
“Employing the Circuit of Culture Approach to Interpret the Institutions of Culture and Economy in the Context of Pashtunwali”

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Abstract:

This study interprets one of the preliminary aspects of the institutions of culture and economy in the context of Pashtuns’ codes of life, “*Pashtunwali*”. The study employs the analytical tool of the Circuit of Culture to analyze culture, economy and their true interpretation. The analytical tool gives hints that most of the codes of Pashtunwali are earlier interpreted, by non-Pashtun, Colonial and/or contemporary war literature writers, in very traditional way to explain somewhat wrong and biased moods of interpretations for the purpose to support exploitation of the land and resources of Pashtuns and create stereotyping of Pashtun communities. This study interprets that the institution of culture is wholistic in nature that provides cultural meaning to most of the constituting blocks of Pashtunwali. Similarly, economic underpinnings of Pashtunwali are sub-sets of Pashtun cultural institutions that is evolved for and has the likelihood to enhance, strengthen, promote, appraise and even challenge some of the components of cultural attributes of Pashtunwali. Thus, the interpretation shows that cultural norms of Pashtunwali based on economic positions of individuals/families paves new ways of cultural cohesion and economic attributes in Pashtun communities. The cultural accumulation of new trends of modernity, politics, class structure and urbanized-metropolitan variants of cultural intrudes in Pashtun societies are linked with economic wellbeing in different stratum of contemporary Pashtuns. The implication of the study unveils strong orientations of culture as an integral part of Pashtunwali to have accommodative trends of cultural development in Pashtuns’ code of life consistent/aligned with globally modern practices of cultural institutions. The economic institution of Pashtunwali provides foundation of sustainable socioeconomic development to Pashtun communities.

Key words: culture; economy; Pashtunwali; the Circuit of Culture.

Introduction:The circuit of heritage gives hints to link culture and economy in the perspectives of societies that are composed of social transactions and perpetual

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predefined social structures in its five nodes of interrelated composition. The communities live in social transactional moods that occur non-terminating and continue since ever with minute intrudes and inclusion of new aspects of cultural norms with the passage of time and all these social attributes are permanently exercised by social agents in specific communes of every society across the globe ever known to history of civilization. Culture provides many sets of identities and economy commodifies the transactional moods of goods and services (including specific cultural norms like, cultural foods and festivals) in exchange format to the social producers and consumers of the both the culture and economy. The cultural and economic meaning of social structure and codes of life regulate conducts and practices that come under and across the acceptable ranges of social strata obligatory to human societies and communities across the globe over long periods of time. Similarly, the Circuit of Culture (Hall, 1997) articulates commodifying the cultural attributes through its five nodes of analysis to be utilized by exploring the relationship between and among many phenomena of arts, education, culture, economy, commodities, social structure and political cultures. It provides room to identify meaning associated and attached to each social aspect and can bring distinction to economic and cultural meaning to social codes of life. In the context of social codes of life, Pashtunwali is a set of social codes that provides foundation stones to general rules, regulations, guidelines, norms, practices, obligatory way of Pashtun life, and cultural attributes for Pashtun people living across the globe. The social codes of Pashtunwali also include absolute and intermixed codes of economy and cultural aspects that are not yet conceptualized through analytical tools like, the Circuit of Culture. To analyze Pashtunwali differently from its traditional way of analysis and attaching Pashtunwali with traditional approaches of its narrative analyses so far in the literature compel the researchers to preliminary conceptualize the nexus between economy and culture in the context of Pashtunwali through latest and relevant analytical tools like, the Circuit of Culture, that has been proved as a relevant, latest/effective, and decent tools of analyzing sets of social phenomena ever perceived in the literature of sociology, economics, ethnic studies, cultural studies, anthropology and literary literature (Reckwitz, 2002; Leve, 2012; Mora, Noia and Turrini, 2019; Arvind, 2019)

The Circuit of Culture:

The Circuit of Culture has been evolved as a tool of cultural analysis. It has been one of the pioneer tools that has been employed to conceptualize the series related to Culture, Media & Identities conducted in Europe (Hall, 1997; Sage & Open University, 1997). The Circuit of Culture is composed of five interrelated nodes/moments of production, representation, consumption, regulation and identity, and the interrelated articulations of these moments. The importance and significance of the Circuit of Culture, as an analytical tool for exploring a social or cultural phenomenon, are proved and has been employed in contemporary literature production about societies and their social actions by different groups of human

societies. It has been used to analyze meaning and its different shades/directions associated to social codes of life associated with different walks of social, political, cultural and civilizational ways of human life. It has been used to construction and management of cultural phenomena, commoditization and meaning making. It gives meaning to phenomena of culture, economy, identity, power, politics, social constructs and more aspects of cultural diaspora ever produced and consumed since the inception of cultural identification and cultural civilizations ever evolved by different societies and communities of the world (Wren-Lewis, 1983; Johnson, 1986; Pillai, 1992; Morley and Chen, 1996). The three theories of representation that are, reflective, intentional and constructionist are not focused in the Circuit of Culture in the context of this study. However, the Circuit of Culture is employed as five nodal-point momentary tool to conceptualize the nexus between culture and economy in the context of Pashtunwali. The application of the Circuit of Culture for getting the purpose of this study does not contrast its application for analyzing a diverse range of social topics in contemporary literature of social sciences and humanities (Caillavet, Guyomard and Lifran, 1994; Leve, 2012; Mora, Noia and Turrini, 2019; Arvind, 2019)

Pashtunwali:

Pashtunwali means, *“the way of the Pashtun”*. It is described as universal set of binding social codes of and for Pashtun society that have ever produced, represented, consumed, identified, gave meaning to and the interrelated articulations, complex relations and practices of these codes that could be perceived by Pashtuns to get distinction from other nations of the world. It is a set rules rule of guidelines that the Pashtun community believe **believes** in and give gives meaning to each component of Pashtunwali. It includes the institutions of *“melmastia”* (hospitality), *“nanawattai”* (forgiveness or asylum), *“jirga”* (assembly of elderly people or elders), *“nyaw aw badal”* (justice and revenge), *“sabat”* (loyalty), *“turah”* (bravery), *“maranah”* (manhood or chivalry), *“naamus”* (protection of women), *“nang”* (honor), *“pat”* (respect), *“wyaar”* (pride), *“ashar”* (community participation obligatory) and many more that cover multiple social, cultural and economic aspects of Pashtuns life. The norms and values in different walks of life are defined by the stick yard of Pashtunwali. The Circuit of Culture is an analytical tool to explain different aspects of Pashtunwali and interrelated binding codes of Pashtuns life. Since culture and economy are interrelated and economic man of metropolitan in nature equipped with modern technological endowments give different shades to the meaning to culture, economy, politics, society, social values, cultural norms and other aspects of social life. It is yet to be explored in the literature of Pashtunwali and culture about the production of meaning to each code of Pashtunwali, sharing of which kind of meaning to each code be associated by who and for whom, what are counter meanings of a specific code of Pashtunwali, and which meanings a specific code of Pashtunwali should be contested and struggled for its preservation. In the late modern societies, culture and economy are related in many directions and propel

each other to support and strengthen the nexus by the people in different walks of life (Habibi, 1382H; Muhmand, 1327H; Spain, 1972; Pillai, 1992; du Gay et al., 1997; Allen, 2000; Banting, 2003; Johnson and Mason, 2008; Nabi, 2008; Major John Cathell, 2009; Kakar P, 2010; Cassidy, 2012; Malala and Lamb, 2013; Mohyuddin & Khan, 2015; Arvind, 2019).

Cultural aspects of Pashtunwali:

Most of the social codes of Pashtunwali are components of Pashtuns' overall and highly rich culture that has evolved and accumulated over the centuries to compose civilization in the broader aspect of Pashtuns' social structure. The centuries old, and dynamic over the years, culture of Pashtuns encompasses different codes of Pashtunwali in its broader basin of cultural reservoir. There are many ways of Pashtuns life that can not be excluded from the overall cultural part of Pashtun communities. Pashtun people exercise and observe codes of Pashtunwali with pride and they normally exercise to abide by all the codes of Pashtunwali as their cultural obligations. A person cannot go beyond "*pashto*", that is to follow Pashtunwali as cultural identity being a Pashtun and follow the cultural aspects commonly accepted by all Pashtun society in any favorable or/and critical/unfavorable circumstances. The culture evolved by Pashtun requires each community member to value the communal sense of hospitality, honor, respect, community participation, valor, justice, forgiveness and defending own land from aggression (Habibi, 1382H; Banting, 2003; Johnson and Mason, 2008; Nabi, 2008; Mohyuddin & Khan, 2015). It is encoded in Pashtun culture to follow, subject to possibility constraints, all the social codes of Pashtunwali and no member of Pashtun community is socially and tribally allowed to practice cultural life in rift or divergence to any aspect of Pashtunwali.

