Exploring the experiences of young Afghan men living in Aotearoa New Zealand.

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Abstract

People of Afghanistan for many decades travelled to a neighboring country for safety before seeking refuge in other nations with ambitions for a promising future for themselves and their families who have faced famine and tribulations of war. Many have resettled in Aotearoa New Zealand. However, very little is known about young people and their experiences in the Afghan diaspora particularly young men. This research project is an in-depth exploration of the experiences of six young Afghan men living in Aotearoa New Zealand. The narratives and timelines of events shared by these young Afghan men highlight the adversities they experienced alongside their strengths and resilience. The interviews were conducted as research conversations enabling a dialogue between myself and the six participants and this format was driven by the principle of halaqah. The combined theoretical framework for this research was informed by narrative inquiry and Islamic principles of halaqah. I identified several themes related to the experiences of these young Afghan men. Firstly, collective trauma was prominent amongst all participants and had a domino effect on their everyday practice of life. Trauma was also shared by participants and their families, often unconsciously. The various complex negotiations that participants discussed included the parenting and protection they received, issues of masculinity and responsibility, as well as balancing their felt cultural identities as Afghans living in Aotearoa New Zealand. Participants also highlighted experiences of transformation and rites of passage achieved through attending university as it became a platform for development of their independence and reconnection to their faith and culture and finding peace. This research shed light on a rarely discussed phenomenon – the enduring impact of, and the spillover of collective trauma for those living outside of Afghanistan, and how these young people learned to cope with these dynamics.

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In memory of my late brother, Abdal whom I dedicate this research. Thank you for the kindness, love, and leadership you displayed all your life as my elder brother and for always being a source of inspiration for me. I am forever grateful for the life lessons and profound intellect you shared. "Innalillahi wa Innailaihi Rojiun" — indeed, we belong to Allah, and to Him, we shall return.

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Preface: Thesis outline

Chapter one focuses on the critical review of the refugee literature and background information of sociopolitical and historical overview of Afghanistan. I explore the socio-political history of Afghanistan in detail to provide an understanding of how history has impacted people of Afghanistan and for those living in foreign countries. The chapter reviews literature amongst Afghan living in foreign countries and their experiences. Moreover, ongoing challenges faced by refugees and impact on generational gaps between parents and children and its influence on intergenerational conflict, identity, and trauma. Lastly, I conclude this chapter by reviewing the protective factors focusing on education and employment.

Chapter two provides an overview of the approaches taken to discuss the practical, theoretical and analysis to conduct this research. I considered the influence of Islamic-principles and its implication on this research project and reviewing the co-joint influences of halaqah and narrative analysis. This chapter discusses the chosen form of methods, discussing the use of research conversation, respect and reciprocity, participant profiles, informed consent, harms and benefits, privacy and confidentiality and anonymity. I explored in this chapter the gathering of information and review of the audio-recording and transcripts to formulate the data for analysis. Accounts of the process of transcription were conducted by applying a biographical narrative analysis approach to formulate the themes.

Chapter three discusses the first theme of the finding's complex relationships with parents, particularly with the fathers of the participants. The complexities involved their perceived notion of masculinity shared between them and their fathers. Alongside the cultural expectations of being an Afghan man and following patriarchal codes of conduct and managing overinvolvement and safety nets applied by their parents according to the participants.

Chapter four investigates balancing of two worlds: Navigating the duality for Afghan refugee's males growing up in Aotearoa New Zealand. Secondly, colliding cultures and identity crisis straddling in two different worlds. This chapters focuses on how these young Afghan men found their place while managing issues of identity crisis and pressures of fitting in.

Chapter five explores the traditions and transitions: Religio-cultural resilience and rites of passage as Afghan refugee males growing up in Aotearoa New Zealand. This chapter discusses participants reconnection with their culture and spirituality and university playing a pivotal role

in offering this opportunity for reconnection through various outlets such as cultural and social groups. The chapter explores how these young Afghan men made sense of their experiences, the various challenges, and adversities they faced in their formative school years. These experiences enabled them to develop resilience with the help of reconnection to their faith and cultural identity.

Chapter six offers key conclusions from this research project. The conclusions that I have drawn from this research project promote for a greater support for young Afghan refugees who choose other avenues than attending university. I argue about the inadequacies of one size fits all approach (OSFA) that has been previously conducted in refugee research. A greater acknowledgment for the strengths and resilience young people from refugee backgrounds demonstrate during their settlement. Additionally, acknowledgement of culture and spirituality amongst Muslim participants in research should be encouraged and its impact on everyday practices of life and way of coping and learning for Muslims. I conclude by discussing the implication of the current study, limitations and areas for further research.

Contents

Chapter 1: Literature Review
Definition of a Refugee

According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), a refugee is an individual who has experienced persecution because of their nationality, sexuality, gender identity, race, religion, and political standing (UNHCR, 2016). Many refugees fled their homeland due to internal conflicts experienced by many national/global regions, such as Central Africa, West Africa, the Middle East, Eastern Europe, and Southeast Asia (Pahud, 2008). Some have lived in precarious environments, aggravated by chronic socio-economic poverty and marginalisation, they have had to leave their home country involuntarily, experiencing displacement when escaping their home countries for reasons such as war, political unrest, natural disasters, and famine (UNHCR, 2016). Unlike migrants, refugees often flee their home country without preparation, typically leaving behind everything and are unable to say farewell to their families. Many experience precariousness because of the limited options for choosing their destination for resettlement (UNHCR, 2016). Refugees often seek protection and safety for themselves and their families in a neighbouring country or a state that can provide them with the capacity to meet their basic needs of security and safety, which can be limited and scarce. However, not all refugees are privileged to seek refuge in a neighboring country. Some refugees flee to interim nations and find themselves in refugee camps before they can relocate to their new homes in host nations (Carvalho & Pinto, 2018)

Living in camps can further exacerbate the traumas experienced by refugees as they face problems related to security and safety. Living conditions are challenging in refugee camps, often near conflict zones, adding to the ongoing trauma that refugees experience and affecting their well-being (Carvalho & Pinto, 2018). Staying in refugee camps for extended periods can adversely affect people's self-perceptions and self-esteem (Gurer, 2019). Experiencing higher rates of war-related trauma events and spending extended periods in refugee camps can further lead to higher post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) symptoms. Many refugees experience social difficulties and mental health issues and are at a greater risk of developing psychiatric disorders than non-refugees. Many experience difficulties post-migration with employment, language, lack of family support, integration, and discrimination in receiving access to housing and education, which can all

contribute to adverse mental health outcomes (Butcher, Spoonley, & Trlin, 2006; Lamkaddem, 2013; Schick et al., 2016; Schweitzer et al., 2011).

Research in this area from a socio-psychological standpoint is scarce. there is very little research on young men from refugee backgrounds and even scarcer research on young Afghans and those living outside of Afghanistan. Therefore, this research project will provide an exclusive insight into the experiences of young Afghan men in Aotearoa New Zealand. This research project aims to contribute to local and international refugee and migrant research. In this chapter, I provide an overview of Afghanistan's socio-political/historical context, the Afghan diaspora, Afghans in Aotearoa New Zealand, the challenges faced by refugees, Afghan parenting, intergenerational conflict, self-identity, intergenerational trauma, employment, and education. Firstly, I provide background information on the socio-political history of Afghanistan to understand the Afghan people's way of life and experiences. The impact such contexts have had on Afghans living both in Aotearoa New Zealand and for those living in foreign countries.

Socio-political/historical overview of Afghanistan

The Islamic Republic of Afghanistan is a landlocked country sandwiched between the Middle East, South Asia, and Central Asia, with 34 Provinces (Central intelligence agency, 2015). A population of over 42 million, a diverse group of people who speak many different languages (worldometer, 2024). Afghanistan is almost three times the size of Aotearoa New Zealand and shares its borders with China, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Pakistan, and Uzbekistan (Central intelligence agency, 2015). The geography and location of Afghanistan play a vital role in shaping its history and culture. The harsh climate and rugged terrain create natural barriers, separating ethnic groups and isolating specific communities. However, this geography has also enabled the independent and fierce spirits of the people of Afghanistan (Hyman, 2002).

The ethnic groups of Afghanistan consist of four main groups: Pashtuns, Tajiks, Hazaras and Uzbeks. The other minor groups are Nuristani, Balochi, Pashayi, Aimak and Turkmen. Many of Afghanistan's ethnic groups have become isolated from each other because of its history and geography (Central intelligence agency, 2015). Traditionally, the Pashtuns were privileged in all areas and had a strong military base. Afghan history is written from a Pashtun point of view, and the national language of Afghanistan is Pashtu, where 'Afghan' is a Persian synonym for Pashtun

(Schetter, 2005). Tajiks were responsible for educational institutions and economic sectors, while Hazaras were, and still are, the most marginalized among the diverse ethnic groups (Schetter, 2005). The Uzbeks are one of the largest Turkic tribes in Afghanistan (Hyman, 2002). In this nation, every ethnic group is perceived and therefore treated differently, creating a hierarchy that caused the emergence of ethnic stereotypes: Hazaras were known as the 'poor' and 'illiterate', Tajiks were known as 'thrifty', Pashtuns were known as the 'Aggressor' and Uzbeks known as 'brutal' (Schetter, 2005). The predominant religion in Afghanistan is Islam, which 99% of the population follows. The Muslim population are divided into two denominations, 85% Sunni and 15% Shia (Abraham, 2013).

Modern-day Afghanistan was established and pioneered in 1747 by King Ahmed Shah Durrani, a member of the Pashtun Abdali clan. He played a pivotal role in unifying the Pashtun tribes and creating a monarchy that enabled the Durranis to be in power for over 230 years – ultimately establishing an independent Afghan Empire (Barfield, 2010). Three Anglo-Afghan wars took place (1839-42;1878-81;1917-1919), involving Great Britain from its base in India, extending its control over neighbouring Afghanistan and ensuring that the opposing Russia had no influence. From 1839 to 1842, Afghanistan encountered its first war initiated by the British commanders, sending a large army of Indian and British troops to Afghanistan to combat the invasion of the Russian army. However, when faced by the Afghan military in January of 1842, the British were forced to withdraw from Kabul and headed east to the city of Jalalabad with a column of 16,500 civilians and soldiers (Bearden, 2001). The second attempt by the British Empire would result in a disaster in 1878 and 1881. The British fought with Afghanistan for the third and final time in 1917, ending the Anglo-Afghan wars in 1919 (Bearden, 2001).

In 1919, Afghanistan won independence from the Great Britain, and the country served as a buffer between the Russian and British empires. From 1929 to 1978, Afghanistan enjoyed its most prolonged period of stability and peace, which initiated a new constitution with a limited democratic government, progressive social developments, rapid economic growth and enabling more significant opportunities for the advancement of women and girls. In 1978, Daud Khan, the president of Afghanistan, was murdered by a pro-Soviet military coup, which the supporters called and was identified as the Saur (April) revolution. The communist coup of the People's Democratic

Party of Afghanistan (PDPA), a Marxist-Leninist party, led to the end of the Durrani Pashtun rule that lasted for 230 years, and PDPA took power (Barfield, 2010).

After the Saur Revolution, the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan to reinforce the communist regime. The people of Afghanistan did not accept the communist regime as it purposely violated cultural and religious norms that Afghans had adhered to for centuries. Ethnic and conservative Islamic leaders formed the Mujahideen, based in Pakistan, funded by Saudi Arabia and the United States (U.S.) as a guerilla movement to combat the Soviet-backed government. This plunged the country into civil war from 1978 to 1989, with the Soviet military directly supporting the Afghan government against the Mujahideen. The Mujahideen, backed by millions of armed and unarmed forces, fought against the communist regime and Soviet military occupation. Throughout the 1980s, Afghanistan suffered one of its most catastrophic wars, and no other war had caused as much social change as this one (Jalali, 2001).

Many people across the country joined forces with the Mujahideen. They were the most prominent group comprising Afghan rebels joined by groups from rural areas supported and armed by U.S. forces and other foreign sources to combat the Soviet Union from taking power in Afghanistan. The Soviet war in Afghanistan ended in 1989 after Russia's withdrawal, leaving five million people disabled and 1.5 million Afghans deceased. Afghanistan became a war-torn country between 1992 and 1994, experiencing internal conflict led by the Mujahideen continuing to fight amongst themselves, resulting in Afghanistan being violent and anarchic (Habte, 2017).

Taking opportunity of this void, the Taliban took over the leadership and implemented their religious movement initiated by clerics who aimed to restore Afghanistan in the name of Islam. In 1996, the Taliban placed extreme measures on the people of Afghanistan. The most affected were women's rights, which meant females were not permitted to be in public without a male chaperone, and girls were restricted from attending educational facilities (Rahman, 2018). The Taliban banned any form of entertainment and cultural art. Those who broke the laws and retaliated received harsh punishments, including public executions, stoning, and amputations for stealing. On September 11, 2001, following the Twin Towers' destruction in New York City, the U.S. invaded Afghanistan. It launched an intensive bombing and attempted to overthrow the Taliban as they refused to expel Osama Bin Laden from Afghanistan. Afghans continued to flee and seek refuge from the mass destruction and ongoing attacks (Schetter, 2005)

In 2022, after 20 years of war, the withdrawal of the US-led armed forces and the government's fall, the people of Afghanistan once more came under the rule of the Taliban (Mohd Saleem et al., 2021). Prolonged conflict and war have affected Afghanistan's economy, infrastructure, culture, and governance, destroyed people's livelihoods, and led to an extensive loss of life. In 2023, Afghanistan experienced increased poverty, decreased employment opportunities, and increased damage to the cultural and social fabric of the country (Rogers, 2021). Afghanistan suffers from one of the world's most acute internal displacements because of ongoing insecurities, prolonged conflict, natural calamities, and the COVID-19 pandemic. The Taliban regained power in the country and captured the capital, Kabul, on August 15, 2021, and over a third of the population (14 million people and 2 million children) had been affected, with Afghans at the highest risk and danger being human rights activists, government workers, minority groups and supporters of parties of coalition forces (Ahmad et al., 2021). Women feared for their education and independence under the new regime of the Taliban. The nation has faced a harsh economic collapse since August 2021, and more people's livelihoods have been affected, and they are now living below the poverty line. Afghanistan's humanitarian and financial situation was at an all-time low when the Taliban took over, influenced by decades of war. The increased cost of essential items has doubled since the Taliban's military campaign and continues to rise in inflation, leaving millions hungry (Islam et al., 2022).

As a result of this turbulent historical and political context, Afghanistan has one of the largest populations of refugees as decades of war have led them to evacuate from their homes and seek refuge in a neighbouring country in the hope of survival in countries such as Iran, India, and Pakistan. Some were able to flee to developed countries. Due to the dire need to escape from their home country from the 1980s onwards, Afghans produced the largest population of refugees globally as more than six million pursued refuges in foreign countries (UNHCR, 2012).

Afghan Diaspora

Diaspora refers to people from countries that experienced traumatic dispersal and had to regroup in different nations worldwide – consistently experiencing violence, conflict, and political repression in Afghanistan motivated Afghan migration to Europe. It is vital to gain an understanding of those living in foreign countries away from Afghanistan and their experiences and integration into their host society (Fischer, 2017). After the late 1970s, conflict and war in

Afghanistan led to an expansion of the Afghan diaspora in Europe and other locations. Many large communities exist in Russia, Canada, the United Kingdom, Australia, the United States, the Netherlands, Sweden, the United Arab Emirates, Austria, and Turkey. Before the 1990's, most migration to Europe from Afghanistan consisted of young people and students. From the 1990's onwards, there was an increase of a few thousand to 33,000 in 2001. The number continued to grow in 2013 to 58,000 and reached over 176,000 in 2015 (Icduygu & Karadag, 2018).

Afghans in Aotearoa New Zealand

Aotearoa New Zealand annually accepts refugees as per their obligation to the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR). Aotearoa New Zealand resettles between 750 and 1,000 individuals annually under the Refugee Quota. Many are also granted residence via the Refugee family support category (RFSC); those accepted as refugees and protected persons are eligible to sponsor a family member and that person's dependent children and persons partner for Aotearoa New Zealand residence (Immigration New Zealand, 2023). Six hundred places are available each year. People of Afghanistan find settlement in Aotearoa New Zealand via various pathways, such as by arriving as refugees, asylum seekers or migrants. The figures for Afghans residing in Aotearoa New Zealand through the refugee quota witnessed the arrival of 1,225 people from 2013/2014 to 2023/2024. Figures for refugee support category arrivals by nationality (Afghanistan) reported in 2013/2014 to 2023/2024, a total of 870 arrived under all tiers of family reunification cases (Immigration New Zealand, 2023). On the other hand, a total number of 225,400 migrants arrived in Aotearoa New Zealand in 2023 (stats NZ, 2023). Therefore, in contrast a smaller population of refugees entering Aotearoa New Zealand than those coming as migrants. In saying this, regardless of the migration or refugee pathway, Afghans are leaving a war-torn context.

In Aotearoa New Zealand, the refugee resettlement program has four stages: pre-arrival, reception, initial settlement, and integration into society, focusing on employment and providing ongoing support (Immigration New Zealand, 2023). The primary goal of this programme is to enable refugees in Aotearoa New Zealand to work toward total self-sufficiency and integration. The key areas focused on developing participation in developing sufficient English language to partake in daily life, education, sustainable housing, and independence. Refugees are resettled across different regions in Aotearoa New Zealand, such as Waikato, Auckland, Nelson,

Wellington, Dunedin, Christchurch, and Invercargill. Refugee resettlement is now being extended and introduced to rural towns such as Timaru and Blenheim. Masterton, Levin, and Ashburton (New Zealand Immigration, 2022).

Aotearoa New Zealand started accepting people from Afghanistan in 1990, and the NZ Census in 1991 reported that 117 people identified themselves as Afghan. As per the NZ Census (2018), there are 5,250 Afghans in Aotearoa New Zealand; of those, 2,694 are males, 2,556 are females, and the median age is 22.6 years. 68.9% of the total Afghan population in Aotearoa New Zealand are born overseas, and 31.1% are born in Aotearoa New Zealand. Of those aged 15 years and over, 24.3% are employed full-time, and 9.8% are unemployed. Moreover, 35.8% have no qualification, while 10.7% have a bachelor's degree and level 7 qualification. 72.3% of Afghans speak English, and 40.4% speak two languages (Census, 2018).

Two critical periods in which Aotearoa New Zealand accepted many Afghan refugees for resettlement were in 2001 following the 'Tampa Incident', as well as in 2012. In August 2001, the Australian authorities refused entry to a ship carrying Asylum seekers. More than 1,500 people arrived in Australia in 2001, and 430 asylum seekers, primarily Afghans, arrived on a boat of a Norwegian freighter, the Tampa. The Tampa was enroute to Singapore and rescued asylum seekers from an Indonesian ferry sinking the previous day. The Aotearoa New Zealand government accepted one hundred fifty asylum seekers from Tampa, consisting of women, children, and families. The Afghans on the ship were a minority group of Hazaras who had escaped the persecution of the Taliban regime (Helton, 2003). The Hazaras have consecutively experienced persecution because of their Shia faith.

In September 2001, Afghans from Nauru were transferred, and 131 gained refugee status in Aotearoa New Zealand. The Australian government utilised Nauru and Papa New Guinea's (PNG) Manus Island for offshore processing of refugees with unauthorised arrival to the country by boat seeking asylum. Asylum seekers arriving to Australia without a visa and arriving by a boat are transferred to either Nauru or Manus Island detention centers (Salyer et al., 2020). Additionally, another 77 were accepted by the Aotearoa New Zealand government who had undergone screening during their time in Nauru (Habte, 2017).

