CONTESTING SUBJECTIVITIES, NEGOTIATING AGENCY, AND RE-DEFINING BOUNDARIES: THE IDEOLOGICAL SUBJECT FORMATION AND POSITIONING OF PAKHTUN WOMEN

By

Anoosh Wisal Khan

Submitted to the

Faculty of the College of Arts and Sciences

of American University

in Partial Fulfillment of

the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

In

Anthropology

Chair:

William L. Leap, Ph.D.

Nasir Jamal Khattak, Ph.D.

Randa Serhan, Ph.D.

Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences

Date

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For

My Amma: a Kashmiri woman who bore two Pakhtun daughters

and

My Baba: the Pakhtun man who was the driving force behind his daughters
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ABSTRACT

Pakhtun society is patriarchal. It is patriarchal in the sense that men are the tribal and familial heads; the decision-makers; and occupy sociocultural positions of power. This project explores how subject-positions of Pakhtun women are ideologically shaped within those patriarchal structures. Are they limited with reference to men’s subject-positions as fathers, brothers, husbands, sons, and tribal heads? Or is there space for: 1) an autonomous sense of “woman’s” subject formation and position and 2) each woman’s sense of herself as an individual? In other words, in this project I consider how the Ideological State Apparatuses (Althusser 1971) and the processes of recognition (Pêcheux 1982) situate Pakhtun women and how women’s ensuing subject-positions are contested. Thus what I really explore is how Pakhtun women occupy subject-positions through which they come to be defined as individuals with their own rights and voice(s) rather than recognized as referent-subjects with respect to men’s subjectivities only.

In order to find answers this dissertation examines the notions of citizenship and belonging in order to explicate who is accepted as an authentic group member in the Pakhtun society amidst global influences. It further explores the influence Ideological State Apparatuses (ISAs) like: family, education, media, law, religion, and culture have on the subject formation of Pakhtun women (and younger men); their subject-positions; the consequent subjectivities various ISAs create; and finally the way Pakhtun women contest and negotiate these subject-positions.
The ways by which Pakhtun women contest and negotiate their subject-positions and hence achieve some level of agency demonstrates that agency cannot have fixed meanings; it has to be understood with reference to the historical, material, and cultural nuances of a society.

This dissertation concludes that the main subject-positions which have helped in the sociocultural progression and agency propagation of Pakhtun women include the “locally-globally aware”; the “mobile”; and the “educated” subject. The analysis of my data shows that achieving and sustaining agency will be further guaranteed if Pakhtun women continue to think critically; stop accepting cultural, social, and political proxy subject-positions; and determinedly lead their lives progressively.
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Khala and cousin Arbab Shafiq Akhtar for their moral and emotional support. In the U.S., I want to thank my brother (in-law) Farid Khan, my uncles and aunts Farsad Baqir and Parveen Khan, Javed and Farida Shaikh, and most of all Syma and Baber Kamal, who always made me feel home away from home. Thank you all!
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT ......................................................................................................................... ii

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS .......................................................................................................... iv

LIST OF TABLES .................................................................................................................. xii

LIST OF MAPS ..................................................................................................................... xiii

CHAPTER 1  PAKHTUN MEN ARE “TALIBANS” AND THE WOMEN “WEAR BURQAS”: PROBLEM STATEMENT, FIELD METHODOLOGY, AND “UNVEILING” STEREOTYPES .................................................................................. 1

  Problem Statement and Purpose of Dissertation .......................................................... 3

  Historical Background .................................................................................................... 5

  Field Sites ......................................................................................................................... 8

  Field Sites: The Official Perception .............................................................................. 10

  Field Sites and Fieldwork: The Personal Experience ................................................... 15

  Methodology: Methods and Data Analysis .................................................................... 22

  Data Collection, Sample Size and Characteristics ......................................................... 22

  Framework and Procedures for Data Analysis ............................................................... 25

  The Researcher vs. the Native ....................................................................................... 26

  Ethical Considerations .................................................................................................... 28

  Limitations of this Study ............................................................................................... 29

  Research Significance .................................................................................................... 31

  Dissemination and Utilization of Research Results ....................................................... 32

  Summary of Chapters ...................................................................................................... 33
CHAPTER 2 THEORETICAL PARADIGMS: INTERROGATING OTHER VOICES........ 36

Pakhtun Cultural Ideology, Cultural Structures, and (Female) Subject-Positioning ................................................................................................. 36

Theoretical Paradigms: Views and Re-views ................................................ 43

Althusserian Ideology: Responses and Critique ........................................... 47

Critique on Althusser (1971) ........................................................................ 52

Althusser’s Ideology and Bourdieu’s Habitus: Point(s) of Convergence ......... 56

Althusserian Ideology vs. Gramscian Hegemony ........................................ 58

Ideological Interpellation: Formation of the Subject and Subject-Position(s) ............................................................................................................. 63

Identity vs. Subject-Position and Subjectivity .............................................. 65

“Agency”: The Slippery Slope .......................................................................... 68

Conclusion .......................................................................................................... 69

CHAPTER 3 ENDORSING AUTHENTICITY AND NOTIONS OF PAKHTUN CULTURAL SUBJECT-POSITIONS: CITIZENSHIP OR BELONGING IN THE AGE OF GLOBALIZATION? ................................................................. 71

Citizenship and Belonging: Shifting Paradigms ............................................. 73

Globalization: The Phenomenon and the Processes ....................................... 76

Matti, Karak: Global Assemblages Territorialized in the Non-Tribal but Traditional Rural Domain ............................................................................. 79

Azmerabad,Charsadda: Global Assemblages Territorialized in the Semi-Traditional Rural Domain .............................................................................. 81

Peshawar: Global Assemblages Territorialized in the Urban Domain ............ 95

Conclusion .......................................................................................................... 108

Chapter Summary .......................................................................................... 113
# CHAPTER 4  

**NEGOTIATING SUBJECTIVITIES: FAMILY AS THE IDEOLOGICAL STATE APPARATUS AND THE PROCESSES OF PAKHTUN FEMALE SUBJECT FORMATION AND POSITIONING**

Background: Ideology and Recognition ................................................................. 116

Carving a Niche: Negotiating and Contesting Subject-Positions through ISAs ................................................................................................. 118

The Categorical Subjects (Positions): Products of Various ISAs ...................... 119

Family as an ISA .................................................................................................. 120

The Familial Subject: Controlled Mobility ............................................................. 121

The Familial Subject: Men-Imposed Subject-Position ........................................... 131

The Familial Subject: Mothers’ Influence in Shaping Subject-Position(s) .......... 148

Conclusion .............................................................................................................. 154

Chapter Summary ................................................................................................. 155

---

# CHAPTER 5  

**EDUCATION AND MEDIA: INTERPELLATING CONTESTING SUBJECTIVITIES**

Education as an ISA .............................................................................................. 158

The Educational Subject-Position: Changing Positionalities ........................... 162

Academic Institutions and Curricula as ISAs: Pros and Cons of (Secular) Educational Interpellation .......................................................... 170

The Educational Subject-Position: The Economically-Desired Subject ............ 177

The Educational Subject: Teacher-Defined Subject-Position ............................. 182

Media as an ISA ................................................................................................... 191

Media-Defined Subject-Positions: Conforming Media Subject vs. Disidentifying Media Subject .............................................................. 192

Media-Defined Subject-Position: The Tech Savvy Subject ................................. 204

Conclusion .............................................................................................................. 207
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Pages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>RELIGION, LAW, AND CULTURE: IDEOLOGICAL STATE APPARATUSES AT CROSSROADS INTERPELLATING MULTIPLE SUBJECT-POSITIONS IN THE MOMENT</td>
<td>209</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Religion as an ISA</td>
<td>211</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Religious Subject: Religio-Conforming vs. Religio-Negotiating Subject</td>
<td>212</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Islamic) Law vs. Culture: The ISAs Conflated</td>
<td>213</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pakhtun Culture-Defined Subject-Positions</td>
<td>220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Honor-Oriented Subject</td>
<td>225</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Fearful Subject</td>
<td>225</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Foreign-Influenced (Female) Subject</td>
<td>239</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Linguistic Subject</td>
<td>246</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Khan-Influenced Subject (Positions)</td>
<td>253</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Agentive Subject</td>
<td>257</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>263</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chapter Summary</td>
<td>264</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>CULTURAL STRUCTURES: BREAKING BARRIERS THROUGH PROSAIC AND POETIC FORMS OF RESISTANCE</td>
<td>266</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Evidence From Earlier Times: The Women Who Coordinate(d) Resources at Home</td>
<td>268</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Women’s Participation in Jirga(s)</td>
<td>271</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pakhtun Women Then: The Women’s Version</td>
<td>274</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Cadenced Catharsis</td>
<td>277</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pashto Folk Songs: The Oral Expression</td>
<td>280</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Pakhtun Women Today: They Say It All.......................................................... 286


Salma Shaheen’s Poetry: Extension of the Oral Tradition Made Possible by Education .............................................................................................. 296

The Visual Expression: Extensions of (Oral) Poetic Traditions Made Possible by Media............................................................................................ 303

Gaining Grounds: Ascertaining Agentive Subject-Position(s)...................... 307

Conclusion ........................................................................................................ 309

Chapter Summary ............................................................................................ 314

CHAPTER 8 PAKHTUN MEN ARE NOT TALIBANS AND THE WOMEN HAVE MOVED AHEAD WITH AND WITHOUT BURQAS............................... 316

Pakhtun Female Subject-Positions: Contested, Negotiated, and Attained ...... 319

Encouraging Observations ............................................................................. 320

The “Locally–Globally Aware” Subject ............................................................ 321

The “Restrained–Mobile” Subject ................................................................. 322

The “Educated” Subject ................................................................................. 323

Supporting Voices: Ethnographic Examples of Female Agency in Culturally Interpellated Societies ....................................................................... 325

Moving Forward ............................................................................................... 327

APPENDIX A TRANSCRIPTION CONVENTIONS USED .................................. 334

APPENDIX B MAPS ..................................................................................... 335

APPENDIX C TAPPAY ................................................................................ 338

REFERENCES ................................................................................................. 341
LIST OF TABLES

Table

1. Number of Research Respondents ................................................................. 24
LIST OF MAPS

MAPS

1. Location of Pakistan in the World ................................................................. 335

2. Map of Pakistan with Provinces and Provincial Capitals............................... 336

3. Map of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) Province (previously known as the North-West Frontier Province or N-W.F.P.), Showing Karak, Charsadda, Peshawar, and Other Cities of KP .............................................................................................................................................. 337
When one traces the history of an ethnic group through time, one is not simultaneously, in the same sense, tracing the history of ‘a culture’: the elements of the present culture of that ethnic group have not sprung from the particular set that constituted the group’s culture at a previous time, whereas the group has a continual organizational existence with boundaries (criteria of membership) that despite modifications have marked off a continuing unit. [Barth 1998:38]

Often, the identity of people with territory is reinforced through constructions of history which produce people and place simultaneously. However, place-making may involve the cultural territorialization of space, through attention to the details of “dwelling” in, and through, particular landscapes. [Medina 1999:134]

_Pakhtuns_ in the present times herald many thoughts that are regrettably unfavorable. The negative perception about them is not only prompted by the U.S. and the British media, especially after 9/11, but this opinion also exists within Pakistan (see Appendix B-Maps 1 and 2) as well. A common notion among many Pakistanis even today is that the _Pakhtuns/Pukhtuns/ Pukhtoons/Pashtuns_ or _Pathans_1 are woodcutters, children-abductors, and violators of women

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1 _Pakhtuns/Pukhtuns/Pukhtoons_ and _Pashtuns_ are orthographic and linguistic variants used for the same ethnicity. The difference in pronunciation of the “kh” and “sh” sound is due to the two different dialects spoken in the northern and southern districts, respectively, in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province of Pakistan (see Appendix B-Maps 2 and 3). The British, following the Indians, used the word _Pathan(s)_ for this ethnic group.
rights; in short they are barbarians of a stone-age, living in some remote and rugged lands! The West\textsuperscript{2} erroneously perceives Pakhtun men as Talibans and the women as the *burqa*-clad (veiled), both of whom epitomize religious and cultural radicalism. In other words, Pakhtuns are regarded as a gender biased, gender segregated (spatially and emotionally), and a patriarchally structured people.\textsuperscript{3}

In this research I particularly study the ideological subject formation and positioning of today’s Pakhtun women of Pakistan, especially living in different parts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa\textsuperscript{4} (KP) province (see Appendix B-Map 3). Here I may clarify that I am particularly looking into the Pakhtun women of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan, as opposed to Afghan-Pakhtuns, that is, the ones who are Afghan nationals, or Pakhtun women in other parts of Pakistan. I choose to focus on gender and sexuality in particular because my research site, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has not been sufficiently investigated from an anthropologically gendered perspective. The literature available on the Pakhtuns is primarily restricted to structural, historical, political, and conflict oriented studies which in most cases further reinforces Pakhtuns’ subjectivity as gender biased, oppressive, and war-like people.

\textsuperscript{2} By “West” I primarily mean countries in North America, Europe, and other economically and technologically developed countries that lie to the west of Pakistan.

\textsuperscript{3} For some recent observations about Pakhtuns in general see Tarzi and Lamb. (2011). Measuring Perceptions about the Pashtun People. Center for Strategic and International Studies: Washington, D.C.

\textsuperscript{4} This province, since colonial times, was called the North-West Frontier Province but was renamed Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on April 15, 2010. “The Provincial Information Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa…said…that the Parliamentary Committee on Constitutional Reforms had spelt the new name in the Constitution as ‘Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.’ He asked all the government departments to follow that spelling and update their respective websites accordingly. He also asked the non-government entities to follow the notified spelling…the spelling of Khyber remains unchanged. The suffix is spelt as Pakhtunkhwa…the notification said it is one word. The two words name is also written without hyphen, with a space between the affix and suffix.” The News, April 27, 2010. Accessed April 27, 2010. http://www.thenews.com.pk/
Problem Statement and Purpose of Dissertation

The central problem for this research project is to find out whether analytically significant aspects of (Pakistani) Pakhtun women’s subject-positions are self-defined or they are formed in relation to men’s imposed definitions of what female subjectivity is or should be in that society. Following Butler (1990:viii) I want to find out how being a Pakhtun female constitutes a cultural performance and how its appearance of “naturalness” is constituted through discursively constrained performance acts that produce the body through and within the categories of sex. Pakhtun society is a patriarchal society and within those patriarchal structures I explore: How Pakhtun women’s subject-positions are ideologically shaped and established?

i. Are they defined and shaped with reference to men’s subject-positions, for example, as fathers, brothers, husbands, sons, and tribal heads?

ii. Or is there space for:
   a. An autonomous sense of “woman’s” subject formation and position?
   b. Each woman’s sense of herself as an individual?

In other words, I consider in this project how the Ideological State Apparatuses (Althusser 1971) situate Pakhtun women and how women’s ensuing subject-positions are contested (Ahmed 2006; Grima 1992; Shah 2007; and Spain 1972). Thus what I really explore (point ii-b) is how Pakhtun women occupy a subject-position(s) through which they can be defined as individuals with their own rights and voice(s) rather than recognized as referent-subjects with respect to men’s subjectivities only.

In this research by “subject” I mean the individual who is a participating or a tacitly participating member of a particular social and cultural community and is therefore affected by the sociocultural discursive practices. Whereas, “subject-position” is the way one “reacts” to the socio-political, historical, and material conditions of his or her society. It is this reaction to the
material and discursive conditions due to which an individual accepts a subject-position.\(^5\) The place of an individual as a social subject, over time, is influenced by hierarchal contestations hence rendering absolute individuality and individual agency questionable.

In this research the subject-position(s) under interrogation is that of the Pakhtun women. It is important to anthropologically interrogate the processes of Pakhtun women’s subject formation and position(s) to break away from the stereotypical images of the Pakhtun society coined by the non-Pakhtuns both locally and globally. Undoubtedly, it is culturally predetermined that the Pakhtuns are a patriarchal society therefore it becomes even more important to “unveil” the stereotypical attributes attached to the Pakhtuns in general and the Pakhtun women in particular. As such, a subject may not have total independent agency but within those patriarchal structures Pakhtun women do have a role to play in their sociocultural fabric. Pakhtun women may have restricted agency as social actors. However, exemplified through material culture, discursive practices, global influences, and everyday language usage, it is also proved that Pakhtun women have some level of individuality and are not as oppressed and exploited as it is believed to be by some both locally and globally.

It is imperative to clarify the sociocultural and political schema of the Pakhtuns in general and the Pakhtun women in particular at the present. Generally, both locally and globally, they are considered religious and cultural extremists fighting for or against the Talibans, and thus personifying and solidifying their subjectivities as ferocious barbarians who usually fight among themselves or with others.

\(^5\) I discuss subject, subject-position, and (comparison with) identity in detail in Chapter 2.
Historical Background

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) (see Appendix B-Map 3) is one of the four provinces of Pakistan (see Appendix B-Map 2). It borders Afghanistan to the northwest, Gilgit-Baltistan (formerly known as Northern Areas) to the northeast, Azad Kashmir to the east, the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) to the west and south, Punjab and Islamabad, the capital to the southeast. The provincial capital of KP is Peshawar, locally referred to as Pehawar in Pashto or Pakhto language. Besides, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakhtuns also live in the Baluchistan province of Pakistan; in Karachi, Sindh; and there are scattered settlements of Pakhtuns in the Punjab. Pakhtuns also live in parts of Afghanistan.

The main ethnic group in KP province is the Pakhtuns, followed by a number of smaller ethnic groups. Caroe (1983:8) states, “No Afghan or speaker of Pakhtu or Pashtu ever referred to himself as a ‘Pathan,’ and that the word was an Indian usage. The corresponding word in the classical Pakhtu of the Peshawar valley is Pakhtun, plural Pakhtanah, of which the Indian word Pathan (with a hard or cerebral ‘t’)) is a Hindi corruption.” Spain (1972:23) also endorses Caroe’s (1983) view by stating, “The last thing a Pathan would call himself is ‘Pathan’…. Some prefer ‘Afghan’, which in this case has nothing to do with Afghan nationality.” In fact, “Afghan” is used only to show a connection of common ancestry among all the Pakhtuns.

The principal language of the Pakhtuns is Pashto or Pakhto; there is a difference between the “soft” or the Kandahari dialect of Pashto, spoken by Pakhtuns in the southern parts of KP. It is called the soft dialect but it sounds harder and harsher than the “hard” or Yousafzai Pashto dialect, spoken by the Pakhtuns in northern parts of the province. The most common difference between the two dialects is the interchanging of the “kh” sound (of the Yousafzai or hard dialect) with the “sh” sound (of the Kandahari or soft dialect). Barth (1998:119) and then Grima (1992:4)

Ironically, both these authors use Pathans instead of Pakhtuns.
quotes a Pashto proverb, “You don’t speak Paxto; you do paxto” by which she explains that “The word paxto itself designates not only the language, but the behavior defined by the code [of ethics called Pakhtunwali].”

The historical origins of the Pakhtuns have been traced in great detail by Caroe (1983); Bowakee (2006); Spain (1963, 1972) and others as well. Therefore, I will not go into the details of the ancient historical origins of the Pakhtuns and their genealogical lineage systems. There have been conflicting opinions by historians and travelers that the Pakhtuns are one of the ten lost tribes of Jews; a claim that is refuted by Caroe (1983:4-11) and Spain (1972:28-29). However, such debates are neither important for my research nor in the purview of this dissertation. Therefore, to give an idea about the Pakhtuns’ background I rely on and summarize the historical account given by Spain (1972). According to Spain (1972:29-35), the Greek historian Herodotus mentions ‘the most warlike of all Indians, who live around the city of Kaspaturos in the country of Paktuike,’ and ‘the Aparutai,’ who lived in seventh satrapy (or the ruled territory) of Darius the Great (550-486 B.C.) of Persia. Caroe (1983:28-34) identifies Kaspaturos with Peshawar, Paktuike with the Pakhtuns, and ‘the Aparutai’ with the Afridis. The invasion of Alexander the Great also left some Greek influences on this region which were adopted by his successors the Indian Hindu-turned-Buddhist Mauryan dynasty (321-185 B.C.) whose empire extended from modern day India right up to Afghanistan. This dynasty introduced the Graeco-Buddhist culture known as Gandhara, the remains of which are spread around in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province and beyond in the Punjab and parts of Afghanistan. For the next years various Central Asian invaders passed through the present day Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, on

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7 For an explanation of Pakhtunwali see Bowakee (2006); Elahi et el (2010); Grima (1992); Lindholm (1982); and Spain (1963, 1972). I also outline the basic tenets of Pakhtunwali in Chapter 3 (footnotes).

8 Afridis are a Pakhtun tribe, occupying regions of Kurram and Khyber Agencies which are part of the Federally Administered Tribal Areas, near the Pakistan-Afghan border. See Appendix B-Maps 2 and 3.
their way to India. Toward the end of the tenth century Mahmud of Ghazni, or popularly known as the “idol-breaker,” a Turk but from Afghanistan on his way to India also passed through this region. The Mongol King, Chengiz Khan, in 1221 also came down to Peshawar in pursuit of a fleeing king of Iran; one hundred and seventy-five years later his descendant Timur, the Lame, called Tamerlane marched in from Central Asia to invade Delhi, where he paved the way for the Mughal Empire that ruled the Indian subcontinent from 1526-1857, until the British took control of the Indian subcontinent. Earlier the Pakhtuns had fought battles with the Mughals and, for a brief period, were ruled by the Sikhs as well until the administration was taken over by the British, who ruled the Indian subcontinent directly, and parts of the now Pakistani Tribal Belt and Afghanistan indirectly until Pakistan was created as a separate sovereign state in 1947. With the creation of Pakistan, official boundary, the “Durand Line [named] after Sir Mortimer Durand who in 1893 signed the agreement with the Afghan Amir [ruler] Abdur Rahman which separated Afghanistan from India” (Spain 1972:22), demarcates the Pakistan-Afghanistan political border.

The main purpose of giving this brief historical account is to demonstrate that the Pakhtuns (now living in KP, Pakistan) have witnessed, experienced, befriended, married, and fought against various peoples and creeds. Since the Pakhtuns lived close to the border, an entrance (previously called the North-West Frontier Province) to the Indian subcontinent, they had to bear the brunt of invasions in cash, kind, human life, and, at times, female integrity as well. Khan, A. (2005) explains the British colonial mindset of 1849, when the British captured southern part of Afghanistan and made it a part of their Indian Empire. He explicates:

The Pukhtun tribes offered a bloody and protracted resistance to the colonial army. So overwhelmed were the British by the resistance that they seemed to have found the exact opposite—‘the Other’—of their ‘civilised’ selves, in the shape of the insolent Pukhtuns—the noble savage. Thus started the orientalist discourse of the Pukhtun society

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9 The Indian subcontinent or the Indo-Pak subcontinent at present is a part of South Asia. The Mughal Empire reigned over the regions which are now Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India, and Pakistan.
as the wild land of the ‘unruly’ and independent people, who could neither be conquered nor tamed by the invading armies. They were eulogized as a martial race that would rather die for its *Pukhtunwali* (Pakhtun code of honour) than submit to the will of the alien power. [Khan, A. 2005:86]

As stated above, in Pakistan, the savage image of the Pakhtuns persists and remains unchanged to this day. As for the Pakhtun women, some believe that they are suppressed, oppressed, distressed, and helpless; and that they are the victims of the excesses of Pakhtun men (Shah 2007:118-119; Spain 1972:145-146). Therefore, this dissertation particularly focuses on the Pakhtun women of KP in Pakistan since 1947 to the present times with the aim to demonstrate that all Pakhtuns are not “unruly; insolent; or noble savages” who imprison their women. Furthermore, this research proves that many, if not all, Pakhtun women have a voice of their own. And if some restrictions are levied on Pakhtun women, there are other variables like age, class, and education, to name a few, that are also at play and not just the gender bias doled out to them by their men.

**Field Sites**

I conducted fieldwork at three sites in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP). In the following sections I give two views of the field sites. First I give a general view of the field sites as described by the respective official District Census Reports (DCRs) along with some of my comments as a participant-observer. And then, in the next section, I give a view about the respective field sites based solely on my own experiences and insight. My field sites for this research include Peshawar (see Appendix B-Maps 2 and 3), the provincial capital, the administrative and urban center. I also conduct research in the village Azmerabad, Charsadda

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10 This notion is predominantly reiterated through the local and international media.

11 Here, I need to make a little note on what I mean by a village in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), Pakistan. The villages in KP are connected to the major cities by metaled roads and most of the interconnecting roads within villages are also metaled though the streets may be dirt roads. The villages offer a rural setting including:
(see Appendix B-Map 3), which is one of the major agricultural districts of KP and is about 17 miles northeast of Peshawar. And my third field site is the village, Matti, Karak (see Appendix B-Map 3), one of the arid districts of KP, and lies approximately 110 miles southeast of Peshawar. I use Peshawar as a point of reference, in terms of distances and directions, to indicate other cities and places in KP.

My research is multi-sited because it is important to show that an ethnic group like the Pakhtuns cannot be studied generally or across the board even within one province. The goal is to demonstrate that living in the same region, even within one broader ethnic group, similarities and differences exist due to the intersectionality of age, gender, sexuality, class, spatiality, and language. In order to get a relatively holistic picture of the processes of Pakhtun women’s subject formation, subject-position(s), and agency, an inter-region based comparative approach is necessary. It gives a more nuanced understanding of Pakhtun women’s subjectivities and subject-positions. I particularly focus on these sites as opposed to any other places in KP because: firstly, Peshawar is the administrative, academic, and the occupational hub and as a result people from other places settle there for various reasons. As such, here I could access a variety of research respondents from different occupations, social, and ethnic backgrounds. Besides, Peshawar also gave me access to respondents who actually belong to Karak or Charsadda. The out-of-village residents helped to demonstrate the effect and change of spatiality in appropriating and at times transforming subject-position(s) and levels of female agency.

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12 Azmerabad is a fictitious name that I use for the village in Charsadda where I conducted my fieldwork.

13 Matti is also a fictitious name.

14 Not going into the debates about ethnicity, I follow Barth (1998:117), who calls the Pakhtuns an ethnic group and on the basis of his understanding and definition of ethnic group (1998:10-11) I also call Pakhtuns an ethnic group.
Secondly, Charsadda serves as a good blend of traditional and not-so-traditional location; and Karak has a more traditional setting. Thirdly, the three sites allow comparisons of women’s experiences and show the diverse responses that social actors have to the ideological interpellation and subject formation due to differences in their age, social class, gender, academic exposure, mobility, and media-related opinions.

Field Sites: The Official Perception

Matti, Karak

Karak was upgraded to district\textsuperscript{15} status on July 1, 1982; prior to that it was a subdivision of Kohat\textsuperscript{16} district. The district is bounded by Mianwali district on the southeast, Lakki Marwat district on the south, Hangu and Kohat districts on the north, Waziristan Agency and Bannu district on the west (see Appendix B-Map 3). Karak district consists of a succession of ranges of broken hills whose general trend is from the east to the west. The general elevation of the district is from 600 (approximately 1969 ft.) to 1400 (approximately 4593 ft.) meters above sea level. The weather in Karak can go to extremes: June is the hottest month with temperatures averaging between 27 (80.6F) and 40 degrees centigrade (104F). January is the coldest month with temperatures averaging between 06 (42.8F) and 18 (64.4F) degree centigrade.

Karak is a rural area, and there is no industry. The scarcity of water rules out agriculture as a profession for most of the people. As a result, people from this area join the armed forces and civil services to earn their livelihoods. A good number of people have gone abroad to the Middle Eastern countries for earning as well. Karak is overwhelmingly populated by Barak sub-tribe of Khattaks; all people belong to the Muslim Sunni school of thought. Pashto is

\textsuperscript{15} In Pakistan, a district is an administrative division within the province, managed by the local government. A district is further subdivided into tehsils which serve as headquarters for small towns and villages.

\textsuperscript{16} Kohat is a city which lies 29 miles south of Peshawar.
predominately spoken throughout the district (1998 District Census Report (DCR) of Karak 2000:1-7, 23).\textsuperscript{17}

Matti, the village where I conducted my fieldwork, is situated close to Karak proper or Karak town. It is regarded an “urban settlement [but] with a rural character” (DCR Karak 2000:7). However, as an observer and a resident of KP, Matti was what I would generally describe as a rural village. However, the people or the participants that I interviewed all lived in brick houses as opposed to adobe houses, which are generally found in most Pakistani villages. As stated in the DCR of Karak, Matti too is surrounded by low mountain ranges; generally has an arid look; with many sandy paths and therefore very little vegetation. Most of the fields had chickpeas or garbanzo beans plantations which are used as the main cash crop. But some people also breed honey bees and produce honey from local berries called \textit{bairay}. However, agriculture is not the main occupation of Matti residents; most men work in Peshawar or other parts of Pakistan, and some have also gone abroad to earn a living. The women, even if educated, mostly do not pursue professional careers. Matti has many schools but for higher education men and some women prefer going to Peshawar; very few men have also obtained higher degrees from abroad as well.

Unlike my other rural site, Azmerabad, Charsadda, one thing that I noticed about the women in Matti was that they could freely stroll around in the village outside their houses. Besides, in the absence of male guests or outsiders, the women could also go to the \textit{hujra} (the men’s quarters).\textsuperscript{18}

\textsuperscript{17} The 1998 District Census Reports (DCRs) were the latest census reports available while I was conducting research in 2011.

\textsuperscript{18} Hujra or the men’s quarters is the outer part of the houses where men sit together. Hujra is a men-only space. It is used for socializing purposes; discussing serious issues; an always-ready space for overnight male guests; and a place for holding \textit{jirgas} (meetings of tribal elders) as well.
A little while ago I, along with other women of the family, went out for a walk to the *khwar* (dry river bed). The weather, the breeze, the whole scene was beautiful. Compared to Charsadda this is a very arid region. The lands usually yield chickpeas and some wheat. During this time of the season there are a lot of *bairay* (berries) which are very juicy and fresh. The khwar is all sandy and I was told that during July-August or the monsoon (the rainy season in Pakistan between mid-July to August) the khwar has water gushing through it. Interestingly, one will never see women walking around in the fields in Charsadda. Here women are working in the fields too; something which I have barely ever seen in Charsadda…. I have observed that women here do not observe as much purdah as they do in Charsadda. I have been told that the lands or fields that we are roaming about are solely my host family’s property and no *praday* (a stranger), especially men, can come on these lands; they are just not allowed. [Matti, Karak, Field notes April 1, 2011]

Thus, from the onset in Matti, the differences that I observed encouraged me to follow a multisited fieldwork approach. As a Pukhtana myself, I had never either roamed around in the fields and agricultural lands or had ever been to the hujra once I was considered an adult until now when I got the opportunity in Matti.

**Azmerabad, Charsadda**

Charsadda was formerly a tehsil of Peshawar district and was upgraded to the status of district in July 1988. At the time of Alexander’s invasion Charsadda was known as *Pushkalavati* (the Lotus). It was then the capital of the region. The Greek historians transliterated it as *Peukelaus* or *Peukelatois*. Charsadda has Malakand district to the north, Mardan district to the east, Nowshera and Peshawar districts to the south, and Mohmand Agency (Federally Administered Tribal Area or FATA) to the west (see Appendix B-Map 3). Charsadda lies about 17 miles northeast of Peshawar. Like most other parts of Pakistan, Charsadda also has the highest temperatures in June-July, souring over 40C or 104F; the coldest months are December through February. The plain of Charsadda is very fertile and hence is one of the most agriculturally productive districts of the province. Since Charsadda is an agriculturally productive region therefore agriculture is the main source of employment for many here.
However, with the passage of time and with the increase of education many people have opted for other jobs and businesses. The area is known for producing famous political leaders, generals, bureaucrats, diplomats, and entrepreneurs. The majority of people in Charsadda are Sunni Muslims. People there are believed to be superstitious, especially women who would acquire charms and amulets from *ziarats* (shrines)\(^{19}\) (1998 District Census Report of Charsadda 2000:1-10).

Azmerabad, the second village where I conducted my fieldwork was very different compared to Matti, Karak. This village was a complete contrast in landscape to Matti as well. Charsadda is generally greener compared to the arid desert-like look of Karak. Besides, being close to Peshawar, Azmerabad is rather semi-traditional compared to Matti, Karak. Moreover, there was a clear division of classes which included the Khans or the village elites and the common villagers. The Khans and their children, apart from being economically better off than the common villagers, were comparatively more educated as well. Therefore, if some Khans still depended on their ancestral lands for living, most of their children, especially men, were in the medical or legal professions; education; bureaucracy; the armed forces; or private sector jobs. Although the traditional customs of segregated male–female spaces and purdah observation was prevalent yet the women here, especially the younger ones, were also far more educated; independent; and mobile compared to women in Matti. However, it is considered inappropriate, especially for the women of the Khans’ families to walk around leisurely in the streets of Azmerabad; the common village women do so but that too mostly for social visits and absolute shopping necessities. And the question of going into a hujra is an absolute “no” for all adult

\(^{19}\) One of my respondents from Charsadda, in Chapter 3, also mentions that she visits shrines.
women irrespective of their social standing. Nonetheless, being in proximity to Peshawar, Azmerabad overall enjoys both the urban and rural benefits.

Peshawar

Peshawar is the provincial capital of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP). Different historians have called it by different names which are in fact variation of its present name. The Chinese traveler who visited this region around A.D. 400 calls it Fo-Lu-Sha. The oldest name has been traced to Kharoshti\(^{20}\) record found near Attock,\(^{21}\) dated A.D. 119 where it is spelled as Poshapura, a Sanskrit name which means the “city of flowers.” The flowers of Peshawar were also mentioned in Mughal Emperor Babar’s memoirs as well. Al-Beruni\(^{22}\) in the tenth-eleventh century mentions its name as Parshawar in his travelogue and the city retained its name till the time of King Akbar,\(^{23}\) who Persianized it to Peshawar, a combination of two Persian words, Pesh and Awar which means artisans because of the large number of skilled artisans present in this city.

Peshawar has Charsadda district to its north; Nowshera district to its east; on the south it has the tribal area adjoining Peshawar and Kohat districts; and on the west it is bordered by Mohmand and Khyber Agencies (see Appendix B-Map 3).

Peshawar, too, experiences the extreme summer heat during June through July-August, which are extremely humid months as well; with average temperatures between 40C or 104F and


\(^{21}\) Attock is a city of the Punjab Province and is located about 40 miles south of Peshawar.

\(^{22}\) Al-Beruni (973-1048) was a Muslim scholar commissioned by Mahmud Ghazni to record his observations about India.

\(^{23}\) Akbar, popularly known as Akbar the Great (1542-1605), was the third Mughal emperor of the Indian subcontinent.
25°C or 77°F. December through mid-February are the coldest months with average temperatures of 18°C or 64°F and 4°C or 39°F.

