

Afghan Entrepreneurial Identity in Peshawar: A Thematic Analysis of ‘Expert Voices’¹

Muhammad Junaid*, Mehboob-ur-Rashid** & Nasir Shaheen***

Abstract

The study frames the livelihood practices of Afghans in Peshawar through the concept of entrepreneurship and conceptualizes it as a function of their (entrepreneurial) identity. Afghan (entrepreneurial) identity is considered as a progression and extension of historical, cultural, political and contextual undercurrents. Identities are anchored through moral propositions regulating values and behaviour. For the individual level they represent the idea of opposing poles; right and wrong, desirable and undesirable (Schöpflin, 2001). From a historical viewpoint, Afghan livelihood practices are considered to be ‘subsistence level agrarian’ where migration has been a constant feature of their lives. Culturally, the code of ‘Pashtunwali’ considered to be enduring in various forms over millennia. It is considered to be the ideal type model for any Pashtun. Politically, Afghans are considered as a tribal society with a strong history of highly volatile relationships. Lastly, the contextual factors represent the more immediate history of last forty years which can be bracketed between ‘Afghan’ being eulogized as the ultimate flag-bearer of freedom and ‘Afghan’ as a most feared terrorist. The thematic analyses of the reflections of three expert voices with vast experience in Afghan affairs illustrate two intertwined currents. Firstly, the question of Afghan and Pashtun identity leading to comparison between Pakistani and Afghani Pashtuns and culminating in the portrayal of ‘strong’ and ‘weak’ identities. Secondly, the redefinition of identities through the construction of new economic ways of being that is supported by adherence to Pashtunwali. Together, the two trends exhibit an ‘Afghan entrepreneurial identity’ strongly stimulated and supported by Pashtunwali. The paper breaks new ground by theorizing ‘Afghan entrepreneur’ and also provides a glimpse of reinterpretation of Pashtunwali.

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Introduction

Entrepreneurship is considered to be a major reason for socio-economic progress of nations (Baumol, Litan & Schramm, 2007). Wealth creation and economic growth translates into advancement of societies through social justice and political stability (Rindova, Barry & Ketchen, 2009). Identifying entrepreneurship as a progressive force raises the issue of its replication in developing and third world countries. However, scholars have struggled to find an agreed upon definition for entrepreneurship due to disciplinary divide and varied philosophical assumptions. Thus, it is necessary to agree on the operational definition of entrepreneurship before seeking answers to the most fundamental questions like what are causes and effects of entrepreneurship?

The current paper develops a contextual view of indigenous Afghan entrepreneurs by using the conceptual frame of entrepreneurial identity. The inductive study of livelihood practices of Afghans in Peshawar illustrates a progression of historical, cultural and political undercurrents with a major event of migration. Using entrepreneurial identity allows a situated view of livelihood practices. This study represents a subset of the first authors PhD thesis that triangulates three two sources of data and three types of analyses to empirically understand the entrepreneurial identity (and the subsequent practices) of Afghan entrepreneurs in Peshawar. This paper succinctly presents the thematic analyses of selected expert interviews collected for the PhD study to emphasize the various aspects of Afghan entrepreneurship in Peshawar. The paper is divided into four sections. The first section reviews the literature on entrepreneurial identity followed by the methodological section outlining the use of expert interviews. Thirdly, the thematically analysed and reconstructed versions of expert interviews are presented. The final section concludes the study.

Entrepreneurship: formative relationship between individual and societal values

The term entrepreneur was coined by Richard Cantillon (1734) as a specialist in taking risk who ensures workers by buying for them in expectation of selling on profit. More recently, entrepreneurship was commonly referred to as process of establishing new organizations (Gartner, 1985), that results in employment of human resource and boosting up productivity. For others it represents risk taking propensity, innovation and creative destruction of resources (Schumpeter, 1934). However, entrepreneurship is the outcome of individual action taking

place within a context. Entrepreneurship emerges as a product of various personal factors like motivation, personal traits interacting with various environmental factors like historically evolving socio-economic and political factors. According to classic theorists like Adam Smith, Karl Marx, and Max Weber cultural values play a crucial role in stimulating entrepreneurial activity (Begley & Tan, 2001). Summarily, the social and cultural antecedents and influences of entrepreneurship vary contextually. Shane and Venkaraman (2000) outline three roles of entrepreneurship in society:

- As a mechanism to transform technical information into value added products and services (Arrow, 1962)
- A mechanism to remove spatial and temporal inefficiencies in the market place and move it towards equilibrium (Kirzner, 1997).
- Entrepreneurial innovation in products and services is the source of change in capitalist economies thus creating the necessary disequilibrium in the marketplace to progress the economy (Schumpeter, 1934).

