islam.

1.5. The People: Bibiane

My fieldwork brought me into close contact with 132 Bibiane of various ages: young (20-35) middle aged (35-50) and older women (50+) from Swat, Mardan, and Islamabad, and, by extension, a social spread of 126 others (Khanan and Badshahyan, children, village-men and women, wet-nurses and servants). Although an ethnography of Bibiane suggests that they form an exclusive elite group, the fact that they belong to larger Pukhtun society through genealogical, social and political connections bestows on them some measure of social representativeness. While most Bibiane are Pukhtun by patrilineal descent, a few acceded, in Barth's words, to "membership" by marriage. The degrees of acceptance given to in-marrying Punjabis, Karachites, and even foreigners, varies greatly, and largely depends on women's own initiatives and efforts to adopt Pukhtun *gham-khadi* practices. Bibiane may even welcome wives of non-Pukhtun ethnicities if the "outsiders" (*pradee*) present no threat to the division of family properties or patrimonies, unlike "insiders" or relatives (*khpal*) (see Lindholm, Charles 1982: 159).

Bibiane are socially identified by their membership in a particular family. Extended kin groupings in households may consist of between 12 to 25 households under one ancestrally-derived name — the Hoti family, the Toru family, the Wali of Swat's family and so on. The size of each household varies between one and four generations; households can have from one to ten children, servants, and sometimes co-wives (*ban*)—though few Khanan under fifty have married twice. While no figures exist, a rough estimate allots some 3% of the total Pakistani Pukhtun population to elite families. In the course of my fieldwork, I spoke to members of some hundred households in total which comprised four main extended families; leadership positions in Pakistan were, at one point, drawn from a limited array of elite families, famously the "Twenty-two" (Weiss 1991: 2, 11).⁴⁶

⁴⁶ At the time of President Ayub Khan (1958-69) 66% of Pakistan's industrial capital was in the hands of the 22 families (Mumtaz and Shaheed 1987: 11).

1.5.a. Genealogy and Historical Background

Bibiane's complex and historically dense conceptions of local heritage represent a critical resource for their ethnic and familial identity. Claiming "foreign ancestry", Bibiane and Khan families trace their collective descent from Adam to the Prophet Abraham through the grandson of King Saul, Afghana, whose 6th century B.C. descendents fled Babylonian captivity to settle in present day Afghanistan (Ahmad, I. 1978; Cole 1984: 169; Spain 1995: 15). Afghana (from whom the name Afghan is derived) had a son called Qais bin Rashid. Qais, the putative ancestor of Pukhtuns, legendarily left Ghor in Afghanistan for Arabia in the 7th century to be converted by the Prophet himself, who was said to be so pleased with Qais and his group that he conferred on them the title "Malik" (Arabic: king). The saying that "every Pukhtun is a Malik" underlies societal attitudes to hierarchy and titles. Qais also married the daughter of the renowned Muslim warrior Khalid bin Walid who bore him three sons: Sarban, Bitan, Ghurghust, and a fourth, Karlanri, was said to be adopted (see Appendix 1). Tracing their descent from Qais whatever their tribe, individuals in Pukhtun society necessarily orient themselves in relation to familial and tribal entities within the larger segmentary order.⁴⁷ Most Bibiane belong to the Yusufzai tribe, which claims descent from the eponymous ancestor Yusuf another descendant of Qais.

In her book, *The Afghan Nobility and the Mughals (1526-1707)*, Joshi (1985) argues that as early as the eleventh and twelfth centuries, numerous Afghans settled in northern India in response to the invitation of Bahlol Lodhi, the ruler of Delhi, who exchanged the support of tribal leaders for land (*jagirs*) and renown. Dominant rulers of the Mughal and British empires repeated this pattern, in order to secure loyalty from the Afghan people, depending on big landowning Khanan and religious leaders to gather revenue and keep order in the Indian sub-continent. In return, the rulers awarded the rural elite lordly titles, honorary military ranks, subsidiaries, and substantial lands.⁴⁸ Rewards of land have benefited the Yusufzai who have a developed social structure based on irrigated land in Mardan and Swat. This structure further facilitated the formation of hierarchies dominated by powerful landlords.

⁴⁷ As Ernest Gellner noted: "the notion of 'segmentation' seems more useful than that of 'democracy' for laying bare the actual mechanics of the society" (Gellner, E. 1969: 28). "However this is a structural rather than an ideological democracy. It is not based on a theory on a set of principles or norms" (ibid.).

⁴⁸ On accounts of the collaboration of elite families with the British in India during the colonial period, see Ansari 1992; Barth 1985; Bayly, S. 2000; Cohn 1989: 318; 1996; Khan, A. 2003; Metcalf 1979. According to the *History of the Hoti Family* Nawab Akbar Hoti was once noted to have owned 40 Frontier villages partly as a result of his "services" to the Mughals and British.

This history of transmigration, clientage and feudalism established, in the words of Nawab Colonel Amir Khan, son of the Nawab of Hoti, Pukhtun “*quom* (ethnic origin) as *Afghan*. We won’t say our *quom* is Pakistani, because we Pukhtuns are from Afghanistan”. According to Banerjee, the British intervention (1868-1880) became the decisive formative event in the Frontier class structure. The Khan’s position was converted from one of patronage and symbolic pre-eminence, which superintended the communitarian system of land rotation (*wesh*), to an entrenched, “feudalized” dominance exercised along property demarcations drawn up by colonial administrators (2000: 31). Both admiring and fearing the warrior Pukhtuns (see Elphinstone 1815; Lindholm, Charles 1996), the British, according to Banerjee, “invented” a local ruling class to serve as their intermediaries. This ruling class received an English education befitting “a class of persons, Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinion, in morals, and in intellect” (Macauley 1935; see also Lees 1871: 5, 102). English-language literacy entered the Frontier through convents in Swat and Murree. The schools, namely: Sangota, St Dennies, Presentation, Lawrence College, Burn Hall and the Convent of Jesus and Mary (opened in 1876) has schooled hundreds of Bibiane, Badshayan and Khanan. A stroke of the administrator’s pen made the English language the *sine qua non* of status and respectability. Elite Pukhtun Muslims sought to educate their children in “elitist English schools” (Rahman 1997: 184) so as to retain social influence by staffing the emergent administrative positions of the state (Eickelman 1992: 644; Forbes 1999: 37; Kolenda 2000: 179; compare Crystal 1997: 101; contrast Todorov 1984).

1.5.b. Education

The importance of these elite schools has in no way diminished in present-day Pakistani life, with both boys and girls being sent away for English-language instruction to boarding-schools. “These few public schools [remain] the pool from which the future leaders and intelligentsia are being, and will be, drawn.” (Ahmed, A. S. 1977: 35; also 2003: 100-101). The Muslim elite sent their daughters to “English-medium” schools because proficiency in bookkeeping and hence household management became desirable qualities in wives, and because officers’ spouses needed to be minimally versed in social graces (Forbes 1999). Irish and Asian Roman Catholic nuns (“sisters”) and priests (“fathers”) who often speak fluent Urdu, run the northern Pakistan girls’ and boys’ boarding schools. Murree Convent, for example, boards approximately 200 to 250 girls, often 100 of them Pukhtun. Other girls come from various ethnolinguistic groups; more than 90% are Muslim. These *waray* (little) Bibiane follow in the footsteps of at

least four generations of Pukhtuns, taking a pattern of education culminating in a final stage comparable to the former British 'O' level. Final examinations for 15-17 year-old students are termed "Senior Cambridge" (being marked in the UK by the University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate). The schools inculcate the moral virtue of obedience in the context of a scholarly (arts and sciences) and practical ("home management", "moral education") curriculum.



Figure 7 - The Murree Convent (notice the Pukhtun mother in a sazar)

Convent boarding establishes the patterned dualities (school/home; overt/concealed; individual/collective) that characterise Bibiane lives, as well as their continual movement between sites (as shall be discussed in Chapter 2). The Anglicisation process implicit in convent-schooling is neither simple nor straightforward. On one hand, convent pupils are widely said to become comparatively more "Westernised" than other Pakistani school students: they wear tunics and western trousers in winter, and are expected to comply with the morals and manners set out by their instructors in English language and literature. The schools enforce English as the official tongue: "convent-girls" now in their forties recall being fined a few *anas* (pennies) for speaking Pukhto. Yet, in other ways, the simultaneous supervision and care of convent schooling approximates, for many Bibiane, to a "protective" Pukhtun family. Girls moreover reject any suggestion of passive acculturation to school values, stressing actions of negotiation, and even defiance. During Ramadan, the month of fasting, girls were only allowed to fast on weekends, but they secretly fasted on weekdays as well; and the day's missed prayers were performed after the sisters had

turned off the dormitory lights. These acts, at the risk of the cane, sustained cultural identity through Islam. A Bibi in her late forties remarked, possibly the convent's most enduring lesson was in cross-cultural adaptation: "The convent was a Western institution; [at] home we had an Eastern culture, so we learnt to adapt between the two."

Educational background creates differences between women. Convent-educated Bibiane speak English fluently, while older Bibiane, maids, and many village-women speak only Pukhto and often remain illiterate, though a few are self-taught in Quranic Arabic. The speech of even younger Bibiane (10-22) registers generational differences from their elders: while these girls may only speak in English; middle-aged convent Bibiane often dip in and out of English, Urdu, Farsi (Persian), and Pukhto, mixing colonial, vernacular, and more modern idioms.⁴⁹ One Bibi observed that, "at one time we were under the British: "The Raaja", but now it's also an Americanized version—MTV, McDonalds, Disney, KFC and all that world." Many western-educated Bibiane and men thus defer to their *masharan* (elders) and even village-tenants in speaking better, and more "proper" (*jukhtha*), Pukhto.

The non- or distant familial friendships formed at school endure into a Bibi's "social" existence as a wife, as her schoolmates some of whom may also be her cousins become her in-laws and form part of her *gham-khadi* network. A few representatives of other religions and ethnicities—Christian, Shia, Punjabi, Sindhi, and Baluchi—also attended Frontier weddings, as the bride's friends. Okely (1996: 151) describes school as a *rite de passage* mediating childhood and adulthood. The age to which families from different regions allow their post-menarche daughters to remain in school varies. Older Bibiane from the particularly *purdah*-observing Mardan Hoti and Toru families reported being sent to school in the 1950s and 60s at the age of five and withdrawn at eleven and twelve (Class 6/7) (compare Hussain 1979-81; Sehrai 1994-96; Sharma 1980: 226). Girls from Swat and Peshawar's Sadozai families typically completed Class 11 (aged seventeen). A broad generational split exists among the Bibiane over what some regard as the pre-emptive curtailment of their primary education. While senior Bibiane uphold the prerogatives of "custom", many middle-aged women in their forties and fifties express regret over their unfulfilled ambitions for a professional career. An increasing number of daughters of these Bibiane now pursue higher education, some studying Law (LLB) or Medicine. Others complete their B.A.s and M.A.s "privately" at home without attending mixed university classes, while most others marry.

⁴⁹ In comparison to 48% Punjabi speakers, 8% of people in Pakistan speak Pukhto.

1.5.c. Marriage

Marriage, a social obligation for both Pukhtun men (aged 19-31) and women (between 16-25), marks a particularly significant turning point in the lives of women (see Shaukat, A. for the Islamic valence of marriage as an act of *Ibadat* or devotion to God: 1997: 181). Marriage grants women social status, relatively greater spatial mobility, and social recognition within family networks. In the Frontier, being married is often thought of as preferable to girlhood, as an antagonistic marital or inter-affinal household can be no worse than some girls' natal homes. Their own *khadi* represent a threshold beyond which Bibiane may participate in the full Pukhtun complement of social events, centrally other *gham-khadi* (compare Delaney 1991: 112; Tapper, N. 1978: 393; Venkatesan 2001: 72). While unmarried *geenakai* (girls) may accompany their mothers to ceremonies, Bibiane only perform *gham-khadi* in their own right as wives. Beginning to undertake visiting, mourning and celebratory practices thus signify Bibiane's first steps as independent social actors.

This agency is necessarily exercised within a context of existing social relationships. Pukhtun marriages are endogamous and based on kinship networks. Choice of marriage for girls is commonly determined by preference for parallel and cross-cousin marriage, as among other groups of Pakistanis (Shaw 2001). These alliances aim to consolidate patrimonial lands and strengthen political and social ties. Political leadership is thus reinforced through marriage alliances. While referring to first cousins by sibling names ("sister" [*kehor*], "brother" [*ror*], rather than "cousin" which lacks a Pukhto equivalent), Bibiane say that many of their relationships are "six times" (*shpag wara*), that is, multiply connected by marriage. One elderly Bibi stated:

"Only ten to fifteen years ago, men wanted to keep their lands in the family so daughters were married to the *Mama zwe* (Mo's Bro's So) or to *de thre zwe* (Fa's Bro's So), not to *pradee* (outsiders). It didn't matter if the cousin was short, illiterate, *jaiṣ* or *najaiṣ* (appropriate or inappropriate). But now parents are clever, they do not ruin the girl's life; and girls want educated husbands with good jobs."

This comment highlights a shift towards "marrying out". Locally, contact between the family of a potential "girl" and "boy" is highly fraught with tension and often mediated by a female intermediary. Families distantly related will also belong to the same extended *gham-khadi* circle. In this way, Pukhtun families may cement political alliances through exogamy (Barth 1986; Lindholm, Charles 1982; Safdar 1997). The marriages of

President Ayub Khan's two daughters, Begum Nasim and Begum Jamila, to the Wali of Swat's sons, Aurangzeb Bacha and Amirzeb Bacha provide locally well-known examples.⁵⁰ Bibiane may marry Pukhtuns of equal or higher status (or hypergamy); hypogamy is rare, and Bibiane never marry servants or the sons of wet-nurses.⁵¹

Marriage for Bibiane remains an inter-class transaction, through which women may express their social relations of dependence and indebtedness to immediate and wider families. Pukhtuns are acutely conscious of how marriage, more than any other social act, creates relationships between distant kin. A thoughtful married Bibi, Seema, with two daughters and one son, told me:

"It is daughters that spread you, like *zele* (roots of a tree). It is their marriages into other families that create [ties of] *tlal-ratlal*, going and coming."

These ties tightly interweave Pukhtun families, although, marriages to non-Pukhtuns, once frowned upon, have become increasingly acceptable among certain families. A few, now middle-aged Bibiane married men from "outside" (*baharani khalak*), including Punjabis and Sindhis, and in religious terms, adherents of Shi'a and Qadiani sects.

Although Pukhtun families consider the birth of sons prestigious, as they inherit family titles and land, the birth of daughters is not considered socially negligible, since they maintain the social fabric of society and sustain Pukhto (Sayyed analyses the "psycho-social implications" of the lack of male offspring for Mardani women [1994-6]). Deliberations as to affiancing suppose people's *gham-khadi* network as the sphere from which marital candidates are drawn, and to which they will return as full social participants when a couple (compare Abu-Lughod 1986:11; Delaney 1991: 112). Bibiane are expected to fulfil family expectations in marrying, especially marriage to a person of their mother's choice. While in some families brides increasingly refuse marriage arrangements, family interests, rather than individual volition, determine marriage choices. The concept of a love match (discussed in Chapter 4) remains uncommon, despite the legends of old Pukhto romances (Heston and Nasir [n.d.]; Walter 1967).

⁵⁰ For an extensive exposition of political marriage alliances among the Swat elites, see Charles Lindholm (1982). Gilmartin traces cross-class or saintly-to-lordly transitions through marriage in the Punjabi case of Khwaja Allah Bakhsh, originally a Pukhtun, whose son "emerged as a wealthy landed proprietor" in allying himself to Ghulam Qadir Khan Khakwani of Multan (1984: 237).

⁵¹ The reasons here are both social and religious, with the Quran forbidding marriage to the offspring of a wet-nurse who is, in effect, a sibling (Q4:22-24).

1.5.d. Inter-Household Tension and Deference

While marriages and their celebration may connect households, the female *kor* (house) serves the immediate context of Bibiane's sociality, and of any *gham-khadi* preparation. The house therefore is the centre of social and familial life for its women (see Aswad 1978; York 1997). The main issues in Pukhtun society revolve around the rivalrous pursuit of power, status and honor among agnatic kin as represented on the tribal genealogical charter. While anthropologists have discussed the centrality of agnatic rivalry (*tarburwali*, or enmity with the father's brother's son over shared patrilineal inheritance) in the Pukhtun lineage system (Ahmed, A. S. 1980: 3; Barth 1959: 11; Lindholm, Charles 1996: 30, 74), social relationships among Muslim women tend to be described more peaceably, for example, as "an explicit women's ideal of "loving" everyone" (Barth 1983: 142). This thesis examines these concepts from a different perspective than the conventional perception of Pukhtun society, arguing that a parallel system of rivalry and competition exists among women, particularly in joint-family households. This "*indrurwali*" ("enmity between the "*indrur*", or husband's sister, and the brother's wife [*wrandar*"]; or between a mother-in-law [*khwakhe*] and daughters-in-law [*ingorane*]; or between brothers' wives [*yorane*]), conditions Bibiane's lives to a pervasive degree.⁵² Most of the married women with whom I worked (Bibiane, maids, and villagers) describe recurrent, often unsettling, levels of tension and conflict in families, which noticeably influenced *gham-khadi* gatherings. Yet familial tensions are concealed and unacknowledged beneath a level of Pukhtun hospitality (*melmastia*), kindness, and etiquette, as demanded in the enactment of *Pukhtunwali*, even to "enemies" (*nanawatee*).

Entering the marital household, a Bibi must establish positive relationships with an array of more senior women, including her husband's grandmother, great-aunts, mother, aunts, sisters and older sisters-in-law. Differences in degrees of household seniority manifest themselves most obviously through the system of respect names and honorifics given to Bibiane once they graduate to a position of family eminence (see Frazer 1993: 249). Apart from a woman's given name (Shaheen, for instance), she will take a generic respect name (e.g. Nazigul) identifying her to her affines and kin after marriage. Maids will not refer to an elder (*mashra*) Bibi by her first or second respect-name unless they themselves achieve a status of respect and long-term familiarity with her. A younger person or maid who shares the same name as an elder Bibi may be given another, in order to avoid disrespect to the elder. Bibiane may take a third, yet more

⁵² Compare Bumiller 1991: 48. Bitter Pukhtun enmities also subsist between co-wives (*bun*), and *tarburan* (male paternal first cousins); in contrast to the potentially hostile relationship with the Fa's Bro, the Mo's Bro (*Mama*) is comparably affectionate.

honourable name (e.g. Sahib Begum Bibi) which distinguishes her *mashartia* (seniority) after a further period of years. In removing the birthname of Bibiane from public knowledge, as its circulation would inappropriately breach *pardah*, the renaming process reflects a Bibi's increasing status and *ezat* (reputation or honour), and the reformation of her personhood in terms of her role in her adopted home. The effacement of origin in assimilating a Bibi may also progressively surmount the suggestion of taint in the family's alliance with a nubile woman. In addition, a complex set of fictive kinship terminology applies to all Pukhtun Bibiane, overlapping with designations for village women and maids—for example, “*loor*” (daughter) addresses someone younger; “*khor/bibi*” (sister) a contemporary, and “*thror/bibi*” (aunt) and *wrandar/bibi* (brother's wife) someone slightly older (for Pukhtun kinship terminology, see Appendix 2). This terminology is also applied to servants and helpers.

1.5.e. *Khidmatgaran* (helpers)

Besides kin and affines, a number of *khidmatgaran* (helpers) or *nawkaran* (servants: the term is used here to include maids, wet-nurses and male servants inclusively) will live in a given elite household. These helpers serve as the physical labourers in Bibiane's festivities, and as the hosts of their own. This is a topic which has as yet received little attention in ethnographic accounts.⁵³ Bibiane's households have between one and over twenty *khidmatagan* including male servants, maids, and sometimes one or more elderly wet-nurses (*dai/gane*). Bibiane address these persons as kin and consider their offspring “like family”. Not all servants stay active around the house; Swati *daigane* who weaned their charges fifty years ago stay in Bibiane's houses (*korona*), coming eventually to make demands on their grown-up Bibiane. Domestic work among *khidmatgaran* is generally gendered in the house. Men work outside on *de saru kaar* (men's work), such as shopping at the *bazaar*, gardening, driving, and even cooking (kitchens are sometimes viewed as ambiguous spaces lying both in and outside the house). Maids' *de kharo kaar* (women's domestic work) involves childcare, cleaning, cooking, and washing clothes. Importantly, trusted maids (addressed as ‘aunt’ (*thror*) or ‘sister’ (*khorai*), and less frequently as ‘girl’ (*geenay*)) may accompany Bibiane on *gham-khadi* trips.

Whether Bibiane do *gham-khadi* with their retainers and their wider relatives depends on their years of service and intimacy of the relationship. Bound by *pardah*

⁵³ Charles Lindholm points out the lack of data on Pukhtun milk mothers (1996: 46). Yet the role of the wet-nurse is not unusual in Muslim contexts, see, for example, Delaney 1991: 72 and 155; Mernissi 1988: 41; Thackston 1999: 65; see also Q2: 233, Q6: 65.

restrictions, Bibiane may give clothes and money directly to maids before the maids leave for siblings' wedding, or may send cash for funerals through intermediaries (varying between Rs.100 and Rs.10,000). Locally, maids may perform village women's *gham-khadi* on behalf of their Bibi, repeating her words and presenting her donation (see Appendix 4). Although the maid performs the "water-carrying" labour, the Bibi's work involves more critical mental effort in directing the maid's actions, especially in terms of etiquette. The subtle differentiation between less and more intellectual forms of "work" makes possible the conceptualisation of Bibiane's *gham-khadi* under that category, where a more simplistic understanding might see the work as being the maid's. On occasions of the misdelivery of goods or messages, for example, Bibiane, not maids, are thought to have failed. The social agency of the Bibi is thus embodied in her servants, and ideas of her personhood are corporate and extend to other subjects. I often heard Bibiane say: "[the maid, or wet-nurse] is my hands and feet" (*zama lasoona khpe da*). Relations between mistress and maid are even more complex than this formulation suggests, in that maids both share interests and forms of social identity with their mistresses, and have distinctively individual desires, goals and own family (kin) affiliations.

Bibiane's relationships with *daigane* (wet-nurses) are the most complex among her bonds with all household dependents. The practice, in which Badshahyan distinguish themselves socially by having one carer for each child, became less common around forty years ago; *daigane* now in their 60s remain among the most imperiously powerful female members of households. Older Bibiane and established wet-nurses selected *daigane* from thronging crowds of nursing mothers belonging to poor village families in Swat. In the case of the Wali's family, these women left their own families to suckle Badshahyan and Bibiane, who call their *daigane* "*Abay*" (mother). Many Swati Bibiane reported that their *Abaygane* (pl.) were "closer" than their biological mothers. Wet-nurses command loyalty and spur occasional inter-affinal antagonism, as ethnographic case-studies in later chapters document. Despite the constraints on travel, many Bibiane in Swat and Mardan visit the houses of their *Abaygane* for their *gham-khadi*. Likewise wet-nurses and maids seek financial and material benefits from their wealthy Bibiane.

1.5.f. Wealth and Income

Conventional anthropological accounts of Pukhtuns have paid little attention to women's property, ownership, and land tenure, often suggesting women's dependent and subordinate status to men. Many present-day Swat and Mardan Bibiane, however, have substantial wealth in their own name. Bibiane own arable lands in parcels of 20 to

30 acres in Swat; in Mardan, the richest Bibiane may hold about 100 to 200 acres of relatively cheaper territory. Prime commercial property of between 35 to 70 shops, and entire shopping “markets” (arcades) also represent assets for Bibiane, whilst a few maintain flats in Islamabad or abroad, especially in London. Some Bibiane are sole owners of many village or Islamabad properties, others are jointly owned with husbands, siblings, paternal cousins, and paternal uncles in a patrilineal set-up (in one family, the six offspring of two wives jointly inherited, after their father’s death, one of the only two bus stations [*adday*] in Swat; the sons received twice the daughters’ share). This property yields them substantial monthly incomes of Rs. 30,000 (£315; \$665) to Rs. 70,000 (£736; \$1398), compared to the mean Pakistani annual per capita wage of \$470 (Pakistan Country Statistics 1998). These figures are exclusive of their husband’s incomes, which vary greatly per year and may average 12 lakhs (£12,000); most Khan and Badshah landlords live off money they receive by selling inherited property. Other less wealthy or older Bibiane claim their brothers excluded them from shares of the family’s inheritance. While older Bibiane consider it wrong to fight for property with their own family, various middle-aged and younger Bibiane have taken their closest kin to court in land disputes. There are as many as forty landcases among the various families I worked with (compare Donner 1992; and Sung 1981). These ructions led to the breaking of *gham-khadi* reciprocities, attracting much comment.

Khanan and Bibiane nowadays express the fear that their power is waning to the detriment of a new professional or mercantile class, with the division of patrimonial lands in inheritance and illiquidity of property. Liaqat Khan, the older son of a big landlord from *bar* Swat, remarked to me: “Our status is from land: the more the land, the bigger the Khan: *loi Khan*. But we are selling our lands simply to live; our capital keeps decreasing. My grandfather had 1000 *jrebs* (500 acres) of land but now I only have 100 *jrebs* (50 acres)”. Some people advanced an understanding of *Pukhtunwali*, especially *gham-khadi*, as making constant demands on capital, without clear expectations concerning return. This worries the Khan class, given female affinity for ceremonies bound with “consumerist” patterns and impressive effects—especially clothes.

1.5.g. Social Diacritica: Dress

Dress and expected deportment, insofar as they express social relations of precedence, vary greatly between older and younger Bibiane. Older Bibiane often wear “modest” clothing, typically consisting of *partoog kameez* (baggy trouser and tunic) with sleeves below the wrists, baggy *kameezoon* (pl.) below the knees, and high necklines. This accompanies the large Pukhtun veil-like covering (the *sazār*), often white in colour

and worn over the head. Older Bibiane also wear opaque, and plain or unadorned, *partoogoonā* (pl.). Local styles differ between Swat and Mardan Bibiane: Mardan descendants' of Nawaban are said to be distinguished by their fondness for expensive clothes and jewellery in contrast to the relatively "saintly" austerity of Swati Bibiane. Moreover, older women are more "conservative" than younger. Many summer *shalwar-kameez-dopatta* (trouser-tunic-veil) sold in unstitched three-piece suits are designed in Karachi, Lahore, or Faisalabad. Often flimsier than the *sazār*, they do not suit the preferences of elderly Pukhtun Bibiane. In contrast, younger Bibiane often wear "trouser-shalwars" with *lande-tange* (short shirts and fitted) half-sleeved or sleeveless *kameezoonā*, which risk impropriety. More recently, styles of dress signify particular beliefs, as in the adoption of the headdress (*hijab*) and black cloak (*abaya*) over the *partoog-kameez* instead of the *sazār* by a few young and middle-aged Al-Huda Bibiane. Samina, a Bibi and popular Islamabad clothes-designer, remarked that her clients, who formerly ordered sleeveless *kameezoonā*, now prefer more "Islamic" styles, and order long-sleeved outfits with matching *hijabs* due to the influence of Al-Huda.

Bibiane distinguish their everyday clothes from their special occasion *gham-khadi* clothes for going and coming (*de tlo-ratlo jame*). They invest a large amount of money and time in preparing clothes for *gham-khadi* occasions. Since women of the same network repeatedly meet each other at shared gatherings, changes of large wardrobes display status and *ezat* (public reputation; Mernissi 1985: 126). Carefully chosen veils and cloths match expensive foreign brand names of shoes and bags (e.g. Bally, Russell and Bromley); some Bibiane may order fifteen to thirty pairs of *partoog-kameezoonā* from tailors for each summer and winter seasons (costing between Rs. 200 and Rs. 3000 [£2-£31] each). Women's clothes provoke competition, with a few Bibiane collecting seemingly inordinate numbers of garments.⁵⁴ Bibiane personalize garments to differentiate their taste from that of another purchaser of the same print. A number of young teenage Pukhtun girls told me that their *gham* was not having "fashionable" clothes and that their *khadi* was shopping.

1.5.h. Generational Differences

As has already been indicated, this thesis broadly identifies differences of attitude towards *gham-khadi* among three generations of women: older Bibiane, who

⁵⁴ On the *Dubai chalo* (let us go to Dubai i.e. to shop) theme in Pakistan society, see Ahmed, A. S. 1991: 257; on the symbolism of dress and cloth, see Sandborg 1993; Shneider and Weiner 1989; Veblen 1953; Weiner 1989.

insist on practices confirming their *ezat* (honour);⁵⁵ their middle-aged daughters who may view “traditional” Pukhto as having deflected them from education or careers; and, more diversely, younger Bibiane, who may regard *gham-khadi* observance as a valuable expression of cultural identity or a form to be renewed by Islam (Mandelbaum distinguishes comparable attitudes towards “tradition” among Pukhtuns in 1993; see also Eddy 1968 and, by contrast, Yin 1981). Some younger and a few middle-aged Bibiane did not exclusively identify themselves in their familial capacities and were striving to make a professional career (compare Sherif 1999). Of the middle cohort, about a dozen Bibiane teach in English-medium schools in the Frontier and in Islamabad; a few are self-employed and offer private tutoring from home, and others have opened their own work centres. Yet the prevalent tone among the middle group is of regret for missed opportunities, and of a defiant commitment to the greater opportunities of their daughters. In one case, a Bibi in her forties told me she stood up to her “conservative”, authoritative father-in-law by insisting that he allow her twenty-one-year old daughter to complete her law studies in Islamabad. Despite a family crisis and complaints from the Bibi’s husband’s brother (*lewar*) regarding the shamefulness of the non-segregated *kacharai* (magistrate’s court, a non-segregated public space), the Bibi’s father-in-law finally relented. Bibiane’s motivation for professional employment does not necessarily reflect an ideological orientation towards “Western” values. Yet the rewards of work, even if it engages the mind in an Islamic way, often prove incompatible with the demands of *gham-khadi*.

1.6. Gham-Khadi Networks

On marriage, a young Bibi acquires a greatly expanded circle of *gham-khadi* contacts, by joining her own kin to her husband’s in new and strengthened bonds of reciprocity and obligation. *Gham-khadi* networks connect different social segments to each other in multiple ways. Khanan will do *gham-khadi* in a seigneurial spirit to tenants and dependents, and more obsequiously, to more powerful Badshahyan. Friends will do *gham-khadi* with each other according to gender. Persons peripheral to some family groupings, become the linchpins of others, so that *gham-khadi* between extended families may represent dense webs of interconnection, or alternately looser lattices, held together only by the nodal observances of the festivities of a few powerful members.

⁵⁵ Some exceptional senior Bibiane—for example, Begum Nasim Aurangzeb (daughter of President Ayub Khan and wife of the heir apparent of the Wali of Swat), Begum Zari Sarfaraz, and Dr. Parveen Azam Khan—are accepted to have broken ground either through setting up social projects like orphanages, drug rehabilitation centres, or through political activism.

One Bibi remarked, “if women are best friends, then there is a bond between those two families.” In Strathern’s words, “[t]ies through women are the essence of group definition” (1984: 19), especially if as married women, they lie “in-between” the two *gham-khadi* circles of kin and affines (comparatively, among the Hagen, Strathern shows how affinity is a state of being between groups of kin (1972: 130)). Both the number and nature of people with whom Bibiane observe *gham-khadi* is highly flexible. Kin may be resident in as many as twenty to thirty different regions of the Frontier and more widely in Pakistan, as may relatives of friends, family supporters, retainers, and village women. Figure 8 below maps out across Pakistan’s various regions, one 48 year-old Bibi’s relational network with branches of comparable families to that of the Bibi’s affinal genealogy illustrated here. It shows a Bibi’s affines who are also her own kin (father’s sister’s children). Each Bibi is at the centre of a *gham-khadi* network comparable to this Bibi’s ramification of connections to various regions of Pakistan from Karachi to Quetta, and from Lahore to Saidu in Swat. The connections require visiting and being visited during *gham-khadi* by appropriate female family members. In this case, the Bibi’s *gham-khadi* connections range from her DIG (Deputy Inspector General Police) husband’s college, political and government friends to her own paternal kin in Saidu, her maternal kin in Peshawar, and to persons related by marriage to her four sisters and various cousins and aunts from other regions of Pakistan (e.g. Mardan, Quetta, Shamoza, etc.). The degree of a Bibi’s participation in a particular *gham* (funeral) or *khadi* (wedding) depends on her closeness to the bride or deceased. Bibiane maintain continuity through various interactions ranging from brief visits to onerous, preparatory engagements. The “close” relatives and household members forming the first circle of a Bibi’s *gham-khadi* network are: her mother’s kin (e.g. Mo’s Mo; Mo’s Fa; Mo’s Mo’s Si; Mo’s Mo’s Bro; Mo’s Bro; Mo’s Sis; Mo’s Bro’s Son; Mo’s Bro’s Da; Mo’s Sis’ Da’s Da; etc.)⁵⁶; her father’s kin (in a similar pattern), her cousins and their offspring; mother- and father-in-law, and their separate extended families. Bibiane also maintain a more extended network of ties with members of different unrelated families.

⁵⁶ The term “close” is an indigenous English idiom specifying those kin and affines upon whom one can rely for co-operation. Nancy Tapper describes the term “closeness” as “only indirectly related to genealogical distance” (1991: 18).

gham-khadi. *Gham-khadi* thus forms a network joining Bibiane to families all over Pakistan.

In *gham-khadi*, every married woman holds a unique position in the network of relationships. The focus of her own network of weddings and birth-visits, a woman becomes a satellite presence at other ceremonies. Participation in *gham-khadi* may be initiated by marriage, or more contingently, by invitation (as in the case of the non-Pukhtun school friends of former convent girls). Attendance at a wedding commits a guest not only to *gham-khadi* obligations but to the ongoing social form *tlal-ratlal*, which subsumes ideas of friendship, loyalty, personal duty and familial propriety. Where two people “do *gham-khadi*” with each other, and one party fails to attend a ceremony, the other may choose to terminate relations with her. The importance that *gham-khadi* plays in inter-affinal and social relations cannot be overemphasised; to be excluded from circles in retribution for wrongdoing, real or perceived slights, or previous non-performance, is to suffer, in Bourdieu’s words, a protracted and painful “social death” (1966: 217). Social relations are severed and *eqat* lost in a society where reputation and honour determine Bibiane’s social acceptability.

Gham-khadi works as the pivot on which matters of symbolic self-definition and identity, and matters of familial and political allegiance, turn. To quote Delaney, “the ties that bind are not [only] *in* the blood but in culture . . . symbolically constructed within an entire system of meanings about the world.” (1991: 14). Thus “[t]he Pukhtun say of a family with whom they have a close relationship: ‘We go to their weddings (*khadi*) and funerals (*ghem*).’” (Lindholm, Charles, 1982: 131).

1.7. Fieldwork: Participating and Performing

Grima, doing fieldwork as “an outsider in the village”, admits she found Pukhtun female society impenetrable: “it was difficult for me to break into the information networks and get women to think of me as someone to inform in the event of a crisis...I also had no obligation to go to any *gham-khadi* or *tapos*...So I usually found out about incidents after they had occurred (1998: 88; 107).” As an ethnographer working “at home”, my own experience was different but equally complex. While I came into close contact with a range of women (Bibiane, villagers, and other Pukhto-speakers) who I met for the first time during my field work, I was also bound to a few Bibiane as maternal kin and had affinal ties to other women (compare Altorki and El-Solh 1988: 52), some of whom were also my school-fellows at the Murree convent. While allowing me a great degree of access, these family relations and the *purdah* system

necessarily determined some of my field practices (unlike conventional anthropologists, I could not live in unrelated men and women's houses: see Abu-Lughod 1986: 11; 96; Ahmed, A. S. 1980; Jeffery 1979: 5; Singer 1982: 74; Wikan 1982: 51. On the inevitably experiential nature of ethnography, see Ellen 1992: 27; James, Hockey, & Dawson 1997: 6; Morris, R. C. 1995: 574; and Okely 1996: 27).

Having *gham-khadi* obligations as a participant deepened my understanding of the tensions Bibiane experience in discharging ceremonial roles, and complicated my self-understanding as an ethnographer (Mir-Hosseini 2000:10).



Figure 9 - In (white and red) summer uniform with my convent class-fellows (1988)

Furthermore, my level of access excited suspicions of impropriety as I “lifted the veil” on women's lives. Ethnography involved reverting to Pukhtun styles of decorum (in conversation with many men I had to avoid eye contact and be circumspect in asking direct questions). It also involved breaching certain decorums in inter-class relationships, such as in visiting the houses of the poor (*gharib*) in Mardan, and on one occasion bathing the corpse of a wet-nurse with several Swati village-women. While unable to divest myself of my familial identity, I had to establish a second self as an ethnographer if my notes were to capture *gham-khadi* as a practice involving interaction across, as well as within, household boundaries.

My initial aim when I first planned my Ph.D. research was an investigation of the role of global media, particularly television, in the lives of *purdah*-observing Pukhtun women. Yet the women I met expressed less interest in my painstakingly prepared questionnaires than in their constitutive effort of “going and coming” from life-cycle

events. These *tlal-ratlal* patterns obtrusively replicated themselves in my fieldwork practices: it was common to spend whole days visiting others or being visited.⁵⁷ Bibiane and their families constantly travelled: one day I would meet them in large-scale gatherings in Swat, a few days later in Peshawar, in Mardan, again in Islamabad, and then elsewhere in northern Pakistan at various *gham-khadi*. When my mother-in-law became seriously ill with cancer, her presence at my home in Islamabad brought in a daily flow of guests—Bibiane, Khanan, Badshahyan, villagers, and retainers from a range of familial and social backgrounds from Swat and Mardan both related and unrelated to me. I utilised my local connections, and status as a wife and mother (compare Abu-Lughod 1986: 17; Altorki 1986: 2; Altorki and El-Solh 1988: 12; Delaney 1991: 21, 28; La Fontaine 1992: 97; Watson 1992: 9; Youssef 1978: 86), to gain entry into women's networks, particularly during weddings and funerals. I thus observed and participated in Bibiane's houses, lives, and complex behaviours in different regions of northern Pakistan at numerous major (funerals and weddings) and minor *gham-khadi* (births, illnesses, returned-*haj* visits and birthdays).

In addition to my immersed participation, I interviewed a wide range of Bibiane and other people, 258 in all, whose accounts provided especially rich resources for my reconstruction of *gham-khadi*.⁵⁸ Interviewees were chosen to reflect gender, generational, regional and class distributions. While I have been careful not simply to defer to people's speech, interview responses proved helpful for building up more nuanced pictures of *gham-khadi*, for instance, in highlighting divergences between "accepted" and actual forms. Though some Bibiane expressed hesitation at my request for an interview and referred me to more authoritative elders, or to written codifications of Pukhto or villagers who still practised Pukhto, many ultimately expressed gladness for an opportunity to reflect aloud on their practices. Interviews, in English, Pukhto or both, were scheduled around prayer-times and conducted according to certain etiquettes, with

⁵⁷ My fieldnotes record, "for me anthropological ethnography has become a passion—my way of life" (3.35 a.m. 16th Feb. 2000), or in Scheper-Hughes's terms, a distinctively female "work of recognition" (1992: 28; compare Shostak 1982). One maid of about 60 in an elite village-household said I was "exhausting" myself "to pieces" (*zare, zare shwe*) by writing down so many people's "words and actions, both good and bad, like the *malaika* (recording angel)".

⁵⁸ The number of interviewees overlap: in total there were 258 of which 242 people were from the Frontier Province; 178 from elite Pukhtun backgrounds and 132 Bibiane. In addition, 16 interviewees were non-Pukhtuns for comparative material. Although, I interviewed 64 men (elite and non-elite), in segregated areas, I also relied on the insights of my husband who is a Pukhtun from the Mardan area. The role of supportive spouses in Frontier's segregated society has already been noted in its ethnographic accounts (e.g. Ahmed, A. S. 1980: 15; Barth 1983: 9; Lindholm, Charles 1982: Introduction: xxiii; Singer 1982: 5, 72). On problematic access in segregated societies, see Keiser 1991: 2-3; Moore, J. 1997: 245; Papanek 1982: 5.

personal names avoided (see Appendix 3).⁵⁹ Many women perceived their own voices as part of themselves and subject to *pardah*. They often became shy (*washaramedoo*) about recording and listening to playbacks. Others felt that they had to speak well, as they were going “in a book” (compare Loizos 1981: 190). Recording itself lifted a metaphoric “*pardah* of the voice” from their experiences. Respectable Bibiane, self-assured during public *gham-khadi*, cried “with an open heart” (*de zre kulawa*) when relating intimate life events (one Bibi broke down recalling her mother, in a land-dispute, disowning her in an open public court); I reciprocated this gesture of trust by expressing my own emotions through crying with them. The contacts forged during these processes are ongoing, as many Pukhtun families visit the UK (particularly London) each year; I also remain in touch with a range of Bibiane, through electronic mail (compare Tapper, R. 2001: 14).

1.8. Conclusion

This chapter has sought to introduce a number of themes through which Bibiane’s enactment of the work of *gham-khadi* may be apprehended. I attempted to analyse *gham-khadi* within a wider structure of *Pukhtunwali*; placing *gham-khadi* for both Pukhtun men and women within a local framework of Pukhtuns’ (self)-identity. It is within this frame of identity that Bibiane from Swat and Mardan organise their lives through marriage, domesticity, rivalry, wealth, clothes, and most importantly, *gham-khadi*. *Gham-khadi* ceremonies are ostentatious events in which families advertise and seek to consolidate their social status. In this way, they provide an occasion in which many of the organising, but more ordinarily submerged, dynamics and tensions of Pukhtun life become visible. Rather than representing discrete and exceptional occurrences, during which people discard their habitual social identities, ceremonies knot the relations of kinship, wealth, domesticity and self-presentation otherwise negotiated in the course of Bibiane’s everyday life. As an identity-defining practice, the terms of Bibiane’s participation in *gham-khadi* are subject to both reiteration and revision; ceremonies may likewise be occasions of grief or joy, engagement or boredom, serenity or anxiety. The dissertation’s fuller description of *gham-khadi* ceremonies in Chapter 2 adduces an account of the necessary context of weddings and funerals in the experience of Bibiane, and the central site of their work, the *kor* (house).

⁵⁹ On prayer as punctuating other activities in Indonesia, see Bowen 1989. On a diverse range of problematic fieldwork experiences in different contexts, see Abu-Lughod 1986; Altorki 1986; Barley 1986; Ellen 1992; Epstein 1967: 15; and Madan 2002.

CHAPTER 2

From the Inside-Out: Bibiane's "Dual Lives" in and beyond the House

"Mother on the plains [in Mardan] and her luggage in Swat"
(*Abay pa sama kadda a pa Swat*).⁶⁰

"When I call on you (at your place), what will you give me? And when you call on me, what will you bring me?" (*Che staso kara darsham no sa ba rake? che zamoong kara rashe no sa ba rawre*). (Pukhto Proverbs).

"When God wants to do it, it is done; when a *khaṛa* (woman/wife) wants to do it, it is also done" (*Che Khde a kai, agha keegee; che khaṛa a kai, agha keegee*). (Stated by wet-nurse Sheereena dai [aged over 70 in 2001]).

2.1. Introduction

This chapter deploys an "inside-out" approach to argue that the house as seen by Bibiane has "a communal and political significance which goes beyond what anthropologists conventionally label 'the domestic' " (Carsten 1997: 18; compare Kondos 1989: 176). The Bibiane house hosts communal gatherings and feasting during *gham-kehadi* (wedding and funeral) ceremonies; women's activities play a central role in the symbolic reproduction of intra- and inter-familial relationships, inter-class social relationships, and in a representation of ethnic identity (Pukhto). As such a site, the *kor* (house) "remains a crucial and an active source of reference" for Bibiane in all social contexts (Donnan and Werbner 1991: 140).

Bibiane go from Islamabad to their village-houses for holidays and religious festivals, including *Akhtar* (*Eid*), and "life-crisis" events; the Bibiane superimpose these holidays and festivals upon seasonal translocations from the city to summer boltholes in the hills of Murree and Abbottabad.⁶¹ Bibiane's movement to and from the *kor* entails a multidimensional interchange of practices and behaviours between regions. On the one hand, modern houses in Islamabad are adapted to meet the stricter *purdah* segregations of the Frontier; on the other, new forms of knowledge, taught at Al-Huda, suggest alternative "Pukhto" practices embodied at local sites in the exemplary actions of

⁶⁰ The proverb originally refers to the Yusufzai annual migration from Mardan to Swat (Tair and Edwards 1982: 3) but is equally apt to the translocal nature of present-day Bibiane life. Contrastively, Humphrey describes how Buryat shamans in the Russian city of Ulan-Ude link citified individuals to half-forgotten rural practices by invoking clients' ancestors (1999: 8).

⁶¹ The Pukhtun practice of relocation has been described as: "*nim-korab*": "a person having two houses and residing in each occasionally" (Raverty 1982: 1001); and "*dwa-kor*" (dual-houses; Ahmed A. S. 1980: 219). Only a decade ago entire Khan households moved servants and cattle to second homes away from the heat.

metropolitan Bibiane. Bibiane's identity, fluctuating between urban and rural sites, characterizes their *gham-khadi* attendance, introducing modifications for *gham-khadi* procedures.

2.2. The House from Inside-Out

Recent anthropological accounts of domesticity in South Asian societies counter the more traditional emphasis on "large-scale social phenomena", particularly in the political sphere.⁶² Gray and Mearns (1989), for example, argue against simply perceiving the house through an "outside-in approach" which "devalues the endogamous processes of small-scale social domains, which are constitutive of actors' experiences" (ibid: 18); Bourdieu, indeed, calls houses "universe[s] of practice and discourse in their own right" (1991: 110). Insisting upon the theoretical validity of the female perspective, anthropologists seek to reconstruct external socio-political activities as seen from the "inside". Thus, "the household remains absolutely central to bringing together the experiential and analytic interpretations of complex societies" (Gray and Mearns 1989: 31). The symbolic location of weddings and *gham* (literally and metaphorically), in the *kor* supports Kondos's assertion that the house is "the site for people's existence [*zeest*] and continuity" (1989: 176).

Public gatherings of extended families and local community members affects this continuity during *gham-khadi*. As restated by Waterson (1990: 139), Levi-Strauss identifies how "house societies" return to symbolically localized origins by enacting ceremonies that legitimate the present in relation to the past.⁶³ The efficacy of these acts of transmission depends on the participation and approval of family and local community members. In other words, the house has public and private dimensions during *gham-khadi*.⁶⁴ Wedding and funeral ceremonies, however, represent less the interruption of an otherwise secluded space, than bespeak the duality of the *kor* as the site for transactions between outside and in. Even during everyday non-*gham-khadi* occasions, Bibiane understand the house as presumptively public and invest continuous efforts to prepare it for future events (storing up cloths, cutlery; getting together trousseaux). Furthermore, the acts of "making kin" and of negotiating brides' marital assimilations portray the ongoing transactions between inside and out. Thus Pukhtun

⁶² On the house as a critical area of ethnographic study, see Carsten and Hugh-Jones 1995; Gray and Mearns 1989; Morgan 1965; Rapoport 1976; Venkatesan 2001; and Waterson 1990 among others.

⁶³ For a critique that attempts to go beyond Levi-Strauss's theory of "house societies", see Carsten and Hugh-Jones 1995, who maintain that houses have animate qualities, and that "an anthropology of the house ... considers houses and their inhabitants as part of one process of living" (ibid: 37).

⁶⁴ The term private is "far from self-evident" (Rapoport 1976: 4); here I imply a sense of certain rooms and spaces of the house as being closed to the general public and guests.

Bibiane's practices demand the reassessment of certain contentious presuppositions within anthropology, primarily those that divide the home from the extra-domestic activities of the public sphere (see Abu-Lughod 1998b; Altorki 1986; Nelson 1974; York 1997 for critiques).