In October 2012, more than 44 interpreters from Afghanistan were working closely with the Aotearoa New Zealand deference force in Bamiyan. They were offered refuge in Aotearoa New Zealand by the New Zealand government (New Zealand Government, 2012). Alongside the 44 interpreters, 96 other additional family members of the interpreters arrived in June 2013. The families spent eight weeks in the Mangere Refugee Resettlement Centre in Auckland and resettled in Palmerston North and Hamilton (Habte, 2017). During their resettlement, many refugees face challenges of fitting in with the host society.

Challenges faced by Refugees

Refugees experience a variety of acculturation stressors during the migration journey, such as finding new housing, new language, employment and isolation from familiar culture and extended families (De Jacolyn et al., 2021). Acculturation refers to an individual from a cultural minority experiencing psychological changes because of first-hand experiences with a cultural majority in the host country (Oppedal et al., 2004). Post-migration challenges for many refugees are often related to participating in the new culture and maintaining their identity and ethnic culture (Kartal et al., 2018). Oppedal et al. (2004) state that acculturation and immigration amongst refugees are stressful experiences for some and can increase the risk of ill health and low self-esteem. Differences between host and refugee cultures can mean difficulties settling in new societies. Perspectives from the majority group towards refugees can result in social exclusion and discrimination, especially for visibly different groups such as Muslims and pose a more significant challenge for resettlement.

Adjusting to a new environment is a challenge for most individuals. However, changing to a new way of life for refugees adds complexity to this adjustment. It is an entirely different experience, and the stress induced by those changes is identified as a cultural shock (Oppedal et al., 2004). Refugees entering an unfamiliar country and culture can make it very difficult for a person's day-to-day ability to function. Increased feelings of unfamiliarity and precariousness build up. Afghans who are unfamiliar with the realities of the ‘West’ often have a completely different view of life outside of Afghanistan; life in Europe and America is glamorised in the media as lands full of opportunity and material possessions – a place where success is easy to attain, and the epitome of the quality of life that most dream of achieving (Kartal et al., 2018). The media plays a significant role in building these unrealistic expectations, and often, shortly after arriving,

Afghans face the reality that life in a ‘Western’ country is also a daily struggle, and adjusting to an unfamiliar environment presents unique challenges. Kale (2017) indicated that refugees experience isolation as some individuals lack any ethnic support, and others choose to distance themselves from people who have the same ethnic background as them.

Isolation develops as refugees lack mutual language, cultural barriers and knowledge gaps between refugees and host society members, creating an obstructive cross-cultural relationship. Refugees encounter hardship with various social determinants of health influencing the impact on accessing services and healthcare post-resettlement. Contributing factors such as stigma, socio-economic status, social discrimination, accommodation, and employment status frequently arise in negative health influence, which requires holistic and broad responses (Cassim et al., 2021). Moreover, grasping the concept of an individualistic way of life compared to a communal one can be challenging and critical in the engagement of resettlement and the process of recovery. Stressors for refugees during settlement commonly consist of services of the host country, policies, educational and employment challenges, linguistic barriers, acculturation problems, accessibility and knowledge of resources and their rights (Rogers, 2021). Additionally, resettlement is stressful for parents and young people and presents unique challenges.

Moving to a new country is challenging for many refugees as they must deal with unfamiliar situations, which can alter acculturative stress. Alemi et al. (2021) described how young people found themselves confused about their identity because of their visibility of being Black and Muslim Somali in San Diego. Young Somali men reported being stigmatised racially for being African American, while Somali women encountered religious discrimination. For Afghan refugees resettling in Aotearoa, acculturation involves learning and adapting to the host country's culture to enhance their psychological well-being and maintain their own culture and a sense of themselves during this process. Sulaiman-Hill and Thompson (2012) found that for groups such as Africans and Muslims among the refugees and migrants in Aotearoa New Zealand, the majority experience attitudes of discrimination and social exclusion, creating a more significant challenge for resettlement. Moreover, stressors produced by cultural differences and discrimination against Aotearoa New Zealand Muslim youth have proven challenging. For Muslim youth to be connected to their culture, maintaining their beliefs and practices, and having a supportive family are vital for their resilience (Stuart, 2014).

The ongoing conflicts in Afghanistan and the Middle East are common in the news and present a potential risk amongst Afghans to relive those traumas. For those living in foreign countries, the psychological consequences of these traumas resurfacing can result in the inability to manage daily life tasks. Acculturative experiences can vary among refugee parents and children in adopting the practices of the new culture and face challenges at different levels of the acculturation spectrum, which can have adverse effects, such as acculturative gaps and intergenerational conflicts (Berry, 2007). It is important to acknowledge many Afghans refugee parents experience displacement and war before coming into the host nation and has a spill on effect on their parenting style and their relationship with their children.

Afghan parenting

Traditionally, it has been observed that Afghan parents apply an authoritarian parenting style through strict rules and regulations in raising their children, which are commonly expressed by most South Asian countries (Ghafoer, 2018). In saying this, South Asian and Afghan parents living in their home countries believe they love their children despite the lack of affection towards them, such as providing hugs or kisses to them. The parents assume that providing the necessities such as clothing, shelter, and food is the utmost priority and responsibility for them as a parent (Choudhury & Jabeen, 2008). Therefore, being able to fulfil these responsibilities indicates the affection and love Afghan parents have for their children. Afghan parents only want the best for their children's education, safety, and health despite difficult socio-economic circumstances.

Afghan parenting typically embodies traditional gender roles within most Afghan families; the eldest male takes up the authoritative parenting role, and women are demonstrably loving and caring, providing affection and preparing food for the children and family (Ghosh, 2003). Afghan men's masculinity is closely connected to their responsibility of looking after their families and communities in the patriarchal context of Afghanistan. Afghan men are entrusted with protecting and safeguarding their families' honour and are the primary providers for their families. The father or husband provides for all the children's and wife's needs, including the family abode, health, education, and financial subsistence. The husband and father have the role of handling the security of their family. Additionally, they play a crucial role in promoting their families' well-being and health for their lifetime.

Afghan parents raise their children in a collectivist environment and receive guidance and support from their own parents, elder siblings with children and extended family members. However, Afghan parents outside of Afghanistan are often exposed to an individualistic parenting style. Leung (2020) indicated that many Afghan parents found it challenging to raise their children independently as they previously lived as a collective group, and many family members were available to assist with the kids. Displacement and migration are a global phenomenon amongst the people of Afghanistan as they continue to experience resettlement in large numbers, settling in various destinations worldwide. First-hand experience of war-related trauma and hardship experienced by Afghan parents has heavily affected their parenting styles, and little is known or researched about this phenomenon and transferring intergenerationally to their children. On the other hand, the prevalence of psychological disorders influenced by war-related trauma is researched intensively (Ghafoer, 2018).

Intergenerational conflict

Intergenerational conflicts are experienced by many migrants and refugee families living in foreign countries. Intergenerational conflicts are partly caused by the changes in family dynamics when families migrate or find refuge in a foreign country and experience strain, tension, and social, cultural, and economic antagonism between the younger and older generations (Daniel et al., 2020). A common dilemma experienced by young refugees and parents is having access to a 'Western' educational system that focuses on individual autonomy, values, and competition. The change in the system and 'Western' practices is often not fully understood by their parents, who find it challenging to connect with the social networks in the host society and are attached to their spiritual and cultural beliefs. Daniel et al. (2020) found that Afghan mothers experienced the education system entirely differently, including the style of teaching and student/teacher relationships, and as such, found themselves confused. Moreover, parents found themselves in a precarious position as their children had learned the host country's language, regulations and laws and found it challenging to adapt to the children's demands in an individualistic context.

The parents experience feelings of becoming disempowered with notions of individualistic autonomy, often empowering the youth. These changes are not easy for refugee parents to accept and find themselves in conflict with the parental control strategies for their children. Children and youth not obliged to these expectations can result in delinquency and rebellion against their

parents. Parents of refugee children find it difficult and feel disconnected in the host country from their children as the younger generation quickly familiarises themselves with the new environment and adapts instantly (Oppedal, 2008).

Within the Aotearoa New Zealand context, refugee youth have become more involved and accepting of the Kiwi lifestyle and culture than their parents (Sobrun-Maharaj et al., 2009). One study showed that 70% of the youth experienced intergenerational conflict with their parents for issues such as differing views and expectations between the parents and youth about life in Aotearoa New Zealand (Sobrun-Maharaj et al., 2009). Western adolescents form their own identity independently, and Arab adolescents are typically bound and obliged to follow traditional and cultural values and have a significant role in the family group (Joudi, 2002). Refugee parents reported elevated feelings of losing control over their children with youth becoming disinterested in performing traditional cultural expectations, resulting in conflict with the parents (Pahud, 2008). There were diverse and conflicting views on issues such as arranged marriages, parental violence towards children and intimate partner violence differing from the cultural norm (Kate et al., 2018). As a result, the younger Afghans tend to focus more on the host country's language, generally English. A failure to produce a cultural domain for the children to learn their native and cultural heritage has often resulted in conflict between the parent and youth (Sadat, 2008). Which has sometimes resulted in involvement of Oranga Tamariki [1](Kate et al., 2018). Involvement with state agencies and experiences of intergenerational conflict can sometimes result in youth isolating and distancing themselves and risking their family roles (Joudi, 2002). The youth can find themselves in a precarious position with their development of identities, living in two different worlds.

Self-Identity

Resettlement presents multiple stresses that can impact an individual's well-being, including the loss of religious customs, cultural norms, social support systems and, readjusting to a new way of life and culture, and adjusting to the changes in self-identity. In culturally diverse Westernised societies receiving refugees and immigrants, youth are more likely to be exposed to prejudice and discrimination (Bhugra & Becker, 2005). Refugee youth can find themselves in a

[1] Oranga Tamariki – Ministry for Children

precarious position defining a meaning to their ethnicity and integrating into the host culture (national identity) and culture of origin (ethnic identity) (Mastrotheodoros et al., 2021).

Self-identity amongst refugee youth requires further unpacking their experiences when resettling in foreign countries and challenges related to their identity formulation. Young Afghan men feel constrained in their ability to share resettlement issues, fearing experiencing discrimination and prejudice. According to Khanlou et al. (2008), Afghan females and males tended to keep their Afghan identity private, fearing exposure to their identity would bring discrimination due to common misrepresentations of their culture. Furthermore, it is feared that common perceptions of Muslims, resulting from oft-repeated, harmful media tropes, might fuel prejudice around their religious identity (Khanlou et al., 2008).

Religious identity played a significant role in the lack of job opportunities, and employers appointed those who could not be easily identifiable as Muslims (Hopkins, 2004). Loss of professional identity and social group for refugees and immigrants can adversely affect the standard of living. Moreover, it can also create a decline in personal autonomy and self-respect, leading to greater possibilities for mental health issues such as depression, anxiety, and the transmission of inter-generational trauma (Bhugra & Becker, 2005). Those who can be visibly identified as Muslims through their attire, skin colour and having a beard are more prone to limited opportunities for employment and face greater marginalisation and racism than those Muslims who are not visibly identifiable. It was found that Australian Muslim-Afghan's often suppressed their identities and found it difficult to express their refugee identity (Rezaei et al., 2021). They saw themselves being labelled and recognised by the people of Australia as "boat people", thus finding it challenging and uncomfortable to reveal their Afghan identities outside the Afghan communities. As such, younger Afghan Australians opted not to address their refugee status and identities (Abraham & Busbridge, 2014).

Religion and faith play an essential role in reconstructing identities amongst Muslims when resettling in a new environment. It is vital to understand the connotations of the "refugee" identity and how they manage this label that is often perpetuated as an outsider and different status amongst the youth (Pahud, 2008). Some younger refugees can begin questioning their identity; their professional accolades and achievements in their home countries are often not valued in the host country, and they lose social status (Gurer, 2019).

Afghans of generation Y or Z who resettled from Afghanistan during their youth and those born in the host countries are privileged with education and wealth and are socially well-adapted. However, most of these youth cannot write or read in the Afghan languages, find it challenging to communicate with their parents, and often speak a mixture of the native and host country's language (Khanlou et al., 2008). For the youth, growing up in a foreign country and speaking their native language with the host country's accent presents challenges in communication with family in Afghanistan and experience feelings of guilt and shame for not speaking fluently (Sadat, 2008). As such, it can be said that religion and language are critical components of an Afghan's cultural identity.

Sadat (2008) explains that Afghans find it challenging to be considered foreigners or feel like they have a hyphenated identity, meaning identities that are at once separated but also joined by the present and historical sociopolitical climate, biography, geography, loss, and longings. Sirin and Fine (2007) discussed the challenges of hyphenated identity experienced by Muslim male youth in America. In their study, 84.3 per cent of the survey of youth participants indicated they experienced discrimination because of their ethnicity and religion in the past year in different settings such as school and public spaces. Young Muslim men in the study demonstrated that they had been seared in half being American and Muslim, living with the representation of being called a “terrorist” and actively resisting self from this image (Sirin & Fine, 2007). These young men can be seen carrying the baggage of global conflict with them.

Intergenerational Trauma

As well as trying to make sense of themselves through managing multiple identities, children of refugees are often grappling with their parents’ trauma. Extensive literature has been conducted on the intergenerational transmission of trauma among specific populations and geographical regions. The trauma of a traumatic historical event can be passed on or shared with the younger generation through the experiences of an individual or family. Exposure to extreme adverse events experienced by individuals can significantly impact their children, who can then find themselves in a precarious position of grappling with their parent’s traumatic states. The impact of intergenerational transmission of trauma can have adverse effects, such as defensive behaviours, emotional distancing, and expression of emotions (Yehuda & Lehrner, 2018). Gangi et al. (2009) provided insight into the transmission of trauma amongst Holocaust survivors

imagined through the lens of their children. The consequences of this transmitted trauma included difficulties with low self-esteem, interpersonal relationships, and negative identity. These difficulties, in part, are thought to arise from the failure of the survivor parent to communicate their experiences, which is often driven by the idea of protecting the children. Higher anxiety levels are experienced by the second generation, which is likely because of their parent's own experiences of the Holocaust (Shoah), which in turn has left survivors with anxiety (Gangi et al., 2009).

First-hand experiences of trauma by Afghan parents and families and the intergenerational transmission of trauma continues to be an area of sparse research. Some Afghan parents have openly disclosed their experiences of trauma to their children. In saying this, however, little is known about these trauma stories' impact on these Afghan children and their well-being (Rogers, 2021). Limited research exists relating to the first-hand trauma experienced by Afghan parents during the regime of the Taliban and war and the impact these experiences have had on their offspring. Parents of the Holocaust and Afghan refugees share similar protective factors, such as avoiding sharing experiences of humiliation or pain with their children. Two studies have examined intergenerational trauma issues with second-generation Afghan refugees (Niazi 2019; Rogers 2021). Both studies indicate that young men experienced ongoing stress and tension because of their parent's trauma, which contributed to the disconnection they experienced with their parents. Poor parental modelling, empathetic understanding, and the pressure of compensating for parents' loss and trauma were common themes in both studies.

Niazi (2019) demonstrates in his study that in second-generation Afghan refugee males, the first-hand trauma experienced by the parents had subconsciously transferred to the offspring, resulting in a sense of disconnection from their parents. The disconnection experienced with their parents is mainly because of their parents' traumas about their past, which often resulted in emotional pain and a lack of parental empathetic understanding. They often had to compromise for their parent's loss, trauma, and way of being. Roger (2021) further reported that Afghan Male Canadian youth reported higher levels of aggressiveness, anger and toxic masculinity perceived by the manifestation of trauma. However, these studies present limitations in explaining the complexities both positive and negative Afghan men experience in everyday life and the pressures of gender roles within their culture. In addition, there is limited knowledge of how Afghan men

cope with the challenges when resettling in a new country and the coping mechanisms and management of intergenerational trauma and ongoing conflict in Afghanistan have on their well-being. Age significantly determines the adaptability and rapidness of refugees resettling in a new environment.

Among all the age groups, the youth are quicker to adjust than the elders, despite the challenges and hardships experienced by different ages of refugee communities. Afghans are resilient people who employ strategies in their settlement efforts in their host nation. Refugees are very determined people who possess optimism, perseverance, and adaptability to cope and survive in the host nation (Hutchinson & Dorsett, 2012). There is a lack of research about protective factors, such as employment and education, for Afghan men experiencing challenges.

Protective Factors: Employment

Employment plays a significant role for many young men from refugee backgrounds as their role as a man in the family and for their masculine identities, which stem from cultural identity. Pahud (2008) indicated that men from refugee backgrounds experienced stress and humiliation for involuntarily being dependent on the welfare system during unemployment periods in Aotearoa New Zealand. More extended periods of unemployment impact refugee men's well-being, and they feel powerless, trapped, and unable to live comfortably, given that their obligation to fulfil their families' needs are unmet (Rafferty et al., 2019).

The man has a responsibility to ensure financial assistance is provided for the immediate and their wider family and experiences pressure and expectation from members of the family living in the country of origin, such as Afghanistan. Employment provides access for refugees to seek knowledge and skills to live independent lives in their host country. Employment is a protective factor for many Afghan men as it enables them to provide for their families and fulfil their cultural duties as men (Kale, 2017). Access to meaningful employment provided autonomy over their lives and social status by enabling refugee men to learn, observe, and mix with others from Aotearoa New Zealand (Pahud, 2008). Another closely connected protective factor for many refugees is seeking education.

Education

Education has been a protective factor amongst many refugees' children, youth and young adults resettling in foreign countries. Decades of war in Afghanistan and harsh Taliban regimes created a vulnerable education system. Education amongst refugee children and youth has provided aid from the restriction of forced recruitment by armed groups, sexual exploitation, child labour and marriage. Moreover, education has provided an opportunity to rebuild their communities and lives and to learn about the world and themselves (UNHCR, 2022). Many refugee youths living in Western society pursue higher education opportunities. Higher education is seen as an aspiration for refugee youth to enter a new space and a sign of success and upward mobility (Rahman, 2018).

Summary

This project will identify the complexities of the lives of young Afghan men and their experiences in Aotearoa. Their complex negotiations of identities span between Aotearoa New Zealand and Afghanistan, focusing on the past and present for themselves and their families. There is extensive literature on the experiences of Afghan women and the challenges presented by living in foreign countries after resettlement (Myrttinen, 2018). However, there continues to be limited research on Afghan men's experiences, vulnerabilities and needs and the expectation of masculinity employed on them (Myrttinen, 2018). Little information is known about young Afghan men living in Aotearoa New Zealand and their employment experience during the resettlement and post-settlement period. Moreover, knowledge about the experiences of Afghan men resettling as children or born in Aotearoa New Zealand is scarce for those resettling in their youth and young adult years. Hence, this research project will explore young Afghan men's lived experience in Aotearoa New Zealand to provide insight that it is hoped will help facilitate further effective changes to policies and support for refugees and migrants in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Chapter 2: Methodology and Methods

For this research project, I focused on the experiences of young Afghan men living in Aotearoa New Zealand by employing a theoretical approach combining narrative inquiry, Islamic principles and frameworks and values of halaqah. The following subheadings discusses the process of data collection, such as participant recruitment, process, interview process, respect and reciprocity, reflexivity, ethical considerations, informed consent, harms and benefits, privacy and confidentiality and anonymity. Lastly, a biographical narrative analysis was employed to extract themes from the data for this research project.