All the three above mentioned roles are rooted in individual action that is situated as well as embedded within a particular socio-cultural milieu. At micro level culture can be observed as compilation of distinguishable behavioural traits expressed in individual actions. Value system of any society shapes the behavioural traits of individuals and trigger off specific response to corresponding environment that is distinct from other societies. Thus, traits act as an intermediary with values (as culture) on one side and action (specific contextual response) on the other side. A generic view of individual's (entrepreneurial) action that arises from the interaction of societal values and individual traits can be depicted in figure 1.1.

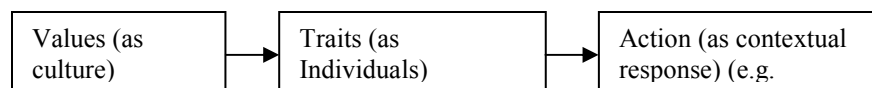


Figure 1.1 Entrepreneurship as a product of societal values

Although figure 1.1 locates the individual within the societal values, a historical would depict a more interactive relationship between the societal values and individual traits. Individuals are born into a particular socio-cultural milieu but they also act as the building blocks of society. Thus, (some) individuals' behaviour extends and progress or introduces new dimensions into the dominant values. This two way relationship between the individual and values can be captured thorough the concept of embeddedness. Jack and Anderson (2002) emphasize the same:

‘Embeddedness is process whereby entrepreneur (acting as agent) becomes a part of the local structure; both the agent and structure affect each other through diverse mechanisms. The social structure’s nature is understood, ties forged through enactment of re-enactment and maintained, this leads to drawing on resources and creating opportunities.’ (p. 476)

Societal values affect the individual decision making process. Societies with values that are more rewarding towards risk taking and innovation breed more entrepreneurs. Moreover, societal perceptions towards entrepreneurial activities have significant impacts on decision to become entrepreneur. On the other hand, societal values can be subjected to changes (though over a long period of time) after individuals’ practices of risk taking and innovation is perceived to be producing favourable outcomes. Thus, societies values can become pro-entrepreneurship if the perception of people becomes favourable about individuals who exhibit entrepreneurial traits. However, such changes cannot be deliberate as culture itself evolves based on the experiences of the members of society. The evolution of values is a trial and error process, including the experimentation with the technological innovations and institutional factors in society that eventually leads to better socioeconomic conditions. Thus, it can be concluded that entrepreneurial activity is carried out in the economic domain however money earning activity is not carried out in a vacuum rather it is socially embedded (Granovetter, 1985). Social contexts give rise to entrepreneurial identities- a dynamic and emergent concept that lends itself to the notion of becoming (Giddens, 1991). Individual’s identity ‘mirrors’ the historical as well as the more immediate elements of the interactions between the individual traits and societal values.

Framing Afghan livelihood through ‘Entrepreneurial Identity’

Different theories of identity are applied to entrepreneurship research from a social constructions view point (Jones, Latham, & Betta, 2008). The growing trend of identity studies in entrepreneurship use self and identity interchangeably. Foss (2004) links identity and culture to study entrepreneurship as a cultural phenomenon. She argues that identity construction is a contextual process of self-reflection where ethnicity can be a crucial factor. But it is also claimed that ‘linking the ‘self’ of the individual to entrepreneurial activities can reveal how entrepreneurship is culturally situated’ (p. 80). The author analyses the temporal events of life history to report continuity and consistency in identity as it projects consistency. Identity is seen as a self’s reflexive project which allows the individual to ‘navigate’ through the social and cultural milieu. Falck et al (2009) combine the social identity theory with occupational choice