This homology (home is to private what non-home is to public) immediately breaks down in the light of Pukhto practices. The Pukhto phrase "*kor kawul*" (literally, to do house) translates, "to live... associate with" (Raverty 1982: 817). A close cognate of the term, "*kalaey kawul*" (to "do village"), suggests the seamlessness of household interactions between Bibiane families' and villagers (Delaney 1991: 202). For Donnan and Werbner, festivities show how the entire local and familial community "[imagines themselves] as an expanded house" (1991: 21), designating the village-crowd (*kile-u'las*) as synonymous with *gham-khadi*. The semantic connections between forms of female participation imply a network of reciprocal visiting extending outwards from the houses of women whose families enjoy *rogba* (fixed; friendly relations); more threateningly, relations truncated due to dispute are called *wrana* (broken, ruined). In returning to the *kille-kor* for *gham-khadi*, families renew a long-standing and typically moralized relationship of co-dependence with the village. Village-houses, continuously occupied for five generations or a hundred years, reportedly tap reservoirs in people's hearts (*zre*) and thoughts (*sobh*) that go deeper than more pragmatic ties to residences in Islamabad (on the significance of village-land for Pukhtuns, see Lindholm, Charles 1982: 91; and Spain 1995: 24).⁶⁵ The following account describes different house forms (and different female domestic practices) in Islamabad and in the Frontier, deploying ideas of familial and gender relations (such as *pardah*) as analytical categories.

2.2.a. Houses and *Purdah*

Most Bibiane with whom I worked lived in Islamabad but frequently returned to visit their relatives living in Swat and Mardan. While behaviour, dress, and styles of thinking varied between locales, styles of *pardah* or *sattar* (concealing, veiling [Raverty 1982: 584]) portrayed the most obvious differences between city and village. This system of gender relations, instantiated most obviously through the veiling of Muslim women, cannot be separated from the house-structures that both cause and facilitate it (see Shalinsky 1986: 329). In Frontier contexts, Bibiane's honour (*ezat*) is kept through

⁶⁵ Ibn Khaldun (1986a, vol. 1: 176) classically adduced an idea of the 'house' in the Middle Eastern context as connoting familial prestige, extrapolating from the term an idea of social interconnectedness (*asabiyyah*) extending from kinship. In the context of Elmdon a village in North-West Essex, England, Strathern comparably suggests the close relationship, even identity, between a house and a (social or familial) unit's conception of their defining origins (1981b: 6).

close adherence to *purdah*. Pukhtuns commonly refer to women by the circumlocutory toponymic “*kor*” (house) or *kor-wala* (women of the house), a term of respect. *Purdah* represents a regulatory system which applies to both genders. Although often articulated in local idioms of shame (*sharam*), honour (*ezat*) and purity, *purdah* determines both gender and class distinctions. Anthropologists have observed that elite women in the Middle East and South Asia generally keep stringency in *purdah* as a sign of privilege and status among Muslim communities (Ahmed, L. 1992: 5; Hoodfar 1991: 105, 106; Mernissi 1985: 142; Papanek 1982: 10; Rifaqat 1998: 181). In the Frontier, Bibiane’s status is signified by exemption from social exposure. Large, well-buttressed village-houses advertise families’ social preeminence (Carsten and Hugh-Jones 1995: 2). Houses with twenty-foot high walls, open in multiple entrances and are clothed in dense foliage, providing “an architectural analogy of the veil” (Humphrey and Vitebsky 1997: 53). This structure excludes male strangers while allowing village-women and other Bibiane access to the house.

In terms of this scheme, the *kille-kor* may be conceived as the embodiment, extension and covering of the self, so that, for example, a “daughter of the house” when marrying from the ancestral home, symbolically throws off its protective veil. In death, the body is again enshrouded back into the veil’s folds.⁶⁶ Recognising the symbolic dimensions of women’s ceremonial activities within the house, the *kor* plays as central a role in constituting *Pukhtunwali* as the male *hujra* (Ahmed, A. S. 1976: 39, 42, 1980: 6; Ahmed, Q.I. 1994; Barth 1986: 52; Lindholm, Charles 1982; Singer 1982: 46-48). The layout of the *kille-kor*, continuously with the “system” of Pukhto relations, observes a segregation between female and male areas, with a *hujra* adjoining the women’s quarters. Male and female roles are generally viewed as complementary and equally but differentially important, rather than hierarchically organized (see Ardener, S.: 1981: 12). This premise of equivalence nevertheless assigns women to domesticity, exemplified by the Pukhto saying, “for a woman either the house or the grave”. Gendered distinction of spaces gives women control over their own enclosure (compare Sharma 1980: 218). Walls separate the *kor* from the men’s areas to sustain the propriety of women in the family, and to establish lines of communication along which messages pass. In daily life, male and female family members share the same space in the *kor*. During *gham-kebadi*, house-spaces become distinctively gendered between the female *kor* and the male *hujra*.

⁶⁶ Carsten and Hugh-Jones have noted that “[b]ecause both body and house constitute the most intimate everyday environment and often serve as analogies for each other, it may sometimes seem unclear which is serving as metaphor for which – house for body or body for house.” (1995: 43). Their “alternative language of the house” assumes neither the “priority of kinship or economy” in developing an analytics of domesticity in its metaphorical dimension (ibid: 2). See Csordas 1999.

Female and male spaces are both independent and interdependent, with messages relayed by servant and child intermediaries.



Figure 10 - Entrances within the house to the hujra and kor in Hoti, Mardan

In the *kille* context, Bibiane interact with close men of the household, visiting village-women, children, and maids. While Swat Bibiane observe *purdah* from unrelated men, married Mardan Bibiane observe *purdah* from all men from their first male cousins outwards (contrary to Papanek 1982: 19).⁶⁷ For excursions to the *bazaar* or hospital, they are driven (by old family male drivers) out of the vicinity of the village with other female relatives and maids to Peshawar's cloth market (*Kochi bazaar*) or Hayatabad, where household-goods smuggled into Pakistan from the tribal areas are sold. In Islamabad, Bibiane's range of interaction is wider, with their *purdah* allowing contact with merchants (contrary to Singer 1982: 74). Some leave the house without the *sazar*, others drive, and a few swim in public segregated pools. For *gham-khadi*, Bibiane change back to severer styles of dress and observance, travelling in the curtained-off backs of cars.⁶⁸ These adaptations of behaviour rehearse a set of metaphorical relationships between the conscious mind, the properly regulated body and the arrangement of house-spaces.

⁶⁷ First cousins are often potential marriage partners; a large number of middle-aged married couples in my marriage diagrams were first cousins who observed *purdah* from (i.e. avoided) each other. Carsten and Hugh-Jones note that cousin marriages are fraught with ambiguity and tension due to implications of incest, which are countered by creating a "formal category of affines" through prior avoidance (1995: 38).

⁶⁸ Comparatively, one Bibi married outside her family to a Sudhum Mardan Khan reported that only 15 years ago the women of her affinal household did not travel by day as it was considered shameful. Women bearing lanterns travelled for *gham-khadi* at night, in order to conceal their height and body shapes from men. York, by contrast, denies the existence of any "public arena" (1997: 229) at night inside houses.

2.3. Layout of the *Kille-Kor* (Village-House)

Kille-koroona, with different compounds and open courtyards, are much larger than the modern western-style detached and semi-detached houses which Bibiane buy or rent in Islamabad. Their spacious architectural layout allows various households and nuclear families from the city to live together as one extended family during *gham-khadi* (compare Singer 1982: 79). An elder mother, one or more married sons, and servants (sometimes as many as twenty-two) occupy the *kor*. Other married sons may build separate adjoining city-style houses retaining the gendered compounds and large gardens (*chamman*) of village-houses. All such households have a mistress or senior Bibi, designated by her second respect name; she will owe this position to marriage or (in the case of unmarried women) to her age and *ezat*. Joint-family structures typically assume a hierarchical form: *masbaran* (the mother/father or eldest son/s and his wife) preside over *kasharan*, the younger sons and their wives. In turn, these younger brothers and their wives may be the heads of their own independent nuclear households in Islamabad. In the family house, however, they are expected to show great levels of deference to their seniors at *gham-khadi* (and sometimes to contribute financially towards the *kor*'s upkeep [Ahmed, A. S. 1980: 294]). The house appears as a working "bio-moral unit" (Daniel 1984) which co-ordinates the efforts (*koshish*) of its members by presenting a united front to kin, dependents, and villagers in times of happiness (*khadi*, *khwashbali*) and sorrow (*gham*, *khahgaan*) (compare Marsden 2002).

My specific example of a house in Swat, "Dalbar" (represented diagrammatically below), exemplifies certain features of Bibiane's village-houses. As the house formed part of the Wali of Swat's court, its name stems from the Persian word "*darbar*" (court). Dalbar embodies many characteristic features of joint-family houses of Khanan in *bar* Swat and Mardan. Situated in the midst of poorer (*gharib*) mud and brick village houses, Dalbar stands in Saidu, some five minutes' walk away from Saidu Baba's mosque and the mausoleum of the family's saint ancestor. Villagers visit daily for the distribution of alms initiated by the Wali. The main road to Saidu Sharif passes Jahanzeb College, a hospital, and a row of small shops selling wares, videos, cassettes, and glossy posters of glamorous Bollywood film stars. In stark contrast, groups of Swati women pedestrians pass by fully covered in large head-to-toe *saxare*.

accessible via a public way and a “secret door”.⁶⁹ Several rooms, added in the entrance (*dewdai*) serve as a *dera* for male guests; from an inside-out view, this area forms the periphery of the *kor* and regulates the ingress of non-related men (Badshahyan, Khanan, servants, or villagers). It also serves as the egress and the place of veiling for Bibiane. In this exceptional case, the Bibiane may undertake a form of pilgrimage via a *kacha* (muddy) pathway to Saidu Baba repeatedly on their return to Swat. After the death of the Wali’s first wife, Dalbar has been successively inhabited by various offspring; the current occupants are his second daughter-in-law, Sahib Begum Bibi, now in her 70s.⁷⁰ The Wali’s eldest son, “Walayat Seb,” (from Wali Ahad Sahib: heir apparent) lives in the adjoining “Bangla” (derived from the English “bungalow”). Dalbar and Bangla share an interconnected internal side-door locked from both sides but permitting Bibiane, on knocking, to visit each other without a *sazar*. Children pass freely through these doors, and maids also use this route to pass on messages and meal invitations (*dodaigane*).

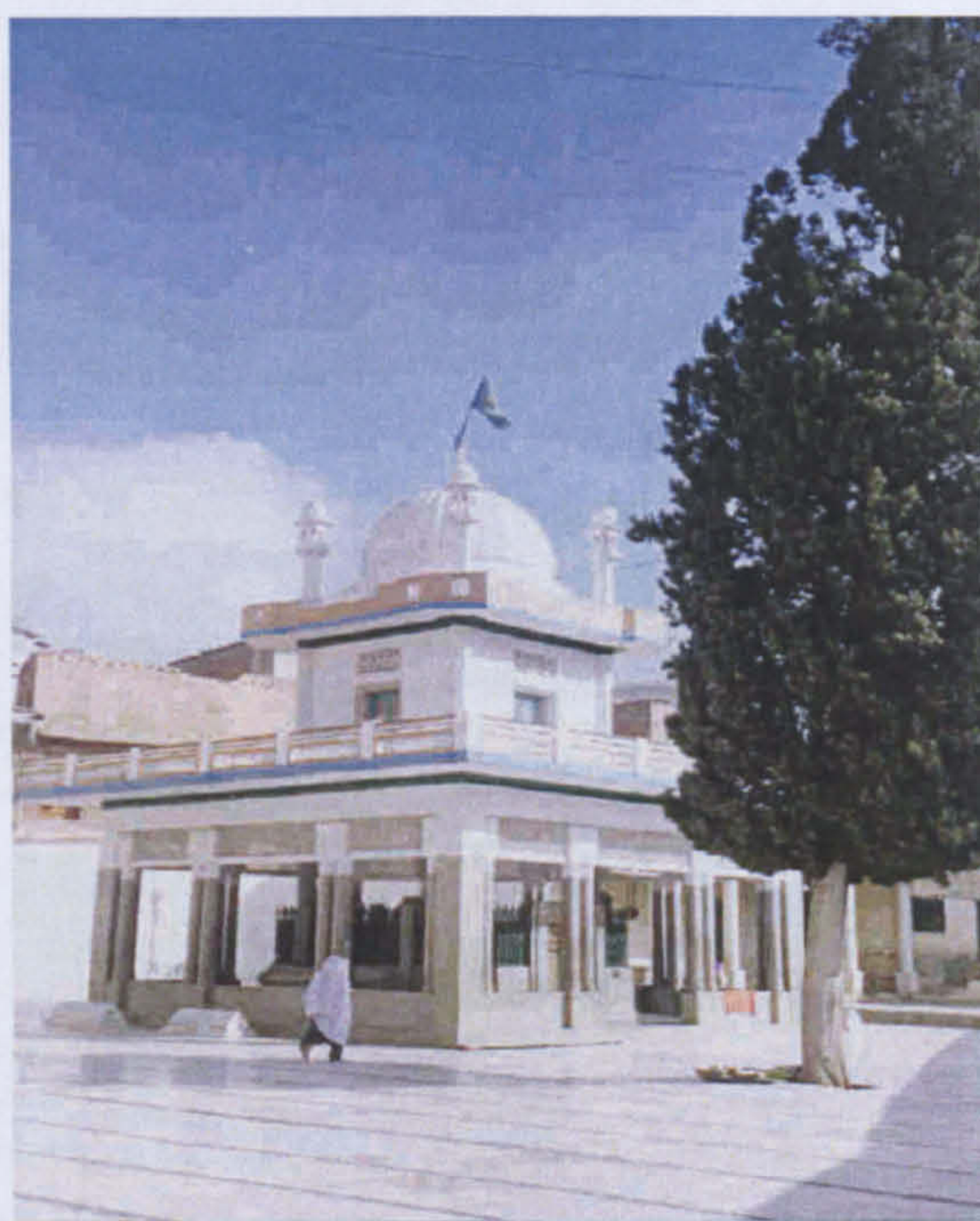


Figure 12 - Saidu Baba's grave inside his mosque

⁶⁹ On the marriage of Wali Sahib at the age of 17 in 1925, see Barth 1995: 41. As with the Hageners (Strathern 1981a: 183), in the past it was rare for Khanan and Badshahyan to spend much time with women. It is said that when the Wali's first wife, Mashra Begum Sahib, heard about her husband's second marriage—to a woman rumoured to be a dancer—she locked the door which connected the Wali to her in protest. This severed her connection to her husband.

⁷⁰ For a discussion of Sahib Begum Bibi's husband, the Wali's second son, see Barth 1995: 93, and on her father, Khan Bahadur Sahib, see Lindholm, Charles 1982.

The central courtyard in Dalbar accounts for its largest shared household space and is often the scene of hospitality and *gham-khadi*. In contrast, private rooms are allocated to Bibiane, their children, and maids according to changing family membership (compare Delaney 1991: 116). Though maids may accompany Bibiane as personal servants, they have their own private quarters, adorned by gifts including televisions, radios, or clothes-trunks and cupboards. Maids also frequent a courtyard-space near the entrance of Dalbar where they oil and comb their hair after their weekly Friday bath or perform prayers on their *janimaṣ* (prayer mat) in the warmth of the winter sun. Many also use the kitchen space as a place to cook, talk, and rest. Storerooms around the central courtyard in Dalbar and generally in *kille-koroona* (village-houses), hold large quantities of cloth, bedding, quilts, and clothing for *gham-khadi*; these items represent the household's symbolic capital. Food is served to the *kor* and the *dera* from the kitchen, the symbolic, not merely functional, hearth of domestic life (Otterbein 1977: 52). Women who live together—mother-in-law, daughters-in-law, wet-nurses, maids and even children—sit around the hearth in winter.

The *dera*, which physically adjoins the *kor* in Dalbar, consists in a row of simply appointed rooms fronted by a garden and ten foot high shrubs. Comparatively, the Khan *hujras* I visited in upper (*bar*) Swat, Mardan and Abbottabad are more lavish, with hand-woven Persian carpets, European furniture, grand monogrammed crockery, and crystal chandeliers. Barth makes a distinction between Khanan with *hujras* and saints without (1986: 52).⁷¹ A network of secret passageways, leading from mirrored cupboard doors to the *kor*, characterizes most Khan houses. These passageways allow a husband access to his family while, in the eyes of guests and male servants, resting in the *hujra*. The shame of men being seen in women's quarters while visiting their wives is nowadays much diminished. Likewise, the village-houses and *hujras* of Khanan who have moved to Islamabad have fallen into disrepair, their paint peeling, carpets mildewed, windows broken and gardens untended.⁷² The house is only renewed with the "life-giving rituals" (Carsten and Hugh-Jones 1995: 37) of *gham-khadi*, which see the arrival of hundreds of guests and children.

As nuclear families shift to the city, the typical demarcation of spaces in the *kor* becomes more flexible. Senior Khanan who have lost their political jobs with a change of government may return to spend their days in the *hujra*; landlords and their families

⁷¹ See also Ewing [1988: 10] on architecture as a sign of legitimacy and prestige; also Metcalf, T. R. 1979: 375.

⁷² Compare Bayly on the twentieth century decay of the large houses of Kara *zamindar* families, "now crumbling", with their inhabitants working in the cities of Lucknow, Hyderabad, and Allahabad (Bayly, C. A. 1980: 37).

may also go back to manage their lands or cultivate political stock. Rather than representing a schematic set of relationships between people and spaces, the house is characterised by a porousness of division between boundaries dividing different classes of agents, both literally in terms of passageways, and metaphorically in terms of shared experience. The relationship between the exterior and interior spaces of houses in Muslim societies has been described as one homologous opposition (Bourdieu, 1990: 277, in Carsten and Hugh-Jones 1995: 40 who critique this homology), yet in Pukhtun village-houses, a complex and continuous movement of goods (particularly gifts and food) occurs between the interior and exterior (Nadelson 1981). The delivery of goods, especially bulk, proceeds through a network of passageways that link public areas to the *dewdai* and kitchen areas to both male and female quarters. In other words, legitimate gender relations are performed through the orchestration of forms of difference equally based on class.

2.4. Visiting Etiquette: Bibiane Forging Bonds

The *kille-kor* is not a hermetic compound, but part of the community: a site for exchanges between Bibiane's families and various classes of visitors and villagers. On the part of the host household, offering maximum hospitality means "doing Pukhto", *Pukhto kawal* (Edwards 1996); on the part of the visitor, the mere act of visiting means maintaining a *tlal-ratlal* or *gham-khadi* relationship with the household visited (Barth 1986: 11). Landlords' offers of food ("hospitality") take forms varying according to recipients' social class. Within their villages, Khanan and Badshahyan earn the reputation of *ezat*, being *kha* (good), and *droon* (literally, heavy; respectable) among dependents through charitable donations (compare Bourdieu 1991: 8, Lupton 1996: 2; and Shaw 1997: 147). In contrast, villagers regard those who are *kanjoos* (stingy), *tang zre* (closed hearted), or fraudulent in calculating future returns (the *matlabi*, their version of the "economist-maximizers") less favourably. *Gham-khadi* is the principal occasion at which hospitality is disbursed to villagers. Landlords thus demonstrate their largesse, humility, and "commitment to [their] culture" in engaging *Pukhtunwali* forms (Edwards 1996: 67; see also Barth 1986: 11). On a micro-level, however, as Iqbal's ethnography in Abbottabad demonstrated, "women exercise control through [the] distribution of food" (1997: 71) by favouring personal connections over affinal ones. Aswad argues that visits are not merely a "domestic" function but "serve as institutionalized forms of the important 'grapevine' component of power and decision-making" (1978:480).

Hosting visits allows Bibiane to perform intimate procedures of social cohesion. It is considered more prestigious to be visited and to offer hospitality, than to play the role of visitor and guest (compare Wikan 1982: 36). Consequently, older Bibiane spend most of the day in their own homes. Visiting implies a "process of incorporation" (Carsten 1997: 16), by which the acceptance of another's hospitality initiates *gham-khadi* obligations between recipient and donor (Barth 1986: 11; Naveed-i-Rahat 1990: 60).⁷³ Conversely, representatives of families in dispute will refuse the other's food. Anthropologists have theorized this refusal of commensality in terms of an unwillingness to partake in the host's "substance" (compare Delaney 1991: 196-7; Gray and Mearns 1989: 23; Papanek 1982), and thus to submit oneself to other's authority or household affiliation (Carsten 1997: 52). Khanan and Bibiane receive a wide range of unrestricted visits from members of their wider families from cities, from local villagers, and the families of various wet-nurses and maids. Dependents will come for financial gain, advice on naming a newborn, or for consultation about marriage proposals and *gham-khadi* matters. Other visitors include female politicians and the wives of regional administrators (the Deputy Commissioner, or Assistant Commissioner).

Visits are carefully organized so as not to disrupt existing premises of reciprocal equality between parties. To take everyday female-female visits first, on arriving in the *kor's* courtyard, guests will be offered the best places on the straw-beds (*katoona*) and cushioned sofas; they will be promptly offered velvet cushions (*bojoona*). During mealtime, foods like chicken curry (*charg engwalle*), rice cooked in onions and chicken (*wreeje*, or *pulao*), spinach (*saba*, *saag*), and home-made yogurt (*mastha*) will be prepared and laid on a hand-embroidered table cloth. In offering hospitality, the host will sit attentively, arms folded and body leaning forward, towards the guests, urging them to take more tea and food: "have some more! Don't do *formality* (in English) (or *sath*)", to which the guest will reply: "it's my own house" (*zama khpal kor de*, meaning I am taking what I like, I feel at home here). Despite these formulae, the guest should be thoughtful of the host's limited resources, although the primary onus falls on the host to be munificent—gifts and money will often be given to younger visitors and villagers on their departure.

In the case of a Khan being visited by an equal, possibly a politician or prominent member of another distinguished family, the visit will again entail certain

⁷³ Grima observes: "Visiting among Pukhtuns is more than an obligation. For the host it represents a tremendous expense and hence a source of social power and prestige...The value of lavish entertainment, often exceeding one's means, lies in being able to claim that many people have eaten one's salt and consequently are indebted... no visit is made without entailing a relationship of reciprocity." (1998: 43).

protocols. Bibiane are often unaware of visitors to the *hujra* until the male family member sends a male servant to communicate with a maid. The Bibi then begins to oversee the preparation of food in the kitchen. Communication between the genders can be frustratingly or comically scrambled—sometimes Bibiane fail to realize guests have left, and at other times Khanan wait endlessly for food. The high stakes in terms of social reputation of hosting mean visits can be experienced as strained, although some older Bibiane possess an air of serenity in directing experienced servants.



Figure 13 - The *mashra* (elder) Bibi (centre) directing maids while cooking for her guests

A Bibi may either cook a number of dishes herself, or sit in the kitchen supervising her maids on a low stool (*katki*) beside the gas or coal hearth (*naghare*). In contrast, younger Bibiane, with small children in the way, fear the social consequences for common errors. If the tea is too black (*tor*), or the food inadequately salted (*pheeka*, *balmenge*), the guests may not drink and eat, which reflects badly on the house. It is said that only an experienced hand can achieve the right texture and crispness of *paratte* (oily bread). To some extent, ordinary cooking presumes the imminent arrival of a guest: the tea is brewed with plentiful milk and sugar, sufficiently sweet (*khog*) for immediate service.

As household managers, senior Bibiane take personal responsibility for the quality of service shown to guests (Lindholm, Charles 1982: 233). It is assumed locally that only guests who have been treated well and given respect will return; guests not offered appropriate hospitality will shun the house and talk badly of the *kor-wala* (women of the house), making light (*spake*) of the Bibiane's reputation (there is thus a "moral dimension" [Strathern 1981a: 175] to women's performance of household duties). This responsibility brings women a large measure of social power inside the

house as domestic supervisors and financial managers (ultimately charged with keeping records of *gham-khadi* debts and credits). It is women who determine recipients and amount in ceremonial gifting; men who interfere in these decisions gain a feminized reputation, “they are like women (*khaze*) and less like men (*saree*)”. Liaqat Khan from *bar Swat* confirmed that Bibiane hold the purse strings: “Before men put their earnings in their own pockets, but today they come home and give the money to their wife and she uses it in *gham-khadi* and in the running of the house”. It is widely said that the wife in a nuclear household “is in charge”. Evidence (even among Pukhtuns living abroad) suggests that the wives grant husbands discretionary allowances (\$300, in one instance) out of a larger sum of money overseen by the women. An elderly Bibi in northern Pakistan stated that she would bluntly ask her husband “*raka*” (give) whenever there was a household shortfall; when he responded, “where shall I produce money from”, she replied, “I don’t know, that is your *kaar* (work)”.

Bibiane enjoy a degree of self-determination in hosting visits, principally in relating with other-household women. Over cups of “mixed tea” (*gad wad chay*), they discuss various issues like the births, marriages, illnesses, deaths (the *gham-khadi*) of other people, as well as difficulties with maids, and familial, national and global politics (Singer 1982: 81; Tapper, N. 1978: 392; York 1997: 218). In her capacity as host, a Bibi may distinguish her own kin from her husband’s in her treatment of them as guests: on several *gham-khadi* occasions in joint-family village-houses, I have seen close family members (sisters, sister’s daughters, mother’s sister’s daughters) of the hostess lie on her bed with their (bare) feet up. This degree of informality contrasted sharply with the upright, crossed-leg posture of close female affines on sofas or chairs one remove from the bed. One Bibi’s wet-nurse in her seventies, having lived many decades in a lordly household, explained: “If you are a relative of Khan, then sit outside; if you are a relative of Bibi, then come inside” (*Ka de Khan khpal ye no warchane kena; ke de Bibi khpal ye no danna rasha*).

2.4.a. Socio-Political Dimensions of *Gham-Khadi*

Whatever the particularities of individual household practices, the social and political prestige of the Khan depends on the competence of his wife in household management and hosting (compare York 1997: 231). It is difficult for any (gendered) anthropologist to describe the nature of this dependence, which is rarely asserted both in conversations with the anthropologists and in anthropological discussions. Male faction-building is, however, underpinned by oblique forms of female *zeest-rozgar*. In recent electoral campaigns, Bibiane canvassed other female voters through house

visiting, suggesting that the extent of women's agency within Pukhtun political association has yet to be fully appreciated. Contrarily, the *ezat* of in-married women depends upon their husbands' skill and willingness in ingratiating them with his own relatives, in whose eyes he (as kin, *khpal*) carries more weight. In both micro- and macro contexts, then, the house is a political, as well as a social, site. Outside of the political context, the individual reputation of particular Bibiane (certain Khans' *kor-wala* or wife) is known in and beyond the village (ibid: 231).

In recent years, characteristically Pukhtun styles of visiting have been modified for specific political activities. With the move to Islamabad, the politicisation of *gham-khadi* and other visits has gathered momentum among men. The brother of a former NWFP Chief Minister, Aziz Khan, from Mardan and a Cambridge University graduate, told me, "a lot of [*gham-khadi*] has become political".⁷⁴ Liaqat Khan, from Swat, diagnosed a reversal in the relations of precedence between landlords and tenants with democracy, with the Khanan dependent upon the people for votes. He explained: "In politics, today's votes are bought. Khanan are dependent on people's votes. So they try to keep the people happy by doing *gham-khadi* with them. A hundred years ago there was no need to ask for votes because the land was ours (Khanans'); today we ask even the *pakeer* (the landless beggar) and the tenants for votes so we are like the beggars." Asfandiar Bacha, grandson of the Wali of Swat and the youngest Minister in Pakistan (1998-9), explained in English:

"*Gham-khadi* is the 'backbone', or 'key', to politics in Pukhtun areas. People will vote for me because they are returning a favour when I go to their house to do their *gham-khadi*. As a Minister, I asked my boss (the Chief Minister) permission to take Saturday [a weekday in Pakistan] off to do *gham-khadi*. With Musharraf's dissolving the assembly I still spend two days a week doing people's *gham-khadi*. I limit myself to going for people's *gham*, not *khadi*, because for the people *gham* is more important."⁷⁵

Compared to the model of religious leadership exemplified by the Swati Saint Saidu Baba, who acquired moral authority by moving away from temporal political concerns,

⁷⁴ Barth notes that *gham-khadi* "form[s] the background for political activity" (1986: 31, 41; see also Ahmed, A. S. 1980: 177; Grima 1998: 44). Assuming a historical perspective, Ayesha Jalal observes that in the period from Partition 1946 to 1957, local, not all-India or religious, issues determined the way the Pukhtuns voted (1985: 171).

⁷⁵ Like Asfandiar Bacha, other influential Pukhtuns in senior government posts such as DIG (Deputy Inspector General) Shaukat Khan the husband of the Bibi mentioned above said he did every thing in his influence not to be posted out of the Frontier so that his family could maintain *gham-khadi* relationships.

his descendants derive influence by engaging in the everyday political milieu.⁷⁶ Another member of the Wali's family, his eldest grandson Adnan Bacha, a former MNA (Member of National Assembly), also stressed the significance of doing *gham-khadi* in voters' houses. On one occasion, when a villager's cow was sick, Adnan Bacha's political rival came to the villager's home for *tapos*. Adnan Bacha said that when "vote-time comes, the man tells the local people to vote for him. If they question him, he says: 'I did your *gham-khadi*, remember' and they say: 'yes, of course - you have my vote'. So how can I compete with a man who extends *gham-khadi* to people's cattle?"

2.5. Household Relationships

"Life," as one Bibi said to me, "is in layers" (*jwand pate pate de*). This layered or multidimensional understanding of life characterises women's activities in relation to other women within the *kille-kor*, and in their hospitality and guesting. Above, I discussed patterns of hospitality and generosity entailed in relations between household members and visitors. Below, I describe inter-familial rivalry and tension underlying household relationships. A specific Pukhto lexicon for household relations indicates the good and bad atmospheres that may prevail in a joint-family *kor*. Bibiane describe houses as either "*janna*" (heaven) or "*dozak*" (hell), depending on the nature of relationships within. Houses may be characterized by co-operation (*kegara*), trust (*yageen*), and love (*mina*). Sororal relationships within the house are frequently ones of sacrifice, affection, and close bonding: sisters may raise their nieces and nephews "like mothers"—feeding them by hand, bathing them, and telling them off. In sickness and pregnancy I have seen reputedly "clean" (*shaki*) Bibiane sleep on "dirty" (*skha*) hospital floors in order to nurse their sisters-in-law. In spontaneous acts of generosity Bibiane might give their favourite shawl, *saxar*, or piece of jewellery to a guest who notices it. Yet sometimes the surface-level appearance of household harmony belies a maelstrom of private antagonisms between Bibiane and Khanan, Bibiane and maids, and Bibiane themselves. Household relationships are often marked, to use the Pukhto expressions, by the simultaneous fear and threat of jealousy (*swaxedal*), mistrust (*be-imani*), and enmity (*doshmani*).⁷⁷

⁷⁶ On sainthood, moral authority, and political leadership during nineteenth century British rule in Sind, see Ansari 1992; and in the Punjab, Gilmartin 1984: 230. As in Sindh "the emergence of saintly families with very great social and economic landed interests...came to wield political power." (Ansari 1992: 159).

⁷⁷ Charles Lindholm observes for men, "[t]he public face, which is kept up for the benefit of others, is often in marked contrast to the face revealed at home" (1988: 233; see also 1982). For anthropological accounts of the dual nature of emotions among the people of the NWFP, see Keiser 1991; and see Marsden 2002 on a discussion in Chitral among Muslims of the open (*al zahir*) and hidden (*al batin*).

Inter-female discord in houses is both a matter of personal friendship and antipathy, and follows certain social patterns comparable to agnatic rivalry among Pukhtun men. In joint-families, the characteristic sequence is for recent brides to be assimilated into marital homes (for kinship to be “made”) through a gradual process of mutual negotiation. Above all, it is vital for younger wives to avoid direct confrontation (*rishtinee*) with their elders, which is construed as utterly insulting. While a *nawe* (bride) inevitably comes to be viewed by the dominant household Bibiane “as a potential threat to family solidarity” when she makes demands that are different to theirs (Mandelbaum 1993:12), family honour insists that she eventually gravitate towards their status (her mother-in-law’s) in the family. Bibiane begin to free themselves of the perceived tyranny of senior women with the further in-marriage of new wives, who pose a greater threat than they (Iqbal 1997: 66; Mernissi 1985: 124; York 1997: 225). As their confidence and skill grows in negotiating protocols, established wives’ increasingly attend *gham-khadi* on their own terms. These negotiations require the adroit management of appearance, polite language and behaviour (*adab*), personal privileges, alliances and authority between Bibiane and *khidmatgaran*.

For women within the household, rage and resentment may fester over perceptions of favouritism, preferential treatment of children and maids, room allocation, heirlooms, degrees of seniority and respect, and even access to food. The most common form of antagonism, or *dushmani* (enmity, rivalry), between women of the same household subsists between in-married Bibiane and unmarried sisters of their husbands. The latter see the house as their “father’s house” (*de plar kor*), thus laying claim to a greater blood-right (of kinship), than those who marry in (affines). Yet the kin of one house must become affines in another. A bride’s bad relationships with other women more commonly sour her relationship with her spouse (who must be aware of domestic politics in seeking to integrate her with his household). The sister/sister-in-law relationship is widely seen as fractious among Swat and Mardan Bibiane and Pukhtun women generally.⁷⁸ Politics within families can take the form of slightly elder in-laws angling for the favour of senior figures by exercising a repressive or critical authority over younger Bibiane. Alternately, newly married women untutored in the skill of manoeuvring can find themselves bullied as interlopers. On many occasions, I heard various Bibiane call a daughter *nazbina* (cared for), and “protected” in her natal house,

“The danger of the underside of life emerging in public discussion has the potential to bring shame and disrespect, [to] individuals...families, and importantly, the moral unit of the village itself” (ibid: 44).

⁷⁸ As Charles Lindholm explains, “one’s most salient opponent is likely to be one’s next-door neighbour, who is as well one’s patrilineal first cousin [and rival for shared patrilineal property]” (ibid: 233).

while in her affinal house she was said to be “overworked” (*wagrabeegee*); “one day she has to please one person, the next day another” (*kala yao te khapa kala bal*; compare Kondos 1989: 164). Bibiane can take drastic steps to maintain their autonomy in marital homes or to hold themselves aloof from others. In one case, a Bibi had a wall built running down the side of her affinal ancestral *kor*, to block off her sister-in-law’s (also her first-cousin’s) living space.

One case especially illustrates the disparity between outward deportment and inner feeling forced on Bibiane by household propriety.⁷⁹ Khadija, a wife in her late twenties with three children, always appeared at *gham-khadi* events in the close company of her mother-in-law—they arrived and greeted people together, and left in the same car. Yet my conversations with Khadija as a friend revealed profound hostility between them. Her mother- and sisters-in-law, and their maids, waged, in Khadija’s words, a daily “cold war” against her in her “*dozakb*” (abyss-like) affinal house. They refused to return her *salaams* (salutations), avoided direct conversation with her, and communicated directly to her husband (by-passing wives in this way is considered highly insulting). When Khadija went to her mother’s house and phoned her affinal house, they would hang up or pass the phone to a maid on hearing her voice. Even the house’s food was locked up: in one instance, she was unable to get at a “single potato” for her hungry child without her mother-in-law’s (and the maids’) consent.⁸⁰ It is usual for conflictual relationships among Bibiane to be inherited by their male and female offspring, who are inexorably drawn into any inter-affinal female dispute (unlike Carsten’s Malay 1997: 220). Within the space of a household, children are treated as extensions of their mothers, becoming the target of any ill-will directed at her. When Khadija confronted her in-laws, it only led to more tension and mistrust; only occasional visits to her own mother’s house in Islamabad allowed brief periods of respite from what she called her heartache (*de zre dard*).

Given the impermissibility of confrontation, Bibiane and maids rely on certain recognized practices in many Pukhtun contexts to articulate contentious feelings. Describing dreams permits women to state or explore otherwise unavaowable desires. Rather than requesting gifts directly from Bibiane, maids may say, as in one case, “I had a dream that Khan gave me land to build a house” or that “you sent me to *haj*”,

⁷⁹ An idea of social interdependence as “morally entangling” and “double-edged” in South Asian social life has been advanced by Laidlaw (2000: 629, 630).

⁸⁰ Mernissi borrows Goffman’s analysis of totalitarianism in showing how dominant parties maintain control through regulating others’ access to simple necessities; for instance, in the Moroccan household younger wives may beg for food (Mernissi 1985; Goffman 1968). In Swat, Bibiane may normally put locks to fridges and go-downs (*godam*) to keep servants away (compare Macfarlane & Macfarlane 2003: 8).

challenging her Bibi's generosity by an oblique request. Other common objects of tacit requests are money, to perform *gham-khadi* for grown-up offspring, or consumer items which become the maid's private property. Many Bibiane were also known to resort to this strategy. Otherwise, Bibiane told me they coped with household friction through strength of character. One remarked that she learnt to be strong (*zrewara*) in childhood by competing with her brothers. Fatima, a Bibi in her late 30s, stated:

"Men are born with the idea that they are men and that's it; they don't have to do anything – just being men makes them great. And the woman, even if it is for a piece of meat she has to fight for that right, and she has to make herself felt. She has to constantly be on her toes to make herself recognized."

Various Bibiane remarked that they become "hardened" (*klak*), "cynical", and "insensitive" (in English) to life over the years, which made them proficient at *gham-khadi* under conditions of intense public scrutiny (*de khalako nazār*).⁸¹ In many *gham-khadi* I attended, some Bibiane performed the public offices of affection—embracing and exchanging *salaams*—without any real warmth of regard. (Bibiane on more openly hostile terms simply avoid their affines in *gham-khadi* gatherings entirely—averting their gaze when they pass by). Women's travails are understood as a private matter. One Bibi said, "a *Pukhtanna* (Pukhtun woman) will bear and hide her *sakhte* (hardships) from other people, especially other women, because if they hear about her problems she will look weak (*kamzōra*) and seem inferior than them."⁸² Those who cannot hide *sakhte*, like Punjabiiane, have no *zāat*." Through this ideology of ethnic distancing, Bibiane accentuate differences between themselves and other groups through claiming a greater ability to endure and conceal the dynamics of domestic politics. *Gham-khadi* events are perceived as problematic because (among other reasons) they risk exposing private discord to public knowledge. Conflicts may then become the theme for gossip and *zghaibat* (criticism behind another's back). On the other hand, the proper performance of *gham-khadi* obligations may rectify lapsed domestic or family relations.

Household relationships can deteriorate so much as to suspend Bibiane's profession of Islam, with their using witchcraft and malediction (*jādu* and *kode*) to

⁸¹ Comparatively Pastner observed that women in Panjgur (Baluchistan) get their own way by means of pleading illness, complaining, playing off male affines and consanguines against each other, and by non-cooperation (1978: 411).

⁸² Charles Lindholm stresses Pukhtuns' personal autonomy as a constituent of their moral egalitarianism. Showing forms of dependence is "reviled as weakness" allowing "one's opponents . . . an unwanted advantage." (1988: 234).

pursue their enmities (compare Iqbal 1997: 109). I was told by a maid in one Bibi's household of a mother who wished to break up her son's marriage concealing pellets of hair under her daughter-in-law's room carpet.⁸³ Unfavoured younger Bibiane within a *kor* will often fear subjection to their rival's evil eye (*nazar*). Castings-out are performed through the burning of *nazar* leaves, usually by a maid, atop a pan lid used as a type of censer and held under the *kameez* (*laman*) (as seen in Figure 14 below).



Figure 14 - A maid called "Babo" (mother), performing the *nazar*-mat for a little Badshah

The protective smoke (*looge*) from the leaves may also be blown on each newly-arrived household member. The recitation of Quranic verses, followed by a puff of breath (either on oneself or the "victim"), and the wearing of *taweezoon* (amulets), are also imputed to have the power to dispel curses. Children and brides are seen as particularly vulnerable to *nazar*. A convent-educated mother of a particularly plump nine-month-old baby told me that she feared women who praised her baby while looking askance at her, because they could cast the evil eye over her child. To ward off the potential curse, she followed her wet-nurse's remedy in hanging an apotropaic *partooghaakh* (trouser belt) from the eaves of the cot.

Bibiane employ many strategies and tactics to deal with the ongoing tension of cohabitation. The Bibi who was walled off by her sister-in-law (also her patrilineal

⁸³ Practicing witchcraft and casting spells on human hair, forbidden by the Prophet, is noted to have been common at the time of the Prophet (Al-Akili 1993: 89). D. N. Gellner describes women using magic to harm each other to improve their status and opportunities. This is done by either casting spells on their hair or through looking at them or their food (1994: 29, 34).

parallel cousin), speaking in a metaphoric sense this time, said: “I build walls in my mind to avoid the people I do not like, but we still share our *gham-khadi*”. Other Bibiane described their defense of rights and territory. In joint-family households, an in-married woman’s allocated private room/s, in contrast to the public and shared courtyard, are often perceived as her own, or as a “space[] within [a] space” (Ardener, S. 1981: 13). Here she may lock herself away from the crowd, rest between prolonged *gham-khadi* gatherings, pray (*moonz*), reiterate guests’ discussions of family politics to her husband, and put her baby to sleep during the day. Both large village-house structures and women’s own room spaces allow them to experience some degree of control. In one large household, a mother-in-law and her daughter-in-law separately told me they held the “spoon and keys”—or dominant symbolic control—of the house (compare Mernissi 1985: 130). Yet boundaries may be used indiscriminately by guests or by rival affines in order to test their limits. During one wedding gathering, a middle-aged non-Pukhtun daughter-in-law said that her sisters-in-law and guests used her room, which had two entrances and a shorter passage to other compounds in the house, as a public passageway. Perceiving this as a violation of her privacy, she put a lock (*thala*) to her back door—an act interpreted as *ajeelba* (strange) by her Pukhtun affines, who left many of their own bedrooms open to guests.

The starkness of this division of spaces amongst social categories of person is to some extent blurred by children, who are only assimilated into the gender system at adolescence. For children, houses may possess the internal variety of a “microcosmic world”. As such, many Bibiane consider the *kille-kor* the ideal site for the upbringing of children: “not claustrophobic like houses in Islamabad. It is paradise (*jannat*)—big lawns, big houses, lots of playmates (cousins and village children), swings, and pets”. Children’s happiness, however, depends on that of their mothers. Some Bibiane, like Khadija, sent their sons and daughters to boarding schools to protect them from joint-family politics, to keep them out of the laps of maids, or to spare them the travel in *gham-khadi*. In other families, the *kille-kor* schools children for adult Pukhtun life. Children’s freedom to transgress gender boundaries paradoxically inducts them in the *pardah*, and possibly class, divisions that shape Pukhtun sociality. Children are disciplined through both fear and favouritism. Some mothers beat their children, or slap them on the face in accordance with a Pukhto proverb: “only with a beating can manners be taught” (*adab da zakhma akhastal keegee*). Family members may call them *kharra* (donkey) or *kamakla* (stupid), though *daigane* (wet-nurses) meting out similar treatment risk being scolded by the child’s mother. Instead, nurses instil fear through frightening stories about “*baoo*”

and “*ballagan*” (demons and beasts).⁸⁴ Yet both mothers and *khidmatgar* (helpers), in joint families, favour their own children over others’ by calling them “*shahzadgai*” (princess) and “*khaaperai*” (fairy). Innately “innocent” (*masoom*) children thus quickly learn to be “*chalak*” (streetwise) and “*shaitan*” (devilish). These qualities make them valuable agents in playing an instrumental role in *gham-khadi*, acting as messengers between their parents; they thereby learn to negotiate different levels of status, permission and interdiction.⁸⁵ Through observing *gham-khadi* practices, children of both sexes are inducted into Pukhtun social practices from an early age through games in the house (Carsten and Hugh-Jones 1995: 2). In games such as “wedding, wedding” (*wada, wada*) or “house, house” (*kor, kor*), children play out the roles of hosts and guests, sipping make-believe tea from plastic toy cups made in China, and gigglingly make appropriate conversation.⁸⁶ Unlike adult *gham-khadi*, children’s are “fun games” (*de maze lobe*), while they provide “expressive models” and “simplified representations of what actually occurs in the world of adults” (Otterbein 1977: 180-181).

Just as children receive provisional exemption from gender segregation, children of different classes—of senior Bibiane, junior affinal brides, maids and village women—also play freely together in the *kor*’s courtyards. Within this context, some older children may take responsibility for younger siblings dominated by older cousins. Yet one Bibi told me that she always instructed her maid to bring her baby into her compound when her older children and their cousins got together in the village-house. She said in English, “the bigger fish eat the little fish”—meaning that some children lord it over their social inferiors. For the children of maids and “helpers”, playing in the elite *kille-kor* may be beneficial. In many cases, these children’s mothers have been taken in charitably, shielded from the social consequences of male abuse or a husband’s absence, whether through death, a second marriage or absconding.

Social relationships in the house feature not only symmetrical same-class relationships but also asymmetrical Bibi-maid ties, which if nurtured develop into what Pitt-Rivers has classified as a “lopsided friendship” ([1961] in Tellis-Nayak 1983: 67).⁸⁷

⁸⁴ Some children’s stories told by wet-nurses are gruesome: for example, in the “*Sheen Thoottee*” (Green Parrot), a boy is cut up by his father and cooked by his mother, his remains are collected by his sister. He then turns into a green parrot and flies off.

⁸⁵ On children’s roles as messengers in segregated societies, see Humphrey and Vitebsky 1997: 52-53. On *chalaki* and the control of emotion learnt at childhood, see Lindholm, Charles 1982; 1988.

⁸⁶ Macfarlane and Macfarlane wittily explain elaborate tea ceremonies as indulging a “human desire” for play and formality (2003: 55).

⁸⁷ On the relationship of mistress-servant as “domestic enemies” in eighteenth century England, and the “simultaneous closeness and distance, intimacy and enmity” which epitomised relationships between mistress and servant, see Hill 1996: 6. Maza notes the “perpetual process of negotiation, conflict, and compromise between master and servant” in eighteenth century France (1983: 6). See also Callaway

The Bibi-maid relationship, like the patron-client tie, is one in which one party is superior to the other in her capacity to grant goods and favours (ibid.). Both parties in the relationship have forms of power: the Bibi obviously so, the maid through the ability to gossip, which could wreak permanent damage on any Bibi's *ezat* in the wider society. Comparatively, Najmabadi describes a transformation in Iranian women's identity and status, in late nineteenth and early twentieth century Persian texts, from "house" (*manzil*) to "manager of the house" (*mudabbir-i-manzil*) (1998: 91). The shift represented "at once a regulating and an empowering moment," necessitating a sundering of "homosocial" relations of solidarity with house-servants as the condition of a new form of elite female power (ibid: 102). Najmabadi's argument captures in another context many ambiguities in how Bibiane relate to female *khidmatgaran*.

Maids may be conceptualized as having a complex, ambivalent nature as both independent persons and adjuncts of their Bibiane, and as both family and as non-family. Bibiane may be jealously protective of maids who have accompanied them since birth or marriage, both as companions and forms of human capital or labour-power. I observed cases where maids' movements between households provoked bitter power-struggles. In one instance, a maid moving in search of a better job caused a dramatic row between the senior Bibiane of the two households involved. Some Bibiane said that their maids were "like family" to them and, conversely, that maids were capable of greater devotion than relatives. In one case, an elderly, bed-ridden Bibi, with four married children, reported better care from her young maid, "more than her children." The young maid bathed, dressed, and spoon-fed the Bibi, she even took the Bibi with the driver to hospital, and slept on a mattress beside her. As surrogates of their Bibiane, maids necessarily become embroiled in household politics. Within households, old house-servants usually side with sisters against incomers, yet some maids and brides (*nawe*) share comparable positions as outsiders. Their role in supporting their own Bibi is said to be double-edged: one Bibi in her 40s living in a joint-family in the village remarked, "all our fights are because of *khidmatgaran* and their "*wre-rawre*" (bring and take, gossip)".⁸⁸ Maids and especially wet-nurses can exert leverage because of their power in the household and because of their freedom to move between the house and the village.

