Can the Afghan Diaspora Speak?¹ Diasporic Identity in the Shadow of Human Rights²

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Introduction

The case of Afghan refugees in Pakistan is one of the most protracted refugee situations in the world. Formally assisted by both the UNHCR and the Pakistani government, in the form of the provincial Commissionerate for Afghan Refugees and the Ministry for States and Frontier Regions (SAFRON), the lives of these refugees and migrant Afghans in Pakistan are shaped largely by how they are “seen” in the Pakistani “imaginaire.”³ The premise of the paper is that the Afghan identity in Pakistan is constructed through the Pakistani State discourse(s) of fearism, international development agencies and the larger geo-political context. This paper seeks to understand the legal and social identity of the Afghan diaspora living in Pakistan. Building on narratives from Afghans living in Pakistan and Pakistanis with regular interactions with Afghans, the paper will examine the strategies of resistance for Afghan refugees in Pakistan as they negotiate their identity and the idea of home.

The rights of minorities are quite often the weakest link in the complex equation of citizenship and entitlement in nation states. It can be argued that the state interface with them as refugees or asylum seekers and later as citizens, and the society’s interaction with them directly after integration or through public discourse on refugees and asylum seekers, provide insights into the ethos of citizenship and democracy.

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- 1 In reverence to Spivak’s stance the paper attempts to unveil who does speak on Afghan identity and when the Afghans speak, who is listening.
 - 2 The findings and analysis presented remain interim and in no way conclusive; they are part of an on-going research, shared with a community of academics working on similar issues, for a cross-fertilization of ideas. The researchers/authors remain grateful to the University of Versailles Saint-Quentin-en-Yvelines and the organizers of the International conference on Globalization and Minority People, held on 19th June 2013, for providing an opportunity for sharing and discussing the information presented in this paper.
 - 3 Jean-François Bayard, *The Illusion of Cultural Identity*. The University of Chicago Press Books, Translated by Steven Rendall, Janet Roitman, Cynthia Schoch, and Jonathan Derrick, 2005, 132.

Categories such as “migrant,” “asylum seeker” and “refugee” exist and are explained within a global context. A new kind of global imaginary is being shaped by the fear of the Other,⁴ or what is termed fearism, that is, “a process and discourse [of?] hegemony [which] creates an experience of fear that is normalized...keeping the cultural matrix of ‘fear’ operative and relatively invisible.”⁵ Appuradai observes that “the blurred lines between ‘them’ and ‘us’ has existed forever and globalization only exacerbates these uncertainties and produces new incentives for cultural purification.”⁶ We explore whether this theory holds true with reference to the Afghan diaspora, keeping in view that “the novelty of our era, which threatens the very foundations of the nation-state, is that growing portions of humanity can no longer be represented within it.”⁷ For both Appuradai and Agamben, the refugee is at the centre of globalization—for Appuradai as part of the “ethnoscape,” i.e., the shifting world,⁸ and for Agamben as “the sole category in which it is possible today to perceive the forms and limits of a political community to come.”⁹ Thus it can be argued that our era, that of globalization, contributes to the understanding of the category “refugee” as much as the category helps our understanding of our era.

There is a more obvious layer of globalised discourse from international organizations and aid agencies working within a humanitarian and human rights framework. This layer seems to contradict with the hegemony of fear. Zembylas (2010) argues that for Agamben the failure to question the separation of humanitarian concerns from politics—and thus the treatment of immigrants/refugees/asylum seekers as bare life, excluded from the political community and exposed to death at every turn—signals a resemblance between humanitarianism and the discourse(s) of fearism. Examples of such discourse come from the International Committee of the Red Cross, the non-political actions of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and more precisely the refusal of these organizations to comment on

4 Michalinos Zembylas, “Agamben’s Theory of Biopower and Immigrants/Refugees/Asylum Seekers: Discourses of Citizenship and the Implications For Curriculum Theorizing,” in *Journal of Curriculum Theorizing*, Volume 26, Number 2, 2010, 32.

5 Fisher 2006 in Michalinos Zembylas, “Agamben’s Theory of Biopower and Immigrants/Refugees/Asylum Seekers: Discourses of Citizenship and the Implications For Curriculum Theorizing,” in *Journal of Curriculum Theorizing*, Volume 26, Number 2, 2010, 32.