model to investigate the link between identity and decision of becoming an entrepreneur. It is concluded that socialization, in an entrepreneurial parents or peer group, can enhance result in entrepreneurial identity and intentions. Johansson (2004) argues that fabrication of life story is construction of identity, which might be formative but certainly it can be used to study (entrepreneurial) identity. Hamilton (2002), Mallon and Cohen (2001) and Lindgren (2000) are also posit that narratives represent identity constructions and can be used to investigate entrepreneurial practice, intentions and motivations. It can be concluded that entrepreneurial identity can be studied through life history narratives for in depth study of entrepreneurship. Jones et al (2008) use narratives to study the social entrepreneur's ideological-activist identity. Organizational boundaries are set through a space of difference that leads to formation of identities. Individuals locate themselves within this space through aligning (with similarities) and opposing (with difference) or opposition and apposition respectively. This 'tension' is strategically deployed towards certain aims, thus identities are used to achieve aims. Analyzing both, 'self-identification (who am I?) and self-disidentification (Who am I not?)' (Jones et al, 2008: p. 332) can better inform identity construction. Murnieks and Mosakowski (2007) use a version of identity theory (Stryker & Burke, 2000), that is an extension of symbolic interactionism, to investigate the influence of multiple identities on regulation of emotions. Identity motivates behaviour because individual seeks self-verification from society by corresponding to respective role. While roles are behavioural expectations attached to societal statuses (Cast, 2004) internalized by individual's self-concept as 'cognitive schemas' (Stryker & Burke, 2000) that forms identities.

Most importantly for this paper, identity is 'self-composed of meanings corresponding to societal roles' (Stryker and Burke, 2000, p. 284). It is a reflexive cognition which seeks to answer 'Who am I?' (Stryker & Serpe, 1982). Thus, individuals behave in a certain way to project themselves in a desired way to others and their own selves. In other words, identification is recognition of self is achieved through expression of a specific behaviour. The connection of identity and behaviour is well established as identity motivates behaviour (Burke, 1991) Individual aligns his/her own identity in accordance with the societal roles. It follows that entrepreneurial action is also a type of behaviour that is triggered by a need for aligning a self with a desired role. Societal values are instrumental in assigning higher or lower value to various roles. Entrepreneurial identity – the behaviour of individual to identify himself as an entrepreneur certainly elicits a specific behaviour from an individual to express his own self. It can be concluded that identities and societal values evolve together. In other words, identities are constructed according to the societal values.

Identities are a product of negotiation of meaning. They are neither a mere personal choice of internalization of a role nor a direct, explicit and independent decision. They emerge out of the interplay of diverse roles stipulated to the individual by a social setting. In the end it all comes down to the issue of identity landscape which arises relationally for the role landscape in a society.

‘For both form and substance, personal identities necessarily draw on available social discourses or narratives about who one can be and how one should act, some of which may enjoy stronger institutional and material support than others’ (Alvesson, Ashcraft, & Thomas, 2008: p. 11).

It can be stated that various research studies have used the premise that (entrepreneurial) action is expressed as behaviour that is motivated by (entrepreneurial) identity. However, research studies have adopted a diverse range of concept within identity theories to interpret entrepreneurial actions. Murnieks and Mosakowski (2007) conclude that the literature on entrepreneurship lacks a deeper discussion on entrepreneurial identity. For this study, entrepreneurial identity construction is viewed as a process of self-reflection (and self-projection) through time and space and encountering a variety of environments (Lindgren & Wåhlin, 2001). And finally;

‘Construction of identities uses building material from History, from Geography, from Biology, from productive and reproductive institutions, from collective memory and from personal fantasies, from power apparatuses and religious revelations’ (Castells, 2004: p.7)

This section warrants the use of entrepreneurial identity to frame the livelihood practices of Afghans in Peshawar. Afghan entrepreneurial identity represents the combined effects of evolving social values through the event of migration and the more stable and enduring elements Afghan culture that have withstood the challenges of time.

Methodology

This Study employs the socially constructed view of reality (Berger & Luckmann, 1967) which ‘emphasize the shared processes and negotiated understandings in which people engage to create meaning’ (D. Fletcher, 2006: p. 42). Scholars have investigated time (Fischer, Reuber, Hababou, Johnson, & Lee, 1997), meanings, identities, lived experiences (Bruner, 1990; Denzin, 1997), the self (Gergen, 1999) and social reality (Berger & Luckmann, 1967) as socially constructed (Hacking, 1999). Social construction of reality has been employed in entrepreneurship research with a person-centric (social constructivism) and relational-centric (social constructionism) focus (Fletcher, 2007). The former views the entrepreneurial process to be constructed by entrepreneur’s cognition and

is derived from seminal contributions of Vygotsky's (1979) and Bruner's (1990). Vygotsky emphasized the 'interactionist nature of development by framing the cultural construction of the higher mental processes within the constraints and possibilities that the developing individual brings to social construction' (Hoppe-Graff, 1998: p. 228). Discourse and speech is central to this thought because it 'functions as a psychological tool in the construction of individual consciousness. Individuals construct their own sense from socially available meanings. The social voice becomes the inner voice' (Daniels, 2005: p. 11). Clearly, individual's construction is portrayed as agentic, deliberate and selective although constrained by the given social context.