1994; Greenleaf 1977; Grint 1994; Gul 1995-97; Hansen 1994; Ong 1996; Robina 1994-96; and Tamanoi 1991.

⁸⁸ Dunbar argues that female gossip is not idle but is a mechanism for controlling behaviour, giving advanced warning and shaming people into conformity with certain standards (1997: 172; compare Spender 1980).

Households' relationships with maids necessarily entail some degree of negotiation between independent persons with their own desires. In one instance, a maid was suspected of having stolen her Bibi's gold earrings. After repeated insistence on the harm that would befall the thief's reputation and restatements of the religious immorality of theft, the maid said she dreamt of her deceased husband for two nights in a row, who told her that she was not a thief (*ghla*), and that the earrings should be in the Bibi's drawer (from which they had been abstracted nine months previously). After the earrings were found, the maid, drawing a veil over her acts, told her Bibi "see, my dreams come true (*reeshtia*); I did not take them." In this way, the maid, turning the situation on its head, aligned herself with a class of seers to whom religious respect is due.⁸⁹

Even more intensely than maids' service, the *daigane's* breastfeeding of the Bibi's children creates a family-like tie between *khidmatgar* (helper) and mistress: "the *dai's* milk" it is said "becomes the child's *weena* (blood)" (see also Delaney 1991: 155). In Swat, *daigane's* offspring refer to themselves as "*dwem number Badshahyan*" (second class kings), claiming a status higher than that of villagers but lower than landed family children. I heard one wet-nurse's middle-aged daughter declare, "I am the *kehor* (sister) of the Badshah; I am nobody's servant" (*zo da cha sara nawkara na yamma*). While in Swat, wet-nurses became members of Badshah households, in Mardan Khan children were sent away to be nursed. The daughter of the Nawab of Hoti told me she was raised in a poor and *kacha* (uncemented) *dai's* home. *Daigane* I spoke to describe strong competition for the honour of entering into the elite household. Throngs of women presented themselves at the *dewdai* and courtyard. Becoming a wet-nurse meant a better standard of living and greater social status, but at the cost of a five year absence from their own families and children. *Daigane* hired other nurses for their own children; in one case, a *dai's* husband left his wife for the wet-nurse of his children.

Bibiane and *daigane* participate in each other's *gham-khadi* in such ways as to create complex cross-investments of money, duty and care. *Daigane's* daughters demand financial benefits from household Bibiane for their own (and close family's) *gham-khadi*, as well as for the ceremonies of Bibiane themselves. *Daigane* become *sharika* (joint, partners) in *gham-khadi*; a *dai's* daughter explained that when she needed money, she would go to her Bibi's married daughter and say, "she is my niece, she is obliged to attend my *gham-khadi*", in other words she must pay up (*da keho zama khwarza da zama*

⁸⁹ Describing dreams as "constitut[ing] a field of force . . . between the living, and between the living and the only apparently dead", Gilsenan explores how they "valoriz[e]... the person, authoring and authorizing experience (2000: 611).

gham-khadi la ba khod razee). Bibiane's financial commitment to *daigane* in gifts of money, property and land can be lifelong. One *dai* who received frequent gifts of Rs. 20,000 (£210) from her Bibi "daughter" remarked: "of all my sons she is the best one for me" (*pa tolo zamanno ke agha zama da para kha da*). Thus, among the poorer Pukhtuns who give sons relatively greater significance, the *dai* compared her Bibi-daughter to a son. As trusted members of a household, *daigane* sometimes attend villagers' *gham-khadi* on behalf of their Bibiane. In one case, while an elderly Bibi received medical treatment in the UK, her retainer of more than forty years undertook a *gham* visit on her Bibi's behalf, and distributed a sum of her monthly income according to the Bibi's phone instructions. In-married Bibiane do not always share this affection for longstanding affinal house *daigane*. They often remarked that the "*gareebe khaazee*" (poor women), who nursed their husbands as children, passed on unsophisticated and bad (*kharab*) language and behaviour. One Mardan Bibi attributes the differences between her feuding seven paternal uncles and aunts to their lacking the bond of having been raised by the same woman.

2.5.e. Reaching Beyond the Village

Bibiane are contradictorily enjoined to observe *purdah* within the house and to make far-flung *gham-khadi* visits to rural and urban sites. Bibiane refer to their shifts of mindset between the different expectations of social life, dress, deportment and regional variations between practices as their "dual life".⁹⁰ Discussing the house, many Bibiane spoke of their frustration with the social constraints of *purdah* and the lack of stimulation in the *kille-keor*. A Bibi, Spongmai, compared men, who "have the freedom to leave the house", with women, for whom "there is no mental challenge—we may arrange a picnic. If I want to see a movie, I have to write a list and give it to the *Mama* [male servant, meaning mother's brother]. If it wasn't for T.V. and the Decoder I'd go crazy. . ." Another Bibi described how she would "kill time" by watching T.V. soap operas like "Santa Barbara". "I used to watch so much T.V. my father used to call me 'The Prophet of movies', because I knew the names of every actor, both English and Indian".⁹¹

⁹⁰ Levi-Strauss (1963: 161) rejects the theoretical presupposition of duality, rather than the availability of dual organisations of concepts to people's sense of their experience. My own use of the term is based on a local usage and not as a theoretical tool.

⁹¹ Both Bibiane and maids resort to television to relieve the boredom of village-life. One unmarried Mardan maid, aged 21, bought a television with her saved-up wages; another older married village woman sold her gold earrings (*deeday*) to buy a TV set. On local reactions to the television, see *The News International* 2000 (31 Oct) and (31 July). Local scholarly works on television are: Ahmad, T. 1998; Ali, L. 1984-86; Farhat-ul-ain 1980-82; Muhammad and Jan 1992-94; Yusufzai 2001. More widely, see

With no other entertainment in a *purdah* context, a few Bibiane confided that their dislike of living in the village stemmed from their difficult (*graan*) and restricted (*paband*) life amongst affines. One, an older in-married Bibi in her 50s, confided that her “heart” belonged in Pindi, where she had lived with her parents as a girl (*geenay*). After the death of her husband, the same Bibi moved permanently from her Frontier village-house to Pindi. Now a widow with married (*wada shawē*) offspring, she travels for *gham-khadi* without restrictions across the Frontier and Punjab with her village companion-maids. Another Bibi, in her late thirties, who is married to her patrilateral parallel cousin in a “conservative” village, Sher Palam, felt quite free to “open” her “heart” (*kulao zre*) to me:

“In (*bar*) Swat, what sort of life is this! If I want to visit my parents or brother’s house, I have to take permission from my husband because men don’t like their wives to be seen travelling too much- it is *sharam*. In the village, the more a woman stays at home, the more *ezat* she has and the more *droon* (respectable) she is considered.”

In Swat and particularly Mardan, prohibitions continue to regulate female visibility in non-segregated public spaces or *bazāaroona* (plural for *bazāar*), as “women in male spaces are considered both provocative and offensive” (Mernissi 1985: 143).⁹² When Bibiane need personal or household items from the village *bazāar*, they rely on their *khidmatgaran* to buy these for them. In Mardan, where Bibiane practice *purdah* in the presence of their male servants, they pass on directions to maids who relay them to male-servants. Shahbana, a Bibi in her mid 40s with kin and affines belonging to separate Mardan families, admitted to having “lost control” beyond the walls of her village-house, due to the unreliability of her servants (in getting household items and ingredients from the *bazāar*). She even reports being cut off from her husband and son in the *hujra*, who may come through to the *kor* in response to her message “forty-five” minutes or an hour after she has called for them. In 2000, Shahbana “convinced” her husband to escape the restrictions (*pabandi*) of the village and move to Islamabad. She wanted to school their growing three daughters (aged 2, 8 and 9) and son (14) in English-medium schools. With her husband, she bought a four-bedroom house in Islamabad, close to her parents’ second home in Pindi. During the small *khadi* for housewarming she told me:

Abu-Lughod 1993a; Ang 1997; Baudrillard 1997; Fiske 1997; Hall 1997; Hobson 1997; Holland 1997; Kuhn 1997; McLuhan 1997; Modleski 1997; Warrier 2000.

⁹² Sharma notes women’s uneasiness and feelings of “being out of place” (1980: 228) in spaces outside their houses unless on “some specific business” (ibid: 218). See also Papanek 1982: 31.

“Here [in Islamabad] I am very much in control of my life and everything—the house, the servants, the children—they come directly to me if anything goes wrong: I have to put it right. If I need anything, I drive myself to the *markaz* (shops), *kana* (you know), it’s according to my choice and there’s no *jagara* (conflict).”

Bibiane spoke of finding a balance between the ease of the village-house even with the restrictiveness, and the greater freedom of Islamabad, which imposed its own strenuous set of social and household demands. A few Bibiane prefer the village for personal and ideological reasons, and urge their husbands to spend more time tending their land. Other families compromise on space by staying in Islamabad apartments during their children’s term-time. The following section shows that the premise of “cultural uniformity” (Arensberg 1968: 7) of Pukhtun “urban society” is misconceived, given the cultural diversity of Pukhtun Bibiane’s lives in Islamabad.

2.6. Bibiane in Islamabad

Bibiane’s domestic relationships are being redrawn with the move from the joint-family *kille* to nuclear family units in Islamabad. Where the village-house (*kille-kor*) characteristically houses more than one marital unit with offspring and dependents, Khanan and Bibiane settle down with reduced ancillary help (maids, *daigane*) in Islamabad. Arguably, a Bibi’s primary relationship, which was previously with other familial or affinal women, is to some extent reconfigured into a dyadic marital partnership with her husband. He often becomes more involved in childcare and spends more time travelling with his wife to *gham-khadi*.⁹³ Ajab, a Mardan Khan in his early forties with two daughters said in English:

“The main reason to live in Islamabad is because of our women. Society forces the husband to move out—if a man’s wife has a toothache, he will go to Peshawar or Islamabad rather than locally in Mardan, where there may be a good dentist but he may be too shy to take his wife to him.”

Amongst the 58 Pukhtun households I observed in Islamabad, 20 (semi-detached) houses were rented, 28 houses, and 10 flats only recently purchased within

⁹³ One Bibi said, “before in the village men spent most of their time in the *hujra*. If a woman was ill she would go to a doctor with a (female) relative or the doctor would come to her house. But now I have seen husbands want to take part and be there with the wife when she is sick; he will take her to the hospital and be involved. Men are more concerned about their wives, they are curious. They want to take part in their wife’s life.”

the last seven years. Most Bibiane and Khanan sold Frontier village lands and jewellery to buy their costly houses and flats. While sitting in his newly purchased and renovated Islamabad house, Khalid Khan, from Mardan, told me in 2000:

“The good (wealthy) families in the [Frontier] villages are all selling their property and buying in Islamabad. I can tell you that in ten years the village will be finished. Only the newly rich families will remain.”

These new financial pressures among the previously “independent” landowning Khanan blur the boundary between them and “dependent” non-Pukhtun tenants. The “newly rich” referred to by Khalid Khan earn their money by working abroad, or through the drug trade or other smuggling; gradually, and with a sense of ambivalence, these fractions are marrying into Bibiane’s *gham-khadi* networks. Translocality, owning in the country and renting or purchasing in the city, places Khanan in a potentially threatened class position. As Barth (1959: 9-10; 1970: 125; 1986: 44), Charles Lindholm (1982: 74, 91), and Titus (1998: 668) stressed, the Pukhtun landowning Khanan derive village-council authority, power of patronage and ethnic honour through land ownership—which frees them of “dependence” as tenants and buyers.⁹⁴ Yet as lodgers in Islamabad houses, some Khanan have rather contracted client relationships themselves. The situation of Khanan, whose ethos was previously determined by the *nang* (free honour) of the landowner, becomes bound by the more contractual criteria of *qalang* or regulated rent (Ahmed, A. S.: 1976, 1980). A Bibi reported, “I remember a time when to rent was considered degrading. We were the landlords; now we are tenants”. But in an inverse process, the ability to rent or purchase a property in Islamabad now implies the wealth to be able to do so.

Data from Islamabad fieldwork revealed that Bibiane from Swati families owned eight of ten flats, and six others have been bought more recently (in other words, owners came from areas where *purdah* was more permissive in relation to male relatives, servants, and neighbours; and second that the flats were in the names of wives who took direct possession of it). Residents view flats as modern, practical and easy to rent to higher-paying foreigners. Most Islamabad flats have a non-segregated, central area, with many bathrooms connecting to main living spaces, rather than to gendered quarters. Flats often have only single-room servant’s digs with a separate entrance (these

⁹⁴ Barth notes, “judged by Pathan standards, clientship places a man among the despised failures, subordinates among independent commoners.” (1970: 125). For Charles Lindholm, the action of a powerful Pukhtun is to create bonds of dependence (1982: 206).

may be allotted to maids). Pukhtun families with male drivers usually rent extra basement rooms with entrances to the car-park. In this way, gender and status distinctions not leading to differential treatment in the country are accentuated in the more “modern” context. Bibiane and various men (family, servants) contend at different times for the use of spaces in the flat: maids may watch television and uncles visit (at different times) in the same lounge. In contrast to Swati flat owning Bibiane, a Mardan Bibi said that her husband was “too Khan-minded” to allow such non-segregated sharing of domestic space and preferred to rent a semi-detached house than to buy a small apartment in a shared block of flats.

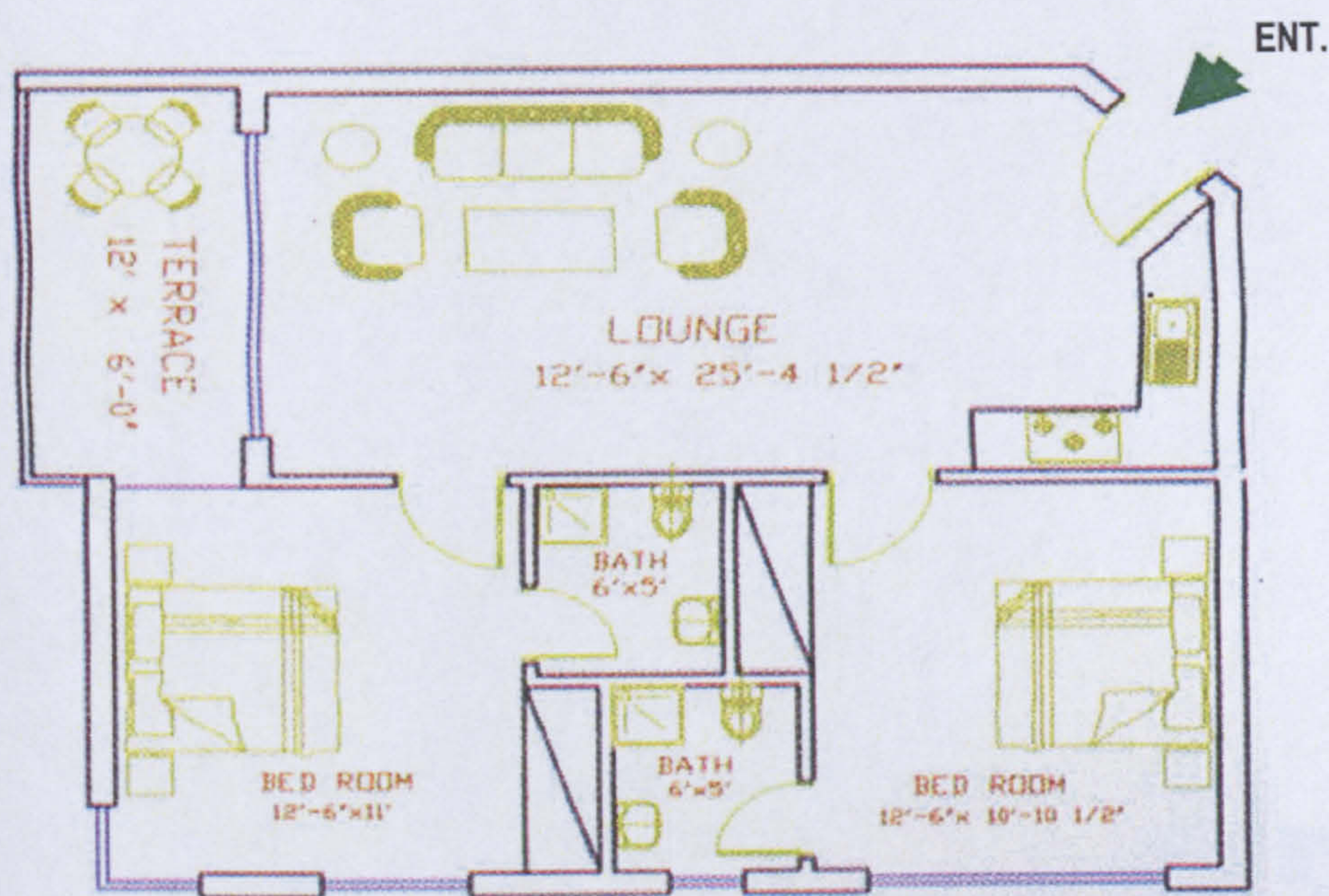


Figure 15 - A two bedroom city flat

Greater stringency of *purdah* among Pukhtuns generally, compared to Punjabis and other Pakistanis, means the customization of modern city houses into more “Pukhtun” spaces. Unlike the spacious houses in Pindi and Islamabad which Khanan owned for many years, the compact, more recently-bought city-houses often lack gardens and provide only one entrance for both sexes. Despite the CDA (Capital Development Authority) rule that the outer walls of Islamabad houses should not exceed a certain low height, some Frontier Khanan seek to reinstate *purdah* restrictions by putting wall extensions, matting, bamboo, and other coverings on their house gates and balconies. Bibiane told me that separate entrances, allowing for *purdah* maintenance, were a criterion determining which houses they rented. On one birth visit to a Mardan Bibi, whom I had not visited before, I recognized her house by the conspicuous

chackoona (bamboo coverings) behind the front gate, on the balcony, and behind the outer walls. Many families adapt the interiors of houses to supposed Frontier norms. Space in modern city houses does not entirely maintain gender segregations, meaning that men and women indiscriminately use bathrooms and kitchens. In one household, the maids refused to share the single or men's servants' bathroom of their Bibi's new city house. The Khan and Bibi built the maids another room and bathroom. Shahbana, who had persuaded her husband to move house to Islamabad, also supervised the construction of a male back-room for her husband's *zamindar* (village tenants) in their Islamabad house.⁹⁵ This room took a separate entrance from the rest of the residence. Thus Khanan's reconfiguration of space attempts to avoid the reconfiguration of gender roles and relationships implicit in the modern house typology.



Figure 16 - Bamboo-covered Khan's and Bibi's semi-detached rented house in Islamabad

2.6.a. Visiting in the City

Bibiane's *gham-khadi* activities do not lapse with their (seasonal) arrival in the city. Islamabad represents not just the base from which women return at short notice to ceremonies in the *kille-kor*, but is itself a flourishing scene of *tlal-ratlal* and female-female relationship outside the house. Indeed, the concentration of Pukhtun Bibiane in the city

⁹⁵ Veiled Bibiane assertively instruct male constructors, painters, and contractors (*thekedars*) in Islamabad. A Bibi whose husband left their half-built house midway during construction said: "I built half the house myself. The work was done faster because they know Bibi means business." She continued: "everything is in order when I manage things- the house runs to the clock. But when he is home he picks on every thing. I want him to get a job and leave the house in the mornings. We can't have two bosses in one house all the time!"

creates an intensification of visiting practices amongst distant and close kin.⁹⁶ These visits illustrate the dependence of specific forms of quasi-“codifiable” behaviour at gatherings on *tlal-ratlal* sociality more generally. Moreover, practices have arisen over the last twenty years by which Bibiane may belatedly discharge *gham-khadi* obligations they may have missed (through indisposition, or being out of the country). In such cases, Bibiane visit the families in question in the city, stating their purpose (“I have come to do your daughter’s *ombaraki*”). While, on the one hand, Pukhto may thus be reinforced or clarified in Islamabad, on the other, Bibiane voice the concern that it might also be diffused, with Islamabad’s greater frequency of inter-ethnic interaction, and with the relaxation of *purdah* and other strictly ethnic forms.

When a Bibi visits another in Islamabad, the hostess obligingly keeps company with her guest, receives her condolences or congratulations, and then may talk or sit in silence. Bibiane serve tea in special crockery sets (either heirlooms embossed with the family crest or purchased from Peshawar’s Hayatabad market), arranged in *soigné* fashion on saucers. They may display and discuss the latest and most modern purchased consumer goods from Hayatabad or even from abroad. The Bibi and her guests (female or even male) sit in the “drawing-room,” as opposed to village-house verandas and courtyards, while the maids, in some cases male servants, prepare meals which the visitor may initially refuse, doing *sath*. As in the village, Islamabad Bibiane prepare for unexpected visits: they commonly keep pre-prepared delicacies, like meat kebabs, *samosa*, meat or home-made chicken rolls, in the freezer. Foods are defrosted in microwaves and served as guests arrive.

City visits also create broader articulations of enacted relationships across regional sites. For some, city *gham-khadi* only represent transposed forms of rural ceremonies. Bibiane without access to suitable village-houses may host weddings in Islamabad hotels, though Bibiane consider weddings in ancestral homes more “prestigious”. On this view, city-residence is rootless and modern amenities (cars, airplanes) serve to expedite people’s obligations in attendance, compared to the era of the *tanga* (horse and cart). Reference to a supposed origin or “watershed” (Munn 1990) provides substantial meaning for a displaced life, provided for more practically by the conveyance of a Khan’s income, means of sustenance and resources—chickens, fruit,

⁹⁶ Anthropologists have theorized identities and description of practices as “translocal”. In a case reversing the Pukhtun example (where Pukhto is conceptualized as invariant, while accounts of practices have altered), Schwartz describes Guatemalan oral historians’ intervention in folk histories as positing a continuity between relocated city practices and the past (1977). For a broader account (broaching concepts of kula exchange and nationhood) of how distant groups may translocally be imagined as related, see Munn (1990: 1; compare Hagen 1999: 372).

ghanam (wheat)—in bulk from the *kille-kor* to the city house. The reverse movement is a flow of modern commodities (Dettol, Pampers, cornflakes, pastries) in large quantities to the village-house.

City visits—as specific forms—recapitulate village and convent-ties and develop new and socially (or familially) expanded *gham-khadi* relationships. In Islamabad, four Mardani couples “broke their *pardah*”, allowing wives to socially meet their husbands’ male cousins. The “information service” of Pukhtun visits increasingly features female-male as well as female-female interfaces: in one instance of hosting in Islamabad, I saw a husband turn around in surprise when his own wife passed on information about his patrilineal cousins’ and uncle’s property business he himself did not know about. In a cosmopolitan milieu, Bibiane mix with certain men, with women of other ethnicities at religious school, or as the mothers of their children’s schoolfriends; they also interact with Christian Punjabi cleaners and beauticians (“waxing women”). Figure 17 below shows Bibiane’s children’s *khadi* (birthday) in the city; guests are from different ethnic and national backgrounds.



Figure 17 - Swati and Mardani children of Bibiane with friends and maids at a birthday (“minor *khadi*”) in Islamabad. The two women on the left (in sleeveless shirts) are Moroccan neighbours

Bibiane’s greater exposure manifests itself in wider freedoms of movement than in village contexts: they may go to cousins’ houses, associate with others in the context of women’s or religious bodies (APWA; IFWA; or Al-Huda). The city boasts several dedicated amenities, such as “Hot Shots”, a family entertainment centre with a swimming pool, bowling, arcade games, and bouncy-castles, in Islamabad’s central Fatima Jinnah Park.



Figure 18 - A maid in white with young Bibiane in "Hot Shots"

2.6.b. Al-Huda

What we see in effect in Islamabad is the co-presence of multiple modes of modernity, Islamized in various ways according to different schools of interpretation. The amusement arcade represents an instance of globalized commodity capitalism. Another modern mode, of the greatest significance for this dissertation's treatment of *gham-khadi* ceremonies, is represented by the reformist interpretation of scriptural Islam taught at the Al-Huda school.⁹⁷ During my initial fieldwork in Islamabad in 1994, I accompanied a group of Bibiane to the series of Ramadan Al-Huda classes, which attracted over 500 women attendees. In crowds of predominantly Punjabi women, Bibiane gathered with friends and relatives, settling down on a particular patch of the carpet, to listen to the Urdu lectures given by the organization's founder, Dr. Hashmi. Approaching the lectern entirely cloaked in a black bodily covering (*abaya*) and headdress (*hijab*), Dr. Hashmi said that women should make an effort to look "attractive" in segregated public spaces and for their husbands, but should cover those parts of the female body which may unnecessarily attract marriageable men. Just before her lecture, she removed this outer garment to reveal an elegantly dressed, soft-spoken, and charismatic person in a brightly coloured *shalwar-kameez*. Dr. Hashmi taught a form of Islam perceived as outward-looking and this-worldly. She made jokes as she referred to her own and other women's everyday experiences. More critically, she stressed that women could potentially transform society, saying in one *dars* in Urdu: "the example of

⁹⁷ Donnan and Werbner observe that religious gatherings and mosques in the cities become central in communal public activities and a focus for status achievement, as well as "focal meeting places." (1991: 24).

a woman (*aurat*)” on her surrounding family and community, “is not like a matchstick but like a flaming petrol pump—as a daughter, sister, wife and mother, her message can spread like fire!”

In contrast to certain harsh prohibitions by the mullahs (male religious functionaries based in mosques) upon women’s agency in general, Dr. Hashmi’s teaching grants contemporary married women an Islamic right (*haq*) of rebuke in relation to husbands and other in-laws.⁹⁸ According to her lectures, the Quran and hadith impose a moral duty on every Muslim “to command right and forbid wrong” (*al-amr bi’l-ma ‘ruf wa’l-nahy ‘an al-munkar*). Under this concept, the individual believer recognizes her duty to issue orders, albeit in a “kind manner”, in conformity with divine precept (Cook 2000: 9).⁹⁹ Every member of a community, male and female, is enjoined by Quranic obligation to this service (see, for example, the following Quranic verses: Q3:104; Q3:110, Q3:114; Q7:157; Q9:71; Q9:112; Q22:41; Q31:17, and several Ahadith [plural]).¹⁰⁰ One cannot compromise or make exemptions, by commanding or forbidding those Quranic precepts that suit particular interests (Tabari 310/923. In Cook 2000: 24). The most professing persons take on the role of God’s *khalifa* (deputy) on earth by zealously “commanding right and forbidding wrong” among his or her kinfolk. “Conversely, ‘a dead [person] among the living’ is explained as one who fails to perform the duty” (ibid: 38). The phenomenon of commanding right belongs to the public space of Muslim society (ibid: 469), whether in a domestic environment or not (Ghazzali in ibid: 505, 1111). The necessity of instruction in Islamic precept places a scholar (*faqih*) in every town, to “go out into the rural hinterlands” to teach (ibid: 445). In this way, Islamic traditions bring scriptural teaching into contact with the circumstances of everyday village life. Those who take up the Quranic injunction to teach are not necessarily received as strident; indeed, the action of commanding right

⁹⁸ The status of women in Muslim societies is shaped by two main factors, the (male-dominated) ulama, and societal patriarchy (Haddad and Esposito 1998). The Jamaat-e-Islami and other such parties, for example, “have advocated [the] inferior status and complete segregation of women who should preferably be confined to their homes, but otherwise heavily veiled from head to foot; and the total exclusion of women from any decision-making bodies or processes.” (Mumtaz and Shaheed 1987: 16); on the “bigoted” *mullahs*, see Alavi 1991: 141. Wikan discusses how the ulama (religious leaders) see “females as morally weak and irresponsible” (1982: 56).

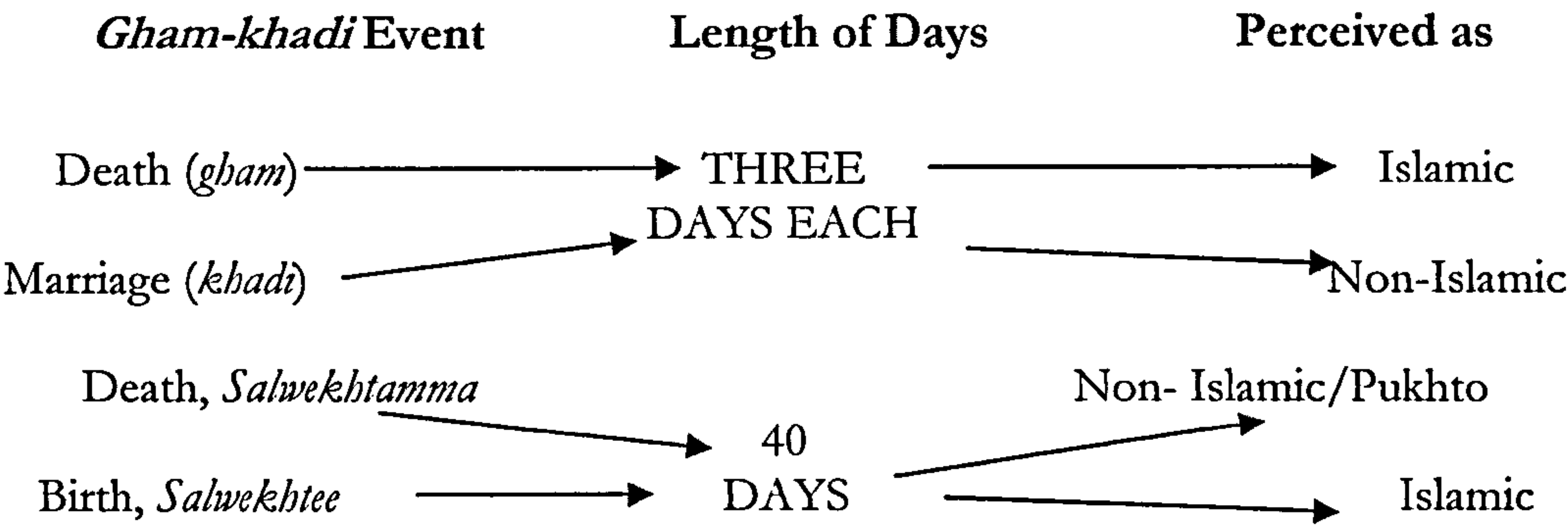
⁹⁹ Cook points to the parallels of such an expression, in A.D. 1801 England when a “Society for the Suppression of Vice and the Encouragement of Religion and Virtue” was established; and may also be seen among the Buddhists and Confucians (2000: 561-2). Distinctively, for Cook, “Muslims perform the duty in its most stringent form (*bi-akad al-wujub*): fighting (*qital*), which involves the risk of being killed.” (ibid: 582). Contrast Hasan 1996; Khan, M.W. 1998; Malik 1991; compare Nadvi, Nadvi and Nadvi 1999.

¹⁰⁰ The Prophet is attributed with the saying: “Whoever sees a wrong (*munkar*) and is able to put it right with his hand, let him do so; if he can’t, then with his tongue, if he can’t, then with [or in] his heart which is the bare minimum of faith” (see Cook 2000: 33). The Prophet thus ordered a hierarchy of modes of responses (the ‘three mode’ tradition) to wrong: deed, word and thought. (ibid: 34, 45).

may be more effective because its proponents are viewed primarily as relatives, not religionists. Al-Huda teachings rooted in these traditions raise fundamental questions as to the meaning of scripture in the world in which Bibiane live.

Al-Huda’s exegesis and commentary upon the sacred Islamic texts (the Quran and hadith) implicitly disputes the conformity to religion of customary *gham-khadi* life-cycle events. While Pukhtun Bibiane mark funerals by collectively commemorating for forty days after burial, the *salwekhtamma*, and a year, the *kaal* (even for two years), the Prophet prohibits Muslims from mourning any deceased other than a husband for longer than three days (Sahih Bukhari 1994: 324 [ch.14: 650]; see also Yusuf 1989 [Quran] 2: 234). Again, Pukhtun families celebrate marriages for over three days, while Al-Huda Bibiane say that the hadith refers only to two events: the *Nikah* and *Walima* (making no mention of the *Nakreeza* or “Henna day”, celebrated by dancing and singing). It is even claimed that the *Nakreeza* and *kaal* are not Islamic, but derives from Hindu practices.¹⁰¹ The Pukhto forms of *gham-khadi* and what might be expected of an Islamic pattern of observance, while not antithetically organized, depart from each other at significant points, as illustrated below:

Table 3 - *Gham-khadi* as perceived by Al-Huda Bibiane



The contradictory modernity of the reformist Al-Huda school equally promotes extra-domestic contact between women. Insistence on a literal Islam paradoxically binds women to stricter personal ethics and more consistent *purdah*-observance, while allowing greater freedoms of association at religious and religiously-sponsored events outside the home. While women cannot attend prayers at outdoor village mosques, in the city, large groups of Bibiane may attend the segregated and screened-off upper floor of

¹⁰¹ The Hindu *sraddhas* is the first year after death followed by “the annual *sraddhas*” (Kondos 1989: 172).

Islamabad's Faisal Mosque at their discretion. On one occasion, a long train of Bibiane, aged between 18 and 70, coordinated to pick each other up on their drive to a *dars*.

Differences in expectation between the Frontier and elsewhere enable a skilfully managed range of dress, varied according to implicit religious or social expectation (something I have learned to negotiate myself). Although non-scholarly younger women, accompanied by a male chaperon, loosely practice *pardah* while shopping or with children, Al-Huda students typically veil themselves consistently in Arab-style *hijabs*. One forty year-old Bibi, ten-years resident in Islamabad, told me how her twenty-year-old daughter chastised her for going about *sartora* (black or bareheaded, connoting nudity or *barband*) without a *sazār* in the village (compare Mernissi 1985: 144). "Conservative" dress—in local English—comprises longer shirts and sleeves and higher necklines; in contrast, Al-Huda graduates wear the black *abaya* (cloak), a garment considered Arab rather than Pukhtun, to mark the completion of the one-year course. Paradigmatically, one Bibi in her mid-twenties remarked:

"When I am in Islamabad I just wear a coloured veil across my neck which matches my clothes; when I go to Peshawar I wear a *sazār* around my shoulders; when I go further to our *kille* (village), I cover my body, head, and face entirely."

This sense of a progressive compromise on characteristic practices, and the ambiguous coincidence of revivalist, new and reiterated cultural forms in the city, leads many Khan-minded Pukhtuns to be wary of translocation altogether. They tend to agglomerate all of the city's features into one perceived threat to "traditional" Pukhto. Bibiane's debates around translocality, however, are far more nuanced and many-stranded than that suggests.

2.7. "Double-Rootedness"?

In a recondite gloss on Bibiane's theme of "dual lives", Aziz Khan described his life as one of "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde", because he practiced Pukhto in the Frontier and more modern manners in the city. Khanan and Bibiane debate the pros and cons of city life in terms of morality, ethnic authenticity, cultural continuity and convenience. Donnan and Werbner, in their work on Pakistani migration, call translocal living a "double-rootedness" (1991: 14); Pukhtuns, however, downplay the strength of their affective city roots, which they say are shallow, compared to attachments to their native *kor* (Lindholm, Charles 1982: 57).

As Ajab Khan remarked, Khanan have moved to Islamabad because of their wife's medical needs. Availing oneself of modern social and medical amenities is frequently conceptualized as the loss of a more organic connection with lands and dependents. Older village-bred Bibiane and older *daigane* protested about their residentially scattered children in the nuclear households of Islamabad (“*zan zani shwa*”). Others remembered the past nostalgically as a period of collectivity and grandeur.¹⁰² The elderly daughter-in-law of one Nawab family from Mardan recalled the village-house and *hujra* as a symbol of family *Badshahi* (royalty), saying:

“The past was a grand time; there were tremendous *gham-khadi* in the *hujra* and *kor*, thousands of people from all the villages would gather. Those were the days of the Nawaban and Khanan. Now it has changed: all the Khanan have left the village and moved out; there is more independence and less love.”

The idea that the communal “love” of reciprocal *gham-khadi* networks has become attenuated was echoed in another Swati Bibi's words: “my heart is in the *kille-kor*. Our roots, our identity, are there. We are like the royal family there. In Islamabad we are nobody”. Such thinking deploys a nativist rhetoric of identity that looks to preserve a presumed cultural heritage in city conditions: “the village-house” remarked one forty-year-old Swati Bibi, living in Islamabad, “is like a magnet, my daughter [aged 20] has that same yearning for Swat as I did when I was her age.”

Speakers in the village context likewise bemoan the exodus of kin to Islamabad. I often heard female members of joint-family households in Mardan utter the common phrase “*tol laroo, kille khwasha sho*” (they've all gone, the village is empty). In these circumstances, *gham-khadi*, as a mode of producing (hierarchical) social relations through ritual, gains an even greater salience as the form reuniting Khanan, Bibiane and villagers. Aziz Khan stated, “going back for *gham-khadi* is a learning process for our son [aged about 38], because of whose education we have lived in Islamabad. It has been a wonderful life but it has deprived us of living in our culture.” He continued: “Before, we as Khanan were much more available to the common people. But now we have run

¹⁰² The grandiose scale of *gham-khadi* celebrated by Nawab Akbar Khan Hoti in Mardan in a socio-political context during twentieth century British rule is described in the *History of the Hoti Family*, detailing the Nawab's celebration of King George V's Silver Jubilee in an act of “loyalty” (Hoti n.d.: 60). This *khadi* event was celebrated (at the Nawab's personal expense) on the 6th of May 1935. The shops in Khwaja Ganj *Bazaar* were decorated and illuminated and a large procession of horsemen, decorated camels, boy scouts, schoolboys, and dancing girls led the local public of 50,000 men, and gentry in cars. The Nawab supposedly fed some 25,000 people (Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs included). Evening followed with a display of fireworks and continued festive dancing into the night.

away to the cities, our *Khani* (authority) and *zmake* (lands) are left behind. So what we were *Khanan* of is finished.” Voicing resentment at the withdrawal of Khanan’s patronage, the 71-year old family driver of the Nawaban and Bibiane effectively agreed, “we are left in *thawan* (loss) and to God’s mercy (*ao munga khde tha pathe shoo*)”.

Bibiane further debate the degree to which Islamabad-living weakens their conformity to *Pukhtunwali*. Gulloono, a Mardan Bibi, told me how her family made a conscious effort to remain Pukhtun in an unfamiliar environment:

“Living in Islamabad doesn’t mean we live like Sindhis and Punjabis who come here. We continue our traditions: we live segregated lives; we don’t go to mixed parties because we think we may come across someone we know; we avoid our children’s friends’ fathers, we just interact with the mothers. If a man visits our house to meet our husbands, we don’t come down. So all this is part of our culture.”

Yet these practices are only sporadically being kept up; many Bibiane do “mix” more widely. Nor are variations in *Pukhtunwali* localized in city and village respectively. A variety of “modern” modes of consumption and televisual spectatorship, *pardah* observance, inter-gender socializing and *gham-khadi* performance (as shall be discussed in Chapters 3 and 4) are transmitted back from Islamabad to the Frontier. One Bibi acknowledged as much in saying, “the difference [between village and city] was becoming less.”

2.8. Conclusion

Appadurai describes how *rites de passage* “produce locality” in a world where the notion of neighbourhood is threatened ([1986 :180] in Humphrey 1999: 9). Khanan and Bibiane return to their ancestral foyer to perform *gham-khadi*. This return reconnects them to their symbolic origin, which grows increasingly complicated as “locality cannot be taken for granted [since] regular work is needed to maintain it” (ibid).

This chapter has sought to establish the central importance of everyday living conditions for *gham-khadi* events: that of the village-house and sphere of conflictual female relations; of the village-community, of partly erased tenant-landlord relationships; and of the multi-ethnic city with its innovative forms of religious and social practices. My account of a range of Bibiane’s social activities is intended to demonstrate the inherence of specific *gham-khadi* forms within wider networks of visiting. This observation implicitly supports the local conceptualization of *gham-khadi* as

work. The work of “making relationships” requires continual negotiation between kin, affinal, other Bibiane and “helpers”, within an intrinsically dynamic, domestic space characterised by agnatic and affinal rivalry. The elite Pukhtun *kor* has multiple identities between the constantly shifting male/female, private/public, non-political/political and ceremonial/everyday character of the activities that it hosts. The very layout of the house expresses its status as the site of *gham-khadi*, with storerooms for material trappings, courtyards and a general pattern of gender-segregated spaces. Yet typologies of the house evolve with changing family shapes and translocation. Some *kille-koroon* fall into decay when their families move to Islamabad. The frequency of displacement between the city and village for *gham-khadi* means that Bibiane live “like modern-day nomads: sometimes we are here, sometimes there.” Yet while this form of mobility ties directly to globalisation, it also suggests continuities with older Pukhtun practices, such as the periodical egalitarian land redistribution (or *wesh*) among the Yusufzai (Ahmed, A. S. 1976; Barth 1986; Lindholm, Charles 1982). In this way, *gham-khadi* as a practice given meaning by migration both suggests the estrangement of Khanan and Bibiane from their ancestral lands and their reconnection with dependents in ceremonies of gifting and cross-class redistribution.

The “translocality” of elite Pukhtun practices around *gham* and *khadi* makes them a vehicle for the communication of new ideas and goods into remote regions, and the transfer of certain “conventional” ideas to the city (Edwards 1998: 725). As Donnan and Werbner have written, “in migration [. . .] people themselves must manage moral relations spanning great distances and disjunctions of both space and time” (1991: 16). Political and institutional practices, notably those of modern elections, insinuate themselves into “ordinary” everyday *tlal-ratlal* house hospitality. These new influences make conventional practices simultaneously both new and old, generous and self-interested. The constant need for adjustment in styles of female propriety between sites affects *pardah* observance, dress, comportment, and Bibiane’s way of life generally (Gilsenan 1990: 12-13 offers a comparison with the Arab case). “Pukhtun culture is geographical,” says Spongmai, who lives between the Frontier village and Islamabad: “it is like [having] a double personality. You can take off your *chador*, you can go for drives and movies and then you go back to Swat—you wear your *chador*, you can’t go out, you can’t go anywhere, you can’t go to the *bazaar*”.

These contrasting elements construct the “hybridized” substance of Bibiane’s contemporary life. Moving beyond the house for Bibiane, however, should not be understood as their accession to a previously denied agency, but as an extension of their space of agency within the house (Abu-Lughod 1986, 1993a and b, 1998a and b; Nelson

1974; Najmabadi 1998; Tapper, N. 1978). Strathern states powerfully that Hagen women's identity "as persons does not have to rest on proof that they are powerful in some domain created by themselves, nor in an ability to break free from domestic confines constructed by men" (1984: 18; compare Devji 1994). Recognising the full extent of Bibiane's *gham-khadi* responsibilities allows us to grant Bibiane a "quasi-professional status" as household managers, responsible for formal and informal payments to "helpers" and service providers, and for keeping accounts of inter-family indebtedness (Abu-Lughod 1998(a): 12). Translocation to Islamabad potentially heralds a major shift in social organization for Bibiane, with the emotional and financial complexity of female-household relationships giving way to companionable marriages. Meanwhile, the practical problems of *gham-khadi*, as the next chapter shows, persist. The exploration of burials in the following chapter exemplifies such problems as they reinforce and transform Bibiane's sense of Pukhtun identity.

CHAPTER 3

The Work of Mourning: Death and Dismay among Bibiane

“Mother cares not for the mourning of others; she merely fulfils her obligation to add to the mourners” (*Aday me gham tasawe wer garmawe*).¹⁰³

“At the time of mourning everyone cries for their dead” (*Pa wer ke har sook khpal maree la jaree*).

“Without tasting sorrow human experience is incomplete” (*Gham ai na yee, no agha banyadam na de*). (Pukhto proverbs quoted by Bibiane and “helpers” during funerals).

3.1. Introduction

This chapter develops the idea of *gham-khadi* as a form of domestic and extra-domestic work in the context of *gham* funerary gatherings. It seeks to present social forms new to Pukhtun anthropology. While describing patterns of funerary practice, this chapter shows how modified religious movements pluralize the enactment of Pukhto. As case studies illustrate, young and middle-aged Al-Huda Bibiane graduates, accepting a Muslim “obligation” to “command right and forbid wrong”, assert independent decision-making in mourning, superseding certain Pukhto concepts of seniority derived from age (*mashartia*). Conventional practices are not rejected wholesale but adapted, sometimes against familial resistance, into greater conformity with “correct” forms of religion. In exhibiting many of the purportedly essential qualities of *Pukhtunwali*—*purdah* (veiling), *melmastia* (hospitality), and styles of public decorum within a context of agnatic rivalry—*gham* becomes both potentially a site for the reproduction of “custom” and a privileged female arena where female-sponsored transformations may take hold (see Charles Lindholm on the unique prestige of *gham* [1982: 156]).

In this and the next chapter, I describe the participatory acts of guests as meaningful expressions of the work of *gham-khadi* for Bibiane, as these acts affirm social relationships. At death the Pukhtun body is laid to rest in the village soil, with burial drawing Islamabad-residing Bibiane and their families back to the village-house (*kille-keor*) in a symbolic and real linkage with their origins.¹⁰⁴ A large body of anthropological literature suggests, funerals reaffirm social connections, but must also deal with death in its negative aspect of disruption and loss. I am interested in drawing on these texts, not

¹⁰³ Tair and Edwards 1982: 16.

¹⁰⁴ On Turkish burial in the native soil next to kin, see Delaney (1991): “to be buried elsewhere is to be consigned to eternal *gurbet* (exile)” (ibid: 311); compare Fazila-Yacoobali 1999:186. For the Lugbara, “the good death” falls amidst ancestral shrines, while “bad death” occurs away from home (Bloch and Parry 1989: 16).

for their treatment of the cosmological or eschatological ideas (see Hertz 1960; Malinowski: 1982) of various societies, but rather for their representation of mourning as a social act, in which different categories of mourners behave in ways distinct from the wider community.¹⁰⁵ This emphasis, following local ideas in devolving concerns with an afterlife to Islam, yields another set of theoretical issues from the arguably dominant approaches to death within anthropology (see Bloch 1971; 1989) or (Hindu) South Asian ethnography (see Parry 1989). In the context of an argument about the relevance of concepts of “pollution” to Muslims, Das suggests a comparable shift of attention away from the conceptualization of death to “the grief of the mourners and the ‘work’ of mourning” (1986: 182; see also Tapper and Tapper 1987: 87; Vogel comparably points to the etymology of “liturgy” as “the work of the people” [2000: 7]). My account of *gham* attempts in this way to characterize the occasion’s complex sociality, as constituted in a differentiation of levels of participation between attenders. For Das, the possibility of different (or graduated) mourning activities mediates two axiomatic but inadequate understandings of death, which view it as entirely continuous with life or as entirely disjunctive from it. Yet these ideas pertain more to the political ideologies (say, of a timeless order: Bloch 1986), than to forms of sociality which ordinarily arise around the commemoration of death. A more fruitful line of enquiry in relation to *gham* thus “conceptualize[s]...mourners as having the structure of a heterogeneous rather than a homogeneous totality” (ibid.: 197), allowing us to make “connections between individual grief and societal patterns of mourning” (ibid).

Attention to these patterns captures the agency of a range of class of social person over the initial three days. The bereaved family gains credit for hosting a large event (close kin households contribute to the payment for the large meals that feed the guests and poor); Bibiane discharge reciprocal obligations and consolidate bonds with bereaved and other attending women; and the village-poor benefit from the disbursement of food and charity. Some anthropologists argue that death breaches the social fabric (or implicit ideology: see Bloch 1996; Tapper and Tapper 1986: 87), and needs the repair of particular ritual procedures. In contrast, Pukhtuns think death reaffirms certain fundamental constituents of Pukhto through orchestrating them socially. (An individual may have died, but his/her *gham-khadi* network springs up intact.) Bibiane (especially) perform their grief in socially productive ways through the collective performances of mortuary ceremonies. In claiming the emotions for anthropology, Lutz challenges dominant ideas that construe emotions as irrational,

¹⁰⁵ Van Gennep describes mourning as “a transitional period for survivors, enter[ed] through rites of separation and emerge[d] from through rites of reintegration” (1977: 147).

child-like, inferior, devalued and predominantly feminine (1986). Following Lutz, I interpret the varying mourning behaviours (of affines, dependents, village-women, professional mourners) of *gham* participants as “taught” and not always “natural”, thus having some of the character of work (compare Grima 1998: 16; Lindholm, Charles 1988: 231). At funerals, Bibiane express their sorrow through understood decorums, which vary according to their degree of familial and social closeness to the deceased. Personal and family interests at *gham* influence spontaneous feeling, while emotional prostration may alternate with resentment or boredom. The composed appearance expected of Bibiane is difficult to sustain during extended funerary events, which last beyond three initial days of close contact to weekly, monthly and yearly anniversaries, and—in terms of relations with the bereaved family—indefinitely into the future.