Islamic Principles in Research

Extensive 'Western' methodologies have been applied when researching native and indigenous peoples and other migrant's communities of colour, particularly in the discipline of psychology. However, there continue to be limitations in the effectiveness and relevance of these approaches, and this has been the case with research relating to many Muslim communities across the world. Stonebanks (2014) draws from his research on the motives of non-indigenous researchers, applying Eurocentric methodologies, and questions the continued implication of the orientalist perspective; in essence, there is a need for the researcher to constantly question their approach to ensure that they are developing counter-narratives, support religious people that have been dehumanised. In this context, Stonebanks (2014) considers ethical perspectives around the Muslim lived experience and considers how Islamic beliefs are being upheld in research and not neglected.

Those who are 'othered' in the 'West', such as indigenous communities and ethnic and religious minorities, often do not receive the same respect in a variety of areas as majority population groups in the 'West'. Likewise, many Muslim nations worldwide have fallen into a similar plight, having been subject to European colonisation, resulting in coercion to adopt Western/Eurocentric ways of life as the norm (Hussien, 2007). Importantly, inclusion of tailored and effective interventions to be implemented in refugee research and moving from the conventional one size fits all approach as it may not address the complexities and needs of the diversity within the refugee population (Im et al., 2023). Proponents of the Islamisation of

Knowledge (IOK) argued that the commonness of Western secular education amongst postcolonial Muslim nations is the cause of the decline in intellectual thought and poor educational achievement in the Muslim world (Malkawi, 2015).

Malaysian philosopher Naquib al-Attas, in the late 1970s, introduced the concept of IOK, focusing on the relation between secularism and Islam. IOK refers to positioning knowledge of Islamic sciences amongst contemporary knowledge. For Muslim researchers working with Muslim participants, centralising the values of Islam is essential in research. Islam requires that studies relating to human societies apply an approach from a human perspective, not scientific, where Islamic ethics seek to understand the truth. In the 'Western' world, Islam is presented as a monolith and neglects the rich diversity of the Islamic civilisation and Islam as a religion (Stonebanks, 2014). For Muslim researchers, it is essential to strive to seek a truth that is underpinned by Islamic ethics and to consciously be aware that as a seeker of knowledge, they are fallible to their understanding (Ahmed, 2013).

The colonial methods of theory and knowledge have been utilised to disregard, mine, control, categorise and devalue the knowledge production of the colonised. Linda Tuhiwai Smith, a Māori scholar, reinforces that decolonising these ways of knowing must incorporate accountability, care, compassion, and privileged voices of the marginalized (Smith, 2015). Applying these ideas across to the Islamic context, this means including Muslims in applying and producing psychological knowledge for Islamic research. This is knowledge production designed to bring humanity to people and religions that have been previously dehumanised. Researchers need to question whether the research acknowledges the context of Muslim experiences and whether it respects the beliefs relating to Islam. As for Muslim researchers, it is essential to address Muslim ways of knowing that are connected and guided by Islam, as they cannot be understood apart from contextual perspectives, historical analysis, and diversity. Moreover, incorporating Islamic worldviews as a researcher is essential to reconstructing a critical pedagogy because Islamic education provides a separate and different worldview from Western critical pedagogy (Hussien, 2008).

This research draws on halaqah as an Islamic research methodology. When working with Muslim men (who are refugees or asylum seekers), which can further provide an opportunity for the men to be in a mutual space, share experiences, and discuss the significance of spirituality and

its effect on their well-being and recovery. Applying halaqah as methodology means a conjoint appreciation of scientific methods and Islamic methodologies for Muslims (Ahmad, 2013).

The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ (Peace Be Upon Him) introduced the halaqah (circle) in Islam. These are learning circles led by a Naqib (mentor) who is responsible for sharing education and knowledge with the members of the circle. Halaqah was performed by Prophet Muhammad ﷺ as a spiritual circle, referring to sitting on the floor in a circle for an oral discussion consisting of students and a teacher. Prophet Muhammad ﷺ shared life histories and stories in halaqah through his tarbiyah (education) of early Muslims. Halaqah can be performed in various community settings such as mosques, under trees, homes, intellectual and literary salons, and educational institutions.

Halaqah was an integral core practice amongst Muslims and continues to be used in traditional Islamic education (Ahmed, 2021). Halaqah has been an integral part of Islamic education and is a significantly important practice in Muslim cultures. There are no limitations to the format of halaqah as it can be teacher-led or student/dialogic but can also be a collaborative group effort. Halaqah empowers individuals and communities through a social justice agenda, transforming personalities and developing the Islamic intellectual heritage of art, sciences, and mysticism (Ahmad, 2013).

The content or curriculum is open, but the modelling is an Islamic worldview that traces references to the Sunnah (sayings of the Prophet) and the Qur'an in discussions through interviews. Ahmad (2013) further states that halaqah as a research method informs the spiritual, sacred, and transformative nature of Muslims' values and knowledge, cultural aspirations, beliefs, and collective autonomy. Ahmad (2013) demonstrated in her study the effectiveness of halaqah as a research method enabling participants to share their experiences and conceptualisation of themselves. Through mainstream/Western research methods and within the context of global Islamophobia and the discrimination and othering of Muslim communities, Muslim participants often do not receive an opportunity to openly express their personal views from their standpoint on how they view the world as a Muslim.

The knowledge produced by the participants in halaqah draws them closer to Allah as they have co-jointly produced insight and knowledge through self-development as individuals and groups to achieve their aims for their community. Halaqah promotes the importance of beliefs and

cultural aspirations concerning Muslims' understanding of their education goals (Ahmad, 2013). Communities within psychology continue to increase literacy by becoming diverse. The inclusivity of Muslim writing and thought in mainstream psychology are indicators of diversity but tend to be an exception rather than the norm. Seedat (2021) proposes that Islamic Psychology (IP) should be in the sub-discipline of the psychology of religion and employ methodologies that can enable the understanding of the cultural dynamics of those from Islamic cultural backgrounds. Muslim researchers have a long journey ahead in implementing the Islamic approach in modern research contexts. However, halaqah as a research method can enable further conversations and implementation of Islamic research values embedded within and has raised many propositions for further research and enquiry for researchers to get an inside view of the Muslim's way of life and culture. This research draws on the basic premise of halaqah as a guide, while also stepping away from the traditional form of halaqah performed in a group circle, as the current participant interviews were carried out one-on-one. Drawing on principles of halaqah facilitated a platform for participants to engage in research conversations, enabling of sharing of their experiences and views were attentively heard as this aligns core tenets of halaqah.

While I will not employ halaqah as a method for this project, I will draw on the fundamental values underpinning halaqah. These values include participants' cultural aspirations, beliefs, and collective and personal autonomy (Ahmad, 2018; Islam, 2014). A study by Islam (2014) in Malaysia demonstrated the significance of halaqah as a research method. Halaqah resulted in the student's self-development and religious expertise. The students were inspired by the depths of the course not only to attend because it was a compulsory component for graduating but also because it enabled them to acquire religious knowledge amongst their peers and apply their learning in their day-to-day life practice.

These values will contribute to this project by enabling participants to draw on their experiences and connections with God and their spirituality to be discussed and how they influence attitudes, interactions, perceptions, and behaviours. This allows for the expression of perspectives from the spiritual, sacred, and transformative nature of ilm (knowledge) and valuing the culture and beliefs of Muslims in research. Centralising such Islamic values in this research allows me to respect participants' relationships with God and the fact that spirituality is an integral part of their lives and experiences (Ahmed, 2013). The young Muslim men in this project were encouraged to

share their personal narratives, their own values, and views, professional and personal. Storytelling and narrative work collaboratively with halaqah as a research method, and therefore Narrative Inquiry was also an approach that guided the methodological framework of this study.

Narrative Inquiry

Narrative Inquiry is concerned with understanding how people organise their experiences through a sequence of events. Sharing stories about experiences allows us to create meanings of the different events (Slone & Shoshani, 2017). Narrative inquiry attempts to gain an understanding of the function, structure, content, and meanings of people's stories (Murray, 2003). In its classic formulation, narrative inquiry is organised by acknowledging three accounts: a beginning, a middle, and an end. Moreover, narrative inquiry enables a co-joint process between the interviewer and interviewee to actively shape the formation of the interviews and break down the power dynamics between the researcher and participants and work collaboratively (Andrews et al., 2013).

The stories of people are not just an invention of themselves but reflect broader narratives influenced by social, historical, political, and cultural factors (Wong & Breheny, 2018). These influences are pivotal in people's personal stories underpinned by dominant structures informing these narratives. Therefore, stories provide insight into how previously formed identities and consciousness of unspoken rules are based on a broader narrative of people and social life (Crossley, 2008). A narrative approach aims to unveil these hidden rules and narratives of stories of individuals affected by which, how and why these stories are shared. By this, we can further investigate how people construct their identity and provide exposure to the forces influencing these structures forming their world (Murray, 2003).

Halaqah and narrative research share similar underpinnings aiming to explore people's experiences of the phenomenon being studied. Halaqah enabled participants in my research project to express themselves and their narratives. The Afghan participants in this research project identified themselves as Muslims. For many Muslims, life is shaped by their spiritual connection. I needed to ensure as a researcher that the participants felt respected and had the opportunity to connect with their spirituality in their narratives.

Narrative and experiences of young Afghan Men

Narrative inquiry enabled me as a researcher to view different layers of meaning and bring them together through participant dialogue to understand more about their experiences. The narrative provides an insight into a person's life experiences on a deeper level but also carries traces of human lives that we want to understand. I explored the experiences of young Afghan men, such as events and memories, as a story by each participant. My own story and experiences played a pivotal role in not only the recruitment of participants but also the comfort and relatability that the participants experienced during the interview process of knowing my own lived experiences and speaking to them through their lived experiences. This approach was vital for me as a researcher and a young Afghan man because of the historical context, culture, and spirituality I shared with my participants. The values of halaqah allowed us to legitimise the sharing and co-creation of knowledge in the research project. The narrative approach helped participants share their stories and allowed me, as a researcher, to engage with them in a shared meaning-making process in the research.

Narrative inquiry begins with the researcher focusing on their own stories as it is an ongoing reflexive methodology, and I continually reflected on my own experiences during the process (Andrews et al., 2013). The narrative approach further allowed me to organise participant narratives and experiences into a timeline comprising a beginning, middle and end. I enquired about their experiences in Afghanistan through to the time of resettlement and for those born in Aotearoa New Zealand from being children, youth, and adulthood. I was able to document and gain an understanding of each of their life stories, comprised of their experiences, events, or people from the past and present.

Participant Recruitment

The research project utilised flyers to share information about the research project. I began recruiting participants from the 15th of May 2022 until the 29th of August 2022. I posted on various Facebook pages such as Muslim of Auckland, Refugees as Survivors New Zealand, Afghans in New Zealand, Afghans Association of New Zealand, and Massey University Muslim Students' Association. The moderators of these Facebook pages received information about the research project and confirmed the posts. In the initial stages, I contacted the local mosque and shared the

recruitment flyer and digital version to be shared further amongst their networks. I also shared the recruitment flyer and information sheet amongst my Facebook, WhatsApp, and Instagram networks.

The current study recruited participants through purposive sampling. Purposive sampling in qualitative research is commonly employed and focuses on exploring the identification and experiences of a particular group or people (Hoeber et al., 2017). The chosen research question determines the sampling method (Setia, 2016). The research question of this project focused on the experiences of young Afghan men in New Zealand; therefore, participants needed to meet the inclusion criteria. The inclusion criteria specifically outlined that participants are between 18 and 35, both parents from Afghanistan, resided in New Zealand for five or more years, attended secondary and tertiary education and are proficient in speaking English.

Process

The participants who met the inclusion criteria and shown interest in this study contacted me for further information about the study and received information sheet via email outlining the details of the study. Moreover, they received information about the interview structure and expectations of the research engagement. Participants received information about the interview structure before the commencement of the interviews. The information sheet was reiterated to the participants before the interviews, explaining confidentiality, limits of confidentiality, and audio recording. Participants who did not meet the criteria who contacted me, received acknowledgement and an explanation for exclusion and were kindly and respectfully declined. For instance, I received interest from Afghans who had recently arrived from Afghanistan less than five years ago. I kindly declined via phone, as their experiences would not have met the aims of this project due to their potential first-hand experiences of trauma and their shorter time living in Aotearoa New Zealand. On the other hand, this project aimed to explore the everyday lives of young Afghan men in Aotearoa New Zealand, extending beyond settlement experiences. I offered the findings of the study once completed to those who expressed involvement in the project.

Participants were from migrant, refugee, and asylum-seeking backgrounds. I focused primarily on young Afghan men who lived in Aotearoa New Zealand for five or more years to ensure that recent evacuees from Afghanistan are kept safe and to prevent any risk of exposure to

first-hand trauma. All the participants lived in Aotearoa. I opted not to disclose the cities where the participants resided to keep the participants safe, given that the Afghan community is small in Aotearoa New Zealand, to prevent any risk of identification. Four participants were born in Afghanistan, and two were born in Aotearoa New Zealand. To further protect their privacy, I chose not to disclose the number of siblings of the participants.

Roland is a Tajik Afghan between the ages of 25 and 35, born in Afghanistan and has lived in Aotearoa New Zealand for between 20 and 30 years. Roland grew up speaking Urdu and Dari in Pakistan before resettling in Aotearoa New Zealand. Roland has completed a bachelor's degree and is employed full-time. Roland lives in a household with his family (wife and children), as well as his siblings and parents. Roland has visited Afghanistan repeatedly.

Zaaro is a Tajik Afghan between the age of 25 and 35, born in Afghanistan and has lived in Aotearoa New Zealand for between 20-30 years Zaaro, growing up, spoke Urdu and Dari in Pakistan before resettling to Aotearoa New Zealand. Roland has previously visited Afghanistan in numerous occasions. Zaaro is a parent of one and lives with his wife, parents, and siblings. Zaaro has completed a bachelor's degree and is employed full-time.

Ali is a Hazara Afghan between the ages of 25 and 35, born in Afghanistan and has lived in Aotearoa New Zealand for between 5-10 years. Ali grew up speaking Urdu and Hazargi (a dialect of Dari) and lived in Pakistan and Afghanistan before resettling to Aotearoa New Zealand. Ali is a student completing a bachelor's degree. Ali is a parent and lives with his wife and child.

Asif is a Tajik Afghan between the ages of 25 and 35, born in Afghanistan and has lived in Aotearoa New Zealand for between 20-30 years. Asif grew up speaking Dari and lived in Afghanistan before resettling in Aotearoa New Zealand. Asif lives with his parents and siblings. Asif has completed a bachelor's degree and is employed full-time.

Aziz is a Tajik Afghan between the ages of 20 and 25, born in Aotearoa New Zealand and grew up speaking in Dari and English. Aziz lives with his parents and siblings. Aziz has completed a bachelor's degree and is employed full-time. Aziz has previously visited Afghanistan.

Baseer is a Pashtun Afghan between the ages of 25 and 30, born in Aotearoa New Zealand and grew up speaking Pashto. Baseer lives with his parents and siblings. Baseer has completed a bachelor's degree and is employed full-time.

The selected participants for the research project each received a demographic questionnaire to complete and return before the interviews. The questionnaire provided background information about the participant's employment status, time spent in Aotearoa New Zealand, education, language, and family structure. I emailed those who met the inclusion criteria, inviting them to an interview via Zoom or in person based on their preference. Four participants opted for Zoom interviews, whereas the remaining two preferred in-person interviews conducted in a local coffee shop. I offered all the participants a time and date suitable for them.

Participants received a calendar invitation via email and text for the interview date. Participants scanned their signed informed consent form and demographic questionnaire and returned it via email before the commencement of the interviews. For those who opted to be interviewed in person, I offered to interview in a quiet local coffee shop where they felt relaxed and comfortable. I offered to buy food and coffee as it is a big part of the Afghan culture to demonstrate hospitality. This gesture was implemented not by me as a researcher but by me as an Afghan. We Afghans take great pride in hosting others through food and tea. The Afghan way to show our gratitude is by offering food. The young Afghan men interviewed were treated like my own guests rather than participants. This gesture also reduced any tension of being interviewed and we also talked about life and other topics not directly related to the interview. This was also a key part of building trust and rapport with participants.

Upon completion of the interview, once I had thoroughly checked the accuracy of the full transcripts, they were shared with the participants, and they had 14 days to make any changes. Participants were notified that involvement in the study was voluntary and that they could withdraw at any stage of the interview and within 14 days. However, all six participants demonstrated interest and were permitted to be fully involved in the research project. During the 14 days, participants examined the transcripts, opted to make changes where necessary, and removed information that they were not comfortable with.

Interview Process

I carried out open-ended interviews. In doing so, I moved away from the traditional format of interviews and instead created a platform for mutual conversation of interest between the young Afghan men and me. This was most appropriate for this research project because the participants and I both co-created knowledge and shared experiences. For this reason, I titled my interviews research conversations. The significance of this method of interviewing was that it allowed the participants to feel comfortable but also created a balance and flexibility to ask me about my experiences. Both of us were involved in the meaning-making process. This form of interviewing minimised the power imbalance between the researcher and participants in the traditional form.

In particular, the stories they shared contained sensitive information about their unique experiences, and the standard form of interviewing would not have done justice to the participants. Moreover, I would have experienced considerable difficulties with the interviews by applying a stimulus-response model, particularly for some participants sharing stories they had never shared before (Andrews et al., 2013). Therefore, pre-prepared questions followed by answers were unsuitable for this research project; instead, I gave agency to the participants to share their narratives according to their preferences. Because I became aware of the imbalance between myself as a researcher and the participants sharing sensitive information about their experiences, I followed up with questions when necessary. However, I focused more on listening and giving them breadth and depth to share their stories fluidly with little to no disruption. This interviewing format allowed participants to share their experiences in their entirety, and each conversation differed in time of completion.

Each participant completed the interview once, which took approximately 60-120 minutes and ensured sufficient time was provided to build culturally appropriate rapport with my participants. The interviews were audio recorded using the Otter application for transcription, and participants consented. I utilised my phone to audio record using the Otter application and notified all participants before the commencement of the conversations. For in-person conversations, I placed my mobile phone between myself and the interviewee, facing the phone down on the table to avoid distraction in the cafe. Moreover, I positioned my phone next to my computer's speakers to capture the audio for the Zoom conversations. The audio recording enabled me as a researcher to engage with my participants freely and be involved thoroughly. Audio recording also ensures

more accuracy and safety when downloading files to a computer (McMullin, 2021). Otter recorded and transcribed the conversations on the go. I only had one recording to complete both tasks in one setting. I transferred the audio transcription notes to my computer and proofread with the audio to ensure the accuracy of the conversation.

Respect and Reciprocity

Afghan people are very honourable and respectable individuals. Reimbursing their contribution with money can be unsettling and offensive. I wanted to ensure that the values of halaqah and Afghan culture are implemented throughout the research project. I ensured that all participants felt respected and acknowledged for their time, effort, and contribution to the project. A $50 Westfield gift card was deemed appropriate and offered to each participant upon completion of the interviews. I communicated to all my participants that the gift cards were tokens of appreciation gifted by the University. This was initiated to ensure the participants did not perceive their involvement in the research project as motivated by compensation. I respected their wishes in terms of how this reimbursement should be used. For example, one of the six participants refused to accept it and opted to give it to a local charity or a person in need. I happily completed this action for the participant. Five of the six participants accepted the voucher. I offered the Westfield gift card and a thank you card for the in-person interviews after completion. For the Zoom interview participants, I mailed the gift card in an envelope to their address with a thank you card.