Since Peshawar has been invaded and inhabited by a number of invaders like the Aryans, Mughals, Sikhs, and the British, almost every race has left an impression on the local people. As Peshawar is the capital of the province it has mixed ethnicities and houses the Peshawaris or the local inhabitants with no rural connections. And other tribal ethnicities like the Afridis, Khattaks, Mohmands, Orakzais, Wazirs, Mahsuds, and the people from the surrounding districts of Charsadda, Nowshera, Swabi, et cetera. Besides, minorities from other provinces of Pakistan also live in Peshawar. In addition to this, with the 1978 coup d’état in Afghanistan, millions of Afghan refugees poured into Peshawar, some of whom are permanently residing here (1998 District Census Report of Peshawar 1999:1-2, 13). The people who reside in Peshawar settle here either permanently or temporarily. Besides, if some people settle in Peshawar permanently they still remain in close contact with their ancestral villages. Therefore, Peshawar as a field site serves as good example of a mixed groups of Pakhtuns and it also demonstrates how people from various rural backgrounds adapt, adopt, and appropriate (or not) some of the traditional Pakhtun customs in the urban setting.

**Field Sites and Fieldwork: The Personal Experience**

I conducted fieldwork for my doctoral dissertation project in January-June 2011. This was in addition to some research I had already done in February-May 2006 in Peshawar; and then in June-August 2009 in Peshawar and Charsadda. Having some previous fieldwork experience in Peshawar and Charsadda, as a researcher made me a somewhat “familiar” subject for the respondents. The fieldwork in Karak in 2011 was my first experience in that area. As such, I was concerned about my positionality as a researcher, guest, and an outsider of sorts in a
more traditional setup compared to Peshawar and Charsadda. In the following sections I demonstrate my personal experiences at all three field sites and the relationship with the respective respondents.

**Karak: The Officially Non-Tribal but Traditional Belt**

I had originally planned to go to Karak sometime in mid-March 2011 but my host had to go on a mandatory official visit to the UK so I had to postpone my visit. Though still undecided about the exact date of my visit to Matti, Karak, my host called me and asked me when I would like to go to his village. I told him that I would like to be in Karak before mid-April; it was the last week of March then. Besides, I needed a day or two-notice before our departure so that I could get the traditional voluntary presents for my host family. Among Pakhtuns and Pakistanis in general, when a person goes to someone’s house for the first time, they take a gift(s) and eatables like fresh fruit, baked goods, or sweets which is traditionally called *methai*. So I needed some time to shop for the appropriate gifts. As luck would have it, my host called me and said, “You can go to our village tomorrow with my family; call them and arrange the program with them.”

“But…but wait I need to tell my mom and she is not home,” I said. “Do I have another option? This seems a very hurried plan!” I added.

“OK. After tomorrow you can go sometime after the 10th [April] if tomorrow is rushed!” he said.

“After the 10th?… That would be too late!” I said.

“OK, then take our address, and you can go to our village with your [personal] driver!” he replied. I could not possibly do that. If one does not know the exact directions to a village in Pakistan (and particularly if you have to pass through politically sensitive areas as one has to
while going to Karak) it is not easy to locate a place. Besides, no major highway takes you straight to a village; there are no right-up-to-the-destination signs or direction boards; no global positioning system (GPS) guidance available; and no mailing addresses with street names or numbers. One just knows the way to a village or has to make many stops to get directions. It is also important for women to be accompanied by a man who can ask for directions. Driving to Karak myself was not an option; it is considered traditionally inappropriate for women to drive in villages, especially in KP, and on top of that ask for directions too! I called the host family in Peshawar and they informed me that I had to be at their place by 2:00 p.m. the next day after the Jumma (Friday) prayer. My host called me at 1:00 p.m. the next day and informed me that there was a bomb blast in the Kohat tunnel and that we should leave as soon as possible.

The Kohat tunnel is a 1.2 miles long tunnel on the Indus Highway (the road we took to Karak. The Indus Highway connects Afghanistan via Peshawar and Karachi, with the Arabian Sea) and connects Peshawar to the city of Kohat. This was the third time the “terrorists” exploded a bomb in the tunnel to disrupt supplies to the Pakistan Army in South Waziristan and the NATO forces in Afghanistan. The tunnel was constructed with the help of Japanese aid and opened to traffic in 2003, and is called the Pak-Japan Friendship Tunnel as well.

Luckily, I was all ready and asked my driver to drop me off at my host’s place in Peshawar and when I reached their house we left almost immediately for Karak. We had to take the alternate route due to the blast in the tunnel. The journey that usually took three to three and a half hours took us a good six hours and a half! The additional two and a half hour was due to our driver who was not familiar with the alternate route. After taking a couple of wrong turns here and there we were finally on the correct route. We reached Matti, Karak after six and a half hours!
The immediate extended family came to meet and greet me. We had a sumptuous dinner: a traditional village dinner that consisted of chicken curry (a must for guests); beef pullao (rice with meat, spices, and herbs); mixed vegetables; freshly made tandoor doday (bread); and shumallay (buttermilk). After dinner I was shown my room and I was left to retire to bed after the long journey. I fell asleep after about three hours of tossing and turning in bed; perhaps the place and the people were new for me to settle down. I, too, was a stranger to whom they were going to open up their houses and their lives.

The night before I had asked someone what time people woke up here. I was told that women wake up earlier in the village. “We wake up for the prayers at around 5:30 a.m. or earlier, depending on the prayer time according to the season—summers or winters. But you can wake up any time you want to!” I decided to wake up at 7:00 a.m. thinking that was a decent enough time. I had the typical village breakfast: black tea with milk, parathay (bread made with wheat dough fried in ghwaree or clarified butter), fried eggs, and freshly churned butter milk. What a calorie-filled diet to start the day! People in the villages too have become conscious about healthy eating but most will still have parathay and tea because it gives them the energy to do all the physical chores—inside the house or in the fields. After breakfast many women and children came to see me; it was almost “seeing” because most of them sat and just looked at me! But some spoke to me as well. People in Karak speak the “soft” or the Kandahari dialect of Pashto which is different than the “hard” or Yousafzai dialect of Pashto that I spoke. The former sounded “harder” and “harsher” to me than the Yousafzai dialect. In this village people greeted me by saying, “Stray mashae!” (May you never be tired of greeting us; your journey!). And I

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24 The expression Stray mashae, I was told, is from the times of nomadic and caravan journeys which Pakhtun tribes undertook in their past. The expression implies may you never be tired of the journey lying ahead of you; given that they were nomads the journey or travel was an integral part of their life.
was told the appropriate response should be, “Janati shae!” (May you be blessed with heavens!); and almost immediately I became a participant-observer.

The only man who actually came to greet me was Mashar Baba (the eldest father). As most Pakhtun women observe purdah in front of unrelated men it is not deemed proper for men and women to casually meet and greet. Perhaps, being the head of the (extended) family and senior in age, Mashar Baba had to pay me a courtesy welcome visit; it was a very short visit. He also told me that he had come earlier to see me too but I was busy with work so he did not disturb me. It appeared that he liked talking; he talked more himself rather than listening to me! After finding out that my father had passed away and I did not have a brother, Mashar Baba, pointing to one of his daughters-in-law, said to me, “Dee baa staa khizmat kawee. Ao ka staa plaar, ror, ba woo no da aghee khizmat ba moong kawalo.” (They will serve you. If it were your father or brother(s) we [the men] would have served them). This gesture would have surprised a foreigner to the Pakhtun culture but I could understand what he meant; hospitality, in Pakhtun culture, is most of the time gender reciprocated as well. Mashar Baba was the only household male who came and actually sat with me for a while; the other men just came to greet me: they exchanged pleasantries while standing at the room’s door; none of them stayed behind to chit-chat as that is deemed culturally inappropriate behavior toward female guests who are not related to the host men.

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25 *Stray mashae* is also used in Charsadda and Peshawar as a form of greeting but many people also greet one another by saying *Assalaam-o-alaikum* which is the Arabic for “May God protect you and be with you.” The response should be, *Walaikum Assalaam* which in Arabic means, “May you be protected too.” This is how most of the times people greet one another.

26 I was told that in this particular region once the elder of the family or the chief of the clan greets a guest or sits with him or her it is redundant for the youngsters to do that. As the sitting of the youngsters would minimize the significance of the respect and honor the elder of the family gives to the guest by sitting with him or her.
Charsadda: The Semi-Traditional Urban-Rural Blend

InCharsadda, my experience was somewhat different than the one in Karak. The main reason is that I belong to Azmerabad, the village where I conducted a part of my field work. In Azmerabad the research dynamics were a little different. The issue of positionality was very relevant here because this was my ancestral village where I had a close personal connection and association with the people and the place. Most of the respondents told me that they will give me all kinds of interviews because “I was their daughter!” or “They had seen me grow up!” or “I was so and so’s daughter, and so and so’s granddaughter.” All these sentiments, as an individual were very humbling but as a researcher it put me in an odd position. Some of my respondents, both men and women, through generations, have been serving my family. They and I were on the extreme opposites of the social spectrum. As a result, during our interviews, I felt some of the respondents did not respond as much as I wanted them to. Perhaps, they did not want to “annoy” me as I was an insider but higher up in the social hierarchy. While there were others who talked a lot and perhaps wanted to “please” me for the same reasons. I interviewed the village Khan and some of his family members as well. I felt my discussions and interview sessions with the Khan were comparatively more open than with the common villagers. I think the reason for this difference was perhaps the Khan and I were social and intellectual equals. Therefore, in Azmerabad my role as a researcher, more or less, was what Collins (1991) describes as the “Outsider Within;” I had my advantages and disadvantages, at times, as well.

Peshawar: The Provincial Capital

After my fieldwork inCharsaddaI proceeded to Peshawar which is also the academic hub, the economic, and the employment center. That is why most of the people who live in Peshawar tend to have active rural affiliations; they visit and stay connected with their ancestral
villages. Since Peshawar offers economic, academic and other material facilities that is why most people have migrated to the city but stay in touch with their families in the villages. Therefore, respondents in Peshawar served as a good mix of people who were situated in an urban setting but at the same time were affected by their rural backgrounds both directly and indirectly. Some of my respondents in Peshawar also had rural affiliations with Karak and Charsadda. As such, their comments served as good examples of comparison and contrast when one is removed from a traditional setting into a rather non-traditional setting; it shows how change in spatiality affects thinking and traditions as well. In Peshawar, I primarily interviewed respondents; these were in-depth interviews. Somewhat like in Charsadda, at times, as a researcher I thought I had positionality issues in Peshawar where I got the opportunity to talk to academics, lawyers, media-persons, poets and writers. The research participants were collaborative, responsible, and extremely helpful in guiding me to other sources: academic and otherwise. Some of the academics were the senior faculty members of local universities and I as a colleague was, comparatively, way below them in the academic hierarchy. Yet, at times I felt that they took me more seriously than I expected. I wondered if my position, as a researcher from abroad—though I was a university faculty member only studying aboard—had anything to do with their treatment. I may be wrong; but that is how I felt. A part of me speculated whether I would have been given the same serious treatment if I were a local Ph.D. student. Similarly, those who did not know me were also very courteous and at times conscious when they would come to know that I was doing Ph.D. in the U.S. However, I noticed that the comfort levels of my respondents relaxed as we proceeded with our discussions.
Methodology: Methods and Data Analysis

I begin my ethnographic analysis with data collected from Matti, Karak followed by Azmerabad, Charsadda, and then finally Peshawar. This order is intentional to signify the literal and metaphoric travel from the rural to the urban with Charsadda as an intermediary of both. This periphery-to-center journey also helps disclose how and why Pakhtun women’s subjectivities are formed and transformed once there is a spatial, material, mental, and physical journey from the periphery to the center.

Data Collection, Sample Size and Characteristics

My research sample includes responses from both male and female respondents. Although I focus on the ideological subject formation and position(s) of Pakhtun women but I think that it is equally important to bring in the male perspective as well. It was important to hear men’s responses because it is essential to understand the rationale that leads to perpetuating, maintaining, and reproducing patriarchal traditions in a setting like that of the Pakhtuns. My data also illustrates the emergence of predetermined and preexisting patriarchal authority. However, as I demonstrate that Pakhtun female subjects are contesting and negotiating their subject-positions, patriarchal boundaries also emerge as non-static showing that the notions of patriarchy are also shifting. The fact that Pakhtun women manage to negotiate their subject-positions proves that the position and definition of Pakhtun patriarchy is also altering with time and circumstances. Hence, I tried to collect an equal number of responses from both groups. However, due to cultural restrictions and limitations I did not have access to the same number of men as women, especially in the rural areas.

In this research project I collected data through a combination of ethnographic methods like participant-observation, casual conversations, and primarily through in-depth formal and
informal interviews based on snowballing or network (Bernard 2006:192-194) stratified sampling methods. Network sampling served as the best technique suited for this research because it gave me access to people who were serious, willing, and trustworthy for providing relevant and correct information. Besides, keeping the geo-political situation of KP in mind, the snowball or network sampling helped in establishing my authenticity as a researcher and as a person especially to those who did not know me. In Charsadda and Karak I had female key informants as well. They not only connected me with other people but they also helped in being a general moral support. In Matti, Karak, since there is a dialect difference, my key informant would also help me translate some of the respondents’ answers when I would be in doubt about the meaning.

My method primarily consisted of in-depth interviews. These interviews were one to three hour long. The three-hour interviews were held in three different sittings of one hour each. In Matti, Karak most interviews were done at my host’s house and only for about three interviews I went to the respective respondents’ houses. In Azmerabad, Charsadda I held interviews either at the respondents’ houses or at my house. And in Peshawar most of the interviews were held at the respondents’ offices or my office; with an exception of two, of which one was held at the respondent’s house and the other at my house. Depending on the comfort level of the respondents, there were some who wanted to be interviewed alone and there were others who wanted a family member or friends to accompany them while I interviewed them. Most of the interviews were conducted in Pashto; some in Urdu; and few in English. I translated all the interviews, from Pashto and Urdu into English. I also transcribed all the interviews myself. In order to maintain the anonymity of the respondents I use pseudonyms instead of actual names of the respondents and the villages where I conducted fieldwork. However, Professor
Salma Shaheen is the only person for whom, with her permission, I do not use a pseudonym. This is because firstly, I use her published and unpublished work as an example for analysis (in Chapter 7 of this dissertation); and secondly, in order to support my analysis of her work I interviewed Salma Shaheen as a research participant as well.

I interviewed a total of 51 respondents. In Matti, Karak, I had nine female and six male respondents; in Azmerabad, Charsadda there were seven females and four males; in Peshawar, I had fifteen female respondents and ten male respondents. That is a total of 31 female and 20 male respondents.

<table>
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<th>Field site</th>
<th>No. of female respondents</th>
<th>No. of male respondents</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. Matti, Karak</td>
<td>09</td>
<td>06</td>
<td>15</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Azmerabad, Charsadda</td>
<td>07</td>
<td>04</td>
<td>11</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Peshawar</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>10</td>
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Grand Total = Females = 31
Males = 20 = 51

The respondent selection was consciously based on variables like age, sex, education, exposure to media, and travel experience. The reason for limiting respondents to 51 is primarily based on the time I could spend in the field. Since I was on a time-limited funding for this project, I could not spend more than six months in the field. Interacting with 51 respondents, taking field notes, and transcribing interviews in the field was possible in my given time frame.

My number of respondents may seem limited but in order to pursue my research I based the number of respondents and data collection methods on the techniques used by Abu-Lughod (1986, 2008); Ahmed (2006); Grima (1992); Hill (1995, 2005); Leap (2003, 2008, 2009); Raheja

27 I use Salma Shaheen’s actual name and not a pseudonym for her with her explicit consent.
and Gold (1994), to name a few. These scholars have worked with one, three or a small group of respondents and have not only effectively managed to convey or answer their research questions but have also significantly added to the already existing anthropological, cultural, linguistic, and methods literature by producing peer reviewed articles and full length books.

Framework and Procedures for Data Analysis

The data analysis includes qualitative approaches for content analysis; primarily critically analyzing the discourse of the respondents’ interviews. Therefore, a lot of direct quotations from the respondents are incorporated in the main text of this dissertation (for transcription conventions used see Appendix A). As such, I began with coding my data according to the themes and sub-themes as they surfaced through the respondents’ discourse and linguistic cues. When certain thematic and linguistic patterns began to emerge, I then tried to explain the presence of such patterns using various anthropological theories that potentially accounted for such occurrences and patterns from ideological, material, structural, gender, and cultural standpoints.

My method of analysis is based on a combination of theoretical models that examine linguistic cues which help in shaping and deciphering respondents’ answers. In order to do this I primarily use Althusser’s (1971) framework of ideology as the foundational theoretical paradigm for my analysis. I trace how the Ideological State Apparatuses (ISAs) “interpellate” or “hail” (Althusser 1971) and form a subject-position(s). I also employ Pêcheux’s (1982:156-159) “processes of recognition” to discuss the formation of various subject-position(s). Sometimes subject-positions and their respective linguistic implications have to be inferred through what Vološinov (1973:23) calls multiaccentuality because their gender—sexual performance(s) and voice(s) have to be deciphered “in relation to site-specific struggles over race/ethnicity, class
position, sexual diversity, cultural allegiance, national identity, and other features shaping and fragmenting everyday life within the late modern period” (Leap 2003:402).

For discourse analysis, following Penelope (1990) and Ahern (2001; 2012) I look for the presence or absence of agency. Ong (1999) and Gaudio (2009) help in clarifying ideas about flexible citizenship and cultural citizenship, respectively. In debates regarding the discourse on belonging I follow Collier and Ong’s (2005) framework of global assemblages and territorialization; furthermore, Aseel (2004); Ahmad (2002); Jamal (2006); Leap (2004) White (1996); and Rosaldo (2003) to name a few, help in further explicating ideas about belonging. In addition, I also rely on the feminist theoretical frameworks of Abu-Lughod (1986; 2008) and Naples (2003) regarding the importance of positionality; and the insider–outsider status as explicated by Collins (1991), amongst other theorists and frameworks which I discuss in detail in the respective chapters.

**The Researcher vs. the Native**

Being a Pakhtun woman and working with Pakhtuns in Pakhtun environment already problematizes my position. Some might contend that I have a soft view of Pakhtuns, especially of women and issues related to them. Others might even argue that I might come across as a spokesperson or advocate for the Pakhtuns, especially of women. Some others might even say that my work is more of an exposé. While I struggle against these possible allegations I am also aware of my responsibility as a researcher and an ethnographer. I admit that I cannot, nor can anyone else for that matter, eliminate the element of bias while dealing with one’s people; I am also aware that an outsider may not necessarily be objective.

I had some personal connections at all the three field sites with some of the respondents before I went there to interview them. For some of my respondents I was a social elite, for some
a colleague, for others a guest, and for yet others a relative. My role as a researcher and a native did complicate the respondents’ and my position. On the one hand, it made it easy for me to interact with the respondents, but, on the other, it complicated my position due to my prior acquaintance with them. I was on a slippery ground of being one of them in a way, but at the same time being an outsider in being a graduate student at a U.S. university whose stay was funded by the USAID. My position was further complicated by my being an academic elite: most of my respondents in the villages were either illiterate or were not highly educated except for some at each of the three sites. Coupled with this was being a social elite at Azmerabad, Charsadda, which is my ancestral village. Except for the Khan and his family, who were my social and academic equals, the rest of the respondents were economically and academically underprivileged compared to the Khan or I. For example, my position as a researcher and a native was challenging at one point in Azmerabad, Charsadda while we were discussing the relationship between the village’s Khan and the common villagers (discussed later in Chapter 6). The husband and wife that I was talking to had a few grievances against their Khan. Although we discussed the issue at hand in detail yet the wife made it a point to clarify that they may have grievances against their Khan but they were loyal to him and could not even think of disrespecting or being disloyal to him come what may. Here the couple vented out their criticism about the Khan but at the same time made sure that I did not get offended or perhaps tell on them because after all I too belonged to the Khan’s family.

I had to work with my respondents and build their trust in me and in what I was doing. I participated in whatever and however they did their day to day chores. My respondents who were educated understood the nature of my research. After reading and signing the consent forms some would ask me further questions which I would gladly answer. I got a sense that they felt
comfortable with what I was trying to get at and what I expected from them. Most of them said that they understood the broad nature of my work. This claim became somewhat apparent as we proceeded with our discussions or interviews because for most part I did not have to guide them or rephrase my questions in order to help them answer. In addition, I could also feel that they were comfortable about our interaction and my research because none of them tried to influence my opinions; research problem; or the overall direction of my research project. To those respondents who were illiterate I explained that my work was about Pakhtuns, especially women and that I was trying to highlight some of the cultural aspects of their lives to show how Pakhtun women are agential members of the society. Most showed interest in what I was doing and asked me when I would finish the work. Some even asked me to share my work with them once I was done. Some others told me to talk to them about whatever I wanted to. I am aware that there is literature available on positionality (Abu-Lughod 2008, 1986; Alcalde 2007; Alcoff 1991-1992; Naples 2003; Narayan 1993; and Taylor 1993). As such, I realized that I was in an academically and socially elite position—a complex position of which I was I constantly conscious. However, my training as an anthropologist helped me consciously keep a check on my positional privilege and I tried to be as neutral as possible in recording and interpreting data. Therefore, in spite of my complex positionality I continued nonetheless because I observed that the respondents saw me as someone connected to the local community. So they were also aware of my positional location and our interaction together – at meals, doing chores, in interviews – was structured in part by its joint mediation.

**Ethical Considerations**

But positionality was not the only ethical issue with which I had to contend while in the field. First and foremostly, I had to ensure the anonymity of respondents. Secondly, I had to
consider the willingness of female respondents, especially in Azmerabad, Charsadda and Matti, Karak (the rural areas), to participate. In some case, they had to take “permission” from their husbands, sons or some male member of the family. Thirdly, Azmerabad and Matti are more conservative about traditional customs, and I, being a woman, had access to women; I also had access to men both in Azmerabad and Matti, however, I had to be conscious about the cultural restraints that are at play between unrelated Pakhtun men and women. In Matti I had to be more careful not to upset the elder family male members by asking them something that would put them in a culturally awkward position because firstly, they may not want to answer it. Secondly, I, being a woman and a guest, could further aggravate their position by compelling them to give me an answer that would not be a true response. With respect to Azmerabad, I had to be careful on yet another level: I belong to the village where I conducted my fieldwork. As a result, I had to be mindful of the shared cultural customs like purdah observation; regard for age; and most of all power dynamics as a researcher who was also the “outsider within” (Collins 1991). In Peshawar, as my respondents were educated they were comparatively more liberal and accepting. However, since some were colleagues, senior and junior, I had to be extra careful not to ask or comment on anything that would or could upset or jeopardize their professional, cultural, individual sensibilities and position(s).

Limitations of this Study

In spite of my best efforts this project has limitations. First of all, I really got to understand why anthropologists can spend years in the field: that is how one really gets to know one’s research participants and can gather representative data. Therefore, I think I could have spent some more time in the field as well. However, my time constraints were due to the fact that I was on a funding and according to the schedule I could not spend more than six months in the
field. Secondly, with regard to the first limitation, I may be criticized, as most linguistic
anthropologists are, for not having a representative sample of respondents. Yet, I think that since
my research was based on in-depth interviews and discourse analysis this sample served as a
dependable size to: 1) highlight the subject formation of Pakhtun women; and 2) demonstrate
that an ethnic group, in this case the Pakhtuns, cannot be stereotyped across the board. Thirdly, I
think that my “outsider within” status at times gave me lopsided responses. As a result, some
respondents at times would not be completely vocal or expressive while at other times some
became exaggeratingly vocal and expressive in their responses. Fourthly, due to cultural
restrictions I could not interview equal number of men and women. I especially had trouble with
asking questions from the elder men in Karak due to cultural concerns which limited my
understanding of some issues. For example, the younger men and mostly women in Matti had
concerns about the restrictions levied on them, especially by the elder men, regarding personal
choice in marriage, that is, the freedom to choose one’s spouse. I really wanted to discuss this
issue with the elder men; I sort of alluded to it in terms of general freedom and the right to speak
up but they gave me evasive responses. Therefore, fearing they might feel uncomfortable, I could
not directly bring up the topic of cousin marriage or exchange marriage since that is the tradition
they had imposed on their children as well. Fifthly, in order to get first-hand responses and a
more nuanced understanding about religion as an ISA I could not reach out to the conservative or
religious faction of the Pakhtun society. Due to the current sensitivity attached to religion, the
anti-American sentiments, and serious security concerns I was advised not to interview the
village and the urban conservatives. This limited my data because I could not get the
conservative view regarding religion, law, and culture as ISAs; more so if they agreed or
disagreed that the three ISAs are confused and conflated for sociocultural convenience in the
Pakhtun setup. Nonetheless, in spite of these limitations there is substantive information that this dissertation offers to the Pakhtuns in particular and the world at large.

Research Significance

Pakhtun women are still an extremely under-researched ethnic group. Apart from the two sources, Grima (1992) and Ahmed (2006), that I discuss in Chapter 2 of this dissertation, I have not come across any significant research work on Pakhtun women of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa by either male or female scholars. Through my research, first, I want to add to the existing anthropological literature by demonstrating the ideological subject formation of Pakhtun women and establishing of their respective subject-position(s). I use Althusser’s (1971) theory of ideology and Pêcheux’s (1982:156-159) processes of recognition as frameworks of inquiry, which, to my knowledge, have not been used for the examination of Pakhtun female subject-positioning. Along with engaging the Althusserian and Pêcheuxian frameworks I also want to demonstrate that the subject formation of Pakhtun women does not take place in isolation; it is rather a product of socio-economical, cultural, and political discursive practices that are communicated through everyday language in the form of conversations, narratives, literary expressions, various socio-political, religious, and media propagated discourses.

Second, my research demonstrates that women may not seem to be active participants in the Pakhtun political and social structure, but i) they are individuals with some levels of self-consciousness; ii) Pakhtun women may seem “invisible” from the public spaces per se but they have their own spaces and sexual performances that act as counter-publics, leading to their self-expression through sexual appropriation both in the rural and urban settings; and iii) global

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28 These are works originally written in English; there are a few works in Pashto but I could not access them mainly due to the fact that I cannot read academic Pashto fluently and they have not been translated into English.
influences have affected Pakhtun women differently according to their age, experience, exposure and mobility. However, they are neither oblivious of global effects nor are they carried away by globalization. In fact, they manage to “territorialize global assemblages” (Collier and Ong 2005) and consequently appropriate these global influences according to the cultural mores.

Third, the current social and political situation in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is not merely changing but is ideologically “hailing” the subject-positions in some particular ways as well. Therefore, my research can be an on-going anthropological project, studying the Pakhtuns in general and the Pakhtun women in particular during times of political turmoil, social instability, and cultural contestation. It will further contribute to the flexible, evolving, and gendered notions of and about this ethnic community.

Finally, this research will be of general significance not only to the academic field of anthropology but also to culture studies, linguistics, politics, gender and women studies, and will thus add a fresh dimension to the already existing literature in these disciplines as well.

**Dissemination and Utilization of Research Results**

The results of this research project will be used first of all in the form of my Ph.D. dissertation. Secondly, the information gathered through this research can also be disseminated through scholarly journals and perhaps after the required editing it can also be published as a book. Thirdly, parts of it can also be used for public and academic lectures. Fourthly, portions of it can be used as part of graduate level courses. Finally, since this is an academic research project all my findings are original, authentic, and valid, therefore, by simplifying the language (that is, doing away with the technical jargon) I can publish it in the newspapers for the non-academic national and international readers.
Summary of Chapters

After introducing the Pakhtuns as an ethnic group living in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and demonstrating my field experience, Chapter 2, “Theoretical Paradigms: Interrogating Other Voices” gives an overview of the existing literature available on the Pakhtuns which either scarcely discusses women in the cultural context or does not apply the theoretical framework that I use in this dissertation to understand Pakhtun women. As such, this chapter also includes a detailed discussion of the existing literature on the theoretical framework used in this dissertation. Therefore, by hashing out the research problem of the dissertation a connection is established between why it is necessary to use the Althusserian (1971) framework of ideology in order to understand the subject formation and subject-position(s) of Pakhtun women. Hence, this chapter also discusses the literature on ideology by incorporating Althusser’s definition and functioning of ideology; other scholars’ understanding and critique of the Althusserian framework; the convergence of ideology and habitus (Bourdieu 2003); the connection between ideology and hegemony (Gramsci 2000); debates regarding the creation of subjects, subject-positions, subjectivities; and finally agency. Chapter 3, “Endorsing Authenticity and Notions of Pakhtun Cultural Subject-Positions: Citizenship or Belonging in the Age of Globalization?” examines the notions of citizenship and belonging in order to explicate who is accepted as an authentic group member in the Pakhtun society. In addition, this chapter also shows the effects of globalization in establishing or de-establishing the notions of cultural citizenship and belonging. This chapter explicates the fragmentary, flexible, and context-related meaning of globalization; the impact of globalization on the local cultures, as reflected through linguistic exchanges and overt or covert gendered performances in the local cultures. Furthermore, the phenomenon of “global assemblages and territorialization” (Collier and Ong: 2005) substantiates various aspects of belonging and citizenship when global-meets-local or vice versa, thus explaining the subject-
positions as interpellated through processes of territorialization. Chapter 4, “Negotiating Subjectivities: Family as the Ideological State Apparatus and the Processes of Pakhtun Female Subject Formation and Positioning” examines the influence of family as the Ideological State Apparatus on the subject formation of Pakhtun women (and younger men); the subject-positions; the consequent subjectivities that are established; and finally the way Pakhtun women contest and negotiate these subject-positions. Chapter 5, “Education and Media: Interpellating Contesting Subjectivities” builds on Chapter 4 and continues to discuss the effects of education and media on the subject-position(s) of Pakhtun female (and some male) subjects. This chapter demonstrates the contestation that these two ISAs create between social actors. Chapter 6, “Religion, Law, and Culture: Ideological State Apparatuses at Crossroads Interpellating Multiple Subject-Positions in the Moment” is a continuation of sorts of the previous chapters but examines the influence ISAs like religion, law, and culture have on the subject-position(s) of Pakhtun women (and men). As such, it examines the various subject-positions; subjectivities; and means of contestation and negotiation that the women use to achieve the desired subject-positions. Chapter 7, “Cultural Structures: Breaking Barriers through Prosaic and Poetic Forms of Resistance,” demonstrates some of the ways in which Pakhtun female subjects contest and negotiate their subject-positions to practice agency in mundane and nuanced ways. This chapter explicates that agency cannot have fixed meanings; it has to be understood with reference to the historical, material, and cultural nuances of a society. As such, this chapter discusses the mundane but agentive role of Pakhtun women in the past and present. And with the help of literary and visual media devices as examples, the chapter illustrates the more nuanced forms of quotidian agency which Pakhtun women practice without challenging the cultural setup per se. The chapter demonstrates that these women stay within the Pakhtun cultural expectations and
manages to achieve agency and get their voice(s) heard through different means. Finally, Chapter 8, “Pakhtun Men are not Talibans and the Women Have Moved Ahead With and Without Burqas,” concludes the dissertation by showing that the three foremost (female) subject-positions which have positively helped and can further aid in the sociocultural progression and agency propagation of Pakhtun women include: the locally–globally aware subject; the mobile subject; and the educated subject. In addition, this chapter elucidates that in order to achieve and sustain agency the Pakhtuns, especially Pakhtun women, should try to become conscious about the kind(s) of interpellation they are responding to; they should think for themselves; stop accepting cultural, social, and political proxy subject-positions; and continue to lead their lives progressively.
CHAPTER 2
THEORETICAL PARADIGMS: INTERROGATING OTHER VOICES

You can neither understand nor practice political criticism today without coming to terms—whatever those terms may be—with Althusser. [Ferretter 2006:143]

Part of the task of understanding ideology is to comprehend how people become members of society, living their lives with a certain (or perhaps uncertain) sense of identity and seeing things from particular perspectives. [Bailey and Gayle 2003:52]

I want to interrogate the ideological subject formation of today’s Pakhtun women in different parts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan as Pakhtuns have not been sufficiently investigated from anthropological and gendered perspectives. The literature available on the Pakhtuns is primarily restricted to structural, historical, political, and conflict oriented studies as demonstrated by Barth (1965); Caroe (1983); Khan, A. (2005); Khan, G. (1990); Lindholm (1988); and Spain (1963, 1972), to name a few, with some cultural hints in between and almost no focus on Pakhtun women at all. Besides, most or rather all of this literature is written about Pakhtun men by men.

Pakhtun Cultural Ideology, Cultural Structures, and (Female) Subject-Positioning

Researchers like Barth (1965); Caroe (1983); Khan, A. (2005); Khan, G. (1990); Lindholm (1982, 1988); and Spain (1963, 1972) have studied the Pakhtuns and have mainly concentrated on men’s roles and performances and consequently male oriented notions of
cultural subjectivity, membership, and belonging. Most of the anthropological or semi-
anthropological literature by Barth (1965), Caroe (1983), Lindholm (1982, 1988), and Spain (1963, 1972) has an almost similar pattern of narration. All of these writers concentrate on the origins of the Pakhtuns; the general terrain of the land they occupy; the tribal and kinship structures; power division within a tribe and relations with other tribes; role of religion; and some mention of the traditions with a focus on cultural traditions observed and practiced by men. All this serves as a good introduction to this ethnic group. However, there are two drawbacks in the works of these scholars: firstly, there have been some administrative changes in the government of Pakistan, for example Swat is no longer an independent state; the geo-political conditions have drastically altered; and the Pakhtuns have considerably advanced academically compared to the times when these men wrote about them. Secondly, all these men were foreigners and as such some power dynamics were certainly at play; especially Olaf Caroe who was the governor of the then North-West Frontier Province (now called Khyber Pakhtunkhwa) from 1946 to the independence of Pakistan in 1947. As such, I believe what he heard, saw, and interpreted was more from an administrator’s perspective than that of an ordinary researcher living among the Pakhtuns. Besides, researchers like Barth, Lindholm, and Spain were not only foreigners who were helped by ordinary local informants but they had elite connections as well. As such their positioning would have undoubtedly affected their data collection and analysis.

However, studying the (Swat) Pakhtuns (men) Barth (1965) demonstrates that cultural authenticity comes from familial and tribal affiliation; cultural capital; and emotional connections. Whereas, sometimes psychological and emotional (in)expressions also account for the authenticity of a subject regarding a particular culture and place. For example, Khan, G.

29 Swat is a district in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa; see Appendix B-Map 3.
(1990) and Lindholm (1982; 1988) explicate the role of emotions in defining the overall Pakhtun male ethnic subject-formation and subject-positioning that validates Pakhtun men to “belong” to the community.

When the Pathan is a child his mother tells him, “the coward dies but his shrieks live long after,” so he learns not to shriek. He is shown dozens of things dearer than life so that he will not mind either dying or killing. He is forbidden colourful clothes or exotic music, for they weaken the arm and soften the eye. He is taught to look at the hawk and forget the nightingale,30 he is asked to kill the beloved to save the soul of her children.31 It is a perpetual surrender – an eternal giving up of man to man and their wise follies. [Khan, G. 1990:27]

Interestingly, Lindholm (1988:231) compares the (Swat) Pakhtuns to the courtiers of Louis XIV and suggests, “The courtier [and a Pakhtun], for his self-preservation and advancement within his world, must therefore practice emotional restraint.” At another point (Lindholm 1982:268) also says, “Trust, love, and intimacy are not found in Swat once the child has been weaned. Rather, he must face a world in which women are contemptible in general and often hostile in particular, and where all equal men are rivals, while all superiors are feared and envied, and all inferiors are despised.”