3.2. The Sequence of *Gham*

I begin with an account of sequenced events that describe accepted behaviours for specific occurrences. Funerary ceremonies are always carried out over a period of three days in the deceased’s Frontier village-house, with anniversaries marking every Friday until the fortieth day after death (the *salwekhtamma*). This anniversary is also commemorated during the first *Akhtar* (*Eid*, Islamic festival) and after one or, in some cases, two years (*kaal*). A large number of people (ranging between 200 to 2,000) attend these funerals. *Khairat* (the *gham-khadi* meal) is distributed to the entire community, particularly the poor and guests on the ceremonial days and also on Fridays (*Jumme*) until the fortieth day (*salwekhtamma*) of mourning. All Pukhtun relatives and those with whom one does *gham-khadi* are expected to attend the first three days, and then to return to the village-house each Friday until a forty-day period has elapsed, to attend the *salwekhtamma*, and to gather in the village-house (*kille-kor*) after a year (*kaal*). Among Bibiane, close family members and friends stay in the *kille-kor* for forty days (till the *salwekhtamma*). Maids also participate, some live in the house for longer than forty days and are relied upon (*etabar*) as *khpal* (relatives) of the afflicted Bibiane. Funerals usually impose the stipulation that family members of the deceased refrain from attending *khadi* events such as weddings, engagements, and birthdays (but not births) until a year (*kaal*) or two have passed (*thleen*).¹⁰⁶ A Pukhto proverb states, “When there is death, there is no

¹⁰⁶ Compare Ansari 1992: 72; Das 1986: 196; and Metcalf 1982: 19. Among Bibiane mourning is expressed by abstinence from events and things seen as symbols of happiness. A Mardan Bibi said she mourned her father-in-law’s death for a year avoiding other weddings, while his daughters observed *gham* for two years. When she attended her cousin’s wedding the guests there asked her why she had come when her sisters-in-law were still mourning: “I said, the bride is my first cousin and I am *majboora*

khadi (joy)” (*che marg shta khadi neeshta*; Tair and Edwards 1982: 148). Though the passage of a year is marked as a formal event that officially closes the period of death, in some families in both Swat and Mardan the day of the death is marked annually by a charity meal. Charles Lindholm notes that some families in Swat may even hold *thleen* (or “*tlin*”) every year for a decade (1982: 158). This extended, obligatory, and highly formalized pattern of Pukhtun funerals (*gham*) constitutes an established and pervasive convention for Bibiane’s families and more generally for Pukhtuns; this commemoration is widely perceived as “doing Pukhto”.¹⁰⁷ Participation and travel to and from the various events place great strains on Bibiane and their households, particularly on pregnant and nursing mothers, elderly Bibiane, and children left in “the house of *gham*” (*de gham kor*) from morning (10 am) till night (*maghreb*: after sunset). Bibiane returning from Islamabad come under particular pressure to behave appropriately in accordance with a more village concept of Pukhto. Respect to elder sisters-in-law and other affines, and propriety in *purdah* (wearing full-sleeved *kameezoon* and the *sazār*), is demanded. Yet some middle-aged and young educated Bibiane increasingly criticize the extended conventional pattern of *gham*, by calling for more rational, voluntary, and Islamic practices.

My characterisation of *gham* events is elaborated in the form of a time-line.¹⁰⁸ An ongoing *gham-khadi* relationship is expressed by an enquiry visit (*tapos*) to someone who is ill (*najora*), and whose death in old age is anticipated. Friends and family fulfil *tapos* obligations in the ill person’s house or hospital room (if the person, particularly an elderly Bibi, is in Islamabad). This is a preliminary step to observing *gham*. *Tapos* visits meet an obligatory *tlal-ratlal* pattern of reciprocity in hosting. These visits are incumbent on both men and women (compare Abu-Lughod 1986: 67), but the primary burden of enquiry falls on women, who see sick female relatives in person.¹⁰⁹ When the sick person is a man, visitors usually consult his female family members, who stay by his side, even in the city hospital (Grima 1998: 92); in villages Bibiane are barred from visiting hospitals due to segregation, and instead visit female relatives of the patient at his or her house. Grima argues that *tapos* visits for men are less onerous a social procedure:

(obliged)”. Another Mardan Bibi said that after her father’s brother’s death her family marked the mourning by not watching television for six months.

¹⁰⁷ Funerary ceremonies of up to the 40th day are also central to Punjabi Muslim ceremonies, even though they are not stressed as ethnic markers (see Shaw 2000).

¹⁰⁸ In this respect, the ordering of ceremonies in terms of “stipulated” procedures of “archetypal” elements, constitutively observed as the social form of *gham* events, fulfils at least two axiological perquisites of “ritual” as defined by Humphrey and Laidlaw (1994: 88-89).

¹⁰⁹ There is a wide array of reasons for undertaking *tapos* visits such as for accidents, miscarriages, even robbery. A variant of *tapos* is to enquire about a girl for marriage. In illness, however, the immediate female relatives (wives, sisters, daughters, mother, aunts, and sisters-in-law) of the sick person take turns to care for him/her who must also receive constant and unannounced guests.

“simply a casual inquiry after someone, performed in a public space like the *bazaar* or tea shop, with no ritual.” (ibid: 86). In fact, present-day Bibiane and their husbands (with Bibiane specially veiled in a *saxar* for the occasion) typically visit as couples. On arrival they may go to the door of the patient’s room, knock and wait outside, then on directions from the sick person’s kin, proceed to separate, gendered waiting rooms. In Pakistan, visiting hours accommodate conventional visiting practices so that family members may tend a patient all day. Bibiane doing *tapos* will enter the female patient’s room. The sick remain in bed, but may offer Bibiane who come and go throughout the day drinks and fruit. Bibiane’s husbands accumulate in the lobby (if, however, the patient is in intensive care, both sexes may gather in separate spaces of the waiting room). In families whose *purdah* practices are relatively relaxed, the sick person’s female and male relatives meet in the patient’s room sitting on the chairs and floor mattresses. Absence (without adequate reason such as illness) from a *tapos* visit is taken as intentional, or an example of “avoidance”, and risks the severing of future relations. Bibiane describe *tapos* as both compelled by social expectation, and religiously enjoined (*sawab*) by hadith.¹¹⁰ Servants, especially long-standing maids, proved to be particularly observant informants about family participation as indexed by *tapos* attendance: one fifty-year-old maid classified after-comers attending the *gham* after missing the *tapos* as “*baharanai khaz[e]*” (outside or insignificant women) at the funeral, “even if they were as close as aunts or cousins”.

Relatives of the dying person (*zankadan*) undertake different levels of work to prepare for the death. This may include a preparation of emotions and mind, in which family members reconcile themselves to the event. More practically, they prepare the *kille-keor* for the public ceremony. In the case of unexpected death, as in cases of suicide (of which there were three among Khanan and Badshayan during my fieldwork [see Yusufzai 2000]), or accidents involving a young person or a child, mourners may typically say: “*Ai-hai!* (Alas!) s/he did not have a “full life”; s/he wasn’t even ill so that we could have prepared ourselves for the death!” In a contrasting instance, the family members of a twenty-one year-old Bibi who had suffered from a prolonged bout with cancer, told those doing condolence (*afso*) with them that her illness had allowed them to be “mentally prepared” (in English). In laying-out the house of death (*de gham keor*), it is widely held among Bibiane that daughters are “too close” (*neeẖde*) to the deceased to offer practicable hospitality—their place is to mourn, not work. Thus daughters-in-law,

¹¹⁰ *Sahih Al-Bukhari* 1994: 935 [ch.5: 1956]. Quoting the hadith, Bibiane widely say during *tapos* visits that illness purifies from sins (Bukhari 1994: 934 [ch.1: 1949]). Yet *gham*, due to its sorrowful nature, is carefully concealed from persons who are not obliged to attend, for example, the young, the sick, and outsiders (see Grima 1998: 88).

whose *khoog* (hurt) supposedly does not penetrate so deep, do most of the necessary work. In the case of one expected death in Islamabad (of a seventy year-old Bibi who had slipped into a coma on a life-support machine), the daughters-in-law packed their own suitcases, left their children in the care of maids and husbands, and drove to their affinal village-house to prepare the house for death. Arriving in late evening, they opened the locked rooms and windows of the village-house for airing and instructed the male servants, from behind the walls, to summon the morning caterers and arrange the rental of chairs, *shamiane* (courtyard tents), tables and crockery in anticipation of hundreds of mourners. Under these circumstances, the Bibiane also authorised payment from the joint family income.

In conceptualising the “work” of *gham-khadi*, at one level, it is important to note the genuine materiality and effortfulness of female labour—house preparation (keeping in mind the large spaces of village-houses and their rooms) includes Bibiane’s work of opening storerooms and trunks to air a substantial quantity of white sheets, bedding, quilts (*brasthane*), prayer mats, and towels. Work also includes supervising the maids’ jobs of washing bathrooms and of sweeping and dusting all spaces used in the *gham*, many of which will be required for nursing, child-minding, resting and prayers. Bibiane, who may remain in their “old clothes” (their previous day’s clothes) as a sign of full involvement, perform a great deal of preparatory organization (which may include cleaning and dusting). They pay special attention to the space to which the body will return, which may be either the centre courtyard (common in Swat) or else the living room (as in Mardan). The women must be able to gather around the coffin or *kat* (straw bed). If the body is laid indoors, furniture may be moved and white sheets spread over the entire carpeted floor. A few personal rooms and belongings are often locked away, as the house becomes a segregated public space and may be used indifferently by the guests.

Following death, the *gham-kor* is opened to rich and poor members of the village and other Pukhtuns with whom the family has *gham-khadi* reciprocal ties. At this point the segregated spaces of the house—the *kor* for women and the *hujra* for men—are designated as public but strictly gendered spaces. Male family members, previously allowed in the *kor*, are barred from it. As the community is reimagined as an enlarged, and equally suffering, family, family members are absorbed into this wider corporate body for the initial period of the mourning.¹¹¹ From the first announcement of death

¹¹¹ On communal aspects of Punjabi funerals, see Shaw 2000. For a comparison of the communal and public aspect of death in Borneo, see Metcalf, P. 1982: 105. Compare Huntington and Metcalf 1980: 102.

and burial-time over the village mosque loud-speaker, Bibiane begin phoning relatives locally, nationally and internationally, and connected family groupings begin to arrive at the *kille-keor*. On the way to one Bibi's funeral (that of the daughter of President Ayub Khan and wife of the heir apparent of the Wali of Swat), in the back of a car driven by her husband, a relative Bibi of the deceased remarked to me in English:

"All the people of the village will come because, like when a royalty dies in England, everyone would want to offer condolences. In England there are restrictions and the public cannot enter Buckingham Palace, but in Swat it is the opposite, the house is open to the people, so everyone will come."

Indeed, Pukhtuns of all social backgrounds and non-Pukhtun friends are expected to immediately drop everything and see the face of the deceased (*makh katha*), thereby registering the reality of their demise. Many Bibiane told me that if "you do *kille* (literally, "village", here implying the upkeep of social relations) with someone, you have to go immediately for their *gham-khadi* (event) because it is in death that you can judge who your *khpal* (closest) people are".¹¹² The first day of death is the most important. When close relatives or children of a deceased woman do not make the first day, for valid reasons (for instance, being abroad at the time of a death), guests often say with great pity: "Alas! she did not see her mother's face" (*ai-hai! de mor makh a wanakatho*).

With the relocation of so many Bibiane and their families to Islamabad, procedures have been devised for the immediate return of the body to the familial village-house via ambulance.¹¹³ A cortège of cars drives from the city to the female section of the village-house in an order determined by seniority, with *masbaran* leading "youngsters", even when these are adult sons of the deceased and their wives. A large cohort of ululating women greet the corpse, regardless of its gender, which is then laid on a *kat* (straw bed) surrounded by as many as a thousand women straining for a glance of the deceased's face (contrast Darish 1989:130, 133; and Metcalf, P. 1982; 37). As Bibiane arrive throughout the day, they leave their children and maids in a designated room (children often cling to the mother's side, while mothers are themselves under pressure and anxious to fulfil their obligations). Mourners then proceed to offer their condolences to the closest female members of the deceased. The deceased's wife,

¹¹² Local concepts of '*khpal*' may include wide and extended networks of people including non-related people (fictive kin) who may be called "*khpal*" due to mutually good relations and ongoing *gham-khadi* reciprocity. This relationship is locally termed *khpalwali*.

¹¹³ Women of poor *zamindar* (farmer) families working in Islamabad told me that they hired the "flying coach" [van] for the return of their dead to their village-home.

daughters, mother, and sisters sit on the floor by the body and touch its head, hands, or feet (the body of a person who has died by accident, suicide, or illness is not displayed).¹¹⁴ Daughters of the deceased remain seated, while daughters-in-law may stand to receive guests and see to their comfort and needs. With each arrival of a close relative, women renew their wailing; some village women, strike their chests and temples, while other women restrain their hands; the mourners reply with cries of “*pre me da!*” (leave me!). The closer the mourner is to the deceased, the louder the crying on her arrival (Grima 1998: 58-63). Through this period, the *kor* is for the women participants transformed into a scene of turmoil (compare Bloch 1996: 215).

Men’s mourning space is confined to the *hujra* where guests sit on chairs or stand and may discuss various socio-political and economic issues; in contrast, the women, in the *kor*, mourn through emotional and bodily involvement, sitting on floor-mattresses and white sheets in positions of unaccustomed discomfort. Bibiane remove their shoes before entering the room and some hold up their hands in prayer (*laas niwa*) before gathering around the body. The lying-in room is conceived as a place of purity; it later hosts prayer and the women’s collective consumption of the evening meal.¹¹⁵ Bibiane see themselves as central by virtue of their proximity to the body, and its visibility. Men’s position in the *hujra* is apparently comparatively marginal.

The body in the *kor* is dressed for burial according to decorum. The head is carefully covered in a continuation of *pardah* observance, with a *topai* (cap) for the male corpse and a veil for the female (Naveed-i-Rahat 1990: 110; Papanek 1982: 11). The clothed body is further covered in layers of white bed sheets, blankets, and quilts. If the deceased is male, his body is washed by the village mullah and several of his own personal male-servants. In contrast, companion-maids or *weenzee-marai* (who may have bathed her during illness) see to a woman’s corpse; more recently, relatives (daughters-in-law, sisters-in-law) have taken on a decisive role in directing this aspect of the work of mourning. Bathing is performed in a manner comparable to ablution for purity and prayers (*awdas-charadam, wadu*). Between three to seven ablutions lave the entire body, requiring several new bars of soap (*sabun*), scent, and oil; black *ranja* (kohl), in the case of women, is applied to the eyes and sometimes eyebrows. The washed hair is braided in

¹¹⁴ Accidental or youthful death is seen as amounting to martyrdom (*shahid*) and deserving of paradise (“*jannat*”). Women always remember the good and talk well of a deceased person (even if the relationship between them was a hostile one). When the news of a person’s death is first released it is said that s/he has reached the truth, (God) (*agha haq waraseda/o*).

¹¹⁵ Contrastingly, on female pollution through proximity to corpses, see Bloch 1996; Huntington and Metcalf 1980: 64; on the corpse as both pure and polluting, see Parry 1989: 79.

three plaits and wrapped in several layers of white cotton cloth.¹¹⁶ Cotton wool is placed in the nostrils and orifices, before the prepared body is laid in a *kaffan* (coffin). The surrounding women may bend over the body of an elder and say, “*ombarak sha*” (congratulations), on having lived a “complete life” (*poora jwand*). Strikingly, *khadi* ceremonies (centrally births and weddings) are the only other occasions on which the phrase is uttered, suggesting that death is subsumed into a more integral understanding of the life-cycle (*gham-khadi*).

The order of *gham* ceremonies both conforms to and diverges from *Pukhtunwali* gender norms. Grima asserts that women mourn by violating *purdah* (by casting off their veil (1998: 39)). Bibiane, however, carefully observe *purdah* on the first day of the funeral. The agitation displayed in the *kor* contrasts with the more sober and controlled actions of the men in the *hujra*. These gendered spaces are, however, trespassed during the Pukhtun burial procedure. Around 4 o'clock in the evening of the first day before *makham moonz* (fourth prayer), about ten to fifteen of the deceased's close male family members enter the *kor* even though many women there, particularly in Mardan, would normally be sequestered from them. The men and women do not speak to each other. The men instead cover the *kaffan* with another cloth (often green and embossed with Quranic verses), and stand in place to lift it away. The women begin to wail loudly, as they realize that the body is about to be borne out of their arena. Close female relatives tear at the *kaffan* cloth from all sides. Some women throw themselves upon the corpse, while men hurriedly push the *kaffan* free. Women who otherwise express the greatest care over their deportment now struggle bodily against the pall-bearers. In this short dramatic sequence, boundaries between male and female, *kor* and *hujra*, norm and exception, and this life and the next momentarily dissolve. For the Bibiane, who are prohibited from attending the interment, the bearing of the body from the *kor* indicates the deceased's social death.¹¹⁷

The rituals of the first day of a funeral end with a meal, cooked, prepared and served on behalf of close kin to guests and the village poor. Styles of consumption vary according to family relationship to the deceased and understood social position. Though wealthier guests (as *mara* [satisfied] people) take food, there is an underlying sense that eating in the house of the dead is shameful for Bibiane, befitting only the poor (*wúge*

¹¹⁶ *Da oobo na oobasee* is the Pukhto phrase meaning, “to take out of water” or to bathe the body. On water as purifier and indicator of “change of state”, see Metcalf, P. 1982: 145, 147, 151. Among Pukhtuns water (bath: *lāmbal*; or “*pāk*-bath” in convent English) indicates ablution at significant *gham-khadi* or life phases: before five daily prayers; at marriage, after the fortieth day of birth; on becoming a *dai* (wet-nurse); after menstruation, sexual contact, and at death.

¹¹⁷ On male Pukhtun death and burial, see Lindholm, Charles 1982: 156-158; Singer 1982: 135-136. Compare Delaney 1991: 313; Jeffery 1979: 21.

[hungry] people).¹¹⁸ Bibiane are served meals first, and accept them under duress. Such “formality” or “*sath*” leaves food on the table, which is then descended upon by village-women and children, who conceal plastic bags of leftovers under *sazare* to take back to their homes. The bereaved (widow, daughters, mother, and sisters of the deceased) refuse food entirely, rejecting the persistent offers of relatives with the words “*zra me mor de*” (my heart is full) with “*khabgaan*” (sadness) (Lupton 1996: 36).¹¹⁹ This rejection of food accords the emotions a measure of rationality or social sense in Pukhtun contexts. After the evening meal and prayer, messages will be sent for Bibiane through maids by husbands and sons, and most women disperse. Bibiane are picked up at the entrances of the *dewdai* along with children and maids with ideally as little *pardah* violation as possible. A small number of “close” Bibiane (according to socio-familial relations, including women from the mother’s side, father’s side, husband’s mother’s side, husband’s father’s side, offspring, their spouses and families, and offspring’s offspring and their spouses) stay with the bereaved relatives in the *kor*. The presence of twenty to fifty such women, who will reminisce about the deceased, is considered healing. One Bibi, whose father died, remarked, “women’s talk during *gham* distracts from the loss and diverts the thoughts”.

The customary second day of *gham* begins with the 10 o’clock arrival of the guests who were present on the first day. This day is often marked by a *qul*, or Quranic *khattam*, reading of the Quran (Dube 1969: 52). In the living room or verandah, large clean white sheets are laid over the floors and trays of date stones and beads are placed in the centre for the telling of short verses (see Gellner 1993: 143). A group of elderly Bibiane and a few younger women sit in a circle, systematically reciting. Other Bibiane simultaneously read the entire 30 *siparas* of the Quran. Some women look on and talk; others excuse themselves as “*na-pāk*” (unclean, or in a state of menstruation). The effort of recital is understood as redounding to the *sawab* (religious merit) of the departing soul of the deceased. Meals mark the end of rituals and the (second) day.

The third day of mourning, the “*thdrayemma*” (from *thdray*, third), is less intense for the bereaved and other mourners. One woman who had lost her mother told me that the first day of a *gham* is like fire (*wor*), the second like burning coal (*skara*) and the third ash (*heera*) (compare Huntington and Metcalf 1980: 105). With the exception of the

¹¹⁸ I was told that the people of Buner (south of Swat) do not eat in the house of the deceased and take their own tea to the *hujra* because: “the food cooked in the house of the deceased is forbidden, ‘*haram*’.”

¹¹⁹ This phrase is also used in a context of extreme anger and interpersonal dissatisfaction “*zre me te mor sho*”, signifying a desire to break off relations. In some parts of Swat the deceased’s immediate family and sometimes the entire village is obliged to fast for three days (Lindholm, Charles 1982: 157).

widow and daughters, the Bibiane sometimes dispense with the *sazar* on the third day and wear colourful clothing and light jewellery, such as diamond earrings and gold bangles. While older women and a few younger women (including those both with and without Al-Huda training) adhere to covering the head, others intentionally remove the veil as a mark of informality. On one of my *laas niwa* visits that occurred on the third day of a death, I wore the *sazar* over my head to visit a reputedly “conservative” Pukhtun family’s home; a young married Bibi immediately asked, “where is your *loopata* (chiffon veil)?” When I answered “in the car”, she said, “on the third day you should not wear a *sazar* over your head, just a veil (across the neck); can you see anyone with a *sazar* except older women and maids?” Though (self)-authorised to impose moral decisions and determine meanings, this young woman saw herself as imparting advice to a “friend,” rather than treating a guest uncivilly. On the third day following death, friends and relatives, especially those who live abroad and only meet during collective *gham* or *khadi* gatherings, express their feelings with less restraint. Groups of women and girls may joke, gossip, and even laugh aloud.¹²⁰ After the evening meal and prayer, guests return to their home cities and villages (as far as six hours away). The immediate family of the deceased remain in the *kille-kor* for forty days. On departure, other guests are reminded to return for the consecutive *Jumme* (Fridays) and particularly for the Fortieth day, or *salwekhtamma*.

The *salwekhtamma* is customarily marked by the gathering of people and a *khairat* feast for the poor, signalling the end of relatives’ confinement to the *kor* (Metcalf, P. 1982: 261). One Khan told me that he registered his father’s death only after the forty days and the formal departures of the mourners. Unlike the first unrestricted three days of death, families increasingly invite people to the *salwekhtamma* by phone. The bereaved speak fondly of those who make the effort to attend. Conversely, they criticize non-attenders openly and retaliate by not reciprocating their *gham-khadi*. Though the *salwekhtamma* is thought of as a Pukhto rather than Islamic practice, people put themselves out to attend, knowing the offence that omission would cause.

¹²⁰Charles Lindholm goes so far as to describe funerals as “like a vacation for [women]” (1982: 156); compare Huntington and Metcalf 1980: 2.



Figure 19 - Old *qabar* (built structure at rear) juxtaposed against new grave

Pukhtun Bibiane also commemorate the year anniversary (*kaal, thleen*), which ends familial *khadi* prohibitions and closes the socially demarcated mourning-period (Metcalf, P. 1982: 262). Guests are invited by word of mouth or telephone, and the village-house is prepared for hospitality. *Shamiane* are put in the courtyards, and caterers set chairs and tables for the *khairat* meal. Men dress in clean white clothes; women wear somber colours but expensive materials. A Quranic *khattam* is carried out with date seeds on white sheets in the *kor*. Women collectively lift their palms and bless the deceased on completion of each prayer. Bibiane and their families also return to village-houses for the festival of *Akhtar* (the two *Eids* celebrating the Abrahamic sacrifice, and the end of fasting in the month of Ramadan), with the family reunion after death explicitly styled as an act of remembrance.

3.3. Decorum and Expression in *Gham*

Pukhtun funerals demand certain behaviours from men, women, family and villagers, which enact the work of *gham-khadi*. “Work” in the local usage refers to both enacted emotion and physical effort. Das’s theory of the heterogeneous structure, or collectivity, of mourners allows us to determine “the structure behind . . . spontaneous and often unbearable expressions of personal sorrow” (1986: 188), as people behave in ways acceptable on the basis of their social relationship with the dead. Within such a structure, or at least formalised articulation of relationships, kin may injure themselves mildly; sisters-in-law look after guests, and visitors sustain a level of decorum at all

times. Those who fail to adopt an appropriate demeanour or social understanding of the collaborative labour of “making” the ceremony risk being dismissed behind their backs as *lewanai* or *kamaql* (mad, senseless). Within the normal allocation of roles, though, there is scope for individual variation in social manoeuvring.

On entering the *gham-kor*, Bibiane usually announce themselves with “*salaam-a-laikum*” (peace be with you), to which the reply is “*walaikum-salaam*” (and peace be on you). Yet in certain conditions of personal and familial conflict or in the extremity of grief, salutations are avoided. Closely-related Bibiane may express the depth of their sorrow through the negation of greeting, making their way to the closest female relative of the deceased, embracing them, and crying aloud with them. Women bow their heads to each other’s shoulders, muffling their sobs. This restrained expression of grief is considered dignified, and forges bonds to the family afflicted by *gham*. Abu-Lughod notes in relation to crying:

“Not only may such shared emotional experiences enhance the sense of identification that underpins social bonds, but participation in rituals that express sentiments might also generate feelings like those the person directly affected is experiencing, thus creating an identification between people where it did not spontaneously exist” (1986: 69).

Through *gham*, individuals of both sexes create ties of obligation, responsibility and care. Both strategy (in the Barthian sense) and disinterest may come into play. Amongst the whole gathering of mourning women in the *kor*, there are also “sub-groups” and sub-networks of *gham-khadi* to which individual Bibiane are affiliated in multiple, sometimes entangled ways. Bibiane of all ages will be thoughtful not only of the closest mourner (widow, daughter, mother of the deceased) to whom she will incline herself in *dua* or *laas niwa* (prayer), but also of various women with whom, on the basis of family connection, she will normally sit throughout the day. Women swathed in white *sazare* and bowed under the pressures of distress, exhaustion, hunger, and the anxieties of social conformity through the *kor* during women’s *gham*. “Extreme” or “symbol[ically] excess[ive]” female mourning behaviour—loud weeping, the beating of breasts, and fainting—both participates in a religious or cosmological understanding—conjoining the states of life and death (Das 1986: 197)—and “produces” grief socially. *Gham* is an occasion which is like typologically similar *gham-khadi*, and reasserts ethnic continuity through and against the deceased’s death. In this sense, the hosting role played by

widows remains paramount.¹²¹ She may stand in the centre of hundreds of women, receive female relatives' *gham-khadi* money, and answer the enquiries about the manner of her husband's death.

The sense of social discrimination as it exists around the display of grief and fortitude is very precise (see Das *ibid*: 196 on "the differential symbolic functions of . . . family mourners and professional mourners"). In bereavement, Pukhtun women often engage in a ritualized funeral lament known as *ghare* (dirge) (compare Huntington and Metcalf 1980: 74). In one *dai*'s funeral, the daughters of the deceased intoned in Pukhto, "*ya zama khdaya*" (Oh my God) [this is repeated in extended phrasal units], "*Alai zama khwaga mor mra shwa, ya moro pasa sta melmana chak chapera raghale dee* (Alas, my sweet mother is dead. Oh mother, arise, your guests have come, standing all around you)". Even in death, the necessities of hospitality in hosting are not forgotten. This chanted lament was intermitted with weeping and comparatively shorter chants, repeated in intense and sustained cycles. In this example, a daughter grieves her mother:

"We all depended on *Moro* (mother); father was not so strong (*kamzora*). We all gathered around Mother. But now what will happen to us? And what will become of Father? And what of Akhtar Ali, our youngest brother? *Ya khdaya, ya khdaya* (Oh God). He said he would never live without our mother. But look! He lives. And so do we. *Ya khdaya, ya khdaya*. You should have taken me instead of our mother. You could have waited till all her children were married. She has unmarried children! And what of them? *Ya khdaya, ya khdaya*. Now who can I call '*moro*? *Ya zama khdaya*, she was my mother as well as my father."

Such formulae are often personalised for the deceased through the insertion of short anecdotes adverting to those left behind. Women who might otherwise keep *purdah* of the voice now express grief, sadness, vulnerability and dependency in a segregated public context (compare Abu-Lughod 1986: 198). Propriety, however, still governs the expression of grief as it relates to class position. I have seen poor women perform relatively more intense *ghare* than Bibiane, who rather than wailing and beating themselves are more likely to cry, faint or talk about their grief and loss. In the funerals of Bibiane, professional female mourners perform the most demonstrative *dirge*. Bibiane who cry excessively during the funeral are reminded to endure with patience (*sabar*) and

¹²¹ "[T]hose most affected by the death are drawn into the centre of the community when they might otherwise feel most impelled to renounce it." (Durkheim. In Giddens 1978: 96).

to accept God's will (*qismat*), as relatives and guests, referring to the death say, "it is God's work" (*de Khde Pāk kaar de*) (see Ahmed, A. S. 1991: 261).

Men's expression of grief is characteristically more muted but those who cry in public at the time of taking away their mother's body from the women's space, for example, are discussed by the female spectators as having a *kamzora zre* (weak heart) (compare Das 1986: 198; Grima 1998: 61; Lindholm, Charles 1982: 156). For men, regardless of their personal grief, "immobility and silence are the only languages available" (Das 1986: *ibid*). For women—as in *gare* or spoken words in death—speeches become ritualized as they invoke repeatable verse-forms and set phrases. Both sexes, however, are expected to avoid laughter in mourning, which is emphasized in the following verse by Rehman Baba (n.d.), a renowned Pukhtun poet (compare Bowen, J. C. E. 1982: 13):

What happened to those handsome people . . .
I cannot laugh with those around me
I'm mourning those departed people...
(from *Waste*. Enevoldsen 1993: 83).

Those who laugh inappropriately at funerals may be remembered critically for a long time. In one case, an elderly woman called "Aunty" by Bibiane, the daughter of a powerful *dai* (wet-nurse), whispered to me how an elder, Jahan Bibi, had acted with little social sense (*kam-aql*) and breached the mourning code. "Aunty" remembered the forty-year old incident, where a child had died from the family into which Jahan Bibi was married, and Jahan Bibi had been seen talking and laughing (*khandal*) during the first day of the funeral:

"Thousands of people had collected in the village-house (*khalak raghwand shoo*), there was tremendous crying! But Jahan Bibi lacked understanding, she was laughing! A *kam-aql* person laughs, she did not consider the propriety of the event (*kam-aqla wa dase a khandal. Napoyeda, kam-aqla banda khandee- mauke ta a na katal*). In *gham*, you are supposed to show *khabgan* (sadness)! It made me so angry that I told *mashra* Bibi (the elder Bibi of the deceased's house): 'what sort of a *khaṛa* (woman) is this! She is laughing' (*da sanga khaṛa da, da kho khandee*)!"

Even the slightest deviation from decorum—a smile, for instance—may be misconstrued as an expression of happiness during the mourning period. This exposes

in-married younger Bibiane to the “*peeshare*” (mocking) of affines and observers. The place of in-married women like Jahan Bibi is particularly uncertain, as they are not yet emotionally attached to their in-laws’ “hurt” (*khooog*), and they have not yet established *gham-khadi* relations as a means of building their own social standing.

Bibiane require much self-control to profess the appropriate and expected emotions over the initial three days of a funeral. The Pukhto proverb, “people weep, but the damsel laughs” (*kehalak jaree, kbo peghla khandi*; Tair and Edwards 1982: 191), reflects a distinction between the uncultivated behaviour of youth and the developed social sense (*aqal*) inculcated with age. In this context, feigned emotions enjoin the precepts of religious and cultural *aqal*; they “serve a legitimate end, for the Prophet himself taught that one should pretend to weep if one did not do so naturally, in order to cultivate the appropriate emotion” (Metcalf, B. D. 1984a: 10). Bibiane described this mindful simulation as onerous (*grana da*). Funerals are occasions on which members of an extended family may see their relatives and friends after long periods, sometimes years, of intermission. While the first day is grave, succeeding days are characterized by the sadness of the occasion and the underlying excitement of the reunion. Bibiane’s skill in carrying themselves at the formal *gham* thus relates to their ability to evade the proscriptive attention of “society” to engage meaningfully with distant friends and cousins.

Different voices respond to the pressures of *gham* by counselling some form of reversion to scripture. Asma, a convent-educated Bibi, now in her mid forties, with a diploma from Al-Huda, told me at a funeral in Mardan: “a man’s *laash* (Urdu: corpse) should be brought to the men’s space, not the womens’; the burial should be quick, and the time-span cut short so that people don’t have time to laugh and ‘do fashion’. When *gham* goes on beyond three days, it turns into one big party: people laugh, joke, and feast” (compare Drucker-Brown 1982: 714). Asma’s words reflect debates about the length of Pukhtun mourning and its violation of the three days prescribed by Islam. Bibiane hold varied opinions about these issues. On the fortieth day of a funeral in which I participated, many of the female guests sat in sub-groups, while certain village women proficiently performed the Quranic *khattam*. Small verses were read over date seeds in order to keep count of the recitation. In contrast to the hundreds of Bibiane sitting in the courtyard, only twelve married Bibiane of various ages from 23 to 65 took part in the read-through. The elderly Bibiane were from the local village, while the Bibiane aged between 23 and 45 had returned from Islamabad. One of the village women, a professional mourner, raised her voice and sang in Pukhto during a moment of silence:

“Where are the beautiful people of this house? This world is a temporary residence, the final world is eternal - how far have you people wandered - you are only involved in the *show sha* (superficial acts) of this world.”

On hearing the village woman sing religious themes, one hijab-wearing Bibi in her late thirties, a regular student at Al-Huda, walked away from this gathering, saying that she found the idea of a *khattam* mixed with singing both offensive and un-Islamic. However, a much older Pukhtun Bibi (in her mid-60s) in this group, unaware of the reason for the younger Bibi's departure, told the singer: “Such a beautiful voice you have; sing more about religion (*deen*).” I often had experiences of this kind of multiplicity and variability in Bibiane's reactions to situations, which tested their notions of what was acceptably “Islamic” in *gham-khadi* settings.

For some types of death, notably suicide, Islam prohibits funeral attendance, yet many Bibiane and their husbands consider these funerary ceremonies obligatory to the practice of Pukhto. Following the funeral of an individual known to have shot himself, I witnessed one group of Bibiane and Khanan debate the morality of holding the burial in the conventional Pukhtun way. The eldest Khan, Lala, said that attending a *marg* (funeral) was “compulsory; it *has* to be done...” His wife, Zainab, disagreed: “But in Islam suicide is *gunah* (sinful), and the burial prayer [*da janaze moonz*] is not accepted; a *janaza* (formal communal burial performed by men) is not permitted; and the body should be bathed and then buried without any usual ceremonies. It is a great sin even to attend the ceremony of a person who commits suicide”. This Bibi, who lives in Peshawar and had not attended Al-Huda, felt empowered by conversations with her relatives (who were Al-Huda scholars), and challenged her husband on the basis of Islamic knowledge. He replied defensively: “Yes, I know, but I *had* to attend; I was doing Pukhto” [in English]. Ejaz, Lala's male cousin, asked: “If you had known [attending was sinful] would you still have attended this funeral?” Lala replied ambiguously and deferred to Pukhto, “I would have attended only to console the deceased's family”. The exchange illustrates the force Pukhto imperatives place on *gham-khadi* members. The stimulus for re-considering Pukhto practices comes from Bibiane by appealing to an alternative religious standard.

Bibiane's work in *gham* partakes both of spontaneous impulses and of a learnt order of emotion, which may be deployed with reference to personal interest (see Grima 1998: 6; and Goody 1962: 22). Parveen Bibi told me:

“Crying in death is sharing the grief (of the bereaved). The poor may cry more because they will get more in *warkra* (gifts/rewards). If they cry a lot and you don’t give them anything they will tell people, ‘Oh, I performed so much *khahgān* (sadness, crying), and they did not [reciprocate] materially’.”

Emotional intensity at weddings, births, or funerals does not negate the awareness of social relationships among Bibiane but rather sharpens it. These events allow people to assess their place in social networks. Both the inter-affinal competition and the wider social regulation of funerals generate discourse among Bibiane and introduce the terms required for transforming “custom”.

3.4. Obligations Upon Kin: Food and Hospitality

In *gham*, certain fundamental features of *Pukhtunwali*, such as *melmastia* (hospitality), surround the actual deposition of the body. The obligatory communal meals (*de khairat dodai*) is foremost among these features. The word “*khairat*” derives from “*khair*” (peace; wholesomeness; goodness), and denotes a form of Islamic charity. The giver and the recipients garner religious merit when food, money and clothes are provided for the poor, the needy, and relatives. Mortuary rituals significantly impact the hosting family financially, given the cost of food preparation, which includes the payment of labour and hired cooks (*degmaran*, named after their large metallic vessels, *degs*).¹²² Relatives, who are forced by social pressures into significant expenditure, seemingly volunteer in order of seniority to pay for the *khairat* meal which is served to the entire assemblage of guests. It is said that the fire in the *gham-kor* should not burn for the three days after a death, so the relatives of the deceased serve and donate *khairat* meals on these days, on Fridays, on the fortieth day and even on the *kaal*.¹²³ The house-context described in Chapter 2 is thus turned inside-out, as relatives and members of the village host the immediate bereaved. In contrast to Bibiane’s *ghamoona*, poorer villagers practice a system of *tal-tole*, or a sharing of expenses incurred in *gham-khadi* among poor village households (Barth 1986: 31-35). Each wealthy household (including its Bibiane and maids) take the opportunity to arrange, finance, prepare, serve and host the

¹²² Compare Baily 1957: 64; and Metcalf, P. 1982: 22.

¹²³ The *khairat* meal is also sent from a poorer household to that of Bibianes’. One Bibi explained: “when my sister’s *Abay* (wet-nurse) died her sons cooked *degoona* (large pots) of rice and sent it to our house”, illustrating the variety of pathways of dependence and reciprocity between Bibiane and wet-nurses.

communal meal.¹²⁴ Different aspects of the “work” of mourning—publicly attested grieving and the practical work of inter-class solidarity—are in this way divided amongst women according to their relationship to the dead person.

Meals served at funerals often consist of chicken (*charg*), rice (*wreeje*), meat curry (*engwale*; beef or mutton); spinach (*saba/saag*), and tea. Pukhtuns consider food without chicken or *ghwakha* (cow or goat meat) *tasha* (empty; unfulfilling) or *spaka* (light, unprestigious), as indicated below.¹²⁵

Table 4 - Food hierarchy

High status (meat)	= <i>charg</i> , chicken: “good food” (<i>droon khwarak</i>)
Intermediary	= <i>kacha ghwakha</i> , small meat (i.e. lamb meat) = <i>ghatta ghwakha</i> , big meat i.e. cow (<i>ghwa</i>), buffalo (<i>mekha</i>)
Low status	= <i>daal</i> lentils: “poor person’s food” (<i>de gharib khwarak</i>)

Bibiane say that “when there is a crowd in *gham-khadi* (the donor should) offer the guests chicken and meat” (*che garna ye khalak charg-ghwakha warkai*). Cooked rice without meat is said to be “*wache wreeje*” (dry rice). Pukhtuns generally consider *gham-khadi* meals without meat inadequate, particularly when the meal is being offered by a household as a form of gift (Shaw 1997). Hosts present meat dishes in large tray-like receptacles that run across a series of tables along one side of the courtyard. Younger girls and Bibiane themselves carry the trays to serve *masharane* (elders). Guests appear impolite and non-participatory when they refuse to eat. People evaluate a family’s discharge of *gham* according to the quality and quantity of food at a funeral meal and to the copiousness of attendance. Hundreds of guests carefully observe, critique, and praise the women who provide the meal.

Operating within what Gilsenan describes as the “fields of force” made up by the overlapping of different moral rubrics and societal expectations, Bibiane display their own family honour as they make, sustain and police relationships (1990: 173) at *gham* occasions. They also exhibit their capacity as “important demonstrators of the status of their protectors” to challenge (or accept a challenge from) others (Papanek 1982: 8). Bibiane may raise, for example, the alleged non-reciprocation in their own

¹²⁴ As one *kasabgara* maid remarked: “when there was a *gham* amongst the *naikan* (elite) I’d wash the dishes, and collect all the bedding, sometimes wash the dead, and *sambal* (collect) everything for the death.”

¹²⁵ On the significance and meanings of meat among Durrani Afghan Pashtuns during religious festivals, see Tapper and Tapper 1986: 64-67; compare Ikramullah 1992: 27.

festivities by other attenders. Cousins and sisters-in-law may use errors and misconduct to “put” a Bibi “down in order to put herself higher”. With such perceptions and matters of deportment, a Bibi’s closest kin and affines (who may be rivals) constantly evaluate her reputation. Bibiane also care about the views of village women, as their gossip shapes Bibiane’s reputation in the *kille*. A Bibi’s “sacred self is most at risk in public, [and] has to be ...jealously maintained by constant awareness of others’ behaviour [and observation]. Everything is on show in such a setting” (Gilsenan 1990: 173). In this “symbolic game of ‘seeing’” for Gilsenan (ibid: 190), *gham* participation presents many risks. Women, under the knowledge that they may at any time be “under observation” (ibid), constantly reiterate behavioral rules and tacit norms at these ceremonies.

Daughters’-in-law service of the meal elicits much attention as they reflect the Bibianes’ affinal household investment in the funeral. These Bibiane rush about laying plates, dishes, and serving spoons (for up to a thousand people) ensuring the plates and glasses are clean, inspecting water jugs, and coordinating the timing that dishes are brought to the table. Each household competes to present meals “better than others” (*de bal na kha*). In this way, households “up the ante”, to adapt a phrase of Grima’s for inter-female rivalry, on their kin and affines (1998: 75-76, 78). Like *kor* hosting, successful *gham-khadi* hosting appears effortless and provides relaxed service, regardless of the laborious preparation. Some Al-Huda Bibiane express dismay about “feasting” on such “sober and sad occasions”, one stating: “I personally feel that instead of giving such lavish lunches and dinners for the rich at the time of death, one should collect that money and give it to the poor”.

After the Bibiane lay out the meal, they call individual attenders (anxiously and knowing they will be judged) to come for the meal. Every guest must be served before the hosts eat. Elders are not expected to rise, so Bibiane and maids ferry tables, trays, dishes, and drinks to the different rooms, verandas, and corners of the courtyard where groups of older women gather. Guests, particularly elders, will repeatedly be offered more food and drink (compare Singer 1982: 27 on male hospitality). After the meal, many guests will want to wash their hands and say their prayers, so prayer mats (*janimaṣṣoona*) and rooms must be prepared beforehand. Many Bibiane (both guests and hosts) say that the emotional and physical intensity of *gham* provoke heightened levels of “tension” (in English), provoking severe headaches and bodily pains. In many funerals, I saw various Bibiane take aspirins and strong “mixed” tea with milk (*teṣ gad wad che*) as cures when the day turned to evening (see Macfarlane and Macfarlane 2003: 46, 255).

Although the wider circle of immediate relatives (siblings, first cousins, sons-in-law, other relatives) and even some village members take on feast obligations, many responsibilities revert to the bereaved after their designated period of grief. When a senior Bibi dies, the daughters, even ones younger than the deceased Bibi's sisters/sisters-in-law, distribute her clothes, jewellery, personal effects, and books. Sororal and affinal Bibiane have a keen awareness of the material work required in the *kor* for *gham* preparations. One Pukhtun Bibi in her forties returning from Islamabad, told a group of Bibiane after the *Asr* (noon) prayer: "we should all leave now; it will be less of a burden on the people of the house. You know, it is a difficult time and *gran kaar* (difficult work) to entertain guests when the *korwala* (house-women) are burdened with their own grief." She took a group of ten Bibiane with her to her brother's house in the same village.

After the three days, mourning lapses into a secondary and more extended period during which the death is absorbed into the texture of family and village life. During this period, mourners gradually assume their former visiting activities. Within the village, as noted by Charles Lindholm, a sense of pollution accompanies the death, particularly regarding the ablution of corpses (1996: 36).¹²⁶ Bibiane, in contrast, are not so scrupulous that they shun the deceased's clothes—cashmere shawls or embroidered veils—which have personal value. After the three days, relatives who missed the initial ceremonies, through illness or absence from the country, are welcomed, indeed expected, to personally express their condolences (*dua*, prayer) to the deceased's daughters (Chapter 2 showed how these procedures may be performed in Islamabad). The patterns of timely, deferred or omitted performance of *gham-khadi*, besides the pace of mourners' reintegration into full *tlal-ratlal*, suggest the articulation of a Pukhtun experience of time in relation to commemoration of "life-events". When paying a deferred condolence visit, women keep their head covered, perform the *laas niwa*, then inquire about the death and burial, no matter how well these events are known. The visit expressing consolation or congratulation following a *gham* or *khadi* has affinities to the *tapos* or illness enquiry, as Grima showed in her typology of the "formulaic apology" (1998: 88). A visitor states:

1. How she found out about the death (i.e. who brought the news);
2. How she responded;
3. Why she was delayed, and came as soon as she could for the *tapos* (ibid: 103).

¹²⁶ Comparatively, death, in Japanese folk belief, pollutes (*kegare*) while ritual purifies (*hare*) (Namihiro 1987). Compare Bloch 1971; Bloch and Parry 1989: 14; Seaman 1981: 382.

A non-participant must account for her family's absence to a satisfactory level of detail, not merely stating but acting out her grief when she heard of the loss. Visitors share in mourning by virtue of their place in linkages of family relationship, obligation and communication, so that the performance of *gham-khadi* obligations crystallizes a certain order of sociality. On the side of the host, *melmastia* obliges Bibiane to offer a whole meal spontaneously to all visitors at any time of the day, following the proverb, "whether it is raining or hailing, give the guest the best hospitality" (*Ka barān we ka galai melma ghware kha nwarai*; Tair and Edwards 1982: 251). After this reciprocal enactment of *tlal-ratlal*, social relations between individuals and families resume to a formal level.

Failure to attend a person's *gham* entails serious consequences for continued social interactions with a slighted family. As Abu-Lughod observes among the Bedouins in the context of the Middle East, "[t]he worst form of trouble, of course, is death. Not to go to a camp in which a person has died, if you have any link...to that person...is to sever the tie" (1986: 67). Such consequences characterize the general sociality of Bibiane and their families, even in circumstances where late attendance is bound up in other conditions of modernity, cosmopolitanism and change (ibid; and Strathern 1972: 176, 182). Even close relatives who miss the initial three days are not invited for the Fortieth. In Marium's words, "that's their clear way of telling you that they are sad or they are snubbing you". In one case, a Khan's mother died while her son, Jahangir, accompanied her sister (his mother-in-law and aunt) to the UK for a medical check-up. He could only fly back four days later, after the three days. Jahangir took offense when his wife (who is his materilateral parallel cousin) reported that a younger nephew-in-law failed to come on the first two funeral days, and declared the end of relations between his immediate family and the renegade. The nephew, who is related to both Jahangir and his wife, had been embroiled in a land dispute with his aunt, which had strained the men's relationship. Jahangir said, "I considered him 'like a son'. Fighting is in its own place; but *gham* is in its own place. As he did not do it with us, my relationship with him has finished for life! Finished! Finished!"

The incident illustrates the agency and privileged role Bibiane have in *gham-khadi* directing male political, or factioneering, behaviour in other contexts. Bibiane serve as family custodians, "keeping the score" of goodness (*khawale*) and neglect in *gham-khadi*, and so determining the form of male and inter-family reciprocity for generations.