The relation-centric focus is studied through social constructionist line of thought where the entrepreneurial process is constructed through dialogical, social structural and relational processes. Drawing on Berger and Luckman (1967) and Giddens (1984), the entrepreneur is acting in interaction with the cultural and social context. The actions represent enactment of meaning that is drawn from subjective interpretation of experiences. This study takes a socially constructionist view point towards employing expert interviews where shared meaning making, the continuous internalization of context through experience are focused upon. Moreover, this study employs expert interviews as a primary data source.

Underpinning expert interviews

Fundamentally, a person is considered to be an expert due to his/her role as an informant – possessing the uncommon knowledge. It is also argued that experts possess the institutional position to transform the reality. (Meuser & Nagel, 2009). However, according to Gordon (2007), experts do not necessarily need an institutionalized position to remain active within a community. According to Schutz (1946), the lay person takes the happenings in his/her surroundings and is largely 'naïve'; the expert is conscious and aware of the events. This study adopts a view that experts possess experience based, context sensitive and subjectively manifested knowledge. This knowledge is a function of expert's embeddedness. Experts for this study are prominent institutional leaders who had the opportunity of getting a first-hand view of the on-going reality (while possessing the power to reshape it). Expert interviews can elicit a various types of knowledge. Table 1.1 illustrates the three dimensions of expert knowledge.

Table 1.1: Expert knowledge as an 'analytic construction': The three dimensions (Bogner & Menz, 2009, pp. 52,53)

Dimensions of knowledge	Explains	Basis	Characteristics
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Technical knowledge	operations and events governed by rules, application routines that are specific to a field, bureaucratic competences	Expert knowledge is specialized and different from everyday lay knowledge	Systematically laid out and content specific
Process knowledge	sequences of actions, interaction routines, organizational constellations, and past or current events,	Expert may be directly involved in the process or the action is in close proximity to his field; expert possess experiential and Practical knowledge	Broader description of personally experienced events
Interpretative knowledge	Expert's subjective orientations, rules, points of view and interpretations,	Experts possess a myriad of ideas and ideologies that are fragmentary and contain inconsistent configurations of meaning and patterns of explanation	Expert knowledge as heterogeneous conglomeration. Rejecting the assumption that expert knowledge is homogenous body of knowledge supports theory generation

The third analytical dimension of considering experts to be possessing interpretive knowledge is compatible with the aims of this study. It can be assumed that expert point of views are heterogeneous and a function of their embeddedness within subjective interpretations. The analytical reconstruction of expert interviews can illustrate a view of Afghan entrepreneurial identity.

Data collection

Open ended interviews were used to collect the expert views. The choice of using questionnaires or open ended narrative interviews has been discussed by Expert Interview and Changes in Knowledge Production. On one hand it emphasize that a fixed set of questions cannot lead anything by 'discursive consciousness containing rationalist reasoning corresponding with officially accepted standards', on the other hand, the open ended narrative interview 'provides the room for the interviewee to

unfold his own outlooks and reflections' (Meuser & Nagel, 2009: p. 31). Narrative interviewing has been classified as open ended and unstructured interview but the interviewer has minimal influence on the narrators. Flick (2009) defines narrative interview by quoting Hermanns (1995, p. 183)

'In the narrative interview, the informant is asked to present the history of an area of interest, in which the interviewee participated, in an extempore narrative...the interviewer's task is to make the informant tell the story of the area of interest in question as a consistent story of all relevant events from its beginning to its end' (Flick, 2009: p. 177)

Jovchelovitch and Bauer (2000) recommend the following generic steps while conducting narrative interviews (table 1.2).