6 Arjun Appadurai, *Fear of Small Numbers*. Duke University Press, 2006, 7.

7 Agamben Giorgio, *Means Without Ends: Notes on Politics* translated by Vincenzo Binetti and Cesare Casarino, *Theory out of Bond*. University of Minnesota Press, 2000, Volume 20, 21.

8 Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at Large*. University of Minnesota Press, 1996, 20.

9 Appuradai 1996, 18.

the actions of political regimes.¹⁰ It is therefore argued that humanitarian agencies operate under a variant of this “fearism.” The presentation of the migrants, refugees and asylum seeker as fearsome is not only in political and media discourses; it also echoes in the discourse of humanitarian agencies.

A further layer of globalised discourse comes through what Appuradai refers to as mediascapes, that is the distribution of the electronic capabilities to produce and disseminate information (newspapers, magazines, television stations, film production studios, etc.), which are now available to a growing number of private and public interests throughout the world. The media are often the conduit for the hegemonic discourse of fearism. The politics of fear¹¹ acknowledges the important role of power relations, cultural scripts and media in the process of figuring immigrants, refugees and asylum seekers as fearsome. Hence, when we take Appuradai’s ethnoscares, mediascapes and ideoscapes as elements of our globalised world, it may be suggested that the ideoscape, defined as “concatenations of images” about the refugees (who are part of the “ethnoscape”) is (potentially) disseminated simultaneously in Kabul, Karachi and New York through the mediascape.

Primarily, the concept of the imaginary (*imaginaire*) is applied to examine the discourses of fearism finding their way into perceptions of Afghan identity, at the legal and social levels: “In short we have to understand the *imaginaire* as the dimension from which issues a continuous dialogue between heritage and innovation that characterizes political action in its cultural aspect.”¹² The global context of the Afghan identity formation within various discourses of fearism can be read through these distinct junctions: the 1979 USSR invasion of Afghanistan, the 1995–96 Taliban government in Kabul and the 2001 World Trade Centre attack leading to the ongoing global alliance of War on Terror (WoT).

In this analysis, we examine identity at two levels, legal and social: legal identity, as given by the Proof of Registration (PoR) for Afghans in Pakistan and social identity as expressed, verbal and written, in the perceptions of those around them. The examined narratives include written narratives from journalistic and bureaucratic sources and discussions with representatives of the Afghan diaspora,¹³ as well as representatives of the Pakistan government administration, aid agencies working with Afghans in Pakistan and Pakistanis

¹⁰ Zembylas, 36.

¹¹ Zembylas, 31.

¹² Bayart, 137.

¹³ So far, these include the Afghans residing in Pakistan and Canada. The research was carried out in 2013.

in Afghan majority neighbourhoods. In this paper, discourse is both a unit of data collection and a unit of analysis.

Forming and Negotiating Identities: the Camp, the Afghans and the Law of Exception

In contemporary states, identity is the authoritative marker of exclusion and inclusion.¹⁴ When Others are constructed as fearsome, “they are excluded from the field of human values, civic rights and moral obligations...[thus] maintaining the boundary that divides ‘us’ from ‘them.’”¹⁵ In Pakistan, it was in the mid-to late 1990s that the Afghan identity was expressed as dangerous to the nation in the prevailing discourse. In time, the Afghans could not be included without inflicting serious damage on Pakistanis. The resentment and even violence against the Afghans, then, was seen as a justified response toward the threat posed by them.

With around 1.7 million registered Afghans living in Pakistan,¹⁶ the country has been host to the largest proportion of the largest refugee population¹⁷ in the world for more than 30 years. Pakistan's recognition of Afghan refugees was *prima facie*, albeit without many restrictions at all. The Pakistan government neither signed nor was a party to the 1951 Refugee Convention¹⁸ and the 1967 protocol.¹⁹ In addition, the domestic legislation (Foreigners Act 1946,²⁰

14 Antje Ellerman. Undocumented Migrants and Resistance in the State of Exception Prepared for presentation at the European Union Studies Association meeting in Los Angeles, CA, April 2009, 11.

15 Papastergiadis 2006 in Zembylas, 39.

16 An estimated 1 million or more are unregistered (multiple sources including UN agencies).

17 According to UNHCR's 'Global Trends' Report, one out of 3 refugees, across the world, is an Afghan.

18 The UNHCR 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees is the key legal document in defining who is a refugee, their rights and the legal obligations of states.