3.5. “Clothing Matters”

For Bibiane, mourning symbolises a range of requisite actions and self-presentation (dark clothes without decorative patterns, make-up or jewellery). Tarlo (1996) uses the title “Clothing Matters” to suggest the rich semantic implication of dress in statements of political belief and social role in a South Asian context. Many Bibiane in their 60s recall wearing the plainest clothes throughout the three days of morning in Swat and Mardan, just two decades ago. A woman’s self-neglect expressed her grief. However, as I was repeatedly told, this “simplicity” has “changed”. In present funerals, even bereaved Bibiane change their clothes daily. On the third day and Fridays, many distant family members and mourners wear rich cotton *partoog-kameez* from *Bareeze* shops, costly foreign cashmere sweaters, foreign shoes and bags, “light jewellery” (small earrings and rings), and make-up. In one Bibi’s words, “everyone dresses well for a wedding. But in *gham* most women want to show that they are high status and that they dress well at home. So the impression they give is that they were wearing the same clothes at home and as they heard the news of death they came ‘as they were’”. Another interpretation would see “dressy” women making a statement about the importance of returning to the *kille* in an ostentatious style reinforcing their status. In a context where several hundred women sit collectively for extended periods, the attire of each mourner attracts much comment, placing great pressure on women to “compete”. Bibiane’s dress must neither be too fine nor too simple; at the same time her outfit must match or outshine the others present. For instance, Arifa, a middle-aged Karachi-born Bibi who has been married into a Mardan Khan family for eighteen years, said in English:

“My husband berates me: ‘why are you dressing so well for *gham*?’ I tell him, ‘if you go into those four walls there are these women—wearing make-up, they are fully dressed in their best clothes. Though now I am wiser—I dress up wearing darker colours and rich fabric—but earlier, for years I would go in my regular plain clothes because I’d think it’s a funeral; nobody will be looking at me. But then you’d be sitting in a courtyard from morning till evening, everybody looking at you from top to toe, how many diamonds you’ve got, what’s the latest designer, if you are wearing the latest print. That’s one thing I found so typical to this society and this set-up.”

Bibiane’s emphasis on material effects such as clothes even at *gham* events makes their set-up distinct for Arifa who observes their world from a partially outsider perspective.

Yet the line between dressing well to express status and dressing appropriately for *gham* is often ambiguous. Shaheen, in her early twenties and married into the Wali of Swat's family, dramatized her sense of contrary expectations in her account of wearing simple clothes to a funeral in Swat. At the event she was struck by the other mourners' garments: "dressy clothes such as velvets and cotton *Bareezes*, I was surprised! It was all a *show shah* (a show)! They were looking at me carefully as if, she's from a *Badshah* (royal) family and look what she is wearing. When I came home I told my husband 'was this a *gham* or a wedding (*wada*)'—I couldn't even see the difference!"

In the minds of many Bibiane, jewellery is more unambiguous in suggesting "that you are happy in a sad time". At the funeral of an older Bibi in Swat, the deceased's sister's daughter-in-law Uzma wore an expensive Pashmina shawl, perfume, jewellery and bright clothing during the second day of *gham*. This outfit earned the opprobrium of the deceased's daughter, Inam, and the censorious conveyance of her activities to her mother's sister, Uzma's mother-in-law. *Gham* ceremonies become sites of remembrance and utmost propriety for the immediate family, as well as scenes for socializing and information gathering. Once her anger had died down, Inam found it sufficient that people should show their respect by attending. Yet a few find slippages between "custom", negotiated social relationship and Islam unsustainable, and think dress codes should be regulated during times of observance. One *hijab*-wearing Bibi, Nazia, a student at Islamabad Al-Huda in her late thirties, commented at a funeral in Mardan: "*Gham* has become a place where every one collects and gossips; it is like a fashion-show. Women should do useful things like reading the Quran". For Bibiane like Nazia, written authority (hadith) and "custom" intertwine in multiple ways in authorising or prohibiting funerary practices. It is this contradiction that makes Bibiane's work in performing, authorizing and debating proper procedures both especially fraught and especially significant in determining the character of Pukhto. Alongside the trauma of a relative's death, funerals offer the traumatic experience for Bibiane of exposing them to a scrutiny of their *ezat*, defined by the correctness of their ethnic self-presentation. At the same time, young Bibiane question the religious precedent of ethnic practices. The work of Pukhtun mourning thus builds ethnic identity and identification across regional and national boundaries, enacts inter-class solidarity under the auspices of "*Pukhtunwali*", and contests non-Islamic forms. These various processes are all acted out in particular ways in the course of various individual funerary ceremonies in the Frontier.

3.6. Transcending Seniority: A Case in Swat

Begum Bibi, whom I had talked to several times in the course of my research, died in her 60s of a heart attack while I was in the field. She was an important personage since both her husband and father were senior Pakistani political figures, one a member of a Frontier royal family. Royal deaths are “special because they are part of a political drama in which many people have a stake” (Huntington and Metcalf 1980: 122). After being informed by phone that she had passed away (*haq waraseda*), I cancelled my planned schedule and donned my *saz̤ar* for the occasion; I arrived at her house in Islamabad early in the morning. There were already dozens of cars outside the house. The body lay covered by an English-rose patterned duvet, surrounded by several standing maids who intoned the following dirge, “Oh, my Bibi! Oh, my sweet Bibi”. The room filled with veiled Bibiane and Punjabi women, some of whom were recognisable by their uncovered heads. After a six-hour journey to Swat, on arrival at the village-house, women began to wail again. Women of different ages and backgrounds thronged the *kor*: older Bibiane on chairs and beds, younger women on the floor, maids on the verandas, and village women freely jostling to see the face of the deceased.

The funerary procedure took a defining but innovative course in the washing of the body before burial. There was no doubt amongst the daughters-in-law, who, in the grief of the deceased’s daughters, had assumed full responsibility about who would direct the bathing. The deceased’s youngest sister-in-law, Kawsar had followed an extensive course at Al-Huda and was the only immediate family member who wore a *hijab*. Middle Eastern anthropologists have emphasized that the wearer of the *hijab* conveys “publicly the message that the wearer is a Muslim woman who adheres to the Islamic rules regulating the relationships, rights, and obligations inherent in the gender roles” (Hoodfar 1991: 106; compare Cook 2000: 9-10). As a *hijab*-wearer and person of supposed high morality, the deceased Bibi’s daughters-in-law authorized Kawsar to supersede the customary prerogatives of three elder (*mashar*) sisters-in-law (the wives of the deceased’s husband’s brothers elder by up to thirty years). Her Islamic knowledge granted her priority over those who conspicuously outranked her in familial and social hierarchy. Kawsar was told to lead the bathing with maids and other women in the bathroom “as you think right”—in other words, avoiding divergence from precept (see Brenner 1996: 685). Kawsar saw no insubordination in taking control, but rather she acted on a sense of responsibility and imposed her duty “to forbid wrong and command right” (Cook 2000: 481). After the bath during the funeral Kawsar told me that she had ordered the sheets taken off and

“laid some towels over the body, so that she [the deceased] does not show, and then did her *audas-charadām* (ablution) in odd numbers such as three. Then we washed her from right to left, we washed her hair and braided it in three plaits. We wrapped five layers of white cloth around different parts of her entire body and head except the face: of which one piece was around the chest, another around [she whispered] her lower parts.”

Kawsar stressed:

“I kept it very Islamic because I had done the Al-Huda course. But according to the *rewaj* (custom) of Pukhto, people do all sorts of things: like they write *kalimas* (Quranic verses) on the sheets, which they wrap around the body; they put the Quran on the corpse’s chest; they put pieces of cloth from Kabah in the eyes. But, I think, Islam says only the person’s *amāl* (good deeds) will accompany the person. None of these other *riwajoona* (customs).”¹²⁷

In this way, Kawsar saw herself stripping away all superogatory funerary conventions not demanded by Islamic texts. The rediscovery of scriptural authority thus poses a challenge not only to “secularism” or “modernity” but also to the widespread religious idioms and symbols of the village. Village Pukhto or “customary” practices often strive for doctrinal supremacy which often contrasts the Islam of the mosques and schools (Marsden 2002). Crucially, complex cases like these parallel themes from eighteenth and nineteenth century Islamic renewal movements. These movements from the sub-continent and elsewhere, notably in Egypt, demand a return to *Sharia* (Islamic law) based on the Quran and hadith (Shakry 1998: 152). The call for “a revival of hadith studies (*ilm al-hadith*); a rejection of *taqlid* (blind imitation of customs and tradition...); a critique of certain forms of popular religion...and a reassertion of *ijtihad*, or independent legal interpretation” (ibid) licences individuals to act boldly in entrenched relationships of seniority, while it simultaneously subjects them to a criteria of propriety and self-conscience. Al-Huda Bibiane see themselves as carrying out an Islamic “duty” by giving instruction at public events of *gham-khadi*. They assertively declare knowledge, without dogmatically insisting on principle (scriptural Islam leaving open many possibilities of tolerance and concession without forsaking the profession of religion).

¹²⁷ The bath under the supervision of Kawsar differed from a *dai*’s death that I participated in myself, where Quranic verses were inscribed on the head-dress and coffin cloth of the deceased.

In this case, the year of the funerary procedure was rounded off with a customary *kaal* observance. In the next case, and elsewhere, certain days that fall outside the prescribed Islamic days of mourning are beginning to be omitted, in a way which Bibiane say occasions confusion and upset to more conventional adherents of *gham-khadi* custom.

3.7. Bibiane's Agency in the Heart of Mardan

My second case study focuses on the funeral of an older Bibi, who was originally from Mardan but lived in Islamabad and whose three daughters-in-law had attended courses at Al-Huda. These women followed Islamic prescriptions and decided to waive the conventional Pukhtun *Salwekhtamma* (the Fortieth anniversary of death) and the *kaal* for both male and female guests. In this instance, however, the women did not transform all "un-Islamic" practices (as discussed in Chapter 2) but rather varied the order of ceremony to combine elements of Bibiane's own understanding of Pukhto and Islam.

First, because the hadith restricts mourning times for Muslim women to three days (widows exceptionally mourn longer, for the pragmatic reason that a pregnancy subsequent to her husband's death may affect her decision to remarry), the daughters-in-law substituted the customary fortieth day observances with a Quranic *khattam*. This was scheduled for the 4th day of the first *Akhtar* (religious festival) after death. Normally, on the first *Akhtar*, men and women separately participate in a *roombe Akhtar* (the first *Akhtar*), by sitting with the bereaved and consoling them through prompted reminiscences. The daughters-in-law also took in hand the obligatory distribution of *khairat*, food for the poor. This practice is typically carried out by the sons and mother of the house, prior to the gathering of female guests. An *alale* (sacrifice) of two goats and a cow was performed near the kitchen spaces of the *kor*. The daughters-in-law, who took immediate charge after their mother-in-law's death, distributed the butchered cubes of meat in handfuls and bags to local villagers, servants, mosques, and *madrassas*.¹²⁸ They carefully measured prescribed quantities, distributing amounts befitting of status.

¹²⁸ On the role of Maktab schemes in Mardan District, see Ahmed, P.S. Abdul-Mueed and Khan 1980-82.



Figure 20 - Bibi distributing meat to the villagers from the kor: a maid bags portions of meat, while the Bibi's three year-old holds the list with the villagers' names; the silver cooking pot under the kat (straw bed) is destined for the local mosque

The deceased's second daughter-in-law Nadia (aged 31), in her black *hijab*, sat her blonde three-year old daughter on her chair in the back-kitchen of the joint-family *kor*, ticking off her list of recipients as the cohort of Nadia's affinal maids went back and forth with bags to give to the male servants in the *hujra*. Nadia's challenge to precedence perturbed the youngest son of the deceased Bibi, Muhammed Khan (older to Nadia by ten years but younger than her husband), who had sometimes helped his mother during such *Akhtar* meat distribution. During the earlier part of the distribution process, the eldest sister-in-law, Zubaida (aged 40; also Muhammad's mother's sister's daughter), had not yet arrived from Islamabad. Zubaida is also Nadia's father's step-sister, and several land dispute cases exist between her and Nadia's father. Muhammed attempted to delay the distribution of *khairat* meat until Zubaida's arrival. He came repeatedly into the *kor*, urging Nadia to take account of particular servants, of which he knew because he grew up in the house (Nadia, by implication, was possibly unaware of the various and multiple bonds of certain individuals to his mother's household). The maids, as they collected the *khairat*, gave some of the meat to village families who had already been given food, but had requested more.

When Zubaida entered, panic crossed the faces of the Bibiane and maids familiar with the domestic hierarchy of the house, and its breach in this instance. Muhammed Khan's wife whispered under her *sazar*: "GHQ has arrived", likening the elder sister-in-law to a senior military army officer in Pakistan's General Head Quarters.

Zubaida dispatched her maid for the list so that she could take over. Warned by a glance from Muhammed, Nadia explicitly challenged her older sister-in-law's authority, saying boldly, but quietly in English, "Sorry, I have started the job, and she can't take the list from my hand, can she?" As Zubaida approached from behind a latticed partition (a *pardah* division separating the kitchen from the bedrooms), Nadia called the names on her list a little louder, and instructed the maids in Pukhto, "give this bag to the driver"; "put more meat in that bag for the *jumat* (mosque)". Still standing aside and observed by guests, her fellow sisters-in-law, and the *kor's* maids, Zubaida initiated an exchange in the most polite and guarded terms. Asked to reserve a double share for Zubaida's *dai's* daughter (her "milk-sister", whose marriage Zubaida herself had arranged with her husband's driver), Nadia replied "*Jee* [assuredly, a polite form of agreement or acceptance], I have already kept a share for her father-in-law [a household driver]". Zubaida pressed further, "keep one for her as well". Nadia replied, "*Jee*". When Zubaida left for her own compound, Nadia confided: "Bibi [Zubaida] always takes credit for everything. She always says: 'I did this and I did that'". Referring to this incident, she noted, "Bibi was so shocked that her place was taken, I could see it on her face, that when she passed by [the kitchen] she didn't even come near me." Zubaida's request that her *dai's* daughter, or symbolic sister, specifically be favoured represented an attempt to wrest back control of the household from her younger affine. Nadia's polite refusal to relinquish a procedure which she had initiated was played out in a semi-public arena, watched by the various household women and visitors who stood to one side in nervous excitement.

The exchange illustrates a number of points about how intrafamilial dynamics influence the work of *gham*. The overseer of the *khairat* donations holds considerable power in the eyes of household members.¹²⁹ Usually the eldest female in the family structure, the mother-in-law of the house, assumes this role. Zubaida was senior to Nadia as her eldest brother-in-law's wife and as Nadia's father's step-sister, yet the system of *mashartia* (seniority) was negotiable, reflecting Nadia's prestige as an Al-Huda graduate (Zubaida wears the *sazār*, whereas Nadia the *hijab*). They both adroitly managed the confrontation within the bounds of decorum. When Zubaida avoided a direct rebuff by sending her maid for the list, she underlined the important role maids hold as key agents in aiding Bibiane's work of *gham-khadi*. Her intercession on behalf of her *dai's* relative, especially as it finessed procedures in asking for meat twice for the same

¹²⁹ Harrison argues, "a community staging one of its important ceremonies may, at one level, be expressing its sense of identity and unity. But often this is only outwardly so, and the performance may in fact be preceded by intense power-struggles among its organisers." (1992: 225).

household, subtly interposed her authority in such a way that it had to be carried respectfully.

The different stages of *gham* provide contexts for these power negotiations amongst affines, where, as in this case, the faultlines ran between females. Alliances, like that of Muhammed and Nadia (despite the younger son's reservations over Nadia's actions), usually form across gender boundaries. All players and levels of society further their own interests from an allotted place. Maids, for instance, seek favour and status among the villagers in requesting bigger portions, while Bibiane may intercede on behalf of maids and younger relatives. It is important to note that there is no transcendental or non-transactional position which senior Bibiane can occupy in refusing requests: they have to either fulfil *tlal-ratlal* obligations or face the consequences of not doing so. In such a context, maids and junior Bibiane alike attempt to "keep in" with village households by being responsible for having their share of food delivered, thus maintaining a social relationship. This act on the part of the interceding Bibi (possibly through her maids) represents the "work" of interpersonal village relations. Looking at the whole procedure for distributing *gham-khadi* food, the pattern of affiliation of Bibiane through servants to village households ensures the nearly equitable sharing of scarce resources as they pass from the elite *kor* to the village.

Furthermore, the decision of Bibiane to hold a religious event (the Quran *khattam*) for their mother-in-law the day after this *Akhtar* (which lasts three days) represents the largest negotiated intervention of all. Many attending Bibiane (some two hundred in this case) considered this alternative day "untraditional", as it did not keep with the customary fortieth day procedures.¹³⁰ I heard one guest ask one of the daughters-in-law: "will there be a Fortieth? Because this is only the 28th day?" The women thought that the daughters-in-law temporized the *khattam*, as it also fell outside the Islamic three-day mourning limit. Death and burial, nonetheless, underwent a partial "de-secularization" through a more textual interpretation of Islam. I found that women in Nadia's situation often viewed a successful *gham* less in terms of wealth shown and *khairat* (food) distributed, and more in terms of appropriately marking the passage of the deceased's soul into its next stage of life. Possibly because of their critical place in *Pukhtunwali*, *gham* rituals importantly unite divergent claims of custom—they do not, in other words, register preexisting beliefs, but signify "a realm of conflict . . . where new statuses can be asserted or destroyed" (C. A. Bayly 1998: 135).

¹³⁰ Even the deceased would not have envisioned such a change to *gham* through her own death, but it is said: "the living have the control over the dead" (*Da maro waak da jwando yee*).

The above case is not unique. Middle-aged Al-Huda Bibiane from various households and families make great efforts to bring individuals into more Islamic ways of living. Styles of attendance, rather than hospitality, change, as women fit their visiting practices with the hadith circumscription of mourning. One Al-Huda graduate, Bano Bibi, described how she once sought to curtail the attendance of a number of women at the *khairat* feast on the first Friday of a funeral:

“In one death, I got up and left before the *dodai* (meal). People close [to the bereaved] said to me: ‘don’t do this; they [the bereaved] will think you are treating our death lightly’ (*che zamoonga marg spakawae*). I thought we have to *break* this tradition because, you know, one meal costs about Rs.25,000 (£263). So I thought that this is too much money and it is being given because it is a social pressure. So I got up and left.”

Bano attempted to persuade others to join her, convincing “five cousins, although” her “own mother declined.” Her mother understood that she would jeopardize her own honour (*eqal*) if she left before the end of the ceremony. “She was too scared of the people, you see”, Bano shrugged, “and then there was a lot of opposition. People were saying: ‘they have devalued our death: they only attend funerals for one hour (*zamoonga marg a spak ko: dee ghenta ghenta oozar kai*).” Although this Bibi and her mother agreed on the differences between customary *gham* and religious prescription, they were unable to act in concert at the actual event.

Bano left the event because she considered the system of obligatory condolences “hypocritical” in that those closely afflicted only spend time and effort hosting for reasons of duty. The pressures of Pukhto force mothers to bear the work of *gham-khadi* in conventional manners and restrain them from following their daughters’ calls to new Islamic practices.

3.8. Conclusion

This chapter described attending, gifting, public grieving and personal self-presentation at Pukhtun *gham*. Funerals bring Khan and villagers together in ceremonial procedures to affirm the former’s solidarity with the latter. The satisfactoriness of a *gham* as a social act depends on its successful enactment of sequence and propriety, and is performed each time a person dies. Families and participants produce the social meaning of death according to a “structuration” (Das 1986) of tasks as they are allotted to people on the basis of family relationship to the deceased. These tasks also define

women's personhoods in both an intimate and public dimension. While stipulations of "customary" form are sometimes oppressively present in Bibiane's minds during *gham*, and have great coercive force in shaping their behaviour, such norms are not immune from challenge. In this chapter, I demonstrated the modes by which Bibiane of different kinds (Al-Huda graduates, and their relatives, and non-Pukhtuns) modify, displace or resignify expected procedures, according to informed readings of scripture.

Pukhtun *gham* may be distinguished from the funerals of other ethnolinguistic groups in a number of ways. First, and arguably, the intricacy of the procedures of gifting and hospitality, and of performed social relationships to the deceased, is central to *Pukhtunwali*. Second, the transregionalism of contemporary Bibiane's lives exposes traditionally held theories about "cultural identity" to multiple and contradictory modes of Islamic modernity.¹³¹

Case studies and other incidents examined in this chapter suggest that the innovations into *gham* introduced by Al-Huda Bibiane are beginning to serve as a conduit through which distinctively novel forms of practice may penetrate elite village-houses in the Frontier. Some anthropologists interpret female "performative" or "ritual" acts (in ceremonial contexts) as a Muslim women's principal sphere of agency in the absence of "direct, confrontational verbal" engagement (Hegland 1998: 255; "rituals [in a Shia context] enable . . . participants to wield agency, share in creating meaning, and make more of their worlds" [ibid]). Yet while it is rare for men and women to break out in open confrontation (*reshtheene*) over funerary arrangements, recent religiously-inspired interventions in mourning do represent a form of engagement between the sexes, in which women gain leverage on account of the centrality of *gham* in Pukhto. Attention to religious Bibiane's reforms in *gham-kehadi* thus takes a stage further two trends in anthropology: the representation of the "ambiguity" or plurality of Muslim ideas of gender for women (Ewing 1988), and the documentation of a number of global Islamic movements, that put religion on a rational footing in connecting Islam to practitioners' everyday lives (Brenner 1996; Tapper and Tapper 1986: 70).

In one sense, it is possible to understand *gham* as part of a "supervisory" network, in which village-based identities and "patriarchal" authority are enforced at participants' natal site (Hegland 1998: 247). Within the idiom of convent-educated Bibiane, however, the word corresponding to "identity" is the Urdu term "*pehchan*", or literally recognition, suggesting that people's sense of themselves resides to some extent in social relations. Much more interesting and specific social transactions than any

¹³¹ On the importance of funeral ceremonies in maintaining trans-local links among other ethnolinguistic groups, such as the Punjabis, see Shaw 2000.

simple reiteration of “village” identities go on under a surface of conformity to *gham*’s stringent prescriptions of female modesty. These dealings may take the form of intra-family disputes and tensions (or agnatic rivalry), but also involve the ongoing redefinition of the relationship between given extended families and the poorer communities they traditionally sustain. *Ghamoona* (pl.) are communal observances, in which a quasi-egalitarian distribution is undertaken under an aegis of Pukhtun ideas of responsibility. The charity meted out in *gham* suggests how strongly stratified and strongly egalitarian forms of social organisation may coexist in contemporary transregional “tribal Islam” (Gellner, E. 1993).

Above all, this chapter has sought to unite a number of detailed descriptions of various hosting and attending decorums under the single local designation, “work”. I would align my account with a materialist ethnography in claiming that the symbolic work of making relationships is not entirely feasible without the physical labour of servants. There are other critical senses in which Bibiane’s overseeing and visiting activities constitute the basis for such an analytical concept. Bibiane’s activities represent mental efforts directed in a coordinated way towards a goal; they have the character of a duty, not a fully voluntary act; they are prosecuted according to recognizable rules and forms of legitimacy, and grasped as recurring or everyday tasks characterizing life in a general way (“the work of life”); furthermore, they maintain the symbolic continuity (“work” in the sense of mechanics) of Pukhtun society. While these features may seem completely onerous, some Bibiane presented the duties of *gham* in a more affirmative way. The elaboration of mourning ceremonies is valued by many Bibiane as supporting and giving a social identity to their personal grief. It is in the critical junctures of *gham* and *khadi*, (the central collective expression of joy in Pukhtun life and focus of the next chapter) that Bibiane depend on the complex mesh of social relationships that shape their social world.

CHAPTER 4

Celebrating *Khadi*: Communal Pukhtun Weddings and Clandestine Internet Marriages

“Marriage is easy, but its work is difficult” (*Wada asān de kho ‘tak took’ a grān de*) Pukhto Proverb.¹³²

“The lover and beloved finally achieved unison, Adam and Dur Khanai became one” (*Mayan pa mayan pathe shoo, Adam ao Dur Khanai yao shoo*).¹³³

4.1. Introduction

The ethnographic focus of the previous chapter was on the procedures enacted by Bibiane in the context of *gham* funerary ceremonies. After establishing a discursive and physical context for elite Pukhtun life-cycle events in the first and second chapters, I sought to introduce to Frontier anthropology a more close-grained account of Bibiane’s practices at funerals. This chapter presents the *gham-khadi* wedding festival in the same sequence. Like *gham*, *khadi* involve transregional and city-dwelling Bibiane in ceremonies which ideally bring them to the village-site or *kille-kor*, reaffirming attenuated class connections with villagers. Weddings are central or pivotal gatherings in which *purdah*-observing women may meet other women, the treatment of *khadi* therefore lies at the heart of Bibiane’s sociality and close or extended kinship structures. As in funerals, meeting other women and satisfying attendance obligations involves gifting, deportment and self-presentation. Bibiane sustain an ongoing work of making relationships, which they conceptualise in conversation as “the work of life”. This “women’s work”—insofar as *gham-khadi* is devolved by Pukhtun men onto female jurisdiction—grants Bibiane considerable autonomy in authorizing the marriages of individual couples and thus, both literally and metaphorically, securing the continuity of elite Pukhtun life and experience.

A Bibi’s “work” during weddings reinforces kinship, responsibility of relationships and class and region allegiances. My account of Bibiane’s “work” at weddings (*khadi*) is comparable to my account of their activities during *gham*. Striving to reconstruct the conceptual interdependence of *gham* and *khadi* in Pukhtun thought, my

¹³² Tair and Edwards 1982: 269.

¹³³ Stated by a Mardan *kasabgar* woman called Almas, whose daughter was engaged to her cousin (father’s sister’s son) but who fell in love with and had liaisons with her parallel cousin. Almas broke the first engagement, marrying her daughter to her lover, as “it was my Pukhto to prevent *sharam* (shame, honour), to *khlas* (release) my daughter from this boy and give her to the other whose name she had already been linked with.”

presentation of the stylised (or “ritualised”) procedures for wedding ceremonies identifies similarities between *gham* and *khadi*’s allocation of space and gendered tasks. The Pukhto proverb, “*gham* and *khadi* are sister and brother,” captures the close relationship of the procedures in local thought, an indissoluble philosophic relation which anthropology has yet to capture fully (see Grima 1998: 73, however, on the ceremonies’ comparable solicitation of “learnt” forms of emotion). Nevertheless, this chapter also distinguishes in important ways between *gham* and *khadi* as performances of female and familial bonding and social continuity. It explains how the necessarily different articulation of private and communal happiness (“*khadi*”) at weddings involves different forms of gifting between women, and a different degree of openness of the elite *kille-kor* to the surrounding village. Moreover, the “work” of Bibiane in confirming the identity and conformity to precedent, or *Pukhtunwali*, of individual *wada* is conceptualized in a slightly different way. While for *gham*, this “work” took the form primarily of attendance in the face of a grief, for *khadi*, women serve as definitive visual witnesses, whose “social presence” endorses the marital rite. Bibiane’s celebration of weddings, through gesturing with money and dancing, validates weddings as consonant with a supposed earlier order of procedure, assimilating them to notions of a life-cycle governed by *gham* and *khadi*. These actions sufficiently constitute unity for many Pukhtuns, so that, in one Bibi’s words, “*gham* and *khadi* are [inseparable] till the end, while there is life (*jwand*).”

This chapter offers an account of *khadi* both as marriage (that is, as a specific sequence of acts leading up to and beyond a ceremony of betrothal) and as marrying (the forging of family alliances through social connection, and the associated consolidation of a kin network). While determining expected forms, it also examines a case study in which the legitimization of weddings, and the enlargement of family identity, did not proceed as unproblematically as suggested in the above account of the exemplary nature of *khadi*. In other words, while Bibiane orchestrating weddings understand their satisfactoriness in terms of ceremonies’ conformity to the ethnic specificity of *Pukhtunwali*, the analytical characterization of weddings is necessarily misconceived if forced to coincide with the experience of participants. This is because, as case studies demonstrate, it has become impossible for *Pukhtunwali* to reproduce itself through weddings, in terms of affirming Pukhtuns’ religious faith and class responsibilities, without arousing painful contradictions in the minds of Bibiane.

Of all *khadi* (joyous) events, Pukhtun weddings may be accounted the most important, because they hold the greatest significance for the families, communities, and the individuals involved (Ahmed, A. S. 1980: 242; Lindholm, Charles 1982: 130). “Elite”

weddings bring families pursuing political alliances together with large numbers of their followers or dependents who stand to benefit or suffer the consequences of renewed affiliations. Bibiane's weddings also introduce the Frontier to practices debated in Islamabad, especially ones that relate to the scriptural warrant for "Pukhtun" celebratory procedures. Bibiane's greater munificence in gifting and hosting, moreover, makes the material objects and signs of *khadi* more legible or available to ethnography. This chapter demonstrates how interpersonal transactions, effected through particular patterns of exchange, produce the social significance of weddings for different people (the couple, the parents, close relatives, more distant kin). Like funerals, weddings involve different social classes of person in differing degrees of centrality, according to their social relationship to the spouses. The bride and groom themselves marry; the natal household loses a daughter and the marital home gains a bride; the families' *gham-khadi* network contributes financially; all present testify to the propriety of the union, and are confirmed in their socio-familial bonds to each other and their hosts.¹³⁴ At a "correctly" observed ceremony, marriage unions are sustained, or receive public approval, through the attendance of a *gham-khadi* circle. In this sense, weddings are understood as merely the culmination of difficult and ethnically specific procedures of betrothal, preparation and communal participation, all of which have their own requirements. Participants experience weddings through the same capillary network of obligations and reciprocal responsibilities described in Chapter 3. Moreover, Bibiane attend *gham-khadi* as the "children" of their *daigane* (wet-nurses), not merely as family representatives or the wives of their husbands.

Bibiane understand the "work" of *khadi* as one undertaken by female relatives and attenders. While brides choose their cloths, *sazare* and jewellery, married Bibiane repeatedly described themselves as being swept into the process of their own nuptials. Marriage initiates the "full" assumption of one's obligations as a social agent, henceforth the maintenance of *gham-khadi* relationships. The work of *khadi*, particularly weddings, is widely seen by Bibiane as having both physical and mindful dimensions. On the level of intentional action, *khadi* involves inviting all of one's social network, and involves observing food, dress, and procedural standards.

The general characteristics of *khadi* in Pakistani weddings (such as large gatherings, a stress on clothing, and lavish hospitality) are central to Pukhtun self-representation as they adhere to "convention" and guarantee the social success of marriage procedures. Failure to observe certain prerequisites makes the wedding less

¹³⁴ Nancy Tapper notes, "Middle Eastern marriages establish a framework in which the intimate connections between the issues of marriage and group identity...can be investigated." (1991: 16).

efficacious as a form of bonding or position-building. The Pukhto proverb, “Marriage is easy, but its work is difficult” (Tair and Edwards 1982: 269), begins to suggest how more is involved in a wedding than the reproduction of an invariant form.¹³⁵ One of the eldest Bibiane (in her seventies, and the mother of six married offspring) with whom I spoke told me that wedding preparations required “*der ghat kaar*” (“a great deal of work”). While for those Bibiane hosting a wedding its work and pressures may be preparatory to the ceremony proper, for guests, questions of etiquette may play on their minds throughout the celebrations. Bibiane, as at funerals, are again judged on how well they perform certain ritualized or formalised actions. Before *khadi*, relatives enquire about the bride or groom, pass invitations and help prepare the bride, house, and dowry. At weddings themselves, Bibiane distribute money, dance, and serve food. Alongside this work of hosting, a range of village-women help lay the tables, clean, wash the dishes, and relay messages locally. Female guests dress in finery, dance and eat, while verifying the observance of bridal *rites de passage*. The ceremonial forms of *khadi* and *gham* suggest both their complementarity, and show the possibility of celebrants at one feast being the mourners at the next.

4.2. Preference and Choice: Finding a Bride

“Marrying” one’s child comprises obligatory work that is construed as the mother’s social duty (compare Shaw 2001: 324). Yet this obligation, stated as such, obscures the many concerns that Bibiane must balance in choosing whom their daughters should marry. These concerns include *ezat*, the consolidation of land, access to wealth and status, preference for kinship and ethnic endogamy, and the healing of family disputes.¹³⁶ Due to the segregation of public occasions, *gham-khadi* contexts provide the only means of viewing and encountering a girl or a boy’s family, in which married women typically play matchmaking roles (see Abu-Lughod 1990: 43; Altorki 1986; Naveed-i-Rahat 1990: 54; Tapper, N. 1978: 397; Watson 1992: 8; compare Humphrey 1992: 191). In a comparative Moroccan context, in the 1980s, Mernissi observed the importance of women’s matchmaking role, specifically mothers, whose: “role is pivotal, because she has access to information relevant to the marriage that only women can have in a sexually segregated society. The mother is the one who can see the

¹³⁵ On marriages in northern Pakistan and Afghanistan, see Ahmed, A. S. 1980: 242-258; Donnan 1988; Lindholm, Charles 1982; Safdar 1997; Tapper, N. 1981; 1991.

¹³⁶ In this I follow Shaw (2001) who seeks to go beyond the “culturalist” explanation for the high rates of inter-ethnic and inter-*biradari* marriage among second-generation British Pakistanis, to consider motivations of: maintaining class or *zat* status; marrying within *biradari*; discharging obligations to kin; upwards social mobility; and facilitating immigration.

bride, engage in discussions with her, and eventually acquire a very intimate knowledge of her..." (1985: 123).

It is often said that "weddings make other weddings": in Bourdieu's terms, marriages take their place in a pattern of social reproduction, both in terms of identity-defining practices and the dominance of a social segment. Previously endogamy, especially patrilateral cross- or parallel cousin marriage, was favoured for preventing the dissipation of wealth; now, however, the criteria for a "good family" includes money-wealth gains, political connections and also historical roots (families newly rich from the opium trade, consumer goods smuggling or employment in the United Arab Emirates may be frowned upon). Until recently, mothers did not take the religious observance or professed Islamic views of young women into marriage considerations (even beauty and fair skin were said to be more important). This situation is changing with the popularity of Al-Huda courses; two middle-aged Bibiane told me that their sons only wanted to marry girls who wore a *hijab*.

At *gham-khadi*, close female relatives of a marriageable boy or girl "look" for potential spouses in the crowd, sometimes literally: the girl's physical appearance, her family and a simple exchange of *salaams* (greetings) may be enough for the boy's mother to consider proposal to the girl (see Barth 1986: 38; Tapper, N. 1978: 392).¹³⁷ In one case of exogamy, a Bibi in her forties gave her 21-year-old daughter to a very wealthy, non-related Shia Punjabi boy, whom she met through her sister's school connections. This inter-ethnic marriage featured both Pukhto and Punjabi ceremonies. A Sunni *khadi* in the girl's parental village-house in the Frontier preceded a Shia function to which only the girl's immediate families were invited. The Shia boy's family was wealthy, and he had studied at Eton, but his denominational and Shia-Punjabi background caused great debate among Sunni-Pukhtun Bibiane. Some Al-Huda Bibiane amongst themselves declared the alliance impermissible. In another related case (in Islamabad), when a 23-year-old female cousin of the above bride received a proposal from a less wealthy Punjabi Shia, she bluntly refused to "marry a Shia", ending the matter there (as Sheriff notes it is a Muslim woman's right to have a say in her own marriage [1996: 7]).

In determining a response to a proposal, mothers rely on information and research from other Bibiane and maids about the boy and his profession (*kaar-rozgar*). Bibiane or maids may involve themselves in other women's weddings anticipating either *exat* or economic benefits. Gossip amongst women on the subject of possible alliances circulates between affinal and friends' houses in a discursive network itself constituting

¹³⁷ In one of my field sites, a few marriageable boys' mothers kept asking me to find their sons a *speena* (light-skinned) and tall girl.

an important dimension of Bibiane's life. Once a Bibi is married, she will think about and facilitate the marriage of her younger female family members. Married women sometimes act as links between metropolitan *gham-khadi* circles and more isolated family or tribal networks, who have more restricted *gham-khadi* relationships with other Frontier families. Women in the NWFP may communicate with their relatives in the city, or even abroad, on the subject of potential alliances over the phone. The whole texture of the lives of Bibiane is revealed in the spirit of wit, good humour and occasional malice in which marriages are projected. Much turns on the intimate relations of friendship between Bibiane in the run-up to a betrothal; senior Bibiane facilitate important alliances between families and withhold or disclose vital information to serve particular interests. Watson, in the context of Cairo, notes: "Information is a powerful tool in such circumstances; marriage plans either advance or collapse when women withhold or manipulate certain facts about the families concerned" (1992: 8). Men, on the other hand, are largely excluded from this field of activity, while their wives, mothers, sisters, and daughters mediate the process.

Bibiane carefully consider intermediation to the degree that stock roles and attitudes exist around it. In one context of particularly restrictive *purdah*, a Mardan Bibi sent a trusted maid to work for a year as a *khidmatgara* (helper) in her prospective daughter-in-law's natal household to assess, by proxy, her behaviour and character. More usually, in the absence of previous contact, families make connections based upon the shared Pukhtun assumptions of both sides. One Bibi, in the role of a go-between helped to effect an alliance between distant relatives (through her husband's uncle's wife on one side and maternal first cousin on the other) who at the time "had no *gham-khadi* relations." She brought the unmarried girl, her mother, and the young man's mother together in her Islamabad house, served tea and observed pleasantries. The marriage took place, and the Bibi who acted as the go-between stated that, because some of the work of the wedding fell upon her, she was *pareshan* (anxious) that she would feel responsible if the marriage was unsuccessful. At the same time, the Bibi derived *sawab* (religious merit), similar to the reward for the *haj* (compulsory pilgrimage to Macca), by successfully facilitating a marriage.

Bibiane arrange the place, invitations and procedures for their offsprings' weddings with concern for propriety, and a strategic cultivation of family *ezat*. First of all, the choice of location projects the legitimacy of the nuptials in the eyes of one's *gham-khadi* network. The three-day wedding ceremonies of Bibiane's families are held most frequently in the village-house (*kille-kor*). They may use sites belonging to either side of the match, with the first two days typically being hosted on "the girl's side" and

the third on the boy's (funerals, by contrast, are always held in one site at the deceased's *kille-kor*). Marriages potentially involve movement between cities, towns and countries, imposing logistical burdens on all participants. Bibiane without access to a village-house, or who are living abroad, may hire a big hotel hall in Islamabad to organize a wedding reception according to the requirements of Bibiane (such as for segregated social spaces). Nazia, an Islamabad Bibi, said that, "a lot of responsibility and work (*kaar*) is reduced" with hotel weddings. Despite this, Bibiane say it is more prestigious and honourable (*ezatmand*) to hold a wedding in the village-house. According to one Bibi in her mid forties:

"People who are typical Pukhtun—they don't want their daughters to get married out of a hotel. They want to go back to their own *kille* (village) because, you see, there is more respect in giving away the girl from the ancestral home."

The spacious courtyards and extra guest-rooms of Bibiane's *kille-kor* accommodate hundreds of guests at any one time, including local villagers. Holding the wedding in the village-house makes the event accessible to a large number of local villagers. Once the location is decided, the mother of the bride or groom, depending on the daily division of responsibilities, chooses the menu and décor, confirms the order of events, books cameramen, and arranges for her daughter's *nawe* (bridal) make-up. In addition, she organizes the distribution of about one thousand invitation cards, individually addressed to all the women in her *gham-khadi* network. It is an obligatory part of the labour of *zeest-rozgar* both to invite one's circle and to take up invitations by attending.

4.3. *Sath* and *Tayyar*: Invitations and Preparations

Invitations express emotions "from the heart"; customarily, hosts notify invitees through a formal visit. A village-Bibi, Mehreen, whose brother was getting married, told me: "all those people who we invited in person came for the wedding, but all those who were invited by telephone did not attend, because they said, 'we have not been invited from the heart (*na-zre*) [meaning that the effort of invitation was not made in person and therefore only partially]" (compare Das 1986: 195). Amongst Bibiane, relatives and those held in respect (elders, influential persons, and certain in-laws) are invited in person, while others are notified through hand delivered invitation cards (rarely by post). The list of people personally invited to weddings may include two to four hundred people with whom the mothers of the groom and bride sustain regular social

relationships. Bibiane are expected mentally to keep track of invitations and refusals, rather than through bookkeeping and through other means. These methods risk not inviting important kin or affines, whose non-attendance must be attributed to failure to send an invitation, inadvertence on the part of the non-reciprocating family or to conscious avoidance. Forgetting to invite someone for a *khadi* causes great anger and offense, comparable to that of missing a *gham-khadi* visit. While I was in Islamabad, several family disputes occurred over this cause. Thus Bibiane experience the receiving and issuing of invitations as fraught with anxiety. The procedures require the Bibi to balance reciprocal procedures with more specific judgments and obligations towards particular families.

The greater honour of being visited, for Bibiane, than of leaving the house means that village women may be invited prior to the date by the Bibi's most trusted maids. In Toru, a village in Mardan that I visited during fieldwork, a Bibi reported that *purdah*-restricted Bibiane depend on their maids to pass invitations to other women in the Frontier. She elaborated: "the trend for *gham-khadi* is not to invite people by telephone, but the maid will go around in Toru village or to Peshawar, circulating a slip of paper among other Bibiane, who have to sign their names to indicate that they are going to attend or not." In other areas outside Toru, telephones and email are used to contact distant guests. Cards are distributed to each female head of a household and her married children, and invite both husbands and wives, with the exception of the first day of the wedding—the *Nakreeza*—reserved for women only.

Wedding cards are placed in an unsealed envelope on which the name/s of the invitee/s are written. Mothers of the bride or groom divide the cards amongst their close female relatives (sisters, married daughters, aunts, cousins, and sisters-in-law) who share the work of distribution by relay along their wider social networks. For example, the mother of a bride may give about thirty cards to her eldest married sister to pass to each of the sister's affines. She will repeat this procedure with all her immediate kin. With some families who practice stringent *purdah*, male members distribute the cards to more distant relatives. Those people who take an active part in this work are considered "close" to the immediate family, according to the distributional definition of social identities suggested by Bourdieu's formulation that "[I]t is practical kin who make marriages; it is official kin who celebrate them" (1991: 34).

The delivery of invitations is itself quasi-ceremonial. Bibiane put on appropriate attire for going and coming (*de tlo-ratlo jame*): expensive embroidered clothes, foreign bags, high-heeled shoes, and either "heavy" gold jewellery, or more "sophisticated" diamond rings. They may be accompanied by other Bibiane or maids as they visit the

invitee's house. Even heavily pregnant sisters, as was sometimes the case, are obliged to participate in this round of work. Visiting prior to a wedding represents a major commitment of time and energy, as well as the deployment of *aql* (social sense). As food cannot easily be refused without some "*sath*" (reverence, polite decline to insistence), on the recipient's side, the Bibiane cannot refuse an invitation to a wedding (or to a relative's house) also called "*sath*" (invitation) without a serious reason such as mourning in her family, absence from the country, or a dispute (*wrana*) with the family concerned.¹³⁸

After the delivery of invitations, preparation for the wedding among the mother and close female relatives begins in earnest. Future brides may choose their own materials, patterns, and designs from separate shops with their mothers, sisters, aunts, and female cousins. Suitable wedding and dowry items are gathered regionally, nationally and internationally: jewellery—a Bibi's personal property—for example, may be procured from Pindi, Lahore, Karachi, Delhi, or London. Female relatives compile a trousseau of clothes, cloths, and other adornments for the bride. 30-40 finely embroidered suits are stitched (*partoog-kameez-loopatte*) and another 50-100 unstitched pairs are expressly commissioned from various tailors (*darzian*) and boutiques. The Bibiane either select or design their own embroidery (compare Tarlo 1996: 155).¹³⁹ One newly married woman told me, "My bridal dress was rust. Before, brides always wore red, but nowadays people are into designer bridal wear from magazines and designers. They want to make unique, rather than common, things, so they experiment with colour and designs." The amount of work required for such embroidered clothes earn their Pukhto name, "*de kaar jame*" (literally, "the clothes of work").

A bride's mother, and sometimes her sister, prepare the trousseau of fine clothes over the course of a lifetime. They include household goods, particularly linens and crockery, to equip the house for *gham-khadi*. In Strathern's terms, these material effects signify their owner, according to a non-Western conception of work in which objects appear as people ("personification"), rather than as things ("reification": 1990: 177). For a wedding, a wardrobe of fine embroidered silks and *jamawars* will be ordered six months to one year before the wedding. The following table represents one example of a mother's approximate expenditure for her daughter's 2002 wedding, which cost about Rs.2,378,000 (equivalent to £25,031.58):

¹³⁸ Even so, close relatives—aunts and cousins come from foreign countries for *gham-khadi*.

¹³⁹ On the tailor's tasks as involving "women's work" and therefore degrading, see Bayly, C.A. 2001: 296.

Table 5 - A bride's wedding expenditure

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>DESCRIPTION</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u> <u>(Rs.)</u>
Clothes	30 pairs stitched and embroidered by a local designer	100,000
Jewellery	New jewellery made in addition to older inherited pieces.	1900,000
Furniture	Double-bed; sofa-set; tables set; carpet pieces	100,000
Electrical goods	Fridge, T.V., vacuum cleaner	100,000
Kitchen items	Cutlery, crockery, etc.	20,000
Toiletry	Shampoos, soaps, powders, etc.	2,000
Makeup	Makeup sets and expensive designs e.g. Chanel lipsticks	2,500 plus
Linen	Bed sheets, bedcovers, etc.	3,500
<i>Asbab</i> (Trunk of bedding)	12 <i>brasthane</i> (quilts); 8 pillows; 4 <i>bojoona</i> (cushions); 12 mattresses, etc.	50,000
Preparation expenditure	<i>Shamiane</i> , chairs, food for guests	100,000
Total		Rs.2,378,000

The sums of money spent on weddings or *khadiane* is high by Pakistani standards. Among Bibiane's families, weddings usually cost less than funerals, though the mothers' financial burden is sometimes higher as they individually bear the costs of their daughters' weddings (Ikramullah 1992: 79). In some cases, mothers may replace the purchase of household amenities with cash: in one instance of virilocal marriage, a mother-in-law forbade her daughter-in-law and mother from buying furniture or electronic items for her already fully-furnished house. More frequently, the women laboriously prepare the girl's suitcases and room furniture, they send electrical appliances and other necessities to the boy's house in installments before the wedding. Mothers organize this work and often perceive it as tediously difficult and time-consuming.

While reactivating the formal ties connecting the Bibiane of a household, wedding preparations also provide an occasion for the clarification of Bibiane's relations with their *khidmatgaran* (helpers). The form of gatherings at Pukhtun weddings, like that of funerals, depends upon the more general idea of female sociality in *tlal-ratlal*, which reaffirms such cross-class female relationships. Figure 21 below shows a Bibi at the wedding of her *dai's* granddaughter. As intermarriage between the children of different wet-nurses is common, the bride is marrying the grandson of the *dai* of this Bibi's sister.

The Bibi herself (on the left, with her grandson on her knee) lives in America where her husband is employed, and periodically visits her mother's house in Swat.



Figure 21 - A Bibi (to the left) at the wedding of her dai's granddaughter (her "niece")

Maids' position is liminal in that they serve in different contexts as bound servants, to whom the Bibiane have responsibilities; as personal companions, in whom Bibiane vest much of their affective energy; and also as independent financial actors, who profit from their work for *gham-khadi* occasions. This relationship between mistress and maid is uncertainly divided among modes of "trust" and of "contract" (Freeman 1970; Tonkiss and Passey 2000), as *khidmatgaran* (helpers) seek rewards for services not specified in the context of any prior negotiated agreement. Women from the village are paid to undertake cleaning, serving and other labour, working beside Bibiane as they perform ceremonial procedures, especially hosting *khadi* meals. While the relationship between the Khanan and their *khidmatgaran* become strained with translocation, other maids have moved to Islamabad with their Bibiane. In one instance, an elderly maid joined her Bibi (in her 60s) in Islamabad by taxi (for which she paid Rs.12 from the *adda* [bus station]), then visited the Bibi's six married children and recouped ten times the cost of her fare; she also personally received Rs.1000 from each for the engagement of the Bibi's youngest daughter.