Reflexivity

Reflexivity identifies the role of the researcher as being active in the co-construction of knowledge. Reflexivity enables researchers to investigate themselves in the process of their positionality and recognition of personal characteristics that may influence the direction of the research. Reflexivity focuses on the researcher's influence, contribution and shaping of inter-subjective research by constant assessment, awareness, and reassessment (Patnaik, 2013). Moreover, reflexive procedures enable researchers to engage in a conscientious and critical evaluation of themselves concerning the groups and individual participants. This process assists

the researcher in engaging in an ethical relationship alongside increasing the quality of social research (Goldstein, 2017).

This research project intends to apply reflexivity as a tool for narrative inquiry as it provides a richer understanding and meaning to the phenomenon being studied and identifies the different lenses utilised to arrive at specific interpretations. This is also a key feature of halaqah because it enables sharing experiences and co-creating knowledge, equalising power dynamics. My positionality in this research is shaped by my gender, ethnicity, being a refugee, professional experiences, and time spent in Aotearoa. I pivoted between outsider and insider positioning throughout this research project. The insider and outsider knowledge embedded within the social difference between the participant and researcher influences the research formation, knowledge gained and methodology (Finefter-Rosenbluh, 2017).

My insider positioning enabled the building of rapport with the participants of my research project. Locating myself within this research project, I am aware of my cultural connection of being an Afghan man and a refugee with parents who are both Afghan. This enabled me to build a connection. In the recruitment process, they felt more comfortable, open, and honest with their responses and acknowledged, demonstrated by the narratives they shared. Pe-Pua (2006) further discussed the categories of "one of us" and the "outsider" and the role they play in the interaction and relationship between the researcher and participants, which determines the interaction one engenders. I applied the principles discussed by Pe-Pua (2006) where applicable to ensure people in the research are valued and respected, for example, by providing the opportunity to ask questions throughout the interviews and are not obliged to answer every question and allowing participants to ask questions from the researcher and giving them autonomy and positioning of researcher experience. Moreover, I ensured they felt part of the research process and a vital component of this project.

Throughout the research conversations, I emphasised on the participants involvement and that they should feel proud of being involved. I could do this by commending them and sharing my gratitude as a fellow Afghan Muslim. Pakikiramdam is a concept used in the indigenous psychology of Filipinos referring to cues that allow researchers to know the sensitivity of the questions they are asking and to determine the timing of asking for sensitive information as Filipinos often use non-verbal and indirect manners of communication (Pe-Pua, 2006). This

concept is very similar to the Afghan culture; tones, pauses, and gestures determine the participants' comfort and relaxedness during the interviews. Therefore, these were some of the key issues I considered during this research conversation.

For some participants, it was an opportunity to be open to sharing sensitive information about their experiences and utilise the research project as a platform. I ensured they felt acknowledged throughout the interviews when discussing their narratives. I actively engaged in listening to their perspectives. I actively reassured them that I invested my interest solely in their experiences and provided them with an opportunity to share and produce knowledge that can benefit future migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers and policies to support the Afghans and others. My refugee background significantly influenced my positioning as an 'insider' researcher. There was a balance in power because I shared similar experiences and stories of restarting life in the host nation of Aotearoa New Zealand.

Hodgetts et al. (2021) reinforce the notion that relational ethics requires a process of engagement. People of similar backgrounds share whanaungatanga (kinship) and move away from the traditional role in research as researchers and participant by becoming more familiar and comfortable with each other. Embracing relational ethics ensures that as researchers, we are more involved and act from our minds and hearts, acknowledging the similarities rather than differences and the interpersonal bonds we create in producing knowledge (Hodgetts et al., 2021). Therefore, these values of relational ethics were also crucial to how I engaged with the Afghan men. Moreover, acknowledging that my time spent in Aotearoa New Zealand of over 16 years, a university graduate, heterosexual, cis-gendered and in my late 20s. I want to be considerate of my privileges and be aware of the different immigration statuses and educational backgrounds.

My insider knowledge of the language enabled participants to share some phrases and stories in their native languages of Dari and Pashto. My background, upbringing, and relationship with the community validated me to receive a greater understanding of my participants' worldviews and narratives. Furthermore, my knowledge of global politics and current affairs in Afghanistan and resettlement crisis experiences through my professional experience working closely with Afghan refugees in Aotearoa New Zealand for five years contributed significantly to this research context and relationship. My exposure to the community and learning enabled me to grasp the experiences of these young Afghan men more readily, and I was actively being sensitive

in my communication with them. I was comfortable and confident with the interviews. I managed the sensitive information addressed by the participants and ensured the participants felt comfortable. The insider perspective has the advantages of enabling access, greater understanding of the participants, and building trust.

I was an outsider because I did not experience similar challenges and difficulties the young Afghan men experienced in this research project. I had to move between outsider and insider throughout the process because not all participants came from refugee backgrounds. They had various experiences because of the different ethnic backgrounds they came from in Afghanistan. I was an outsider because some participants were born and raised in Aotearoa New Zealand at a very young age and experienced various hardships. Acknowledging the insider and outsider dynamic is very important as it balances the expected bias that may come with being an insider and stabilises the outsider's assumed "objectivity". Moreover, the outsider positioning as a researcher allowed me to ensure that I am not taking my insider positioning for granted about certain aspects of the research. I also ensured I followed up with my supervisors and cultural advisor about the emerging bias as this research is meaningful to me, and I acknowledge the participants ethically because they have encountered similar experiences (Pe-Pua, 2006).

I also worked alongside a cultural advisor throughout this project. The cultural advisor played a significant role in providing a cultural context for me to learn how to work alongside the participants and ensure their safety and comfort. Cultural advisors provide tools and share skills to work effectively and build meaningful relationships and trust with participants. I received ongoing feedback from my advisor to continuously reflect on potential harm and risk to the participants during recruitment and interviews and be ethically rational. Moreover, the advice from my cultural advisor assisted me in situations where I was an outsider and ensured I acknowledged the similarities and differences between myself and the participants.

Ethical considerations

In any research involving human participants, a researcher has the ethical and moral obligation to ensure participants receive full disclosure of the project, transparency, and prioritisation of the well-being and best interest of the participants throughout the process. This research was approved by the Massey University Human Ethics Northern Committee (MUHEC)

to conduct my research. The key areas were confidentiality, vulnerable populations, cultural diversity, cultural safety and minimising any risk of disempowerment of refugees. Before receiving approval from the (MUHEC), a full application was completed and submitted for review, which focused on several aspects requiring detailed information and explanation to ensure appropriateness and safe research.

Informed Consent

For this research project, all interview participants received an information sheet outlining the nature of the research and their involvement. Before beginning the interviews, I further discussed the information sheet and purpose of the research project with the participants to ensure they received further clarity and opportunity to ask questions. I asked for their permission to audio record their interviews using Otter. I obtained the consent forms before the interviews and provided them on the day of the interview for further clarity and questions. I sent the full transcripts to each participant who requested their transcripts in the consent forms to ensure they were satisfied with the information they shared to be used in the project and for future publications. Five of the six participants asked for their transcripts, which were provided to them. Participants were offered 14 days to review and edit their transcripts.

Harms and Benefits

To minimise any potential risk of harm in the interviews, I informed the participants about discussion topics at the beginning, which may touch on sensitive and vulnerable information. Pittaway et al. (2010) stated that ethical attention is required when researching refugees and other vulnerable groups regarding confidentiality, harm, trust, unequal power relations between the researcher and participant, and issues of consent. In addition to these issues, which were discussed in previous sections of this chapter, my concern, particularly for the young Afghan men in this research project, was the sharing of narratives that they may have never shared before. Therefore, I created an environment where they were comfortable and had space, time, and the option of refusing to answer interview questions. Ensuring I created a safe environment for them to be interviewed respectfully, with dignity and with care was a key focus of my research process.

Privacy and Confidentiality

This research involved participants from refugee, migrant, and asylum-seeker backgrounds, where research engagements had the potential to divulge sensitive personal experiences. It was imperative that the participants, throughout the interview process, were made aware of their rights and given the opportunity to ask questions about how the information provided would be used in the research project. The information collected from the interviews and other data and demographic questionnaires were secured in a password-protected computer and could only be accessible by the researcher.

Anonymity

To ensure the anonymity of participants for this research project and any future publications and thesis of the study, I provided pseudonyms for each participant against their real names. Every participant received the opportunity and autonomy to choose their own pseudonyms. All six participants chose their pseudonyms to ensure anonymity. Any other identifiable information in the interviews was removed from the transcripts to ensure confidentiality. I also utilised age bands to provide a rough estimate of the ages of the participants to ensure their identities are protected.

Data Analysis: Biographical Narrative Analysis

This biographical narrative analysis provides a framework for exploring the complexities people experience and how they account for it. This form of analysis enables the voices of people who are not usually heard to understand reality by taking a subjective stance. Other analysis methods do not always account for psycho-social, historical, and biographic aspects of people's lives to their full potential. Moreover, biographical narrative analysis informs the story and narratives of the past and future (Rosenthal, 2004). I was thoroughly involved in listening to the audio files of the participants' conversations to ensure that the transcripts produced by Otter were accurate. I read, coded, and analysed the transcripts. Most of the research conversations with participants occurred in English. However, when some phrases or words were expressed in Dari, they were transcribed and translated during the reading phase of the transcription. I am a fluent

Dari speaker and understand the phrases and words of expression. As such, I did not experience any challenges in translation. Nonetheless, I did have my cultural advisor available for me to consult with for any further clarification or unfamiliar terminologies that may have arisen in the conversations.

Once all the interview data have been transcribed and organised according to pseudonyms, I began to read the transcripts to familiarise myself with their contents and develop an eye for detailed reading and re-reading, refining, defining, and elaborating on my previous attempts at reading and gathering new findings. I manually coded the contents from each conversation, focusing on the timeline of events and their participant's biographies. I read each transcript and coded narratives alongside the reading. Once I completed each transcript coding, I began to draw on common narratives within the six transcripts relevant to my research questions and project.

I colour-coded and used Microsoft Word to examine the themes that emerged from my conversations with my participants. I achieved this by using tables against each participant's pseudonyms. I started integrating the two main themes into sub-themes by sharing their experiences in quotes, and the common themes were structured in this way. I began to write the analysis section; this process involved an inductive application accessed by the data. I ensured that my interpretation of each conversation was scrutinised, thoroughly checked, and edited to provide further clarity on each conversation's content, structure, and function. I collected excerpts from the themes that emerged in the research conversation to be utilised in the findings chapter. By employing a biographical narrative analysis and principles of halaqah, this research project identified three key themes. The first theme focuses on the complex relationship with parents. The second theme explore the challenges of balancing of two worlds: navigating the duality of existence for Afghan refugee males growing up in Aotearoa New Zealand. Lastly, traditions and transitions: Religio-cultural resilience and rites of passage as Afghan Refugee Males growing up in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Chapter 3: Complex relationships with parents

Your Lord has decreed that you worship none but him, and be good to your parents. Whether one or both of them reach old age with you, do not say to them a word of annoyance and do not repel them, but rather speak to them a noble word - (17:23 QURAN).

Lower to them the wing of humility for them, out of mercy, and say, "My Lord, have mercy upon them as they brought me up [when I was] small"- (17:24 QURAN).

This chapter highlights the complexities the young Afghan men in this research project experienced in their relationships with their parents growing up in Aotearoa. I will apply a dual analysis to capture these relationships' nuances and the 'two sides to the story' characteristic. A dual analysis focuses on the participants interpretation of their own lives through narratives. Dual narratives can be shared by different people and can also be told by the same individuals in different time periods (Altman, 2008). This dual analysis will involve unpacking participant experiences and accounts from their own perspectives, alongside an understanding of external events experienced by their parents that shaped their parenting, particularly their father. The complex father-and-son relationship and masculinities involved are discussed. Moreover, my own experience of the relationship with my father growing up in Aotearoa is shared to provide another layer of perspective. The role of Afghan mothers and their responsibilities in raising the children to provide insight into the parenting received by these participants is also discussed. The implication of Afghan parents building safety nets by applying overprotective forms of parenting to nurture their children in the host nation of Aotearoa New Zealand is also examined. Multifaceted dynamics are highlighted in each subtheme of this chapter, justifying the lived experiences of these participants, and exploring them individually by using biographical narrative analysis.

Masculinities and Father-Son Relationships

Participants shared the challenges and turbulence they experienced in their relationships with their parents, specifically their fathers. Analysis revealed that two factors influence the father-son relationship. Firstly, masculinities, relating to the role of Afghan men within a family, and secondly, how parenting strategies and relationships travel intergenerationally. Afghan culture follows patriarchal codes of conduct, where men are often solely responsible for bearing the family's economic burden, and the father/husband supports and protects the entire family, even in contemporary times. Accordingly, adult sons must also contribute to the collective family finances to support the family. Moreover, the eldest male in the family unit (e.g., the father, husband, or oldest son) in most families has autonomy over most of the decisions and spending relating to the family. These roles and responsibilities are constructed by their religious teachings and cultural expectations. In contrast, children follow 'codes of conduct' by demonstrating reverence and obedience towards their family's elders (parents or older siblings), where disobedience towards the elders is viewed as disrespectful and frowned upon. As Baseer shared:

> *When I say parents, I am referring to my dad, but with the whole military background, they grew up in quite a strict household, like in a household where in that generation, they grew up in a household where even if the elders spoke, you would stay quiet unless spoken to. It was a very different….so we grew up in a very strict discipline kind of house.*

These codes of conduct and related expectations remain the same even when children become adults. The responsibilities increase for the eldest son in the family as they reach adulthood, where along with contributing to the finances, they are expected to look after the family and contribute to the decision-making alongside their father. As they reach adulthood, they can give back to their parents. Masculinity is a big part of the gender roles for elder Afghan men, and for those from military backgrounds, the experience played a big part in shaping their masculinity. In saying this, little is known about the parenting received by Afghan children of those with fathers from military backgrounds and specifically those living outside of Afghanistan. Afghan children growing up with fathers in the military received higher levels of strict parenting as I observed myself growing up with extended family members who were in the military and ranked high as

Generals/flag officers. Afghan fathers from military backgrounds are pressured to immediately find employment and provide for their families during resettlement due to cultural expectations around the role of fathers and husbands. However, acknowledging this, existing literature on the experiences of Afghan children with parents from military background is notably scarce. Absence of substantial research of having parents or military affiliated members impedes our ability to distinguish parenting style of those from military and non-military backgrounds and separate the influences of cultural expectations and military influence amongst these participants.

Deng and Marlowe (2013) carried out research with Sudanese men in Aotearoa New Zealand, which highlighted the complexities and difficulties in maintaining 'traditional' masculinities and gender roles when moving to a new country such as Aotearoa New Zealand. Refugees such as Afghan and Sudanese families arriving in Aotearoa New Zealand often must rely on funding support from the government as they resettle until they can find a job. This significantly affects Afghan men, directly disrupting or inhibiting their role as breadwinners and family protectors. This discrepancy, compounded by the label of being 'unemployed', can also thereby affect their well-being and pride. Furthermore, their masculinity often led them not to discuss their mental well-being and concerns that are closely attached to their role as the head/breadwinner of the family.

Refugee men face adversity and challenges related to their gender. Rafferty et al. (2019) study indicates that the class and status of refugee men are significantly affected, particularly for those with professional qualifications, jobs, and work experience. Many men experience inability to fulfil their traditional roles in their families which affects self-confidence and self-esteem. Their masculine role and relations were affected, as well as their protector and provider roles. Dependence on agencies and social welfare negatively impacted their well-being, and they often experience stigma associated with dependence on the welfare system. This further causes disruption and connection with their family as some men found themselves experiencing shame and guilt of being unable to provide for their family (Rafferty et al., 2019).

Pre-migratory factors such as trauma can also impact settlement in new countries (Affeck et al., 2018). The implications of not being able to adhere to the culturally prescribed duties of providing for the family, self-reliance and contributing to the community further resulted in a psychological and emotional state of depleted masculinity (Affeck et al., 2018). The consequences

of experiencing depleted masculinity and experiencing gender role conflict have been demonstrated to jeopardise their well-being and lack of self-esteem, deteriorating anxiety, and depression disorder. The trauma experienced by these men in their home countries, paired with the discrepancies in their gender and familial roles experienced on their arrival and settlement in Aotearoa, cumulates as a form of trauma itself. In the case of the present study, the participants' fathers inadvertently conveyed this trauma through their parenting. Therefore, these factors affect their sense of status and class and deplete their sense of masculinity. For instance, Baseer states that some families' expectations for their son and their achievements are seen as a sign of status and respect for the entire family. As Baseer explained:

> *In the Afghan household, it is a status thing like, "Oh, my son does this or my son does that". Nowadays, it's also my son and daughter do this. Back then, it wasn't… [the daughter as well]. It was more like my [son], you know… Because in Afghanistan the man was always the head of the household.*

The eldest male obtains the role of the head of the family and is expected to provide for their family and motivate their children to adhere to their faith-based values. Many Afghan fathers feel respected and proud of their children's success in completing their education and finding a respectable job. These achievements are highly desired and are symbols of status, as Baseer states. Therefore, for refugee communities, having their son succeed in the new country through education or their job can be seen as a way of restoring the family unit's status (that was lost through migration). However, for many Afghan parents, raising children in a new society away from their country of origin presents many challenges. Afghan parents come with their own set of expectations and life experiences settling into a new society. Their past life experiences considerably influence their parenting style, particularly for the fathers. Therefore, I will share my own experience of the complexities my father and I shared in our relationship as we resettled in Aotearoa. I start by providing a brief background about my father and his relationship with my grandfather. This can provide context to my father's thoughts and actions as a father to me and gain an understanding of the expectations of the father and son relationship shared between him and his father in Afghanistan.

My father was born and raised in Afghanistan, living in a collective family unit surrounded by his siblings, parents, and extended family members. My father was a highly educated individual in Afghanistan, a lawyer by profession and a very respectable member of society. My father often shares stories of his companionship with his father during their time in Afghanistan. He speaks highly of my grandfather, who was a role model for him, and they had a friend-like relationship. Although my relationship with my father is very positive, we grew up in two different generations, countries, and cultures. These factors played a key role in constructing my relationship with my father. I always believed that our upbringing and being raised in two different societies, alongside the impacts of acculturation, affected my relationship with my father. For example, my parents fled from Afghanistan during the civil war. This completely changed the lives of my parents, particularly my father. My father left behind his career, livelihood, family members and home to get his immediate family to safety in a neighbouring country of India before resettling in Aotearoa New Zealand as a refugee.

These changes significantly impacted my father, who found it challenging to process as he had to restart his life many times in both countries. My father entered a new society with experiences of first-hand trauma, famine, loss of family, displacement, and uncertainty in Afghanistan before moving to India and entering as a refugee in Aotearoa. These experiences influenced his parenting style, relationship, and communication with his offspring.

My siblings and I grew up knowing the hardship people of Afghanistan have faced from a young age through stories and warnings told by our parents and extended family members. Furthermore, we experienced growing up in two different countries and cultures; I was born in India and spent my teenage years and adulthood in Aotearoa New Zealand. I found it challenging to understand the restrictions and discipline I received, and it often clashed with the dominant Anglo-European culture of Aotearoa New Zealand. I started to learn about the history of Afghanistan and the challenges experienced by many Afghan parents living in the diaspora. I also gained an understanding of the parenting I received and the many sacrifices my parents made before and after resettlement. I now realise the tension I shared with my parents were closely related to their past experiences in Afghanistan and resettling in India and the various stages of resettlement, which had subconsciously affected their connection with us children. Therefore, I

want to shed light on the complexities experienced by both the children and parents as they navigate their relationships with each other.