Table 5.2: Basic phases of the narrative interview (Jovchelovitch & Bauer, 2000: p. 62)

Phases	Rules
Preparation	Exploring the field; Formulating examinant questions
1 Initiation	Formulating initial topic for narration; Using visual aids
2 Main narration	No interruptions; Only non-verbal encouragement to continue story-telling; Wait for the coda
3 Questioning phase	Only 'What happened then?'; No opinion and attitude questions; No arguing on contradictions; No why-questions; Exmanent into immanent questions
4 Concluding talk	Stop recording; Why-questions allowed; Memory protocol immediately after interview

The four step process was used to provide a perspective to the researcher. Going prepared with some generic start up questions of interest resulted in consistency. Flick (2009) uses the term 'generative question' for such questions that can result in a narration (p. 178). In the final step, the narrator closes the narration after which the researcher can ask exploratory question about different themes. The recommendations only acted as broad guidelines to elicit open ended narrations from experts.

Analysis

There is no standard method for analysing qualitative data elicited through open ended narrative expert interviews. The broad guidelines provided by Meuser and Nagel (2009) advocate a focus on themes present in each expert interview where sequence is immaterial and constant comparison with thematic areas arising for various interviews becomes the basis for reconstructed summation of all interviews. Furthermore, the paraphrased and thematically reorganized reconstructed account constitutes the findings of data.

For this study, the thematic analysis of three expert interviews was undertaken by doing a simultaneous sentence by sentence translation and transcription. The selected experts included; firstly, Mr. Raj Wali Shah Khattak a senior Professor, poet, writer and head of Pashtu department of University of Peshawar. Secondly, Mr. Rustam Shah Mohmand, a bureaucrat who had worked as a Pakistani Ambassador in Afghanistan and thirdly, Mr. Qutbuddin Hilal, a former senior Jihadi leader and the second prime minister of Afghanistan. The first two experts are Pakistani Pashtuns while the third is an Afghan Pashtun. The thematic analysis was followed by deconstruction and reconstruction the three interviews as a descriptive account of several themes. In the first step the interviews were coded line by line which is also called *In-vivo* coding. The process was carried on for the whole interview. In the second step, the codes were listed separately and numbered. They were also scrutinized for a possibility of developing shorter code phrase. In the third step, all the three interviews were analysed and reconstructed to create new categories. The codes were grouped under their respective categories. The categories were constantly compared and reshuffled to create links between categories. In the end, a descriptive account of themes and subsequent categories was developed. The expert interviews clearly emphasized socio-cultural elements as it underpinned

‘the embeddedness of the expert in circumstances and milieu; to the heterogeneity of relevant others; to membership in global communities and local networks; to arenas and circles the expert is involved in and orientation is derived from’ (Meuser & Nagel, 2009, p. 25).

The reconstructed version of the three expert interviews is presented in the next section.

Findings: ‘Expert Voices’ on Afghan Entrepreneurial Identity

The findings of thematic analysis resulted in two themes, with first having four categories and the second, three categories. The first theme deals with the geo-political history of Afghans while the second theme focuses on the economic activities of Afghans.

Strong and weak identities

The first theme concerns the comparison, differentiation and vagueness of Afghan and Pakistani Pashtuns identities. Afghanistan has a history of 250 years but Pashtun history goes back at least two millennia. There is an ambiguity regarding the use of term Afghan and Pashtun. From the geographical point of view, Afghans are divided between Afghanistan and Pakistan. Several hundred Afghans tribes are seamlessly spread across both sides of the border. Pashtuns live by a code of honour-the *Pashtunwali* which is interpreted and implemented through a council of elders – the Jirga system – at multiple levels.

The first category concerns 'the question of being Afghan or Pashtun'. Till 1890, Pashtun and Afghan were synonymous although other ethnicities of Afghanistan shared the label- 'Afghani'. In 1893, the Durand line was drawn as a temporary border between Afghanistan and Pakistan and Pashtuns were divided into Afghanistan and Pakistan. However, all ethnicities of Afghanistan are united by the geography in a shared sense which is called 'Afghanityat – The spirit of Afghanistan'. However, the foreign invasions have encouraged identification on ethnic lines as it this (political tactic) allows the invaders to get maximum benefit out of non-Pashtun ethnicities against (the resisting) Pashtuns. For instance, there are only 6% 'Hazaras' in Afghanistan but they have around 20% representation in the government. Thus, identification through ethnicity has become more fruitful for the minorities at the moment in a political sense.