In many cases, maids' economic interests would seem to be bound up with the weddings (and more tacitly, the deaths) of the close relatives of her mistress. One maid described collecting the money thrown at dancers at the *Nakreeze* function, which Bibiane shun as it is meant for the performers. This maid would calculate the other gifts (clothes, for example) which she could expect from Bibiane during their *khadi*

occasions, bidding for ten thousand rupees when she expected to receive six. This sense of haggling is only present in the relations between certain classes of maids and their employers, with reciprocity and augmentation in cash gifts between Bibiane themselves being calculated but not the theme of overt expostulation or debate.

Marriages also reunite families whose members live in different regions and countries, emphasizing individuals' rootedness to the *kor*. The girl's close family (including aunts and cousins) arrive at least a month before the wedding (compare Delaney 1991: 124). In the house, celebrations and group dancing practices begin days, even weeks, before the actual wedding. Unmarried friends and cousins stay close to the bride-to-be, offering "moral support" in preparation for the life-changing event.¹⁴⁰ For people from Pukhtun families living abroad, absence from the country implies not so much the attenuation as the redefinition and renegotiation of the practical ties of kinship. In a personal instance, an older female in-law visiting Britain from Pakistan offered to make a list of people to whom I owed a *gham-khadi* visit within minutes of meeting me. While attendance and involvement in the case of distant kin, supporters or equals may be exempted, different terms apply for those who are closely related.

The three wedding days proper are second only to Pukhtun funerals in the scheme of *gham-khadi* events.¹⁴¹ While funerals are open to the public, weddings are largely "by-invitation" events. A basic typology of Pukhtun weddings would include: a three day event; dancing; food and generous hospitality. Variations occur within this pattern, according to location, the minutiae of rituals during the first festive day (*Nakreeza*), the degree of *purdah* observance, and emphasis on dancing.

4.4. Bibiane's Weddings

In the marriage season, just before and after the summer heat, various weddings occur in different places at the same time. If weddings overlap, attendees will be expected to attend both occasions. Bibiane and their families will then visit the *Nakreeza* and *Wada* of one marriage and the *Walima* of another. Women's journeys from Islamabad to *kille-korona* are particularly arduous due to prolonged travel in *sazare*, heavily embroidered wedding clothes and gold jewellery, and holding children on their laps on the rough and dangerous roads to villages. The first day, or *Nakreeza*, of the

¹⁴⁰ Altorki, referring to the Jiddah elite, comments on female friendships: "In a world of women, friendship ties play a more important role as they come to constitute a network of support second only to kinship ties and at times equal to them..." (1986: 100).

¹⁴¹ Weddings in the Punjab are far more elaborate and extended. One Punjabi wedding that I attended of a neighbour in Islamabad spread over a period of ten days of formal celebrations, including: the bride's *Mayun*; the groom's *Mayun*; Bride's *Mehendi*; the groom's *Mehendi*; *Barāt*; *Walima*; and two further days of mutual visiting to the bride's and groom's houses.

wedding takes place for Bibiane on the night of their arrival. Women enter the courtyard of the *kor*, greet the female relatives by embracing and kissing them, and then approach the mother of the bride. They give her money in an envelope saying, “*ombarak sha?*” (congratulations). While during funerals, cash gifts are restricted to substantial donations of about Rs.10,000 (even 30,000) from immediate family members, at weddings, all invited women are expected to contribute (further details are provided in Chapter 5). After presenting herself to the bride’s mother, a Bibi may then greet a large number of kin, affines, acquaintances and other guests with an embrace and kisses. In addition to relatives, and Bibiane from other respectable families (*kbandani korana?*), there will be a large presence of local village women and poorer dependents.

The women of the boy’s side, particularly his mother, prepare and pack the various suitcases, making sure that every last lipstick and bar of soap is packed. Mothers worry about leaving some important or minor thing out, fearing the impression of ineptitude might damage her reputation (*ezat*). Other female relatives place henna (*nakreeza*) on plates, which are encircled with shimmering tinsel and lit candles.¹⁴² After adorning themselves with gold jewellery, the Bibiane from the boy’s side veil themselves with their *sazare* and are driven in a cortège of several cars by close male relatives to the bride’s house. This journey may last a few minutes or several hours, depending on the distance between the groom and bride’s houses. Upon their arrival at the “*Nakreeza*” function (henna-night), the first of the three formal wedding days, women remove their *sazare*, which are skilfully folded and put away by maids. The cohort of Bibiane variously walks or dances into the courtyard space of the house, which is enclosed by *shamiane* (colourful tents). The courtyard is ablaze with women in vibrant colours.

¹⁴² I use lower case for *nakreeza* (henna) to distinguish it from the wedding event also called *Nakreeza*. Nancy and Richard Tappers describe henna as “symbolic blood” (1986: 70) and the henna event among the Maduzai Pashtun of Afghanistan as symbolising “good luck” [in the bride’s marital defloration] (Tapper, N. 1991: 163).

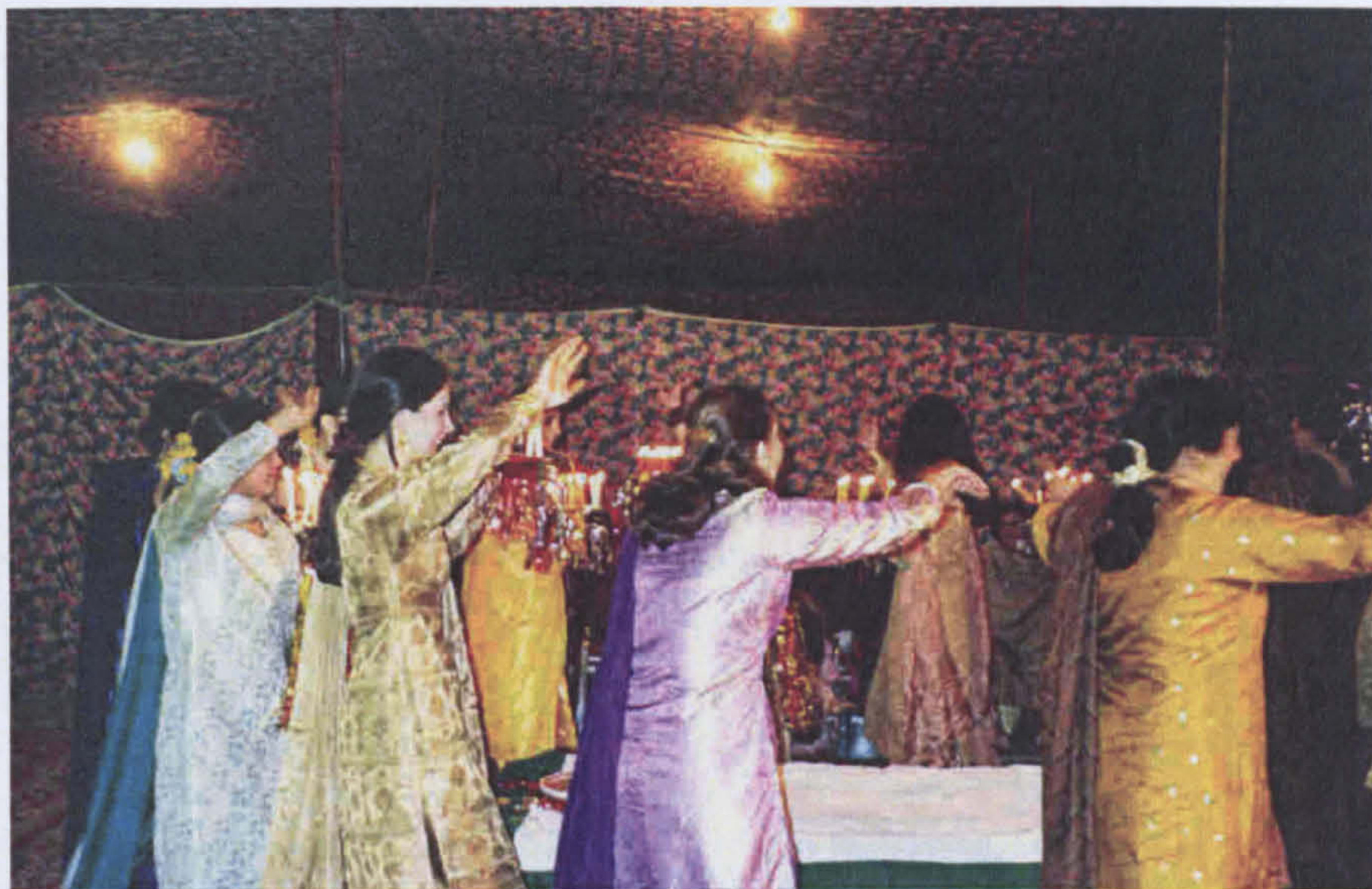


Figure 22 - Groom's side Bibiane dance as they enter the bride's house with henna (*nakreeze*)

The boy's side then place the henna on the centre table on the carpeted courtyard, while the male musicians, or *dumman* dressed in jeans and shirts, sing popular Pukhto wedding songs:

This is the night of henna,
The girls beat their kettledrums;
The people (*khalak*) have assembled for the wedding.
(*Shpa da de nakreezo,*
Jeenakai tanbal waheena;
Khalak pa wada raghale dee na).

The song reflects the high spirits and dancing evoked at weddings. More importantly, it refers to weddings as integrally characterized by guests' attendance and participation. The aunts of the groom (his father's brothers' wives) brandish five or ten rupee notes above each Bibi's head during the dancing. The songs and dance halt for the public displays of the bridal gifts brought by the groom's relatives. A close female relative, such as the groom's paternal uncle's wife, stands on a chair and present each item brought for the bride's wedding day: the bridal suit (*jora*), shoes (*paizar*), jewellery (*kalee*), and other accessories (*zaroorathoona*) (compare Tapper, N. 1991: 165). This display of reciprocal munificence asserts the new family relationship in a mode of abundance and economic largesse.



Figure 23 - Displaying the bridal gold jewellery at the Nakreeza event



Figure 24 - Aunt, cousin and mother (in silver) of the groom displaying the bridal jora (suit)

A few female guests may visit the bride in her room who typically dresses in yellow, without make-up or “real” jewellery apart from glass bangles. This image of pure simplicity contrasts with the elaborate bridal makeup worn the following day. The bride’s relatives and friends escort her under a silk veil onto the verandah. Several relatives place *nakreeza* on the palm of her hand. At this point, the groom’s kin throw money over the bride’s and other relatives’ heads, which is collected rapidly by the musicians (as in Figure 25 below). Groups of maids dance in circular patterns before an evening meal, which concludes the event. The guests finally disperse back to their village-houses.



Figure 25 - A young male performer (*dum*) collecting money thrown over the groom's father's younger brother's wife's head

On the second day (*de wada wraṣ*), the bride's family host an event in their village-house. Each female guest, on arrival, presents her cash contribution to the bride's mother (varying between Rs.300 (£3) to Rs.1000 (£10) or more). Poor village women do not necessarily offer monetary gifts, but present their attendance as a gift. If not already performed, the *nikah* (legal marriage contract) may be carried out in the girl's room (the *nikah* may have been formally drawn up months, even years earlier).¹⁴³ The bride's male kin and close female relatives perform the *nikah* with a close relative, employing the girl's brother or maternal uncle to represent the bride. At this point, the mother of the bride often appears especially tense, as the responsibility of the entire wedding falls upon her shoulders; furthermore, at the point of *nikah*, her daughter will be married and shall leave the mother's house for another *kor*. Yet at the same time, parallel to a widow in grief, the mother must maintain her sense of hospitality—greeting and offering each guest her time, good humour, and food. At this point, the bride's mother and female kin call each guest for “*dodai*” (food); Bibiane and maids serve elders each dish of the meal where they sit. Other attendees claim their appointed share. The hosts renew their hospitality to guests already served, only eating when everyone else professes themselves sated. Village guests and maids often describe a “good wedding” through reference to food: a “*garam*” (hot) and “*mazedar*” (tasty) wedding is one that is

¹⁴³ Nancy Tapper notes that the Afghan Durrani Pashtuns visit their wives in her parent's house until the marriage is celebrated publicly (1991).

successful, meaning that both the quantity and quality of the wedding sufficiently fed a large number of rich and poor people.¹⁴⁴

The bride is then presented to the guests on a verandah or a raised platform in the courtyard. A group of relatives and friends “hold” the bride by her arms, while her face may remain fully covered with the red bridal dress presented the preceding day.¹⁴⁵ “Holding” the bride symbolizes the significance placed on interdependence and solidarity between close kin and friends. The female guests approach the bride in turn, giving her money (if this has not earlier been offered to her mother), congratulating her on her appearance, and blessing the match. The bride and the groom sit together on the sofa for an hour of photography with different affines, kin and friends.¹⁴⁶ In some weddings, the bride’s sisters and cousins remove the groom’s shoe (*juta chupai*), and return it for a sum of money. In one wedding, the young Bibiane began bargaining at Rs.50,000 (£526) and settled at Rs. 20,000 (£210).¹⁴⁷ The bride told me that she got nervous at this point: “normally I am the boss, and I boss my cousins around, but as a bride, I couldn’t”.

The next stage of *khadi* proceedings entails a male intrusion into the female *purdah*-space, comparable to the entry of the male family pall-bearers in the *gham-keor*. The men on the bride’s side—her father, brothers, uncles, and sometimes cousins—enter the courtyard to bear the bride away.¹⁴⁸ At the *Rukhsatee* (departure), the bride is walked by her father or brothers to the bedecked car after tearful farewells from the women of her family and household. Grima has interpreted this momentary sadness as “*gham*” (1998: 52)¹⁴⁹; Delaney, more aptly, notes, “The crying symbolizes love; if a mother didn’t cry, one would suspect she didn’t care for the girl” (1991: 131).

The *jhanj* (convoy of in-laws) drive with the bride to the groom’s village in a flotilla of cars.¹⁵⁰ At the threshold of her new house, the bride is brought from the car

¹⁴⁴ Comparatively, the Maduzai Pashtuns say that “a big feast, which for the local Khans may involve feeding upwards of 2,000 people, ‘tastes good’; it is also a clear sign of both economic and political success and is likely to bring yet further success in the future” (ibid: 174, see also 173).

¹⁴⁵ The bridal colour red is symbolic of fertility and suggests the loss of virginity, while symbolising the vital and emotional participation of the guests in the life-cycle event (see Abu-Lughod 1986: 136; Delaney 1991: 142).

¹⁴⁶ Whilst photography, a symbol of happiness (*khwashbali*), in *khadi* was seen as normal, in *gham* it was offensive. Compare Kurti 1999.

¹⁴⁷ There are a variety of wedding games that are performed on stage, some introduced by Punjabi friends and relatives. For example, the male and female cousins of the groom and bride attempt to push her/him down as they stand on stage; the last person standing, it is said, will be the stronger partner in the marriage.

¹⁴⁸ Iqbal calls the “*Doli*” (bride’s palanquin) a “*zindajinaaz*” (coffin) (1997: 108).

¹⁴⁹ Bibiane say weddings may include moments of “*khaggaan*” (sadness), rather than *gham* (in the sense of the event itself), just as death events may include laughter as the days of mourning wane.

¹⁵⁰ Charels Lindholm notes that “the *junj*...is a display of solidarity with the groom and his family” (1982: 137).

by her female affines. One bride described her arrival at her new house: "When I arrived, it was from one set-up to another, I had a sinking feeling and I started to cry. Probably, it was the change; and none of my family were there." The Quran is then held above the bride's head. Later in the evening, the mother-in-law offers the bride a special drink made with sweetened milk and almonds, called "*gool*" (literally, sip). It is said that whichever girl drinks the *gool* after the bride will be next to marry.

The *Walima* or the third day of the wedding is carried out on the boy's side and publicly celebrates the consummation of the marriage in accordance to a hadith (Tirmidhi) that states, "make this marriage publicly known, solemnise it in the mosques and play tambourines in honour of it".¹⁵¹ The successful prosecution of a *khadi* wedding and the production of the married couple as an accepted social sub-unit within a family are at stake on this day. The transfer of the bride between households must pass without any suspicion of premarital sexual expression or, as understood in *Pukhtunwali*, her being violated (compare Werbner 1986). The repeated public demonstrations of the marriage bond explicitly link two families and their *gham-khadi* networks, and clarifies the new social status of the bride as a junior Bibi in her affinal household. The fear of this change of status being inadequately conveyed is a great source of tension among the groom's female relatives, who usually host the *Walima* in the household into which the bride will be adopted.

Whilst some guests attend all three wedding days, more distant relatives may only attend the *Walima*, driving down from Islamabad for the day and returning after the event is over. Lunch is served with the hosts from the marital household's side repeatedly urging food on their guests. The bride's mother may bring a number of large, silver trunks, displaying the dowry contents to the groom's family relatives and guests. This procedure manifests the brides' mothers' fulfilled dowry obligation. Excluding immediate family and cousins, guests return home after tea. One 21 year-old Pukhtun bride from Swat who married a Lahori Punjabi living in Pindi described to me how only two weeks after her own marriage, she was obliged to perform other *khadi* among her kin in Swat, thus illustrating the ever-renewed urgency of *zeest-rozgar* demands:

"After two weeks of my own marriage, a cousin of mine was getting married, so I went back to Swat. As this was my first time after my wedding, my mother gave me a gold jewellery set— this is a Pukhtun custom. I also called on all my relatives, and even

¹⁵¹ In *Shi'i* Islam, one of the four conditions under which marriage may be void is if the marriage is not consummated, with the bride remaining a virgin (Ferdows 1985: 27). The *Walima* is seen to be a necessary symbolic public marker of marriage.

though it was only two weeks after my wedding, every one was asking me ‘*sa dee?*’ (are you expecting?) [she laughs].”

The honouring of reciprocal ties needs to be overt (and arduous) because marriage in effect enlarges kinship relations between families. My fieldwork uncovered a number of Bibiane marrying outwards, and thereby coming into intimate relationship with families who, two or three generations before, were merely acquaintances. Strathern notes, “In societies where...marriage rituals take centre stage . . . often demanding lengthy periods of time, people make ‘transformed kinship’ their chief problem” (1990: 264). Ceremonies “work at making visible what works by being kept hidden; [as people] work at ‘reproducing’ themselves, at making more kinship” (ibid: 264). This activity of “making more kinship” proceeds the work of *khadi*: through the marriage itself, through the consecration of relations of obligation and reciprocity between guests and hosts, and through the affirmation of a body of common “Pukhtun” perceptions and practices among invitees.

4.5. Wedding Dances: The Work of Entertainment

The complexity of the work of *khadi* is suggestively embodied in wedding dances. For many Bibiane, dancing is an expression of the bonds of relationship—a sister may dance at her brother’s wedding to express her kinship and affection. Though dancing occupies a central place in contemporary Pukhtun weddings, dancing excites much debate and verbal opposition, as I discuss below. During the *Nakreeza*, which is set aside for women, Bibiane of the boy’s side and the girl’s side, together with hired musicians and household maids, dance in festive celebration. Yet dancing is not confined to the *Nakreeza*. One Pukhtun Bibi, who is married to a Punjabi, reported that in her experience of non-Pukhtun weddings, people generally only dance on the first day, the *Mehendi* (*Nakreeza*), whilst “in the Frontier, women dance on all three days: the *Nakreeze*, *Wada* and *Walima*”. This statement supports my own observations that elite Pukhtuns’ specifically and villagers’ families more generally dance to songs from Indian movies, and other Pukhto and Urdu popular songs, on all three wedding days.

Dancing occurs immediately in front of the raised platform on which the bride is presented. As they arrive, the wedding participants arrange themselves on rows of chairs around the central stage, and critically comment on the dancers. Some ask about the dancers’ relationship to the bride or groom, and others even search for brides.



Figure 26 - The bride's unmarried sisters and cousin in "modern" clothes dance "Indian-style" in Mardan

Though usually segregated, male musicians remain present during the *khadi*. Cameramen and photographers—all of whom are *pradee saree* (male strangers) from whom *purdah* should be observed—are considered an inherent part of a contemporary wedding, even though their presence is contentious.¹⁵² In one wedding I attended, Bibiane performed dances in the courtyard of the bride's village-house, while local village boys and girls watched with great interest from the flat mud rooftops of their houses. Some Bibiane may say they are "shy" of dancing in public as they are being watched, and others avoid persistent requests by saying that they do not dance at all. (The word used here is *sharam*, suggesting that weddings are one occasion where Bibiane are expected to overcome their fear of shame or public display by bodily signifying their affiliation to the bride and groom's families). The social *éclat* of weddings is evaluated by the performance and quality of hired singers and dancers (Tapper, N. 1991: 175); as Delaney observes, "[t]he women's celebration is comparable to the community of men gathered at the mosque." (1991: 135).¹⁵³

¹⁵² On scholarly debates on Muslim women's wedding dances, see Delaney 1991: 135, 127; Grima 1998: 43; Tapper, N. 1991: 175.

¹⁵³ On the *adab* (respect and behaviour) of musicians, see Silver 1984: 327, 329 and on the Hindu origin of music and its problematic status in a Muslim or Pakistani context, see *ibid*: 324; on music as an act of devotion, see Marsden 2002.



Figure 27 - Young Bibiane and children dance in a Swati wedding to an audience of Bibiane and male performers

Bibiane dance in two distinguishable styles: the conventional Pukhto dance (*gadedal*) involves little bodily movement; only the turning of wrists or the bending of ankles diverts attention from the woman's body. Dances are typically performed in groups, although some dances arouse other women's critical comments.¹⁵⁴ In contrast to Pukhtun dance, a more contemporary and "modern" style of dancing is imitated from Indian Bollywood movies.¹⁵⁵ Here movement is concentrated in the more provocative parts of a woman's body, her shoulders and hips, which are thrust back and forth vigorously. In various weddings, younger sisters of brides and grooms chose to dance "Indian-style"; on occasions, male cousins were brought in to the female space to dance among the women like Indian actors and actresses in movies. This often caused a stir among the female audience, prior to the boy's identification as a brother or cousin. Female relatives of the groom and bride dance separately, almost in a competition. Both sides are subject to scrutiny as they consolidate their kinship group through dance.

¹⁵⁴ Bourdieu suggests that besides being an expressive or representational art form, collective dancing itself enacts a form of social order: "The reason why submission to the collective rhythms is so rigorously demanded is that the temporal forms or the spatial structures structure not only the group's representation of the world but the group itself, which orders itself in accordance with this representation" (1991: 163).

¹⁵⁵ Comparatively, Imtiaz Ahmad notes: "the customs and rituals observed by Muslim communities [in India] at the time of marriage are adaptations of the customs and rituals observed generally within the region." (1978: xxv, Introduction). He observes further, "the customs of presentation (*joran*), of singing of songs by women (*bainam*) and of the ritual purification baths given to the bride and the groom (*naoni*) are easily comparable to similar customs observed by the Hindus of that area." (ibid).

The crowd of dancers both consists of an indeterminate celebratory body, whose physical participation lends substance to the marriage contract, and of a group of individuals with determinate relationships to the bride, the groom and their families. Singers will typically select a particular member of the crowd and direct their songs towards her. Bibiane may dance towards others as a form of affectionate notice. In one instance, after I had returned from Cambridge to my field sites, a senior Bibi distinguish me in this way. In weddings, women will dance up to relatives and friends and move their hands, saying: “Why? You have come all the way from Islamabad for the wedding; shouldn’t I dance specially for you”.¹⁵⁶

Audiences debate the different styles and meanings of the dancing. Nahida, a young Bibi in her 20s who lives in Swat, told me in Pukhto at her brother’s wedding:

“Before people danced *sada* (simply). Now they have learnt from T.V. *India-walla* dances. The *masharan* (elders) don’t like it because the *badan* (body) shakes, and they think it is *behaya ao sharam de* (immodest and shameful).”

Dancing in Swat and Mardan offers younger Bibiane a historically novel avenue for self-expression in the supposedly all-female space of the *Nakreeze*. The bodily expressiveness which it grants women has perhaps been tolerated insofar as it has articulated itself in the interstices of an important life-course (*gham-khadi*) occurrence, whose nature is determined by women. It would appear that dancing has passed from being a mere form of entertainment to being a physical sign of participation in the wedding and its happiness (female relatives of the couple are now pressured to join in, suggesting dancing has become a “work” of entertainment). The following exchange between a Khan from *bar* Swat, reputedly one of the most “conservative” and Pukhto-observing families, and an elder, Begum-Bibi, illustrates the complexity and historical mutability of dance:

Nasir Khan: “Except for the mullah, almost every family watches T.V., satellite, and Indian channels. The other day in my nephew’s wedding in Swat, my nieces were dancing and singing just like in Indian *filmoona* [films]!”

¹⁵⁶ A troupe of male *dumman* or musicians may charge as much as three thousand rupees each; another source of expenditure is the hundreds of 5 and 10 rupee notes thrown over the heads of the dancers and the bride. Three sisters arranging a wedding told me: “We wanted to call [female] *dummane* from Lahore but they are too expensive—some demand two and a half lakhs!”

Walayat Begum-Bibi: “There is a male *dum* [dancer] in Swat who said, “before (during the Swat State) you Bibiane and Badshahyan used to make us dance, now the Bibiane dance and I play the *sāz* (music).”¹⁵⁷

This change is striking in the general context of Pakistan’s wider Islamic society, where dancing and drumming in festive contexts are seen as “un-Islamic practices” (see, for example, Ansari 1992: 151-152; Cook 2000: 68, 90, 444; Freitag 1988: 145; Marsden 2002: 128). Dancing has particularly been regarded as questionable in Swat, and more widely in the Frontier. Barth (1959; 1981b) and Lindholm (1996: 37; 1982: 118-121) point out the lowly status of the *dum* (dancer) or *nai* (barber, whose wives may be dancers, *dummane*) in Pukhtun social hierarchies. A number of Bibiane who attended Al-Huda did not participate in the *Nakreeza*, nor did they dance—although some may dance wholeheartedly on other days. It is even more striking for Bibiane, who observe strict *purdah* in the village, to dance. One older village-Bibi condemned younger Bibiane’s exposure of themselves as “all *show sha* (showing off).” In her mind, their thoughtless imitation of Indian films violated *purdah*: “this is not Pukhto, but it has become the way of Pukhtun women”.

Abu-Lughod suggests that women’s dancing at weddings represents a form of resistance to men (1990: 51). From this viewpoint, women control their own sphere by staging symbolic acts of protest and insurrection through bodily movements denied them outside the house or in the ordinary domestic environment. Nasrin, whose brother forbade her to undertake professional employment or to drive a car, told me: “people will not say anything bad when the sisters or the mother of a boy dance, because they are expected to be happy and dance.” As a female expression of loyalty to male kin, dancing also allows women to present themselves subversively in terms of some men’s expectations. Women may pressure others to dance and be refused, while onlooking Bibiane may approve or be critical of the communal, cross-class or inter-gender nature of the celebration.

In one wedding, Ranigul, a groom’s father’s sister (in her forties), danced close to her sisters and said:

¹⁵⁷ Indeed many older Bibiane and *daigane* who were fully involved in the daily lives of Bibiane note that in contrast to the present, “*dumman*” used to be invited frequently for every *khadi*: weddings; births; and circumcisions.

“I have a hurt hip, yet because of happiness I am dancing the most. But my sister-in-law [the groom’s mother] will probably not appreciate it. She will say, ‘so what? After all it’s her brother’s son! She is supposed to dance!’”

Different relatives express kinship relationships in diverse and sometimes conflicting ways. Here, Ranigul risked her own respectability by dancing for her nephew, at one point even referring to herself by the derogatory term “*dumma*” (dancer, or prostitute). The wives of paternal uncles and cousins, with whom the groom’s immediate family may have been in dispute, symbolically heal the breach in relationship by participating wholeheartedly in wedding festivities (dancing and throwing money). Bibiane conceal their feelings of stress from the guests of the wedding. To the public, Ranigul expressed her bond with her nephew, her brother and with his wife (Ranigul’s sister-in-law) by extension.

So far I have presented the conventional sequence of events at weddings; other examples of *khadi* exhibit individuality by departing from this order of procedure. Weddings are characterized by a tension between what individuals wish to do (dance or not dance, socialize in families or more widely), and what they feel compelled to do at the essentially collective event. The sense of cooperative and collective work is maintained throughout the different phases of the *khadi*: in travel, through each married woman’s donation of wedding money (which shall be discussed in Chapter 5), in sitting and participation, in receiving the hosts’ hospitality, in the escorting of the bride, in the dancing during the *Nakreeze*, and in a range of other complicated social interactions. Correct female participation in each of these actions bestows public respectability on individual *khadi* ceremonies, which are thus legitimised as relationships continuous with the other interpersonal and inter-familial kinship bonds of society. Peoples’ marriages that fail to follow the precepts of *Pukhtunwali* by excluding members of their *gham-khadi* circle deprive themselves of such a constitutive social endorsement; such marriages are rather met with social disapproval. This “non *zeest-rozgar*” is illustrated in the following case of a Pukhtun love marriage that developed over the internet.

4.6. An Internet Love Marriage

The famous contemporary Pukhtun poet Ghani Khan wrote that a Pukhtun “cannot think of love without marriage. If he does, he pays for it with his life” (1990: 13). In the account below, I show that individuals’ choices in marriage were disconnected from the expectations of their community, defying the “ideology that

underpins a South Asian 'arranged' marriage . . . that obligations to one's immediate and more extended family have priority over personal self-interest" (Shaw 2001: 323). Such a perception has informed a number of ethnographies within a South Asian context. Ask affirms that unmarried girls in northern Pakistan are conceptualized as "creatures" of uncontrollable emotion, and are thus bound to forms of familial duty (1993: 208). The conflict between family ideals and self-will have provoked a broadly documented range of demands for love-marriage (Abu-Lughod 1990: 47; Altorki 1986:137; Alvi 2001: 60; Ask 1993; Beck and Keddie 1978: 4; Berland 1982: 89; Fischer 1991: 102; Mernissi 1985: 135; Mody Spencer 2000; Papanek 1982: 39; Shaw 2001: 324; Tapper 1991: 94). These accounts describe violent outcomes meted to those transgressing parental sanctions. In the Mohmand Pukhtun context, Ahmed (1980) and Singer (1982: 74) describe husbands' killings of wives and their lovers in *tor* cases seen to have violated the family honour (1980: 202-212). Elsewhere, lovers may both be killed by the woman's kin, partners separated, and individuals disinherited, ostracized or otherwise sundered from interaction with kin.

As seen in the beginning of this chapter, Pukhtun mothers of brides and grooms typically play active roles in their children's marriages, often determining the type of family and bride, and are consequently involved in working towards achieving a successful wedding. The case here is of a rift between the groom and his Pukhtun mother, resolved peacefully, but through painful social compromise. Firoza and Zain's love marriage developed over the internet. Many Pukhtun and Pakistani girls and boys have increasing access to the web in their bedrooms. In this instance, Firoza (a 26-year old with a Masters in Social Science from Karachi), began to correspond with Zain, a Pukhtun man (aged 25, and a student in Canada) through email after meeting only once at a Karachi party. Zain's parents live in Islamabad; his mother is a Bibi from a less wealthy Pukhtun family, and is related to the Mardan and Swat families through marriage. Firoza's mother is Pukhtun and her father of Indian origin. The lovers married secretly, defying Pukhtun notions of collectivity and *gham-khadi* group involvement. The bond was found unacceptable by Zain's mother, as compromising her honour or *ezat*, impairing her full personhood and social identity in Pukhtun society.¹⁵⁸ Two years after the actual wedding, Zain's mother accepted the match, arranging a special collective *khadi* commemoration to reconcile the nuptials with *Pukhtunwali*.¹⁵⁹ The case is perhaps

¹⁵⁸ In the words of one anthropologist, the loss of honour means "he or she is no longer able to face others. Honour is the public part of the self which, in order to remain communicable to others, must conform to social expectations" (Alvi 2001: 52). Compare Shah, S.Y. 1980-829.

¹⁵⁹ Bourdieu theorizes how "[r]ite[s] must be resolved by means of an operation socially approved and collectively assumed" (1991: 136). For a comparable case of elopement and marriage of a British

best told through separate conversations I had with Firoza and with Zain's mother. In the first, a taped interview from her apartment in Islamabad, Firoza explained the complexities of her marriage:

"The computer brings the whole world right up to your eyes [sic] ...on the internet chat room, Zain's name was above mine, and he wanted instructions on how to use the internet, so we began to talk. After Zain's classes in Canada, we began to chat for ten-hours straight, and then it went up to eighteen hours a day. Then my net used to be connected all the time. He wanted my photo to see me. After a year, he said he wanted to come to Pakistan to marry me. I told my mother—but being a Pukhtun she knew the society—she knew what the people would say, so we argued. From Canada, Zain phoned his mother, and spoke to her about me, but she told him that she wanted him to marry a cousin and would get him engaged, so he ended up disputing with her. Zain said, 'my mother is a Pukhtun, and once she puts her foot down she will not change. I know her. She will say, 'this is not my choice, it's my son's choice!' But Zain came to Pakistan secretly, and we got married, *nikaofaied* [an anglicized term for the Arabic *Nika*, legally wedded]. My husband went to Islamabad and showed his mother the *nikah-nama* (marriage certificate) to show her the proof. Zain's mother got very angry. They both fought fiercely, and Zain left the house. He had nowhere to go, so he came back to me to Karachi."

The incident illustrates how boys, as well as girls, are scrutinized and chaperoned, and how Pukhtun Bibiane's attitudes towards children's obligations are perceived as different from, but in constant contact with, the possibly more permissive stances of other Pakistani ethnicities. In a separate interview, Zain's mother presented her side, attesting a concern less for procedure than for the suitability of the marriage itself. According to her, "Firoza's parents told us over the phone to send a proposal, and they'll marry them. I told her parents: 'My husband was mad at the situation because of the way it happened. It wasn't the right way! Everything has a correct way (*Da har sa tareka yee*). Now I'm very angry with him [Zain]..."

At this point in Firoza's account, her parents were also upset:

Pakistani girl, who feared to renew contact with her angered father ten years after the incident, see Shaw 2001: 330.

“My father really loves me, but this time my parents were angry when they found out—Zain’s parents called my father. I was sorry...so my father accepted Zain on condition that we get wedded again ‘properly’ [i.e. publicly]. Zain came to my home, so my parents wanted to do a ‘function’ [Pakistani English implying ‘gathering’; or ‘wedding reception’] for us to make it official. So they spoke to Zain’s parents, but they were uncooperative. My parents still held the wedding function, so that if I had a child tomorrow people would not say it is *haram* (illegitimate).¹⁶⁰ For two years, his parents did not accept me; his mother kept telling him to divorce me. Zain almost had a nervous breakdown. I felt guilty and sad for him, because he had no one else and nowhere else to go to. But then a few months back, the mother called, and she said they wanted to patch up. So we did.”

Zain’s mother, just before her act of public accreditation of the marriage before all her female relatives, told me: “I’m going along with it. He’s my son, and he’ll come back to me whether after five or ten years.” Clearly, the responsibility given Bibiane in marrying sons can foster feelings of maternal possessiveness and aggression towards sons’ wives. Above all, the mother-son relationship is conceived as indissoluble. Firoza confirms:

“Zain is very dominated by his mother. I have seen that in this community. Pathans usually get very dominated by their mothers. He had studied abroad; but the thoughts remained: if you are a Pathan, you remain a ‘Pathan’ [this colonial era term is still used among non-Pukhtuns and some Bibiane]. When my husband is alone, he makes one decision, but changes his mind after he comes back from his mothers’. Since we have moved to Islamabad, we have to go to see his mother every day, and they meet as if they have seen each other after a long time while I hang around. Looks like I have another wife to my husband, something like that!”

Two years after his clandestine marriage, Zain’s deferred wedding reception followed the conventional *khadi*-style, featuring an invitation event with a feast, singing and dancing, and the reunion of hundreds of kin, affines, friends, and acquaintances (including myself). In reinscribing the potential transgression of the son back into the symbolic order of *Pukhtunwali*, the mother’s own honour in the public eye—her *ezat*—was effectively restored, given that “[t]he code of honour weighs on each agent with the

¹⁶⁰ In relation to food the term *haram* implies “strictly forbidden”. In a different context, Nancy Tapper points out that among the Durrani Pashtun “the children of mixed marriages may be described as hybrids (*du-raga*, literally, ‘two-veined’...)” (1991: 57).

weight of all the other agents” (Bourdieu 1991: 196). To some extent, the wide attendance at such an unorthodox *khadi* gathering mitigated its exceptional quality, since “a gathering of many people is also one’s honour (*gara hum ezat sho kana*)”. A Bibi explained:

“It shows that people are coming to see the host, because she does *gham-khadi* with them, people will come to see her. That is her *ezat*. But if she did not keep up with them, and her house was *tash-tor* (literally, empty and black: receiving no visitors), then people will say, ‘what honour does she have? None’. So this is also her *ezat* that people say: ‘*gara raghla*’ (the crowd has gathered).”

The work of *khadi*, both in hosting and attending, healed the breach in social relationships caused by Zain’s liaison. However, because *gham-khadi* builds over generations, Zain’s mother could not invite her circle to the “second wedding” on the same terms as she had attended their festivities. Thus the reparative work of the festivity, exercising the “right of a mother” (*de mor haq*), was only partially accepted by many participants. This case highlights how Bibiane understand the public wedding reception to be a marriage contract not only between a bride and groom, but between families, kinship networks and wide-spread *gham-khadi* circles (see Tapper 1991: 14).

4.7. Birth: *Ombaraki*

Bibiane specifically, and Pukhtun women more generally, often say that the birth of children (particularly sons) completes the personhood of a woman, both socially and in terms of a desirable life-trajectory. As a new member of her husband’s household, a bride is not expected to work in the home for a year until she has her first child. One newly married Bibi remarked, “I don’t think a woman is complete without children”. This widely shared expectation means that Bibiane see birth as the next “natural” phase of marriage. Birth-visits tend to be soberly happy, but less vibrant than weddings. The local concept of the “work” of attendance and giving money in birth is also categorized under *zeest-rozgar* and *gham-khadi*. During the period of my fieldwork, I participated in more than twenty birth *ombarakiane* (pl.), or congratulatory birth visits, accompanied by other Bibiane, maids, or with my husband. A Bibi’s location, context, and family relationship determine who accompanies her for home visits. In the village context, a Bibi may go with a group of Bibiane (her mother—or sister/s-in-law) and a male family

driver; in the city, she may undertake visiting with her husband or alternatively with a sister.

The general pattern of an *omabaraki* for many Bibiane is as follows: often a couple or a small group of Bibiane visit the mother and baby in the hospital or at home without prior notification. As on a *tapos* enquiry, visiting men do not enter the mother's room unless very closely related (brothers, uncles), and even then leave when a female guest from another family enters. While men discuss national and local politics with the father to one side, Bibiane sit beside the mother as she lies in bed, asking detailed and other intimate questions about the *khadi*. Much is said about whether the baby's looks "have gone" to her father's or mother's side. Visitors may further enquire about the type of birth and the weight of the baby. In reply, the mother gives detailed descriptions of the first moments of birth and the father's reaction to the baby. After about an hour, the women wish the mother *salaams*, place an envelope with money (between Rs. 300 (£3) to Rs.2000 (£21, depending on the relationship and earlier reciprocal exchange) under the baby's pillow or give it to the mother herself, and depart. All the envelopes bear the name of the woman who gives the money, allowing the mother to tally the identities of donor families and the amounts given. At many events, I was stuck by how well Bibiane remembered exactly how much money they had received from the different members of their *gham-khadi* networks, as much as ten years after the event. The assumption is that the receiver will repay the amount in *gham-khadi* events over the course of her lifetime.

On departure, a Bibi may send her child or maid to her husband with the message "*Bibi wai, zoo?*" (Bibi says, shall we go?). Bibiane cover themselves appropriately with their *sazare*, and leave separately from non-related men (who will leave the room). In the car, I often heard Bibiane provide their husbands detailed accounts of the baby's name, looks, birth, in addition to other important information about family relationships and disputes. The husband then inquires about issues he could not, in propriety, discuss with other men.

4.8. Conclusion

It is now possible to compare some structural features of *gham* and *khadi*. Both necessitate the gathering of people; as one Bibi told me on the way to a funeral, using the words of an Indian song: "*Kia barat hoti hay, kia janaza hota hay, log jama hote hay. Aik hee bath hoti hay*" ("Sometimes a wedding, sometimes a death, people come together in both events. It is the same thing"). Preparation for both requires similar effort—ordering and organizing chairs, *shamiane*, and *degoona*—with the meals symbolising a

form of gift. Furthermore, both *gham* and *khadi* obey the tripartite organization of commemorative events proposed by Van Gennep (1977)—there are three days of observance in death and weddings; and forty days mark the initial phase of mourning (*salwekhtamma*) and celebration after birth (*salwekhtee*). These time-schemes regulate the reassimilation of mourning or celebrating families into the community.

This chapter has shown that a number of critical or constitutive female procedures in weddings take place in particular house-spaces (or spaces outside the house). Women's presence, or active forms of ceremonial participation (like dancing or scattering material or money), is determined by their familial relation to the bride or groom. Since forms like dancing make or perform kinship, bride's and groom's side relatives often dance or socialize separately in an assertion of kin identity, even as this is subsumed in a wider festive body of revellers. The allocation of duties and activities amongst women, as in the case of funerals, portrays the structure of reciprocal relations always implicit in female sociality. Aunts may hold up money in the *Nakreeza*, while *daigane* dance on stage with their Bibi's daughters or granddaughter; less close but still dependent maids and village-women will watch the dancers from low roofs. This concerted, but minutely differentiated, effort amongst women represents the "work" of participating at and "making" a wedding.

My account of *khadi* also relates the physical and celebratory coming-together at weddings with Pukhtun forms of elite-family and cross-class social solidarity ordinarily secured by *thal-ratlal*. Chapter 3 described funerals as acts of social cohesion, predicated on ideas of *Pukhtunwali*, that bring poor tenants, village-people, and Khanan together. Bibiane's weddings are distinctive in bringing together people of both sexes from different social backgrounds, though attendance on the part of the poor is by invitation. Weddings secure social continuity in a comparable way to funerals: they produce unions as proper extensions to preexistent patterns of kin (and thus social and *gham-khadi*) relationship. Women's "work" in this connection centrally involves the certification of individual marriages as "correct" enactments of Pukhto procedure, seen and approved by women's own eyes. The female activities and conventional procedures of *khadi* celebration—from energetic forms like dancing to more sedentary forms like accepting food—connote a mode of social presence and collective witness of wedding rites.

Pukhtun and Islamic notions of shame around bodily processes give women special authority to authenticate deaths, births and weddings. At weddings, the bride and groom are presented to a female audience; in *ombaraki* and *haqiqa* (head-shaving) ceremonies, women observe the baby at birth. Male kin depend on close female relatives to confirm weddings and births (Shaukat Ali 1997: 215). The public nature of festivities

eases transitions across a liminal zone joining states of life—life/death and maidenhood/marriage. The explicit disavowal of *sharam* in the case of virginal brides safeguards the honour of both families. Thus Bibiane's confirmation of the giving-away of the bride, of her marital relationship with her husband and her defloration, represents a form of engagement with men and male concepts of family honour, however passing the ceremonial interactions between the genders within the *kor*.

My description of ceremonies within the house extends from my articulation of the *kor*-space in Chapter 2 where I posited analogies between the house and a range of Bibiane's *pardah* practices, such as veiling. The *pardah* system which insists on a segregated *kor* for women now generates analogous forms of *pardah*-enclosure (notably the cordoned-off backs of cars), which are being assimilated into ceremonial patterns. In striking contrast, *gham* and *khadi* stages the exceptional incursion of men into the segregated women's zone. The appearance of male kin in the *kor* (to bear away the coffin or *dolai* [bride's palanquin]) allows women to put faces to names, paradoxically making present the whole body of a (section of) society at the time of the loss or departure of one of its members. This particular scene, in which Bibiane expressly look at their male kin, may serve as an emblem for the role of visual witness which they play throughout *gham-khadi* events, consecrating the social legitimacy of proceedings.

The concept of "work" developed throughout, particularly in my treatment of the anthropology of the house in Chapters 2 and 3, incorporates physical efforts (travel, food preparation) into broader notions of socially responsive, thoughtfully directed action (*aql*). The deployment of this word in a Bibiane Pukhtun's context, in a sense different from the religious meaning, enjoins the proper observance of ritualized actions or appropriate moods at life-event ceremonies. Bibiane are thus said to be deficient in sense, or in an appreciation of Pukhto, if they fail to perform expected emotions at particular ceremonial junctures. At stake in weddings for individual Bibiane is others' (and her own) assessment of her *ezat*, as someone who complies with a requirement to attend. At stake for a family is their freedom from taint, as socially attested, and (as discussed in chapter 3) their social status, implied by the size of attendance (the *khalak* or "people"; Barth 1986: 32; Bourdieu 1991: 171).

Yet if the outcome of Bibiane's participation in ceremonies is typically social approval (Delaney 1991: 135), the possibility exists of procedures going awry. Relations can founder and be unmade. In one scandalous instance, an unmarried cousin broke up a marriage when she told a prospective bride about the groom's affair with another relative. The subsequent stigma, while not resulting in any honour killing, nevertheless stained all participants. In this way, actions intended to reproduce an immemorial order

of *Pukhtunwali*, in practice preserve, adapt and problematise “convention” in multivalent ways. If one way to describe *gham-khadi* ceremonies is through itemising their conventional forms, another is through exploring the ways in which these forms are internally contradictory, characterised by impossible demands, and subject to revision in new circumstances. The next chapter examines how *gham-khadi* as a system of ideas is itself problematic in Pukhtun thought and practice in conjoining certain presuppositions—of Islam and “custom”, or “tradition” and “modernity”—in conflicting ways. *Gham-khadi* continues to project Pukhto into the future, but as the vehicle of new or distinct forms of female agency or Islamic knowledge. Such slippages, as well as such transmissions, of social meaning go on so long as marriage joins “*alak*” (boy, unmarried man) and “*geenay*” (girl, unmarried woman), and transform their public status into “*sare*” (man) and “*khaṛa*” (woman)—that is, into people who become accountable, “on whom the responsibility to do *gham-khadi* in turn falls” (*de wada na makhke de jeenai hisaab kitab na yee; wada na pas hisab shoro shee*).

CHAPTER 5

The Work of *Gham-Khadi*:

“Not to Do *Gham-Khadi* is Shameful (*Sharam*); to Do it a Burden”

“In my laughter there is grief; with sad eyes do I smile”

(*Pa khanda ke me jara da; pa khapa stargo khandegam*) Ghani Khan.

“Before there was little *gham*, now these *ghamoona* (pl.) have taken me off my *rozgar*”

(employment) (*Pookha ba kala kala gham wo was de ghamoona da rozgar a ooweesthama*)

(From the popular contemporary Pukhto song “*Gham*”, sung by Rahim Shah).

“At times I enjoy it, at times I don’t; *gham-khadi* is like a *duty* that has to be done” (middle-aged convent-educated Bibi).

5.1. Introduction

This chapter examines the problematic and stressful aspect of *gham-khadi* as experienced by Bibiane not just physically in different milieux but in their reflection upon diverse areas of their lives. The performance of *gham-khadi* prompts women to think about its relation to Pukhtun categories of religion and “custom”, right and wrong, the individual and the collective, and the obligatory and the voluntary. Unlike other customs less identified with a philosophy of life or with particular celebrations, *gham-khadi* falls neither on one side of these dichotomies nor the other, but rather cuts across them in such a way as to arouse painful dilemmas for Bibiane. My analyses here begin to expose how *gham-khadi* is problematic for Bibiane in bringing to the surface deep-lying social contradictions, which demand some practical resolution given the priority granted to *gham-khadi* (or *zeest-rozgar*) over forms of professional employment (*kaar-rozgar*), childcare and housework (*kor-kaar*).