Similarly, the father-and-son relationship I experienced was validated by the participants in this research project. For example, Roland shared the differing world views and experiences colliding with him and his father. As Roland explained:

> *Often, he's [father] told me that because he has…so much experience in life that he feels that me and the rest of his children are not valuing those experiences. He's like, he almost says that you don't have to find out for yourself. Because, because, basically, I'm a book. Listen to what I'm telling you. I will tell you what to do, what not to do. So yeah. I tried to explain to my dad that, look, I've grown up in this environment. And yeah, I think I know. I think I understand this even better than you. Do you understand the Western way of life values here? What it takes to succeed, he doesn't seem to somehow recognise that. Yeah, like, you know, like he's not willing to, to basically acknowledge that [his] son might have very valuable insight into the Kiwi way of life.*

Roland's engagements with his father about the 'Kiwi way of life' or, rather, life in general in Aotearoa New Zealand demonstrate conflicting views where they both experience difficulties with understanding each other. This is closely connected with intergenerational conflict regarding beliefs, values, and expectations among immigrant and refugee parents resettling in a new country (Daniel et al., 2020). Experiencing intergenerational conflict and past trauma can result in parents losing a sense of normality, particularly in relation to how they engage with, and their role in, their family, as there are layers of trauma parents resettle with, including lifestyle and culture (Riggs et al., 2015).

Parents can find it difficult to assimilate with the expectations of the host nation, adjust to new parenting methods, and practice their traditional roles of parenting and family practices that they were brought up with from 'back home' (Deng & Marlowe, 2013). These conflicts are commonly experienced between Afghan children and fathers but are often overlooked, neglected, or not fully understood by both parties. Afghan fathers who have been raised in Afghanistan and growing up in that culture have difficulty understanding and acknowledging their children's development and strengths in their new host society. Roland explained:

I think I would. I would say that growing up. I wasn't made aware of what I'm good at. And what I'm not good at. So it's the fact that what you're passionate about, that's one thing, knowing what you like, what you don't like, but also, you know, where your talent lies. And maybe I think some Afghani parents are not happy with exactly where the child's talents lie. They would rather have, you know, they would rather have the child be good at something that they value.

Roland and others shared in the research conversations about the different trades of work and education prospects available in Aotearoa New Zealand, which the participants showed interest in. Their fathers appeared restrictive and valued certain professions, reinforcing those professions in their children. Roland further explained:

That's the one thing that I found quite challenging, especially with my dad, is that he doesn't back off. They (parents - father) don't feel like they never recognise that you're now mature. You're an adult. There's no phase where they say, Okay, you're now responsible for your own (life) like, I'll give you my advice. But I will not get in any way upset if you don't take my advice.

These conflicting situations that Afghan children and fathers were commonly experienced by all participants in this research project. This caused further distancing between them, and these issues were rarely discussed to find a mutual ground of understanding for both parties. This barrier in communication continued in adulthood and adversely affected their relationship. Roland explained this further:

Even though my dad was saying that him and his dad [were] like almost like best friends. Talk about anything. I was like, Dad, why weren't you like with me like this growing up? He's like, but I was. I was the kind of son that I could keep my dad's secrets (laughing extensively). I was like, dude, come on. He's like, I don't trust you. Basically, he was like I was their ideal son, you know? My dad could trust me, and were best friends. He's like, I don't trust you. And I wish I had a closer relationship with my parents, not this strict formal parent-child relationship. But there were certain topics I couldn't share. Topics such as talking about girls, for example. Yeah, that was a taboo

topic (laughter). And I needed someone to talk to about those things. But because it's such a taboo topic in our culture, I couldn't have talked about (it) with my parents, especially my dad.

Many of the participants shared in the research conversations their desire for a closer connection with their father and to be able to express themselves openly. Additionally, they wished to have a male figure in their lives like their father to talk about sensitive topics and receive advice from their father about challenges they faced. Some participants desired to adopt Eurocentric approaches when it came to the father and son relationship of being able to freely express their opinions and feelings openly with parents and others. However, their fathers presented their dominance as the head of the family, and the children had to adhere to the rules and regulations. In Afghanistan, boys, and men they are discouraged from dialogues about their fears and emotions to each other (Ahmadi, 2018). Roland provides an example of the relationship he yearned for with his father. Roland explained:

So, like year 10 or 11 and year 9. He came (my friend). He's like, "Man, my dad today told me he's like, son. When you're in school, have fun. I know you're trying to get with girls. Just don't fall in love (laughter) If you aren't, you know...", and he's like, "man, me and my dad were like friends"..... And I was like, Wait, hold on a sec, man. I wish my dad was a little bit more talking to me, joke around and kind of let his guard down instead of always having this... because I think my parents, as Afghans, are very... they (are) always conscious of how their children's (are) seeing them. They want to maintain that. That sense of authority that comes with being in control.

While this ideal father-son relationship where they could talk about anything, trust each other and be 'friends' was something that all the participants wanted with their fathers, it was never something they ever communicated with their fathers. Some participants believed that their father's expectation of a father-and-son relationship differed from what they wanted, influenced by a generational barrier, cultures, and differing expectations of father-and-son relationship stood between them. In Roland's case, he grew up listening to his father talking about an idealised friendship and companionship he shared with Roland's grandfather, but this was a relationship that he never had. This type of father-and-son relationship is commonly identified amongst many elder Afghan fathers resettling in a new society with their children, finding it challenging to create that

atmosphere and connection they once had with their own father in Afghanistan. Roland and Zaaro echoed each other's thoughts about an idealised relationship with their fathers. As Zaaro stated:

> *The one norm that I kind of envy from my peers and stuff [is the] understanding that their parents show to them.*

I once asked my father for his reasoning behind the different relationship dynamics between him and myself, compared to that he shared with his own father. He likened this disconnect to the disconnect he felt from once living in his country of origin with the comfort of being surrounded by his family and house that generations have lived in and being raised there, to fleeing for safety. Niazi (2019) shares the disconnect between Afghan parents in the United States and their children are because of the splitting of the "outside" selves and "inside" selves driven by American dominant (white) culture and parental expectations further influencing the gap between the second-generation Afghan males and parents' past experiences disrupting the connection with their children. They face multifaceted dynamics, such as Afghan fathers being in unfamiliar territory, adopting a new way of living life and building connections with their children from a state of unknown that they have never experienced before. Furthermore, the weight and burden of the first-hand traumas carried by the fathers of these parents also create a barrier between themselves and their children, as they do not want to share the trauma they experienced as a way of safeguarding and protecting their children.

Another contributing barrier is communication and pride. For most Afghan fathers, their communication with their adult children is treated the same as they were once children and children transitioning to adulthood suppress their concerns or any trouble they may face externally to be silenced as it may potentially bring shame to the family. Some adult children continue to face these difficulties by not verbally sharing their personal concerns because they fear the potentiality of oversharing or feeling embarrassed with their fathers. Furthermore, these influences have distanced the child/parent relationship further and are identified in areas such as emotional intimacy and trust, resulting in a lack of empathy for each other. Lastly, Afghan fathers find themselves involved in unfamiliar roles, which extended family members of the father previously aided, such as sisters, aunts, and mothers, in raising the children. However, entering a new society with only their immediate family and their wife, these Afghan fathers find themselves fulfilling the roles of others. These contributing factors differ from previous literature and are exclusive

insights into the world of Refugee research scarce amongst this population of Refugees and Afghan men living outside of Afghanistan.

This approach is similarly addressed by the African proverb, "It takes a village to raise a child". The phrase states that it takes numerous people (villages) to provide a healthy, safe environment for children to flourish, develop, and reach their dreams and hopes. The villagers can consist of parents, neighbours, extended family members, siblings, professionals, teachers, policymakers, and community members caring for a child (Reupert et al., 2022). This initiative applies to the people of Afghanistan as they raised their children with extended family members and lived together as a collective. However, Afghan parents in Aotearoa New Zealand raised their children away from their country of origin, experiencing uncertainty, feelings of isolation, and a lack of social and cultural support.

Afghan parents find themselves in unfamiliar territory and ensure their children adhere to their cultural and faith-based values and practices. These are all new challenges that are very unfamiliar to them, and they have never experienced this before with their own parents in Afghanistan. There is an increased unexpected conflict between the children and parents because of the different practices that come with living in a new society. Parents face limitations with the English language, whereas children pick up the language instantly, further disrupting the child-parent relationship. These challenges exacerbate or compound the baggage of trauma and masculine roles these parents carry.

Additionally, many of these participants have been raised and treated as a collective unit rather than as individuals by their own parents – drawing on their cultural values and lifeworld’s in Afghanistan. However, growing up in the 'Western' nation of Aotearoa New Zealand, some participants desired their parents to adopt individualistic approaches to focus on each child's individual needs, as shown by their peers' parents. These offspring felt that their individual needs were not recognised, and they perceived that the well-being of the entire family (unit) took precedence over the well-being of individuals. Together, these results provide important insights into the complex relationship between Afghan fathers and their offspring, and both have a set of difficulties influencing their relationship.

This act of love inadvertently creates a rift between parent and child. Linking back to Roland's statement of 'let his guard down' and 'being in control' directly speaks to the experiences of trauma. Fathers who have faced a history of trauma and feel they must be the strongest members of their family are naturally accustomed to keeping their guard up all the time and being in control. By doing this, they fulfil their roles, protect their family when everything else is falling apart, and ensure their children never experience their past hardships. Therefore, it is closely connected to their masculinity and overcompensating for the lack of control and depleted masculinity they experienced moving to Aotearoa New Zealand. Zaaro provides an insight into the challenges he experienced growing up with a father who encountered first-hand trauma and chose to be silent about it altogether. He also provides a perspective of how it influenced his father's parenting and actions. Zaaro stated:

> *My dad was part of (the) resistance against the Soviets. And so was my mum. At that time, that was praised by the West and everybody else… So, I kind of looked up to my dad. My dad put in the work defending this country and its people against foreigners, so I really idealised my dad. They obviously came with their own traumas, and they still haven't really spoken about that, which I am really sad about. I often try, and you know, (I try to) bring it out of my dad (to) try to make him (think) 'Oh'. (But) you cannot get through (to him). You know it's very hard, like a concrete wall... We (siblings) try so hard, but (he) only tells you little things but doesn't tell you '(this is) what my childhood was (like) how it affected me.*

For many Afghan men, discussing the implications of trauma symptoms and mental well-being are highly stigmatised topics to discuss and are often silenced because of the cultural expectations and responsibilities associated with the presentation of being an Afghan man. Moreover, many young Afghan men experience limitations with sharing collective or first-hand trauma to their parents particularly their father's or older men in their family. Ali shared his first-hand experience of trauma, a bomb blast took place in an unnamed country, and he was one of the volunteers who supported families in finding the bodies and witnessed what was remaining of those bodies. Ali shared that:

When I was in (unnamed country) …You know, there was a bomb blast. I was in one of the educational institutions, you know, a kilometer away. From there was an incident that was a targeted killing like, you know, if you heard about the Lashkar-e-Jhangvi… you know, that this organisation was targeting? Most of the communities, especially, you know, the attacks were concentrated on the Hazara people again, unfortunately in (unnamed country) in the (unnamed region) in (unnamed city)… Abrar, actually, it's very hard, you know, there were so many people whose body parts were missing. And I was one of a member of a club responsible for just going and finding (bodies and remains) … then we found four arms. And, you know, that was the time when that (happened) was very traumatising for me… You know, a year later I came to New Zealand and that was in the back of my head all the time.

Ali: A man is a man who just can deal with all those sorts of situations, assume that there might be some the Afghans who have been in New Zealand, you know, maybe the older generation that I if I talk about those situations, you know, I might hear, you know, that might maybe I'm wrong, that was my assumption that if I talk to somebody, you know, that I faced such challenges, I was thinking that I'm I possibly might hear that, you know, that is something normal that you know, we can we can see, we can see and watch every day, and there are a lot of Afghans who will who face you know, come across those things (trauma).

Others similarly address Ali's first-hand experience of trauma management in this research project, as their collective traumas are experienced in silence. Collective trauma refers to a traumatic event impacting not only the individual but the entire society and is lived through the collective memory of the group exposed to it (Hirschberger, 2018). In saying this, extensive research has been done on Afghans living in Afghanistan and their experiences of collective trauma (Myrttinen, 2018). However, research in Aotearoa New Zealand is scarce for Afghans with lived experiences of trauma living in Aotearoa New Zealand as these experiences are unique. has significantly affected the people of Afghanistan and their management of their traumas. In saying this, the commonness of experiencing trauma by the people of Afghanistan has dramatically affected their sensitivity and care for others with experiences of trauma. In Ali's situation, he believes that as a man with lived experience of trauma, he will face backlash if he

shares his trauma experiences with the older generation. There is a potential of his experience not being taken seriously and silenced by others.

In saying this, it is not only Afghan men who experience such issues with masculinities. Instead, research indicates that men from other nations (e.g., Aotearoa New Zealand), particularly those who have experienced war, have specific ideals on what it means to be a strong male and cannot communicate their feelings and emotions (Cramm et al., 2021). Davidson and Mellor's (2001) study with children of Vietnam war veterans indicated that children who had a father with PTSD were at a greater risk of having a poorer child-parent relationship. Moreover, these children had poor communication and involvement with their fathers compared to those whose fathers did not suffer from PTSD.

Parental detachments are commonly expressed by parents who have encountered trauma and often have difficulties with detachment in their child's rights and needs. Parents' own hardship and trauma are found to significantly impact their quality of caregiving, attachment to their child and parenting style (San Cristobal et al., 2017). Understanding families with a history of trauma is crucial as it sheds light on the intergenerational effects of trauma on their offspring. For Zaaro, growing up in Aotearoa, discussions of mental health are more commonly expressed and promoted. However, according to Zaaro his father chose not to disclose vulnerable experiences to Zaaro or his siblings and instead provided a layer of protection for himself and the children.

Areef (2018) discusses parental anger as a form of PTSD, and family-directed anger is commonly expressed among refugees. Niazi (2019) further explains the silence among Afghan parents about recollections of their migration and refugee stories was to protect their children from their suffering. The silence and lack of response are similarly addressed among holocaust survivors. Discussions of war-related traumas were silenced amongst parents who survived the holocaust to add a layer of protection for their adult offspring, and silence was their way of expressing love and care. However, children of holocaust survivors often felt they were responsible for their parent's silence and sadness, and they found it unbearable to cope with their parent's feelings – or lack thereof (Fossion et al., 2003). Similar trends were visible with the contrasting dynamics for fathers and sons in the present study. What is important here is that these codes of conduct are often never directly verbalised. Instead, the child and parent silently assume their actions are in the other party's best interest. Therefore, despite conflict, both parties do this as an

act of love and consideration towards the other. Parents safeguard and protect their children as best they can, given their history of trauma, and children safeguard their parents' feelings, not wanting to upset or disappoint them. Therefore, this lack of communication between father and son are closely connected to expectations of masculinity in Afghan culture and as a father ensuring no sign of vulnerabilities are presented to the child. Moreover, perceived notions of masculinity among these participants appeared to differ according to these participants from their fathers in relation to communication. Roland and Asif shared:

> *Roland: Fortunately, I've always had that because all my friends were also interested in that. [discussing well-being and mental health]. We had that. I think I had that. Yeah, yeah. It's awesome. To be able to share. Yeah, talk about these things. Yeah. But I wish I had the opportunity to talk about these things that my parents and they would have faced instead of trying to, trying to, you know, give me advice that just listen, without, you know, without just being judgmental.*
>
> *Asif: Luckily, though, I do have close Afghan friends, and so when things come up like this stuff.*

Roland and Asif shared that they have both been fortunate enough to discuss sensitive topics with their friends and feel respected. The participants in this research project appeared to be striving for a change in portrayals of Afghan men's masculinity and wanted to move beyond the masculinity that their fathers once taught them. They have developed their own views and practices of masculinity and, with their life experiences, have enabled these changes. Ali shared:

> *It's not only men responsible for, for the economic aspect, you know, so and it's everybody living in a living in New Zealand living in a society where everybody works and everybody you know, it leaves a little bit pressure from all over the I don't I? I don't mean at all that you know, all the people are like responsible, but generally, it is culturally comes in saying that only the men are responsible to just buy a house to buy my car, so that's why that puts a lot of pressure, you know, on the men and, you know, that is it, that's why I say that.*

Ali stated that the cultural expectations of men taking full responsibility for being the main provider in Aotearoa New Zealand presents challenges, and he believes others should also

contribute to the family expenses of those living under one roof instead of one person providing for the entire family's expenses.

Safety Net and Overprotection

Alongside their relationships with their fathers, many of the young men in these research conversations frequently discussed the structured parenting and overprotection they received from their parents. The participants shared the limitations and consequences of growing up with this parenting style. This added layer of protection resulted in participants experiencing difficulties with decision-making in different areas of their lives, such as career choices, employment, and personal development (identity) in Aotearoa. War-related stress disrupts family functioning, where families have little control over their lives and are focused on increasing their survival needs. Therefore, all these factors play a role in parents' behaviours in raising their children and their development. Refugee parents suffering from fear and higher levels of uncertainty caused by war are more likely to be fearful for their children. They are more constricted and overprotective of their children (Eltanamly et al., 2019). Afghan parents focused on ensuring their children are protected from encountering any hardship in Aotearoa New Zealand and making safe choices. Asif shares the implications of his mother and father's parenting style and creating safety nets for him.

> *They seem to acknowledge it, and they can see where they (are) com(ing) from, but they're very defensive about their stance, for example, about keeping it safe or playing it safe or not going out of their comfort zone, very defensive about that approach, and they have their reasons… We really have to, like, have real safe, safety nets everywhere we go… I guess my life choices. They've always been very safe and sort of thought about consequences, like thought about other options before I make anything, whether it's choosing where to live, what job to take study… I have to sort of play it safe, but that's just naturally because I'm just scared about the things going wrong or in part of this, because we always think that things could go wrong if we don't, you know, keep things in check.*

Different parenting styles were influenced by factors such as education, gender, socioeconomic status, immigration, acculturation, and war-related trauma. Asif's parents' experiences of war-related trauma have led them to create walls of protection for Asif who finds

himself in a position where he must choose the safest choices with the lowest risk involved in all areas of his life and have safety nets everywhere he goes. Similarly, Roland addresses the reasoning for Afghan parents' higher levels of protection for their children associated with displacement and risk. Roland shared:

> *So I would say safety because my mother came from environment that was not safe environment, and crimes was a big issue… so I think my parents have different experiences. I've been shaped by war and trauma as the elephant in the room always war displacement losing, you know, losing this idea of being removed from the context somewhere else.*

Participants found the constant over-involvement of their parents in all areas of their lives often frustrating. According to Smith et al. (2001), parenting plays a vital role as a moderator between children's psychological, mental, and social development and exposure to war. Zaaro further elaborated on how the lack of security of his parents contributed to his development and relationship:

> *That has a lot to play in. Lack of security. They don't want it to be reinforced again, sure. But I think that has a downside to me, like as a parent now. I try and allow my son to be free, obviously. Protecting him when I can to be free. Because I don't want that same thing to happen [that happened] to me, where my independence was taken away [by] somebody else who was making decisions for me. I need to look after myself when I should have been, or somebody else [father] is constantly trying to protect me has a negative effect.*

Firstly, Zaaro touches on freedom for the next generation of Afghan kids and having autonomy over their lives. Secondly, he works to prevent implementing the same parenting style of his father with his children. Most Afghan parents, particularly fathers, find it too challenging to understand that young children can make decisions independently (Berry et al., 2003). Participants indicated that from a young age, their parents have instilled fear in us when it comes to making individual decisions because of their individual trauma experiences. Klein et al. (2020) indicate that immigrant and refugee parents experience elevated levels of insecurity and anxiety raising children in the host nation's cultural environment, which may present dissimilarities from the one the parents grew up with and further result in overprotection and higher control over their children.