19 The Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees (also known as the New York Protocol) entered into force on the 4th of October 1967. Whereas the United Nations 1951 Convention on the Status of Refugees had restricted refugee status to those whose circumstances had come about “as a result of events occurring before 1 January 1951” and has given states party to the Convention the option of interpreting this as “events occurring in Europe” or “events occurring in Europe or elsewhere,” the 1967 Protocol removed both the temporal and geographic restrictions.

20 The Foreigners Act, 1946 is a Pakistani law enacted to grant the certain powers to Pakistani government in matters of foreigners in Pakistan. The Act was enacted before Pakistan became independent. The Act defines a foreigner as a person who is not a citizen of Pakistan.

Foreigner Registration Act 1939,²¹ etc.) remains inadequate and at best ambiguous. For more than 20 years, Afghans in Pakistan remained largely undocumented. Those in camps were issued ration cards which for a period also doubled as a means of identification. However, it is clear that while the concentration of Afghans coming to Pakistan was found in the 300 camps²² that were set up, there was a sizeable Afghan population outside the camps as well. It was in 2005 that registration for Afghans (inside and outside the camps) was undertaken by the Pakistani Government, in collaboration with the UNHCR. Close to 3 million Afghans were registered and certified with a "Proof of Registration" (PoR) document.

Canadian Afghan journalist and documentary maker, Nilofer Pizar, remembers a warm reception and helpful local population during her stay in Pakistan, when she was fleeing Afghanistan after the Soviet invasion. Pakistan was lavished with praise globally for its generosity in hosting Afghan refugees through the 1980s. Comparisons were often made with Iran, which was specifically criticised for forced repatriation. Pakistan, on the other hand, maintained the rhetoric of Afghan guests. At the height of the international generosity, the international community supported Pakistan in this effort for as much as US \$100 million²³ annually, funnelled through Pakistan for the Afghan population living in Pakistan. The global narrative on Pakistan changed following the Soviet withdrawal and the fall of Kabul to the Taliban in 1996. One indication of this changed role for Pakistan was in the drying up of financial support for the Afghans. This was also the time when in the absence of any work programmes or ration card system, an even larger number of Afghans left the camps to seek a livelihood outside the camps. The late 1990s saw the emergence of policy directives to police stations that called for Afghans to be hauled up and sent back to Afghanistan. The USCR report on the change in conditions of Afghans in Pakistan, published on September 28, 2001, predicted "The appalling terrorist attacks on New York and Washington on September 11, 2001 are likely to trigger fundamental changes in states' and individuals' attitudes towards foreigners, and particularly in the reception and treatment of refugees. The refugee population most likely to be immediately affected is Afghan refugees in Pakistan."²⁴

21 An Act to provide for the Registration of Foreigners in Pakistan & extends to the whole of Pakistan.

22 Most of these were in the two provinces of Balochistan and North West Frontier (renamed Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in 2011).

23 UNDP/UNHCR Needs Assessment Report, 2007.

24 USCR 2001, 4.

There is an acknowledgement of an overall change in perception of Afghan refugees in Pakistan (USCR 2001; IRIN 2007; HRCP various reports 2001/2- 2009). This change in perception appears to have translated into a change in attitude which is shared by the Afghans interviewed: "It is simple. My father did not face what my brother had to face till we sent him away to Canada. Don't get me wrong, there were problems for our family when we first came but for my husband to have to go to the local police station and bribe them to let my brother go is harassment, simply on the basis of being Afghan" (urban Afghan woman married to a Pakistani).

To understand the transition as expressed in the above statement, it is important to explore the elements of cultural identity, global discourse and the politics of nation state and refugee as an intricate medley. Following the 1979 invasion of Afghanistan by USSR, there was an exodus of refugees to the neighbouring countries. Pakistan was an ally against the USSR, a pre-dominantly Muslim country with a sizeable Pashtun population.

Hence, initially, the shared religion²⁵ and culture was invoked in the global discourse and reflected in the political actions in Pakistan. As Boesen²⁶ writes, "The Pushtun Afghan refugees and the local Pakistan population share fundamental cultural links: language (Pushtu), religion (*Sunni*), and the Pushtun cultural system, which they call the *Pushtunwali* (The Pushtun way). The basic values of *Pushtunwali* are twofold: *merana* (magnanimity) and *melmapalana* (hospitality)." As mentioned, the mid-1990s ushered in a change and by 1999,²⁷ the government refused to consider all newly arriving Afghans as *prima facie* refugees, resorting to deportation and even detention, border closures, camp closures and voluntary and forced repatriation among other actions. The refugees also faced greater restrictions on movement, employment, and access to public services within the camps and refugee villages. In 2001, Pakistan officially closed its borders to new arrivals. For the camps in Germany to be effective, the Nuremberg Laws stripping the Jews of their citizenship rights were a necessary prerequisite;²⁸ Without *prima facie* recognition and any official

25 Countries such as Saudi Arabia helped finance the mujahedeen in order to help rid Muslim Afghanistan of the Soviet "infidels" (op.cit).