Economic aspects of Pashtunwali:

It is quoted that, "*...the 'economic' and the 'cultural' are irrevocably 'hybrid' categories; that what we think of as purely 'economic' processes and practices are, in an important sense, 'cultural' phenomena in the late modern societies...*" by du Gay (1997). There are many components of Pashtuns' code/way of life that require strong economic and wealth-based endowments. For instance, "*melmastia*" which means hospitality, it requires remuneration, favor, feeding multiple meals, give giving asylum to hostages who come to a tribesman, and so on. The arrangements of big get-together for inviting people through hospitality also needs need financial and human capital. Similarly, the social code of "*ghairat*" and "*badal*", that are valor and revenge, also needs not to be poor enough to not purchase arms and tools to show valor and get revenge from the enemies. The whole Pashtun state of Afghanistan is under war and the Afghans do not have enough economic empowerment and financial capital not to rely on war-aid assistance and arms and ammunition from coalition power and USA (Cassidy, 2012). "*Ashar*" (community participation) also needs some economic aspects to be performed or get village people together to get their community participatory services. It has been observed in village life that

Pashtunwali codes of “*melmastia*”, “*nang*”, “*jirga*”, “*asher*”, “*pat*” and other aspects of Pashtuns’ ways of life are practices by not only those who are rich enough to do/practice all these norms of Pashtunwali. Similarly, village men with weak financial and economic position are provided enough room in the economic institution of Pashtunwali to seldom observe and practice, as per their financial/resources limitations, the codes of “*melmestia*”, “*nang*”, “*pat*” and other aspects of Pashtunwali. It is due to justice-based mechanism endowed in Pashtunwali that materializing these codes/institutions on regular basis, requires strong and adequate financial and economic resources to conduct on regular basis. However, the practices of Pashtunwali are limited practically to those who are having strong economic endowments in capital and human resources. The economic aspects of Pashtunwali have accommodated new market based trends, intrudes of metropolitan aptitudes, business-based economic collaborations, client-owner relationships and market-based aspects of norms and valuation in the minds of Pashtuns population. All these economic aspects endowed in social codes of Pashtunwali are consistent with all the modern economic-based institutions of social structure of contemporary world across the globe (Habibi, 1382H; Caillavet, Guyomard and Lifran, 1994; Kakar, P, 2010; Mora, Noia and Turrini, 2019).

Objectives and rationale of the study:

In the light of the above discussion about Pashtunwali, cultural and economic aspects of Pashtunwali, it is academically appealing to interpret further the institutions of culture and economy in the context of Pashtunwali. Since the social codes of Pashtunwali encompass both the culture and economic aspects of Pashtuns way of life, yet the interpretations of culture and economy, so far, are missing in the context of Pashtunwali. This gap shows a negligence on part of most of the non-Pashtun writers and scholars of war literature on get in getting their own implicit objectives to wrongly and traditionally interpret Pashtunwali. This deficiency in literature related to Pashtunwali, interpretation of the institutions of culture and economy, and the employment of the Circuit of Culture as an analytical tool to interpret and conceptualize the objectives of this study forth the likelihood of supportive arguments to fill the existing literature gap and start a starting point series of initiations of scholarly discussion to elaborate the topic of Pashtunwali from its real and very true points of views/references to the academic world. The study will pave new ways of research exploration in Pashto literature, provide a new taste of thinking to Pashto literary experts, assist the traditional Pashto literary producers to see beyond the traditional and narrowed approach (to only limited topics and narrations) to Pashto literature, and give different direction(s) to research and development in Pashto literary production.