Zaaro highlighted the constraints and decision-making of his parents in his travel plans to Afghanistan.

> *2019, I went back to do the project (Afghanistan). My parents were completely against it. You should not go back. Yeah, I was like, nah man, this is what I feel is the right thing to so I am going to do it.*

Children from collectivist cultures are more likely to have demands placed on them around obedience. At the same time, the surrounding support structure is more focused on interdependence rather than emphasising independence, such as within an individualist-oriented culture (Klein et al., 2020). However, Zaaro's concerns relate to s autonomy, self-fulfillment, and the person's independence.

Parents who are overly protective and involved in their children's affairs and constantly intervening and taking away their autonomy and making decisions for them are often known as helicopter parents. These parents invest their time heavily in their child's development and removing any barriers they may face (Leblanc & Lyons, 2022). Amongst many migrant Asian parents, helicopter parenting is applied to promote the academic achievement of their children and enhance their family pride. The children's performance is consistently compared to their peers, and children find themselves experiencing an abundance of over-scheduled activities. Parents of these young Afghan men subconsciously have adopted helicopter parenting propelled/fueled by their own past traumas and displacement stressors.

Sim et al.'s (2018) study, showed how displacement and war affected Syrian refugee parents and their parenting in Lebanon, indicated that displacement stressors related to parenting are more likely to present parental control and safety precautions for children because of experiences of insecurity in the community. Parents' over-involvement in their children's care can adversely affect their emotional, social, and physical development. Afghan parents growing up with similar experiences of security issues and growing up in war and displacement have contributed to their connection and parenting of their children. Leblanc and Lyons' (2022) findings indicated that overparenting has detrimental effects on career adaptability, career development and increases levels of self-doubt in their careers.

Schiffrin et al. (2013) state that parents who are excessively controlling and involved in their children's lives while involved in tertiary education will more likely lead to those children developing anxiety and depression. Furthermore, over-parenting has detrimental effects on family life satisfaction. My participants experienced distant relationships with their fathers because of over-involvement in their care. Behaviours of helicopter parenting include interfering with competence because they can convey messages of parents having little to no faith in their offspring's abilities to solve their problems. This has potentially affected their competence and confidence as they shared in the research conversation reaching adulthood. This relates to the broader arguments of complex relationships with parents.

Participants in the research conversation extensively discussed their relationship with their fathers. However, I want to acknowledge that Afghan mothers play as big or a more significant role as fathers in raising their children and make many sacrifices. Their sacrifices are experienced in silence because often Afghan women find themselves confined to practising their gender role, relinquishing the hopes and dreams of education and employment offered in the host nation. For example, they practice the conservative and traditional expectations of being obligated to stay at home, nurture their children, and conduct their household tasks. Subsequently, they witness the efforts of their parenting through their children's achievements in seeking higher education, employment, and a greater quality of life (Afrouz et al., 2022).

Summary

Many participants shared that their father's perceived notion of masculinity and experiences in Afghanistan had significantly shaped their relationship. In addition, there was a communication barrier between the two parties, which resulted in unintentional distancing and disconnection. It is to be noted that both parties have each other's best interests at heart. Afghan parents have made many sacrifices for their children and involuntarily had to seek refuge in a new country to ensure a greater quality of life is granted to their children. Furthermore, safety concerns and first-hand experiences of trauma by the parents of these participants showed they subconsciously adopted a helicopter form of over parenting and became overly involved in their children's lives during resettlement. In saying this, the implications of being overly involved have resulted in a state of ambivalence for these participants. They acknowledge that their parents have

provided them with their full attention. However, parents' hardships have also restricted these children's development and growth in some areas of their lives to adulthood.

Chapter 4 Balancing Two Worlds: Navigating the Duality of Existence for Afghan Refugee Males Growing Up in Aotearoa New Zealand

This chapter is about Afghan men finding their place in Aotearoa New Zealand by tracing participant narratives as a journey, progressively exploring their experiences from a young age to adulthood. Firstly, I identify how these experiences have enabled these Afghan men to find their place within Aotearoa New Zealand society. Then I discuss their resilience and strengths as they establish a sense of belonging. I explored this by including four subthemes in this chapter: 'Straddling Two Different Worlds', 'Colliding Cultures and Identity Crises', 'Culture and Spirituality', and 'Rites of Passage'. 'Straddling Two Different Worlds' focuses on how participants negotiate between their lives at home and school. 'Colliding Cultures and Identity Crises' discusses the cultural conflict experienced by these participants during school and university and the processes of identity-making. 'Cultural Identity and Spirituality' discusses the protective factors utilised by these participants and their coping mechanisms to combat the hardships they encountered. Lastly, attending university was a significant turning point for all the participants. Their 'rite of passage' enabled full autonomy over their lives.

Straddling two different worlds

This sub-theme focused on participants of this research project encountering challenges of straddling two different worlds of home and school. On the one hand, participants found themselves experiencing secondary trauma through carrying the baggage of their parents' trauma and being exposed to the hardship that Afghanistan experienced as a country. At the same time, some participants in this research project shared their first-hand experience of trauma from straddling between the two different worlds. Many participants also found themselves negotiating the unique challenges of being treated differently in school facing discrimination, stigmatisation, and marginalisation as Afghans and refugees. Aziz elaborates on the discrimination and emerging feeling of othering he experienced.

> *There's just me and this other Afghan guy …(we are) like the pretty much the only Afghans in the school really. And we used to get called names like Taliban terrorists, and they will make like bomb jokes. And yeah, bro. Like, it was so bad. Like, I would come home crying sometimes like holyshit, this is just like, this is so unfair, you know. Like, even the teachers and staff like looked down on us because, you know, obviously it was like a white school, and there's a lot of* favoritism.

Refugee students can also find themselves unfairly treated in all other curricular activities such as sports, music etc. Sobrun-Mahraj et al. (2008) indicated that students reported feelings of exclusion, racism, and prejudice in schools in Aotearoa New Zealand. Similarly, in Australia, bullying at school was one of the key issues faced by refugee youth, with many being targeted because of their ethnicity (Correa-Velez et al., 2010). Uptin et al. (2012) indicated that schools were not attentive to the discriminatory and racist behaviour towards refugee students, demonstrating a lack of significance to these concerns. Mainstream school systems prioritising equality versus equity risk erasing the experiences of minoritised communities such as refugee youth, thereby inadvertently encouraging and perpetuating discrimination.

Abu Khalaf et al. (2022) addressed students experiencing discrimination from teachers, peers, and the school administration itself. The students further outlined how media played a pivotal role in spreading harmful and false accusations amongst their religions. Enforcing negative religious and cultural stereotypes about Islam and students managed these issues in school. The students yearned for their school staff and teachers to demonstrate fair treatment and inclusivity; instead, they often were the perpetrators of discrimination and allowed students to criticise the Muslim students and their practices freely. On the other hand, Muslim students found themselves always defending their culturaal and religious practices and cited challenges with explaining praying in school, fasting, and wearing a hijab.

This results in hierarchies where refugee students are confined to lower classes and in a deficit position. The report indicated that teachers from dominant ethnic groups lacked sensitivity to the underlying issues affecting the students' performance. These young Afghan men had experiences like those of being excluded and not given the same opportunities as European students in school. Many participants lived in two worlds shared between home and school, experiencing tension in both areas of their lives. According to Murakami and Akilova

(2023), asylum-seeking and refugee children are more likely to develop emotional and mental health challenges because of various factors, such as secondary trauma induced by parental stress and forced migration. Witnessing parents' trauma at home and managing discrimination and marginalisation at school led some participants to act out at school. Zaaro talked about the challenges he encountered when these worlds collided:

> *Then, when I had that fight, and again, the school turned on me without actually assessing them (and) the situation. A guy didn't get suspended (and was) back in school the next day. So I was suspended for three days. That's where it all started. That resentment towards [others] started because it started in intermediate [school and] was reinforced…. I was in detention class. Suspension hours and detention class almost every single day.*

Zaaro was a student who was doing exceptionally well academically in school. Nevertheless, his experience during school created tension. He often found himself in detention, where his anger was fed and perpetuated due to racism and othering experienced at school, including unjust treatment from staff. However, no one questioned him as to why he was finding himself in trouble so frequently and where this built-up anger was coming from. Zaaro reported:

> *Like in high school, my teachers weren't asking, why is this young guy… from a good family… Why is he acting out? They weren't asking that question. They're just saying he's acting [like] this [and] punishing [him and giving] him detention.*

Instead, he is being punished for his actions, further building his aggression, and leading to losing trust with others, particularly his teachers and the school. Therefore, Zaaro's experiences seem to be perpetuated through a cyclical process that never ends. Toppelbein et al. (2013) conducted a study with school-aged refugee students aged 15-16 in Nordic countries. Their findings highlight the negative consequences of parental posttraumatic stress, where youth can carry a high burden of familial stress to school, resulting in poor school performance and conflict. Zaaro recounted:

> *Why is she [my mother] crying again [when] you come home [from school] Fuck! not again!… So, I couldn't speak to [my] family [about the detention and other issues at*

school]. My mom would ask me what's going on? I just wouldn't be able to share with her. Yeah. So, I felt like it was just me against everything.

Similarly, Zaaro finds himself in a situation managing his mother's past trauma and the hardship that Afghanistan was experiencing at the time, significantly impacting his mental well-being, and resulting in conflict in school. Therefore, it is essential to acknowledge that some Afghan youth are carrying the burden of their parent's trauma to school, which can adversely affect their well-being. Zaaro also was routinely exposed to watching current affairs of his home country, Afghanistan. While keeping up to date with affairs in the country of origin is common in many migrant and refugee households, this is particularly true for Afghan households because of our attachment to our country and the perilous situation experienced by our extended families living in Afghanistan. Thabet et al. (2008) indicates this is similar among Palestinian families who watch news programs about the conflict in Palestine as one of their main activities. Continuously watching these traumatic events through television has implications on the well-being of the individual exposed to it, in terms of secondary or vicarious trauma. Participants talked about addressing the trauma and feelings of injustice about what was happening in Afghanistan, and how it became interrelated to the experiences of discrimination and marginalisation they experienced at school in Aotearoa New Zealand. Zaaro recounted that:

[A] group of white guys would continuously taunt me up until two years [ago], and then in the middle of year 10, I just had enough of this. [I thought] "I can't do this right now". Everyone did. And then I ended up beating them up… So it was like kind of in my head. I reflect on it. It was my way of fighting back against what was happening in Afghanistan. With people who look like them, and they were drone striking our people and stuff like that.

Xiong et al. (2021) indicate that reactive and displaced aggression is linked with experiencing discrimination, as it may influence frustration and anger development, further invoking aggressive responses. Displaced aggression refers to when an individual transfers their anger or frustration to another person other than the stimuli causing the aggression and becomes the victim of the aggression (Allen & Anderson, 2017). Moreover, the severity or likelihood of anger displacement can further exacerbate if the person ruminates on the initial provocation of the aggression, further influencing aggression to continue for a prolonged period.

There are many deep layers to Zaaro's reaction for becoming violent towards others. Zaaro's built-up anger was comprised of years of deeply being affected by the ongoing hardship Afghanistan is experiencing as a country, and Zaaro reached an age where he started to understand this, and it started to affect his personal life. Secondly, the development of anger and frustration was also from the racism he experienced in Aotearoa New Zealand, particularly from the unfair treatment he received in school by being placed in detention and not the other guy who fought with him. Therefore, this anger was fueled by what happened to him in Aotearoa New Zealand and Afghanistan. Zaaro found himself lashing out this built-up anger on white people here in Aotearoa New Zealand; by doing this, he gave a face to his anger. On the other hand, Baseer explains finding protection in increased numbers of Afghan students in school, where it was 'us' versus 'them'. Baseer stated that:

> *It was very much of them versus us kind of thing. And all the different groups that minorities would pick it up with it was Afghans or (Pacific) Islanders or Somalians, or whatever, like would always be us, verse them kind of thing... One thing was there was more numbers. There was more of us. And I guess, at that point, we started to defend ourselves, you know, kind of, yeah, and I think in maybe mid high school, (it) kind of goes back to normal.*

Baseer's explanation of 'us versus them' was a common experience for many participants in high school. They continuously had to seek out others who understood their challenges, accepted them, and shared similarities. Many participants had to find safety in groups to create friendships and have a layer of protection. To have others who can defend them and build a gang of respite to look after them because many of these young Afghan men experienced bullying growing up. Research around refugee youth forming groups in schools is scarce. However, drawing on my experience as a young Afghan male in secondary school, I witnessed refugee youth from Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq, Somalia, and Pakistan formulating a group almost like a gang who had positioned themselves in a designated physical space in the school. This designated space was a safe space, where refugee boys could spend their breaks between classes. It almost gave us a sense of protection from being bullied or discriminated against. This group ranged from newly arrived year nine (8^{th} grade) students to young adults of year thirteen (senior year).

Baseer found protection in the group of young Afghan boys in school. As these young Afghan men worked to straddle their two different worlds, these worlds collided at times, causing them to experience crises in their sense of identity. Im et al. (2016) highlight that the cycle of ongoing trauma can adversely affect the interpersonal life of refugee youth. In their study, young Somali refugee youth were seen to seek revenge and had a desire for retaliation in response to the hardship and deaths they had experienced in their life. This further led them to gang-related activities, and the trauma they experienced fueled the anger and grief they were experiencing. Somali youth associated with gangs to gain a sense of status and protection from the discrimination they experienced regularly. Rather than intentionally pursuing criminal activity, involvement in groups and gangs for Somali refugee helped them regain control over their lives, pushing them away from experiencing victimisation and helplessness. Instead, however, they found themselves empowered.

Colliding Cultures and Identity Crises

For many resettled refugees, adjusting to a new way of life in the host country is difficult. Maintaining your cultural values can conflict because of the differences in the host nation's cultural norms. Many of these young Afghan men experienced their Afghan culture colliding with the dominant Anglo-European group. Some who experienced identity crises within those cultural conflicts growing up found themselves stuck in the middle and felt isolated from the host nation. The first excerpt is from Roland, providing an insight into his attempt to fit in with European and other ethnic groups' children in a sporting context. Roland explained:

> *I got into cricket, especially club cricket. And I remember with… my teammates [I] find it quite difficult to communicate. That's because their style of humour was quite different. Obviously, English was their first language. I couldn't you know, I think… that aspect of humour, knowing when to laugh when not to laugh, knowing when to take something seriously not to take something seriously that I found extremely challenging, certain things I will find offensive, for example, that the other side did not think was offensive at all.*

Roland's statement about 'certain things' that he found 'offensive' that others joked about and didn't themselves find offensive alludes to the humour presented by his

teammates, and discomfort was found in the jokes they shared. Cassim et al. (2020) highlight Sri Lankan migrants experiencing the distance between their European Kiwi friends and themselves by one of the participants in the study, saying, “It is difficult to crack jokes because you know they don’t understand our jokes, we don’t understand their jokes”. Drawing on Simmel’s (1950) work focusing on the stranger, he states, “Distance means that he, who is close by, is far, and strangeness means that he, who also is far, is actually near” (p. 402). The concept of stranger focuses on an individual encountering other groups and members; however, they can experience exclusion from these groups, further causing the individual to encounter the “combination of the near and the far” (Horgan, 2012). Similarly experienced by Roland in the context of his cricket teammates making him feel like a stranger in the context of a group.

Similarly, Horgan (2012) further elaborated on the concept of the ‘stranger’ being applied in immigration and cultural differences tethered by racial and ethnic identity and causing restriction by applying the ‘stranger’ to specific experiences of immigrants concerning their social positions. The ‘stranger’ concept resonates with Roland’s situation, where he finds himself as a minority within the dominant social conventions where he is only a partial member of society. It is in this frustrating position that he finds himself othered. A group or person that is socially excluded or distanced from the community or people refers to the concept of the ‘stranger’. Despite feelings of exclusion, they can also find themselves sandwiched between two cultures.

Immigrant and refugee youth can be trapped between two cultures stemming from their experiences of existing within and navigating both the mainstream culture and their parents’ cultures. Refugee and migrant youth can then find themselves experiencing an identity crisis because they may be negotiating two very different cultural worldviews (Eliassi, 2013). According to Ziaian et al. (2021), identity crisis refers to how political contexts, historical and social structures, and social backgrounds influence the reconstruction and development of individuals. Identity crisis depicts various stages of exploration, confusion, uncertainty, and commitment. In saying this, it also influences our values and beliefs and provides control for maintaining our present, past, and future. Identity crisis in the context of this research project refers to the disconnection the participants experienced concerning their sense of self and belonging. It often led to confusion about not knowing to which group they belonged. The two

cultures tend to clash because of the different values they uphold and can become incompatible. Participants found themselves in a similar position of not fully being able to immerse themselves in one culture. Asif shared how:

> *In terms of identity, I realised that you know, throughout growing up, I always thought that this is how it is... this is the religion, this is (the) culture, and these are the values, and we've got 100% right… (However, moving to Aotearoa New Zealand), it made me realise that no, there's actually different ways to look at something. I might be looking at their lifestyle, it will tell us this, but they might be looking at mine and being like, well, what is this, and so I think it made me a bit more open-minded to see that, like (you) know, things that I thought were certain and very clear (were not). After those interactions (it) became a little bit, I guess, the foundations (of what they thought were true became) (less) solid.*

Youth from refugee backgrounds can find themselves embracing two or more cultures but can also find it conflicting with their own culture of origin. They can also switch between cultures and lean towards the dominant host culture society holding ties between their own and the host culture, which can also result in mixed identities (King, 2022). Sirin and Fine (2007) discussed hyphenated identities of Muslim American youth, where they found a way of enabling their Muslim and American identities to co-exist and interact amongst their preferred cultural and social activities of both religious and ethnic communities within the US's mainstream society. Muslim American youth further indicated the coexistence of their diverse identities. In saying this, some participants did not encounter hyphenated identities but instead experienced challenges of identity crisis, as Baseer stated,

> *I was like, that's always been there… Even though (I am) someone (that is) being quite proud to be Afghan because, you know, I know, my roots. I know, you know, like, the history and like, it's just, you know, there's something to be quite proud of. (However,)I feel like growing up… there was always a sense of, I think, there was a sense of the identity crisis… But then high school was like, I think it would have been a point (in my life where I was)… facing, like, an identity crisis because you try to live two different kinds of life.*

An individual like Baseer is proud of his Afghan culture and heritage but also experiences an identity crisis because of his ties with the European Kiwi culture. The term 'Kiwi culture' used in this research project refers to the dominant norms created by European/British influence during the colonial period. Here, the interest and cultural values of Māori as the indigenous peoples of Aotearoa New Zealand, minority groups and migrants are only fractionally recognised under the term 'Kiwi culture' (Terruhn, 2015). Similarly, Asif and Baseer questioned and came close to jeopordising heir Afghan identities. Asif explained how:

> *There was always this identity crisis because I felt like because it was a lot of sort of Europeans in my class and hanging out with them. Obviously, their culture is different. And you know, there's things like drinking etc. And you see that from a young age, and you experience (…) see them. What I found is that you never quite felt… like I was one of them… We're sort of in the middle of both. And so, what ended up happening is you sort of have these multiple friend groups.*

Similarly, Aziz described how,

> *It's just hard… (I) just kind of felt like an outcast… trying to fit in with different cultures is kind of hard. As well, because you'd have to go against your morals and values. Yeah, so it's like that's what I kind of noticed… Honestly, bro, like I was going down a dark path myself.*

Choosing a side was not as simple as they found themselves in a precarious position of negotiating between their belief system, values, and culture and the host country's culture and norms to fit in. However, the identity negotiation for these Afghan men is not as simple because they face additional adversity, which is reinforced by the reality that if you do not fit in, you also encounter discrimination and racism – similarly feeling isolated, othered and being treated as an outcast in school all the time. On the other hand, if you do fit in, you are experiencing conflict with not being authentic towards your culture of origin. Mental health problems amongst immigrant youth are commonly associated with marginalisation, which results from disengagement from both cultures (Kirmayer et al., 2010).