26 Page 161 in Boesen, Inger W. (1990) "Honour in exile: continuity and change among Afghan refugees," in *The Cultural Basis of Afghan Nationalism*, eds. Ewan Anderson and Nancy Hatch Dupree. Oxford: University of Oxford, Refugee Studies Programme.

27 HRW, 20–22; See also U.S. Committee for Refugee and Immigrants (2001), "Pakistan: Afghan Refugees Shunned and Scorned," available at http://www.refugees.org/world/articles/pakistan_introduction_2001.htm; Centlivres, 13–17.

28 Giorgio Agamben, *Means Without Ends: Notes on Politics* translated by Vincenzo Binetti and Cesare Casarino (University of Minnesota Press, 2000, Volume 20) and Hannah Arendt in *Power: A Reader* edited by Mark Haugaard, Manchester University Press 2002.

documentation, these refugees were also rendered stateless within Pakistan and moved into a zone where “the exception and the rule, the licit and the illicit”²⁹ were indistinguishable. The above quotation is all the more significant since a Pakistani citizen was able to negotiate (or even buy out) a release for the Afghan brother of his wife, not an Afghan. Agamben observes “When the rights of man are no longer the rights of the citizen, then he is truly sacred, in the sense that this term had in archaic Roman law: destined to die.”³⁰ The exacerbation of the distinctions between Afghans and Pakistanis is a transition contrasting the initial drumming up of cultural similarities. The stripping off of these similarities was a necessary precondition for the state of exception wherein “the normal rule of law is suspended and in which the fact that atrocities will be committed does not depend on the law but on the ethical and civil sense of the police that act temporarily as sovereign.”³¹ The following two excerpts from a conversation with Afghans in Pakistan further illustrates that they do live without a rule of law and are at the mercy of the police as sovereign where sovereign is defined by the ability to designate *homo sacre*.

The first time the police stopped me and my brother, he was upset. He showed them his papers (referring to the PoR), yet they wouldn't let him go. I was scared and just so my brother wouldn't get into any trouble, I gave them all the cash I had with me at the time. It happens now too, and we do bribe them.

Urban Afghan student at a private institution

My husband is a taxi driver and we live in a predominantly displaced Somalis and Afghans area. Police routinely stop taxi drivers who are Afghan just to extort money, threatening them with rotting in jail without any legal recourse. We barely make enough to sustain ourselves, yet we'd rather bribe them than have my husband incarcerated and me, my daughters and my young son left without his protective presence.

Urban Afghan woman, domestic worker

The discussions further highlighted that “getting into trouble,” that is being taken to the police station, could lead to the writing of a report, which they wanted to avoid by paying the bribe. While we could not talk to the police, we relied on conversations with Afghans to conclude that the fear of being taken to the police station was used by the police to extort money. Hence, using

29 Agamben, 2000, 40.

30 Agamben, 2000, 22, 3.

31 Agamben, 2000, 41.

Agamben's analogy of the camp, while the actions of the police represent the law of exception being extended beyond the camp itself, the police station resembles the camp, with its law of exception or naked life that Arendt refers to as "a space where power confronts nothing other than pure biological life without any mediation."³² The Afghans outside the 'camp' therefore do not want to go inside the "camp."

The Hegemony of Fearism: Conduits, Amplifiers and the Construction of the Other

In the popular Pakistani imagination, by now the Afghan is "the Other," responsible for moral decay in a hitherto pristine Pakistani culture through a combination of debauchery and violence. This moral malaise does not consist only in the introduction of violence and weaponization, but also prostitution. Here are some representations of such popular perceptions gathered during conversations with Pakistanis regularly in contact with Afghans living in Pakistan:

They have been key in bringing the drug culture, Kalashnikov culture; in the Zia era, the formal economy GDP was 5% and the black economy was 8%.

Retired Pakistani Army Officer

The men are drug addicts and their wives are prostitutes to make ends meet. Due to prostitution, abortion is rampant and they are willing to bribe doctors with dollars to get it done (Pakistani doctor practicing in Afghan concentrated neighbourhood).