In addition, Jan (2010) demonstrates a more nuanced portrayal of (Malakand, Swat) Pakhtuns’ character and culture by the hybridization of opposites like the tribal and settle areas; class division and differentiation between the “Khanan” or the social elites and the “Ghariban” or the economically marginalized; and ethno-nationalism versus religious identity. Thus, Jan (2010:75) exemplifies, “The Pakhtun identification…process is multilayered and therefore, has

30 The hawk symbolizes the powerful who hunt and the nightingale symbolizes the weak who can just “sing” of their plight.

31 This is an interesting and far-fetched image. As I understand it, the beloved is usually the woman who, if at all, the lover meets clandestinely and she too breaks all the cultural limitations to meet the lover. As a result, if a man marries such a “loose” woman there are chances her children may inherit that sinful quality and thus be doomed forever literally and metaphorically. Therefore, the man at times gives up the beloved to “save” her (or rather his) children from inheriting such culturally disapproved characteristics and in turn the social rebuttal as well.
internal and external aspects. Moreover, it suggests that these layers are related to each other and reflect the interplay of ethnicity, religion and identity.” Jan’s (2010) work gives a detailed perspective of the changes that have come about among the Pakhtuns as an ethnic group, culturally and politically. However, his shortcoming (which he admits) is that his work also lacks the inclusion of and discussion about Pakhtun women.

Some other forms of literature through which a part of the Pakhtun culture and ethnic character can be inferred include Ali’s (2007) compilation of some criminal cases and proceedings which took place in his courts and were decided through his judicial judgments. Khan, M. (1972:i) has compiled some journalistic articles which he himself had written and contributed to various local newspapers and were later published as a book which “is a story of the Pakhtuns of the twentieth century living in Pakistan today, of their past, present, and future in the historic context of the Indo-Pakistan subcontinent” and their struggle against the British; their present backwardness; national plight; ethnic unity; economic, cultural and political rehabilitation. Besides, Ahmad and Boase (2010) have assembled a collection of Pakhtun folktales which also indirectly reflect the Pakhtun character, temperament, traditions, and the general way of life and living. Folklore consists of stories that were and are heard as opposed to being actually witnessed therefore folklore should not taken as historical facts but it gives an insight into cultural traditions, desires, and aspirations. As such, Ahmad and Boase (2010) in the narration of their stories, at least, bring in the role of some Pakhtun women and show how they were and are a part and parcel of the Pakhtun society and culture.

Spain (1972) also includes a chapter, Zan, (woman) in his book but he also suggests that as a male researcher he had accessibility issues regarding Pakhtun female respondents.

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32 Spain (1972:146-150) also quotes a case which was narrated to him by the then advocate-general of Peshawar and the same case is also documented in the compilation that I mention here.
Therefore, Spain (1972:143) claims, “There are few things that can be said about Pathan women, although I must confess that they come from Edith’s [his wife] experience and intuition than from my own.” Besides, in the said chapter he primarily narrates a law case and stories or legends associated with the role of Pakhtun women and therefore Spain (1972:150) admits, “I am tempted to apologize for depending so heavily in my descriptions on second-hand accounts of this obviously vital part [the women] of Frontier society.”

Bokawee (2006) like most of the scholars mentioned above also shows the cultural, traditional, and organizational structures of the Pakhtun community but he also primarily concentrates on Pakhtun men. Though Bokawee (2006:191-233) makes a little effort to talk about Pakhtun women in particular but his narrative reads more like an experiential journal as opposed to a proper scholarly researched work.

Elahi et el (2010) also make an effort to look into the transitional trends in the Pakhtun society in a village in Hangu (previously a subdivision of Kohat in KP; see Appendix B-Map 3). They also demonstrate the cultural transition of the Pakhtuns as affected by various sociocultural and technological developments. Elahi et el (2010:142) conclude, “The study revealed that transition in this particular community was due to the introduction of new technology, economic development and education.” Although these scholars basically discuss the Pakhtun sociocultural traditions and patterns they do not focus on the role of Pakhtun women per se.

However, Shah (2007) sketches the most detailed picture of Pakhtun women. He gives a plausible explanation of Pakhtun women’s political movements between1930-1947; the Pakhtunwali and role of women; women’s contribution to literary and journalistic writings; participation in education; and the general overview of Pakhtun women in the social and cultural
setup of the Pakhtun society. The only limitation of Shah’s (2007) piece is that it is bracketed within a certain time period and rooted in the political sphere.

Weatherhall (2002:122) believes, “Gender identity is seen to be a property of individuals and society.” This is so because “a person’s sense of who they are is compromised of aspects of the self deriving from themselves as an individual and those that arise out of their membership of social groups” (Weatherhall 2002:126). And Leap (2008:283) further elaborates that, “Gender is not a static construction but always in formation…. Gendered identity builds on understandings of normality and difference that are reflected in sexual, racial, ethnic, and/or class-related identities.” As such, the scholarly academic inquiry conducted primarily about Pakhtun women, highlighting some aspects of gender relations, thus far, includes the works of Grima (1992) and Ahmed (2006).\(^3\) Grima (1992) illustrates the Pakhtun female oriented practices, manifested through the emotions and rituals of the common rural Pakhtun women of Madayan, Swat and Ahmadi Banda, Karak, in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province of Pakistan. She looks at honor in a unique way because no scholar has studied “honor,” as understood in the Pakhtun society, from a female perspective.

Ahmed (2006) picks it up from where Grima leaves it and shows the ritualistic practices of the Swat and Mardan elite Pakhtun women. She shows that ritualistic customs, traditions, and emotional expressions also somewhat determine the sense of cultural citizenship among Pakhtun women, validating their female subjectivity and position within their restricted spatial spheres.

Perhaps, like the foreign male researchers it can be debated about Grima (1992) that she too was a foreigner and therefore the imbalanced researcher-respondent power dynamics were equally at play. As Grima (1992:26) herself also states, “No foreigner, man or woman, can

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\(^3\) Jan’s (2010) doctoral research is the latest detailed investigation on the Pakhtuns by a Pakistani Pakhtun scholar that I could find and he also alludes to Grima (1992) and Ahmed (2006) as the only two women who have thus far produced scholarly researched work on Pakhtun women (Jan 2010:73).
simply step into a Paxtun community and expect to get far on his or her own without introduction.” But in her work I can see that in spite of her elitist contacts in Peshawar, Karak, and elsewhere she actually lived among her respondents in a rented house in the village as opposed to being a state or official guest of sorts. And Ahmad’s advantage, in spite of belonging to the elite strata of the society, was that being a Pukhtana herself she not only had access to respondents but her respondents were more or less of the same social standing as she. Although the researcher-respondent power dynamics are always present, yet hierarchical division is not as prominently daunting as when participant-observer or the interviewer and the respondents are of a similar social standing.

However, more research is required about Pakhtun women to validate Butler’s (1990:2) stance that it is not enough to inquire how women might be more fully represented in language and politics. Butler believes that it must also be understood how the category of “women” is produced and restrained by the very structures of power through which emancipation is sought. In a similar vein, with particular reference to language ideology, Irvin and Gal (2000:37) state that respondents’ ideologies about language locate linguistic phenomena as part of and evidence for what they believe to be systematic behavioral, aesthetic, affective, and moral contrasts among the social groups indexed. Similarly King (2008:235) states that, “identity…involves not merely a single pathway but is rather a nexus of multimembership. The work of identity is ongoing, and identity is not an essential core.” Therefore, it is pertinent to study the ideological subject formation of Pakhtun women, that is, when and how they respond to the interpellation of various Ideological State Apparatuses (ISAs).

The above examples show that the Pakhtuns have been discussed in a specific way; there are certain topical illustrations about the Pakhtuns from the administrative, political, and
historical perspectives. Therefore, I perceive there are significant research gaps in the works that I mention above. In this chapter I discuss some of the ways in which those gaps can be filled-in. As such, I demonstrate the importance of the ideological subject formation and the subject-positioning of social actors with a particular focus on Pakhtun women. Furthermore, in addition to the current socio-political and historical literature available on Pakhtuns in general this chapter also emphasizes the current need for sociocultural scholarship about Pakhtun women who are an integral part of this ethnic group with a voice of their own. In order to prove my stance, firstly, following Althusser (1971), I examine how ideology interpellates or hails individuals through various Ideological State Apparatuses (ISAs) which sets the tone for various subject-positions. No scholar, according to my knowledge, so far has looked into the ideological subject formation of Pakhtun women with reference to Althusserian ISAs per se. Secondly, I examine what is meant by subject-position(s) and subjectivities. Thirdly, I discuss what identity is and how it differs from the concept of subject-position(s) and subjectivities.

The sequence of this discussion engages these concepts along the following lines: First, I discuss the various debates and arguments about the concept of ideology and its function. I examine various meanings of and critiques about ideology in order to get a holistic idea about the process. Second, I look into the construction of subject-positions and subjectivities as they emerge by responding to the Althusserian (1971) ideological interpellation or hail. Finally, I demonstrate the difference between subject, subject-position, and identity as understood in anthropology.

**Theoretical Paradigms: Views and Re-views**

My starting point to understand Althusser (1971) are Hegel (1979) and Marx (1994), followed by Pêcheux (1982). I only touch upon Hegelian and Marxian points of view to show
how Althusser builds on them and develops his own understanding and critique of their theoretical frameworks. However, I want to clarify that the foundational framework of this dissertation is based on Althusser’s (1971) explanation, usage, and function of ideology in affecting the subject formation and positioning of individuals or social actors.

For Hegel (1979) part of the “identity” formation depends on reaching some level of selfhood achieved through the process of recognizing the “Other” and by reaching a certain level of “Self-Certainty” as “Absolute Selfhood” is not possible. In a person’s lifetime there are several roles that he or she has to play. As such, there can be multiple selves or identities which an individual can develop with the passage of time and experience, while maintaining some level of Self-Certainty to be able to “recognize” the Other. However, Hegel’s concept of selfhood is considered individualistic and abstract, especially in terms of societal and structural relationships. Marxist explanation, on the other hand, portrays selfhood as a social construct rather than an individual one. Marx (1984:82-85) states, “Hegel…conceives wealth, state power, etc. as entities alienated from man’s nature, [which] only happens in their thought form…. Self-consciousness is rather a quality of human nature…; human nature is not a quality of self-consciousness.” Therefore, Marx (1984:112) continues to reiterate that “Men [and women] who develop their material production and their material relations alter their thinking and the products of their thinking along with their real existence. Consciousness does not determine life, but life determines consciousness.”

Following Marx, Cohen (1994:05) believes that the self extends beyond individuals to groups, large and small. However, groups composed of different selves, have to struggle against

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34 I use the word identity here as opposed to subject formation, subject-position, or subjectivity as these are statuses that are according to Althusser (1971) “interpellated” when ideology is at work. According to my understanding identity is a common term used rather loosely for the “processes of recognition” (Pêcheux1982:158-159) without really explaining the process itself.
their own contradictions and find a middle path to be able to maintain a group identity or selfhood (cf. later to Pêcheux’s (1982:158-159) disidentification). As such, self-consciousness or selfhood is a product of the dialectical relationship between the individual(s) and the society. Therefore, the social subject constantly forms, re-forms, and sometimes transforms with the passage of time and changing material conditions. Hence, the social subject’s agency, as a social actor, is greatly affected by the intersection of race, gender, sexuality, class, and space through both local and global material influences.

Therefore, it becomes pertinent to trace the development of subject formation as inferred through Althusser’s (1971) explanation of how ideology functions and Pêcheux’s (1982:156-159) theoretical framework of processes of recognition. It is important to understand these frameworks because ideology, through interpellation, converts a social individual into a social subject depending on how he or she responds to the interpellation. Althusser defines:

An ideology is a system (with its own logic and rigour) of representations (images, myths, ideas or concepts, depending on the case) endowed with a historical existence and role within a given society…. Ideology, as a system of representations, is distinguished from science in that in it the practico-social function is more important than the theoretical (function as knowledge). [Althusser 2005:231]

Althusser continues to explicate:

Ideology is indeed a system of representations, but in the majority of cases these representations have nothing to do with ‘consciousness’: they are usually images and occasionally concepts, but it is above all as structures that they impose on the vast majority of men [and women], not via their ‘consciousness’. They are perceived-accepted-suffered cultural objects and they act functionally on men [and women] via a process that escapes them. [Althusser 2005:233]

However, the function of ideology, in constructing and transforming subject-positions and social subjectivity(ies) is further explained by what Althusser (1971:143) terms the Ideological State Apparatuses (ISAs). Althusser (1971:145) states, “Ideological State Apparatuses function
massively and predominantly by ideology, but they also function secondarily by repression, even if ultimately, but only ultimately, this is very attenuated and concealed, even symbolic.”

According to Althusser (1971:143) the subject-position and agency of a social being, in any society, is continuously shaped and re-shaped by Ideological State Apparatuses (ISAs) which include family, education, law, media, and religion among others. As a result of institutional ideologies, people come to accept change(s) naturally and sometimes by developing a false consciousness (Althusser 1971:164). However, Althusser (1971:142-143) warns us not to confuse ISAs with the Repressive State Apparatuses (RSAs). As opposed to ISAs, RSAs include the government, the administration, the army, the police, the courts, the prisons, et cetera. Althusser (1971:145) explains the basic but major difference between the two by stating, “the Repressive State Apparatus functions ‘by violence’, whereas the Ideological State Apparatuses function ‘by ideology’.” Therefore, it is through the ISAs that ideologies, both personal and collective, begin to change or affect ideas because ideology “interpellates” or “hails” individuals (Althusser 1971:173). In other words, following any ideology makes an individual accept a certain subject-position; it makes an individual “recognize” himself or herself in a particular way. And as for ideology, “it imposes… an obviousness… which we cannot fail to recognize and before which we have the inevitable and natural reaction of crying out…‘That’s obvious! That’s right! That’s true!’” (Althusser 1971:172). As a result of interpellation, the “process of recognition” begins and as recognition is somewhat complete an individual can either accept or reject a subject-position or else he or she can agree to disidentification, that is, “working (transformation-displacement) of the subject form, and not just its abolition” (Pêcheux 1982:159). In other words, the individual can opt for a middle path and refuse to be in the

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35 I call it “somewhat” complete because different ideologies interpellate people at different times and subject-positions can change accordingly as well. Thus different selves or identities are formed.
passive subject-position. According to Pêcheux (1982:156-159), the individual who responds to and accepts the hailed position is called a *universal subject* and the one who refuses to comply is the *subject of enunciation*. The universal subject or the “good subject” is the one who abides by the expected social and cultural norms whereas the subject of enunciation or the “bad subject” does not. The latter in fact has the capacity to “talk back” to the respective interpellation.

Besides, accepting or rejecting a social subject-position, a social subject can adopt disidentification which constitutes “*working of the subject-form* and not just its *abolition*” (Pêcheux 1982:159). Therefore, the various ways in which the social individuals develop, function, and transform is explicated through their interaction with the social, political, and economic structures: the ISAs. As such, Althusser (1971:186) reminds us, “ideologies are not ‘born’ in the ISAs but from the social classes at grips in the class struggle: from their conditions of existence, their practices, their experiences of the struggle, etc.” In other words, it is ideology that works through various ISAs or within and through material and social structures in order to act on or interpellate individuals in a society. And the individuals who respond to the interpellation or hail actually follow the ideology that has hailed them and unconsciously accept and adopt the subject-position that results as a response to that interpellation.

**Althusserian Ideology: Responses and Critique**

Various scholars define ideology and its function from their own points of view and life experiences. However, many do springboard from an Althusserian premise, whether they agree or disagree. Ideology was a term coined by Destutt de Tracy (Althusser 1971; Hawkes 1996; Thompson 1990; Williams 1977) and Althusser states:

36 However, the social subject that rejects the hailed position, in the Hegelian sense, achieves a level of “Self-Certainty.”
The expression ‘ideology’ was invented by Cabanis, Destutt de Tracy and their friends, who assigned to it as an object the (genetic) theory of ideas. When Marx took up the term fifty years later, he gave it a quite different meaning, even in his Early Works. Here, ideology is the system of the ideas and representations which dominate the mind of a man or a social group. [Althusser 1971:158]

Williams further elaborates the term “ideology.” He says:

‘Ideology’ was coined as a term in the late eighteenth century, by the French philosopher Destutt de Tracy. It was intended to be a philosophical term for the ‘science of ideas’. Its use depended on a particular understanding of the nature of ‘ideas’…. [In other words] the ‘real elements’ of ideology are ‘our intellectual faculties, their principal phenomena and their most evident circumstances.’ [Williams 1977:56]

Thompson (1990) moves in a slightly different direction. He describes the evolution of the term “ideology” and explains different thinkers attached different meanings to it and how they applied the term in political, economic, and social contexts. Thompson states:

If for de Tracy the link was direct and explicit (ideology was the pre-eminent science that would facilitate progress in human affairs), for Napoleon it was implicit and oppositional (ideology was the pretentious philosophy that incited rebellion by trying to determine political and pedagogical principles on the basis of abstract reasoning alone). The unique contribution of Marx consists in the fact that he took over the negative, oppositional sense conveyed by Napoleon’s use of the term, but transformed the concept by incorporating it into a theoretical framework and political programme which were deeply indebted to the spirit of the Enlightenment. [Thompson 1990:33]

Thompson (1990:5) clarifies, “Ideologies can be regarded as ‘systems of thought’, ‘systems of belief’, or ‘symbolic systems’ which pertain to social action or political practice.” He further explicates:

Ideology, broadly speaking, is meaning in the service of power. Hence the study of ideology requires us to investigate the ways in which meaning is constructed and conveyed by symbolic forms of various kinds, from everyday linguistic utterances to complex images and texts; it requires us to investigate the social contexts within which symbolic forms are employed and deployed; and it calls upon us to ask whether, and if so how, the meaning mobilized by symbolic forms serves, in specific contexts, to establish and sustain relations of domination…. [Ideology] calls upon us to ask whether the meaning constructed and conveyed by symbolic forms serves, or does not serve, to maintain systematically asymmetrical relations of power. [Thompson 1990:7]
Although Thompson (1990:92-95) criticizes Althusser as well (which I discuss later) yet the way in which he explains the functioning of ideology makes sense from an Althusserian perspective. Therefore, I discuss at length Thompson’s (1990) explanation here. Thompson (1990:53-54) enumerates two types of conception of ideology: “neutral conceptions” and “critical conceptions” of ideology. By the neutral conceptions of ideology he means, “those [conceptions] which purport to characterize a phenomena as ideology or ideological without implying that these phenomena are necessarily misleading, illusionary, or aligned with the interests of any particular group.” And “Critical conceptions are those which convey a negative, critical, or pejorative sense.” Furthermore, Thompson (1990:60-66) goes on to explain how ideology functions. According to him ideology functions through: Firstly by “legitimation,” which in turn depends on ‘rationalization’ or defending or justifying a set of social relations or institutions; ‘universalization’ or by representing that institutional arrangements, serving the interest of a selected few, are serving the interests of all; and ‘narrativization’ or narrative or stories that recount the past and treat the present as part of a timeless and cherished tradition. Secondly, by “dissimulation” in which “Relations of domination may be established and sustained by being concealed, denied, or obscured, or by being represented in such a way which deflects attention from or glosses over existing relations or processes” (Thompson 1990:62). Dissimulation also employs ‘displacement’ or when one object or individual is used to refer to another object or individual along with positive or negative connotations respectively; by ‘euphemization’ or when actions, institutions or social relations are described or re-described in terms which elicit a positive valuation, for example a prison or concentration camp is described

37 Words within quotation marks used throughout the discussion by Thompson (1990:60-66), on the functioning of ideology, are mine and are used for emphasis or clarity. These words are not in quotation marks in the original text.
as a rehabilitation center; and through ‘trope’ or the figurative or symbolic use of language like drawing on synecdoche, metonymy, and metaphor. Thirdly, ideology depends on “unification” or by establishing a symbolic form of unity which brings forth a collective identity irrespective of the differences that separate them. Unification works through ‘standardization’ or by adopting symbolic standard frameworks, for example, promotion of a national language by the state. And unification also uses ‘symbolization of unity’ by constructing symbols of unity that portray a collective identity like creating flags, national anthems, emblems and inscriptions of various kinds. Fourthly, ideological functioning depends on “fragmentation” or by dividing groups that can challenge the dominant groups. Fragmentation depends on ‘differentiation’ or by emphasizing the distinctions and differences between groups and accentuating those characteristics which disunite such groups that can potentially challenge the dominant groups. Fragmentation also uses the strategy of ‘expurgation of the order’ which “involves the construction of an enemy, either within or without, which is portrayed as evil, harmful or threatening and which individuals are called upon collectively to resist or expurgate” (Thompson 1990:65), for example, the portrayal of Jews in Nazi literature; or more so, in recent times, the portrayal of Muslims in the Western world and vice versa; and for my research purposes, the stereotypical depiction of Pakhtuns generally within and outside Pakistan. According to Thompson (1990:65-66) ideology finally depends on “reification” in which “relations of domination are established and sustained by representing transitory, historical state of affairs as it were permanent, natural, and outside of time. Processes are portrayed as things or as events of a quasi–natural kind, in such a way that their social and historical character is eclipsed.”

Reification depends on ‘naturalization,’ a state of affairs in which social and historical events are portrayed as natural or inevitable; ‘eternalization’ in which the socio-historical phenomena are
portrayed as “permanent, unchanging and ever-recurring” and their rigidity cannot be questioned, like, some traditions, customs, and institutions whose authenticity, (ir)relevance, and discontinuation is unquestionable; and finally reification depends on ‘nominalization and passivization’ which is the use of various syntactic and grammatical devises in which actors, agents, or agency (responsible) is missing or “processes as things or events which [are represented to] take place in the absence of a subject who produces them. [Nominalization and passivization] also tend to elide references to specific spatial and temporal contexts by eliminating verbal constructions or converting them into the continuous tense” (Thompson 1990:66).

Following Althusser’s (1971, 2005) explanation and functioning of ideology, Ferretter tends to agree and continues to build on it by explicating that:

Ideology is primarily the kind of discourse that we do not consciously appropriate for ourselves, rationally judging it to be true…. Rather, ideology comprises the stream of discourse, images and ideas that are all around us all the time, into which we are born, in which we grow up, and in which we live, think and act…. [Ideology] comes to us primarily in the form of obviousness—common sense, popular opinion, what everybody thinks, what we take for granted. [Ferretter 2006:77]

And Bailey and Gayle (2003:2) are of the opinion that, “Ideologies, at the simplest level, are systems of beliefs that guide our choices and behaviours and, indeed, justify our thoughts and actions.” Yet they also realize that ideology recognizes the structures and systems of power, thus giving rise to (different) points of view. In other words, ideology “mediates people’s understandings of society” (Bailey and Gayle 2003:7). They continue to explain that ideology can have multifold manifestation:

First, an ideology can be a self-interested, partial truth constructed to serve the advantage of a particular group in society…. Second, an ideology can be seen as a socially contextualized formation of knowledge—that is, all knowledge is ideological—emerges out of a social interest or context, such as science or religion. Third, there is the more obvious political definition: ideologies are socially constructed systems of ideas, which
means that they take on symbolic status and meaning within societies. As a result, they become indexes for action or the organization of various social and political structures, such as fascism, liberalism, and conservatism, as well as socialism and feminism. [Bailey and Gayle 2003:70]

Eagleton (2007:148), too, is of the opinion that “Ideology is not primarily a matter of ‘ideas’: it is a structure which imposes itself upon us without necessarily having to pass through consciousness at all.” As such, Eagleton (2007:56) continues and says, “An important devise by which an ideology achieves legitimacy is by universalizing and ‘eternalizing’ itself. Values and interests which are in fact specific to certain place and time are projected as the values and interests of all humanity.”

However, one of the most important points that Althusser (1971:159) makes, regarding ideology is, “It is clear that there can be no question of a theory of ideologies in general, since ideologies…have a history…[but] ideology [in general] has no history.” In other words, ideology (as opposed to ideologies) is ahistorical; timeless; always present; and always at work.

**Critique on Althusser (1971)**

For the purpose of my research, Althusser (1971) makes a lot of sense to me as his theoretical framework regarding ideology is apt for analyzing the data that I collected. However, there are scholars who find flaws and loopholes in Althusser’s (1971) theory of ideology and ideological function. For example, Eagleton (2007:42) believes, “It may be that there is a dominant ideology at work, but nobody is gullible enough to fall for it. All of these cases have their kernel of truth—not least the claim that material factors play a more vital role in securing submission than ideological ones.” Here I think Eagleton fails to convince the readers. As a response I ask, what are “material factors”? How are they produced and reproduced? What role do relations of production have? Are not all these factors manifestations of ISAs? And are not
cultural, social, and political concepts and expectations “normalized” through ISAs, paving way for the reproduction of existent material conditions? I think Eagleton’s confusion is evident when a little later he says:

Taken as a whole, however, this end-of-ideology thesis is vastly implausible. If it were true, it would be hard to know why so many individuals in these societies still flock to church, wrangle over politics in the pubs, care about what their children are being taught at school and lose sleep over the steady erosion of the social services. [Eagleton 2007:42]

And also when Eagleton claims:

Viewed psychologically, [ideology] is less a system of articulate doctrines than a set of images, symbols and occasionally concepts which we ‘live’ at an unconscious level. Viewed sociologically, it consists in a range of material practices or rituals (voting, saluting, genuflecting, and so on) which are always embedded in material institutions. [Eagleton 2007:148-149]

Thus critiquing Althusser’s (1971) concept and function of ISAs, Eagleton (2007:147-148) believes that Althusser emphasizes that institutions such as the school, family, church, media, among others, are used as conduits for propagating the dominant ideology, which favors a few. According to Eagleton (2007:147), Althusser fails to recognize the (positively) functionalist aspect of these institutions, that is, “schools may teach civic responsibility and saluting the flag; but they also teach children to read and write…. The television disseminates bourgeois values; but it also tells us how to cook a curry or whether it might snow tomorrow, and occasionally broadcasts programmes highly embarrassing to the government” and that the family is not always oppressive to women and children but also “occasionally offers kinds of value and relationship.” Therefore, Eagleton (2007:148) is of the opinion that, “Not all aspects of such apparatuses are ideological all of the time: it is misleading to think of the ideological ‘superstructure’ as a fixed realm of institutions which operate in an invariable way.” I agree with Eagleton (2007) about the fact that ISAs also play a positive role; my research also suggests this.
However, Althusser (1971) emphasizes that the ideological underpinnings of the ISAs are subtle and individuals respond to the interpellation even before they know it. Besides, it is the very ISAs that provide that agentive platform for the subjects to practice their agency as well.

Like Eagleton (2007), Thompson (1990) also critiques Althusserian notions and functionality of ideology but I think Thompson (1990) gives a relatively plausible explanation of the modus operandi of ideology even if he disagrees with Althusser on certain levels. Thompson’s (1990:92) main criticism is that “[For Althusser] the ideological field is structured in favor of the ideology of the dominant class, which exercises control over the ideological state apparatuses.” Further critiquing Althusser, Thompson believes that:

The state is seen, primarily and ultimately, as an institutional mechanism through which class power is sustained…. [B]ut it would be quite misleading…to maintain that class relations are the only, or in circumstances the primary, structural feature of social contexts with reference to which the analysis of ideology should be carried out…. [T]here are systematically asymmetrical relations of power which are based on considerations other than class – which are based, for instance, on considerations of sex, age, or ethnic origin; and it [is] essential to broaden the framework for the analysis of ideology to take account of these considerations.” [Thompson 1990:92-95]

According to my understanding of Althusser (1971), he does not mention that variables such as sex, age, or ethnic origins may also be responsible for power relations per se. However, if one tends to understand Althusser’s (1971) functional aspect of ideology it goes without saying that one can understand the interplay between ideology and its effects on and through the above mentioned variables; cultural ideology shapes our notions of sex, age, ethnicity, norms, and so forth. For example, in the Pakhtun society a 40-year-old, single woman is considered “old” but a married woman of the same age is still “young.” How? Why? Is this not a culturally ideologically driven standard?

And with particular reference to media as an ISA, Thompson states:
The media of mass communication are not simply one among several mechanisms for the inculcation of a dominant ideology; rather, these media are partially constitutive of the very forum within which political activities take place in modern societies, the forum within which, and to some extent with regard to which, individuals act and react in exercising power and in responding to the exercise of power by others. [Thompson 1990:95]

This stance is no doubt correct but various media may not perpetuate the dominant ideology per se; most of the times media itself follows a certain ideology and is also aware not to totally go against the dominant ideological forces. That is why “to some extent” individuals act and react in exercising power and responding to power by others.

As such, with regard to the “some extent” factor (in the Althusserian model) there are some scholars who believe that Althusser’s model of ideological functioning is a closed system; it renders the social subject no agency at all. For example, Smith (1985:641) argues, “Althusser’s “antihumanism” has produced a convenient ideology for a new class of Marxist intellectuals to exert their claims to power over ordinary human agents who have been reduced to “bearers” or “supports” of certain systemic, structural relations.” And Eagleton (1983:173) is also of the opinion that “Althusser’s suggestive essay is seriously flawed. It seems to assume, for example, that ideology is a little more than an oppressive force which subjugates us, without allowing sufficient space for the realities of ideological struggle.”

In a similar vein, Hennessy (1993:21) critiques Althusser’s theory of ideology and says, “[Althusser’s] understanding of ideology’s role in social production has been seen as overtly functionalist, and his concept of interpellation—which explains the formation of subjects as an effect of the summons of ideology—has made theorizing subversive agency difficult.” And Rooney (1995) believes that Althusser “fetishizes the theory of ideology.” In other words, these scholars are suggesting that Althusser’s (1971) explanation of ideological functioning proposes a totally closed system; the social subjects have no agency at all.
The reason I choose to use the Althusserian framework is because I think that no social actor can have complete agency within a given social structure at any given time and circumstances; at the most they have restricted agency which, ironically at times is also achieved through and within the very structures or ISAs that they are resisting. A social actor, in any given structure, is bound to respond to some ideological interpellation and therefore is compelled to become a social subject. The social subject is at times, agency-less and at other times he or she may have restricted agency.

**Althusser’s Ideology and Bourdieu’s Habitus: Point(s) of Convergence**

Since ISAs are a part of the culture that produces, re-produces, and opposes them therefore it is worthwhile to compare some debates regarding Althusser’s (1971) ideology and Bourdieu’s (1977) habitus. Althusser (1971:147) states, “Ideological State Apparatuses may be not only the stake, but also the site of class struggle, and often of bitter forms of class struggle.” Hence, accentuating the functioning of ideology Eagleton (1994:187) states, “Ideology is a realm of contestation and negotiation in which...meanings and values are stolen, transformed, [and] appropriated across frontiers of different classes and groups, surrendered, repossessed, reinflected.” Coupled with this, perhaps Bourdieu’s (1977) framework of habitus also works in the same way as ideology which works through the ISAs and hails the social subject unawares, avoiding coercion, and simulating naturalness. According to Bourdieu, the social subjects in a similar fashion internalize the habitus or the social dispositions—unconsciously and naturally. Bourdieu explains:

[Habitus is] the systems of dispositions – a past which survives in the present and tends to perpetuate itself in to the future by making itself present in practices structured according to its principles, an internal law relaying in the continuous exercise of the law of external necessities… is the principle of the continuity and regularity which objectivism discerns in the social world without being able to give them a rational basis…. Because the
habitus is an endless capacity to engender products – thoughts, perceptions, expressions, actions – whose limits are set by the historically and socially situated conditions of its production, the conditioned and conditional freedom it secures is as remote from a creation of unpredictable novelty as it is from a simple mechanical reproduction of the initial conditionings. [Bourdieu 1977:82, 95]

Furthermore, both ideology and habitus function in socially contesting fields.\textsuperscript{38} Eagleton (1994:223) reiterates this by stating that habitus is relevant to the concept of ideology because it tends to persuade the social agents to such aspirations and actions that are compatible with the objective requirements of their social circumstances.

Butler (1997a) also sees a connection between Althusserian ideology and Bourdieu’s habitus. Butler states:

\textit{Bourdieu’s notion of the \textit{habitus} might well be read as a reformulation of Althusser’s notion of ideology. Whereas Althusser will write that ideology constitutes the “obviousness” of the subject, but that this obviousness is the effect of a dispositif. That same term that reemerges in Bourdieu to describe the way in which a \textit{habitus} generates certain beliefs. Dispositions are generative and transposable.} [Butler 1997a:180 n. 21]

As such, almost in the Althusserian sense, though he uses the word ideologies, Bourdieu explains:

\textit{Ideologies, owe their structure and their most specific functions to the social conditions of their production and circulation, that is first, to the functions they perform for specialists competing for a monopoly over the competence under consideration (religious, artistic, etc.); and second, as a by-product of this, to the functions they perform for non-specialists.} [Bourdieu 2003:169]

Althusser (1971:166) also states, “An ideology always exists in an apparatus, and its practice, or practices. This existence is material.” Therefore, the habitus “whose limits are set by the historically and socially situated conditions of its production” (Bourdieu 1977:95) functions in the same way as ideology does. Consequently, Ahearn aptly says:

\begin{footnote}{38} I am using field here both in the general and Bourdieuan senses in order to show a point of convergence between ideology and habitus.\end{footnote}
Bourdieu’s concept of habitus provides insight into how we can both shape and be shaped by our social and cultural surroundings. By emphasizing how we are predisposed, not predetermined, to act, think, and speak, in certain ways. Bourdieu allows for the influence of social structures [read ISAs] on our behaviors while still leaving room for the possibility that that we might act in opposition to the structures and norms that have influenced us. [Ahearn 2012:266]

As such, Ahearn’s observation about Bourdieu’s habitus once again brings forth its parallels with Althusser’s concept of ideological functioning. Ahern suggests that the habitus allows the subjects or individuals to challenge the structures of which they are the products. Similarly, regarding ISAs, which parallel Bourdieu’s habitus, Althusser (1971:147) explicitly states that the ruling class cannot maintain strong positions for long because, “the resistance of the exploited classes is able to find means and occasions to express itself there, either by utilization of their contradictions, or by conquering combat positions in them in struggle.”

However, Bourdieu (2003:170) also points out that “Symbolic power does not reside in ‘symbolic systems’ in the form of an ‘illocutionary force’ but that it is defined in and through a given relation between those who exercise power and those who submit to it, i.e. in the very structure of the field in which belief is produced and reproduced.” In this quote I see “symbolic power” as the power that comes to an individual who is in a position to interpelate or ideologically hail the “Other” through the tacit functioning of the “symbolic systems” or the ISAs or else it is a social subject who has the power to disidentify or talk back. Therefore, it becomes pertinent to at least touch upon how power, control, and supremacy or to be precise, hegemony works in and through ideology.