Research Methodology :

It is an applied study and interpretive by nature of its composition. The study will employ the Circuit of Culture (as discussed in introductory part of this study) as analytical tool to accomplish the objectives of this study. The study will assess, first,

the institution of culture and interpret it in the context of the Circuit. Secondly, the institution of economy is further assessed via the tools of the Circuit of Culture, the Pashtuns' codes of life (Pashtunwali) are defined, interpreted and thoroughly assessed with the help of the Circuit of Culture. Lastly, the institutions of the nexus between culture and economy in the context of Pashtunwali are conceptualized and interpreted with the help of the Circuit. The justification of the Circuit as an analyzing tool for getting the basic objectives of this study are in line with the studies of (Caillavet, Guyomard and Lifran 1994; Johnson and Mason, 2008; Cassidy, 2012; Reckwitz, 2002; Leve, 2012; Arvind, 2019).

Results and Discussions :

1. Institutionalizing culture via the Circuit of Culture:

Culture is defined as the arts and other manifestations of human intellectual achievements regarded collectively. It is also defined as the ideas, customs, and social behavior of particular people or society (Tylor 1920 [1871]: 1). This study uses the second definition to be analyzed with the help of Circuit of Culture. Since, there are five nodes/moments namely, production, representation, consumption, regulation and identity, and the interrelated articulations of these moments for giving meaning to each aspect of social codes like, Pashtunwali. Thus, it is argumentatively valid to analyze the institution of cultural present in Pashtunwali in the light of these five nodes/moments for interpreting and conceptualizing the true meaning of Pashtunwali in literature. Doing so will also make the biased and wrong interpretation of Pashtunwali correct for academia, research and Pashtun communities. To do so, this portion of study takes some cultural codes of Pashtunwali and will analyze their meaning with the help of each nodes/moment of the Circuit of Culture. For example, "*melmastia*" is a cultural norm that encompass hospitality and its multiple variants in Pashtuns life. The meaning to hospitality is produced by Pashtun societies for their own collective social structure and practiced regularly in the context of respect and mutual help to other community members. But the text and literature about Pashtuns way of life produced by mostly Westerners and alien writers (e.g. Olaf Caroe and some others) have articulated biased and sometimes wrong for the implicit purpose(s) to exploit Pashtun hardliner/firm elderly of specific tribes and independent common tribesmen who resist politically and by arms the aggression of Colonial power on Pashtuns land and resources. There are countless traces of texts present in the book, "*The Pathans*", to stereotype almost every Pashtun tribe living across the Durand-line. Similarly, the sugar-coated pills of "*melmastia*" has been narrated mostly by non-Pashtun writers as an exploitative tool to be consumed and represent the Pashtun people to erase the hidden and implicit enmity of the staunch enemies in the disguise of "*melmastia*" and "*nanawattai*". The enemies of Pashtun land and property like, foreign aggressors have missed no chance to use Pashtunwali codes of life as a homage and safe-asylum to appeasing aggressions of Pashtuns during looting and plundering into their tribes, land and resources during Colonial aggression on Pashtuns land. It has always been narrated

by the non-Pashtun writers to get favor of the Pashtuns while simultaneously looting their tribes, land and resources by foreign invaders; and even stereotyping these codes as foolish social codes in their text and narrations. The case of Usama-bin-Ladin in the disguise of “*melmastia*” and “*nanawattai*” and “*nang*” has been exploited by the USA and Pentagon to attach on Afghan land. Similarly, in one of the war related studies of Major John Cathell (2009) mentions that Pashtuns cannot be subjugated by rules and law and every tribes man of Pashtuns is independent. It is extremely biased a statement and the likely implications of this statement show that Pashtuns are not binding to any law, any regulation, any political struggle, any social development, any constitution, any civilian rights devised for decent societies and so more negative connotations would be implied by this extremely biased, wrong and partial statement/explanation about Pashtuns tribes men in the disguised of wrong-interpreting the social codes of Pashtunwali. So, the Circuit of Culture, as an analytical tools, gives evidence to the firm institution of cultural in its text/content explanations to give meanings to re-conceptualize and interpreting the true sense and meaning of each social and cultural codes of Pashtunwali that would be texted and materialized for yielding socioeconomic, civic-cum-tribal, cultural identification, state building, tribes making and harmonization, civilizational development and much aspects of Pashtuns way of life in line, inclusive and assimilated with ongoing ways of life of other societies, nations, and contemporary communities of the Eastern and Western world.