Forced repatriation is a very dangerous policy option. You cannot get the Afghans out, there will be daily bombings as a reaction, if they do.

Aid Agency worker

These expressions are representative of fearism which finds its way into the popular "imaginaire" through "multiple threads that interconnect fear with the "stranger" other."³³ These threads include the national discourse on Afghans as well as the international discourse on terrorism. The Afghan in Pakistan is constructed as a moral, physical, economic and security threat. Such an effect

³² Agamben, 40.

³³ Zembylas, 39.

of seeing the “Other” as a threat caused dualities of “us” and “them” to emerge. Some excerpts are shared from the discourse of international aid agencies which seem to depict the same fearism as in the popular “imaginaire.”

Afghans concentrated in and around villages and camps have contributed to the degradation of the environment accelerating the deterioration of the physical infrastructure, forests and livestock grazing areas.

Afghans living in Pakistan have strained the Pakistani service sector's financial resources and infrastructure in the affected and hosting areas. Even where camps were fully closed 25–30 percent of Afghans preferred to remain in Pakistan. Afghan school children account for at least 20–25 percent of the students in Pakistani schools in these areas.

The menial jobs that the local population shies away from, such as garbage collection and recycling in the major urban areas, are undertaken by Afghans.

These statements are from a document³⁴ for the development of an assistance project in the refugee hosting areas. The overall context of the argument within the document is therefore humanitarian. Being a UN project, it is apolitical. Yet, we see that these statements are congruent with the discourse(s) of fear, which constructs the Afghans in Pakistan as detrimental to Pakistan. The help provided is therefore rooted in a human rights discourse. In other words, like the discourses of fearism compelled by the law of exception, the international aid agencies' discourse also views the Afghans simply as bodies, bare life separate from political life.

Resistance: Coping by Using the Weapons of the Weak

Scott³⁵ argues that while the weapons of the weak are strategies of resistance, they do not amount to acts of empowerment, but are better understood as acts of desperation. Often, these acts of desperation are coping strategies for thwarting social control. Ellerman discusses “resistance by means of identity-stripping” by illegal migrants in Germany: “These self-stripping strategies

34 JOINT UN PROGRAMME on DISASTER RISK MANAGEMENT available at <www.undp.org.pk>.

35 Scoot (1985) in Antje Ellerman, Undocumented Migrants and Resistance in the State of Exception Prepared for presentation at the European Union Studies Association meeting in Los Angeles, CA, April 2009.

clearly exemplify the possibility of resistance in the state of exception.”³⁶ In Pakistan, we can see a version of this among the Afghans that we spoke to. To explain the everyday negotiation of identity by the Afghan population, we introduce the idea of a “line of visibility” as a weapon. Both in terms of social and legal identity, their coping strategy is to stay below the line of visibility:

I speak English and they ask me where am I from, I get away with saying “I am from the middle east.”

Male student

My cousins in Afghanistan make fun of me because I look so Pakistani, but I think it's better. At least I don't have many explanations to give.

K is an Afghan woman in her later twenties and works in a local business at as a receptionist and assistant

I am more Pakistani than I am Afghan, anyway. I dress Pakistani, I speak Urdu so well, my friends are all Pakistani. Unless somebody visits my place, they never know that I am Afghan.

Female student

I know there are women who do not disclose that they are Afghans, they do this because it makes them feel safer.

Nazneen

For the Afghans living in Pakistan, this everyday subterfuge is to create space in what most consider a temporary home. While no one that we talked to mentioned going back to Afghanistan, they did not see Pakistan as “home” explicitly. Nazneen, an Afghan woman living in Pakistan who has been quoted several times in this paper, is a mother of four who came to Pakistan in 1998 after the Taliban stopped her in the street and beat her for lifting her *burqa* (veil) in public to breathe during an Asthma attack. Since then, she has alternately been working in people's houses, stitching clothes and selling knitwear to a local store to make ends meet. Her husband is a taxi driver. She shared, “For me, Afghanistan is my country, my love, my pride. Afghanistan zindabad.” However, implicitly, Pakistan is associated with home, as they explained knowing the streets here and not knowing them in Afghanistan: “What would I do there?”³⁷

36 Antje Ellerman, Undocumented Migrants and Resistance in the State of Exception Prepared for presentation at the European Union Studies Association meeting in Los Angeles, CA, April 2009.