Althusserian Ideology vs. Gramscian Hegemony

Hegemony generally speaking is the political, economic, ideological, and cultural supremacy or power exercised by the dominant group over other social groups. However, the
concept of hegemony has a more nuanced meaning when and as used in the Gramscian sense. In

Antonio Gramsci a slight evolution of the term, hegemony, can be witnessed:

The word meant leadership of a class alliance: in a first instance (referred to the 1905 revolution) proletarian leadership of the bourgeoisie democratic revolution; subsequently (after 1917) proletarian leadership of an alliance with the peasantry and other exploited groups…. In Gramsci’s 1926 essay ‘Some Aspects of the Southern Question’, he argues that the proletariat can only become hegemonic, a ruling class, if it can overcome its economic self-interest and win the support of the poor peasantry and southern intellectuals…. Hegemony is…necessarily rooted in an economically dominant, or potentially dominant, mode of production and in the ‘fundamental’ social classes (bourgeoisie and proletariat), but it is defined precisely by an expansion beyond economic class interest into the sphere of the political direction through a system of class alliances. In the prison notebooks this meaning of ‘hegemony’ remains but the term is extended in two ways. Firstly, it is applied not just to the situations of the proletarian leadership but also to the rule of other classes at other periods of history. Secondly, it is qualitatively modified: hegemony comes to mean ‘cultural, moral, and ideological’ leadership over allied and subordinate groups. [Gramsci in Forgas 2000:424-425]

In conjunction, Althusser (1971:146) states, “To my knowledge, no class can hold State power over a long period without at the same time exercising its hegemony over and in the State Ideological Apparatuses.”

Almost as a response Williams states:

Hegemony is then not only the articulate upper level of ‘ideology’, nor are its forms of control only those ordinarily seen as ‘manipulation’ or ‘indoctrination.’ It is a whole body of practices and expectations, over the whole of living: our senses and assignments of energy, our shaping perceptions of ourselves and our world. It is a lived system of meanings and values…. It has continually to be renewed, recreated, defended, and modified. It is also continually resisted, limited, altered, challenged by pressures not at all its own. [Williams 1977:110, 112-113].

Williams (1977), suggests that hegemony is a system that does not work only through coercion or economic production but it functions within and through political, cultural, and institutional structures. In other words, according to Ferretter (2006:138-139) in any social process there are hegemonic forms and discourses at work whose function is to maintain and promote the interests of the ruling class but at the same time there are counter-hegemonic forces that work against these structures. Sometimes it is the hegemonic forms of culture that can challenge the dominant
ideology as well. I think Williams (1977) and Ferretter’s (2006) explanation regarding the contestation between hegemony and counter-hegemonic forces links it with the functioning of ideology. As I understand, ideology and hegemony are two different frameworks but both aim at achieving and sustaining power and power (mediated) relations. Sometimes the dominant ideology has to compete with various subordinate ideologies while at other times various ideologies and ISAs have to compete with each other; depending on whose stakes are higher and which structure(s) is hegemonically more powerful than the other(s) at a given time. Thus, aligning the function of ideology with hegemony, “which can be challenged by pressures [though] not at all its own” (Williams 1977:112). Besides, like ideology, “The reality of any hegemony, in the extended political and cultural sense, is that, while by definition it is always dominant, it is never either total or exclusive. At any time, forms of alternative or directly oppositional politics and culture exist as significant elements in the society” (Williams 1977:113). This idea, in turn, also corresponds to the dominant ideology vs. counter or subordinate ideology; or one ISA vs. another ISA, say for example: traditional culture vs. non-traditional media portrayals; or secular education vs. religious education.

Although Eagleton (2007:112-114) does not see any link between Althusserian concept of ideology and Gramscian concept of hegemony by stating that “[regarding hegemony] there is thus an immediate difference from the concept of ideology, since it is clear that ideologies may be forcibly imposed…. Hegemony is a broader category than ideology: it includes ideology, but is not reducible to it.” I personally see a contradiction here, that is, in the use of “ideology” and “ideologies.” Eagleton uses the two words as singular and plural but essentially meaning the same. Althusser (1971:159) however, makes a clear distinction between general ideologies and
ideology: the former is reared and works within historical domains; the latter is ahistorical.

Besides, a little later Eagleton contradicts himself by stating:

> With certain notable inconsistencies, Gramsci associates hegemony with the arena of ‘civil society’, by which he means the whole range of institutions intermediate between the state and economy. Privately owned television stations, the family, the boy scout movement, the Methodist church, infant schools, the British Legion, the *Sun* newspaper: all of these would count as hegemonic apparatuses, which bind individuals to the ruling power by consent rather than coercion. Coercion, by contrast, is reserved to the state, which has monopoly on ‘legitimate’ violence. [Eagleton 2007:113-114]

It is interesting to note that the “apparatuses” that Eagleton mentions in the above quote (including “privately owned television stations” and “infant schools”) or what he calls the “arena of the civil society” are just another way of talking about the ISAs. Even private television stations and perhaps infant schools have to abide by the ruling ideological beliefs of the state and the ruling class (in this case the Queen and the nobility, perhaps). Besides, he goes on to say that the state is always in a position to “legitimately coerce violence;” is this not the same as what Althusser (1971:137) calls the Repressive State Apparatuses (RSAs)?

However, Forgacs explains Gramscian hegemony as:

> Hegemony…is identified with the formation of a new ideological ‘terrain’, with political, cultural and moral leadership and with consent. Hegemony is thus linked by Gramsci in a chain of associations and oppositions to ‘civil society’ as against ‘political society’, to consent as against coercion, to ‘direction’ as against ‘domination…. Gramsci stresses that ‘though hegemony is ethico-political, it must also be economic, must necessarily be based on the decisive function exercised by the leading group in the decisive nucleus of economic activity. [Forgacs 2000:422-223]

Besides, Gramsci believed that “man is mind, i.e. he is a product of history, not nature” (Forgacs 2000:57). In other words, this means that human beings should have knowledge of how the nature governs the mind but the main purpose of learning is to know oneself and the other better (Forgacs 2000:59). Therefore, for Gramsci it is important that along with political and economic power the proletariat or the subjugated class has to be intellectually powerful as well. These are
his organic intellectuals as opposed to the traditional intellectuals who especially attach themselves to a certain fundamental class, for example, priests, whether revolutionary or conservative depending on their class identification (Forgacs 2000:72-73,425). Gramsci believed that all men are intellectuals but all men in the society do not have the function of intellectuals; “there are historically formed specialized categories for the exercise of the intellectual function.” Therefore, one of the most important tasks for any group, struggling to achieve dominance, is to assimilate and to conquer ideologically the traditional intellectuals and elaborate its own organic intellectuals as well (Forgacs 2000:304-305).

Once again, the relation I recognize between Althusserian ideology and Gramscian hegemony is the way both these phenomenon function. As I observe, firstly, both function through the ISAs as opposed to RSAs. In conjunction, Boggs also states:

Gramsci approached the problem of hegemony from two separate angles. On one plane, he set out to differentiate opposing modes of political control, contrasting the functions of “domination” (direct physical coercion) with those of “hegemony” or “direction” (ideological manipulation, consent)… Gramsci’s main task was to restore the consensual side of politics. [Boggs 1984:159]

And secondly, both ideology and hegemony, experience counter or opposing forces either from within or outside structures. Therefore, “The second aspect of hegemony centered around Gramsci’s analysis of insurgent movements as they strive to create their own consensual legitimacy or counter-hegemonic presence in both civil society and the state” (Boggs 1984:159). Beach (2005:37) is also of the opinion that, “Dominating powers use idealist analytical categories to take priority away from the “whole” social process in order to mystify their domination and exploitation, and this creates what has become known as “hegemony.”” Hence, Althusserian ideology and Gramscian hegemony may be two different phenomena in terms of definitions; however, both of them function in the same manner. As a result, the
ideological interpellation or hailing uses it’s hegemonic (read dominating or powerful) “voice” to transform a social individual into a social subject when he or she responds to the interpellation with a “natural reaction of crying out… ‘That’s obvious! That’s right! That’s true!’” (Althusser 1971:172).

What I have so far discussed in this chapter is the process through which ideology interpellates an individual and transforms him or her into a subject. Thus, making it pertinent at this point to interrogate in detail how a social being transforms into a social subject; responds to the ideological interpellation; becomes a subject by taking a certain subject-position; and accepts various subjectivities. I explicate these processes in detail in the following sections.

**Ideological Interpellation: Formation of the Subject and Subject-Position(s)**

Following the three modalities of Pêcheux (1982:156-159), in this research I take “subject-position” to be one of the ways in which an individual(s) “reacts” to the socio-political, historical, and material conditions of his or her society and accepts to be the good; bad; or the not-so-good; not-so-bad subject. And the “subject” refers to the individual who is located in that subject-position. As a result, most of the times the subject accepts a social position(s) through a process that barely involves any agency or at best the subject may have restricted agency. Moreover, the place of an individual as a social subject, over time, is influenced by hierarchal contestations hence rendering absolute individuality and individual agency questionable.

It is vital to note that Althusser (1971:174) draws an important distinction between a “concrete individual” and a “concrete subject.” Althusser clarifies that ideology “recruits” subjects from among the individuals or in other words, transforms the individuals into subjects through interpellation. The response of the interpellated individual makes him or her a subject. “Why? Because he [or she] has recognized that the hail was ‘really’ addressed to him [or her],
and that ‘it was really him [or her] who was hailed’” (Althusser 1971:174). Therefore, the various ways in which the social individuals develop, function, and transform is explicated through their interaction with the social, political, and economic structures: the ISAs, or in other words, within and through material and social structures.

Butler (1997a:24) believes that, “For Althusser one is entered into the “ritual” of ideology regardless of whether there is a prior and authenticating belief in that ideology.”

Following hooks (1989:42-43) who is considering the context of ideology of domination, Bailey and Gayle (2003:102) are also of the opinion that “As subjects people have the right to define their own reality, establish their own identities, name their history. As objects, one’s reality is defined by others, one’s identity created by others, one’s history named only in ways that defines one’s relationship to those who are subjects.” Therefore, in conjunction with hooks (1989), Naseem (2010:4) explicates that sometimes “curricula and text books, fixes the meaning of what it means to be a woman. It thus in part constitutes the subjectivity of the female subject.” And somewhat endorsing Althusser’s role of the ISAs, Naseem further elaborates the acceptance of a subject-position and the formation of a social subject by stating:

Each subject occupies various sites of meaning (differentially or simultaneously) that are culture based. Each of these sites (schools, family, workplace, social and/or marginalized groups) produces or induces varying identities, uses of language, configuration of self, (and other), motivations, foci, and levels of agency. Thus, unlike the Enlightenment “man,” the subject is constituted by and is part and parcel of the material world, its practices, mechanisms, and structures. [Naseem 2010:19]

Thus, according to Naseem (2010), like Althusser(1971), the subject is formed in accordance to his or her reaction to various ISAs and the relevant subject-position(s) is established in accordance to the material structures of which he or she is a product and a (re)producer.

Butler (1997b) also points out an important aspect regarding interpellation and an individual’s response to the interpellation. Butler (1997b:5) is of the opinion, “Althusser does not
offer a clue as to why the individual turns around, accepting the voice as being addressed to him or her, and accepting the subordination and normalization effected by that voice. Why does this subject turn toward the voice of the law [or any ISA], and what is the effect of such a turn in inaugurating a social subject?” Butler (1997b:108) self-explicates and states that “It is important to remember that the turn toward the law [or any ISA] is not necessitated by the hailing; it is compelling, in a less than logical sense, because it promises identity.”

Identity vs. Subject-Position and Subjectivity

“Identity,” as I understand, pertains to the social and cultural labeling of an individual(s) due to which they are accepted and accept labels like name, gender, race, class, ethnicity, nationality, good or bad citizen, relationships, and so on. The sociocultural individual, most of the times, accepts these labels unconsciously and without a choice. In other words, it is the label(s) one accepts depending on his or her exposure to the discursive practices. And most of the times these labels or identities are given to and accepted by individuals as a result of how others read their assumed subject-position. As a result, the individual(s) who responds to a particular ideological interpellation not only accepts an identity but actually ascertains a subject-position and becomes a sociocultural subject. Dorothy et el (1998:270) suggest that “Identity is one way of naming the dense interconnections between the intimate and public venues of social practice.” And Hall further elaborates:

I use ‘identity’ to refer to the meeting point, the point of *suture*, between on the one hand the discourses and practices which attempt to ‘interpellate’, speak to us or hail us into place as the social subjects of particular discourses, and on the other hand, the processes which produce subjectivities, which constructs us as subjects which can be ‘spoken’. Identities are thus points of temporary attachment to the subject positions which discursive practices construct for us. [Hall 2011:5-6]
Block (2011:337-338) adds, “Identity construction is seen as the negotiating of subject positions at the crossroads of past, present, and future.” Identity, therefore, is not created in isolation; it is a label that is accepted or given through a dialectical relationship between the individual(s) in question and the society at large. Bailey and Gayle (2003:53) state, “The genesis of individual identity is not only complicated by the dynamics of collective representations that attempt to dictate individual realities, but also take place in a multiplicity of sites, including homes, schools, churches, and arts and sport facilities.” Bailey and Gayle (2003:58) further explicate this dialectical relationship by stating, “How we think of ourselves is formulated around our perception of how others judge us. This co-produced, negotiated reality recognizes the individual not as a passive participant overwhelmed by the coercive power of the surrounding environment but as an active participant.”

In a similar vein, Bucholtz and Hall (2006:370) state, “externally imposed identity categories generally have at least as much to do with the observer’s own identity position and power stakes as with any sort of objectively describable social reality.” However, they also suggest that identity can include two oppositional but complementary characteristics: sameness and difference. “The first of these allows for individuals to imagine themselves as a group, while the second produces social distance between those who perceive themselves as unlike” (Bucholtz and Hall 2006:369). Therefore, Bucholtz and Hall (2006:382) define “identity [as] an outcome of cultural semiotics that is accomplished through the production of contextually relevant sociopolitical relations of similarity and difference, authenticity and inauthenticity, and legitimacy and illegitimacy.”

Riley also (2007:2) believes that identity is not something that individuals can decide for themselves; identity is constructed by other people. And if those people happen to be in the
position of relative power they not only construct an identity for others but they are also in a
position to take decisions for the others even if they do not approve of the decisions taken for
them. Besides, Riley (2007:122) is also of the opinion that every society shares certain
“situationally salient features of social roles” which are manifested through particular forms of
social communicative acts and are interpreted through a shared social knowledge. Therefore,
Riley (2007:131) goes on to explicate the important “perimeters of social identity include age,
sex, class, marital status, religion and occupation.” He further elaborates by stating:

It is striking to note how each of these categories can be signaled in terms of indexical
information: Age – grey hair, balding; Sex – beard, breasts; Class (social, economic) –
accent, clothing; Profession – uniform, stethoscope; Marital status – engagement ring,
wedding ring; Religion – Sikh’s turban. [Riley 2007:131]

Cooper and Brubaker (2005:75) also make a special reference to collective identities which they
state, “is the emotionally laden sense of belonging to a distinctive, bounded group, involving
both a felt solidarity or oneness with fellow group members and a felt difference from or even
antipathy to specified outsiders.”

All the above scholars discuss what is broadly meant by “identity” but I think they fail to
outline a theoretical process that evokes or forms identity(ies). In other words, for example,
Althusser (1971) says that process of interpellation produces a subject and establishes a certain
subject-position. Following Althusser’s discussion about the function of ideology and formation
of the subject it is important to point out that the transformation of an individual to a subject
involves a hegemonic process, that is, the ideological interpellation and the response to it, is
responsible for the transformation. But using the word, “identity,” as used by scholars above
gives a broad definition of what identity is but nonetheless they do not really show or discuss the
process of how individuals develop and transform their identity(ies); the word identity sounds
flat. Therefore, in this dissertation I use subject, subject-position, and subjectivities rather than
identity for describing the various social statuses assigned to or adopted by social actors as a result of responding to the ideological interpellation. However, once a subject-position is established it decides the level of agency (or not) the subject can practice.

“Agency”: The Slippery Slope

Agency, in anthropological literature, has multi-tiered meaning(s) and the notion can be expressed and practiced in various ways in different cultures, structures, and circumstances. Besides, agency can have nuanced meanings depending on the positionality and gender of the researcher and the researched in a given cultural context. Therefore, it is pertinent to understand the meaning of agency in a given cultural context. As such, Pakhtun women, the focus of this dissertation, apparently may not have absolute agency as understood by Western standards. Nonetheless, with restricted agency Pakhtun women manage(ed) to spend their lives and express their concerns in the past and the present times. Ahearn (2001:112) defines agency as, “the socioculturally mediated capacity to act.” Mahmood (2001:203) believes that “[the] ability to understand and interrogate the lives of women whose desire, affect, and will have been shaped by nonliberal traditions… think of agency not as a synonym for resistance to relations of domination, but as a capacity for action that historically specific relations of subordination enable and create.” Hilsdon (2007:127) concurringly states, “Agency is thus thought to arise from within existing societal discourses and symbolic structures rather than in opposition to them.” Raval (2009:492) is of the opinion that “women growing up in different cultures will likely internalize different desires that guide their behavior in various situations.” Correspondingly, Heron (2008:87) states, “When it comes to human agency, people make choices, motivate and regulate their behavior on the basis of belief systems and cultural backgrounds.” Thus, Emirbayer and Mische think:
[We should] begin to reconceptualize human agency as a temporally embedded process of social engagement, informed by the past (in its habitual aspect), but also oriented toward the future (as a capacity to imagine alternative possibilities) and toward the present (as a capacity to contextualize past habits and future projects within the contingencies of the moment). [Emirbayer and Mische 1998:963]

Keeping in view the above discussion about agency my objective in this dissertation is to demonstrate the culturally and socially contextualized agency of Pakhtun women.

**Conclusion**

In this chapter I discuss the works of some scholars about the Pakhtuns and show that it is important to add to the scant cultural literature available on the Pakhtuns in general and the Pakhtun women in particular. To address the gaps in research about Pakhtuns a framework is required; mine is Althusserian (1971). If and when some secondary theoretical paradigms are used I review them at the beginning of or at a later point in the respective chapters (for example in Chapters 3 and 7). My goal in this dissertation is to show the role of ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses (ISAs) in shaping the subject-position(s) and social statuses of the Pakhtuns in general and Pakhtun women in particular. Therefore, in the following chapters I demonstrate the ideological subject-positioning of Pakhtun women (and men) when and as they respond to the ideological interpellation by various ISAs.

There is some criticism levied against Althusser’s (1971) explanation of ideology and the ISAs as a closed system or framework for interrogation; it suggests that in such a system the social subject has absolutely no agency at all. I choose to employ the Althusserian (1971) framework because in my case this framework helps in elucidating various epistemological standpoints and processes that explain the sociocultural positions and statuses of Pakhtun women and men. Therefore, in the following chapters of this dissertation I employ the Althusserian (1971) framework of ideology, ideological interpellation, and the role of ISAs to show the
various subject-positions Pakhtun women and men occupy as a result of responding to the ideological interpellation. Furthermore, as a result of the subject-positions they occupy, they accept certain social and cultural statuses as well. Hence in the following chapters I demonstrate how responding to various ideological interpellation makes a social actor become an authentic Pakhtun subject; the ways in which ISAs interpellate various subject-positions and how Pakhtun women contest and negotiate for the socially accepted subject-positions to agentially pave way for other subject-positions and subjectivities. In addition, I also demonstrate that Pakhtun women, through various times and means practice quotidian agency within their cultural structures; and finally some Pakhtun women manage to achieve some desired subject-positions and continue to strive for others by working within the ISAs.
CHAPTER 3

ENDORSING AUTHENTICITY AND NOTIONS OF PAKHTUN CULTURAL
SUBJECT-POSITIONS: CITIZENSHIP OR BELONGING IN
THE AGE OF GLOBALIZATION?

We need to situate debates about identity within all those historically specific developments and practices which have disturbed the relatively ‘settled’ character of many populations and cultures, above all in relation to the processes of globalization. [Hall 2011:4]

He [or she] is a Pakhtun [or Pukhtana] who “does” Pakhto, not who [only] “speaks” Pakhto. [A Pashto saying]

“Belonging,” too, is alliterative shorthand for a larger idea…identification, and cohesion. Just as belief is a step beyond knowledge, belonging is a step beyond membership. [Marshall, D. 2002:360]

In this chapter I demonstrate what makes a person good enough Pakhtun and how Pakhtuns are authenticated and accepted as fellow ethnic participants within the larger Pakhtun society and culture in some parts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) Province in Pakistan. Since no society can live in isolation Pakhtuns are no exception to the rule. They too are affected by global influences which include the effects of media like the TV, internet, satellite channels, movies, and printed materials; awareness due to education; exposure attained through travelling abroad; and acceptance of non-Pakhtun qualities adopted through coming into contact with other
people. As such, the present day Pakhtuns are juggling to maintain a balance between the globally influenced and yet the authentic Pakhtun subject-position and global citizenship.

“Globalization” in the present times, as a word, a phenomenon, and a process can have multifaceted and multilayered meanings. According to Vološinov (1973:23) a word or text can have a multiaccentual quality to it. As such, “globalization,” depending on the part of the world this notion is used in and by who can consequently mean and refer to a number of things. Therefore, globalization can mean one thing sitting in Washington D.C., U. S. A.; another in Peshawar; and quite another in Charsadda or Karak, Pakistan.

This chapter illustrates the meaning(s) of citizenship and belonging as it emerges through a nexus of language, sexuality, and present day global influences in my three research sites: Matti, Karak; Azmerabad, Charsadda; and Peshawar. It is important to understand who “belongs” and qualifies as a Pakhtun(a) and why. In order to understand the concept and meaning(s) of citizenship and belonging my main focus is to examine what endorses (cultural) citizenship and ethnic belonging and who qualifies to be accepted as a cultural citizen especially when there is an the impact of globalization on the local culture as demonstrated through linguistic exchanges and overt or covert sexual performances. Furthermore, this chapter shows the fragmentary, flexible and context-related meaning of globalization and its effect on who qualifies to be a Pakhtun or a Pukhtana.

In order to prove my stance I first explain how the Ideological State Apparatuses (ISAs) interpellate or hail (Althusser 1971) an individual and determine a subject-position(s) for him or her. Second, how these individuals react or have reacted to the processes of recognition (Pêcheux 1982:156-159) as good subjects by accepting the hailed positions; as bad subjects by rejecting the hailed positions; or as the not-so-bad/good subjects by disidentifying the hailed position(s),
thus, forming their respective citizen–sexual subject-position(s). Once a subject-position is established, the linguistic markers demonstrate the effects of globalization on local subjectivities, especially through ISAs. Third, the effect of globalization on local subjects is further explained by the model of global assemblages and territorialization (Collier and Ong 2005). Along with Collier and Ong’s model for re-formation or transformation of subject-position(s) due to globalization, Ong’s (1999) and Gaudio’s (2009) examples of the flexible citizenship and cultural citizenship, respectively, further substantiate various citizenship standpoints when global-meets-local and vice versa. However, sometime these subject-positions and their respective gender–sexual performance(s) and voice(s) have to be inferred according to the multiaccentual (Vološinov 1973) quality of the linguistic, spatial, and temporal context as demonstrated by Leap (2003). Finally, I conclude by demonstrating the formation, re-formation or transformation of gendered subject-positions and their respective notions of citizenship and belonging as developed through the territorialization of global assemblages.

Citizenship and Belonging: Shifting Paradigms

In order to understand the citizenship–belonging dynamics I follow Althusser’s (1971) ideological framework as outlined in Chapter 2. Althusser does not talk about citizenship per se but he develops a very important framework to understand how an individual, in a society, accepts or rejects a certain citizenship status or a belonging-to-a-group status. Althusser (1971:143) states that social institutions or Ideological State Apparatuses (ISAs) like, family, education, media, law, and religion, among others, start shaping both personal and collective ideologies. According to Althusser (1971:173) ideology interpellates or hails individuals and responding to any ideological hail or interpellation makes an individual accept a certain subject-position; it makes an individual “recognize” himself or herself in a particular way, including
gender and sexual subject-positions as well. That is how individuals also unconsciously (or sometimes consciously) accept or acquire a certain citizenship status and “belong” or not to a certain sociocultural group.

Citizenship status, definition, and importance come down to us from the time of the Greeks. In the modern time citizenship status has been variously defined by religious ideals, legal documents, and political loyalties. However, Marshall, T. (1964) initiates the discourse on social citizenship. There are other scholars (Beiner 1995; Giddens 1985; Graham 1995; Kerber 1997; Patton 1997; Stewart 1995; and Young 1989, 1990) who discuss in detail the socio-political nature of citizenship. There are some scholars (Jamal 2006; Lister 1997; Prokhovnik 1998; and Yuval-Davis 1997) who critique the socio-political definitions of citizenship because it ignores the gender divide and hence they bring in the gendered citizenship framework. Besides, with the changing global situation citizenship statuses and meanings have also undergone a paradigmatic shift.

Ong (1999:6) introduces the concept of “flexible citizenship” which is a status produced as a cumulative result of capitalistic accumulation, travel, and displacement that force subjects to respond fluidly and opportunistically to changing political and economic conditions in the late modern times. Therefore, some other scholars (Appadurai 2002; Beauregard and Bounds 2000; Bergeron 2001; Chambers 2002; Kearney 1995; Kim-Puri 2005; Lukose 2005; Stevenson 1997; Turner 2001; and Walby 2002) may not use the word “flexible citizen” but all of them allude to the same notion. With the idea of flexible citizenship it becomes pertinent to question the notion of belonging. At this point in time it becomes significant to distinguish between issues of citizenship and belonging because the present neoliberal times demand and support the flexible definitions of citizenship, paving the way for notions of belonging. Hall and Held (1989:175)
say, “Citizenship has entailed a discussion of, and struggle over, the meaning and scope of membership in the community in which one lives. Who belongs and what does belonging mean in practice?” As such, the question arises whether it is possible to be a citizen of one country in terms of space and “belong” to another country not only in the spatial but temporal sense as well? Aseel (2004); Ahmad (2002); Gaudio (2009); Jamal (2006); Leap (2004); Rosaldo (2003); and White (1996) suggest that belonging is a stance asserted and negotiated by individuals in local communities of which they are a part. Furthermore, Leap (2004:137) clarifies that, “[c]itizenship is not an autonomous construction but a status that gains meaning only within the complex geographies of the state, civil society, and the family and within economic and social structures that diversify and stratify everyday life within those domains.” Thus, belonging is embedded within citizenship and it also has different manifestations depending on the geographical location, cultural context, and individual social position(s). Therefore, I label or give a name to the different types of belonging that emerge through and within various cultural contexts. There is no doubt that formal citizenship categories and statuses are a product of laws and legislations governing a particular nation-state. In some case, the formal or official citizenship status shapes one’s notions of belonging as well. In other words it gives one “passport identity,” a formal membership that enables one to benefit (or not) from certain privileges bestowed by the state alone (Magat 1999:137) and therefore instills some level of loyalty and belonging as well (Collier et el 1995; Ku 2004; and Maurer 1993, 1995, 1996). This type of belonging I call “legalistic belonging.” Secondly, there is “spatial belonging,” which includes physical and cyber space. In other words, along with the legalistic definitions of citizenship, the geographical space, the imagined space, and the cyber space also plays a role in certifying the notions of belonging (Appadurai 1996; Brown 2001; Bunzl 1996; Dufoix 2008; and Magat
1999). Thirdly, in some cultures the notion of belonging is strongly tied down to traditional rituals which establish “ritualistic belonging” (Arnaut and Blommaert 2009; Bourdieu 1977; Ceuppens and Greschiere 2005; Dilger 2008; Durham and Klaits 2002; Greschiere 2005; Greschiere and Jackson 2006; and Marshall, D. 2002). Finally, apart from ritualistic practices, emotions also play a role in developing and displaying notions of belonging (Ahmed 2006; Barth 1965; Grima 1992; Khan, G. 1990; Lindholm 1988; Lutz and White 1986) and I call this type of belonging “emotional belonging.” Brown (2001:760) is of the opinion that, “Through the ‘invention of tradition,’ the creation of a ‘usable past,’ the ‘space’ of the country becomes the ‘place’ of the ‘people.’” Therefore, in this chapter I demonstrate that belonging, in traditional societies like that of the Pakhtuns, carries more meaning and weight as compared to national citizenship status especially when local meets global and it changes the conventional understanding, meaning, and dynamics of citizenship. Moreover, with the flexible definitions of citizenship and the flexible nature of globalization the concept of belonging tends to make more sense especially in the tradition-bound Pakhtun society.

Globalization: The Phenomenon and the Processes

In order to understand globalization and its effects, in this chapter, I follow the model and functioning of globalization as put forth by Collier and Ong:

Global phenomena are not unrelated to social and cultural problems…. Global forms are able to assimilate themselves to new environments, to code heterogeneous contexts and objects in terms that are amendable to control and valuation…. Global forms are limited or delimited by specific technical infrastructures, administrative apparatuses, or value regimes, not by the vagaries of a social or cultural field. [Collier and Ong 2005:11]

Collier and Ong suggest that globalization is a multi-tiered and multidimensional process and as a result has a dialectical nature: it affects the locals but it is also affected by the locals. Perhaps, when Harvey explicates the traits of late modernity he also suggests globalization as a late
modern process with its respective characteristics. Harvey (1990:9) states, “Postmodernism [or globalization]…privileges ‘heterogenity and difference as liberative forces in the redefinition of cultural discourse….’ Postmodernism would turn metanarratives into local stories, the past into contemporary collage, and space into an aesthetic playing rather than a social project.”

Appadurai also believes that:

The globalization of culture is not the same as its homogenization, but globalization involves the use of variety of instruments of homogenization (armaments, advertising techniques, language hegemonies, and clothing styles) that are absorbed into local political and cultural economies, only to be repatriated as heterogeneous dialogues. [Appadurai 1996:42]

And Appadurai somewhat echoes Collier and Ong’s (2005) notion when he states:

Globalization is about a world of things in motion…. The various flows we see—of objects, persons, images, and discourses—are not coeval, convergent, isomorphic, or spatially consistent. They are in…relations of disjuncture….What they have in common is the fact that globalization…produces problems that manifest themselves in intensely local forms but have contexts that are anything but local. [Appadurai 2001:5-6]

Collier and Ong (2005) also explain how globalization works. They go away from the global–local divide but not too far away; they show that the global–local is not a dividing tactic but rather a complementary or an all-inclusive approach. According to Collier and Ong (2005:4), “Technoscience, circuits of licit and illicit exchange, systems of administration or governance, and regimes of ethics or values” are trends that circulate collectively or individually in the global context. This multilayered operational strategy of globalization points to the phenomenon which Collier and Ong refer to as ‘global assemblages.’ They further explain:

As global forms are articulated in specific situations—or territorialized in assemblages—they define new material, collective, and discursive relationships. These “global assemblages” are sites for the formation and re-formation of …technological, political, and ethical reflection and intervention. [Collier and Ong 2005:4]

However, Collier and Ong (2005:12) explicitly also point out that, “The term “global assemblage” suggests inherent tensions: global implies broadly encompassing, seamless, and
mobile; assemblage implies heterogeneous, contingent, unstable, partial, and situated.” A claim to be noted is that “global forms are territorialized in assemblages.” Therefore, the process of “territorialization” starts when the said assemblages, in any combination, enter a site or location, they are bound to engage with it and it is here that the nexus of globalization, language, gender, and sexuality takes place; though the intersectional variables can be other than these as well.

Therefore, in this chapter when I use the term territorialization I mean the process that initiates when global assemblages enter and engage with the local site(s) and the resultant effect they produce on the people, their subjectivities, and the environment. Berry et el (2003:7) refers to the same phenomenon as “glocalization,” which is, “the local appropriation…of globally mobile technologies and discourse” (Berry et el 2003:13). This intersectional matrix first, facilitates the formation, re-formation or transformation of subject-position(s). Second, when a certain subject-position is adopted, the global assemblages are territorialized, glocalized or appropriated in accordance with the cultural and local demands and expectations. Therefore, in the following sections I demonstrate:

i. The effect of global assemblages territorialized and appropriated in accordance with the cultural mores and as a result of ideological interpellation.

ii. Gendered performance or sexuality expression through ideologically affected language: both tacit and explicit.

iii. Finally, using territorialized global assemblages, as they interact with cultural ideology, I explicate the notions of citizenship and belonging as it emerges through the responses of the participants.
In Matti, Karak the foremost sense of belonging, as the women there told me was expressed through the ideas and customs regarding marriage. Marriage is an important and a formal tradition for most Pakhtuns. Most of the times marriages are arranged by the family; partners are sorted and selected by the family; and in some cases the concerned couple’s consent is also not taken into consideration. It was interesting to see that the notion of marriage in traditional and semi-traditional rural areas was linked up with the idea of belonging. But it was even more interesting to see that the men in Matti did not bring up the connection between marriage and belonging and only the women alluded to it.

My key informant in Matti, Karak, was Beenish. She was about 28 years old; is married; has a law degree but does not practice in the field. She introduced me to other respondents in the village. At times, she would also help in clarifying and translating responses which I did not understand due to a difference between the dialects of Pashto that I and the people in this village spoke. While we were discussing other things I questioned:

Anoosh Khan: What do you think if a man or woman from outside marries into your family will they be accepted, especially if they are non-Pakhtuns?
Beenish: A woman may get accepted.

And then Saba, also 28 years old, single, and a medical doctor, added:

But there is no possibility that a girl can make a [spousal] choice, outside of the family, and that man gets accepted. I will not want to marry a non-Pakhtun nor will my family accept it. I will not accept a Pakhtun who does not belong to Karak ((AK: You or your family?)). My family won’t accept it; because ours is a reserved family and then every family has its own traditions.

And Beenish continued to comment:

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39 Here by non-tribal I mean an area which is not a part of the state demarcated tribal belt or the Federally Administered Tribal Area (FATA), though the tribal traditions are a very dominant characteristic of this region as well.
It’s a fifty–fifty chance. The elders would tell the boy that you should marry your cousin because she will be more under your control and will do whatever you say. One of my sisters-in-law is a second cousin and has been educated in the city. When my brother got transferred to the Northern Areas [of Pakistan] he did not have a family accommodation and could not take her along. She did not want to stay behind in the village and went off to rent a house in Peshawar. She was all alone so my younger brother used to live with her. In case, had she been a first cousin, she would have had no problem staying in the village [with us].

Beenish believes that her family may accept a non-related or even a non-Pakhtun woman into their family as a daughter or sister-in-law but Saba added that it is rather impossible for a woman in their family to get permission to marry outside the family. And marrying a non-Pakhtun is simply out of the question. Beenish rationalizes this practice by explaining that one of her sisters-in-law, who is related but is not a first cousin did not want to live in the village like the rest of the family. And had she been a first cousin she would have had no problems in living there like the others. Besides, Saba also adds that she herself will not want to marry someone who is not a Pakhtun or who does not belong to Karak and her reason is that every family has its own traditions. Saba, in a way, also justifies Beenish’s claim about her sister-in-law; according to Saba every family has its traditions and since Beenish’s sister-in-law was not a part of the immediate extended family she could not adjust or accept her in-laws and their family traditions. Thus, this shows that there is a general sense of belonging to the larger ethnic group but within the Pakhtuns there is a stronger sense of regional and familial belonging as well.

Another 80-year-old woman, who never told me her name and I did not ask her out of conventional respect and therefore I will just call her the Elderly lady, informed me, “Those women who want to work in or near the village can do so. Nobody minds their working here. The reason is that this is our land; our village, where we have our own traditions and women can properly observe purdah as well.” Interestingly, this remark shows how the idea of belonging in some ways also affects female work choices. Through the participant’s response I understood
that women in this village can work in or near their village because the land in or around the village is theirs or they claim that it is their land; their village; and where they have their own traditions. The Elderly lady’s remark suggests as if in Peshawar or other parts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) there are no Pakhtuns and some other traditions are followed. In her own way the Elderly lady may be correct because like Beenish and Saba, she also believes that belonging is first and foremost associated with one’s own village and immediate family because for her belonging is understood at the most immediate level.