The term *gham-khadi*, as used by Bibiane, refers not merely to wedding and funeral ceremonies and procedures, but to a sense of social obligation underlying the performances. *Gham-khadi* as a principle of Pukhtun life and thought may be characterized not only in terms of the organizing schemes above, but also as a negotiation between the poles of each; it is not simply the implementation of any single principle. Having focused ethnographically on ceremonies’ features in Chapters 3 and 4, I now ask: should *gham-khadi* be collectively understood as having prior terms of enactment, or as subject to individual manipulation and strategy? Is *gham-khadi* for Bibiane governed by patterns of reciprocity that exclude personal choice, or does it represent a kind of morality, accessible to the subjective judgments of groups and

individuals? If *gham-khadi* is an ingrained feature of Pukhto, then is it in conformity with present-day understandings of Islam? Can the obligation to perform *gham-khadi* be made congruent with the Western idea of a professional career for women outside the home? The chapter draws on my observations and discussions with Bibiane, representing *gham-khadi* as the place where a number of normative and definitional concepts of gender, personhood, propriety and tradition are knotted—and are beginning to unravel.

Bibiane see the activities associated with *gham-khadi*—preparation, travel, financial and household management—and the consolidation of kin relationships through acts of attention and politeness as a form of “work”. However, the injunctive force of work does not make *gham-khadi* an unproblematic performance of (a number of) narrowly-defined acts. As we saw in Chapter 2, Bibiane describe their “layered” lives in terms of ambiguities and contradictions—between city and village, home and school, *hujra* and *kor*. The fundamental paradox of *gham-khadi* (sadness-happiness) as a verbal formulation is yet more intractable in practice, in the sense that a funeral may take place in one village the day after a wedding in another. Bibiane also experience the paradox enshrined in the phrase in a series of daily quandaries as *gham-khadi* obligations may clash with other projects they wish to pursue, such as education, full-time employment and childcare.

Different *gham-khadi* occasions are categorised in a hierarchy of importance with attendance at *gham* (the paramount emotional, thoughtful and bodily experience) taking priority over *khadi*. The scale descends through illness (*najorthia*), birth (*paidaish*) and relatively minor *tapos* (enquiries) on moving, *afsos* (condolence) following an election defeat, or felicitations (*ombaraki*) to winners. Thus, were a death and a wedding in two separate families to fall at the same time, an individual expected to attend both should go to the funeral (*gham*) (see Lindholm, Charles 1982: 156). References to *gham-khadi* are pervasive in people’s accounts of their social experience. Bibiane and Khanan feel an overwhelming sense of responsibility in complying with expectations concerning their attendance, gifting, deportment and dress; this generates an agitated moral discourse of judgment and self-scrutiny. As husbands depend on wives to undertake *gham-khadi* on behalf of their households, the practices represent an instance of female power within a supposedly “patriarchal” framework (Papanek 1982: 37; Shaw 1997: 149). Meanwhile, the specificity of *gham-khadi* as a distinct set of conventions between religion and Pukhto, moral choice and compulsion, grants it a language of its own, as documented in this chapter.

5.2. Collective and Individual in *Gham-Khadi*

Gham-khadi in Pukhtun experience comprises a constant feature of life as lived and understood, yet is complex, contradictory and subject to transformation (Comaroff and Comaroff 1992: 38). One of the dimensions in which Bibiane see *gham-khadi* changing is in the different types of responsibilities required of individual subjects over the course of their lives. Another dimension concerns the always-mutable question of social status (of both individuals and families) as negotiated through *gham-khadi* observances. Much of the complexity of *gham-khadi* inheres in its bridging of two levels: that of collective performance, and of individual responsibility.

At one level, collective co-operation, through attendance, gifting, and consumption of the feast-meal, is deemed essential to the correct performance of *gham-khadi*. The success of an event and the prestige of a particular family are judged by the number of people (*khalaq*) attending their wedding or funeral (see Ahmed, A. S. 1980: 243, 288; Barth 1986: 32). A large attendance maintains honour, while scant attendance may lead to the ostracism of “the person whose *gham/khadi* it is. It is as if she is not “recognised”: she is “no-one” in society.” Sumaira, in her late thirties, originally from Swat, married to her matrilineal parallel cousin from Mardan and now living in Islamabad, explained the significance of *gham-khadi* to me in English:

“*Gham-khadi* has this importance, from *roz-e-awal* (Persian: from the beginning) both for men and for women, like when people get together collectively for prayers in a mosque. Why? The importance of this is that people come together collectively and understand and share each other’s *dokh dard* (Urdu: sorrow and pain). It’s a community feeling. Tomorrow, God forbid, if it is your sorrow or illness the same people will ask and come to you when you need them.”

In *gham-khadi*, the collectivity of kin and affines assembles from the same and other villages, cities and even foreign countries to gather at the site of origin. The *gham-khadi* event in this manner places emphasis on *Pukhtunwali* both in regulating social relations and on an individual level, is an important constituent in the self-understanding of urban or emigrant Pukhtuns. In the case of one wedding, a Bibi who lived in the U.S.A. with her Pukhtun husband praised *gham-khadi* for joining dispersed relatives. With increased global transport and communication, *gham-khadi* becomes crucial in the affirmation of people’s Pukhtun identity. Close relatives living abroad are expected to return for the ceremony (compare Shaw 2000; Werbner 1986); and more distant

relatives phone. The work in *gham-khadi* makes itself felt in the literal and physical cost of travel and attendance.

Against an emphasis on collectivity (and cases where parents may act for married children, or wives for husbands), every adult individual is ultimately responsible for performing reciprocal cycles of “going and coming” with his/her wider social network. Participation is said to engage different dimensions of personhood—the body (*jismi zor*: physical effort), mind (*dimagh*: intellect), and emotions (*zre*, heart). Bibiane are expected in a generalized moral register to keep up relationships with kin and affines (through visiting, solicitude, *gham-khadi* attendance), and also to carry off social performances in the ceremonial context (presenting oneself to the senior women of the afflicted or celebrating household, addressing people correctly by seniority and family closeness, gifting correctly and in accordance with an accepted procedure). Despite the usual practice of husband and wife attending *gham-khadi* together, in segregated spaces, individual women are understood as agents exercising control over these forms of behaviour. Actions in such a context inform a public view of one’s female morality, in which “psychological” and “social” components are indissoluble. A common proverb is repeated among Bibiane, “*khpal ezat pa khpal las ke de*” (one’s own *ezat* is in one’s own hands; compare Altorki 1986: 135; Lindholm, Charles 1995: 64). If distinct styles of behaviour are expected of Bibiane in *gham-khadi* contexts, then it is also understood that women may fall short of them. Thus two orders of moral thinking interlock in the context of *gham-khadi*: first, women’s adept or inept performance of repeatable procedures; and second, individuals’ knowing deviation from them (for example, through notably ostentatious or self-effacing styles of self-presentation).

The actual deployment of tactics in socializing and presenting one’s gift as a household-head in ceremonies is far more subtle than schematic moral ideas of good/bad and conformity/deviance would suggest. Each woman (responsible for more than herself) in the act of giving money on behalf of her own family (and husband) will take great care to register her action both with the recipient and the attending assembly of women. She will announce her contribution, writing “from Mr. and Mrs. Khan”, for example, on the envelope. Bibiane are concerned to make an impression through the way in which they arrive and present their offerings, taking care to acknowledge the senior women of the household (see Chapter 3 for an analysis of Bibiane’s discourse of skill in *gham-khadi*). Persons seek to maintain a respectable public face, even, in some cases, at the cost of excluding or asserting precedence over others. These manoeuvrings of position and status within extended families, with competing sisters-in-law, other affines, and step-relations (co-wives and their children), make *gham-khadi* the site of

peculiar conflicts (as was seen in Chapter 3).¹⁶¹ These forms of female rivalry are often treated light-heartedly, with an undertone of deeper feeling. An approaching sister-in-law may be derided *sotto voce* as a “*balla*” (monster) or “*badda*” (bad), before being greeted cordially. Thus as we have seen, under the co-operative and collective sense of *gham-kehadi* lies another level of relationships fraught with competition and tension.

Unmarried girls and women not obliged to attend *gham-kehadi* are schooled in the skill and politics involved in *gham-kehadi* from a young age. On one occasion in Islamabad, I accompanied a Bibi, her daughter and niece to the *baazaar* for an evening drive. The Bibi bought a bouquet of red roses (*gwalab*) through her half-opened car window from a persistent young beggar-girl. After the Bibi had given them to her five-year old daughter in the car to present to her bed-bound grandmother, the child’s seven-year-old cousin said, “You hold the flowers now [in the car], but I will “give” them”. The Bibi turned to me and whispered, turning her eyes towards the seven-year-old, that the little girl displayed “*chalaki*” (sharpness). At the age of seven, she understood the social value of being the person to offer gifts, skilfully renegotiating the terms of exchange so that she could be the giver.¹⁶²

Tension coexists with forms of tutelage into Pukhto procedures, as affinal relations (mothers-in-law and sisters-in-law) teach brides how to perform correct *gham-kehadi* in the context of their own extended families. Anthropological accounts from the wider Muslim world, specifically South Asia, recurrently note the role extended families play in shaping individual behaviour. In her account of joint family households in rural Rajasthan, Kolenda notes that early marriage necessitates “the joint family function[ing] as [the] protector and guide of young couples” (1989: 103); for newly married Bibiane, this protection extends to their training as workers in *gham-kehadi*. Nazia (aged 45 at the time of this conversation) recalled:

“I was only fifteen when I got married. But my *yor* (husband’s eldest brother’s wife) taught me everything, like dressing up and how to meet people in *gham-kehadi*. She has trained me the way you train your own daughter.”

The mutual obligations of *gham-kehadi* define for Bibiane the particular social and familial networks in which they will engage during the course of their lives. Older informants told me that every family has their specific *riwajoon* (ways/customs) of *gham-kehadi* (i.e.

¹⁶¹ On competitive rivalry and “upping the ante” among Pukhtuns, see also Grima 1998: 75; and Lindholm, Charles 1982: 74, 191.

¹⁶² Barth noted that when faced with a choice, Swati Pukhtuns consider private rather than group interest, switching sides from one group to another when it suits their interests (1986: 2).

who with and how they do *gham-khadi*), both in terms of whom they favour with attendance and their procedures of visiting, gifting and recognising reciprocity. Arrangements between families vary according to the amounts exchanged (e.g. between Rs.500 and Rs.2,000), the degree of non-kin attendance for political families and expectations of exact financial reciprocity for poorer scions. Beginning the performance of *gham-khadi* can be a daunting and bewildering experience for young women, who are treated as full independent moral agents for the first time. A non-Pukhtun wife, Aliya, captured in English the difficulty of establishing new affinal relationships:

“If you do not attend *gham-khadi* they say: ‘she doesn’t want to be part of the family’. It’s very clannish. It took me a long time to understand that all these women are all cousins; and cousins of their husbands. If I don’t go they say she is an ‘outsider’, and I am pushed out more. So I *work* hard to meet these people.”

In-marriage, as proved time and again in family *gham-khadi* gatherings, is proposed as making of kinship in two ways: not only does the non-consanguineous bride affiliate herself with the relatives of her husband, but also works at building relationships with a network of household spouses who are also cousins, overcoming a further kin boundary. When such a woman integrates herself successfully, her choices in terms of small acts of compliance with group norms will have bound her to the collectivity of her affines.

5.3. Reciprocity and Morality

In committing herself morally to a *gham-khadi* relationship, a Bibi reciprocates another’s attention firstly with respect to time and presence, and secondly with respect to money. The quality of visiting is evaluated by the amount of money given, immediacy of attendance, and time stayed (from morning to evening for three days, or forty days). All these represent criteria for how “well” a bond has been discharged. The identity of *gham-khadi* as a form of reciprocal *tlal-ratlal* in theory guarantees a return on visits paid. Financially, this reciprocity takes the normative form of receivers giving back more than they were offered. One Bibi observed: “You come to my house [for *ombaraki*] and give me a gift [customarily money]; in return I must go to your house for the same duration of time and pay back the equivalent or more, but never knowingly less [although in practice some people give according to their means].” Attendance at others’ festivities is more important than money itself, and determines whether a relationship is sustained or

ruptured. The gift of one's presence at ceremonies is normally, however, accompanied by a financial subvention, and vice versa; both together signify the continuance of family bonds (Abu-Lughod 1986: 69). To borrow Mauss's terms (1990), *gham-khadi* gifts do not exist as isolated and unsignified objects, but rather carry a symbolic part of the donor: in a display of hospitality, women offer their guests their unconditional attention, time and presence. The gift of money also represents and embodies the donor and receiver's social relationship.¹⁶³

Chapters 3 and 4 focused ethnographically on the particularities of hospitality, courtesies, entertainment, ritualized or repeated performance, dances and feasts (see Mauss 1990 [first published 1954: 3]). Procedures for the presentation and reception of gifts of money are calibrated to the family relationships of both donor and recipient and, more markedly, the recipient and the "subject" of the gathering (the dead person, the new-born baby, the bride's mother or female guardian). Bibiane may accept money from *gham-khadi* guests in different capacities: as brides, mothers of new-born babies, wives of ill husbands, or widows. At weddings, a bride's mother, who stands at the entrance of the wedding reception, will be greeted by each arriving guest, then handed an envelope containing money (this may vary from Rs.200 to Rs.2000, the amount depending on reciprocity and, to some extent, means). This money is meant for the bride, and her mother hands over all the envelopes to her daughter after the ceremony. The mother may at this point write down the names and amounts of money given by each guest, often assessing her relationship with each woman according to the amount of money given. This list will be an important reference for the bride in her future reciprocations as, until individual sums of money are repaid, the receiver is in a state of debt.

Expectations of reciprocity in *gham-khadi* practically affect Pukhtuns in their day-to-day existence. Among the *gharibanan* (poor), many maintain a public image by large sums for gifting and hosting *gham-khadi* events.¹⁶⁴ Maids may depend on their Bibiane as patrons from whom to borrow large sums of loans (during my fieldwork I knew three maids who borrowed more than Rs.10,000 (£105) in one transaction from Bibiane for their families' *gham-khadi*). If someone is *na-chara* (very poor), they procure loans (*qarx*) from village shopkeepers, wealthier relatives, and neighbours. Many of these loans lead

¹⁶³ On hospitality as a special variety of gift giving, see Barth 1986: 77. On unreciprocated or free gifts in 'Jain society', see Laidlaw 2000, who theorises that "The self-negating free gift is [. . .] present, even if only for a moment, in the transactions which make up systems of reciprocal gift exchange." (ibid: 628).

¹⁶⁴ One woman told me: "Here (in Mardan) there is a wedding of a widow's son the *jore* (suits), clothes, the rice, everything- are *qarx* (loaned). I told the woman: 'what is the sense in taking so many loans?' The mother of the groom replied: 'people will laugh at me if I don't have these things to show at my son's wedding'. The speaker herself did not "give a single meal" at the marriage of any of her four sons due to her unwillingness to take out a *qarxa* (loan).

to life-long debt.¹⁶⁵ Financial gifts pass not merely between members of different households, but also, in a generally more symmetrical arrangement, between affines. The morning after her wedding, a bride also receives money from the closest of her husband's relatives: her married sisters-in-laws (both her husband's sisters and his brother's wives) and mother-in-law, who typically determine amounts beforehand, so that all sisters-in-law give equally. The inscribed envelope is then presented to the bride with large sums of *ombaraki* money. In Mardan at the time of my fieldwork, close relatives such as first cousins or sisters-in-law gave Rs.10,000 to brides; in Swat some Bibiane even reported giving Rs. 20,000. Funeral payments range from Rs.500 to Rs.20,000 for a very close relative. Births "cost" from Rs.200 to Rs.2000, and illness upwards of Rs. 500. Distant relatives are not required to underwrite funeral expenses, though a wealthy elder who did so would be thanked after the gift had been politely refused in *sath*. (There are no forms for young people giving to the old in such circumstances). The differences between funeral and wedding gifting points to the greater closeness of relatives in sharing grief; *khadi* are happier occasions, in which all may participate. Very tentatively, though, the movement among elite Pukhtuns from closely reciprocated patrilineal cousin marriages to exogamy suggests that *khadi* contributions keep alive a family's possibility of later marrying into the circle (benefitting from the "good" of a bride or giving a bride).

Without ceasing to be obligatory, Bibiane's responsibilities in *gham-khadi* are graded according to their household seniority.¹⁶⁶ One of my older informants, Bibiji (aged 60), stated: "*Masharan* [elders] give more in weddings and births of people not so close (distant relatives) about Rs.500 (£5) to Rs.1000 (£10) while *kasharan* [younger women] give less about Rs.300 (£3)." According to my observations and the statements of younger Bibiane, however, this was rarely the case. Bibiane in their twenties and thirties reported giving between Rs.500 (£5) to Rs.20,000 (£210) for weddings, and Rs.500 to Rs.2000 (£21) for births. The younger women considered the amounts suggested by Bibiji as far too little and "embarrassing"; many women remarked that the larger sums they gave symbolized the value which they placed upon their relationship with recipients. Larger sums may also reflect younger Bibiane's anxiety to grow roots in their marital families. A young 25 year-old Bibi told me that she wanted to give Rs.2000 for the birth money of a very close friend, who was also her affine, but just before

¹⁶⁵ "[H]ospitality and the large-scale entertainment required at *gham-khadi* events were the greatest burdens on the family economy, leading to the heaviest debts" (Grima 1998: 43).

¹⁶⁶ "Social status, [is] measured through conspicuous consumption and as part of Pukhto tradition, is maintained by senior lineages although their incomes may be considerably lower than junior or non-Pukhtun groups." (Ahmed, A. S. 1980: 287; see also 288).

visiting their house, her mother-in-law interceded, causing her to reduce the amount to Rs.500 (£5) in proportion to the elder woman’s gift of Rs.1000 (£10). The amount of money younger women give in *gham-kehadi* clearly exceeds the amounts given by *masharan* (elders), suggesting younger Bibiane’s gifts express degrees of voluntariness.

The following is an estimate of a *mashara* (elder) Bibi’s spending on *gham-kehadi* within a period of four months.

Table 6 - Money given by Bibi for *gham-kehadi* during a four month period (March-June, 2001)

Deaths		Cash
1) Brother’s wife (<i>wrandar</i>)		= Rs.5000
2) Older sister (<i>khori</i>)		= Rs.5000
3) Sister’s husband (<i>ookhe</i>)		= Rs.1000
Food Offerings		
4) Husband’s brother’s son - (<i>lewarzay</i>)	(five <i>darai</i> of) Rice, <i>sarwe</i> (1 cow) and <i>sanda</i> (1 buffalo)	= Rs.10,900
Weddings		
Relatives (<i>khpalwan</i>)	Usually varies from Rs.500-10,000, but due to the many deaths of close relatives there were no weddings in the Bibi’s family during this year. Amount given = None	
Non-relatives (<i>pradee</i>).	= Rs.1000 (varies from Rs.100-Rs.2000)	
Births		
Amount given for two <i>ombaraki</i>		= Rs.2000
Total		=Rs. 24,900

The above total amounts to a large sum of expenditure by local standards.¹⁶⁷ Another Bibi estimated spending approximately one *lakh* rupees a year on *gham-kehadi*: “I give Rs. 20-30,000 for relatives’ death” (see Appendix 5 for a younger Bibi’s *gham-kehadi* expenditure). Anthropologists confirm the major economic impact of funerals and weddings on Pukhtun families, not merely among Khanan but across social classes (Ahmed, A. S. 1980: 285-288; Barth 1986: 32; and Grima 1998: 43; compare Metcalf, P. 1982: 21).

Maids and *daigane* participate in the reciprocal gift economy of *gham-kehadi* in a number of ways. Though maids and *daigane* may accompany their Bibiane on all their *gham-kehadi*, they do not normally give money to Bibiane (wet-nurses may give, however; in one case I observed a *dai* give Rs.100 as a birth *ombaraki* to a particular Bibi). Among villagers the expectation of gifting is not waived, even for poor married maids who give the same amount as other villagers: between Rs.100 to Rs.200 for a close relative’s

¹⁶⁷ In comparison a wealthy Khan’s annual income may range from 10 to 12 lakh rupees (£10,000 – £12,000) and a maid’s pay may average from Rs.2400 (£25) to Rs.20,000 (£210) a year.

death, and either Rs.30, Rs.50, or Rs.100 for weddings (if the wedding is of the offspring of a sibling or husband's sibling, the gifts of a bride may cost Rs.1000, including a pair of clothes for her trunk (*de sundak jora*), a *sazar*, and shoes). A maid may also give the same amounts for the birth of a relative's child, and at illness she may take a litre of milk, eggs, or a chicken. The amount a maid has received from her own relative will be reciprocated with an increase of Rs.5 (surcharges on gifts are levied to save the face of the original recipient, or *zan kooz na khkara kai*). In contrast, those unable to offer anything but their person participate marginally in society, and are visited only by a small circle of close kin.¹⁶⁸ While in practice Bibiane send money and food to villagers and maids' houses during their *gham-khadi* without visiting them, *gham-khadi* is understood to impose mutual, though asymmetrical, obligations. For instance, when one 24 year-old maid's father died in Swat, her 30 year-old Bibi sent the maid's mother Rs.5000 from Islamabad; several months later when the maid's mother came to visit her daughter's Bibi, she brought two chickens (costing Rs.50 each), and on another occasion a dozen eggs (Rs.3 each). Maids widely report that their state of poverty makes them *na-chara* (unable) to undertake expenditure beyond their means. Reciprocity that involves *gham-khadi* money in figures of Rs.1000 and Rs.2000 is "*droon kaar*" (heavy work), meaning it is beyond their means (*char*) and befitting only Bibiane.

Widely stated comments thus indicate that people make *gham-khadi* contributions according to their means. While the *gham-khadi* of Bibiane and maids is lopsided, that between Bibiane should ideally be characterized by reciprocity. Given that each family maintains *gham-khadi* relationships with a large number of women in other families, Bibiane who receive *gham-khadi* money collect considerable sums. The cash may be earmarked for feast money for weddings and deaths, or used for personal purposes. Bibiane say that the money given to women belongs to them; what they do with it is, in one Bibi's words, "women's business". One Bibi revealed that in total she received 2½ lakh rupees (approx. £2,631) for her two sons' births which she invested in the stock market. Several other mothers bought expensive jewellery with the money, purchasing new "sets" (necklace and earrings) for future *khadi* events. Mothers with baby daughters said that the jewellery represented a long-term investment in their daughters' dowry (compare Ward 1997).¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁸ Similarly, a maid, Sherafzoon (aged about 60) explained the reciprocal nature of *gham-khadi* among poorer Pukhtuns: "no one does my *tapos* (enquiry) because I am poor (*ghariba*). I cannot afford to do *gham-khadi* (i.e. give money)", unlike many villagers, she said, she refuses to take loans to do *gham-khadi*.

¹⁶⁹ On the symbolic significance of gold as a reflection of God's divine light (*nur*), see Bayly, C.A. 2001: 291-2.

While some Bibiane benefit financially in the short term from *gham-khadi*, the deferred nature of reciprocity means that ceremonies' cash requirements place large, unpredictable demands on the household incomes managed by Bibiane. Many revealed that they spent a large sum of the house pay (*de kor kharcha*) on *gham-khadi*; and some Bibiane stated their reliance on their own sources of income. One Bibi reported that, as a young bride, she was too shy to ask her husband for the necessary cash and "senselessly" (*kam-aqltob*) sold her gold jewellery to pay her close kin's *gham-khadi* money. Yet as Bibiane get older and more powerful within their marital households, their duty to be munificent in *gham-khadi* proportionately increases. Many Bibiane (young and middle-aged) argued that both Islam and Pukhto conventions give women a right to her husband's wealth, whereas her own income is her own. In one Bibi's words, "I can save it; I can spend it; I can do anything with it". Moreover, comments were made suggesting that men would consider themselves ashamed to be supported by their wife's income, as Arifa, a professionally employed Bibi, remarked:

"A Pukhtun man would not have his wife spending her money on the household to throw in his face and say: 'Oh, I'm supporting the family'. No way, he would go that extra mile to make sure *his* money is spent."

The reciprocity implicit in the practice of *gham-khadi* gives it affinities with characteristically Pukhtun forms of exchange, *badal*; analogous to *badal* in another sense—that of revenge (Baal 1975: 11; and see Grima 1998: 5, 70-72 on the reciprocal structuring of revenge). Just as men seek payment from those who have insulted their honour, so women exact vengeance for social slights and neglect (particularly in cases of land dispute) by selectively observing the obligations of *gham-khadi*. I have described reciprocity as a non-negotiable obligation, but it may in fact also be refused by Bibiane's deliberate choice. In one instance, an Islamabad Bibi referring to her second cousin told me: "Zurina's son is born [in Islamabad], but she didn't come for my 21 year-old niece's *tapos* [enquiry visit] when my niece was diagnosed with cancer. So I didn't go for her son's birth *ombaraki*, even though my daughter is named after her." In this way, much of the otherwise suppressed and deflected hostility between female affinal and kin relations is expressed through reciprocation and non-reciprocation in *gham-khadi*. In terms of how reciprocal obligations are discharged, wide scope exists for individual moral choices, as perceived offences and antagonisms work themselves to the surface in voluntary actions.

In this sense of female choice, Bibiane's control over a family's *gham-khadi* relationships may be more typical of elite than non-elite families. Amongst the poorer Pukhtuns who tilled farmlands in Chak Shehzad near Islamabad as tenants of Pukhtun Bibiane, men typically exercised greater direction over their wives' *gham-khadi* relations. The wife of one *zamindar* (farmer) stated: "We have this *rewaj* (custom) that if my husband doesn't get along with anyone, including my family, then I and my children avoid those people. But if the dispute is between me and another person then my husband will not break relationships with them. Men have more *ikhtiar* (authority); women don't, because we live in such *gharibi* (poverty)." Unlike the range of many poorer women's positions in the family, Bibiane and even some of their husbands admitted that in upper social echelons men eventually follow their wives' lead in avoiding kin. With her affines, the case is more complicated and varied; husbands may here behave with a degree of independence in maintaining personal relationships with their own mother or sister. Yet during the time of my fieldwork, there were more than two cases where relations with mens' mothers and sisters were entirely severed for extended periods through their wives' disputes with them. The machinations of family politics seem more involved amongst Khan families, where the connections between people are more multiple, and forms of dependence not officially governed by money or retainership.

5.4. Obligation and Preference: the "Burden" of Performing *Gham-Khadi*

Bibiane's actual *gham-khadi* practices show receptivity to some degree of choice. Bibiane actively discriminate how much *gham-khadi* to do, how immediate one's family *gham-khadi* circle should be, how to prioritise double engagements, and even whether to abandon social relations with families altogether. Yet the choice of whether to do or not to do *gham-khadi* is limited. The obligatory nature of *gham-khadi* is widely perceived as binding and burdensome as it constrains as well as shapes social visiting among women. "*Gham-khadi* is a *boj* (burden) because women want to visit each other, but there are all these rules of 'give and take' which restrain them" expressed Nasreen, a 22 year-old *dai*'s granddaughter, employed as a 'Lady Social Worker' (visiting women's houses as a government employee in Swati villages with medicine and contraceptives). The *gham-khadi* visitor, regardless of social status, must give on arrival to avoid the appearance of dishonour (*sharam*). Likewise, full hospitality (as seen in Chapter 2) must be displayed to avoid damaging the host's social reputation. As one convent Bibi, originally from Mardan in her late forties, now living in Islamabad, remarked:

“If you do *gham-khadi* you can’t go empty handed. That’s not our way. To help in that *khairat* (charity meal) you have to take something—money (*paisay*), gift (*thofa*), rice (*wreeje*), oil (*ghwaree*), and sugar (*cheenee*). With inflation, it is a financial burden and then we can’t keep it up because nobody has the time. The performance of *gham-khadi* should not be prolonged (over a period of days). But if you don’t do *gham-khadi*, people get very offended.”

Rabia Bibi, in her thirties, originally from Swat but living in Islamabad, amplified this point in English:

“*Gham-khadi* kills everybody, rich and poor. If you don’t do it, people say, ‘she’s an outcast’. They will boycott her socially; because, they say, she hasn’t done it with us...but once you start doing it, there is no end.”

The impasse expressed by these Bibiane is one felt across class, gender and region. For instance, a middle-aged village woman associated with a Khan household (rumoured to be the Khan’s mistress) said following a week of several kin *gham-khadi* events that she had been obliged to gift large amounts of rice, oil and flour in the village:

“The *boj* (burden) of *gham-khadi* is on our *kakarai* (skulls). So in this age we’re fed up (*der tang*) with *gham-khadi*! *Gham-khadi* has burdened us greatly. Because if we do not do it —it is *sharam* (a great shame). It takes the clothes from off our backs (lit: I have been skinned for this: *sarman me wakhatha*). It’s a burden, because *gham-khadi* never ends and the [network of] people is vast, while our incomes are comparatively small. If we don’t do it, people say they don’t understand *rewaj* (custom); if we do it, we pay out more than we get in. Oh, God! My heart is fed up with this *gham-khadi*.”

As reflected in the words of this outspoken woman, Bibiane also entertain a range of spirited views about *gham-khadi* and the burdens it places on them.

Such views are possible because *gham-khadi* is felt to be obligatory by Bibiane, yet it is not always welcomed or liked. Many Bibiane insisted on the invariant nature of the forms and orders of procedure acceptable in *gham-khadi*. Visiting excludes, or forecloses upon, spontaneity, since visits follow conventional patterns. The greater the intricacy of Bibiane’s kinship ties, the more *gham-khadi* there is, and the more arduous it becomes. The difficulty, intensity and frequency of *gham-khadi* visits leads to Bibiane and

other Pukhtun descriptions of *gham-khadi* as a “*boj*” (burden) or a “*musibath*” (problem).¹⁷⁰ The *boj* is one that is seen to extend from the social to the core of familial life.

In relation to childcare, Bibiane experience great levels of distress over how their children’s requirements, particularly schooling, might accommodate constant interruption by mothers’ *gham-khadi*. Arifa told me, “Every time there is a death in my in-laws’, I have to leave everything in Islamabad and go to the village. But I cannot take my children with me, as they will then miss three days of school”. In one case of an aunt-in-law’s death, Arifa resolved her dilemma by requesting an Islamabad friend to nanny her children. The demands made by ceremonies on mothers’ time also detract from their childcare. Farah, in her late thirties, who studied at the Murree convent and works as an English-medium schoolteacher in Peshawar, told me (in the presence of her father and male cousins) that Pukhtun mothers of wealthy backgrounds spent more time buying and ordering clothes for *gham-khadi*, and attending ceremonies, than they did reading with their children. Imitating the mothers, Farah gestured: “No *jee!* there is a death here; a wedding there (*Na jee! zama khwata mare sho; alta wada sho*). Mothers are busy with *gham-khadi*; the father is tired, he comes home from office—the children are neglected and ignored”. Farah further gives an example of a student in her class:

“Like, this little boy, who was beaten by his father. I called his mother to school and I said ‘what happened?’ She said, ‘Oh, I wasn’t at home, I had gone for my mother’s brother’s son’s wedding’. The mother is never at home. The father comes home tired from office—he starts shouting at the children. There’s no confidence at all in that child, and then they expect a good result!”

Mothers hesitate to take their children to *gham-khadi* gatherings, since it involves a great deal of “*pasa kenda*” (standing and sitting) or meeting and greeting. Yet leaving them in the care of a maid arouses concern and “sadness”, in the words of one Bibi, as “your children become insecure, clinging to you when you return home”. Both Pukhtun and Muslim mothers are idealised as devoted figures who bestow time and love on their offspring (*kha moryane*), yet the predominant Pukhto conception of womanhood paradoxically requires their absention from the *kor*. This degree of onus on women

¹⁷⁰ In other contexts, social scientists studying aspects of Western work have also described its nature as a form of “burden” (Pahl 1989: 9), indeed making the kind of social work represented by *gham-khadi* as synonymous with “toil” (ibid: 11).

leads some Bibiane to compare their customary conventions unfavourably with those of other ethno-linguistic groups in Pakistan. One Pukhtun Bibi said:

“Punjabian are better—they visit each other for short periods, raise their hands, pray, and go; but among Pukhtuns the formality is endless.”

The latitude exercised by Bibiane in taking their children to *gham-khadi* or not, or travelling with their husbands, does not extend to negotiating non-attendance or forms of reciprocation in the absence of attendance.¹⁷¹ Bibiane are, thus, “locked” into *gham-khadi* social behaviour.

5.5. Participation and Exclusion: the Severing of Social Relations

My exposition of obligatory relationships around *gham-khadi* gives substance to a concept of ceremonial performances as “work”, in the sense that work “implements a rule”. My account situates *gham-khadi* within the context of the social relationships which it sustains, seeking to determine what space it leaves for alternate modes of thought and action (non-participation, selective participation, the individuation of gifts and so on). Yet Bibiane are keenly aware of the high stakes of performing *gham-khadi* correctly. Omission, far from opening plural or less constrained social networks to non-participants, incurs a form of “social death” (Bourdieu 1966: 217; see also Baal 1975: 11). As two Bibiane told me:

Asma: “If you don’t attend the wedding, then you have to come later for *ombaraki*. That is a very important part, because if you don’t do that then all relations are broken...”

Yasmin: “The people (concerned) get *khapa* [sad] from [i.e. angry at] the person who did not attend. People say, ‘(s/he) didn’t come for our death or wedding!’ (*Wai na marg la raghe na khadai la raghe!*). In death if you are absent, you have got to go for the *dua* afterwards. Because if you don’t do either one of these, the *ombaraki* or the *dua*, people won’t do it with you!”

¹⁷¹ Many mothers found the role of mothering and doing *gham-khadi* difficult to maintain. One young mother says, “I breast-fed my son for two and a half years and during that time when there was *gham-khadi* I found it very difficult: as I could not leave him at home because he was attached to me. I had to take him everywhere with me, and feed him on demand. It was a very difficult time.”

More specifically in funerals, those who miss the important days are not invited to the Fortieth day commemoration, and are subtly shunned in social gatherings.

The following incident indicates the importance of attending both *gham* and *khadi*. Samina Bibi (aged about 48) is from a wealthy and prestigious household from Swat. She teaches, works, and lives in Islamabad with her non-Pukhtun husband (from a Nawab family of Indian origin based in Lahore). Samina injured her back, which caused her to miss her second cousin's daughter's wedding. She told me: "*Jān* (my life [a term of affection for younger people]), I stayed back. I didn't want to go to the wedding in Swat. My [older male] cousin told me: 'If you do not do *gham-khadi* no one will come to you either and you'll die a lonely woman with no one by your graveside.'" Compliance is thus enforced not only through the prospect of unfortunate consequences, but more directly, through the urgings of close relatives.¹⁷² There is nothing uncommon in someone taking it on themselves to upbraid another for their errors. Such a formula of "commanding right and forbidding wrong" is often observed in Pukhtun contexts in interpretations of Islam, becoming an arena for conflict in Al-Huda's application of literal scripture.

Looking at non-compliance from the reverse perspective, that of snubbed Bibiane, absence from *gham-khadi* causes serious offence. When I accompanied a group of Bibiane to visit their niece, Parveen, in Islamabad on a congratulatory birth visit (*ombaraki*) for her first-born baby girl, Parveen (married to a Mardan Khan and originally Swati) complained that her mother-in-law and sister-in-laws had failed to perform her *ombaraki*, although her baby was born after several years of marriage and was thus eagerly anticipated. An earlier property dispute had led to mutual avoidance in *gham-khadi*, even though the events were often shared. Referring to her mother-in-law, Parveen said: "it is also *her* happiness, but she doesn't understand (*kho poyege na*)."
Looking tenderly at her crying baby girl, she added: "She reminds me of my mother-in-law when she looks angrily at me."

A families' prioritizing of certain engagements over others may also cause relational problems. In one case, a Bibi's husband's female cousins neglected to visit her hospitalized husband a month after his operation, while they travelled to a remote village for another cousin's *dai's* (wet-nurse's) husband's death. Shehnaz, the snubbed Bibi, cried: "if they don't care about us, why should we care about them! Illness is the time when all relatives come together (*khpāl ratol shee*)."
She declared, "I am not going to

¹⁷² Analogously, Foucault in *Discipline and Punish* (1991) describes the constitution of power in the modern era as being a matter of the "molecular" interactions of individuals insofar as they exert normative expectations (regarding custom or morality) on each other. On Foucault, see also Nola 1998.

do any more *gham-khadi* with them!” These simmering resentments are rarely vented in direct confrontation (*rishtinee*), which, one Bibi told me, “is very rude” (compare Pitt-Rivers 1966: 40). I was present during a number of different Bibiane’s *rishtinee*, where the most common response was “*munkaredal*” (to deny or reject) or evasion, especially in response to accusations of intentional wound or insult.

Disputes among Bibiane escalate from neglect of the customary “*salaam*”,¹⁷³ usually accompanied by an embrace and a kiss on either cheek, to coldness and discreet avoidance, and finally to outright and widely understood aversion altogether (in a *badal*). The confusion over whether a festivity is missed for genuine reasons or in retaliation, provokes much anxiety for Bibiane. As *gham-khadi* contexts are segregated public spaces, “the constant concern over “seeing” who sees whom, when and where” (Gilsenan 1990: 190) becomes of crucial importance. Relatedly, “not being seen”, or to avoid another’s *gham-khadi* intentionally in an act of subversion, is also a characteristic feature of Pukhtun social life.

5.6. Juggling Professional Work, Housework, and the Work of Existence

Gham-khadi places multiple and competing demands on women’s time, energy and responsibilities in their roles as mothers and wives (in their *kor-kaar*: housework), kinswomen (their *zeest-rozgar* or *gham-khadi*) and professional employees (their *kaar-rozgar*). As the near-exclusive form of female adult sociality, *gham-khadi* and *tlal-ratlal* prohibited women from any form of employment outside the *kor*. Women (and men) give moral precedence to *zeest-rozgar* or *gham-khadi*, as they define Pukhtun ethnic identity and provide a particular philosophy of life. The imperative of maintaining social bonds overrides both childcare, as we have seen, and housework in the sense of Bibiane’s supervision of menial tasks. The *tlal-ratlal* requirements of spontaneous hosting often oblige Bibiane to be in two places at the same time, sitting with the guests and providing tea and food. One Bibi whose maid had gone on holiday stated, “if I receive guests I have to sit with them—to leave them is said to be *badtameezee* (impolite).”

The requirement on Bibiane to host *gham-khadi* sits uneasily with some women’s perception of their household roles and instincts. One thirty-five year old Bibi, resident in Islamabad and married to a Mardan Khan, argued: “I think when a woman has a baby, then people should not even visit for the first three months. When my son was

¹⁷³ “There is nothing worse than to pass unnoticed: thus, not to salute someone is to treat him [or her] like a thing, an animal...” (Bourdieu 1991: 11).

born, some people apologized for coming so late, but in my heart I said '*shukkar de*' (thank goodness), because receiving and entertaining guests the way we do is difficult when your hands are fully occupied." The task of hosting, particularly in Islamabad where Bibiane's *gham-khadi* networks vastly increase, is broadly but secretly seen as an unwelcome pressure, as in the words of a Bibi:

"Entertaining guests is like a tug of war—having a family, keeping a house, and doing *gham-khadi* all at the same time. Nothing is relaxed or enjoyable now. You have to be obliged. You have to be there for your children's needs, for the needs of *gham-khadi* and society, for your husband's needs, your in-law's needs. So it's always needy, needy of a woman, and a woman's own needs are ignored."

It is difficult to convey an appropriately multilayered sense of how arduous a Bibi's work of directing household labour can seem to the women involved. In the local context, the maids on whom Bibiane's social reputation depends are often illiterate, untrained, unused to electrical appliances (microwaves and electric lighting), and unversed in the scrupulous differentiations of hosting practices. Bibiane's labour, although partially physical, requires constant thought and watchfulness, particularly in negotiating differences of propriety across locations and classes. Maids, in their Barthian capacity as independent "players", may make increasing demands for gifts and privileges, and Bibiane do not feel able to "call their bluff" and drop *zeest-rozgar* responsibilities entirely. During my entire fieldwork period, I knew of only one Bibi, Shandana, who explicitly chose not to employ maids for childcare, and looked after her six children herself, even at the cost of avoiding *gham-khadi*. Once Shandana's children were old enough for full time education, she returned to *gham-khadi* participation, though only among a small circle of close family, cousins and friends. The additional time afforded her, enviably to some, with her limited *gham-khadi* responsibilities allows Shandana to serve in organisational contexts, such as the monthly meetings, lunches, and exhibitions of the All-Pakistan Women's Association.

Some Bibiane juggle the customary obligations of *gham-khadi* with professional work (*kaar-rozgar*). Khanan often avoid marriage to highly educated, professional career women because careers are held to distract from childcare and house management (see also Alavi 1991: 130). Even the *tlal-ratlal* displacement that characterises *gham-khadi* poses enormous obstacles for Bibiane wishing to take on full-time work. Bibiane often indicated that these *gham-khadi* demands proved insuperable. Zara, a 55-year old living in Islamabad, described in English that she was forced to give up teaching "because of

gham-khadi. When my father's brother died, I actually went to the *kille* (village) for one night only! But even one night meant I missed two days of teaching my school children." Even this highly unconventional pared-down version of *gham-khadi* attendance left Zara feeling that she had violated proper standards of professional conduct.

Although Bibiane may wish to determine their own future goals, they find many to be incompatible with *gham-khadi*. Yasmin Bibi, from Mardan, revealed her desire to take the one-year diploma course at Al-Huda. Although she perceived it a beneficial religious undertaking, the course would constrain her time for *gham-khadi*. Yasmin felt forced to discard her plan, stating, "If I decide to do the diploma at Al-Huda, I can't do *gham-khadi*; and if people know that I am in the country and I don't go for someone's death, the close relatives will never forgive me!" A more dramatic illustration of the strains caused by these conflicts can be seen in the case of Arifa, the non-Pukhtun wife from Karachi, previously mentioned in Chapter 3 and married for eighteen years to a Mardan Khan. Arifa found her career as a United Nations development professional in Islamabad impeded by the demands of "going and coming":

"With some *gham-khadi* we had to go to villages in Mardan, like Shiva or Hoti where I did not know the people at all but with whom my in-laws did *gham-khadi*. But then this is it. There is no question of 'not' going. My husband takes time off from his work. And I've been working since the second year of my marriage. But I 'had' to take time off. And that's one of the reasons I couldn't continue working in the U.N. ... [pause] ... I remember when my husband's aunt who was living in Mardan died in the afternoon. I was there in the middle of a Gender Training Programme. My husband said: '[Auntie] has died and they [her entire cohort of affines] are all leaving immediately for the funeral'."

While her husband initially supported the idea of his wife's employment, the couple's flexibility was limited through the equally conscientious Pukhto training inculcated in both husband and wife:

"...I was thrown in a great dilemma. I was the lead trainer at the U.N. So what I did was I continued with my training. My husband (and the extended family) left for the village. He left the second car and the driver for me. My programme ended at 5 o'clock p.m. and then I left. But that was the only time I gave priority to my professional work.

Otherwise, there were a number of times when I was in the middle of a project I had to just leave ‘everything!’”

Arifa’s non-Pukhtun work colleagues could not appreciate her required absences, nor evolve some form of flexibility allowing her to work more intermittently. She describes another occasion:

“My sister-in-law’s daughter’s husband died in Bannu. In the morning I had to go to the office—I was working for UNICEF at that time and was waiting for a mission that was here from Philippines, but again I just ‘had’ to go. What did I do? I attended the meeting half way through, and then again I went with the driver whereas the whole family left early all the way to Bannu [six hours’ drive from Islamabad] for two nights. But I ‘had’ to go. There is no way I could say: ‘I am a working or career woman, and I may come the next day’. No! You had to show your face there!”

The conflicts between work schedules and *gham-khadi* responsibilities (felt also by employed husbands) have led Bibiane such as Zara and Arifa to negotiate a space, both physically and symbolically, for Pukhtun self-representations and practice within the world of work. Arifa gave up her U.N. career, but opened a successful private primary school in half of her Islamabad house. The school and its garden are divided from the family portion of the house (both parts of which she personally owns). A wooden partition divides the garden, with parallel driveways and gates to the house. Within the house, a swinging door from the home-kitchen connects to the adjoining school. Arifa’s maid makes tea and *samosa* at her own home, and brings them over to the school for the visiting mothers of schoolchildren (some of whom are also her in-laws) and other guests. Thus, presence in her professional role at school does not preclude Arifa’s performance of the norms of Pukhto, such as *melmastia* (hospitality), which remain incumbent on her as a Bibi.

5.7. Rewaj and Islam: Dimensions of Personhood

Morality in Muslim societies is the subject of a rich body of anthropological debate.¹⁷⁴ However, it is often assumed that the central moral faculty *aql* (the power of

¹⁷⁴ On morality and *aql*, “the faculty of moral discrimination” see Metcalf, B. D. 1984 (a): 10; 1984(b); and Kurin 1984, Nancy Tapper translates *aql* as “responsibility” (1991: 15, 209), the following authors as “social reason” or “sense”; see Abu-Lughod 1986: 90-91; Anderson, J. W. 1985; Ewing 1988: 8; Marsden 2002: 76; Metcalf, B. D. 1990: 8; Shalinski 1986: 325, Torab 1996: 236. In the context of

moral discrimination, or social sense) in different Muslim societies is derived singularly from religious authority. Anthropologists of Muslim societies point to an “Islamic theory of personhood” (Shalinsky 1986), which views humans as being endowed with two important faculties: *aql*, social reason acquired through discipline and education or *ilm*¹⁷⁵; and the *nafs* or the human will and undisciplined impulses of the lower soul, which is contrasted with and controlled by the *aql*. The properly instructed person has a developed sense of *aql*, and thus seeks to act with propriety (*adab*) at all times. *Nafs* uncontrolled by *aql* creates *fitna* (disorder). Some anthropologists claim to have taken Muslim societies at their word in according a greater capacity of *aql* to men than to their female kin or counterparts (see Shalinsky 1986; Torab 1996; Metcalf, B. D. 1986).

Bibiane’s use of the term *aql*, however, to denote thoughtfulness, cognition and an engaged attention in relation to social procedures, suggests a greater plurality of the concept. Different senses of *aql* are deployed to refer to religious observance and social self-possession or rationality. In practice, these different uses are contradictory, though social agents manifest both. Bibiane envision their actions in ceremonies as being highly deliberate, while their self-conception is a matter of both “Muslim” and “Pukhtun” identifications. While the Western media often portrays (in the wake of the recent rout of the Taliban) Pukhtun life and thought as extremist and monolithic Islam,¹⁷⁶ many educated young Pukhtun Bibiane consider Pukhto and Islamic practices to be in certain ways antithetical. These Bibiane experience a continual tension between the *aql* of *rewaj* (custom) or *Pukhtunwali*, and the *aql* of *maḥab* (religion) or Islam. The religion thought to encompass every aspect of Muslims’ life (see Gilmartin and Lawrence 2000: 1) has been problematically construed by some Bibiane as proscribing certain *gham-khadi* rituals (as seen in Chapter 3).

The idea of *aql* is integrated into the (self-)representation of distinctively Pukhto values in a nuanced fashion. People who perform *gham-khadi* well, maintaining relations of *tlal-ratlal* (going and coming) with a wide social circle, are said to be persons who “know” and “understand” (*poyege*) Pukhto. In other words, they possess a degree of social *aql* that has been cultivated through experience, time (*wakht*), and age (*umar*). Elders or *masharan* of both sexes may be described as “*aqalmand banyadaman*” (persons of *aql*); they are shown great respect in *gham-khadi* events, and their participation

South Asian Islam, Ewing notes: “guidance by ‘*aql*’ bring[s] one closer to God, and also higher on the social scale.” (Ewing 1988: 8).

¹⁷⁵ Of the Quran, hadith, and *shari’a* which provides a guide for living correctly in this world (Shalinsky 1986: 325).