Bigelow (2008) discusses the challenges Somali adolescents encountered in negotiating racial and religious biases inside and outside of school. Somali youth can struggle with their

identity in their new society and question which groups to associate with – either co-ethnic or with another group altogether. This was commonly expressed by many of these young Afghan men in this research project negotiating from a very young age finding a group that will allow inclusivity of their beliefs and culture and openness to accept the differences they may share. Jimenez and Gifford (2010) highlight in their study amongst young Afghan men with refugee backgrounds in Australia that fitting in comes with layers of complexities and is an ongoing process of finding, building, and reinventing a relationship with the host nation and connection with being an Afghan. The project highlighted the importance of having a structured space for their voices to be heard, providing freedom and structure to enable these young men from Afghan refugee backgrounds to explore confidently, aligning with this research project. This project highlights the significance of these young Afghans being able to see how they see themselves and how others see them from a mirrored view.

Youth can find themselves reconciling multiple systems within cultures and from the stress and discrimination of being positioned as a minority status. Negotiating identity is a tumultuous time for many youths and adolescents, regardless of where you are from, and for people from migrant and refugee backgrounds, it adds to the complexity. Stuart and Ward (2011) suggest that refugee youth often must negotiate between two complexities of prescribing to their religious and ethnic groups and those prescribed by the host culture. Confining identity to either black or white or choosing one over the other is not as simple. It is filled with complexities, but it is essential to acknowledge that the participants in this research project felt they had to choose between the two at the time. Many of the participants in this study were continuously negotiating this as their beliefs and values differed crucially from those of the wider society, where they fit in best and did not find themselves disadvantaged. This led to their feelings of crisis and affected their mental well-being. Initially, the participants in their youth believed there was only one way to express their identity and culture as Afghans. However, arriving at Aotearoa, they realised that there was more than one way, but they quickly realised these two cultures collided a lot of the time. They find themselves negotiating between the home and host culture, finding out they do not fully fit into either culture.

I can relate to the participants in this study experiences of experiencing an identity crisis during the negotiation of the two cultures, as I often found myself thinking about the

consequences of my potential actions if I were to live the individualistic way of life of my European peers. However, I wanted my peers to acknowledge my positioning of why I cannot participate in certain activities, as well as my expectations. My expectations for my peers were for them to respect and recognise my religious and cultural practices instead of judging me. I found myself in this position many times where, at home, I upheld my traditional beliefs and values, and when I was in school, I found myself adhering to the potentially individualistic way of life of my peers. For example, when seeing a group of friends after school to play sports or socialise, I found myself in a situation where I made my own decision without consulting my parents. However, 'codes of conduct' must be adhered to in Afghan culture, and this was not considered the proper kind of behaviour according to my parents. This positioning was immensely challenging as I negotiated between the two cultures. I returned home from school with individualistic ideologies found in the 'Kiwi culture', which did not fit Afghan cultural values. Consequently, I found myself consistently 'code-switching' between the two cultures. However, despite my attempts at code-switching between the two cultures to fit in, we were informed daily that we were different because that is what others told us. As Asif explained:

> *Well, It would always come up [in conversations], and I think that was in itself a thing that has always had to come up by they [Europeans] always sort of knew that this is you're not quite from here. And they [Europeans] pretty much instantly knew that I was a refugee.*

Asif's experience of being labelled as a refugee was commonly addressed amongst other participants, who felt others had already constructed their identity regarding how they entered Aotearoa New Zealand and based on their appearance. The label 'refugee' was given to them without their consent, and this proxy identity formation was out of their control. The list of attributes associated with that label then immediately solidified their place as 'outsiders' even if they were not refugees. Regardless of how participants entered Aotearoa New Zealand, they were all viewed and identified as refugees. According to Ludwig (2013), being labelled as a "refugee" often overlooks their identities but are merely viewed as objects in dire need of training and assistance in the resettlement services.

As well as viewing refugees as objects needing intervention, certain behaviours and expectations are placed on refugees. In Eurocentric countries, the 'grateful refugee' is

constructed as ideally having deference and gratitude to the resources provided by the host nation, willing to work and not be a drain on the resources provided by the state. The ‘grateful refugee’ is associated with patriarchal, colonial, and capitalist standards of measuring the success of refugee and migrant individuals. The ‘grateful refugee’ is embedded with expectations such as conceding vulnerability, producing capital, and contributing to the labour market whilst perceived as racialised subjects in Eurocentric societies. Which consistently uphold notions of cultural and social superiority to silence refugees by insisting they are grateful for everything given to them by the host nation (Thiruselvam, 2019).

Summary

Being viewed as refugees has negative connotations attached to it and is filled with the misconception that all migrants always need help and assistance. Concepts such as the ‘grateful refugee’ also work to homogenise all migrants, refugee or otherwise, which also caused issues of connection for participants. The next chapter discusses the strength and resilience these participants found within their own Afghan culture and faith, which helped them deal with these challenges.

Chapter 5: Traditions and Transitions: Religio-cultural Resilience and Rites of Passage as Afghan Refugee Males Growing Up in Aotearoa New Zealand

This chapter will explore the significance of religion and culture as facilitator cultivating personal strength and resilience. In saying this, participants found reconnection with their faith by attending university which acted as a rite of passage for these young Afghan men, and they found a renewed bond with their identities and instilled a sense of pride to their heritage. Moreover, hardships and challenges they faced in their formative school years empowered them, specifically during adulthood, to develop and forge a more connection with their identity.

Furthermore, this chapter will discuss the role of religion and culture being an enabler for building resilience and personal strength and attending University provided the opportunity for this reconnection. In saying that, university proved a rite of passage for these young Afghan as they found reconnection with their identities. For many of these young Afghan men, encounters of discrimination strengthened their cultural identity, and they took pride in their heritage. Moreover, those challenges enabled these young Afghan men in the later years of their lives (adulthood) to build strength and a deeper connection with their cultural identity.

Culture and spirituality played a significant role in participants' identity development and in how they managed challenging situations in Aotearoa New Zealand. Their connection with Afghan culture was repeatedly discussed in the interviews. For many of these young Afghan men, their connection with their faith played a leading role in enhancing their own cultural identities and managing challenging situations in their lives. Despite the young Afghan men reporting accounts of prejudice and discrimination, they also talked about other times outside of school that they could express themselves in Aotearoa New Zealand, share their cultural identity and highlight the importance of their faith being acknowledged here in Aotearoa New Zealand. Baseer reflects on how he now, as an adult, realised the importance of his faith and spiritual practices, whereas back in school, he engaged in them more as a requirement or force of habit:

> *I feel like that spiritual side of it did help a lot. Where as at that time, I didn't really like think about actually my [Attending Quran Classes], this is actually helping. [It] was more likely you know, we're here in the classes and you're doing the prayers… The spiritual side of it is something that helped a lot. And it's something that I'm*

actually trying my best to kind of, like, get on lock and I don't think I'm there, but I feel like it's definitely a journey.

For Baseer, religious practices such as praying and attending Quran classes helped him connect with Allah and maintain his cultural practices, which are closely intertwined with his faith as a Muslim. Many of these young Afghan men consistently maintained their cultural and religious practices to seek guidance and support. Notably, all participants turned to Allah for help during challenging times and hardship. Their faith also played a role in building resilience and connection with their culture. Tozer et al.'s (2017) discusses how personal resilience and spirituality, or religion are key psychosocial protective factors amongst refugee youth to promote well-being. Faith enabled young refugee students to feel a sense of belonging in school, and developing resilience may reduce behavioural, psychological, physical and stress. School connectedness strategies and creating an environment for refugee education can be achieved through supportive student-staff relationships, peer interaction, and respect for cultural diversity. Zaaro explains that even though he was not practicing Islam at the time, his sense of morality, or right and wrong, is strongly tied to his faith-based identity as a Muslim. Zaaro shared:

I have this connection with Allah [God]. Even though I wasn't practicing or anything. I just always felt like somebody's looking over me. So while I was doing these things… drinking, going in the complete opposite direction. Even crime was very… I would feel guilty at the time even doing it anyway… that whole journey into prison was an escape. Even when I went to prison, I was with a friend… And we were still smoking weed in prison.

Zaaro provides an insight into how his faith and Islamic values that he had grown up with were always in the back of his mind, for example, knowing fully that his actions were not aligning with the principles of his faith. He was consciously aware of this. When Zaaro hit rock bottom and went to prison, he had the opportunity to reflect on his actions and had a wake-up call that he needed to change his ways and do better for himself. For many young Afghan men in this research project, their faith played the role of protection, enabling them to combat the hardships and external turbulence they encountered growing up in Aotearoa New Zealand. Participants' resilience was built around their connection with their faith and cultural identity. Diakow and Goforth (2021) found that faith is closely related to resilience amongst refugee

youth from Muslim backgrounds. For Muslim youth, faith is seen as a source of strength, and contributed to higher levels of self-esteem. Zaaro stated:

> *I was lying in bed thinking Allah [God] has given me the opportunity to really make a change for myself. What are you doing with that? That was the day I told my cellmate, "Hey, if you want to continue this get the (fuck) out the cell! You can't be my cellmate". Yeah. So he changed his way as well and stopped doing it.*

Zaaro's influence on bringing his friend onto the right path was also a form of morality and reconnecting to his faith by obeying the rules of Islam. Zaaro's insight through his relationship with Allah helped him to find his purpose again, and help his cellmate have a positive outlook on life, and Zaaro reinforced that he changed for the better as well. His faith was his most significant support and guiding light that gave him patience during his time in prison when he had no other support present to help him.

Going beyond faith and linking to self-esteem and resilience also provides a sense of grounding closely connected to secure identities. Faith enabled participants to overcome 'crisis' situations they encountered in their lives and provide a sense of certainty in this uncertain world. For these young Afghan men who had limited outlets and people to turn to in times of need, for example, lack of connection with their parents and people at school, faith was their only support during those challenging periods. As Zaaro explains, during his time in prison, he reflected on his actions influenced by the teachings of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ (peace be upon him). Zaaro explained:

> *You know, like Prophet Muhammad ﷺ(peace be upon him), he will go and seclude himself from time to time to reflect, because that's important because we're constantly being bombarded with external things that really is your time to think. What am I doing? What am I thinking? Why am I thinking this? What is my value? I don't have a chance to do this [now]. So yeah, Prison gave me that opportunity. And I came out feeling like a completely new person.*

In events of narrative disruption, such as going to prison in Zaaro's case, or migration, death, hardship, and natural disasters, people turn to religion as a connection or anchor. Nejati-Zarnaqi et al. (2022) discuss how several participants turned to prayer during natural disasters to

build optimism for recovery and strengthen their connection with God. Similarly, trusting in God and demonstrating your appreciation for God improved resilience and enhanced the well-being of Muslim victims in the United States during Hurricane Katrina, and consistently communicating with God by praying enhanced their spiritual health (Putman et al., 2012). Whether their challenges were big or small, the participants of the present study still turned to God and prayer. Aziz provided insight into how faith has benefited him during turbulent times in his life.

> *Praying and meditating men, like being very mindful and (in) control of my emotions... it's just helped me be more in touch with my emotions and being able to control myself like a lot better. You know, I feel like when you don't give yourself downtime, your body tends to feel very on edge… So luckily for me growing up, I have already been through a lot of hardship, and obviously, any job you give me, I can handle it because I've been exposed to situations so much. I'm used to it.*

Turning to God for help and engagement in self-reliance was demonstrated in refugee youth (Ni Raghallaigh and Giligan, 2010). For many refugees' youth, religion played a significant role in their lives, where having a strong belief in God and practicing their religion enabled them to build strategies for living in a different cultural context. Faith became a coping strategy and a gateway to enhancing positive attitudes and allowed them to become independent and self-reliant, where confidence in God's help allowed them to move away from relying solely on the support of others for their well-being (Ni Raghallaigh & Giligan, 2010). Closely linked with their faith, these participants' Afghan culture was also a robust protective factor, and expressions of culture were important in building their identities. As Baseer explained:

> *To be honest, I think for me, I was someone that was quite proud to be from Afghanistan, like I was someone who could walk through a mall with my Afghan Kameez (Traditional men's Afghan suit) without worrying about people... I was like, that's always been there. Even though someone being quite proud to be Afghan because, you know, I know, my roots. I know, you know, like, the history and like, it's just, you know… there's something to be quite proud of.*

Cultural practices such as wearing traditional clothes, and speaking the language reinforce a sense of belonging, well-being, and cultural identity, especially for migrant and

refugee families (Amit & Bar – Lev, 2014). Connection and overt presentation of one's own culture enhance identity and promote a positive view of one's ethnicity and oneself (Khanlou et al., 2008). Similarly, for the participants in this research, language and cultural attire are tied closely with their identity and significantly impact their well-being. Furthermore, they feel a sense of belonging to their roots, allowing them to connect with their parents and culture. Ali provides insight into how language enabled him to establish a sense of belonging in Aotearoa New Zealand. Ali shared:

> *In the language classes, and so I used to teach, like Persians and Persian classes, or Dari, and there were so many get-together opportunities. So be it like they any kind of like party, hobby, say for any wedding ceremony, you know, get-together events. So I was…it was really, it was very good, and then it was very productive. In terms of finding new friends… In terms of integration.*

Spaces such as language classes enhance social networks amongst migrants and refugees, where they feel supported and can build their cultural identities (Sorgen, 2015) – feeling socially included, receiving cultural information and an opportunity to develop a sense of belonging and building relationships with people like themselves from their country of origin in the host nation to enhance their sense of belonging further. Moving from culture and spirituality, another protective factor for these young Afghan men was attending university and further education.

Rites of Passage: University

Parents have placed a high value on education for many refugees, and good academic performance can be another protective factor for them (Carlson et al., 2012). For many of my participants, going to university appeared to be a motivating factor for self-development and discovery. University was a place of growth and autonomy for many of these young Afghan men. The participants found themselves not only an opportunity for development but also to move away from the traumas of life and constantly having parents making decisions for them. For these participants, university was a gateway for finding their place. Education was a motivating factor for all to succeed in life.

Through acquiring knowledge and achieving higher education opportunities, many refugee youths can enhance their social and psychological skills, resilience, and self-esteem (Safak-Ayvazoglu & Kunuroglu, 2021). Those individuals not of the host nation and culture equip themselves with additional skills and knowledge to navigate institutions, schools, and workplaces. They often must 'code-switch' or match the norms of the given institution, for example, in a university class, which might differ from how they engage or behave at home and go back and forth. This code-switching requires refugee youth to have skills, knowledge, and foundational components of self-regulation (Nagaoka et al., 2015). Therefore, many of these young Afghan men learned to successfully navigate adulthood in university by entering unfamiliar situations and learning to negotiate different cultures, institutions, and contexts, which proved vital for their growth.

Education was a vital tool for upward economic and social mobility for many of the young Afghan men in this research project, and attending university was a pivotal transition in their lives. We draw on Van Gennep's notion of 'rites of passage' to analyse the significant events or series of transitions that took place in these participants' lives as they moved from secondary school to university. These rites of passage transferred them from adolescence to adulthood. In this research project, these young Afghan men moving from secondary school and shifting to university was their rite of passage, transferring them from adolescence and moving towards an adult setting (Gennep, 2019)

Attending university allows young people more autonomy and a big step up from secondary school. When attending for three to five years or more, universities provide a diverse setting for growth where students find themselves heavily involved (Blumenkrantz & Goldstein, 2014). Students are more in control to understand their university experience on their own, moving from their childhood setting where decisions were previously made for them by parents and caregivers to now being more in charge of their development as a rite of passage for them to have full autonomy of their lives (Covarrubias et al., 2018). There are three stages for the 'rites of passage' process, comprising separation (leaving the familiar), a liminal period (a time of learning, testing and growth) and new role or return (reintegration) (Gennep, 2019). The participants in this research project experienced all these different stages of rites of passage.

Higher education provided participants with the necessary skills to adapt to life in Aotearoa New Zealand and ensure their stability, security, and sense of belonging. As Asif explains:

> *I have to say that it was at university that I sort of shifted from having a lot more European friends to finding Afghan friends or people from Middle Eastern (backgrounds) and becoming close to them. And the reason for [parents] back[ing] off. And I think the whole idea is that you're an adult, and part of it is (that) education is such a big thing in Afghan culture. And so that when you can, when you get there, they sort of let you have more freedom in exchange that you will continue your studies and things like that. At university, I actually found… that there was quite (a) divers(ity) of people) and (I) met a lot of friends. But no, university was a much more pleasant experience than high school.*

University was a significant turning point for participants as, for the first time, it enabled them to experience greater independence in their lives. Previously, in secondary school, parents were heavily involved in deciding their future and lives – as discussed in Chapter 3. Once at university, the decision-making from parents declined dramatically and autonomy was given to these participants with considerable confidence from their parents because the milestone of reaching university assured parents that their children could make the right decisions.

Once they entered university, parents let go of the reigns; the trust had been built over the years, and parents now gave agency to the young adults to make some of their decisions independently. From my personal experiences, I can state that attending university is a sign of pride for Afghan parents and is highly desirable and respected in the Afghan culture if your son/daughter attends university and has higher education. The privilege of attending university and seeking higher education presents itself with resources and building resilience as key factors amongst students from refugee backgrounds succeeding. Higher education and motivation for study have been a central feature amongst many refugee students for their intrinsic value and building their confidence by meeting other people from different communities and further transitioning into the host society (Naylor et al., 2019). Attending university and higher education are positive enablers for social connection and belonging to the host nation.

Many participants experienced discrimination and marginalisation in secondary school and experienced limited diversity in friendship groups. Some participants were particularly

targeted by dominant groups, and some were confined to their own communities. However, for many participants, university became a place where they created meaningful friendships. University also became a place where participants connected to their ethnic communities, met many new Afghans, and spoke in Dari. Overall, participants could connect with cultural and faith-based values and engage in everyday interactions that were more deeply respectful of the cultural differences. Going to university became a time for growth and maturity within this transition, facilitating a greater awareness of cultural sensitivity. Aziz explains how his university exposure was eye-opening as he had previously been confined to only a few of his Afghan friends in school. Aziz shared:

> *High school and university was a big change for [me]… like [in] university, I definitely, like, fit in a lot more. Because I was just exposed to so many more different cultures. And it was a lot more (of a) diverse environment. [I remember] like in high school, like teachers literally thought I wouldn't go to university like they went on: this guy is not going [to] get a degree. And you actually do even better in university because you've been through the hardship.*

Going into university for any new student moving from secondary school is exciting and nerve-racking. However, for some of these participants it was different, as they had experiences of being targeted in school and exposed to discrimination and isolated by some of their teachers. Therefore, university for these participants was initially filled with mixed emotions, contemplating if they would receive fair treatment or be targeted as minorities. However, as they settled into university life, they had a pleasant and inclusive experience through unexpected friendships.