Azmerabad, Charsadda: Global Assemblages Territorialized in the Semi-Traditional Rural Domain

Charsadda is also a rural area but it is somewhat less or semi-traditional compared to Karak. The reason is perhaps its proximity to Peshawar. In Azmerabad, Charsadda, I interviewed the village Khan or the village elite. The Khan was 60+ and had masters in Political Science. He did not work but lived off of the income generated from his ancestral lands. He had a medium built and height: neither tall nor short according to Pakistani and Pakhtun standards. When we met he was dressed up casually with an unshaven face. He talked spontaneously and seemed very interested in explaining to me the background of the Pakhtuns and their traditions. As such, he was one of my respondents who explicitly explained to me how the sense of belonging was authenticated by and among the Pakhtuns. The Khan said that if one went to the tribal areas there they do not ask you, “Where are you from?” They ask, “Who are you?” And the expected answer is your tribe’s name like Mohammadzai, Yousafzai, Khattak, and so forth. He further explained that when people of the same tribe are together then they ask each other about their

40 This is quite similar to Abu-Lughod’s description of Awlad ‘Ali’s tribal organization. She (1986:50) says: “The importance of blood in a social identity is apparent in identification of Bedouins by family, lineage, and tribe. One of the first questions asked a newcomer is “Where are you from?” the answer to this question is not a geographical area (that would be the response to another question, “Where is your homeland [wūtm]?”) but rather a tribal affiliation.
respective *khel* or clan or blood relatives, for example, *Ghanikhel*. When two tribes intermarried they would become *dostaan* (friends by relationship) and since the relationship would be good, in order to strengthen it further they would do *adal-badal*\(^{41}\) or “exchange” family members in marriage. The rationale behind the adal-badal was (and still is) that if one’s daughter (say from Yousafzais) went to another tribe (say Mohammadzais) her offspring will carry on the lineage of that tribe (that is of the Mohammadzai tribe since Pakhtuns follow a patrilineal descent system). Therefore, in return that tribe (Mohammadzai) should also give a daughter to the first tribe (Yousafzai) so that their (Yousafzai’s) lineage may continue as well.

The Khan also went on to explain that if a person from a different tribe requested *nanawatee*\(^{42}\) or refuge from a tribe other than his own tribe the host tribe would say, “Moonga wer sera lokhay shareeq de” (we have shared our eating bowl with the refuge-seeker) and this would metaphorically also mean that we are ready to marry one of our women to him and accept him in our khel or clan. But even if an outsider, the one from another tribe, was accepted into a certain khel his name would not be included into the *shaamilaat* (shares) of the hereditary property; nor could this khel claim inheritance in his property. This khel only gave the man or the refuge seeker their name; their hospitality; but not a share in their property. The Khan narrated an incident and he said:

I knew a local man, who committed a murder and fled from law to the tribal areas. There the Afridis gave him *nanawatee* or refuge and were ready to *shareeq lokhay* (share their eating bowl or food) with him. So they married one of their daughters to him and accepted him into their khel. He has been living with them for the past 35 years; he speaks Pashto in the Afridi dialect and no one can tell he is from Charsadda; and his

\(^{41}\) *Adal-badal* (or *watta-satta* in Urdu), means “exchange,” that is, when a boy marries a girl from one family the girl’s brother has to marry his brother-in-law’s sister or his sister’s sister-in-law.

\(^{42}\) *Nanawatee* or refugee is one of the main tenets of Pakhtunwali or the (unwritten) ethical code of the Pakhtuns. In Pashto nanawatee literally means to “get in” (protection or the house of) or take refuge. Besides nanawatee the other tenets of Pakhtunwali include: *Melmastia* (hospitality); *Badal* (revenge to seek justice); *Turah* (bravery); *Sabat* (loyalty); *Imandari* (honesty); *Isteqmat* (determination due to trust in God); *Ghairat* (self dignity and honor); and *Namoos* (the honor of women).
children are more like Afridis too. So the Afridis gave him their identity and he can still claim his own identity [that he belongs to Charsadda]. The Afridis will also accept that he is an Afridi but will not give him a share in their personal property.

The Khan though quoted an example from the tribal areas of KP but what he said is generally relevant among the Pakhtuns especially in the rural areas. He told me two things: firstly, that a Pakhtun (man) did not only belong to his village but more so to his khel, that is, the village area or space occupied by his blood relatives or clan only. Secondly, among Pakhtuns, hereditary or inherited property also determines one’s sense of belonging. So much so, that a tribe may accept a person from another tribe; give him a place to live; give him work; and also allow him to use their cultural markers like names and addresses but will not allow him a share in their ancestral property even if he marries their daughter and spends his entire life in that tribe or khel. This phenomenon reiterates the idea (discussed by Beenish, Saba, and the Elderly lady in Matti, Karak) that one actually belongs to one’s village; it is their land.

In Azmerabad I also talked to some common villagers and by talking to them my aim was firstly, to understand how they perceived the notions of citizenship and belonging. It should be kept in mind that like the village Khan these common villagers did not own hereditary lands in the village. Secondly, how does globalization, if at all, affects their notions of citizenship and belonging in particular and their overall thinking about belonging-ness in general. Most of the women that I talked to were illiterate but could only read the Quran in Arabic with no translation abilities.

Nudarat, a female, about 50 years old, married for about 27 years claimed, “I don’t really know…but if there were [marriage] papers then it [the exact date] would have been known.” Her husband Mustafa is a tailor and worked independently in Azmerabad. He is the sole bread earner. They have six children: four girls and two boys. Two of her daughters were married and

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43 I am using “common villagers” for that category of villagers who are not the village elites.
she also had five grandchildren. I was trying to comprehend the understanding these people had about citizenship and belonging. Nudarat suggested that she was not only deeply but happily rooted in her village Azmerabad. She said:

No, [I will live] in Azmerabad. Even if you take me to Hayatabad[^44] I still like Azmerabad. Azmerabad is my whole life. Had it not been for Azmerabad, Mustafa would have taken me [as far as] America; so much so [if I didn’t want to go] he would have put me in a sack and taken me (laughing). He would have taken me to America but I like Azmerabad; I really like my village.

In Azmerabad, Charsadda, my key informant was Mahjabeen. She is a short, stout, woman, and is about 55 years old. She is illiterate and is married for about 30 years to a local farmer. She has five children and all of them are educated to a respectable level according to the local expectations which I inferred meant studying up to the tenth grade. But one of Mahjabeen’s daughters had an undergraduate degree. Mahjabeen had a low, croaky voice and usually talked incessantly and fast. She worked for the village Khans’ households. Her main advantage, as the key informant, was that she knew the entire village! During fieldwork she would usually accompany me to the respondents’ houses; sit there for a while and then leave when I would want to start the interview. She would pre-arrange a time with me, roughly the time the interview would finish. Then, as decided, she would come to get me and accompany me back home. Sometimes she would stay back for refreshments or lunch at a respondent’s house and leave accordingly.

As a research respondent, Mahjabeen gave me an understanding of her affiliation with Azmerabad by saying, “I am from Azmerabad…Azmerabad, Musakhel[^45] [names] Khan’s

[^44]: Hayatabad is a posh urban locality in Peshawar.
[^45]: Notice even Mahjabeen mentions her khel, that is, Musakhel (pseudonym).
This is the place of our elders, since generations, that is, our elders, the young ones—
this is our fathers’, our grandfathers’, our whole clan’s place. We cannot not leave this place at
all and go elsewhere. We were born here, raised here; I mean this place is our everything.”

Babbo, much senior in age than the other two women, informed me, “The doctor told
me I am 60 years old” but she was corrected by her daughter, who told her she must be 70 by
now. She is married with four children and grandchildren. Babbo told me, “Our place [village] is
called Musakhel.” But while talking about her affiliation with Azmerabad or the village Babbo
said, “I don’t know what to say (laughing) but all my children are here. I go to visit shrines and
even there I worry that if I die all my children will be left here [in the village]. But if all my
children decide to go away [from this village] then I will also leave” (laughing).

However, I asked Nudarat and Mahjabeen the reason for this attachment with
Azmerabad. Nudarat proudly told me that there were “no bad people” in Azmerabad. In fact, she
was very proud to admit that the rich and the poor alike are morally good and respectable people.
Mahjabeen, also somewhat echoed Nudarat’s claim by saying, “We really like our place, our
house, our village. We like it in all conditions: with regard to respect, honor and [for] living...our
men and everything else belongs to this place. So we really like this place.” Further trying to
probe their idea about personal affiliation I asked how they explained to strangers who they were
and where they belonged. Nudarat was quick to reply and said:

When they [someone] ask me, “Where are you from?” I tell them that I am from
Azmerabad, Musakhel. Earlier [names the elder] Khan’s kanday was quoted [as a point

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46 Kanday is a Pashto word which does not really have an English synonym. Kanday is a small village or a
community in a village, most or all of which is owned by the village Khan or the lord; it is usually named after that
Khan as well. The kanday is inhibited by the Khan’s relatives, tenants or both. Spatially, for the lack of a better
word, a kanday may roughly be the equivalent of a neighborhood.

47 Babbo is not a proper name; it is a Pashto word for aunty or any elder woman who due to respect is not
called by her name.

48 Even Babbo mentions the khel, that is, Musakhel.
of reference and recognition] and now by the grace of God it’s his son...and now [the place] is referred to by his son’s name [names the present Khan that I interviewed].

Mahjabeen responded by stating:

We tell them [the people] we are from Azmerabad, from [name] Khan’s kanday. So, many people are familiar with [name] Khan’s kanday. ((AK: What if they don’t know [name] Khan?)). Then we say we are from Azmerabad...we are from Charsadda. Then a lot of people recognize [us]. Our Charsadda is very well known among people, you know…. [Nobody asks for our national identity (ID) cards] we just tell them verbally, that is it...nobody asks for them [ID cards]…. But when we show our national ID cards and people read our residential address they know who we are [or which Khan’s village we come from].

And her husband Shamsher added, “Besides, all the local officers [men] know we are his men.”

And Babbo also said, “I will mention this place. ((AK: You mean Musakhel?)) Yes, yes. ((AK: Do people know Musakhel?)) Oh! The whole world knows Musakhel. Most of the people call it Charsadda. Such people call the entire Azmerabad and Musakhel, Charsadda.” After suggesting that “the whole world knows Charsadda” Babbo rather gives me a deeper insight into her limited notions of belonging, pointing to her daughter, Babbo further said:

[While watching TV] I ask her to show me Murree… I’ve been to Murree with Faryal. So when Murree is shown on TV I ask is this Murree? No, no I don’t like any other place but Murree because I’ve been there. ((AK: But someone has to tell you this is Murree?)). Yes, of course, without exaggeration, I don’t recognize it myself. My biggest achievement is when I go to the shrine...but recently I haven’t been there either, my feet hurt.

Therefore, for Nudarat and Mahjabeen, the notion of belonging is not only attached to Azmerabad (the place) but also to the household of the village lord or Khan (the person) as they would locally refer to him. Perhaps it rather defines their moral geography and the related point-

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49 Murree, in Punjab, was the summer station of the British where they would send their families to escape the extreme summer heat of the plains. They had their cantonment, church, hospitals, and schools established there as well. After independence of Pakistan in 1947 Murree still remains to be a popular summer resort for the people. Pakistani elite usually send their children to Murree boarding schools now.

50 The Khan’s daughter.
of-reference. But for Babbo the matter is even simpler: for her Musakhel (the neighborhood), Azmerabad (the village) and Charsadda (the district) are all one; it is all simply Musakhel where she lives. The world outside of Musakhel is beyond her recognition and perhaps beyond her concern too. She proves this by referring to her extremely limited mobility and not being able to recognize Murree which she claimed as her favorite place. And she appreciates the place when she sees it on the TV, but ironically, that too happens only when someone else points it out to her.

I continued and wanted to know a little more if these women could distinguish between citizenship and belonging. Therefore, I proceeded to ask,

Anoosh Khan: As the current political times are what if Pakistan ceases to exist then what will you say, where you are from?
Nudarat: Then…then…if they take to us to China…
AK: No, no one is taking you anywhere, you will remain here.
Nudarat: Then we will still mention this place [Azmerabad]. We are from this place [Azmerabad] therefore we will just mention this place.
AK: Do you ever think that you are from Pakistan?
Nudarat: We will say that we are from Azmerabad but we are familiar with places like Lahore, Peshawar, ’Pindi, Tangi, Umarzai, and Hayatabad.51

Mahjabeen, on the other hand, accepted that she does not really understand the difference between belonging to her village or Pakistan. She responded, “Well, I don’t know about this. We really like our Charsadda of all the places… Azmerabad, Charsadda is the first place that comes to my mind.” And Babbo also added, “We will just say [we are from] Musakhel, Charsadda.”

This conversation adequately shows that for Nudarat, Mahjabeen, and Babbo the notion of belonging to their village is very clear. However, the idea of belonging to a nation or a country or being aware of a political or legal citizenship status is not really on their radar. However, Nudarat does not directly refute or negate my question but instead mentions other places in

51 Lahore, Peshawar and Rawalpindi (or ’Pindi) are cities in Pakistan. Hayatabad is a posh urban township in Peshawar. Tangi and Umarzai are villages near Azmerabad in Charsadda.
Pakistan thus showing her familiarity with Pakistan but her belonging with her village. Whereas, Mahjabeen and Babbo do not even do that; they only mention their village.

However, Faryal the Khan’s daughter like Beenish and Saba had a more nuanced take on belonging. She also connected the idea of belonging with marriage when I asked:

Anoosh Khan: If Pakhtuns marry non-Pakhtuns does it become problematic?
Faryal: It is problematic in the sense that sometimes the person who is not from the family feels lonely. For instance, most of us are inter-married and we have a sister-in-law, who is a non-Pakhtun and also not from our family so I think she may not feel the same companionship as we do when all of us are together. Or maybe she does not want to intermingle with us as much as we want to with each other because we are cousins or relatives and she is not. She may simply want to stay home with her children but my cousin insists that he wants to be with his relatives. Whereas, things are easier for her brother-in-law because he is married to a cousin and all his relatives are also his wife’s relatives. Besides, for non-Pakhtuns it also becomes necessary to learn Pashto if she or he wants to be a part of the family. Some of our aunts who were non-Pakhtuns and some who were foreigners also learned Pashto because even they realized that the whole family will not communicate in Urdu or English for one person all the time. Even children when young tend to opt for the mother’s side but when they grow up they realize that their actual roots and ancestry comes from the father’s side so it is better to know your language and people.

Faryal’s idea about cousin-marriage and its advantage(s) compared to non-cousin marriage are similar to what Beenish and Saba said earlier on. Perhaps the sense of belonging to a family, a village, a khel, not to forget to the ancestral lands (even in case of women who get a share in the ancestral property), is so strong among the Pakhtuns that at times they are not even ready to marry outside of their clans and khels. Marrying within Pakhtuns, by one’s choice, is not considered as culturally inappropriate as is marrying non-Pakhtuns. Amongst other things, lack of education and travel, and perhaps not intermingling with other ethnicities are some of the reasons why Pakhtuns do not easily accept non-Pakhtuns among them. Although the situation is changing (as will be discussed in consequent chapters) many Pakhtuns still cling to their old traditions and people.
Amma Jaan is the mother of the village Khan in Azmerabad. She was over 80 years old. She was a calm, sober, and well articulate woman. For her age Amma Jaan was a comparatively progressive Pakhtun woman. However, she too had her own take on what made a woman qualify as a Pukhtana, that is, by belonging to the Pakhtun ethnic group.

Anoosh Khan: In order to maintain her Pakhtun-ness, what do you think is important for a Pakhtun woman of today?
Amma Jaan: It is important for her to know her limits. She should do whatever she wants to do but she needs to be conscious of what is honorable and decent. She should not forget that she is a Pukhtana and we have to stay within the perimeters of Pakhtunwali.

Interestingly, like the Elderly lady in Matti, Karak who believed that women should only work in or near their village because that is how they can keep their purdah intact, Amma Jaan also thinks that a Pakhtun woman’s honor, as defined by the tenets of Pakhtunwali, is something of utmost important. Thus, in this case honor is tied to the concept of belonging as well. Upholding honor is one of the tents of Pakhtunwali and by abiding by the cultural ethical code one belongs to the group. This is further elaborated by Professor Shah a little later in this chapter.

In order to tie my understanding of citizenship and belonging to globalization I introduced the role of media in our conversation. I just mentioned the electronic media because these women, in particular, were not even literate (except the Khan’s daughter) so print media was realistically out of the question. In responding to my query about the effects of media, by which Nudarat primarily meant the television, she told me that it did not negatively affect a person. It all depended on the person, that is, what he or she wanted to get out of the media or the television. Nudarat said, “Those who want to bring a change in their thinking can bring all sorts
of changes. And those who do not want to bring a [negative] change do not...there is religion [religious shows] in it....We can just recite the Kalimah\(^{52}\) and nothing else really matters.”

Mahjabeen responded by saying:

Well, in our house, we don’t have these things, cable…or dish. We only have a colored TV and a CD [player]. At the most my [elder] son watches [the TV]… and after him its Iffat’s [her daughter] number, she watches it…. So, definitely they are boys and girls [it may affect them in some ways].

Babbo’s response to media’s influence was:

What can I say? I don’t really understand these things… I only watch Pashto songs [on the TV.] And I haven’t taken a step away [from the TV] that I forget the song! I don’t even remember old songs. I was worse at these things when I was a young girl! Our mother wouldn’t let us do such things.

These responses explicitly bring to surface the role and influence of Althusserian ISAs, perhaps a combination of multiple ISAs. In this case, the role of religious tradition in the life of these women, even through media, shapes their thinking and behavior. Perhaps religious affiliation also in some ways colors one’s notions and understanding of belonging. People, especially with limited access, tend to believe that they can practice their beliefs better within the community they live in. Thus, unconsciously fearing a new community’s practicing behaviors.

In connection with religion, female sexuality has always been an issue of honor, chastity and modesty in the Pakhtun society, regardless of the rural–urban divide, though more so in the rural setting. Modest female sexuality is expressed through gendered performances. For example, Nudarat narrated her episode of a visit to the doctor’s. On her way back home, while on the van, she was inappropriately touched by a young boy. But she managed to slap him a number of times.

\(^{52}\) Affirmation of the Kalimah is the first of the five commandments of Islam and belief in the meaning of the Kalimah is the primary distinction of what defines a Muslim.
to teach him a lesson for the future. However, even here she made a reference to female modesty by saying:

I have made a proper burqa\(^{53}\) for myself, the one that has a cap attached. Now, I’m wearing the burqa and that boy [riding] in the Suzuki van [with me] started touching my leg with his foot….While I was slapping him for the fourth time I asked, ‘Look at my face…what difference did it make that you touched me with your foot?’

A little later she also said to me, “I am a very strong woman…I am strong enough that if you (addressing me) ever need me I can raise a rod or a pole [to hit someone].” Nudarat comes forth as a strong woman, when judged by her gendered expectations. However, her female sexuality is both highlighted and appropriated by her gendered performance, enabling her to act as a subject of disidentification. She talked back to a man who tried to touch her indecently but she appropriates her behavior by being clad in a burqa and therefore justifies her behavior and has the courage to slap him a number of times. Hoodfar also explains this dialectical phenomenon of the purdah or veiling and the agency it provides women. She states:

Veiling is a lived experience full of contradictions and multiple meanings. While it has clearly been a mechanism in the service of patriarchy, a means of regulating and controlling women’s lives, women have used the same institution to free themselves from the bonds of patriarchy. [Hoodfar 1997:249]

Whereas, Mahjabeen directly stated that it is the men who make final decisions; they occupy a position higher than women and therefore can control female sexuality as well. She said:

No… (laughing loudly) what I mean is that, in my household, my man comes before me, he is the one responsible. Then I come second, and my children [in the hierarchy] follow me. What I mean is that the first [head] position belongs to my man…. ((AK: But does he listen to you and ask for your opinions?)). Yes, why not! He has definitely done it [what I have told him to do] many times.

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\(^{53}\) This particular burqa is a long, loose covering, from head to ankles. The “shuttle-cock” burqa has a cap-like head-piece attached to the long loose covering. The part that covers the face usually has lattice patterned holes for breathing and vision. It somewhat resembles the shuttle-cock used for playing badminton.
Nudarat, comparatively speaking, was more vocal in expressing female sexuality being controlled and challenged by men, whereas, Mahjabeen accepted this reality in a rather tacit manner. Appadurai (1996: 45) explains this politics of sexuality by stating, “The honor of women becomes not just an armature of stable (if inhuman) systems of cultural reproduction but a new arena for the formation of sexual identity and family politics.” Whereas, Gaudio (2009:8) further explicates this power dynamics in a cultural context by stating, “The term ‘cultural’ reminds us that participation in social life is not solely a matter of power relations, but also needs to be understood in terms of aesthetics, emotions and beliefs.”

Another thing that these women talked about was their socio-economic status and how that affected their loyalties to the place. Throughout her interview Nudarat reiterated the fact that being poor sanctioned many restrictions on them. It appeared as if the idea of belonging to Azmerabad, in particular, was an indirect result of poverty. Nudarat said:

*Khudaiya paka!* (Oh God!) Poverty is a bad thing. If I ask Mustafa [husband] to accompany me [to the doctor] then he has to forgo his daily earnings… I tell him [Mustafa] going [to Abbottabad] 54 will cost us the fare money, it will definitely affect your daily earnings, so what’s the point in our going there? But once, I got really fed up and told him let’s go away from this village. ((AK: You mean for good?)) Yes, let’s move out. [I told him] what if your [tailoring] business stopped running? But [then I wondered] if his business stops I’ll work somewhere anyhow. So thank God we are still here.

Nudarat also told me that she wanted to go for Haj (the holy pilgrimage) to Mecca, Saudi Arabia. But poverty is the main problem that would not let her fulfill her wish. The only way for her to go for the holy pilgrimage was:

Now I just want that God takes me to the Holy place [meaning the holy pilgrimage]. I really wish for that. I asked Mustafa to do something for me in khizmat (to serve the physically weak). If I go in khizmat that will be good because otherwise I have my [financial] limitations… [khizmat is to serve the] disabled in some way… God has given

54 Abbottabad is a city in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and is also famous as a holiday resort because of its hilly terrain and pleasant weather, especially during the summers in Pakistan.
them money so...serve them...help them with clothes [dressing up] etc. ... that is khizmat (service). Now that’s my biggest wish that I can serve someone.

Mahjabeen also stated her desire to visit different places, eat special cuisine, and be beautiful too! She said:

Like, we want everything too. We have seen so many things [that] people like you [have]...our Khans [have]. For example, the clothes and dresses, the parties and celebrations, we see all these things. So we also wish that we could go to places, eat and drink, and were as beautiful too! (smiling). Why, yes, I do think about being as beautiful as well. Why am I not saying the right thing? But...everything is the hand of Allah, the Almighty. So...even in our poverty we are thankful to Allah,... All this is Allah’s doing; He has one thing in store for some and another thing for others. It is as simple as that.

My final question to these women was how they would self-identify themselves with respect to gender, ethnicity and nationhood. This was my ultimate attempt to verify their notions of citizenship and belonging. As I had so far understood, for Nudarat, it was only the idea of belonging that made the difference and not surprisingly she said, “I am a Muslim. I am a very strong woman... and after this I’ll mention Azmerabad. I will say that there is Azmerabad in Pakistan. If they do not know I’ll say “Azmerabad…in Charsadda.” [If they are foreigners] they will say “OK, OK” or something of the sort! (laughing).” Once again for Nudarat being a Muslim is of foremost importance; then comes her womanhood and she claimed to be a strong woman. However, her emphasis is still on “Azmerabad.” She will even emphasize to foreigners that she is from Azmerabad and if they do not know where Azmerabad is then she will refer to Pakistan, the country. However, Pakistan for her still does not define her region of belonging and she has to qualify it with Charsadda.

Mahjabeen in a similar vein replied, “I will tell [people] that first of all I am a Muslim; then in the second place I am a woman, [a mother] for raising children and a home-maker; then I am a Pakistani—I will definitely say this... I will also mention Azmerabad, Charsadda. First I’ll say I’m from Azmerabad, Charsadda…then from Pakistan! (laughing).”
And Babbo said, “I will tell them I am from Azmerabad. And I am a Pakhtun woman…this is what I will say. I don’t know what else I should say…I will say whatever comes to my mind first (laughing).”

My point here is that for these women from Azmerabad, it is not enough to say that they belong to Pakistan; they have to spell it out that they belong to Azmerabad, Charsadda. Thus, proving that they are rather oblivious to the idea of political citizenship; for them belonging is the only thing which they have been emphasizing throughout their responses. This includes belonging of different sorts: religious, cultural, economic, and spatial. The idea of belonging is perhaps so strongly embedded in these women because of the fact that they have limited access to the world out of Azmerabad. Their mobility is restricted due to various reasons, including gendered restrictions; economic limitations; transportation difficulties; and illiteracy, which in turn results in their restricted agency. All these factors add to and reiterate stronger notions of belonging as opposed to national citizenship. We know that Nudarat and Babbo visit the doctor; Mahjabeen and Babbo sometimes accompany their Khans’ families to places outside Charsadda; and Babbo sometimes goes to the shrines. However, a strong religious influence, restricted mobility, and limited global influences also restrict their quotidian agency and thus their sense of citizenship and belonging. Therefore, the impact of globalization on these women is not as apparent as it comes forth in my respondents discussed in the next section of the chapter. However, the limited global influence on these women points to the fact that globalization has fragmented and flexible effects on people depending on where those people are spatially situated; what their academic backgrounds are; and what their age bracket is.
This section looks at the effect of globalization as understood by the educated, the “globally” exposed, and the mobile cohort of Pakhtun men and women. The themes that come forth, due to the responses from this group of respondents are a little more nuanced in meaning and tone compared to the discussion in Matti and Azmerabad above. However, this group also believes that territorialization (Collier and Ong 2005) or glocalization (Berry et al 2003) mainly takes place through the influence of media, especially the satellite or cable channels, followed by education and migration, both temporary and permanent, to foreign countries. It should not come as a surprise that territorialization or glocalization occurs through media and education: they are ISAs. Territorialization (Collier and Ong 2005) is a process that serves to connect or influence the global-local scene through ISAs like media and education; mobility and travelling which expose individual to foreign or non-familiar cultures and localities and thus to foreign ISAs indirectly. Therefore, individuals who are exposed to education, media, mobility, and migration tend be doubly interpellated. In other words, such individuals respond to the academic and media (as ISAs) interpellation and to local and foreign cultural ideological interpellation as well. As a result, they tend to react to the stronger interpellation (whether local or global) but at the same time get a choice of sorts; they can somewhat choose to decide which sort of ideological interpellation to respond to: local or global.

Professor Shah, a Pashto scholar, tends to trace global meeting the local back to olden times. He suggested that the Pakhtuns first came into direct contact with global influences through conquests of and against the Mughals55 in the 17th century, followed by the Sikhs and

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55 As mentioned earlier the Mughal Empire was a Persian Islamic dynasty that ruled the Indian subcontinent from 16th-19th century.
then during the British rule in the subcontinent. Professor Shah explained that the Pakhtuns lived a life of “ordered anarchy” which he explained by stating:

We can call it ordered anarchy because there was anarchy but at the same time there was order as well because of the Pashto\textsuperscript{56} that intervened in the middle [of everything]. Pashto, among them [the Pakhtuns] is that commonality [which means] the language, culture, and Pakhtunwali… it is the nucleus [of their lives].

In order to understand the holistic nature of Pashto it becomes pertinent to understand the performative nature of Pashto, which is, “doing Pashto.” Professor Shah goes on to explain this concept:

Pashto is a language… but… because we talk about Pakhtunwali, which is, as people suggest, like the British constitution, an unwritten constitution [of the Pakhtuns]. Since it is unwritten and is a constitution, its meaning was communicated through the Pashto language—in the form of proverbs, idioms, and anecdotes. Therefore, various traditions, whether spiritual, worship oriented, life in general, about one’s home, village, about mountains, the seasons, in short everything, was conveyed through the Pashto language. That is why Pashto is not only a language but also the [symbol of] belief, integrity and the cultural identity [of the Pakhtuns]… On the basis of Pashto [ideology] rests the foundation of a nation… … As such, any person who goes away from Pashto goes away from Pakhtunwali. Therefore, for a Pakhtun his identity, his national status depends on Pashto. And this [ideological status of] Pashto is alive due to the Pashto language. That is why Pashto, Pakhtunwali and Pakhtun are all tied together.

Perhaps Professor Shah’s explanation of the Pashto language as symbolic of cultural subjectivity and performance is a way to explicate that within such cultural ideological framework the global influences are bound to be territorialized and appropriated according to cultural norms. The ideological status of Pashto language not only strengthens the ties of belonging to the Pakhtun culture but it also re-appropriates the idea of belonging and cultural citizenship. Here the idea of belonging does not emerge from a nation-state loyalty but from a cultural loyalty. Professor Shah

\textsuperscript{56} Pashto is the mother tongue of Pakhtuns. However, here I want to show that Professor Shah basically meant it in the proverbial sense, commonly stated as “You don’t speak Pakhto [Pashto]; you do Pakhto,” which shows that the Pakhtun culture is “performed” through the Pashto language as well. For details see Barth (1998:119) and Grima (1992:4).
also said, “One distinction that the Pakhtuns have is that even if they go to any corner of the world they take pride in their culture…their [Pakhtun] identity, which is due to the [Pashto] language, [it] is their pride.”

Salma Shaheen, also a Pashto professor and poet explained the initial global or foreign contact of the Pakhtuns with the outside world:

About 50 years ago…the English used to live here as missionaries. They had good family terms with us…From an intellectual perspective they were very advanced people. They used to teach my family members knitting and embroidery; they were social workers. During those times there was no hospital in Mardan,\(^{57}\) there were no [female] doctors either. There was only one hospital where the missionaries handled gynecological cases. Therefore, people had accepted everything [of the English]—all their services… … … The people knew that they [the English] are not doing anything bad. Well they may have been doing their work, you know, of converting people to Christianity or whatever. But in Mardan people needed education. And the village that I belong to, Baghdada, had a proper convent school [due to these missionaries].

Salma Shaheen further elaborated that by living with the migrants from India and the Hindus, who did not go to India after the partition between India and Pakistan, also had positive effects on their Pakhtun neighbors and associates:

The professions and trade was under their [Hindus present in her village] control. They were very civilized people… … …Our people did not like [women] earning money, which is why all professional teachers were Indians… Pakhtuns have a different life style, you know, so we learned a lot from them…one got polished.

Both Professor Shah and Salma Shaheen talk about the effects of global-meets-local either in the near past (about 50 years ago) or in the historical past. I am not suggesting that the past is not important; rather it portrays the evolution of global and local interaction of the Pakhtuns. I also noticed that Salma Shaheen had a positive tone while discussing the influence of missionaries in their lives. Her tone was not that of a colonized who is made to accept life as dictated by the

\(^{57}\) For location of Mardan see Appendix B-Map 3.
colonizers; she appreciated what the missionaries were doing in her village and considered it as a positive outcome of global-meeting-local.

Some of the more concrete examples of this dyadic relationship of global–local in the present urban setting of Peshawar are primarily brought forth through the effect of media and education on language, culture, and attitudes in general. Interestingly, none of my Peshawar respondents referred to global influences as Western influences, in the European or the North American sense. For most people in Pakistan global-meeting-local primarily equates to the media infiltrated influences of the Indian media, especially Indian soap dramas and Bollywood. So much so, that Nudarat, my Azmerabad (village) respondent also said, “Dramas these days only [means] India!”

Raheela, a professor of Gender and Women Studies, looking at the influence of Indian media on Pakistani audience stated:

In the Pakistani cultural context, probably we don’t know because we are a post-war\textsuperscript{58} generation, I am not sure if the Muslims [in combined India] used to follow Hindu and Sikh cultural traditions. Now that we have separated from them their culture is so strongly influencing us! …We have Holi\textsuperscript{59} and colors… children very conveniently use Hindi words… it is seeping into our culture… I don’t understand why this influence was not as strong when we were living together, as neighbors, and why is this happening now?

But at the same time Raheela also stated that reason for this influence:

If you talk about global, the bulk of our population doesn’t understand Chinese, Japanese or English [languages]. So what do they watch? They mostly watch Indian channels… … For our uneducated population the global world is that which they can access… …Here [in Peshawar] some Afghan channels are accessible because of Pashto [language]… the strongest interest of our people is in entertainment.

\textsuperscript{58} The 1947 War of Independence that led to division of India and Pakistan after the British left the Indian subcontinent.

\textsuperscript{59} Holi or the festival of colors is a Hindu spring festival.
Raheela is correct in stating that for most Pakistani people global influence translates into the Indian media propagated fantasy due to linguistic familiarity and electronic access. Raheela also stated, “These people who are influenced by the Indian channels is because their [Indians’] dress, their language, their cuisine resemble ours.” In other words, this is because the “mediascapes” (Appadurai 1996:35) that these people live in help them translate their fantasies in a familiar but imagined space, beyond their physical reach or as Appadurai explains:

The image, the imagined, the imaginary—these are all terms that direct us to something critical and new in global cultural processes: the imagination as a social practice…. The imagination is now central to all forms of agency, is itself a social fact, and is the key component of the new global order. [Appadurai 1996:31]

Appadurai (2001:14) further explicates that this happens because, “the world may consist of regions (seen processually), but regions [and people] also imagine their own worlds.” It is interesting to note that Raheela mentions that the reason most people in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and elsewhere in Pakistan watch Indian satellite channels is because of the familiarity of language and dress. Thus, in a way this suggests that dress, a cultural marker, too has a role to play in one’s sense of belonging; though in the case of Indian channels it is limited to familiarity rather than belonging per se. For example, Abdul Haq, an English professor at a local university in Peshawar told me:

Whenever I am in a western country I never wear shalwar kameez⁶⁰ in a university or anywhere. But as soon as I come to my residence, I immediately change and wear shalwar kameez because that is something in which I feel relaxed. And I don’t think there is anything wrong with the dress. When I am outside [of Pakistan] I always wear the dress those people wear. I don’t want to make myself unnecessarily distinguished from the rest.

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⁶⁰ Shalwar kameez (in Urdu or partoogh kameez in Pashto) is the loose trousers and long shirt that is worn in Pakistan by both men and women, though there are style and pattern variations in the male and female shalwar kameez.
Abdul Haq’s remark that he dressed in “Rome as the Romans did” and changed into his traditional dress when he got back home made me think that there can be a sense of temporal belonging as well. What I mean by “temporal belonging” is that under certain circumstances like job requirements; social and cultural obligations; and simply by the status of one’s residence (not nationality) a person tends to accept social symbolic markers to be in sync with the local people because he or she, “[does not] want to make [himself or herself] unnecessarily distinguished from the rest.” However, I think it is not only a matter of making one look different, it is more a matter of acceptability in a foreign land; within a certain social, ethnic, or a professional group, that is, being able to have a sense of belonging of sorts. As Bailey and Gayle (2003:124), too, are of the opinion that, “Even clothing that covers our bodies constitutes an enclosure driven by ideological contest and context…. Indeed, clothing in the broadest sense represents who we are; it helps mould our identities.”