2. Institutionalizing Economy via the Circuit of Culture :

Economy represents the flows of goods and services from businesses (producers) to households/families (consumers) interlinked in such a way that businesses hire the factors of production from the households and households get the commodities in shapes of produced goods and services in exchange of market prices. A circular flow exists between producers and consumers via two interconnecting markets of goods and factors of production. With the help of Circuit of Culture, the economy is analyzed as commodification of social codes for personal gains and achieving material resources through political economy tactics by every possible means even by exploiting the sentiments of social codes of Pashtunwali by the writers and forces of the aggressors, enemies and invading nations (Nabi, 2008; Leve, 2012; Arvind, 2019).

The social codes of Pashtunwali have handsome portion of economic institution and economic aspects and all these economic aspects are not lagged the contemporary set of economic tools, in practice, devised for socioeconomic and financial wellbeing of contemporary societies of the world. Take the example of “*ashar*”. It is a complete code of economic wellbeing, participatory and collective in nature assimilated to other tribal codes of Pashtun people, for productivity and consumption channels of works, helping community by community members, and fulfilling even day to day economic transactions of the needy people/village-men living in a specific village or tribes in rural areas of Pashtuns communities. It is widely practiced and gives binding

and cementing moods of collective efforts of economic and social wellbeing by the people for the people. But the literature is completely silent in explaining this very productive social codes of Pashtunwali, not even by non-Pashtun writers but also by so-called Pashtun literary producers. To assess the concept of the “*ashar*” through five nodes of the Circuit of Culture, one could arguably state that the social codes of Pashtunwali like, “*ashar*” could be re-conceptualized and truly interpreted for associating true meaning to its concept of theory and practice in Pashtun communities. Other concepts also have the strong text/content and meaning forms of interpretations and re-conceptualization by the nodes/moments of the Circuit of Culture to emancipate the so far highjacked concepts and interpretations of Pashtunwali and its social codes by the biased authors/writers of Pashtu literature. The text elaborations of biasness, partiality, wrong connotations, and false and exploitative meaning to each social codes of Pashtunwali must be erased by the contemporary scholars to start re-interpreting all the available text/content of Pashtunwali ever produced/written by war-literature writers, Colonial supported writers, so-called Pashtun writers and non-Pashtun writers. The interpretation and re-conceptualization of the economic institution of each social code is necessary condition for socioeconomic development, appeasing the exploitation of Pashtuns in the disguise of false meaning association to these codes for their exploitation, and overall economic and civilizational development of the Pashtun community (Caillavet, Guyomard, and Lifran, 1994; Mora, Noia and Turrini, 2019; Leve, 2012; Reckwitz, 2002)

3. Interpreting and conceptualizing the institutions of culture and economy in the context of Pashtunwali:

Economy is embodied in super set of culture and there are economic components that are cultural parts of Pashtunwali. With the help of Circuit of Culture, it is being analyzed and elaborated that some of the cultural aspects of social codes of Pashtunwali have commodification nature that could be materialized for socioeconomic and cultural development of Pashtun community living in Afghanistan and Pakistan. The commodification and cultural meaning to each social code of Pashtunwali give meaning of representation, consumption, regulation and identity, and the interrelated articulations are confined to **not** only rich and wealthy class/people of the Pashtun community to exercise wealth-based social codes of Pashtunwali like, “*melmestia*”, “*nang*”, “*namos*”, “*jirga*”, “*asher*” etc. However, the practice and meaning, through production moment of the Circuit, to specific social codes in specific spheres of life, are confined to only wealthy and rich people of Pashtuns communities that they could practice, manage, accommodate, bear, and produce the social obligations of “*melmestia*”, “*nang*”, “*namos*”, “*jirga*”, “*asher*” etc and the poor and resourceless are meant to not capable enough to practice, manage and even get benefits of these social codes of Pashtunwali on larger scale. Since the cultural institutions of social codes of Pashtunwali imposed on rich and wealthy Pashtun people are derived from social meaning of the practices of