The second category concerns the emergence of a Pashtun society with a common culture but two intersecting narratives. Afghanistan was a feudal state before 1980s. The structure was coherent with the social values as tribal chieftain was responsible for well-being and government was a formality. Rural Afghans are highly sensitive about their code of honour and Pashto and will do anything to keep it. Pakistani Pashtuns were influenced by the administrative changes in the past three centuries by different rulers including the British. Their cultural perspectives were diluted. The deterioration of Pashtun culture in Pakistan can be judged by highlighting the key feature of Pashtun society, the Jirga system which constitutes the third category in this theme.

The Jirga system is primarily a mechanism for directing Pashtun egalitarianism. Afghans resolve their disputes through a *Jirga* which is one of an open, democratic and transparent public forum for conflict resolution. Jirga is a social institution which operates through unwritten laws that are primarily drawn from *Pashtunwali* and religious addicts. Each party in conflict appoints its representatives who present arguments and evidence to the panel of elders. The representatives are not paid, as the sole motivation of conflict resolution through Jirga is to maintain peace in society and strengthen trust on each other. '*Waak*' is the equivalent to power of attorney that can be granted as conditionally ('*Karkha*') or unconditional ('*Tuwey*'). In both cases, the arbitrator(s) ensure that a just decision is reached in accordance with tribal and religious rules. The decision is binding on the parties but they can confer a larger *Jirga* if they are not satisfied.

One of the main aims of the *Jirga* is to keep the society intact and reach a win-win decision for everyone. *Jirga* decisions are implemented through social pressure created by collective decisions. The decisions are made in consultation and there is no tyranny or single

person rule. It is not only a forum for resolving personal and familial conflicts but it also operates at the highest level to collectively evolve strategies to address national crisis. It ensures the stability and continuity of Pashtun society. It ensures free access to justice to every Pashtun. The legitimacy of Jirga is drawn from the collective agreement on the rules of *Pashtunwali* and Islam. However, for Pakistani Pashtuns, the Jirga system has been largely replaced by state run judiciary system.

The last category relates to the cultural demise of Pakistani Pashtuns. The economic prosperity of Pakistani Pashtuns is not conscious choice but the result of outside influences and manipulations and has come at a price. They were directed towards economic activities at the cost of their culture. The British understood that introducing new economic ways of life into Pashtun culture can change the complexion of freedom loving Pashtun society. The political leadership and religious clergy were used by the British to achieve their aims. But after the British left the sub-continent, the Pakistani state became the new 'Masters of Pashtuns' and continued using the British tactics. Pakistani Pashtuns were also impacted by internal migration within Pakistan as they intermingled with different ethnicities. The neglect of Pashtun lands by the Pakistani state and the use of political leadership to exploit them in the name of *Pashtunwali* promoted negative notions of *Pashtunwali* such as jealousy and revenge. Afghan Pashtuns did not face such cultural challenges and lived in a relative state of isolation until the Russian invasion and mass migration.

Redefining economic ways of being: constructing new identities

The second theme relates to an understanding of Afghan identity through the relationship between economy and culture. It reflects on the historical view of Pashtuns' economic behaviour and the different ways of livelihood and the evolution of two-way relationship between culture and economy within the migratory context.

The first category elaborates the struggle of Pashtun to find the space for legitimate economic practice. Pashtuns have a great survival instinct as they have earned and lived in a migratory context. Their earning activities are restricted in their own country but unlimited in foreign lands because it is related to the Psychological and Sociological make up of Pashtun identity. Pashtuns migrated to other areas due to poverty. On their own land, they have been subject to discriminatory behaviour first by British and later by Pakistani government. The border trade was never considered legal but Pashtuns never accepted this restriction and found innovative ways to defy the central administration which eventually led to smuggling narcotics. Large scale poppy cultivation and narcotics trade was introduced in Pashtun areas by outsiders. Poppy was only used in pharmaceuticals but some foreigners

came to Pashtun lands in the garb of hippies and taught all the required techniques to local people. Poppy cultivation and narcotics trade provides an easy method of making large profits. Education, industry and scientific innovation was neither promoted by the state nor pursued by the local population.

The second category relates to the intricate relationship between Pashtun culture and economy and proposes that cultural practices regulate life and business. '*Pashtunwali*', the culture of Pashtuns, affects the economic activities in Pashtun society in various ways. It advocates a preference for private ownership and earning but also disapproves several professions. The tenets of *Pashtunwali* abhor greed and recommends over spending as a means to give honour and gain self-esteem. *Pashtunwali* promotes contentment in all cases as both the rich and the poor are pushed to spend above their earnings. Accumulating capital is negatively denoted as greed. The strict interpretation with respect of adopting profession has become more flexible now.