37 Afghanistan.

I don't even know the streets. I wouldn't be able to run simple errands. What do I know about the place? Nothing!" (Nazneen). However, the Afghans in Pakistan are different from the illegal migrants in Germany as discussed by Ellerman, in that their destination of choice is not the country they have escaped to, namely Pakistan. Given a choice, they would much rather be in some developed country of North America, Europe or Australia. Most of our respondents had at least one relative in one these countries.

Hannah Arendt observes a "priceless advantage" that refugees have: "History is no longer a closed book to them and politics is no longer the privilege of Gentiles...Refugees driven from country to country represent the vanguard of their people."³⁸ Though this needs³⁹ further development, we do look at some conversations displaying this priceless advantage, which we link to Appuradai's notion of "imaginaire" which is also a means of subversion and to Agamben's idea of the "power of intellectuality" which he argues is the power to reunite life to its form or prevents it from being dissociated from its form.

We have argued in this paper that the lives of Afghans in Pakistan are shaped largely by how they are "seen" in the Pakistani "imaginaire."⁴⁰ Our respondents were aware of this control exerted on them at a social level and even how it extended to the articulation of their legal identity: "If I could change one thing, it would be the way the men in this country look at me,"⁴¹ Nazneen's shared. Her story is not unique, nor is her experience. It is, however, her being a refugee which has given her the insight expressed above.

To be honest, Pakistanis have also changed. They weren't like this, they are quite backward. Just look at your TV, from covering head to sleeveless and western attire, now. Whereas women from Kabul when they first came, they wore sleeveless and western clothes and were generally, more fashionable. Now that is not bad but only different. The Pakistanis categorised that as bad and associated it with being loose.

Urban Afghan woman, living in Pakistan for 30 years

She went on to explain with an example:

See, we are different for Pakistani weddings might be segregated but ours are not. For Pakistani, it might be strange to dance in wedding ceremonies, when men are present. For us, the dance is a gift to the couple and their families, signifying that we are sharing in their happiness. If we

38 Arendt in Agamben 2000 16, 7.

39 Arendt in Agamben 2000 16, 7.

40 Deleuze in Bayart, 132.

41 All names are changed to protect respondent privacy.

don't dance, they might think they are not happy with this match, It can, actually, offend them.

She explained how cultural differences were used to contribute to what we refer to as discourses of fearism:

I have, personally been asked "So are you kaafirs⁴² then, you wear a white dress for weddings." White dress is cultural, from Turkmenistan to Iran to Afghanistan even Arab countries, it is white for the bride. It is Pakistan taking from Indian subcontinent that you have read. So I now tell the person asking, unless you are Hindu⁴³ for wearing red as a bride or eating chillies, we are not kaafirs.

We understand the above conversation as an example resistance and coping strategy based on the "priceless advantage" since in this explanation we see historical, cultural and political analysis from a person who is not a political analyst or a historian. She was simply faced with the situation of having to leave her home country and confront a culture different from hers, which led to questions she had to find answers to. The resistance is especially evident where exiles use their intercultural knowledge to counter the Pakistanis' question at a social level with a retort that counters the Pakistani nationalistic discourse of difference: "the State of Pakistan has not been fair to us. It has wanted its people to feel about us the way they wanted. How do they claim they have given us space? Where? What space? We pay rents and that too a higher premium. We are partly responsible for appreciated rentals through the 80s and 90s" (K from the private sector). K is aware that it is the social perception created through various conduits of the discourses of fearism which compels most homeowners to avoid having her as a tenant, simply because she is an Afghan. However, it is what we refer to as the law of exception that leaves her no recourse to legal action if she is asked for higher than market price as rent, simply on the basis of being Afghan.

Faraz, an Afghan student shared with us how the global imaginaire is fuelled by the mediascape and shapes the ideoscape, and we will end our analysis of the status of Afghan refugees in Pakistan with his comment:

Before coming to Pakistan, I hated Pakistan. We all did in Afghanistan. In fact, when I first got an opportunity to come to Pakistan on a scholarship,

42 Generic term used for non Muslims which is derogatory.

43 India being a longstanding adversary in Pakistani national discourse, Hindu has implications for the common Pakistani ego beyond religious aspects.

my friends discouraged me so much so that I gave it up, citing family problems. Everyone in my country hates Pakistan. My mother is totally illiterate, she hates Pakistan. So I thought why does she hate Pakistan? She doesn't even know much about it. She hates Pakistan because my father hates Pakistan. Why does my father hate Pakistan? My father hates Pakistan because the media tells him to.

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