¹⁷⁶ Richard Tapper argues “there is no simple equation Taliban = Pashtun = Islam = terrorism” (2001: 13).

consecrates observances as socially significant. At the other end of the age spectrum, children are widely referred to as “*kam-aql*” or “*be-aql*”, or persons with little or no *aql*, disqualifying them from a full role in *gham-khadi* events. While girls may attend with their mothers, they have no formal obligations in gifting, attending, or in offering congratulations or condolences. Between elders and children lies a wide range of persons who may or may not have cultivated different levels and degrees of *aql*. *Aql*, as developed in a person’s *gham-khadi* performances, influences others’ wider moral evaluation of that person’s “*khawale*” (goodness), sometimes even above acts of lying or theft (see Hart 1987).

Bibiane’s judgments of individual *gham-khadi* performances are supremely important in evaluations of persons’ character and status, not only in morality but also in social skill. In conversation, “*kha*” (good) people, those supposedly diligent in *gham-khadi*, are contrasted with others who omitted attendance in the past. Such belittling of women’s social *aql* works as a disciplining technique, however humorously it is expressed, reaffirming family relationships and household hierarchies. People falling short of prompt reciprocity in *gham-khadi* practices are referred to as *bad* (literally, bad), *na poyegee* (lacking understanding), *lewanai* (mad), or *magbroora* (proud). In contrast, “*Khogmun* people” (responsive to another’s hurt) perform *gham-khadi* out of sensitivity and respect. Others often comment about these *khogmun* people. A statement I widely heard was: “Bibi and Khan are ‘good’ (*kha*): they do our *tapos* (enquiry visit)”. Bibi Gul, referring to her deceased paternal uncle, remembers: “Kaka was a very good man: he did everyone’s *gham-khadi* and so many people came to his funeral. His children are just like him. When my young son had a heart operation, Kaka’s sons and daughters were the first to come for *tapos*.” Diligent familial attendance at ceremonies absolves young Khanan, in particular, of the accusation of headstrongness or selfishness. Those present every day at commemorations (including the Fortieth and year) are said to show a greater understanding of Pukhto, and thus a greater social sense. Yet the judgement of a persons’ morality in their performance of *gham-khadi* creates confusion for many young Bibiane due to their purist understandings of Islamic hadith.

Al-Huda graduates of the word-by-word Quranic exegesis and of the Fahm-al-Quran program during Ramadan are increasingly returning to the village-context, seeking to modify Pukhtun practices. Bibiane with diplomas from the Institute see themselves as emerging with a far deeper understanding of the Quran and hadith (the basis of Islam) both in philological terms and as a living practice, than is prevalent in Pukhtun society generally. Bibiane’s grasp of the meaning of the scriptures may especially be contrasted with that promulgated by the mullahs, who, in Pakistan, are

typically summoned to wealthier person's houses to teach children the Quran by rote in Arabic. Al-Huda is distinctive and novel in the Pukhtun context in that women interpret religion for a female audience. At the time of my fieldwork, much debate and interest developed around the women's Al-Huda courses and *dars* classes primarily taught by the organization's founder, Dr. Farhat Hashmi, among a wide array of Bibiane, and among other women from multiethnic backgrounds in Islamabad.

Within the context of Al-Huda lectures themselves, conventional *gham-khadi* practices are referred to critically as "*rewaj*" in Urdu, or "customs" in English. Bibiane who attend classes necessarily become aware of the contradictions between Islam and Pukhto, allowing them vocally to express their disapproval in Frontier villages. There are two means by which such women express their dissent: in speech, "forbidding wrong" at or after *gham-khadi* gatherings, or (more commonly) in choosing not to attend on particular days. One Bibi who had gained a diploma at Al-Huda refused to commemorate the traditional Fortieth day after a particular death. Describing her explanation to her would-be host, she stated: "*Khorai* (sister), please don't be sad, but I cannot come because I don't perform the Fortieth any more". On different occasions, a few Bibiane absented themselves from the *Nakreeze*.

In exercising this power of religious discrimination, Dr. Hashmi's students have in effect taken up a challenge to "command right and forbid wrong" in local village contexts. As graduates, they conscientiously translate Quranic Arabic into the local languages of Urdu, English, and Pukhto. Several Bibiane now give daily Quranic classes in their houses in Swat, Mardan, and Islamabad, bringing together small groups of local women and children (of up to 60 persons) daily or weekly. In 2003, a group of Bibiane established a satellite institution in a Mardan *kille-kor*, instructing village-women in Pukhto. Dr. Hashmi herself has been invited to the Frontier on a number of small *khadi* occasions, once giving a talk during the Quran *khattam* (completion) ceremony of a child of the Toru Nawab Family. Her courses seem continually to be gaining popularity amongst Bibiane: in 2000, she relocated to Karachi, and reputedly draws more than five hundred women to the Marriott Hotel hall, with many turned away. Islamic scholarly learning bestows authority on its possessor regardless of age, gender or socio-ethnic background (compare Cook 2000: 528): a Prophetic teaching states: "the ink of the scholar is more sacred than the blood of the martyr". The involvement of elite and middle-class Pakistani women in Al-Huda creates a coordinated network of instruction spanning rural Pakistan from Swat in the north to Karachi in the south. Students at these classes may be wealthy family-members of politicians, businessmen or diplomats

or poor village-women. In principle, all women gain equal merit through attendance and study.

The reforming spirit of Al-Huda-educated Bibiane is comparable to the arguments deployed by the late nineteenth century north Indian Deoband movement that claimed women's ceremonial "customs" for marriages and funerals were *gunah* (sinful) in the absence of a Quranic basis.¹⁷⁷ Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanawi (1864-1943), one leader of the Deoband movement, defines an entire female curriculum of "proper" education in his book *Bihishti Zewar* (Heavenly Ornaments) (1905). According to the *Bihishti Zewar*, female accomplishments range from the alphabet to styles of letter writing, polite conversation, recipes, managing household funds, and religious observances. In particular, book 6 focuses on women's activities at life-cycle events. While written for the "wellborn" and "grand ladies" (Metcalf 1990: 25, 110), the *Bihishti Zewar* became widely popular with the Muslim women of the sub-continent. Thanawi's text is particularly significant due to its translation into many languages, including Pukhto (ibid: 26), encouraging women to reject, in theory at least, *gham-khadi* customs.¹⁷⁸ This effort of regulation bequeathed nineteenth century Muslim women a religious identity—as seekers of the "jewels of heaven", and half "*ulama*" or religious clerics—even as it contested the Anglicisation of elite society in the imperial era (see Devji 1994). Echoes of such ideas have actually been expressed by certain sections of elite Pukhtun society itself. For example, the ruler of Swat, Badshah Sahib, in his account of *The Story of Swat* writes:

"Many an absurd custom on the occasions of marriage and death was prevalent in the State. People incurred huge expenditure, much above their means or status, and involved themselves in serious monetary difficulties. I abolished all such practices and decreed that ceremonies should in future be held modestly and inostentatiously. Women folk were restored to their rightful place in society, and were given the rights and privileges in the *Shariat*...In short, I spared no effort in weeding out all moral and social evils" (Wadud 1962: 115).

¹⁷⁷ On the Islamist critique of *taqlid* (blind imitation of customs and traditions) in Egypt in discourses of proper pedagogy for children and mothers, see Shakry, 1998. Compare Gilmartin and Lawrence (2000: 1).

¹⁷⁸ Abu-Lughod writes, "Thanawi will empower women with literacy but relegate them to a newly created private sphere where they can even develop some modern forms of housewifery (...weights and measures...)" (1998a: 19). Thanawi, ironically, describes each customary practice entailed in life-cycle events among Muslim women of the sub-continent as "the false *shari'at* that thwarts proper order [Islamic law]" (Metcalf, B. D. 1990: 3) as it entails, he argues, extravagance, indulgence, and license: "It is evil to consider something required that is not so specified in the *shari'at*" (ibid: 158). This is, he argues, to invent new traditions thus *bid'at* "reprehensible innovation that is the negative counterpart of the *sunna* towards which the *shari'at* leads." (ibid: 31).

Whether the people of Swat celebrated *gham-khadi* modestly after Badshah Sahib came to power remains undocumented. My own research into contemporary practices indicates that *gham-khadi* remains ingrained in Pukhtun society. Yet without necessarily referencing the Deoband intervention, the Al-Huda Bibiane—some of whom are the descendants of Badshah Sahib and the Sufi saint, the Akhund of Swat—are, in a more female-centred language, contesting and negotiating “custom” through life-cycle events.¹⁷⁹

Many Frontier Bibiane living in Islamabad spoke of the transformation Al-Huda has brought to their life and spiritual practices. Bano Bibi from Swat remarked:

“Before Al-Huda we were doing the traditional *pardah*: for example, we would observe *pardah* from men in the village but not in Islamabad; we would remain bareheaded in front of some *na-mahram* men (marriageable) men like our brothers-in-law and not others. Now, *Mashallah*, I am trying to avoid that and be consistent. I am trying my best to do everything Islamic.”

Visible changes show in Bibiane’s dress, as well as in their enactment of *gham-khadi*. Participation in *dars* entitles Bibiane to leave their houses under religious auspices, wearing a *hijab* and *loopata* (veil). Young married and also unmarried Bibiane may leave the *kor* for religious destinations. The increasing prevalence of the *hijab* attracts both approval and criticism from other Bibiane. For one convent-educated Bibi in her late thirties, who had been wearing the *hijab* for seven years after moving to Islamabad:

“Some people think being ‘modern’ is to wear sleeveless *kameezes*, have the latest hair-do, go for parties, drink *sharāb* (alcohol) and talk in English. But if someone, like me with a *hijab*, is in that party, they’ll ignore me. People tell me, ‘are you crazy wearing the *hijab*; you’re a *Fundo* (a fundamentalist)’ [She fixes her *hijab*]. Pakistan is a Muslim country, and covering your hair is the first identity of a Muslim woman, yet people here never fail to ask me why I wear a *hijab*.”

Many Al-Huda graduates impose higher moral standards on themselves, although their right to Muslim authority is contested or problematic in different

¹⁷⁹ One of the Akhund’s descendants was Bandai Bibi, a female saint (compare Smith 1994). Sherani observes that “the *pir* has dominated the whole countryside since the advent of Islam.” Strikingly Bibiane, as descendents of a Sufi saint are now beginning to take up harder-line Deobandi-type Islam.

contexts. Young women's arrogation of Islamic prerogative as having priority over customary privileges, especially, is often vexed, leading to conflicts within families. In one instance in 2004, a sixteen-year old daughter, who recently adopted the *hijab* and attends Al-Huda, reputedly cited Islamic prohibitions in refusing to be kissed on her forehead (as customary in some families) by her visiting "uncle", or the male cousin of her father. Her father took offense, construing her action as a rebuff to his authority and an outrage to Pukhtun hospitality. However, in effect, the ambiguous relationship between scriptural precedent and everyday Pukhto allows most Bibiane from day to day to reconcile opposing values and plural personal inclinations and identifications.¹⁸⁰ Anthropologists focusing on South Asian Islam have noted this ambiguity whereby Islamic law (*Shari'at*) is given "unconditional theoretical acknowledgement" without being enforced in practice (Ewing 1988: 7; compare Chhachhi 1994: 82).

Differences of outlook between Al-Huda and non-Al-Huda Bibiane are more usually accommodated into gossip and tacit forms of contrariety, than explored in debate or *rishtinee*. A number of Bibiane, of various ages and educational backgrounds, dismiss *hijab*-wearing relatives "behind their backs" as "narrow minded hypocrites". For them, cousins or sisters-in-law's adoption of Islam tends to represent another strategy of rivals to win social pre-eminence or personal esteem. One Bibi said, in English, that her *hijab*-wearing cousins "push religion down our throats". Another, in the company of several Bibiane and Khanan, said that the women who say their prayers five times a day make a show of themselves and often do not have the best characters. Yet knowing more about Islam than their husbands, older Pukhtun women, kin and affines, enables middle-aged and younger Bibiane to transcend "patriarchal" and social norms by referring to the higher moral order of the Quran and hadith. As the account of the washing of a corpse in Chapter 3 showed, these Bibiane command much authority in Bibiane's Frontier village-houses. Many Muslims are illiterate and cannot read the Quran (Eickelman 1992: 644); even some western-educated Khanan (sent abroad for school at early ages) cannot read the Arabic script. Convent-educated Bibiane are literate in Urdu and thus see themselves as well-placed to become the reformers and teachers of Islam (compare Horvatic 1994: 812; and Turner 2000: 94). Moreover, women exercise power as the orchestrators of the "women's work" of *gham-khadi*, where changes in the form of observance are binding on both sexes. In this way, women's centrality in the ceremonial

¹⁸⁰ In the Jain context, Laidlaw describes personhood in a field of cultural multiplicity, not as "a stable coherent self" but rather as something "distributed"...This gives us the notion of a self which may be divided against itself, an assemblage of possibly conflicting 'subject positions'." (1995: 20).

continuity of Pukhtun society grants them particular leverage for defining the terms of *gham-khadi*—although always in partial and contested ways.

5.8. Conclusion

In this chapter, I have explored the ways in which some Bibiane are beginning to exploit uncertainties in Pukhtun definitions of work, morality, religion and *Pukhtunwali*, in order to better fit *gham-khadi* obligations to their own concerns (childcare, professional employment, personal friendships and antipathies, religious convictions). But it would be wrong to conceive of Bibiane, in terms of a “theory of resistance”, refusing their *gham-khadi* obligations within a wider “patriarchal” society. Rather, customary practices in *gham-khadi*, as an especially important node of Pukhto, are successively refined through slight and incremental variants. These changes may be authorized by religion, by Western-inflected modernity or by reinterpretations of tradition. Their combined effect, in any event, influences Pukhtun social relationships as these are made and displayed through life-events. Whatever the dilemmas faced by educated Bibiane, most elite Pukhtuns continue with *gham-khadi* even when questions are raised over practicality or religious warrant. Within this context, an awareness of the contradictions in the work of *gham-khadi* is growing. Young educated Bibiane, unlike many of their husbands, broadly implement the Islamic challenge “to command right and forbid wrong”. This is an important development, as Bibiane embody religious knowledge in the context of present-day *gham-khadi*.

This chapter has sought to explore Bibianes’ performances of *gham-khadi* as complex undertakings that engage the most fundamental, and fundamentally contradictory, ideas in Pukhtun experience. Through *gham-khadi*, women reinforce their social relationships through highly regulated procedures, understood as forms of work. The discourse of actors themselves reveals the term *gham-khadi* as both individual and collective, moral and potentially immoral, and voluntary and obligatory. Affines and other members of society evaluate each others’ performances in terms of quality (immediacy of attendance, degree of mourning/celebration) and quantity (amount of money given, time spent at the event), while failure to participate incurs severed relationships and lost social respectability (*eṣat*). Meanwhile, heightened consciousness of *gham-khadi*’s partial incompatibilities with Islam, brought to the NWFP by Al-Huda graduates, leads to the incorporation of diverse or novel elements in the ceremonies themselves. This small but influential group of Bibiane urge the reformation of practices

impugning their sense of Muslim selfhood, and are met in turn by opposition from older and some middle-aged Bibiane.

The degree of paradox inherent in *gham-khadi* practices deepens its intractability in the lives of educated Bibiane. Bibiane may understand that *gham-khadi* obligations (visiting and house-*pardah*, “tradition” and reform) are incoherent, yet this does not lessen their obligatoriness. Paradoxically, a central set of practices through which Bibiane are beginning to alter the terms of engagement with *gham-khadi* is that of textually sanctioned Islamic discipline. The prominent and productive role of educated women as instruments of Islamization in the Frontier contests many Western and local portrayals of Bibiane as pampered “socialites” (BBC News: Ali, S. 2003), while associating Islam with poor young men, or the ‘Taliban’ (meaning students) (see Tapper, R. 2001). Bibiane’s increasing, contestatory engagement with customary *gham-khadi* is wrongly conceived within a feminist rhetoric of liberation from “patriarchy” or “tradition”. Plural forms of women’s participation rather renew and bring complexity to ceremonies and social processes. The social continuity of Pukhtun ceremonial forms through time, and the social solidarity of Pukhtun society, are thus not necessarily damaged by Bibiane’s ongoing reinterpretation of the “work of life”.

CONCLUSION

Before returning to Cambridge in 2001, I visited a number of Khan households in Mardan and Swat. One of the last families I called on was Mashar Khan's, a Khan household in the small and verdant village Sher Palam in upper Swat. Mashar Khan's wife, Bibi Khana, is his second cousin. Their two sons recently married young British Pukhtun girls from Manchester in England. Their only daughter, Saira (in her early twenties), is married to her mother's *mairazane* (step) cousin's son (*de mama zve*) in Jura, another adjoining village.

Over tea, chicken and *parathe*, I asked Bibi Khana about her daughter, Saira, who was six years younger than me, and in my informal charge as a relative of my mother's at the Murree convent. Bibi Khana told me that Saira had recently given birth to a baby girl, so we decided to pay her a spontaneous visit. Bibi's eldest son, Asif Khan, three years my junior and briefly back from Manchester, volunteered to drive. We veiled our heads and faces and got into the landcruiser. The barking of Mashar Khan's dogs muffled as a *saukidar* (gatekeeper) shut the black gates behind us. Passing small huts and *korona*, the evening air filled with the dust stirred by the vehicle, and smoke from Jura's *tanoorona* (mud-ovens).

During this fifteen-minute journey, Bibi Khana warned that Saira's widowed mother-in-law ruled her household with an iron fist—the mother required her only son, Abdullah Khan (in his early thirties), to obtain her permission for all social or political activity or decisions in or beyond the house. Saira's husband oversees the cultivation of his substantial land and orchards (cherries, apples and peaches), which he then sells to the fruit market in Lahore. His mother would not allow her son to take Saira with him on his distant journeys to Lahore. Saira was said to be far too young and inexperienced in domestic politics to challenge her mother-in-law's authority in any major way.

On arrival, barking Alsatians, restrained by the house *saukidars*, greeted us. As the only man, Asif Khan led us through the central courtyard to the veranda and his sister's rooms. The house-dogs alerted the residents of our arrival. In semi-darkness behind heavily curtained windows, Saira sat up with her new baby to greet her mother and an old school-fellow. Bibi explained that I had come to do the *ombaraki* of her newborn daughter. Just then Saira's mother-in-law walked in and greeted us; I was introduced as my mother's ("Zeenat's") daughter. Though Saira's mother-in-law was not related to my mother by blood, her husband was a distant relative of my mother's mother. Saira's mother-in-law sat us down to enquire briskly how my mother was, and

when she would be returning to Swat from America (where my parents live). Then she left the room to organize the drinks.

In the privacy of the room, Asif Khan sniggered at his sister's mother-in-law, saying that he always felt nervous in her house. Bibi, with her granddaughter in her arms, kept glancing at the door, anticipating the mother-in-law's return. We were served a glass of *sharbet* which we each sipped only once, before placing it nervously to one side. At this stage, Saira's mother-in-law complained that my mother had not yet performed the *laas niwa* (condolence) after her husband's death in a car crash on the Malakand Road over four years ago. Forced into a corner, I assured her my mother would perform the *laas niwa* when she returned to Swat. Pushing further, the mother-in-law said that my mother had come to Pakistan two years ago and not visited her. Now visibly angry at me, she got up a number of times and returned only to check whether we had left her house. On our way out, I caught a glimpse of tears in Bibi Khana's eyes at the thought that her only daughter and *masoom* (innocent) granddaughter were obliged to remain in Saira's mother-in-law's house. In the car, as Asif Khan told me not to take the mother-in-law's words to heart, Bibi Khana could only say, choked: "I have taken my *nazbeena* (delicate) daughter with my own hands and (by marrying her into this household) slaughtered (*alal*) her like a lamb (*beeza*)" (compare Bhattacharya 2000).

This vignette reveals the significance for Pukhtun Bibiane of the patterning of *tlal-ratlal* obligations of attendance, fulfilled at *gham* and *khadi*, and crossing over between persons, here from mother to daughter. Even though I came to perform a birth *ombaraki* visit on a *khadi* occasion, my relationship was already tenuous given Saira's mother-in-law's complaint about my mother. My performance of this particular *khadi* was one element in a continuous sequence of previous acts of reciprocation between my own mother's mother and the Khanan of Jura, which were then expected to continue in my mother's and my own relationship with the family. According to this inherited generational scheme, each Pukhtun individual, rather than being conceptualized as an autonomous agent, is connected to a tightly-knit web of social relationships that links near and far kin and affines. Non-performance of *gham-khadi* potentially sours relations widely: in one funeral, for example, the daughters of a man with three wives publicly complained that two of their cousins had not asked about their father (*tapos*) or performed their father's *laas niwa*, and had therefore insulted and injured them personally. In contrast, the performance of *gham-khadi* among Bibiane continually bonds families through the women's work of making relationships.

This thesis has sought to capture the sense in which the performance of such familial and social obligations, pivotally through attendance at *gham-khadi* ceremonies, is

understood among Pukhtuns as a form of work. My phrase, “the work of existence”, brings together the “experiential and analytical interpretations” (Gray and Mearns 1989: 31) of Bibiane’s lives by presenting the wide array of organized and meaningful activities that comprise female actions at weddings and funerals. I have demonstrated how the term *gham-khadi* refers to these occasions and denotes a wider conception of life that is paradoxically sorrowful and joyful—to the extent that the conventional separation of weddings and funerals fails to capture Pukhtun ways of thinking. Using descriptive ethnography, I spoke about Bibiane whilst trying not to speak “for” them (Moore, H. L. 1994: 9). The dissertation’s first chapter introduced *gham-khadi* both as a philosophy and an explicitly female set of practices (“women’s work”), demonstrating the continuity between female sociality at weddings and funerals and wider patterns of *tlal-rallal*. I also showed the centrality of female sociality in ideas of Pukhtun identity and cultural distinctiveness.

Much of the anthropological interest in *gham-khadi* derives from its ambiguous interface between different social categories: male and female, public and private, local and transregional. Whilst Chapter 1 sought to place *gham-khadi* within a context of Pukhtuns’ self identity, the second chapter described the segregated, multi-family *kor* as the context for these transactions. The different layouts and uses of the *kor* in the Frontier and Islamabad were shown to reflect contradictory interpretations of “Pukhto”, Islam and “modernity”. The house’s staging of *gham-khadi* enacts both familial relations, and also inter- and cross-class relationships, as women’s work is understood (however ambivalently) to achieve the reproduction of a socially unifying “traditional Pukhto”. It does this through the performance of ceremonies invoking precedent. As the site of *gham-khadi* and Bibiane’s sociality, Chapter 2 attempted to capture the significance of the women’s *kor*. This fuller ethnographic account of female domesticity sought to enrich conventional anthropological accounts of Pukhtun society focusing solely on the *hujra* (men’s house) as defining *Pukhtunwali*.

Chapters 3 and 4, dealing with *gham* and *khadi* respectively, provide ethnographic descriptions of Bibiane’s *gham-khadi* procedures hitherto undocumented in anthropology. Case studies seek to convey the variety and dynamism of funeral and wedding practices, showing how the impetus towards religious revision (or towards a more individualistic, extra-familial exercise of agency) can pose extremely painful dilemmas for Bibiane. Inherited moral and “cultural” schemes no longer fit new ethical phenomena, nor can such schemes persist unaltered in the face of the global dispersion of Frontier Pukhtuns to other Pakistani regions and abroad, to Britain, the U.S., and U.A.E. When members of Khan or Badshah families return as expatriates to the *kille-kor*

for *gham-khadi*, they introduce new ideas to local settings. My fifth chapter laid out many of the contradictions that characteristically mark women's performance of their ceremonial obligations. Drawing from Bibiane's own speech, I portrayed *gham-khadi* to be both an individual and a collective practice; both an action "forced" by prior convention and one amenable to individuals' choices and sense of personal morality; and both Islamic and at variance with scriptural Islam. The increasing realization of heterodoxy within *gham-khadi* procedures, particularly their deviance from textual Islam, inspires Al-Huda graduates to initiate highly contentious reforms. While this work aims to situate itself at the forefront of many strands of Frontier ethnography (of women and social elites), it nonetheless problematises its object, demonstrating how forms of *gham-khadi* practices are, indeed, one of Pukhtun society's most sensitive registers of heterogeneity in the contemporary world.

Throughout the thesis, I emphasised the making of social relationships as work because, as is also explicit and implicit in my examples, close relationships (rooted in agnatic rivalry) among Pukhtuns are generally very tense (Barnard 2000; Barth 1958, 1986; Grima 1998; Lindholm, Charles 1982, 1988; Lindholm, Cherry 1996). Within households particularly *gham-khadi* bears moral weight as good relations depend on attending and participation (being *kha* ("good") and "caring"—in English [see Alvi 2001: 52]). Compliance in the dimension of personal morality overlaps with questions of wider social membership. The Bibiane's careful and reflective following of *gham-khadi* conventions regulates the practical cohesion of society (Tapper, N. 1991: 209). The discourse of Bibiane challenges accounts of Muslim societies which claim that its men grant women inferior powers of reflection and self-scrutiny (see Metcalf, B. D. 1990: 14; Shalinski 1986: 326; Tapper, N. 1991; Torab 1996: 237, 241). Correct performance of *gham-khadi* draws on a repertoire of learned skills, as shown in Chapter 2, including aspects of dress, deportment, self-presentation, artful speech and social "networking".

There are further grounds for borrowing the local conceptualization of the "work of existence" as the basis for an alternate analytical category (of "work"). A Bibi's *gham-khadi* is not merely punctual or ceremonial, but spreads out over the course of her (reflection upon her) life. Situated at the intersections of a Bibi's personhood, family and social position, eschatological belief and cultural identity, the "processual" nature of *gham-khadi* encompasses an ongoing set of actions. As described in chapter 4, women equip their daughter's marital trousseau while she is still a child; and the accumulation of *eqat* through diligent performance of *gham-khadi* obligations anticipates a Bibi's accession into the senior ranks of a household's most esteemed women. As they live out their social roles, Bibiane learn to be responsible for the actions of their maids.

As described in chapter 5, they juggle the competing priorities of childcare and professional employment with household management, visits and hosting. In a single year, there can be hundreds of *gham-khadi* calling on any individual Bibi's time and energy. The *gham-khadi* network of one woman may involve 27 or so different villages, towns and cities, may represent the domiciles of servants (and their families) and kin, and may include the proliferating affinal connections she gains through marriage.

What is at stake for a Pukhtun Bibi who does not perform *gham-khadi* at all or inappropriately, is her personhood as publicly conceived—that is, her reputation or *ezat*. Due to *pardah*, a Bibi's *ezat* represents the only aspect of her personhood that circulates freely in all public contexts, and its cheapening (by her failure to perform adequately) impairs her social status. Criteria of *gham-khadi* performance are thus tied to individuals' sustained ethnic identity (Tapper, N. 1991: 107). In this sense, behaviours presumed antithetical to *ezat*—miserliness, failure to perform or return *gham-khadi* visits, inadequate gifts, unseemly emotion, and confrontation (*rishtinee*)—detract from a person's embodiment of Pukhto. On the level of collective representation, the nonconformity of wedding or funeral procedures with social expectations (as described through an internet marriage in Chapter 4) renders those procedures socially inadmissible, vexatiously “half-done” or non-existent for close family members.

Another especially interesting dimension of female ceremonial performance is its linkage with male political power. While many Khanan were hesitant to attribute any extra-domestic influence on a woman's skill at *gham-khadi*, both women and men suggested that the standing of a Bibi's family, including her husband's political fortunes, does depend on this proficiency. In this sense, my discussion of Pukhtun *gham-khadi* illuminates an area of women's activity not covered by Nancy Tapper's account about Iranian women's formalized visiting *khayr-u-sharr*. Tapper presupposes that women engage in hospitality, prestige- and position-building to the extent that they are excluded from male public life; she claims that their networks rarely overlap with male circuits of patronage and clientage. Yet I suggest that *gham-khadi* is continuous with male politicking, not parallel to it. What might be considered political power within a political anthropology of Pukhtun society is denoted as the possession of honour (Abu-Lughod 1986: 97) in this context. “Power, properly developed, enhances *iʔʔat* [*ezat*]; *iʔʔat* legitimates power” (Mandelbaum 1993: 22).

In this sense, a theoretical question this dissertation has engaged throughout concerns the appropriate frame for the description of *gham-khadi* practices: namely, that of social or political anthropology. The pioneer works of Pukhtun anthropology were couched in a political idiom, understanding social activities as strategies oriented

towards Khans' "maximization" (Barth 1986) of political power. I have offered another perspective, suggesting that *tlal-ratlal* visiting might be better conceptualized within a horizon of social phenomena. In satisfying the crowds of female onlookers at weddings and funerals, Bibiane establish a store of social capital partly constituted by their personal *ezat*. For Bourdieu, in his work on the Kabyle the societal forms of "symbolic capital" (1991: 180) (as in the effects of *gham-khadi*: its feasts, gatherings and clothes), and its forms of "economic capital" (ibid: 195) (Khan patrimonial wealth) are ultimately exchangeable or subject to equivalence. In these terms, the lavish expenditure among Khan families on wedding and funeral hospitality would represent the consolidation of familial inheritance through the maintenance of ultimately renumerative social relationships. While Bourdieu considers some forms of display as "wastage" (of social energy; ibid), people's participation in *gham-khadi* remains rational insofar as they serve their political interests. Such a rationalization of *gham-khadi*, however, fails to deal with the intricate network of *zeest-rozgar* relationships on their own terms. It is the particular social and familial connection, no matter how distant, not the primacy of identification with a political class, that is important for Bibiane in attending *gham-khadi*. Individuals, describing their *gham-khadi* experiences, offer discriminating accounts of their "individual selves," bound by imperatives other than those of their religion, supposed ethnic practice or *Pukhtunwali*, or class or family interest.

In re-specifying a diverse body of practices of *Pukhto* (divided by gender, generation and location), this work sought to capture the dynamism of contemporary *Pukhtunwali*. With the move of Khan families to the city over the last thirty years, *Pukhto* is seen as having undergone a modification by almost all local people. One elder Pukhtun in his seventies, for example, thought the entire way of life had been lost. Others said it had simply "changed". For many, especially mullahs, practices among the elite have become westernized, to the detriment of Khan morality. I have argued that while the relative prominence of male notions of *Pukhtunwali* (as described in conventional anthropological accounts), such as male honour (*gherat*), trust (*jabba*), revenge (*badal*), male honour (*nang*), assembly of male elders (*jirga*), and manliness (*saritob*), have declined among the transregional Pukhtuns I worked with, others like *gham-khadi*, hospitality (*melmastia*), and agnatic rivalry (*tarburwali*, *indrurwali*), have intensified. In presenting *gham-khadi* as engaging a wide network of people, this account has sought to mediate between male (Barth 1986) and female (Grima 1998) emphases in stressing the transitive and transactional elements of participation. Men and women kin and affines, close and distant relatives, rich and poor, and paid and unpaid attenders contribute to the festivities in different ways. On the theoretical level, *Pukhtunwali* may

be grasped, in Laidlaw's terms, as a "set of representations" (1995). Rather than having the character of a "code" (as previously defined by anthropologists), whose operations are invariant and which may only be changed wholesale, it forms a repertoire of actions integrally attached to social meanings and processes, but articulated in such a way that individual practices may emerge or fall into abeyance without the whole pattern undergoing resignification. Such a theoretical frame is useful in helping us to perceive the many innovations that are beginning to be introduced into *gham-kehadi* by Al-Huda graduates.

"More than economics, more than philosophy, the crucial variable when considering any aspect of Pakistan is its religion, Islam" (Ahmed, A. S. 1977b: 4). Any ethnography of Pukhtun peoples must distinguish between proponents of different styles of being Muslim in advancing any characterization of social practices. While the Pukhtun Taliban are male, of poor background, and are educated through rote-learning in the *madrasa* by mullahs, Al-Huda graduates, particularly Pukhtun, are female, of relatively wealthy background and are preponderantly English-speaking and convent-educated.¹⁸¹ Representing an alternative mode of Islamic modernity to any simplistically-identified form of "fundamentalism", Al-Huda seeks to make Pukhtun funerary procedures consonant with a scriptural reading of the Quran. In the face of critics who argue that Muslim girls leave convent-schools Christianized, Al-Huda graduates have taken issue with the prolongation of mourning beyond three days, in one case (Chapter 3) bringing the forty-day anniversary forward to coincide with the weekly Friday anniversary. More frequently, however, graduates introduce modifications into their styles of attendance, risking their social reputation by the appearance of rudeness when they leave after the third day (compare Shakry in Egypt 1998: 154). It should be noted, however, that these Bibiane are often as, or more, committed to the maintenance of *Pukhtunwali* as their contemporaries. In another apparent contradiction with their Islamic faith, Al-Huda graduates often continue to send their children to schools like the Catholic Murree Convent, which they regard as an institution that has conventionally taken generations of Pukhtun girls, and a place of knowledge valuable under Islamic auspices. Indeed, the religious commitment of such Bibiane has been able to transcend the hostility that typically exists between the Khan and mullah classes (see Barth 1995: 63; Caroe 1992: 426; many Khanan are said to perceive mullahs as "narrow-minded", authoritarian and hypocritically fixated on what they proscribed [*houris*, alcohol, debauchery and homosexuality] while for the mullahs, the landed classes are perceived

¹⁸¹ Brenner locates a comparable Islamic women's movement in Java (1996: 680); compare also Abu-Lughod 1998: 4, 15.

as “infidels”: Ahmed 1988: 191-192; Barth 1995). The two social factions are pitted against one another in the electoral process, a system largely riddled with corruption where votes are “bought” in the context of reciprocal but asymmetrical agreements, such as in *gham-khadi*. Ironically, for the first time in the 2002 Pakistan elections, after the American rout of Afghanistan’s Taliban government, Swat and Mardan returned a full slate of religious candidates, leading many politicians from influential families to doubt the veracity of pledges received in their *hujre* and *dere* (men’s houses).¹⁸²

This sense of the slippage between public personae and private selves, as voters turned out to have concealed their intentions, also pervasively characterizes *gham-khadi*. Ceremonies occur in the midst of constant scrutiny, judgment and gossip (badly-dressed women are referred to as “*daigane*”). *Khalak* (people, public opinion) shapes Bibiane’s every move. The necessity of presenting an irreproachable public front arouses great anxiety in many Bibiane. This anxiety produces feelings of inadequacy or exhaustion, and ructions between family members. Women repeatedly stated that *gham-khadi* left little time for, variously, childcare, friendships, relaxation, reading or courses of study. Many women professed the desire to escape the obligations of Pukhto entirely. Knowing I lived abroad, one respectable village woman asked me in the most earnest manner to find her a position as a maid outside the country: “just take me out of this Pukhtun society” (*bus ma de dae Pukhtano zee na oobasa*) (see also Grima 1998: 163; and Lindholm, Charles 1982: 193). For many, including Bibiane and their husbands, only emigration to *Lundun* (London, used as the term for Britain generally) or *Amreeka* (America) offers an outlet. Pukhtun Bibiane living outside Pakistan likewise praised the arrangement as having released them from what they saw as non-negotiable obligations: a Bibi whose husband works in Dubai said that her children’s schooling could now proceed uninterrupted by *gham-khadi*. Future research into Pukhtun communities and elite immigrant Pukhtuns outside Pakistan is needed to broaden the present work by specifying *gham-khadi* as an international phenomenon.

However, translocation to Islamabad and the global dispersion of educated Bibiane open a space for flexibility in the “work of existence” (Donnan and Werbner 1991: 12). Besides bringing about marriages like Firoza and Zain’s, the internet makes possible new forms of sociality, adapting earlier practices. Recently, for example, my husband and I received email invitations in Cambridge for Pukhtun weddings in the North-West Frontier Province of Pakistan. Technology also offers gradations of

¹⁸² In one instance, Bibiane believed that they had successfully secured the votes of dependents for their father who stood for a position in national elections in exchange for wedding invitations. When their father was trounced by a mullah at the 2002 elections, however, they brandished sticks to drive back the poor (*gharib*) village wedding guests from their gates.

participation in *gham-khadi* for expatriate and other Pukhtuns not present at collective events. In one case, hearing a younger nephew had died, an illiterate maid working in a Khan household in England recorded a message of condolence onto a cassette player, and sent the message to be played by the deceased's wife in Swat. It would certainly be premature to say that many people accept such mediated forms of *gham* as adequate substitution for personal attendance. Nevertheless, some negotiation between different degrees of presence and social participation in *gham-khadi* events will develop. Otherwise, the arduousness of the "work of life" risks alienating many Bibiane, predominantly middle-aged, to whom their own lives seem less attractive than the opportunities now opening up for their daughters and granddaughters. Possibly only through such an adjusted economy of "modern" and "customary" practices and allegiances can *gham-khadi* avoid being judged as what a few professional Khanan (one a medical doctor) summarily dismissed as a "waste of time".

But such a dissociation from Pukhto as it is imagined and experienced by most Pukhtun people would, for the majority, be understood as the loss or estrangement of those speakers' fundamental identity. As one older Bibi, sitting on a *kat* (straw bed) alongside various other visiting Bibiane, village guests, and maids—all sipping tea under a persimmon tree in the cool mountainous Swati breeze—told me,

"The world is established through the work of existence!"

"Dunia pa zeest-rozgar wadana da!"

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APPENDIX 2

Kinship Terminology: Affinal and Consanguinal

ENGLISHPUKHTOAffinal

Husband
 Wife
 Mother-in-Law
 Daughter-in-Law/s
 Father-in-Law
 Husband's Sister/s
 Husband's Brother/s
 Husband's Brother's Wife
 Husband's Brother's Wife's Offspring
 Husband's Brother's Offspring
 Brother's Wife
 A Man's Wife's Sister
 Sister's Husband
 Ego's Husband's Other Wife
 Ego's Husband's Other Wife's Offspring

Skhargannai

Khawand
Khaza
Khwakhe
Ingor/ Ingiande
Skhar
Indror/ ane
Lewar/ oona
Yor/ ane
De yor bachee
Lewarꝑay
Wrandar
Kheena
Ookhe
Bun
Bunꝑai

Consanguinal

Mother
 Father
 Brother/s
 Sister/s
 Son/s
 Daughter/s
 Grandmother
 Grandfather
 Grandson/s
 Granddaughter
 Mother's Sister
 Mother's Brother
 Father's Sister
 Father's Brother
 Father's Brother's wife
 Mother's Sister's Son
 Mother's Sister's Daughter
 Father's Sister's Son
 Father's Sister's Daughter
 Ego's Brother's Son
 Ego's Brother's Daughter
 Ego's Sister's Son
 Ego's Sister's Daughter

Plarganai/ De Mor-Plar Kor

Mor
Plar
Ror/ a
Khor/ Khwende
Zwe/ e
Loor/ a
Neea (Nanaji)
Neeka (Babaji)
Nwase/ e
Nwasai
Thror
Mama
Thror
Thre
Thandar
De thror ꝑwe
De thror loor
De thror ꝑwe
De thror loor
Wrara (from ror, brother)
Wrera
Khwaraye (from khor)
Khwarꝑa

APPENDIX 3
Time

Five Daily Prayers (Local Time is Measured according to
Prayer Timings)

<i>Number</i>	<i>(Pukhto) Prayer/Moonz</i>	<i>Arabic/Urdu</i>
1	<i>Sahar</i>	<i>Fajar</i>
2	<i>Maspakheen</i>	<i>Zohar</i>
3	<i>Mazeegar</i>	<i>Asar</i>
4	<i>Makhaam</i>	<i>Maghrib</i>
5	<i>Maskhutan</i>	<i>Isba</i>

Days of the Week

Friday	<i>Jumma</i>
Saturday	<i>Khaali</i>
Sunday	<i>Itwar</i>
Monday	<i>Gwal</i>
Tuesday	<i>Pinzamma</i>
Wednesday	<i>Shoro</i>
Thursday	<i>Ziarat</i>

Months in a Year

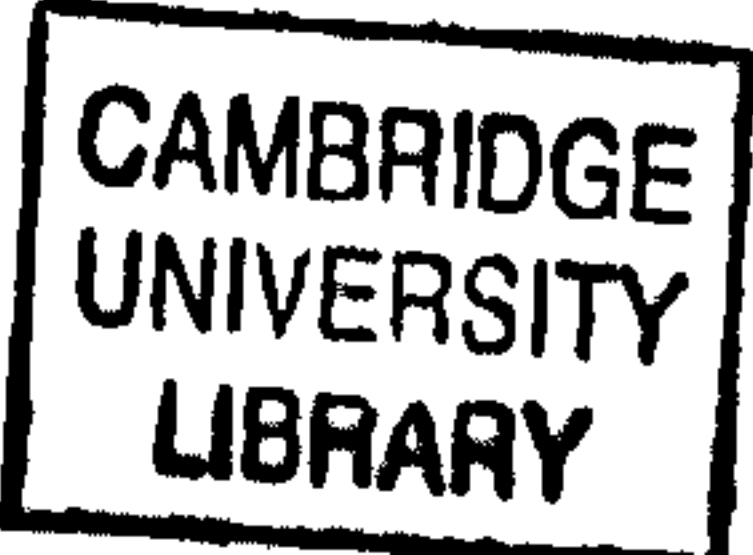
January	<i>Warokey Akhtar</i>
February	<i>Khali</i>
March	<i>Loi Akhtar</i>
April	<i>Asaan</i>
May	<i>Safar</i>
June	<i>Wrambai Khor</i>
July	<i>Dweyamma Khor</i>
August	<i>Thdrayemma Khor</i>
September	<i>Saloramma Khor</i>
October	<i>Zbarga</i>
November	<i>Shokadar</i>
December	<i>Roja</i>

APPENDIX 4

Maid Performing *Gham-Khadi* on behalf of her Bibi

A) A maid, Marium (aged 25), relates her experience of performing a wet nurse's (*dai's*) brother's *laas niwa* (funerary visit) on behalf of her Bibi:

“Recently when Speena Dai's brother died, Bibi (who is from the family of the Khanaan of Sher Palam and is married to her father's sister's son who is a Badshah from the Swat Wali's family) wanted to go for the funeral. But when she went to Sher Palam [in upper Swat] her brother forbade her. So, Bibi gave me Rs.500 and sent her daughter [aged 9] with me and the driver in her car. I went as Bibi's representative (*pa khpal ze*). The *dai's* house is next to Bibi's father's house in Sher Palam; Bibi wanted to go herself for Badshah's sake (*waja*) because *dai* is Bacha's wet nurse and she has spent a lifetime with them (*ao umar a wur sara ter kare de*). But she could not go, and instead sent me in her own place (*ao pa khpal ze a zo wa legallam*). When I went to the house I gave the (deceased's) family Rs.500 and I said to them: “Bibi was very sad at the news of your brother's death and she has sent me on her behalf. She wanted to come herself but her younger brother did not allow her to come, *da agha bad khwee de* (literally: he is ill-tempered, i.e. he imposes stringent *purdah*); he did not want her to leave the house in the village, so Bibi has sent me in her own place”. So, I held my hands up in prayer (*ma warta laas waneewo*) and said, “May God bless him”, (“*Khde de oobakhe*”). I had never done *laas niwa* and did not know how to do it, but Bibi had explained every detail to me. Bibi had told me where to go, what to do and what to say. So I did and said all that she had explained to me. When we were about to leave *dai* gave me Rs.200 and some eggs. So *dai* did *badal* (exchange/reciprocity) at that very moment. When I came back, Bibi asked me what I had told them and I related the details of the entire visit to her.”



APPENDIX 5: The income and household expenditure of a 35 year-old Bibi with three children from her matrilineal cross-cousin

Source of	Husband's	Total amount of husband's income about Rs.75,000 per month. Husband gets income in lump sum not a fixed amount, once a year from inherited lands and property (shops etc.) rented in Swat. Bibi says "He gives me this money and I spend it on the house; he doesn't take anything...He gives the money to me to keep; when he needs it he tells me ' <i>raher'</i> (give)".
	Her own	Bibi sold her gold wedding jewellery in Swat and her inherited land (from her father); she invested all the money in property, buying two apartments (flats), in Islamabad. The second apartment was bought jointly with some of her husband's money. She says: "the two flats are in my name and the rent that comes from them- Rs. 24,000 collects in my bank. My husband doesn't touch it. I am going to change this money into dollars in an account abroad. The other thing I want to do is to buy land here in Swat." She adds "My husband insisted on writing his lands and shops in my name."
Income	Other	For "other" source of income Bibi says "my mother-in-law [they live jointly] will start contributing to the [large village house] house expenditure to ease the pressure on her son."
	Food shopping and cleaning	She states "chickens, cleaning items etc. what ever I need I write it on a piece of paper and in my expenditure notebook; I give it to Mama [her servant] who takes it to the shopkeeper. We have a fixed rate with particular shopkeepers who keep a monthly book and at the end of the month I compare my notes with his bills to see if they are the same and pay him the amount through our servants."
Expenditure on House		"Apart from that every time I go to Islamabad to drop or pickup my daughters from the boarding school I do about Rs.10,000 worth food shopping; those things you can't get in Swat like foreign cornflakes, chocolates, tin foods; and the things you feel too ashamed to ask for, in a place like Swat, like toiletry such as women's personal stuff- sanitary towels, creams, and so on."
	Schools	Bibi has two daughters in the convent boarding school. For each daughter it costs her Rs.7000 per month. This excludes expenditure on 'luck' (food/snacks) which comes to about Rs. 2500. Holidays and trips cost Rs. 10,000 in total. The bedding, hold-all, trunks and uniforms cost an initial amount of Rs. 50,000 on first admission into school.
On Children	Toys	Playstation, video games, and children's video cassettes: "My daughter has more than seventy Disney videos". Stuffed toys and books are passed down from the eldest.
	Clothes	Bibi spends Rs. 20,000 on three piece suits <i>partog-kameez-lapata suits</i> per season (six months) buying about 12 pairs of clothes for summer, and 8 pairs for winter. In addition she adds "and the other pairs my husband gifts to me".
On Personal Items	Jewellery	"I do't like the big gold wedding ewellery...I sold most of mine to buy property; I prefer precious stones. When I went to Lahore I bought a diamond set".
	Shoes etc	"When I go abroad I buy a supply of shoes and bags so that I can wear them for <i>gham-khadi</i> ."
<i>Melmastia</i>	At home	For hospitality, Bibi says, she spends about Rs. 38,000 on dinners (Bibi has a reputation for being very sociable and hospitable). She adds "whoever used to come to Swat we would give them dinners. But since our mills (flour) have closed down we are beginning to become more careful. We give fewer dinners. But we always serve our guests sherbat in summers and tea in winters."
	Restaurants	Her statement here reveals the city-village complex: "It is unthinkable to go to a restaurant in Swat. But in Islamabad if someone has taken us out for dinner then we are particular to return the favour. In Islamabad we go to restaurants three to four times a month and take people out. Because I can't handle it in the flat the space is too small and I want to rest, not work in Islamabad."
Hospitality	Deaths	She says "If it is a poor person's death, I do not attend because of <i>purdah</i> , but I send Rs. 200 or Rs. 300 to them through my husband's <i>dai's ingor</i> (wet nurse's daughter-in-law) or I send them <i>ghwan ten</i> (a pot of cooking oil). If the death is in my own family then I give Rs.15,000 <i>kharinat</i> and attend all the days and even the Fridays (<i>jumme</i>) after death."
	Weddings	In a <i>khadi</i> context she states, "It is tit for tat during <i>gham-khadi</i> . Whatever I received in the past from that person I must give the same. If it is a poor person's wedding I will send Rs. 200-300 or an unstitched suit, <i>jora</i> . If it is a friends or relatives wedding I will take an (expensive) and beautiful suit, <i>khevalde jora</i> or then give money about Rs. 1000."
<i>Gham-Khadi</i>	Births	In the context of birth, she points out, "Whatever amount someone gave me [at the birth of her daughter] I write it down in my diary, their name and the amount and when they have a child I return the exact amount. It's an exchange, <i>badal</i> . Whatever they give me I give back."

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