Trade is considered legitimate from Islamic point of view as the Prophet is known to have traded. Trade does not require large organizations because immediate family members can lend support without requiring any specific technical skills. They prefer sole proprietorship because they feel secure about their identity and can easily uphold the values of *Pashtunwali*. They do not transform their smaller businesses into large organizations and enterprises that can become subject to other rules and regulations. Afghan Pashtuns have utilized the strengths of *Pashtunwali* to face the challenging times. They have harnessed the business friendly aspects of their culture to earn their livelihoods and survive.

The final category explains the economic rise of Afghan Pashtuns. The phenomenal rise of Afghan entrepreneurs can be explained through various elements of the context and the individualistic and community based features of Afghans. Migration allowed exposure to new environments and contributed towards the success of Afghan entrepreneurs. Afghanistan's economy is agriculture based, but international trade and business are not new to Afghans. Afghanistan is a historical trade route in South Asia as it is the gateway to Indian sub-continent.

The destitute, illiterate and uprooted Afghans were compelled to start their own businesses and work hard in Peshawar. They did not leave their culture but learned 'new ways of doing things'. Adjusting with language barriers and new culture all over Pakistan proves that Afghans are highly enterprising. Bound by their culture of *Pashtunwali*, poverty and deprivation, Afghans started their own businesses. The conduct and life style of Afghans in Pakistan is a key to their success.

Afghans migrants have been frequenting the tribal areas of Pakistan but after Russian invasion they were given refugee status with equal rights to Pakistani citizens. They got only meagre help from international community but their primary source of livelihood constituted their own businesses that also became a source of foreign exchange for Pakistan. Afghans also benefited from a better education system and were motivated to establish their own businesses. Afghan entrepreneurs have displaced the Pakistani businessmen. Although majority of Afghans changed their livelihood practices in Pakistan they kept following their culture of *Pashtunwali*. Afghan entrepreneurship is a natural phenomenon triggered by migration. This 'serendipitous' practice has contributed positively to local economy with some negative influences. Afghans draw material and non-material benefits from the *Pashtunwali*.

Summarizing expert views

On the basis of expert opinion it can be stated that Afghans earned their livelihood without any help from Pakistani government while following the essential tenets of *Pashtunwali* and using their culture as a competency to become entrepreneurs. They never became dependent on international aid which compelled them to sustain their own lives. Several important community based practices such as importance of word of mouth is a key feature of Afghan Pashtuns, while Pakistani Pashtuns lack these characteristics. Thus, Afghans were better positioned to exploit the opportunities available in Peshawar and Pakistan. The expert opinion also provides a historical reconstruction of the social, cultural and political evolution of Pashtun society with emphasis on the economic activity. A single narrative about Pashtuns splits into two as they are divided into Pakistan and Afghanistan by a rather 'porous' border – the Durand line. The major portion of expert opinion describes the post 1979 'informal merger' of Pashtun tribe, when Afghan Pashtuns migrated to Pakistan (particularly Peshawar) due to Russian invasion. United by their culture, Pashtuns follow '*Pashtunwali*' in diverse manifestation in different contexts. Afghans in Peshawar represent the interaction of people living by Afghan and Pakistani versions of *Pashtunwali* that generated a unique narrative of Afghan entrepreneurs taking the 'centre stage'.

Raised in the rugged mountains of Afghanistan where subsistence was the primary goal, Afghan Pashtuns outclassed their Pakistani 'cousins' by innovating and establishing new ventures in the opportunity rich environment of Peshawar. Experts agree that adherence to *Pashtunwali* is the most important factor in the rise of Afghan entrepreneurs. They illustrate this by contrasting them with Pakistani urbanite Pashtuns who are not so dynamic because they have lost their culture. Pashtuns follow a variety of customs to achieve stability and