However, Yasir Kamal, another professor of English explained the role and influence of media as:

Media is only a medium for the change that is bound to occur if two cultures are allowed to interact. Um…why media… media accelerates it perhaps, it helps you to step out of yourself and look at yourself, which primitive societies cannot do otherwise, you know…um…so I don’t think it is the media that should be blamed or criticized for that; [media] just accelerates the change that is bound to happen, if any two cultures are allowed to interact, yeah.

Media, especially the satellite channels, are easily accessible to people than actually being able to go to various places in the world and coming in contact with the people of foreign lands. However, this interaction of the global–local via media translates into a desired belonging of sorts.

On another level, the notions of citizenship and belonging are also worth examining among people who live in the diaspora and analyze the influence of global-meets-local in
Yasir explained how the “Pakhtun pride” works when it is faced by global influences in diasporic settings. He explicated:

Pashtuns\(^{61}\) are a rural people. Um…they are…um…without any offense to anybody, they are…I myself am a Pashtun so hopefully I don’t offend any Pashtuns. They are very primitive people and their level of consciousness is not there where…they can hold their own ground and can…accept values, rituals, and customs from other ethnicities without shedding theirs. Um…wherever there are any primitive people, who interact with…um…a non-primitive people they are likely to follow the non-primitive people. So those who are in the diaspora have obviously gone from this rural setting into this urban setting and they are likely to follow whatever happens in that culture [that they are in]. But in some cases there are people, there are Pashtuns where they have blended in with whatever environment they have around them. Most have not, and they continue to resist the…the assimilation, the national assimilation so strongly that I have heard about how some, even though they are settled there…um…very well in every sense of the word they decide to come back to Pakistan because they feel “uneasy” with some of the things that their children…um…do. [Then] there are those kind of Pashtuns, you know, those that physically live or work in a different country but emotionally and culturally continue to have their…you know, rural environment with them. And there are others who both…um…emotionally and culturally are a part of where ever they are. Um…these are the people whom I would call very conscious because they can very easily switch from one persona to another.

Perhaps Yasir’s point here is that the “problem of today’s global interactions is the tension between cultural homogenization and cultural heterogenization” (Appadurai 1996:43). In a similar vein Hadia, an Urdu\(^{62}\) professor, explained the diverse attitudinal effects of globalization on people, especially in the diaspora. She said:

Those people who live abroad feel this a lot…that our children should not be ignorant of cultural traditions, which is our real asset…our children don’t get absorbed in this new [foreign] culture… … … On the other hand there are people who don’t care about this. They are those people who don’t have strong roots [or affiliation] behind them. When such people go [abroad] they basically go there to earn money. That is why they adopt those [foreign] ways; they think that is the best strategy for their survival. They believe that if they don’t adopt foreign ways the local people will not accept them [as one of them]. There are some who stay in the middle. Those in the middle…cannot forego their

\(^{61}\) As stated in Chapter 1: the noun or the ethnic community, Pakhtuns is sometimes written and spoken as Pashtuns as well, especially by people of southern regions of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) Province. This happens when the “kh” sound is replaced by the “sh” sound. So Pakhtun is pronounced as Pashtun; Pakhto as Pashto.

\(^{62}\) Urdu is the national language of Pakistan.
traditions but at the same time flow with the tide of time. So such people remain balanced.

Both Yasir and Hadia suggest that those people who tend to adopt the middle path or the disidentifying subject-position tend to be better off and are what Ong (1999) describes as “flexible citizens,” though in this case the citizenship status is more culturally flexible and not only politically flexible. Ong explicates:

“Flexible citizenship” refers to the cultural logistics of capitalist accumulation, travel, and displacement that induce subjects to respond fluidly and opportunistically to changing political-economic conditions…[the] subjects emphasize, and are regulated by, practices favoring flexibility, mobility, and repositioning in relation to markets, governments and cultural regimes. These logics and practices are produced within particular structures of meaning about family, gender, nationality, class mobility and social power. [Ong 1999: 06]

In the quotation above Ong mentions that globalization has an effect on family, nationality, and gender. In the case of Pakhtuns the “logics and practices” of particular interest to me, are the effects of globalization on gender dynamics and practices due to which the respective changes in the Pakhtun society or culture are accordingly territorialized. Talking about the gendered notions of Pakhtun culture in Peshawar, Hadia believed that:

Men would get more affected, their businesses, trade get affected [by global influences]. Besides, men in our society can adopt changes or anything very confidently. A woman can only accept or adopt change if she sees the support coming from the man. For example if she wants to forego the burqa she thinks if my husband, father, or brother supports me then I will let go of it. Men have more power in our society. And besides, men for their rights easily get influenced. For their personal benefit they don’t mind accepting change but not so much if it’s beneficial for women or their rights. Women only adopt a change within their limited circle; things to which their men don’t object because man is the main bread earner. Therefore, men in our culture, not only the Pakhtun culture but in others also, enjoy a lot of freedom.

Salma Shaheen, on the other hand, suggested that with changing times the Pakhtuns, especially men and parents had improved a little when it came to understanding their young daughters and women in general. Salma Shaheen was of the opinion:
Like natural feelings, emotions…they [Pakhtuns, especially men] do not care about them. Otherwise the Pakhtuns are nice people. According to their psyche, they really appreciate brave women…. [For example] if I don’t want to get married, there is no problem. I can say I don’t want to [get married]. But I don’t have the guts to say that I want to marry such and such a man or can marry him. Now things may have changed a little…because of the support parents give their children. They take their emotions into account. Now I think that a mother or father understand a girl’s thoughts and her nature better [than before].

Although Salma Shaheen does not really mention the reason for the positive change but indirectly suggests that this is due to global influences propagated through the media, education, and perhaps travel and mobility. However, what both Salma and Hadia suggested, echoes Ong (2006:34) when she states, “Women’s entry into the public sphere thus entails not only a challenge to male rationality and control of politics, it also plunges women into debates about the ethics of female self-management and their role in society.”

Therefore, Yasir believed that to “only connect”\(^{63}\) on multiple human levels education can play an important role in this culture. He said:

So another way of connecting the global with the local or the local with the global would be to make sure that…um…we focus on education…particularly in those societies, in those countries which we call developing countries. Ours is one of them. Where the education has to be such that it helps people generate ideas, it helps people think critically, it helps people think analytically…um…so that they don’t have that in [the] box thinking or think within a box.

Whereas, Raheela felt that globalization affects people differently according to their age and social status as well. As a result, education, in the global context, is territorialized and appropriated according to cultural expectations. Raheela said:

There is a small minority of people who travel internationally and who can read the [English] script. [They include] those who can read the newspapers, magazines and can watch the foreign [English] channels. Nowadays, a new group, the nouveau riche, has suddenly become upwardly mobile. They send their [quite young] children aboard for studies. When these kids return [to Pakistan] they are almost misfits in the society. But if

\(^{63}\) I have borrowed these words from the leitmotif of Forster’s (1921) Howard’s End.
you go for higher education at a relatively mature age you have fixed ideas by then. So you pick and choose. But if you send a child after A-levels the peer pressure is so strong that [they are bound to blend in the foreign culture].

This shows the dialectical nature of globalization and education, both in the locally territorialized sense and with reference to cultural expectations in Pakistan and of Pakistanis abroad. They feel pressurized to adopt foreign cultural ways primarily due to their age. At the same time this also suggests, especially with reference to upward mobile class, as (King 2008: 232) explains, “Western… refers more to an elite attitude than a region.”

There is no doubt, when the global-meets-local through media and education, many traditional values are bound to change or are appropriated accordingly. Shaheen Faheem, a writer and a housewife aptly remarked, “Many of us belong to villages [but have settled in Peshawar or other urban areas].” And in connection to settling in Peshawar or other urban areas Professor Shah was of the opinion:

Besides, [now] we do not follow our traditions as before. For example, now we have marriage halls for weddings. In the villages, due to larger spaces, we have a free hand to invite and assemble as many guests as we want to but we can’t do that here [in the city] anymore. And then we have to pay attention to and respect cultural requirements as well; they change from place to place. I’m sure when you go to your village you wear a chaadar [for purdah or veiling].

Professor Shah’s point here helps to clarify that globalization can mean urbanization but that global influences, especially through media and travelling exposure, have made people in Peshawar appropriate traditional customs for convenience. Urbanization can be a by-product of globalization but the above excerpt explicates that contemporary life style, due to global influences, make Pakhtuns migrate to the urban areas but they carry on with their traditional

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64 The Advanced Level General Certificate of Education or A-levels is offered in and by universities in the United Kingdom.

65 Chaadar (Urdu) or saadar or paroonae (Pashto) is a long, shawl-like covering with which women usually cover their heads and also wrap it around their body. It is used for purdah purposes.
customs and only appropriate them accordingly. Therefore, even if I do not wear a chaadar in Peshawar I would wear one while going to the village, thus appropriating my behavior according to the cultural mores and expectations.

Yet, at the same time one cannot ignore the importance of global influences which has enabled Pakhtun men and especially some Pakhtun women develop their critical and analytical faculties. Perhaps, some Pakhtuns [men] may equate this to cultural revolt on part of women when some women develop the capability to think, question, and talk back to the cultural system and some traditions. For example, Aliya Khatoon, who is a lecturer at a local university, is in her mid-thirties and is single, narrated to me how she talked back to her father when she tried to explain to him her understanding of Pakhtunwali. She told me that compared to before her father had changed a lot in some ways. He used to be a very staunchly traditional Pakhtun in the beginning now he had become very accommodative because “I argue with him whenever he says something like ‘this should be done this way or that.’” Aliya Khatoon continued telling me that one day she asked him, “Father, tell me what is your definition of Pakhtunwali?” She explained that she asked him about Pakhtunwali because during those days her father was not on talking terms with his brother, her uncle. And her father justified his behavior by saying, “I’m facing “Pakhto” problem with him” (that is, we have a difference of opinion and now it’s a matter of Pakhto, or honor, or ego for me). Aliya continued that the same uncle had an accident and she requested her father to go and visit him. And her father asked her why she was insistent that he visit his brother. Her father said, “My brother and I are contesting a property court case so why don’t you understand that it is a matter of my Pakhto, my honor, that I should not go to visit him.” So Aliya replied:

_Abbu_ (daddy), does Pakhtunwali not include humanism? My Pakhtunwali is that one should only practice Pakhtunwali with a [social, economic, and physical] equal. If you
think that somebody is weaker and you practice your Pakhto there is no need to [do it] because you know that he is already flat! So…when…he is well, strong enough to stand against you in the courts then practice your Pakhto with him. By doing so your Pakhto is not going to lessen; my Pakhto does not lessen that he is sick and I should go and inquire about him [his health]. Because, in case, he dies tomorrow and you tell us to go for his funeral then where will be your Pakhto?

I have included Aliya Khatoon’s conversation with her father because she, being an educated woman, is ready to rationalize the spirit not just the meaning of Pakhtunwali. According to Pakhtun cultural standards she may be considered a rude daughter who is talking back to her father and trying to instill “sense” into him who is her (culturally understood) social senior, protector, and provider. But because of her education and exposure she has developed the sense of re-interpreting or perhaps better interpreting Pakhtunwali or the Pakhtun code of ethics. Aliya’s response should not be judged as challenging family traditions or as considering family traditions a hindrance. As a reflexive and passionate woman she is questioning the validity of an action (not tradition) based on Pakhtunwali; an action that her father will take at some point in his life. After all, written text, and in case of Pakhtunwali, which Professor Shah earlier called the “unwritten constitution of the Pakhtuns,” may be non-documented or unwritten (though now it is written), is always open for re-interpretation and appropriation according to the demand of the times. However, this does not mean that Aliya Khatoon is subverting the Pakhtun heritage or ethical traditions; she does not disown her sense of belonging to her ethnic group. But, as a global and a local cultural subject, Aliya wants a flexible definition of Pakhtunwali. She further elaborated her stance by saying:

I do not know who made this contribution; who said that Pakhto or Pakhtunwali’s definition should be changed when your virtues were…aa…hospitality, or caring, and your social capital [increased] by meeting and greeting people, so how did it reach all this bloodshed? I don’t understand who is contributing to this kind of code of conduct. And they are imposing or giving it to us. I mean, let me decide what is Pakhto because I want to live with it.
In addition, the idea of belonging is also linked to funeral practices among the Pakhtuns. It is almost similar to the African preoccupation with autochthony and the exclusion of “strangers” which is determined by funerals as the ultimate test of belonging (Arnaut and Blommaert 2009; Ceuppens and Greschiere 2005; Greschiere 2005; Greschiere and Jackson 2006). Many Pakhtuns believe that after death a person should be buried in his or her ancestral graveyard or at least in the native village graveyard. Among the Pakhtuns burial in the native village not only shows the person’s sense of belonging but the practice is also a form of symbolic cultural capital; it suggests that the dead person actually had a place to belong to; he or she has a family to take care of his or her dead body; and above all he or she has a conforming familial subject-position. Or simply put: he or she has “their own land” as suggested earlier by the Elder lady. As such, Mohammad Zafar, who belongs to the tribal area of KP explained that these days their area (of origin), due to the war on terror, has been taken over by the Arabs, the Chechnians, the Turks, people from the Middle East, and Chinese separatists, among others. Zafar added, “Now when I go to my village, my home, and when I knock at my door, I find an Arab coming out and asking me what I want.” Therefore, the last time he and his family were able to go there was in September 2006. According to him since then the situation has been such that it is no longer safe to go there because the area is not in control of the Pakistan military; it is totally in control of the foreign international terrorists. And because of that they have started burying their dead in the settled districts, “which is something a tribal would never want. It has been the tradition that the tribal people bring their dead from every corner of the world and bury them in the tribal areas. My father was the last person that we buried in the tribal area and that too was in 2006,” explained Zafar.
It is not only the Pakhtuns from tribal areas who prefer to bury their dead in their ancestral villages but it is a practice which almost all Pakhtuns believe in following as it authenticates and endorses the (dead) person’s sense of belonging. Zafar’s explanation is in fact a form of territorialization which I choose to call “terror-inflicted-territorialization.” In this case traditional practice is appropriated due to the physical occupation of land by outsiders (read social and political mischief mongers) and as a result the local people have to appropriate their burial practice because of the fear induced among them due the geo-political instability and insecurity in their native land(s).

Conclusion

In the above discussion respondents from rural areas like Matti, Karak and Azmerabad, Charsadda bring forth their ideas about belonging more clearly and straightforwardly. For them belonging is a claim to their own rural lands; village; and family. The respondents from urban Peshawar tend to look at the notion of belonging in a rather nuanced manner; they tend to tie the meaning of belonging as understood through global-meets-local phenomenon. For example, Yasir defined globalization as:

To tell you the truth, the word [globalization] has come to mean so many things that it doesn’t mean anything, any more. So I would be adding to the confusion that perhaps already exists. But globalization for me means…diversification…celebration of difference…celebration of commonalities. Perhaps all of these sometimes; at others some of them. So that is how I look at globalization. When I see myself as a part of this huge…um…GLOBE…I want to be given the respect that I’m willing to give to another. Wherever that happens, I’m in a global sphere. And if I’m willing to demand respect for myself without giving it, I think I’m in a local culture, local sphere.

As such, Collier and Ong’s (2005) idea of global assemblages and territorialization or Ong’s (1999) use of flexible citizenship aptly suggests the flexible meaning of belonging in a globalized world. The important characteristic that comes forth through the responses of the rural respondents is that belonging to the group and their respective villages is of utmost importance;
it is their sense of belonging that actually justifies who they are for themselves and for the others. For instance, in Matti, most of the women were illiterate except for the few younger ones and most of these women did not really have the sense of how belonging can be a more complicated phenomenon than it appears to be. Besides, their universe primarily included belonging to their village and family so for them marriage was one of the foremost traditions that explained the idea of belonging. The above responses exemplify that the influencing forces in Matti were primarily ISAs like family and culture. Thus, the institution of marriage was considered as one of the important denominators for defining belonging. Conventional marriages in traditional setups are important because they symbolize the beginning of a family life; extension of family; and the unconscious reproduction of the familial ISA. Thus, the institution of marriage re-enforces the influence of family as one of the foremost ISAs affecting the Pakhtun society.

Apparentely, the responses I got in Azmerabad, Charsadda were straight forward compared to the ones I got in Peshawar. In Azmerabad, the ISAs at work were family, culture, and religion. As seen from the responses of the women in Azmerabad, their primary point of reference is being a Muslim; their media exposure is limited, some watch religious programs; and their mobility is equally restricted, with one respondent’s claim that outing for her meant “going to the shrines.” Therefore, the religious ideology, which primarily interpellates them, can be seen in their sexual and gender performances as well. For example, in order to be a good (cultural) subject and maintain the obligation of belonging Nudarat appropriates her sexuality by wearing a “proper” burqa; Mahjabeen believes her “man” comes first and she is a “woman” for her “children and homemaking;” and Babbo lives in Azmerabad because her “children” are there and if they decide to leave she will leave the village as well. These women are illiterate but can only read the Quran: a reiteration of the religious interpellation. As these women are relatively
mature, ranging between the age group of 50-80 years, in their case another ISA, that is, education does not play a role per se. When they were younger education was not as common in Azmerabad as it is today. Therefore, the influence of media (yet another ISA) is not as strong either in their lives or language because for most part they do not understand the language(s) (as Raheela rightly mentions above) spoken in most shows. Hence, for them the notion of belonging is only cultural and spatial. As a result, globalization affects them in a different way: they know what cable, internet, CD players, and Indian dramas are but they tend to territorialize these global assemblages in a way that it does not (post)modernize them per se but at the same time does not render them primitive either. Here I would like to appropriate what Leap (2003:402-403) suggests, “Genders [and global influences] are cultural constructions, and not determined entirely or primarily by bodily form or biological function…. [L]inguistic practices, and the messages about gender expressed through them, take place within specific economic contexts and social and historic “moments.””

Therefore, in Azmerabad, the Khan who is the educated, social, and cultural elite discussed how the idea of belonging among the tribal Pakhtuns and according to my understanding among the Pakhtuns in general depends on their ownership and control of the hereditary agricultural lands. Since the Khan is an economic superior that is why for him land-entitlement plays an important role in maintaining his personal and the collective Pakhtun symbolic cultural superiority; thus, land ownership establishes his sense of belonging to his village. Besides, in Azmerabad and some other rural areas of KP landownership; the economic power to buy more lands; and eventually to have control over your land(s) in the face of familial land-related disputes not only enhances a man’s economic status but is also symbolic of his masculinity. In comparison, for Faryal, the Khan’s daughter, marriage endorses belonging. Just
like Beenish and Saba, Faryal being a woman is also more concerned about marriage because for Pakhtun women and men (generally) among other things, marriage advances (or not) their sense of belonging. Besides, it is through women that future generations are propagated; cultural and tribal affiliation and belonging is maintained and promoted. Similarly, Amma Jaan, though the Khan’s mother and a socio-economically stable woman also has a gendered notion of belonging. She claims that Pakhtun women should always be conscious about their honor which is the foremost trait of acceptance for them in the family, tribe, and the Pakhtun community at large.

However, in contrast to Matti and Azmerabad, my respondents in Peshawar are a product of multiple ISAs: family, education, media, religion, and culture. As noted in Professor Shah’s description of Pashto, which as a language and a code of ethics verifies the role of culture acting as an ISA, perhaps an ISA stronger than religion. It is through the cultural notions that sexuality, both feminine and masculine, are defined and appropriated as seen in the responses of Professor Shah, Hadia, and Salma Shaheen. However, as this group is educated and has traveled well beyond Peshawar therefore media equally colors their understanding and appropriation of global influences. In fact, my village respondents territorialize and appropriate global influences but my city respondents not only territorialize but rather re-territorialize these influences by first appropriating them according to the Pakhtun cultural expectations and then re-appropriating the cultural expectations enwrapped in education and global media influences, thus further proving the multiaccentuated (Vološinov 1973:23) nature of globalization. This is mostly suggested by Yasir’s and Raheela’s comments. Although I did not include the actual Pashto or Urdu transcripts in the body of this chapter but this re-appropriation in terms of language can be well noticed in the responses that I got in Peshawar, not to mention that Yasir’s entire interview was
in English. The flexible usage of language, forms of linguistic accumulation, and hybridity are characteristics of late modernity (Leap 2003).

Therefore, this flexibly accumulated nexus of language, sexuality, citizenship, belonging, and globalization in the Pakhtun culture is further explained when Harvey (1990: 49) says, “Cultural life is then viewed as a series of texts intersecting with other texts, producing more texts… this intertextual weaving has a life of its own.” As such globalization, through the process of territorialization, affects different regions, people, ages, and social classes differently and hence re-defines meaning(s) of citizenship and belonging. This multifaceted influence of globalization, especially, in the Pakhtun community of Peshawar is territorialized, appropriated and re-appropriated accordingly. However, it is important to recognize that citizenship is a legal status or a subject-position interpellated by the state with the help of state apparatuses and implemented through coerced ideology (or the Repressive State Apparatuses). In contrast, belonging as suggested by Leap (2004:137) is a stance asserted and negotiated by individuals and local constituencies of which they are a part. While building further on Leap’s (2004) idea, Gaudio explains the notion of (cultural) citizenship and belonging:

Legal citizenship is defined with respect to political units (states), ‘cultural citizenship’ calls attention to the fact that identities are embedded within particular social fields and institutions including religion, commerce, work, and leisure…. ‘cultural citizenship’ thus refers to things different people do in their day-to-day lives (as well as the things they don’t or can’t do), and the effects their actions have for them and for others. [Gaudio 2009:8]

Therefore, the respondents at Matti, Karak, Azmerabad, Charsadda, and Peshawar more or less, form, re-form or transform their notions of cultural authenticity, belonging and citizenship—local, national and international—through the territorialization of global assemblages, appropriation of language, and sexuality. The Pakhtuns, in the age of globalization, appropriate their notions of citizenship and belonging but at the same time by responding to the
interpellation of various ISAs like family, education, media, religion, and culture tend to adopt certain subject-positions which further authenticates and endorses their sense of belonging and cultural citizenship statuses. Thus, paving way for a more nuanced discussion of what it means to be a Pakhtun subject. I discuss the Pakhtun (female) subject-formation and the respective subject-positions according to the influence of various ISAs in detail in the subsequent chapters.

**Chapter Summary**

Citizenship, belonging, and globalization impact each other to a significant extent, and in the process the meanings and concepts of citizenship and belonging become more varied and challenging. In this chapter I have explicated the fragmentary, flexible, and context-related meaning of globalization; the impact of globalization on the local cultures, as reflected in the linguistic exchanges and overt or covert gendered performances of the local cultures in Matti, Karak; Azmerabad, Charsadda, and Peshawar. This chapter illustrates the meaning(s) of citizenship and belonging as it emerges through a nexus of language, gender, and globalization. Drawing on ethnographic examples this chapter demonstrates how ideological interpellation or hailing, through various Ideological State Apparatuses (ISAs), establishes the respective citizen and gendered subject-positioning(s) of people in various locales. Furthermore, the chapter analyzes the linguistics markers which clearly indicate the effects of globalization on these local cultures and how they in turn position themselves with reference to gender, belonging, and citizenship. In addition, Collier and Ong’s (2005) phenomenon of “global assemblages and territorialization” substantiates various aspects of belonging and citizenship when global-meets-local or vice versa. These subject-positions, their respective gender–sexual performance(s), and voice(s) require a careful interpretation according to the linguistic, spatial, and temporal contexts as well. This chapter shows that citizenship, belonging, and globalization are vitally connected;
they impact each other on several levels; and in turn form, re-form, or transform gendered Pakhtun subject-positions and their respective notions of citizenship and belonging.
The notion that an effective suturing of the subject to a subject-position requires, not only that the subject is ‘hailed’, but that the subject invests in that position, means that suturing has to be thought of as an articulation, rather than a one-sided process, and that in turn places disidentification, if not identities, firmly on the theoretical agenda. [Hall 2011:6]

The social values of various [subject-positions]—the symbolic capital they command—is often contested interpersonally through the attempted denigration of the discourses that posit them or the acts that sign them. [Holland et al 2003:282]

In the previous chapter I discussed notions Pakhtun men and women have about ethnic or group acceptance in relation to their sense of cultural citizenship and belonging in spite of local presence of global influences. In this and the subsequent chapters I discuss in detail how various Pakhtun subject-positions and social statuses are contested, established, and further negotiated. I demonstrate that within their culturally marked spheres of belonging Pakhtun women are negotiating and contesting for various subject-positions by “working (transformation-displacement) of the subject form and not just its abolition” (Pêcheux 1982:159). This negotiation and contestation, at times, is between women and men and at others among the women themselves. Furthermore, this chapter also shows that Pakhtun women occupy subject-
positions through which they define themselves as individuals who have their individuality, rights, and voice(s). And that they are not recognized as referent-subjects with respect to men’s and other sociocultural institutional subjectivities only.

As stated earlier, in order to understand the processes of subject formation I particularly look into the role that Ideological State Apparatuses (ISAs) (Althusser 1971) play in the subject formation and subject-positioning of Pakhtun women with reference to Pakhtun cultural and social institutions. The reason I specifically use ISAs as a mode of interrogation is because the data, as discussed in the previous chapters, reflects how ideology functions through various ISAs, like family, education, media, religion, law, and culture to form, curb, and at times (positively) change the subject-position(s) and thus the sociocultural statuses of Pakhtun women. In this chapter I specifically discuss the influence of family, as an ISA, on the subject formation and positioning of Pakhtun women and men. I discuss education and media as ISAs in Chapter 5 and religion, law, and culture as ISAs in Chapter 6.

**Background: Ideology and Recognition**

In order to understand the process(es) of subject formation and subject-positioning my fundamental framework consists of Althusser’s (1971:174) idea of “interpellation” or “hailing” and Pêcheux’s (1982:156-159) “processes of recognition.” Subject-positions and social statuses are also constructed, persist, and transformed by the Ideological State Apparatuses (ISAs). Althusser (1971:145) believes that Ideological State Apparatuses function primarily through ideology, but this functioning is very smooth, subtle, and even symbolic. Therefore, the social subjects and their agency in any society is continuously shaped and re-shaped by institutions or ISAs like family, education, media, religion, and law, among others. As a result of institutional ideologies, people come to accept change(s) naturally and sometimes by developing a false
consciousness (Althusser 1971:164). Ideological interpellation or hailing (Althusser 1971:173) means responding to the “call” of ideology by accepting, rejecting a certain subject-position, or finding a middle ground by neither a categorical endorsement of its details nor its categorical abolition (Pêcheux 1982:159). Therefore, the choice social individuals make in responding to the interpellation determines their subject-position(s).

**Defining Subject-Position and Subject**

As stated in Chapter 2, in this research, “subject-position” is one of the ways in which individuals “react” to the socio-political, historical, cultural, and material conditions of his or her society. Subject-position is in line with the three modalities of Pêcheux (1982:156-159) where an individual accepts to be either the good; the bad; or neither the not-so-good nor the not-so-bad subject. Nonetheless, the position of an individual as a social subject, over time, is influenced by hierarchal contestations hence rendering absolute individuality and individual agency questionable. And “subject” refers to the individual who is located in that subject-position. In other words, a subject is a participating or a tacitly participating member of a particular social and cultural community and is therefore affected by the sociocultural discursive practices. However, it should be kept in mind that Althusser (1971:174) draws an important distinction between a “concrete individual” and a “concrete subject.” Althusser clarifies that ideology “recruits” subjects from among the individuals or in other words, transforms the individuals into subjects through interpellation. The response of the interpellated individual makes him or her a subject. Therefore, the various ways in which the social individuals develop, function, and transform is explicated through their interaction with the social, political, and economic structures or the way in which they react to the ideological interpellation aimed at them through various ISAs.
By questioning the processes of Pakhtun women’s subject formation and positions this chapter also breaks away from the stereotypical images of the Pakhtun society coined by the non-Pakhtuns both locally and globally. Interrogating the formation of Pakhtun women’s subject-position(s) is an important research problem given that the Pakhtuns are a patriarchal society and yet within those patriarchal structures Pakhtun women have a role to play in their social fabric. These women are not as oppressed as they are believed to be. Therefore, in order to understand the processes of the formation of Pakhtun women’s subject-positions I analyze the discourse(s) regarding the influence of various ISAs in these processes.

Carving a Niche: Negotiating and Contesting Subject-Positions through ISAs

From my experience in the field and after having analyzed the data I suggest that the Pakhtun society is vastly affected by ideology that particularly works through ISAs. Building on Althusser’s (1971:143) list of ISAs and analyzing the data collected, the ISAs that influence my respondents are: family; education; media; religion (not necessarily mosques only); law; and to a large extent culture. Through these ISAs Pakhtun women accept, negotiate, contest, or defy various subject-positions which I discuss through ethnographic examples. As such, generally in Pakistan and specifically in the Pakhtun setup “female selfhood is limited to “daughter,” “wife,” “sister,” or “mother”” (Jamal 2006:298).

In order to clarify the particular subject-positions and the kind of sociocultural statuses they develop into after analyzing the data I categorize the different subject-positions that Pakhtun women (and men) occupy or aspire to occupy. I give specific labels to those subject-positions that emerge through the data. In this research family acts as the conduit for ideological propagation and interpellates female (and male) subject-positions. This I call the “familial-subject,” whose status is determined in accordance with her or his subject-position within the
family. The family as an ISA also interpellates the “mobility-controlled” subject; “men-imposed” subject-position; and the “mother-defined” subject position(s). Similarly, education as an ISA produces a subject-position of “changing positionalities”; the “economically-desired” subject; and the “teacher-defined” subject-position. Media also acts on various subjectivities; and produces the “media-defined” subject who is i) either the conforming or the disidentifying media subject; and ii) the tech savvy subject. Religion as an ISA produces the “negotiating subjectivities.” There are various contesting and negotiating subject-positions adopted due to the influence (or not) of law as an ISA; I do not have a specific label for them as those subjectivities overlap with other subject-positions and statuses.

Pakhtun culture is yet another ISA that greatly influences subject-positions of Pakhtun women and men, and thus produces subjects, which I call the “honor-oriented” subject; the “fearful” subject; the “foreign-influenced” subject; the “linguistic” subject; the “Khan-influenced” subject; and the “agentive” subject. In most of these subject-positions Pakhtun women, nevertheless, come forth as “mothers,” “daughters,” “sisters,” or “wives.” However, in the following chapters other subject-positions are highlighted as well.

The Categorical Subjects (Positions):
Products of Various ISAs

As demonstrated in the previous chapter, I conducted my research at multiple field sites; two rural and one urban. The rural sites included the villages: Azmerabad in Charsadda and Matti in Karak; whereas the urban site was Peshawar, the capital city of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) province. As stated earlier, I wanted to work at three different research sites to prove that an ethnic group, Pakhtuns in this case, cannot be glossed as a category across the board. My goal is to demonstrate that living in the same region, even within one broader ethnic community, similarities and differences exist due to the intersectionality of gender, class,
spatiality, mobility, and language. In order to get a relatively holistic picture of the processes of Pakhtun women’s subject formation I have opted for an inter-region based comparative approach. I rely on the respondents’ perspectives from all three sites in order to demonstrate a more nuanced understanding of the subjectivities of Pakhtun women as developed in their particular habitus (Bourdieu 1977).

**Family as an ISA**

In many cultures family plays an important role in the development of a person; in some cultures not only the immediate but even the extended family has an influence on the development, decisions, and destinies of individuals. In this research by immediate family I mean the parents and their children; by extended family I mean the parents, grandparents, children, aunts, uncles, and cousins. Among the Pakhtuns, in some cases, extended families live separately in their respective houses. While in other cases they share a common house with either separate quarters or rooms within the same boundary wall. In this section I specifically look at how family, in all my three field sites, plays the role of an ISA; defines subject-positions; and shapes respective subjectivities and sociocultural statuses of women and men.

At all my field sites, before we engaged in a formal interview, even the informal conversation with the respondents made it clear to me that the majority of the women and men were what I choose to call the “familial subjects” by which I mean individuals whose basic life decisions are made by the male members of their families. In other words, their subject-positions and thus their social statuses are shaped according to their family’s tenets and expectations. Such individuals seldom have the authority to define or decide for themselves. My analysis of the respondents’ discourse in the subsequent sections shows that in this category most women, as I understood, have sociocultural statuses or labels of a mother (in-law), daughter (in-law), sister
(in-law), and wife with their corresponding male counterparts. These statuses are shaped through: i) controlled mobility; ii) men-imposed subject-position(s); and iii) mothers’ influence. However, some exposure to life outside of the villages and to secular education has affected their subject-position(s) a little bit which gives them space to negotiate their subject-positions and contest for recognition beyond the sociocultural statuses of mothers, daughters, sisters, and wives.

I begin my analysis with responses I got from my research participants in Matti, Karak; followed by responses from Azmerabad, Charsadda; and finally I incorporate responses from Peshawar. As stated above, I want to see how responses change (or not) when there is a physical, mental, and emotional journey from the traditional rural space or periphery (Karak); through the rural-urban mix (Charsadda); and finally toward the urban center (Peshawar).

The Familial Subject: Controlled Mobility

In Matti, Karak, one of the ways in which the elder men and sometimes the younger ones try to influence female subject-positions is by controlling their mobility. This mobility control can be in the form of not allowing the women to go out of the house; decide who is going to study: where and until what age; and keep an overall check on the women’s mobility in general. The 80-year-old woman whom I call the Elderly lady, informed me:

After I got married I used to help my sister-in-law with all the household chores and her children. I did not have children for three years after my marriage. My first born died because of lack of medical facilities. I have four daughters and six sons. And I have delivered all of them at home; God had His mercy on me. The other elder women of the village used to help in the delivery. Now we have doctors and all. We could bear all the difficulties; God had given us the strength.
Here it should be noted that the Elderly lady also mentions her “sister-in-law;” her “marriage” which would by default make her a “wife;” and her “four daughters and three sons” thus showing the status labels the women have. However, I continued to ask:

Anoosh Khan: Why weren’t women taken to hospitals in the olden days? 
Elderly Lady: There weren’t any hospitals back then; at the most you would find a dispensary or something in Bannu or Kohat.66 Besides, there was no sound transportation system either. There was only one bus that would go from here and that too had a schedule. 
AK: How long ago was this? 
EL: About 40 years ago ((AK: that means the 1970s)). I am nearing 80 [years] now. But one never realizes how time passes away.

At first reading, the Elderly lady’s response gave me an impression that women in earlier times were not taken to the doctors because of the lack of structural facilities. There was neither a hospital in Karak nor was there any regular transportation arrangement in the village. So the women would have to deliver babies at home with the aid of other self-taught and experienced women. She also mentioned that otherwise (due to other illnesses) women and sometimes men were not taken to hospitals in the bigger and far off cities either. But interestingly Bibi gave me a slightly different picture of why women had to deliver babies at home.