Aziz shared how his teachers had given him no hope of succeeding in university and made discriminatory remarks to him during secondary school. However, Aziz believed the discrimination and hardships encountered in school enabled him to perform better in university and build character and resilience. For Aziz, even his experiences at school were part of his rites of passage to reach where he was now. This was commonly expressed by the participants. They all encountered hardships in their life growing up in Aotearoa New Zealand, but all demonstrated that they had a solid faith-based system that would get them through adversity. According to Kiper et al. (2022), some people who have encountered difficulties see it as an opportunity for

growth and improvement. The adversity they faced growing up has made these participants resilient. We have grown up reading the history of Afghanistan through sources, parents' experiences, and communities in which we have lived. Afghanistan's political history and war have made us a very resilient people because, for us, living outside of Afghanistan is to be living in a place of privilege; this mentality has enabled us to be grateful for everything we have now, and our faith has given us hope in the adversity we face. On the other hand, outside of university Asif wished for greater engagement of younger adults to interact with the younger generation, as role models and build support systems for them. Asif shared:

> *(I) wish there was more. Well, I think there needs to be more engagement from the older Afghans, not like the older men but the 25 plus to have an older 21 Plus, to have more interactions with those (younger people) and go and talk to them. And yeah, I think there just needs to be more of a support system for them. And more integration and just more of a network.*

In recognition of this, the university was also a site that allowed these participants to give back to the host nation. As Ali explains:

> *You know, to pursue my education as a career, which can be a source of income for me at the same time that can, you know, help me contribute to a (new) society and (a) new environment because I, since I've come to New Zealand, I've never taken this opportunity for granted… The other aspect was just contributing in… New Zealand and paying back.*

For many participants, giving back to the host nation of Aotearoa New Zealand and contributing to the nation through attaining higher education and employment was widely discussed. Participants considered any given opportunity provided by the host nation through education and employment to be rare, so they were grateful. Asif states:

> *I think I say yes to a lot of things, and I tolerate a lot more. So, I'm always like, oh my god, I'm so grateful for this and I am grateful to have a job.*

The approach of not taking everything given to them by the host nation for granted was always at the back of their mind. Entering a new society comes with greater responsibility, and with education being a significant prospect in Afghan culture and the privilege granted to these

participants by the sheer act of living in Aotearoa New Zealand, it was mentioned that it was highly important to them that they contribute to the economy. Education provided an opportunity to go beyond not only giving back to the host nation but also giving back to their own Afghan community in Aotearoa New Zealand. Ali explains:

> *I came to know that not a lot of people… not a lot of Afghans (laughter), were in social work… [it] is not considered a very important... it is not considered important by many people, you know, (as an) important professional job. But it's still I… I feel happy to, you know, to contribute in my community.*

The notion of 'giving back' extended beyond helping Aotearoa New Zealand and Afghans in Aotearoa New Zealand and included the motivation to help and support people back in Afghanistan. Like Ali, other participants also applied their cultural values and educational achievements to give back to the people of Afghanistan. For instance, shortly after the collapse of the Afghan government in August 2021, Baseer and Zaaro assisted the people of Afghanistan through their philanthropic work. As Zaaro and Baseer explain:

> *Baseer: So I actually started a charity, and through that charity, you know, we raise[d] funds, and we purchase[d] food and food packs for families to self-help them for at least a month or month and a half.*

> *Zaaro: This is what we can do… We (can) help raise money (and) send it to Afghanistan. Alhamdulilah (praise be to God). (We) supported people for a very minimal time. That was our way of doing something… That was my way of giving back.*

The notion of giving back is an instilled Islamic value of sadaqah. The Qur'an states, 'Those who believe, and do deeds of righteousness, and establish regular prayers and regular charity, will have their reward with their lord: on them shall be no fear, nor shall they grieve' (2:277). Sadaqah refers to worshipping Allah through voluntary giving (Lambarraa & Riener, 2015). Voluntary sadaqah refers to donations of money or any act of good deeds to support people without being asked, and philanthropic acts and work are also sadaqah. Sadaqah must only be done to please Allah and not aimed at getting recognition or praise from others. Sadaqah provides an opportunity to get barakah (blessing) from Allah and enables us to do good deeds in

the context of these participants conducting philanthropic works of creating charities. In the context of this research project, some of these young Afghan men assisted people in Afghanistan and gave back to their host nation through their skills and knowledge, which are all acts of sadaqah and are rewarded by Allah SWT (Amin, 2022). Therefore, the notion of giving back among the participants is closely connected with the Islamic principle of sadaqah. University was their gateway and gave them confidence, skills, and resources to engage in acts of sadaqah.

In saying this, these participants also saw a significant shift in their identities and attaining higher education and employment further enhanced and shaped their confidence. They now play a big part in their communities using their educational backgrounds. Their increased independence enabled them to be involved in philanthropic work, and they are now giving back to their communities through the skills and knowledge they have developed. Moreover, for participants such as Baseer and Zaaro, their philanthropic work was their way of finding their place and further developing their identities as Afghans in Aotearoa New Zealand. All participants in this research project have either attained an undergraduate degree or are working towards one.

Summary

This chapter highlights that these young Afghan men have experienced significant challenges growing up in Aotearoa New Zealand. It has not been as easy as it may have appeared from the outside to receive basic needs and to be a 'grateful refugee', migrating and finding refuge in the host nation of Aotearoa New Zealand. Integrating into a new society presents unique challenges compared to being born in Aotearoa New Zealand, and these participants expressed similar experiences across the board. Their challenges allowed them to build and demonstrate perseverance, resilience, and intuition in response, allowing them to manage and mitigate them. These experiences ultimately resulted in them becoming strong, experienced, and independent adults. On this journey, two significant periods in their lives that served as rites of passage were secondary school and university, which played a pivotal role for these young Afghan men in finding their place. During secondary school, these participants encountered challenges of secondary trauma, discrimination and finding solutions to the problems they experienced. At the same time, university proved to be a place for self-growth, autonomy,

reconnection with their culture and faith, and a place where they began building meaningful relationships with others.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

This research shed light on a population that has been severely under researched both locally in Aotearoa New Zealand and internationally. For decades people of Afghanistan have moved to foreign countries via various pathways as refugees, migrants, and Asylum Seekers (Houte, 2017). However, very little has been known about the experiences of young Afghan people and their resettlement experience in foreign countries and precisely the male population (Sadiq, 2022). Notably, this study stands as the inaugural exploration providing direct access to the experiences of young Afghan men in the diaspora in Aotearoa New Zealand. Exploring the experiences of six young Afghan men residing in Aotearoa New Zealand. This research project focused on their experiences in relation to the various stages of their lives with three key themes that were explored in the preceding chapters. This was achieved by employing a biographical narrative analytic lens. The participant's interview was interpreted through the principles of halaqah.

There are many unique experiences associated with the people of Afghanistan and its history has played a pivotal role in shaping its people. Recognising the sensitivities, vulnerabilities, and complexities inherent in understanding the experiences of these Afghan men in Aotearoa New Zealand, this research project challenged the one-size-fits all (OSFA) approach utilised frequently in refugee research (Al-Dajani, 2022).

This acknowledgement is vital, considering the various backgrounds of these Afghan participants they all demonstrated uniqueness and similarities in their experiences. These experiences also indicated intergenerational transmission of collective trauma for some of the participants from their parents' experience of turmoil, displacement, and war.

Participants navigated through collective trauma from a young age to adulthood, which particularly manifested during their formative school years. Participants carried the weights of this trauma and consistently spoke about the impact it had on various facets of their lives, including pursuits of independence and parental dynamics. For some participants this meant managing their own alongside their parents past trauma simultaneously. However, in saying this many participants restricted themselves from sharing their challenges because they did not want to be a burden to their parents. This meant that both children and parents have been victims of this collective trauma and accordingly faced adversity, often in silence. Despite expressing

gratitude for the opportunities and security of the host nation, these young Afghan men continued to grapple with challenges stemming from collective trauma. The management of collective trauma amongst young adults and children particularly in a diasporic context remains underexplored in research. Consequently, the research positioned biographical narrative as a valuable tool, by offering a chronological framework to trace the turbulences of growing up in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Alongside the collective trauma these young Afghan men experienced and carried, they had to adhere to their cultural responsibilities and expectations of being a male and managing their masculinity. Masculinity was viewed and practiced differently from the traditional forms of masculinity which were practiced by their fathers.

Findings from this research also highlighted the transformative impact of university attendance for participants. Attending university emerged as a pivotal breakthrough offering an avenue for personal growth, independence, and social connection. The opportunities arose in the networks and communities formed by other university students from similar backgrounds. There was a profound opportunity for participants to forge meaningful relationships with individuals with similar ethnic backgrounds in university. This contrasted with experiences at intermediate and secondary school where participants highlighted disconnection from their peers and teachers. The university environment became a catalyst for reconnection with Afghan cultural practices and language, fostering a sense of belonging among these participants. Moreover, alongside reconnecting to their culture, university also became a platform to rejuvenate their faith. Involvement in university groups, events and friendships played a crucial role in the rekindling process of faith. For many of these participants they felt a sense of belonging and acceptance as they navigated their university experiences. University provided a space for these Afghan men to come to their own.

University offered a wide range of students and a bigger population of Muslim students and spaces such as prayer rooms for student to attend Friday congregational prayers. These activities and practices were normalised and they did not experience alienation by these practices as they experienced elsewhere. Rather, they were encouraged by their peers. Reconnecting with their faith and culture in university and in their early twenties led to building resilience and giving back to their communities. As for some participants they experienced total comfort in

their cultural attires and practicing their faith and developing pride in being Aghan and in being Muslim – something they had not felt before.

Additionally, other than reconnection to their faith and culture they also had an increased independence at university as their parents took a step back from being overtly involved in their care according to the participants. Participants also discussed decline in the tension between themselves and non-Muslim others, for example the expectation of building friendships and being accepted by others and pressures of fitting in secondary school quickly disappeared. Each participant's individuality was appreciated by others and participants accepted the uniqueness and strengths they possessed. Moreover, these participants experienced a steep learning curve from encountering hardship in the beginning from their schooling where these experiences enabled them to build perseverance and ultimately led to the cultivation of feelings of pride and embracing themselves and their identity.

During this trial-and-error phase of negotiating where they belong, participants found they have their own unique culture as Muslim Afghan Kiwis and forming hyphenated identities. This was not necessarily about combining cultures but finding a space in the middle that many young people occupy and do not have to pick between the two. Immigrant youth achieve successful integration when both cultures are acknowledged, leading to effective development within their new society (Sirin & Fine, 2007). Socio-cultural adjustment to the host society's culture is essential, and maintaining one's cultural identity is equally vital for psychological and social adjustment for migrant and refugee youth (Mude & Mwann, 2020).

The positive outcomes observed by these participants in the university context raise questions about the opportunities and spaces available for those who chose not to pursue higher education or attend university. These further warrants exploration, emphasizing the need for inclusive avenues to facilitate connection and community for individuals who choose alternative paths other than attending university. This research shows the importance of having a community-led approach for initiation and system for those not attending universities to ensure equal opportunities are provided for young Afghan men.

The participants have demonstrated resilience and strengths in the adversity they have faced and have demonstrated profound gratitude for their New Zealand citizenship and myriad opportunities afforded by the host nation. Participants have contributed by repaying the host

nation as they feel indebted to the opportunities and security the country has provided for them. Some participants formed charity platforms to give back to the people of Afghanistan as closely connected to their faith and for some their reconnection with their Islamic faith initiated involuntary charity of Sadaqah. To help the larger community, formalised in the Islamic practices of Sadaqa and Zakah and other forms of giving in their lives (Mirza, 2018). On the other hand, with their various professional backgrounds, they all contributed to New Zealand society through their knowledge and employment and further providing to the economy. They have ensured they have made the most of the opportunities that have been granted to them and fulfilling them to the best of their potential.

Study Limitations

There are important limitations to be considered. Firstly, I had trouble with recruiting participants from different ethnic Afghan backgrounds and promoting the research project to other major cities as some communities are not as overtly involved in social media platforms. This meant a missed opportunity to explore a diverse range of Afghan participants, especially given the diversity of the Afghan diaspora in Aotearoa New Zealand. For future research considerations, recruitment of Afghans living away from the big cities such Auckland, Wellington, and Christchurch and those resettling in areas such as Timaru and Blenheim, Ashburton, Masterton, and Levin can further enrichen the diversity of the ethnic population of Afghan in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Additionally, many evacuees from 2022 following the U.S withdrawal and the Taliban regaining power who resettled in Aotearoa New Zealand demonstrated their interest in the research project and involvement. However, they did not meet the criteria and aims of this research project for inclusion. Moving forward, involvement of evacuees of 2022 can contribute immensely to understand the experiences of young Afghan men resettling Aotearoa New Zealand which can further contribute to refugee research. I also had many requests from young Afghan women also who shared interest in being involved in the research project as a participant. I had to kindly decline their request as it was outside the scope of the research project as it is based on experiences of Afghan men living in Aotearoa New Zealand. Future research can also involve Afghan women participants to further enrich the experiences of Afghans in Aotearoa

New Zealand and refugee research around the world. Furthermore, this research project shed light on the experiences of these young Afghan men and one of the common themes emerged in the finding was the father and son relationship. Therefore, future research could involve the Afghan parent's perspective particularly the fathers to receive a comprehensive understanding of the family dynamics and intergenerational experiences within the Afghan diaspora in Aotearoa New Zealand. This would provide a holistic insight on the familial aspects influencing the experiences of Afghan individuals in the resettlement process.

Summary

In this research project I explored the lived experience of young Afghan men in Aotearoa New Zealand. I found a significant impact of collective trauma experiences transferred to these Afghan men from an early age from their parents' own experiences of trauma. I want to acknowledge that their experiences have been filled with disruptions and conflict and they have had to manage many of these challenges on their own from a very young age coupled with acculturation issues associated with resettling in a foreign country and growing up being viewed as different. These participants also coped with and managed parental dynamics particularly with their fathers. For many participants, these childhood experiences resulted in feelings of being older and having to grow up very quickly (Titzmann, 2011). Many of these participants were also unable to share their personal experiences of struggle with anyone, where it is well known that creating networks and social groups and associated activities can be beneficial for the wellbeing of young people in Aotearoa New Zealand.

There is a need for a community- led approach to support youth and particularly newly arrived refugee youth resettling in Aotearoa, New Zealand. This may especially be the case for young adults who choose not to attend university, as it appears there is a need for alternative outlets for them to connect with social, faith-based groups and communities to experience inclusion the same way as these participants did when they attended university. It would also be worthwhile to create a space for parents and children to receive information from experienced Afghan professionals and parents to share their experiences and expectations of living in Aotearoa New Zealand. It could be useful for these conversations to also address the parental dynamics they may potentially face residing in the host nation. This may include discussions around an increased need for emotional involvement with children from a young age and going beyond providing necessities of food, shelter, and clothing as their only responsibility in the host

nation (Choudhury & Jabeen, 2008). These findings aim to support wider refugee research and the needs of young people. It is hoped this research is valuable for stakeholders and policy makers to build on resources and identify changes in areas of need for refugees, migrant and asylum seekers seeking a brighter future in Aotearoa New Zealand.

APPENDIX A: Demographic Questionnaire

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Demographic Questionnaire

1. How old are you? _____
2. How many siblings do you have?
3. Where did you grow up?
4. Where are you in birth order?
5. When did you resettle in New Zealand?
6. What is your family's Afghan ethnicity _____?

A. Are you actively involved with your ethnic group and if so, how?

7. What was the primary language spoken in your home while growing up?
   A. Dari/Farsi
   B. Pashto
   C. English
   D. Other _____
8. Growing up did you speak any other languages?
9. Growing up who was in your household?
10. Currently, who comprises your family?
11. Have you ever been to Afghanistan? [If yes]

A. How many times?
B. Which year was your last visit?

12. What is your highest level of Education completed?

A. Secondary School
B. Diploma
C. Bachelor's degree
D. Postgraduate Study

13. What is your Employment Status?

A. Part-time employment
B. Full-Time employment
C. Unemployed
D. Seeking Employment
E. Student

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APPENDIX B: Information Sheet

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Information Sheet

Salaam Alaikum and Kia Ora,

As part of my Master of Science thesis in Psychology, I am researching the lived experience of young Afghan men with refugee backgrounds in Aotearoa/New Zealand.

Topic: Exploring the experiences of Young Afghan Men living in New Zealand

Project Description
I am seeking to explore the perceptions and experiences of these Afghan men to learn about the pre and post migration experiences of their families and the impact on everyday life in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Research in this area, particularly from a social-psychological standpoint is scarce, so this research is designed as an exploratory study and aims to better understand the experiences of these young men.

You are invited to take part in this study. Whether you decide to take part or not is entirely your choice. If you do not want to take part, you do not have to give a reason.

This information sheet provides further detail to help you make an informed decision about participating in the study. You may also want to discuss the study with partners, family, whānau, friends, or health providers.

Who can participate in this project?

- Participants must be between the ages of 18 and 35.
- Participants must speak be able to speak fluent English.
- Participants must have lived in New Zealand for 5 or more years.
- Participants must live in New Zealand.
- Participants must be Afghan Males.

Koha
To acknowledge time and effort, participants will receive a $40 Westfield voucher at the time of the interview.

If you participate, what will you be required to do?

Participants who fit the inclusion criteria will sign a consent form.

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APPENDIX C: Consent Form

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CONSENT FORM

I have read, and I understand the Information Sheet. I have had the details of the study explained to me, any questions I had have been answered to my satisfaction, and I understand that I may ask further questions at any time. I have been given sufficient time to consider whether to participate in this study and I understand participation is voluntary and that I may withdraw from the study until two weeks after I receive my transcript for review.

I agree to the interview being sound recorded.

_ Agree

_ Disagree

I wish to have my transcript returned to me.

_ Yes

_ No

I wish to receive a summary of study findings

_ Yes

_ No

I agree to participate in this study under the conditions set out in the Information Sheet.

_ Yes

_ No

Declaration by Participant:

I _____ [print full name] _____hereby consent to take part in this study.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

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APPENDIX D: Ethics Committee Approval

MASSEY UNIVERSITY
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HoU Review Group:

ReviewerGroup:
Dr Veronica Hopner

Researcher: Abrar Saleh
Title: Exploring the experiences of Young Afghan Men living in New Zealand.

Dear Abrar,

Thank you for the above application that was considered by the Massey University Human Ethics Northern Committee at their meeting held on 06/05/2022.
On behalf of the Committee I am pleased to advise you that ethical approval has been granted for your research.

Approval is for three years. If this project has not been completed within three years from the date of this letter, reapproval must be requested by contacting the Research Ethics Office at humanethics@massey.ac.nz.

If the nature, content, location, procedures or personnel of your approved application change, please advise the Secretary of the Committee.

If you wish to print an official copy of this letter:

1. Please login to the RIMS system (https://rme.massey.ac.nz).
2. In the Ethics menu, select Ethics Applications.
3. Using the Advanced search with appropriate criteria to find only this application.
4. With the application on the Results tab, select Reports from the toolbar.
5. Select the "Human Ethics - Full Application Letter" link, this will open the report viewer.
6. Select the application code from the Report Parameters dropdown and submit. You can then select an export option from the top toolbar (Print, Save).

Yours sincerely
Professor Craig Johnson
Chair, Human Ethics Chairs' Committee and
Director (Research Ethics)

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