Pashtunwali like, hospitality and helping people, given by all community members through the knowledge and perceived social cognition with the tools of objects and wealth possessed by these wealthy and rich people. That's why rich and wealthy people are compelled to regularly practice Pashtunwali codes/way of life and the poor people are set immune/deprived socially for practicing those codes of Pashtunwali that are beyond the purchasing power to help/assist Pashtun community around them subject to large scale of the operation and production of these social codes. This interpretation has re-conceptualized the assessment of social codes of Pashtunwali that may imply that cultural practices to preserve and continuity in cultural practices require economic resources. The findings are not in dissonance with the arguments and points of views of the studies of (Habibi, 1382H; Muhmand, 1327H; Reckwitz, 2002; Mora, Johnson and Mason, 2008; Cassidy, 2012; Minhaj ul Hassan, 2012; Leve, 2012; Arvind, 2019; Noia and Turrini, 2019) found in literature. On the other spectrum of the given conceptualization, so far, of the culture-economy institutions, which is very necessary for associating real and true meanings to social codes of Pashtunwali, it is necessary to re-code and re-assess the textual and commence the content analyses of the complete diaspora of literature ever produced by non-Pashtun scholars/writers like, Olaf Caroe (1958), Spain (1972) and Major John Cathell (2009), and Pashtun scholars/writers who intentionally and unintentionally followed the wrong, fake, partial and biased narration of traditionally explaining the social codes of Pashtunwali that might have contributed to the cognitional disruptions of Pashtun tribes-men and might have weaken their efforts to strengthen and secure their lands, property, people and resources from the aggressors and foreign invaders. These interpretations have contributed to weakening their positions inter and intra tribal set-ups and affairs by the Colonial and aggressors' political economy tactics of associating wrong meanings and connotations to Pashtun codes of life.

The Circuit of Culture provides evidence to the existence of huge potential in cultural and economic development associated with each social codes of Pashtunwali. It is necessary to re-conceptualize and interpret the meaning of each code of Pashtunwali in its true sense of economic and social connotations that will certainly paw developmental ways to the cultural and economic development of all Pashtun communities and tribes living across Pakistan and Afghanistan. The cultural and economic meaning of each social codes of Pashtunwali will thus strengthen cultural and economic aspects of Pashtuns way of living. The preceding discussion about the importance and significance of social institutions of Pashtunwali are not in dissonance to the meaning mentioned by classical texts of Muhmand (1327H) and Habibi (1382H) about the evolution of social codes of Pashtunwali over the centuries on Pashtun land. The re-conceptualized interpretation of the Pashtunwali in its cultural and economic meanings will provide inclusive guidelines and culturally approved policy options for socioeconomic development, civilizational growth, cultural development, economic development, enhancing harmonization among the

tribes, provides binding strength to Pashtun communities, unite the diverse tribes as a nation, gives foundation to political exposure and development, may secure Pashtuns' land and resources from the foreign aggression and invasions, re-defined Pashtun community as decent and civilized and many more beneficial aspects of Pashtun society to go in parallel pace with the developmental stages of the contemporary global communities.

Conclusion :

This study has introduced the nodes of the Circuit of Culture to reveal the true meaning of the institutions of culture and economy in broader social codes of Pashtunwali. It has a tinge of critical attack on the text/content of the writers/scholars of Pashtunwali and Pashtun way of life who have not done justice interpreting the social codes of Pashtunwali and have neglected to explicitly elaborate the beneficial articulations of the mentioned social codes. The interpretation of the institutions of culture and economy of this study show that these are integral and supportive fundamental components of Pashtunwali that could be employed and brought into the text elaborations and content analyses techniques/methods of social codes of Pashtunwali. The traditional and biased meaning so far given to each social code and Pashtunwali in the context of war literature production should be discouraged with the help of modern and useful analytical tools of social studies. The research convention(s) set for cultural underpinnings, economic development, anthropological aspects, scientific methodology of analysis and literary research methods of contemporary advancement are some of the suggested ways to re-interpret and re-conceptualize the true sense and meaning of each social codes of Pashtunwali for the broader cause of civilizational development of Pashtun communities to live in peace and contribute their part in global development. The implication of the study unveils strong orientations of culture as an integral part of Pashtunwali to have accommodative trends of cultural development in Pashtuns' code of life consistent/aligned with globally modern practices of cultural institutions. The economic institution of Pashtunwali provides foundation of sustainable socioeconomic development to Pashtun communities.

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