Bibi is about 75 years old and she was the sister of the family male elders, the Babagaan. Bibi was an illiterate, humble looking but an out-spoken woman. She told me about the problems women of her generation faced during pregnancy especially during childbirth as there were no medical facilities available in the nearby areas. There were no medical facilities but at the same time the women were not allowed to go and see a doctor because the doctors were mostly male doctors. Bibi began by quoting an incident of one of her aunts who died during childbirth

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66 Bannu and Kohat are two other districts and cities (with the same names) of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) province. They distance between these cities is approximately 79 miles. For reference: the distance between Bannu and Karak is approximately 22 miles; between Bannu and Peshawar is 119 miles. The distance between Kohat and Karak is about 43 miles; and between Kohat and Peshawar is about 29 miles; see Appendix B-Map 3.
although she had given birth to two children before that. However, when the aunt fell sick the village elderly or the experienced women came to see her but they could not understand what was wrong with her. They were not sure if she needed some medicine or should be taken to the hospital. After sometime she delivered a still baby. Bibi recalled that her mother came and told them that the baby was born dead. She also added that at the time they did not have access to drinking water and young boys would carry water in mashkeezay (large leather bags that were used for carrying water). Bibi continued to explain:

During that time [when I was young] there were simply no doctors in our village. There were neither LHVs [Lady Health Visitors] nor any midwives. There were no female doctors even in Karak city—maybe a few in Bannu. In fact, there were neither male nor female doctors nearby. I delivered one child in Bannu; I was taken to Bannu because I was very sick. [The elder women] would help in delivering the baby; cut the umbilical cord; and help the mother get some rest. Besides this there was nothing else that anyone could do; after this we were helpless. Now [things have changed] women are taken to doctors during the second month of pregnancy and then are taken every month [for regular checkups]. The moment it becomes known that a woman is pregnant she is immediately put in a car and taken to the doctor. If a female doctor is not available in the village then the pregnant woman is taken to Karak…. Yes, [babies] are still delivered at home. Many are delivered at home. Some women are taken to the hospital and some are not; some are blessed at home. I have delivered one baby girl in the hospital as well. One of my sisters-in-law was taken to a hospital in the village but due to complications which the doctor here did not understand [perhaps due to shortage of equipment and technicians] the doctor referred her to Karak hospital. Now everyone has their own cars but earlier it was not the case…. I have delivered babies myself: I would deliver the baby; cut the umbilical cord; tie it; clean the baby; wrap him or her in a blanket or cloth and give it to the mother. We would also give the baby some butter and if someone did not have it at home they would fetch it from another’s house. Now people don’t give babies butter anymore. Earlier the whole world [all babies in our village] was born at home; now women are taken to hospitals…. Yes, it is a good thing…. The problems we had earlier are gone now. It is all because of education that the number of female doctors has increased. See, she (pointing to Saba) is also a doctor.

No doubt, Bibi, like the Elderly lady also tells me that women in earlier times or during her youth were not taken to hospitals because of the lack of structural facilities. But Bibi also points out that women were not “allowed” (read by the men) to go to hospitals as most of the doctors there were male doctors. It was considered traditionally inappropriate for a male doctor
to examine and then help deliver a baby. Bibi says that now things have changed; women are taken to hospitals because now “the number of female doctors has increased” and yet “many [babies] are still delivered at home;” perhaps because still all doctors are not female doctors. Therefore, along with the time-long recognized statuses of Pakhtun women the female “doctor” as a sociocultural status is also recognized and accepted now.

In accordance with Bibi’s and others’ views in Matti, Amma Jaan, the Khan’s mother, in Azmerabad had something similar to state about earlier days when due to the lack of female doctors women were reluctant or not allowed to visit male doctors in hospitals. Amma Jaan, like the senior women in Matti, also explained to me:

Women would give birth to babies at home with the help of midwives. The midwives were experienced [women] but at times women would die during childbirth. My maternal aunt also died in childbirth after delivering her first baby because she had some complication and she wasn’t taken to a doctor. There weren’t any female doctors during those times [not even in the British administered hospitals] so women were not taken to hospitals. Even if the British had female doctors they would not bring them to this province [because of the conservatism associated with the Pakhtuns by the British]…. When my children were born [post early 1950s] there were female doctors here [not Charsadda but in Peshawar].

The conversation still revolves around the “mother” delivering “babies” and the lack of “female doctors.”

Another respondent, my key informant Beenish’s mother (in Matti, Karak) informed me about the change in mobility dynamics of women in the past and present. She said:

No, in earlier times men used to do all sorts of shopping for us. My husband would get clothes for me and the kids; in those days there weren’t so many [designs and patterns in] clothes. Women used to stitch female clothes while men would get their clothes stitched by tailors. Women learned stitching at home, just like that. Even now women stitch their own clothes. But now we also go out and shop ourselves too.

But at the same time Beenish’s mother also told me that her elder daughters (as opposed to Beenish) were not allowed to study further once they finished high schools in the village. For
further education they would have to go out of the village and this was not acceptable for the men, though in her case, it was unacceptable for her elder son. She said, “No, we couldn’t send them to Peshawar. In fact, her older brother said it was enough for them, though one of my other daughters was a good student too. Our men were not very fond of female education in the sense they were OK with education for women as long as it was in the village.” And then Saba explained to me:

I think if a person just thinks about himself or herself only and another person(s) gets affected by that is not good. I know [comparatively] there are many facilities in the city but I cannot live alone in the city; my brother or even my father may accompany me. My father [or brother] will have to leave his job and his other chores to accompany me and so he will get [negatively] affected by it.

In spite of being a young woman with a professional degree Saba has also been interpellated by the family to believe that she cannot live alone in the city as that is culturally and socially inappropriate and unacceptable. Therefore, she will have to have her “brother” or “father” (read a male family member) accompany her and by doing so their work will suffer. So, Saba is ready to sacrifice herself, in spite of working so hard for a medical degree. She, in a way, is forced to negotiate her hard work; her social status; and an agentive subject-position. This shows that Saba has responded to the familial ideological hail by abiding to the familial expectations, that is, by not living alone in the city and practicing her profession. As a result, by responding to the familial hail she becomes what I have described as the “familial subject.” At the same time her subject-positions as a woman, a doctor, and a capable serving citizen has been curbed and reduced only to that of a daughter or sister who believes in following what she is expected to do or what pleases her father and brother(s). Saba also told me that some of the restrictions on mobility were lessening with time. She explained, “They [our elders] also restrict our mobility; they believe one [especially young girls and women] should not go out of the house
very often. Now this restriction has been relaxed a little but earlier it was strictly observed.”
Besides, Bibi also believed that there was a relaxation in this restriction, “Because now people
have learned so much.”

Keeping in view Saba’s subject-position (of immobility without a male figurehead) the
Elderly lady had similar notions. She said, “No, no. they [women] can work in the village as a
teacher or a doctor; or can work at home but we can’t send them for a job to Peshawar. Our
family, especially, does not make a woman work or allow her for a job…. She has to be
accompanied by a brother, the mother or father.” At this point my concern was that there is a
huge age difference between this Elderly lady and Saba; yet after all these years the cultural
restrictions on women’s independent mobility has not changed much in Matti, Karak. Besides,
the way the Elderly lady and to some extent Saba endorse this practice, leads me to think men
control women’s mobility but women also reproduce and support this practice. Therefore, the
women within the familial structures are contesting between the daughter or sister and the doctor
or working-woman subject-positions. In other words, women in Matti are contesting between the
time-honored familial relationship statuses and subject-positions and the new or introductory
professional social statuses and subject-positions.

However, Amma Jaan also narrated that even in Charsadda, women, married or single,
during her youth were not allowed to go out shopping or for social visits. Like Beenish’s mother
Amma Jaan told me, “Women could not go to bazaars [shopping]; it was just not done. The men
[of the family] used to shop for women: they were the ones who bought clothes for them or
anything else the women needed from the bazaar.” And like Saba, who believes a woman cannot
live alone, Amma Jaan explained, “Even if she [woman] travelled by car or a horse-driven
carriage her husband [read a male family member] had to accompany her for all the social
events.” Hence the more we go back in time we realize that Azmerabad, Charsadda was as traditional as any other village in KP. But with the passage of time, introduction of (female) education, and general exposure the cultural and social trends in Charsadda have also changed.

As stated earlier, Peshawar is the urban capital and most people who live in Peshawar have rural affiliations and are partially influenced by the general respective rural traditions here as well. Besides, generational or over the years socializing does not go away with changing accommodations. As such, even in Peshawar the family’s control over an individual is as strong as in the rural areas. However, in some cases there may be some flexibility. For example, Aliya Khatoon who is an educated Pakhtun woman explained to me the various familial restrictions she had to face while growing up. Some of those restrictions were not on her mobility per se but they did have an underlying influence on her future decisions and actions as well. Aliya said:

My problem was that I was a Pukhtana and I lived in the Punjab. The environment outside was different than the environment inside my home. So my problem was that I had a certain code to follow, dictated by home: “You have to dress in a certain way; behave in a certain way; play with other children in a certain way; by what time you should be home; and after what time you should not leave home!” Now if I want to decide things, at this age, the thing is that I…I cannot follow my heart even now.

Aliya’s remark, “Now if I want to decide things, at this age, the thing is that I…I cannot follow my heart even now” is very suggestive of the fact that ideology is at work. Here Aliya is conscious that she wants to act in a certain way but she cannot even if she wants to. Her thought resonates Althusser’s claim:

We observe that the ideological representation of ideology is itself forced to recognize that every ‘subject’ endowed with a ‘consciousness’ and believing in the ‘ideas’ that his [or her] ‘consciousness’ inspires in him [or her] and freely accepts, must ‘act according to his [or her] ideas’, must therefore inscribe his [or her] own ideas as a free subject in the actions of his [or her] material practice. If he [or she] does not do so, ‘that is wicked.’ [Althusser 1971:167-168]
Another respondent, Naeema Gul, had somewhat similar thoughts. Naeema is in her early thirties and she also teaches at another local university. She comes across as a lighted hearted, carefree, and laid back sort of a person. She is single. By the local standards of Peshawar she is apparently quite a liberal person: she drives herself; is not much concerned about observing purdah unless she absolutely has to; and is a vocal young woman. She preferred talking to me in English. However, even Naeema while growing up sometimes used to feel that, though her parents were broadminded, if she were a boy it would have been much better for her. She told me, “I used to feel kind of confined: I couldn’t [freely] go out; I couldn’t make a lot of friends [without knowing their backgrounds]; and I always wanted to do these things.” She further said that she was a sports girl during her school and college days but that would be within the bounds of the institutions. And she could not play or compete outside in the local or street games like boys could do. Talking about the present time in Peshawar especially regarding single women, Naeema believed:

Until now in every home, no matter how educated they are, you [being a single woman] are still answerable to your father if you are going out: who you are going out with; why you are going out; who you are on the phone with; where you are going; when you are going to be back; how you will go and all that (laughing). The “wh-questions” are always there!

However, overall Naeema believed that in spite of such restrictions Pakhtun women have become more confident and vocal. Naeema’s father, Dr. Gul Khan, also said:

Now there is a big difference between the woman of today and the woman of 50 years ago. They have progressed a lot. Secondly, when women get educated and you let them free, they take [more] interest in home [and] in family affairs. Earlier, in the Pakhtun society, women were forbidden to have friends; the only friends consisted of female cousins. Now we see and hear, “This is my friend; I am going to her house or she is coming over.” But I approve of this change because we [as parents] are relaxed because we know she has somebody to talk to; somebody to meet; somebody to guide her…. My daughters go to the bazaar by themselves; do groceries; buy books; do whatever they want to do. Earlier women used to request their fathers or brothers to get them whatever they needed.
Dr. Gul Khan’s observation that Pakhtun women now have the freedom to go out on their own tallies with what Beenish’s mother (in Matti) said, “But now we also go out and shop ourselves too” and Amma Jaan (in Azmerabad) who also told me that in the past women could not go out or shop themselves; the men would accompany them or shop for them. Similarly, Shaheen Faheem, a 70-year-old house wife and a writer told me that when she was a young student, living in a hostel was considered inappropriate for women. Shaheen Faheem explained:

So we were not allowed [to go to hostels] and at the most we would stay at our paternal uncle’s place. For instance, my father’s job was such that he would get transferred around so we used to be at our paternal uncle’s place. Although on some level the hostel would have been better. But [the logic given to us was] that no, girls are not supposed to go to hostels. But now it is no longer the case. Now people [read young women and girls] have their paternal and maternal uncles living in the cities but still they stay in hostels.

Keeping the above discussion in view, I want to suggest that even in Peshawar mobility constraints or autonomy also help in shaping female subject-position(s). I absolutely agree with the respondents who believe that Pakhtun women, in Peshawar and other areas, are now liberated enough to go out; shop; dine; and pay social visits. And that most of the times this is a normal and acceptable thing.

Since my focus is on the influence of ISAs in shaping and re-shaping Pakhtun women’s subject-positions, one place that is still considered inappropriate for women to go to are the courts of law. And God forbid, if under any circumstances, a woman has to go there alone! In this context I had some discussion with Alamgir Khan, a practicing lawyer, in his mid-forties. I narrated to Alamgir Khan my own experience to the lower courts on the pretext of election duty when I was once the Presiding Officer during the national elections. As part of my duty I had to return the ballot boxes to the magistrate on duty. I told Alamgir that I was properly clad in a chaadar yet the men were staring at me as if they wanted to know what business I had there. The magistrate was all right; nothing wrong with him. But the general atmosphere, like the
chaprasees (peons), clerks, and the other men there made me feel uncomfortable. Alamgir Khan’s response to this was:

Alamgir Khan: You know Anoosh, the society we are living in, it is a Pakhtun society; in our society one tends to think that a woman would come out of the house when there is a need. She would go to the market to buy clothes, groceries, and all that, she will be fine. But the courts: why? Because no one goes to the courts happily; there has to be some problem, some reason, and you know the Pakhtun society, or the Peshawar area or the whole province...how should I put it?
Anoosh Khan: Is it that ours is a male dominated society and people wonder if there is no man to represent her that she has come to the courts herself?
Alamgir Khan: Yes, maybe.

I was not satisfied with Alamgir’s explanation here; in fact I answered my own question. The legal courts being an almost no-zone or an inappropriate zone for women makes me think firstly, that legal courts are considered inappropriate for women because it is a place where all kinds of men are present; and secondly, women are “not supposed” to commit crimes; and therefore only the morally and culturally bad female subjects go to the courts.

The legal courts are a space where, hopefully, a majority of women do not need to go most of the time. I had a discussion with another young man Ibrahim. Ibrahim is also a faculty member at a local university and was in his late twenties. He had a slim physique, bearded face, and a serious look for his age. Ibrahim told me what he saw in Swat while it was still under the Taliban control:

Ibrahim: Some time ago, around 16-17 months ago...aan...the Swat operation [by the Pakistani military against the Talibans] had not yet begun, I was going to the village and on my way, at Batkhela, at a certain place I saw [read] a very strange statement; it was a quotation. On a very large banner it was written, “In this market the entry of women, without mehram,” is not allowed.”
Anoosh Khan: Where exactly in the market was this statement written?
Ibrahim: Right at the market’s entrance; at the main entrance. The interesting thing is that it was a market for women’s clothes, shoes, and other [female] things.

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67 In Islam women are supposed to observe purdah from men who are not their mehrums. Mehram are all those male relations with whom a woman cannot get married like father, son, brother, immediate or real maternal and paternal uncles. Whereas, a na-mehram is any other male with whom a woman can get married.
I will discuss the influence of religion, law, and culture in detail in Chapter 6 but I have included this dialogue here to show how culture and religion superimpose other ISAs like law and give men, familial and others, the chance to restrict female mobility. This leads me to another category of the female subject-position which is basically defined through the male members of the family, that is, what I label “men-imposed” subject-position.

The Familial Subject: Men-Imposed Subject-Position

Sometimes life becomes ironic and the greater irony is that we humans are aware of the irony and yet we choose to maintain the status quo. In this section I show how the elder men of the family impose certain limitations on women and sometimes on younger men as well. However, sometimes this imposition is also practiced by the younger men, depending on their relationship with a particular woman or women at a given time. But most of the times it means the decisions the male patriarchs make about the women and younger men in the family, thus forming the “men-imposed” subject-position. Among others, in Matti, Karak, I talked to the family male elders. I call them Babagaan (the fathers). They included the Mashar Baba (the eldest father); Mianzanay Baba (the middle father); and the Kashar Baba (the youngest father); all the three men are brothers. Mashar Baba, like all men in the village, was wearing a white partoogh kameez. He also wore the white cotton moonz topay (a cap that is usually worn by men during prayers and generally also worn in KP villages otherwise as well); black Ray Bans; and slippers. He had a slightly unshaven face; some uneven and stained teeth. Mashaar Baba, a retired army personnel, seemed to be well informed about the current affairs of Pakistan; the game of cricket; and the English language. Mainzanay Baba was more or less wearing the same clothes as Mashar Baba but he was wearing a turban on his head and was perhaps slightly taller
than Mashar Baba. Kashar Baba, dressed like the others, was almost the same height as Mashar Baba but was slightly slimmer than the two.

I observed that the Babagaan, at least now, were well aware of all their “forced” subjectivities that they had pushed their children into but also maintained that that is what traditionally happened there.

Kashar Baba: But they [the youngsters] don’t have rights…. If the father is uneducated and the son is educated the son obviously understands things better and has a different perception about things but the problem is that the son does not have the independence or the right to persuade the elders.

Anoosh Khan: In the Pakhtun society why isn’t independence and right to make decisions given to young adults especially if fathers are alive?

Kashar Baba: It is just like that. For example, if there is a discussion or we are trying to resolve an issue and a younger man says or gives a suggestion or something he is immediately hushed by another elder with, “Be quiet; your father is sitting here.” As a result he can’t talk.

AK: But do you as elders encourage the younger ones to talk?

Kashar Baba: (Laughs) This is what the other elders say; it is a weakness of our society. Yes, we acknowledge this drawback.

However, Kashar Baba does not answer my question directly; he rather blames it as “the weakness of the society,” suggesting as if he or the other elders are not really to be blamed for this practice. Besides, it is this attitude that renders the son a “good” son (read a good familial subject). Mashar Baba continued:

We have raised our children in such a manner that they do not do anything against the elders’ wishes; our society doesn’t allow this. We are a little educated so we are a little flexible but most people here don’t let their children [irrespective of age] take independent decisions. The elders feel that their children will get spoiled this way. Although when a child goes out into the world and society his [mostly “his” in their case] thinking and perception change drastically. But our people don’t want this to happen.

Even Mashar Baba blames the society. This also shows that how “our society” is such a debatable phenomenon; it is such a relative term. Besides, it is also pertinent to ask here who defines society and who decides the societal mores? For me these questions are like tag questions. I would rephrase it as “We, the social subjects, define a society, don’t we?” In
conjunction with Babagaan’s reflection, the Elderly lady reiterated this idea by stating, “When we were young we were ordered what to do; what to eat; what to wear; and simply to raise children. And so we have just raised our children and said our prayers.” The Elderly lady spoke to me in Pashto and in her sentence construction, as is sometimes done in English, she also missed out the agent, that is, she never said “who” commanded her and the other children what to do or not to do. The reason is, perhaps, she too believes that I, as a part of the larger Pakhtun society, will understand who the unlabelled agent is: the family’s patriarch loosely referred to as the “culture.” I believe this, following Penelope (1990:133-137), is a case of false deixis; in the Elderly lady’s case she says that “they were ordered” but the “they” does not have a previous referent or an antecedent. Penelope (1990:134-137) states, “False deixis forces readers/listeners to make contextual guesses to make “sense” of what they hear and read…. A speaker’s use of false deixis doesn’t mean that the utterance is uninterpretable or impossible to understand.” Nonetheless, with reference to the Babagaan and the Elderly lady, it is one individual who is talking and he or she is talking for himself or herself and yet both do not commit to using the explicit first person pronoun “I,” thus, “evading the issue of who will be or is responsible for some action” (Penelope 1990:144) of propagating traditional cultural practices. Besides, for women, like the sons, the only option to be accepted in the familial circle is to behave as the good subject (of Althusser); so they just listen to what they are told to do or not to do.

In addition, Musa, a relatively younger male respondent had similar views about the Pakhtun society. Musa was about 32 years old; has a law degree but works in a private academic institution; and is married to Beenish. Musa told me that that he totally agreed that the(ir) Pakhtun society is a male dominated society. He said that about 95 percent girls in their village
were not really considered for education until they were six or seven years old. Either the father or the brother just did not allow them to study. Musa also added:

My aunt is not educated; my mother is not educated and they didn’t get education because it was believed [by men] that their exposure to the outside world is not a good thing. They thought women can be exploited. But I think we can trust our females and let them get educated. We can trust them to go alone [or by themselves] to school. But earlier the elders did not have this trust. One of the factors responsible was that earlier education was not so common. Since there was little female exposure [in earlier times] the society did not really respect those women who stepped out of the house the way they are respected now if they are educated.

Whereas, Mainzanay Baba further reinforced the idea of “men-defined” subject-position(s) when I asked that one of his nieces had a law degree and if she wanted to practice will they let her practice? And to this he responded:

We will allow her but our [Pakhtun] society does not approve of it; the society hasn’t fully sanctioned [a woman] for this yet; although one can see so many women in offices now. We can let them [our women] study further…. Time tends to make certain decisions… but I think times have changed a lot; our fathers were way stricter; they would not allow us to do anything.

Some of these familial subject-positions such as (to be) the good “son;” the good “wife;” or the good “daughter” which are at play and imply the imposed subjectivities or statuses on the individuals involved are accepted to a large extent. This is seen from the above excerpts that the concerned individuals, though forced, manage to live up to and try to accept the family’s expectations. But the most difficult “forced” subject-position is the one where the male elders decide to inter-marry their children without asking or considering the concerned child’s choice or preference. What I found interesting in this aspect was that most of the women talked to me about this practice; the younger men sort of alluded to it; and the elders or the Babagaan did not bring it up at all in our discussion. I have to be honest here: even I, as a researcher, also felt uncomfortable to bring up the intermarriage issue with the Babagaan, fearing lest it may strike
the wrong chord. One of the first senior women to bring up this issue with me was Bibi, the 75-year-old, younger sister of the Babagaan. She explained to me:

If girls are married in the family it is not burdensome. My uncles, for example, had married all their sons to all their brothers’ daughters. Besides, if men go away to earn they are not worried about their wives [and children] because they are living together with other family members; this advantage is definitely there. Plus eating, living, and sleeping under one roof strengthens family ties.

This was Bibi’s rationale for why it is important for girls and boys to marry within the family.

And perhaps this is the rationale that works for most Pakhtun families as well. But it was interesting to see how one of the younger men responded to this idea. Mobeen, a 24-year-old medical doctor, and I were having a discussion on whether the younger men have the right to make independent decisions; keeping in mind that the Babagaan had told me that younger men are always hushed and their suggestions not taken seriously. At the time of our discussion we were also accompanied by Musa, 32 and Qadir, 33 but it was Mobeen who responded to my question:

Mobeen: I cannot say this in isolation that I’m a man so I have the decision-making power. I think it is because of education and being a man is a major factor which I cannot deny.

Anoosh Khan: But do you think, in our cultural setup, even if boys and girls get educated they have the [independent] decision making power? How about yourself: do you have the liberty to tell your mom that you like a classmate and you are not going to marry an uncle or aunt’s daughter?

Mobeen: (all of them laugh very loudly) I think I do have this power [liberty] but I will have to consider so many things.

When I asked my question all of these young men laughed out a loud which in itself was an answer of sorts! Sometimes it is a gesture, like the laughing out loudly of these young men, which can suggest more than the words actually do. However, Mobeen, too says that he can make an independent decision because he is “educated” and is a “man” but he “will have to consider so many things.” He never clarifies what the “so many things” are or can be. Thus, the
gender-category of being a “man” is not enough; it is qualified and limited by being a “son” as well. However, when I interviewed Beenish and Saba, they were very forthright in telling me what the “so many things” could be. Perhaps, one of the reasons that Beenish and Saba could open up with me more frankly than the young men was because of the traditional practice of women being framer with women as compared to men being frank with (unrelated) women. In the following discussion the forced familial subject-position of a “good” daughter or son is clearly highlighted:

Anoosh Khan: Even the boys and men are not given the freedom to choose their own partners?
Beenish: No, even boys don’t have that liberty. Our elders mentally torture (said this in English) a person so much that in the end she or he just has to do whatever they want him or her to do.
AK: What do you mean by mental torture?
Beenish: They [the elders] socially boycott against him [or her]; they won’t talk to the person; they will ask, “Why are you doing this? Why do you want to do this?” When the elders stop talking to the person she or he becomes so helpless that she or he just gives in to their demands.
Saba: Among our families there is a lot of adal-badal (exchange marriages). Everybody wants that their daughters and sisters should get married within the family. So for that reason it becomes mandatory that a brother has to sacrifice. The boy or the brother also takes into consideration what is better for his sister’s life.
AK: What is the result of such marriages in the long run; do they work?
Beenish: It’s a fifty-fifty chance. The elders would tell the boy that you should marry your cousin because she will be more under your control and will do whatever you say.
AK: And Beenish you weren’t given a choice either?
Beenish: No. I was just told that we like so and so and you should also like him and accept him. I would wonder that they [my parents and siblings] can’t see my tears; they don’t understand why I am crying; what other reason can there be apart from that I don’t want to marry him? Eventually I decided if everyone likes him I [should] also like him.
AK: So how did you find him after marriage, better or worse?
Beenish: I feel sorry for him; I should not behave with him the way I do because after all he is my cousin as well. But [our relationship] is a type of compromise. I am not satisfied.
AK: But if you did not like anybody else what was the problem in accepting him?
Beenish: I think with the passage of time things get better. If you don’t like a person beforehand…aa…but now gradually things are changing. I mean I do have some reasons for not liking him but I don’t want to discuss them.
AK: What about you Saba? Will you get a choice to select your partner?
Saba: I have a limited choice; I may get to choose from within the family or from the village [I live in].
AK: In case you were given an open choice what would be your criteria?
Saba: He should be well educated; is decent; is courteous; has good moral values; comes from a good family.
AK: What do you mean by “good”?
Saba: For example, well educated means that if he is not as [professionally] educated as I am at least he should not be less educated [generally] either. By good moral values I mean that he is not addicted to anything [like drugs]; is not a womanizer; and by good family I mean he belongs to a family like ours: having similar values and traditions.
AK: You wouldn’t care about physical attractiveness; handsomeness?
Saba: Handsome comes at the end! (laughs). I mean he should be like me; I’m not really beautiful! See men always want beautiful women. Honestly, even if we girls say we don’t care about looks, everyone wants a presentable partner.
AK: Regarding the men in your family, hasn’t anybody ventured for a second marriage of their own choice; I mean after fulfilling the family’s demand?
Saba: When the issue of adal-badal comes in between then it becomes difficult because by marrying for the second time, of your own will, will put the man’s sister’s [who is married to his first wife’s brother] marital life in jeopardy too.
Beenish: And if one man does re-marry the other will have to do something too because the family and other people will taunt him that his brother-in-law married another woman over his sister and look at him he is being nice to his wife and not settling scores with his brother-in-law by re-marrying or leaving his wife!
AK: That is ironic because in both cases it’s the women who bear the brunt whereas men are busy competing and defending their honor!

The discussion with Beenish and Saba suggests that firstly, accepting forced marriage obediently, that is, the behavior marks the basis for the subject-position of the women as the “good” and “abiding” family members thus winning them the cultural and familial status of a “good” daughter, sister, or wife. Secondly, family bonds are secured due to intermarriages of cousins and other family relations. Thirdly, that the status quo of the forcefully accepted social positions and subjectivities is maintained primarily due to the adal-badal status of the marital relationships. In other words, due to the practice of adal-badal or exchange marriages, if a man tries to separate or divorce his wife, in most cases, his sister(s) will also bear the brunt because she is the wife of his brother-in-law (his wife’s brother). This renders women negotiating and contesting for an accepted familial subject-position either among themselves or else with men; and therefore they continue to maintain a status quo as “obedient” sisters and wives.
Interestingly, in Azmerabad, Charsadda marriage was an issue at hand as well. Like Matti, even here the marriage related subject-position was controlled by the family, especially the men. Apparently the elder women may have a say in marriage affairs of their children but the final decision came from the father or other male head of the family. For example, here Gulshan, a 27-year-old young village woman who works at one of the Khan’s households told me that two of her elder sisters were married to men of their parents’ choice. However, the custom of adal-badal or exchange marriage was also prevalent here. Gulshan said:

My [younger] sister may get engaged to my uncle’s son [it was a childhood arrangement] but my uncle wants us to marry his daughter to one of my brothers [as well]. But my brother doesn’t like her; she is quiet and not very social. And on the other hand my uncle’s son [my cousin] liked my sister and insisted that he will marry her.

While discussing that the family imposes subject-positions on women, especially through male members, Gulshan told me, “My brother is younger to me; he is fifth in number; [but] my father says he is the elder of the house. Maybe my father thinks that my brother understands things and issues better than he.” This shows how Gulshan’s father has given his younger son the authority to control his elder sisters. At the same time this also shows that familial subject-position(s) can also be manipulated if and when required. This transfer of power reinforces and validates the cultural and familial traditional interpellation that men, even if younger than the women, are expected to be responsible for the household. Shamsher, a 60-year-old male farmer said to me, “Until a certain time this was my responsibility to guide them. When they were small I would tell them what to do or what not to do. Now it’s her elder brother’s responsibility.” From this I gathered that the father had relegated decision making powers to his son, especially about matters regarding one of his daughters. He, too, transferred the responsibility, power, and control to yet another male member of the family. Another 26-year-old woman, Naila, also explained to
me that her father controlled her decisions. She is matriculate (passed tenth grade)\(^{68}\) and lives with her parents. She is single and she wanted to continue her education and then work as a teacher but her father did not allow her to do so. As a result, she did not want to continue with studies and said, “I really wanted to teach but my father did not allow me to. So I thought if he is not going to allow me to teach then I won’t continue to study…. He said, ‘I’m alive and I will provide for you.’” In Naila’s case, as later explained to me, the issue at hand is not whether her father can provide for the family or not; it is deeper than that. Naila wanted to be a teacher: a dimension of her personality and a potential subject-position that was curbed not because she was a bad student or that they did not afford sending her to school but for the reason that her father felt it is his responsibility to provide for the family. In this case the father does not only control a part of Naila’s subject formation as a daughter but at the same time he also reinforces the Pakhtun familial and cultural interpellation that men are and have to be the providers for the women in their family. In fact Naila had earlier pointed out, “He said I’m alive and I will provide for you.” Besides, he also stops a woman from getting further education which in turn means stopping her from understanding the world and herself better.

Faryal provided me with one of the most interesting insights into how Pakhtun men in general impose subject-positions or statuses on Pakhtun women. Faryal is a 31-year-old woman and has an undergraduate degree in law. While discussing subject-positions imposed on women Faryal used the example of Pashto movies. She had serious reservations about the manner in which Pakhtun women are portrayed in Pashto movies. Faryal said:

\[^{68}\text{In Pakistani education system matriculation or popularly called matric means tenth grade which is the highest level in high school.}\]
So if someone watches [a Pashto] movie they will think “Oh! OK that is how Pakhtun women are: they wear pants and then play meergatay\(^{69}\) in the village streets! Is this our culture? They [the movie makers] are in fact embarrassing us! I don’t know what these [Pashto movie directors] are doing? The way they portray women in movies I wonder if they have such women in their houses! Do their mothers and sisters wear pants and behave in such a [stupid] manner?

Faryal’s observation made me ponder: firstly, Pashto movies portray an incorrect picture of how the common Pakhtun women are. Secondly, this portrayal perhaps shows the fantasized female(s) that the Pakhtun men desire. But realistically Pakhtun men would not want their own female family members to be like the women portrayed in Pashto movies. Thirdly, it stereotypes those women who wear pants or dress up in non-traditional clothes as women who do not or should not belong to the Pakhtun culture; they are the bad subjects because such portrayals are for the celluloid or personal male fantasies and not for one’s own female members to be seen or imagined by other men. Thus, Pashto movies too define a male-imposed “actor” subject-position on women even though it is a fantasized, not a true-to-reality depiction of Pakhtun women. Therefore, due to such portrayals the sociocultural status of the Pakhtun women as “actors” is looked down upon and highly unacceptable.

Interestingly, Sabina Babar, a university professor in Peshawar explained to me the way Pakhtun women are portrayed in Pashto literature. Sabina is about 47 years and is a single mother. Like Faryal, Sabina believed that the portrayal of Pakhtun women in Pashto literature, especially folk tales, is not as romantic as it appeared to be. She said that they are tales

\(^{69}\) Meergatay is a game mostly played by little girls and sometimes boys too. In this game five round pebbles are taken and the game is played by four individual players turn by turn. One of the pebbles is tossed in the air and the other four are thrown to the ground. Before the tossed pebble touches the ground the other pebbles are hastily collected in a hand and then the tossed pebble is caught with the same hand. When a pebble is tossed in the air first one, then two, followed by three, and finally all four pebbles are picked up before the pebble in the air is caught. If and when the catch is dropped, the turn ends. This game is played entirely by one hand. Now-a-days a tennis ball or a small bouncing ball is also used, for tossing in the air, in this game. For details visit, http://www.khyber.org/culture/games/games.shtml, accessed March 28, 2012.
romanticized by men for men but with a suggestive model of the ideal Pakhtun woman, thus, signifying partial truth. Sabina believed:

Everyone says [Pashto] folktales are so romantic. The most dominant character is always the woman in folktales. Most of the [Pashto] literature has been written by men and that’s how they portray women. They [male writers] say this is how the [good] behavior of man is and was toward a woman. But it is not true. When you look at the tappay\textsuperscript{70} in Pashto… you read them and those have been written by women. And in that they talk about what they go through; what a common woman goes through. So in that they don’t say men respect us; they never say that.

Perhaps like Pashto movies, which try to portray a (sexually) desired female-subject, Pashto literature also portrays and portrays the desired female subject when sketched by male writers and poets. In other words, Pashto (folk) literature portrays the “ideal” and the “romanticized” version of Pakhtun women as beloveds, daughters, sisters, and wives.

Aliya Khatoon tried to rationalize the phenomenon of why Pakhtun men try to control female subject formation and try to impose their self-defined subject-positions onto the women. Aliya explained that she thought the institutions that are meant to teach or influence Pakhtun men become more problematic for the women. Men, at home, are also socialized by the family but so are women. The problem arises when men go to the mosque where there is a maulana sahib (cleric) who teaches them how to deal with women and that they should be the ones to give (read dictate) a certain code or way of life to the women. The men are “informed” that they should be able to tell the womenfolk that they should wear this and not that; behave in a certain manner; serve in a certain way and if they do not fulfill these obligations, as directed, then the men should (mis)treat them in a certain way. That is how most men are informed by the clerics

\textsuperscript{70} Tappa (or Landai) or tappay (plural) is a form of Pashto folk poetry which I discuss in Chapter 7.
and men’s thoughts are negatively or positively constructed regarding women. Aliya continued that later institutions like school, college, and university also contribute to men’s thinking. Media was also influencing them along with all these other institutions of socialization. The communal institutions like the jirga\textsuperscript{71} and mosque, where men meet other men, also influence men’s point of view. Those things or institutions to which women are not directly exposed but only men are exposed again affect women. All the lessons learnt there are imposed on the women. Very seldom women go to mosques; some of them, at the most, would go to academic institutions, so for them family is the most influencing institution. But all these other institutions that men go to in fact are made for influencing the women. Aliya further added, “[Men] always try to correct you and they will always be giving you the codes of how to be a “good” woman. And this “good” woman [thing] is really disturbing now. Many a times I have said, ‘OK forget it. I’ve accepted it I am a bad woman!’” Here I thought Aliya was trying to talk back and contest the definition of what it means to be a “good” “Pakhtun” woman.