continuation in society. A principle outcome of following *Pashtunwali* is community based trust which also influences their ventures in various ways. It provides an easy and quick way of getting finance, as the word of mouth of an honest person is considered sufficient. In this way, Afghans negate their disadvantage in being illiterate. In Pashtun society, trust is a function of being honest and having goodwill within the community. Experts agree that Afghans have inherent qualities of becoming entrepreneurs such as courage, drive towards self-sufficiency, self-confidence and dedication. Due to a strong sense of community at familial and tribal level, they encourage their compatriots by providing financial and moral support. However, remaining loyal to culture is not conditional or based on favourable outcomes. Khattak argues that every aspect of Pashtun's life affects identity which is based on being an Afghani through following the cultural code of *Pashtunwali*. Culture is synonymous with honour and their lives are purposive if they have honour while the loss of honour equals the loss of purpose in life. 'Pashtuns are proud of their past, they do not face identity crisis as they follow *Pashtunwali* in every aspect of their life (including earning livelihood) to keep their honour' (Khattak). Thus, following *Pashtunwali* is an integral part of the Pashtun identity. Pashtuns have survived wars and onslaughts by guarding their identity through following *Pashtunwali*. They do not abandon their culture in their everyday life, including earning their livelihood.

Discussion and Conclusion

The thematic analyses illustrate two intertwined currents. Firstly, the question of Afghan and Pashtun identity leading to comparison between Pakistani and Afghani Pashtuns and culminating in the portrayal of 'strong' and 'weak' identities. Secondly, the redefinition of identities through the construction of new economic ways of being that is supported by adherence to *Pashtunwali*. Together, the two trends exhibit an 'Afghan entrepreneurial identity' strongly stimulated and supported by *Pashtunwali*.

The actions of 'male Pashtun, centres on *Pashtunwali*, or doing Pashtu [through] adherence to a code of behaviour' (Dupree & Gouttierre, 1997, p. 108). Following Goffmann's (1974) notion of culture as a model for behaviour (rather than actual behaviour) Ahmad (1980) theorized *Pashtunwali* through Weber's ideal type model – a typical course of action that assumes a normative orientation of an individual towards ends-means framework.

'The construction of purely rational course of action in such cases serves the sociologist as a type (ideal type) which has the merit of clear understandability and lack of ambiguity' (Ahmad, 1980: p.89).

Pashtun upholds *Pashtunwali*- a standard course of action for a Pashtun that has been historically shared, agreed upon and constructed by the society collectively. It is a timeless model depicting Pashtun 'social reality as it existed uninterrupted, stable and in equilibrium for over four centuries at least' (Ahmad 1980, p.88).

Afghans' 'informal and situated social interaction' results in competency in dealing with complex reality, made possible through identity construction. They use the three modes of belonging (Wenger, 2000). Firstly, Afghans participate in such actions and discourse that influences the individual's experience of self as they draw external responses. They participate in a tribal culture faced with a war induced migratory context. Through engagement, Afghans influence each other's experience of self. Their discourse and actions constitute a cyclical process of social construction of reality (Berger & Luckmann, 1967) as they seek to resolve their livelihood problems. Secondly, imagination involves Afghans reflecting on self, others and the world to explore different possibilities of participation and ways of being and becoming. They reflect on their own selves through comparison with others (including their kin, tribe and beyond). Taking up an entrepreneurial identity presents itself as a way of being that allows individuals to become an active and respected Afghan Pashtun. Thirdly, alignment ensures that 'local activities are sufficiently aligned with other processes so that they can be effective beyond [the individual's] engagement' (Wenger, 2000: p. 228). Afghans align their enacted entrepreneurial identities to their overall selves. A compatible and complementary relationship between entrepreneurial identity and overall self-identity guarantees that doing business goes beyond a livelihood practice and contributes towards realizing a higher end. This is achieved by aligning entrepreneurial identity as a means of attaining the ideal types of *Pashtunwali*. The engagement, imagination and alignment by Afghan entrepreneurs lead to the establishment of informal groupings of entrepreneurs. Thus, they establish a community of practice as they group together to construct a sense of joint enterprise by instituting norms through mutual engagement that can result in a common repertoire (Wenger, 1998). Afghans communities of practice benefit from egalitarian (rather than hierarchical) participation where participants make use of narratives and storytelling (Cox, 2005).

It can be stated that the strong sense of enterprise among Afghan entrepreneurs is regulated by norms drawn from *Pashtunwali*. More importantly, this results in a unique repertoire 'of communal resources— language, routines, sensibilities, artefacts, tools, stories, styles' (Wenger, 2000: p. 229) which is tailor made for dealing with the business environment of Peshawar. The sense of mutual enterprise regulated through norms represent the construction of 'new reality' while common

repertoire is about the 'unique understandings or episteme'. In this sense, the stories told by Afghan entrepreneurs act as tools of disseminating various ways of dealing with the emergent situation.

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