Like Aliya, Salma Shaheen also had something similar to say about the restrictions on Pakhtun female subject-position(s) and thus men’s imposing tactics on their subject formation. Salma said, “[Pakhtuns] are not ready to give her rights. She does not have any decision making power. For her, her life decisions are made by the father or the brother and this thing hasn’t changed.”

Another male respondent, Zaheer who is a Ph.D. scholar, had another strange story to tell me; he almost substantively proved Salma Shaheen’s stance. Zaheer told me about the discussion he once had with one of his male cousins regarding the education of the cousin’s daughter.

\textsuperscript{71} jirga is a counsel of tribal elders and village elites who decide legal, social, and political issues in the light of Shari'ah or Islamic laws, outside of law courts. The jirga follows the majority’s decision which is binding on the party at fault. Non-compliance can result in social/tribal boycott.
Zaheer: I was discussing with [a] cousin that he has a female child and she has recently started [going to] school. So I asked him, “What do you desire [that] till what class [grade] your daughter should study?” He said, “Well, she should study not more than the fifth class.” I said, “But if she would be a talented girl and she would like to go and move forward in education, will you allow her?” He said, now MARK his words, he said, “It would be better to tie her to the back of a tractor and roll [or drag] her down.”

Anoosh Khan: What did you say?
Zaheer: I said, “OK.” I stopped at that very moment. I mean there was sort of perspiration on his face; I felt the anger.

In conjunction with Salma Shaheen and somewhat building on Zaheer, Naeema believed, “[The reason] men don’t let their women work is because once money comes in [women’s] hands [men] think they have lost control over these women. [The women] will use their minds; they will ask for their rights.” As stated earlier, Naeema teaches at a local university and this university is a coed institution but it is dominated by male students and faculty. Although Peshawar is comparatively more liberal than Matti and Azmerabad but because most of the people living here have strong rural and tribal affiliations so all men are not necessarily as liberal as one would expect them to be. Naeema told me that some of the male students do not take the female faculty members as seriously as they do the male faculty. Though both the students and male faculty are in denial of this yet this is what is commonly felt and observed by the female faculty who teaches in this university. Naeema explained:

Somehow I feel that they take out their frustration, as an outlet, on these female teachers. For example, [some male students] think how they [the female teachers] can be in such a good position when we people have been working in our villages; our parents [read mothers] cannot work like them; men cannot earn this position. So somehow [such male students] feel that we [the female faculty] have imposed ourselves on these professional places and this is not what we deserve. So that is why they disturb [female] teachers in classes.

Naeema’s explanation that some male students disturb the female faculty because they cannot accept that these women are good enough to deserve such positions or job is food for thought!

Perhaps this mentality is the result of what Aliya explained earlier on; it is the result of the effect
of various ISAs or it is the result of the way various institutions of socialization “teach” (read interpellate) Pakhtun men in terms of how to behave with or treat women. In other words, such men tend to think that women can and should be only mothers, daughters, sisters, or wives; women do not deserve the subject-position of a teacher.

In continuation with Naeema’s explanation of why some men fear and do not let their women, especially wives, work was also brought forth in Alamgir Khan’s response. Alamgir, himself a practicing lawyer, said:

You know, I’m a part of this society. [Though] that I am a modern man; an educated person; a broad minded man, I am yet a part of this [Pakhtun] society. I married a woman who was a practicing lawyer but for a brief period of time. But then, maybe I did not allow her to practice or maybe she did not want to continue practice, I don’t remember! (He laughs and I raise my eyebrows!). I never encouraged her and she was not in the mood! But still you know…aa…aa…our society has so far not progressed as such for me to allow my daughter [to practice law]. I would think there are other fields; I might want her to work in the medical field; maybe if she is a doctor I will have no objection to that. But the legal profession, for a woman, so far has not been able to give her…aa…much…aa…recognition and due respect.

Alamgir’s response shows that men not only curb the professional statuses of their wives but they play a major role in allowing or not the professional (subject) positions their daughters can acquire. This is comparable to Naila’s situation earlier on and is in sync with Salma Shaheen’s observation that Pakhtun women do not get the right to make their life decisions; their fathers or brothers and in some cases their husbands make those decisions for them and thus enforce sociocultural statuses on them as well.

Just like Naeema complained about the disturbing attitude of some male students, a female lawyer Qaisara had a similar complaint regarding male colleagues. Qaisara was 29 years old; she is a practicing lawyer; and is single. She said, “Many male lawyers are not broad minded men at all because they have not seen many females in this field; they cannot digest [accept] us.” Besides, she also added, “If you look at our Family Laws, a woman is given a lot of liberty but
my observation of the past few years as to why marriages are breaking up is that no matter how strong and influential a woman is but the moment she steps into the house her husband becomes all-in-all.” Qaisara also told me that she was contesting for a position in the upcoming Bar Council elections. She said that as she campaigned for the election her bothers or brother-in-law were always physically there with her. She justified, “I only want them there with me so that no one [read other men] can morally defame me.” The “morally defamed” woman would be another forced or (male) imposed subject-position on her.

Sabina Babar, herself a single mother, told me how women are perceived and identified in the Pakhtun society with regard to their marital status: whether single and never married; single and widowed; or single and divorced. The following excerpt from our conversation shows how a woman’s marital and social statuses define her and change her subject-position in the eyes of some Pakhtun men. Sabina said:

Being a single mother: going out; facing people in offices; doing everyday work in…like going to Avon or Town store (upscale urban shopping areas) is completely easy. But going to places like the National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA) office; the passport office; or the mechanic. That is, if you are in a certain thing [state], you are married it’s OK; everything is easy for you. If you are widowed, it is OK. But if you are divorced it becomes very difficult because then you have no status in the society. I’m getting emotional now.

I waited for Sabina to compose herself. After a little while I acknowledged that being single myself I understood her sentiments. I also asked her if she wanted to continue the interview or not. She nodded in the affirmative and I asked:

Anoosh Khan: But what I want to know is that when one goes to the passport office or the mechanic they do not apparently know one’s marital status, isn’t it so?
Sabina Babar: The very fact that you go alone. Now my son has grown up so he goes instead of me or goes with me, it’s OK then. But until my son was not able to go with me the difficulties were there. Now I do not have any difficulty because I’m seen in the society with my son and a grown up son can be seen with me. But when he was small and couldn’t go with me that is when the problems arose. And [the people] know; at once they know.
AK: Have you felt that they know or has somebody said it to you?
SB: It is always that feeling; they know at once that either she is single or there is something else. I don’t know how they come to know.
AK: So how do people’s attitude change when your son is there with you?
SB: They are very polite; you can get your work done very quickly. And when you go alone it is like talking to a wall; they don’t listen to you. You can keep on talking, telling them and sitting on the chair waiting and waiting and there is no response.
AK: Why do you think this happens?
SB: I think because they can’t accept. I had once gone with my mother to the Cantonment Board Office and my God! We had to change the name of the flat [owner] or something. We were sitting there and they [the officers] would pay us no attention and then somebody had come to attest some papers. So I always have my [official] stamps and everything; it’s always in my bag because I knew we had to attest something. My mother turned to that man and said my daughter will do it saying that she is a grade 20 officer. They were all taken aback and shocked. But until that time they were treating us like dirt.

This conversation shows that in this case social statuses are more important than being a woman; perhaps this may be true in other societies as well. However, Sabina makes a stark observation: in the Pakhtun society women are judged or further identified through their marital status. If by chance a woman happens to be a divorcee, things become even more difficult for her; she is automatically labeled as the bad subject because she has not only proved to be a bad wife but she also went ahead and defied the sociocultural system by taking a divorce; a phenomenon still considered a taboo in the society. Thus, for a Pakhtun woman the active status of a wife is an acceptable status as opposed to a widowed or worse a divorcee status.

In another instance, Rabia Saeed, a 55-year-old university professor narrated to me the way her husband, who is also a university professor, did not allow her to accept a university position or collect one of her prizes. Rabia narrated:

I was offered the position of deputy provost but my husband did not approve of it and I had to uphold my husband’s preference. Then I was awarded a shield for the best player [amongst faculty] and I was called to collect that award in a meeting of the university employees’ association. I was very happy and told my husband. My husband only uttered, “You are not going there.” ((AK: Why?)). Listen, why. I asked him why and he

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72 The highest official grade in Pakistani government jobs is 22; in this case Sabina is almost at the top of the official grade hierarchy.
replied, “Because I’m saying so and I don’t like your appearing in front of everybody.” So I said, “I’m going to go wearing a chaadar not a dupatta.\(^{73}\) I am conscious of it myself also.” But he insisted, “I said I don’t approve of it.” My husband is not a Pakhtun but all the values in their family are those of Pakhtun men. My husband was born and bred in this culture so I said OK. He said it so strictly that he didn’t approve of all this that I couldn’t argue further.

Rabia’s experience suggests that firstly, apparently her husband did not approve of her to work as a deputy provost and later she could not collect her shield (trophy) because both these deeds required her to be present among men who happen to be not only her colleagues but also her husband’s colleagues. He did not want her to be among them. I understand that there are purdah concerns but on another level this, on part of her husband, is hampering Rabia’s career development and in turn is an example of imposing his own definition of a professional woman he wants her to be; perhaps to be a non-competitive but only an earning subject. Secondly, Rabia mentions that her husband is ethnically a non-Pakhtun but because he has grown up among the Pakhtuns he acts like them too. This shows that her husband’s own subject-positioning is a little confused; I believe that when in Rome one should act like the Romans but not at the expense of one’s own individuality and beliefs. Perhaps, being a non-Pakhtun makes him more conscious and thus he tries to behave like the Pakhtuns so that he can be accepted as one of them; more so as a good Pakhtun subject.

As such, looking at the various ways in which Pakhtun men try to impose sociocultural statuses and subject-positions on women, perhaps Dr. Gul Khan made the most rational remark. He believed, “A woman will only change when the man will change. If I adopt my 50 years old attitude or customs, will my daughter be able to drive today?”

\(^{73}\) Dupatta (Urdu) or lupatta (Pashto) is a scarf or stole-like garment worn with the shalwaar kameez. Sometimes the dupatta, though shorter in length, is also used instead of a chaadar for purdah purposes as well.
In short, Pakhtun men accept women if they occupy subject-positions of mothers, daughters, sisters, or wives but these subject-positions have to meet men’s definition and expectations. Along with these statuses Pakhtun women can have other statuses like that of a lawyer, doctor, teacher, provost, and others but in accordance with the familial expectations that does not render them as bad, disobedient, or stubborn daughters, sisters, and wives. Nonetheless, though Pakhtun men try to impose subject-positions on women, motherhood tends to be one such position that, most of the times, happens to be the most powerful female subject-position. Mothers occupy the most powerful subject-position as women and it is one such status in the Pakhtun society that has a considerably and comparatively more influential effect on both men and women of the family than any other female subject-position(s) can have.

**The Familial Subject: Mothers’ Influence in Shaping Subject-Position(s)**

Men in the Pakhtun society have control over all major (family) decisions; on the mobility of women and sometimes younger men; and play a major role in determining women’s subject-positions. Pakhtuns are firm followers of cultural traditions and family plays an important part in their lives. Therefore, a mother is given a lot of importance in spite of the fact that she too is a woman. Mothers are not totally independent; the same Pakhtun structures influence their lives that affect the lives of other women as well but overall mothers’ say has an impact once their children, especially when their sons become adults. As such, sometimes mothers’ influence and opinions have a significant role in defining female and sometimes male subject-positions. Beenish told me, “The reason I got permission to study up to LL.B. [Bachelor of Laws] is because my mother would see these highly qualified women, who were also very independent. It is not necessary that every woman gets married but if she is educated at least she can support herself.” In a similar vein Saba said, “When I was leaving for college I was told that
I should only concentrate on studies. ‘Don’t get involved in following trendy fashions. You are not supposed to look at other girls and follow suit.’ This is what my mother, sisters, and aunts told me.” I thought that it was but natural for mothers and sometimes sisters or aunts to talk to the younger women because they were a part of a society where women have their own spaces for interaction; men have theirs; and the two seldom meet or intermix. Beenish had a little complain regarding her family, mother and sisters included; she thought they were not frank enough with each other. Beenish explained:

As a child I was not a frank person; I would not even talk to my sisters or mother much. I mean I talked about general things but I never shared my personal thoughts or feelings with them. I would only talk to Saba about it. But talking to Saba was like talking to a wall as well; though she would advise me and console me but our discussions would not have any outcome…. It is because we have been groomed in such a manner; our elders were never frank with us. So a barrier is formed between them and us; we feel shy in discussing things [with them]…. For example, first of all when one has the first period [menses]; I had no idea what so ever about it. I was in school when I had them the first time; my final result was declared and I had come 1st in class but I was never able to relish that moment because I came home crying. And I thought they [my sisters and mother] should have told me about all this beforehand so that I had been mentally prepared for all this. Similarly there are other things as well which I don’t want to disclose.

Beenish continued to vent out her frustration and narrated that once she got home from school then everyone knew what was wrong and explained everything to her but she was feeling very embarrassed. She would feel conscious during her periods because following the Islamic tenets she would not say her prayers and she would think that everyone knew what was going on with her. In fact, so many times she prayed during periods just to avoid embarrassment. Beenish rightly believes that young girls should be educated beforehand about the biological changes that are bound to occur during their lifetime. When these changes occur unawares many confusing thoughts start coming to the young minds. Beenish further said:

For example, when I had my first period, I only knew that women bleed after delivering a child and I thought people will doubt me that I delivered a baby! (laughs). This
experience was a very shocking experience for me at that time but had I known about it I would not have been shocked. It is not really a matter of having uneducated mothers or elders; I have seen some uneducated mothers very frank with their daughters.

As Beenish suggests maybe her family, her mother, and sisters are not frank among themselves whereas she says she has seen other families more frank among themselves. Based on my personal experience and participant-observation, I think that Pakhtun parents are seldom frank with their children. Perhaps, now, some educated ones have crossed these barriers but the gap in communication between the generations still exists. Bourdieu aptly rationalizes this practice by stating:

Generation conflicts oppose not age-classes separated by natural properties, but by habitus which have been produced by different modes of generation, that is, by conditions of existence, which, in imposing different definitions of the impossible, the possible, and the probable, cause one group to experience as natural or reasonable practices or aspirations which another group finds unthinkable or scandalous, and vice versa. [Bourdieu 1977:78]

In Azmerabad, Charsadda no one really said anything to me about the levels of their frankness with their parents. However, Gulshan told me that her paternal uncles objected to her working for the Khans but it was her mother who prevailed. Gulshan said, “My mother told them that OK her daughters won’t work but then they should provide for us. See it’s not just a matter of one-time meal that is a problem; there are so many other things that we need.” Besides, Nudarat confidently told me that her daughters are more educated than she and two are also married but she is the one who has the upper hand. Nudarat said, “I always ask this daughter (pointing to the eldest of the two) for advice. But I don’t accept my daughters getting in control of things. A mother is a mother after all; my daughters are good girls, they never argue with me. Even my married daughters are still scared of me although they have their own lives now.” And Faryal also added:
My mother would tell us [me and my sisters] that your father is very strict and he will not be able to bear to see you with boys. So we grew up with this idea in mind: not to talk or socialize with men both related and unrelated. I’m sure my mother must have learned this from her elders… Even my grandmother tells us that people have changed.

Looking at mothers’ influence from a male perspective Abdul Haq, who never really mentions “mothers’” influence or role in the Pakhtun society but I infer that is what he meant when he said to me:

I believe that socially Pakhtun woman was never in as poor a condition as were women in the rest of the [Indian] subcontinent. Socially she always enjoyed a focal position in the Pakhtun society because she was the pillar of the family. She was not the head of the family but the heart of the family…always. ((AK: Can you explain how she was the heart?). She was the center of the emotional attachment of the entire family. And the family unit was always very strong in the Pakhtun society.

I think that Abdul Haq by “woman” here means the mother because he says, “She was not the head of the family but the heart of the family.” This suggests that the head of the family was a man, and most probably the father or the elder brother. The woman here means the mother because unlike elder brothers, elder sisters very seldom are accepted as the head of the family in the Pakhtun culture, unless they are the earning head! However, this reaction, on part of Abdul Haq also points to the fact that on an unconscious level or as an immediate thought, woman (or women) only or primarily means mother for him. In other words, is he equating woman to a mother only? He is a married man with daughters and sisters as well. But for the purpose of my argument he also adds and proves the influence of mothers in the Pakhtun society. Thus, reiterating the “mother” status of women in the Pakhtun culture as one of the most respected positions bestowed (by men and other women) upon women.

Rabia Saeed narrated to me an incidence when one day she had to check a female student for dressing up inappropriately. Rabia politely told the girl that she was looking very beautiful but her entire dress was see-through and perhaps she was going to walk home in that; the girl replied in the negative and said she had a car. Rabia thought that that girl was wearing those
clothes when she came from home; did not her mother see what she was wearing? According to Rabia, a Pakhtun girl, at least, should not dress up in see-through clothes. Her dress, according to Rabia, was objectionable but she came from home wearing it. Therefore, Rabia commented, “So, from this you can deduce Anoosh, whose fault it is: the teacher’s or the mother’s?”

Rabia narrated another incident to me: A mother, whose daughter would not wear the dupatta in college, was asked to come to the college. The girl said that her mother never gave her the sense or made her conscious about the dupatta when it was the right time to do so; now she did not even know what a dupatta is! She pointed to her mother saying, “Ask her; she did not give me the sense as to what a dupatta is.” The girl said she will not wear a dupatta but the faculty told her she will have to as it is part of the college uniform.

The point of both these anecdotes is that in spite of the fact that Pakhtuns are a patriarchal people mothers’ influence, good or bad, has a lot of weight in the familial arena. On a positive note, Zaheer pointed out, “As my mother was educated so my sisters got education.” Similarly, praising the role of a mother, though rather stereotypically, Dr. Gul Khan told me:

My youngest son says, “When we used to do our homework with daddy on every other question he would scold us and hit us. And with mummy, I would climb into her lap, doze off at times, and she would hold my hand and make me practice how to write a, b, c...” but men cannot do it. A man cannot take care of his children no matter whatever he does. This is my own experience and the experience of a few others too. In a family where the woman does not care for the children, the children are bound to be spoiled. This credit goes to the woman [read mother].

Pakhtun mothers decisively influence the lives of adult, educated, and working daughters as well. Aliya Khatoon said:

She [mother] teaches me to dress up even today [like] your [shalwar’s]74 paincha75 should be like this, or your shirt’s length should be this much, and she…aa…um…I

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74 In a traditional Pakistani dress, shalwar is the loose pants worn underneath a kameez or a shirt.

75 Paincha (Urdu) and painsaa (Pashto) is the lower part of the shalwar that covers or sits at the ankles.
always listen to her…. If I shake hands with [male] cousins that is OK…aa… for her, but if I shake hands with another man, [in the] outside world then that is problematic. Then…this…she will say, “No! You are not conscious of your father or your brothers’ honor!”

On a similar note, Qaisara the young practicing lawyer explained her dilemma as a working woman:

I stayed away from the courts for three years because my mother believed that I will not be able to find a good match if I went to the courts. Even last year, my brother-in-law was telling my father that those women who work and socialize in the courts seldom get married. My father got very tense but I asked him that the three years I didn’t join the courts and stayed home what great proposals came for me then? I also told my mother, “You pray so regularly; go for Umrah76 and pray there; have been for Haj and prayed there, if God wills I will get married otherwise don’t worry!”

In the Pakhtun society marriage is a serious issue and parents remain worried for their daughters until they are married off. However, on the other hand, Rabia Saeed, also informed me, “The young girls, whose mothers are less educated, tend to exploit them so much…. Such girls don’t care a fig about their less educated or uneducated mothers and make such fools out of them.” And Saara, a 30-year-old lecturer believed that the person who plays a pivotal role inside the house is primarily mothers. If they are educated then the females of that house especially the daughters do not face as many problems as when the mother is uneducated. Saara further explained her stance by saying:

Like if you want to go for a professional career [or] job, so they [uneducated mothers] don’t support you for that; like it’s fine if you say that I want to go for some job. They say, “Well, you can go,” but they don’t push you; they don’t give you support the way they would if they had been educated.

And interestingly, Asma Faizullah, a writer, a mother, and a mother-in-law also talked about the influence of mothers on sons and in turn on their daughters-in-law. Asma believed that women of previous generations raised their sons according to the values of the past when the

76 Umrah is a pilgrimage of Muslims to Mecca. Unlike the Haj, Umrah can be performed at any time of the year.
sons, while growing up, saw that their mothers put up with their fathers in all possible ways; with all the tear-shedding and hard times. When such men (or sons) get married it becomes difficult for them to handle and accept the modern ways of today’s women. And therefore some mothers(-in-law) tell their sons, “Son, you should control her a little; pull her bridles!” However, Asma believes that their mother(s)-in-law used to be stricter but she and her contemporaries are not as strict; they give a lot of space to their daughters-in-law, “but even then the generational difference or gap still exists between us.” Asma is perhaps one of those mothers-in-law who gives space to her daughters-in-law and does not try to influence her sons negatively but many women are not like her. There are still mothers-in-law who do try to “pull the bridle” of their “untamed” daughters-in-law via their sons. Nevertheless some improvement in relationships between mothers and daughters, and daughters-in-law, as Saara pointed out, can be seen due to academic exposure of Pakhtun women.

Conclusion

There is no doubt that within the Pakhtun patriarchal structures family acts as one of the foremost ISA to interpellate Pakhtun men and women. However, women bear the greater brunt because the Pakhtun ideological structures, like family, tend to interpellate and carve female subject-positions strongly and throughout their life time. In other words, Pakhtun men eventually become the head of families as fathers, elder brothers, or sons due to which they get a chance to become the means through which women are interpellated (as members of family). As a result of this (male) familial interpellation Pakhtun women react in a certain way as a result of which their subject-positions are mostly established as mothers, daughters, sisters, or wives. It is only when these women openly or tacitly contest and negotiate these established subject-positions that they manage to achieve subject-positions or social statuses of lawyers, teachers, and doctors, to name
a few. Within the familial subject-positions Pakhtuns are generally influenced by mothers. The reason is that family is an integral part of the Pakhtun society; mothers may not occupy (public) decision-making (subject) positions but they occupy private (space) decision-making (subject) positions. Secondly, women at all three sites felt that in the present day many women were freer to move around on their own as opposed to earlier times when they could not go out unless accompanied by the male family member(s). The data also showed that women in Peshawar were more outgoing as well. I could see lesser female mobility in Matti; a little more in Azmerabad; and in Peshawar most women were free to go anywhere, anytime, and that too on their own. Thirdly, marriage is still an issue amongst the Pakhtuns. By issue I mean that irrespective of whether one lives in the village or the city, marriage of choice or outside the family is not readily accepted. But with the passage of time, especially due to academic exposure in villages and elsewhere many Pakhtun women have become more aware of choices, though restricted, and at least think of planning a better future for their prospective generations.

Therefore, the next ISA that influences the subject formation and subject-positions of Pakhtun women, according to my data, is education, followed by media both of which I discuss in the next chapter.

**Chapter Summary**

In this chapter I discuss the role of family as the Ideological State Apparatus (ISA) and the influence it has on Pakhtun female subject formation and subject-position(s). According to my data family as an ISA produces what I call the “familial subject” which is further explained by subjectivities such as the: i) controlled mobility (mobile but controlled subjects); ii) “men-imposed” subject-position(s); and iii) “mother-influenced” subject-position. As a result of the data analysis I conclude that the undisputable and (pre)established subject-positions that Pakhtun
women have are that of a mother, daughter, sister, or wife. But in order to contest and negotiate for other social statuses like teachers, lawyers, doctors, and others from within the established subject-positions Pakhtun women have to find a middle ground by neither a categorical endorsement of its details nor the categorical abolition (Pêcheux 1982:159) of the pre-established statuses and thus respond to the ideological interpellation accordingly so that they can claim, justify, and, maintain the newly acquired subject-positions.
CHAPTER 5

EDUCATION AND MEDIA: INTERPELLATING

CONTESTING SUBJECTIVITIES

Drawing upon the interdiscursivity of other discourses such as those of law, media, state... the educational discourse is not only the primary site where meanings of signs such as woman, man, mother, father, and so on are gendered; it also provides the techniques of discipline (the school system and pedagogical practices) and surveillance (examination) for naturalization of meaning (the process through which meanings of different words/terms/notions/are rendered unproblematic) and normalization of subjects (the notion through which subjects stop questioning). [Naseem 2010:4]

The institutions of mass communication are generally regarded...as part of the system of ideological state apparatuses...through which the ideology of the dominant class is realized.... It may be acknowledged that these institutions possess some degree of autonomy vis-à-vis one another and vis-à-vis other aspects of the state; it may be acknowledged that the ideology diffused by the mass media may contain conflicting and contradictory elements, may incorporate elements drawn from subordinate groups, classes or class factions; but, ultimately, the institutions of mass media are defined by their function of securing social cohesion and reproduction by means of transmission and inculcation of the dominant ideology. [Thompson 1990:95]

In this chapter I build up and continue with my discussion about the influence of Ideological State Apparatuses (ISAs) on the subject formation and subject-positions of Pakhtun women (and men). In this chapter I specifically look into education and media as ISAs and how
they interpellate individuals as social subjects within their specific contexts and material realities. Through my data analysis I found that education interpellates individuals, especially through academic institutions, curricula, and teachers, and produces the: i) changing subject-position(s); ii) economically-desired subject; and iii) teacher-defined subject. And media produces media-defined subject who is i) either the conforming or the disidentifying media subject; and ii) the tech savvy subject. I discuss these subjectivities in detail in the following sections.

Education as an ISA

In anthropological research, like so many terms, education needs to be defined as well. For instance, who is considered educated in a community? Who is considered highly educated? What are the prevalent systems or types of education? How do multiple systems of education produce different subject-positions? And finally how does education affect the subject formation of (Pakhtun) women? In this chapter I have two definitions or two ways of looking at education in Pakistan. One definition pertains to schooling and the system/structures/institutions and processes that deliver instruction; and the other means a particular type of knowledge-transfer which is related to mobility of individuals. As the chapter unfolds I will point out the kind of education that is at work; at times both types of education interpellate subjects.

At present in Pakistan three main education systems run parallel. First, the education provided by the private sector which consists of private schools, colleges, and universities. These institutions are expensive and are usually attended by the comparatively richer strata of the society. Second, education provided by government-run institutions at all the three levels. These institutions are attended by the majority including the middle, lower-middle, and lower classes. Finally, there is the madrassah system which is sustained by local and international funders and
usually attended by the lower strata of the society for provision of religious education to them and used for the vested political interests of the funders. Besides, in the Pakistani education system “high school” ends at tenth grade (unlike the U.S. where it ends with 12th grade). The next four years, that is, the intermediate and undergraduate years are a part of college. And then the two years of M.A. are part of the university. However, this is prevalent for those institutions or programs that follow the annual system (which includes one final exam at the end of the program year) as opposed to the semester system. In some institutions, both government and private that follow semester system students get admitted to colleges or universities after the intermediate level as well. One thing to be noted is that post 9/11 there has been a more pronounced struggle between secular education and religious education. Secular education is the form of education imparted through private and government academic institutions. These institutions, also teach religious education which is a compulsory component of the academics from grade one up to the undergraduate level. However, the religious education that I am discussing here and in the next chapter pertains to the systematic religious education imparted through madrassahs, big and small. Therefore, in the following sections it is important to understand who is regarded educated; keeping in mind that in certain areas (female) education may mean acquiring systematic religious education only.

In Matti, Karak it was unanimously agreed by all male respondents that earlier women were not encouraged to acquire education. But with the passage of time; growth in higher level secular academic institutions; better structural facilities; and exposure to urban experiences people in this village were now open and tolerant to female secular education. However, some men still preferred that for higher education women should stay in the village and study in the local colleges. Some of the reasons given for the acceptance of female secular education in
particular and secular education in general were that it i) brings awareness; ii) changes subject-positions both positively and sometimes negatively; iii) creates economic opportunities and thus desired (female) subjects; and iv) shows the important role of teachers in shaping subject-position(s).

Mainzanay Baba narrated to me how secular education was introduced in their village. He recounted that there was completely no provision for education in their village Matti, not even in Karak proper. The Malak (tribal head) system was prevalent; one could get educated but the only person who could read something was the local mullah because he could read the Quran. Mainzany Baba’s first appointment, as a school teacher was at a nearby village and the people there were rigidly conservative. They thought listening to his ideas was like following the non-believers; it was considered a sin because Baba and his brothers were educated in missionary schools. These people said anybody who had studied in a school run by the English were non-believers. Mainzanay Baba continued by telling me that there was not a single school in their village before 1962; the only one was in Karak city which barely had 200 children in all. Now a single primary school in their village has 500-600 children. He recalled that after Pakistan came into being in 1947 the education structure started expanding and the society started changing. Even the women started admitting their sons in schools and colleges although those were economically hard times.

In this particular family, in Matti, I found out that men were way more educated than the women. As much as I could observe this family’s third generation women had received postgraduate education. Nasima Bibi, like Mainzanay Baba, had something similar to tell me about the expansion of education in their village. Nasima Bibi was 60 years old and Babagaans’ sister-in-law; the widow of their younger most brother. She told me:
Many things have changed; people, men here were educated about 50 years ago too but only a few would get educated. My father-in-law was an educated man; he was a teacher in a local school. There would be like one person per family who would be educated. Women used to attend school too but they were few. Now there are many who go to school and education among women of the present generation is quite common. Now women get educated so that they can understand things themselves as well.

As I observed, no doubt, there was a change in ideas; outlook; frankness; and the tolerance to accept change amongst the older and younger generation in Matti. However, most of the respondents agreed that the spread of education was responsible for many changes in their village. As Mobeen, who at the time of our interview was preparing for the United States Medical Licensing Exam (USMLE), said, “At least education has made me realize what is important for me.”

In Azmerabad, Charsadda Amma Jaan, the eldest respondent also told me how education, especially female secular education was introduced in their village:

Amma Jaan: The women were responsible for the upbringing of the children; breast feeding the younger ones; making sure the male child or children got education; while ensuring the female child learned to read the Quran but school education was not even considered for them. I remember that Charsadda School was built in front of me; I recall the first batch of students who got admission here. Initially people were not ready to admit their daughters there but there used to be a female teacher [names her], who tried very hard to convince people for female education and education in general as well. She had initially established this school in her house. She used to go to each and every house in the village to convince people to send their children to this school. Gradually this school progressed from the primary level to high school level. The entire credit [of establishing a female school here] goes to her because she would constantly tell people about the importance and benefits of education especially for women. No one knows about the future; anything can happen in the future but if a woman is educated enough then she has the power to do many things [and support herself]. She had really done a great service for Charsadda. All other schools came much after the establishment of Charsadda School.

Anoosh Khan: When did she found this school?
AJ: Hmm…it must have been 30 or 35 years ago. She used to go in person to people’s houses to tell them to send their children to school. She convinced families to send their daughters as well.
As of now, there are a number of schools in and around Azmerabad; there are separate postgraduate colleges for men and women in this village as well.

Peshawar, as stated earlier is the hub of academic opportunities for people of all ages and backgrounds. Many people have migrated to Peshawar from their respective villages primarily because of their jobs and because of better academic opportunities for themselves or their children. Like Matti and Azmerabad I will not discuss the establishment of the first academic institution in Peshawar because that will require going back to the times of the British rule and the formation of Pakistan. That of itself should be proof enough that compared to the villages in Charsadda and Karak, Peshawar provided academic opportunities since long. The purpose of my argument in the following sections is that the respondents at all three sites believed that introduction or exposure to secular education has produced: i) changing subject-position(s) which included both positively changed and sometimes negatively changed subjectivities; ii) the economically-desired subject; and iii) the teacher-defined subject-position(s), formed through both secular and religious education.

**The Educational Subject-Position:**

**Changing Positionalities**

In this section I demonstrate the influence that secular education has had on the changing subject-positions of women specifically and the younger men generally and how it affects female sociocultural status(es). The data suggests that the elder (male) generation is in support of (women’s) education but the younger men and women are more vocal about their preferences and how secular education has changed them mentally compared to their elders, especially the men. Mainzanay Baba reflected:

Our local culture or social belief is that when you let your children go out to study in the university they want to imitate what others are doing. They learn others’ way of life and in turn learn better things…. The reason our elder women are uneducated is because there
were no schools when they were young; if there was a school that too was coed. Besides, the teacher who taught in that school was only a sixth grade graduate! When a [government] high school was established, the people here did not care who the headmaster was but they were more concerned about the fact that they themselves should be able to control the rules and regulations of the schools…. When private schools were established things got a little better and we admitted our grandchildren there.

Mainzanay Baba points out that earlier on women were not educated because first there were no schools and second, even if there was one it would be coed. Due to purdah restrictions girls would not be allowed to study with boys. So, Mainzanay Baba holds the lack of infrastructure responsible for illiteracy among the women of his times. The Elder lady said something similar but with a slight variation. She explained:

No, anybody who could afford it would make their daughters study as well. Now we are very concerned about our daughters’ education even at the higher levels. One of my daughters studied up to the 12th grade; another one is [doing] masters; and two are studying business administration… I think our children’s life is better. If I had got the opportunity to get educated I would definitely have availed that opportunity. Since I lost my mother at a young age and my tandiyaar [paternal uncle’s wife] raised me; no one really bothered about me or guided me. My tandiyaar only taught me religious education, the Quran, prayers, and everything.

The Elderly lady, a part from suggesting the lack of structural facilities in the village also points out that economics played a big role in deciding who gets educated; where; and when. Beenish also pointed out a similar problem by stating:

Then there was the issue of limited resources. For example, if a family had seven or eight children and among them three were males and four or five were females, they would definitely give preference to the male children. The family would prefer the males to get educated; the females are OK if they get education up to matric [tenth grade] because they are anyway going to get married and as a result the females would be deprived [of education].

However, Saba explicitly told me that education and exposure to life outside her village, in Peshawar changed her thinking and eventually her family’s thinking as well. She narrated that before she left for college in Peshawar her mother and sisters told her she should only
concentrate on her studies and not get overwhelmed or influenced by what the other girls did.

She was specially asked to forget about fashion trends and focus on her studies. But when Saba was exposed to college life she saw and learned how to maintain a balance between pleasure and studies. She said:

I mean, you understand a person cannot just concentrate on studies. But you want to dress up nicely at times; watch movies; you just can’t study all the time. So, I wouldn’t really pay attention to other girls but I would notice that most girls do everything and also pay attention to their studies; they maintained a balance. Therefore, I also developed that sense: one can study and get entertained as well. So, I realized my parents were incorrect in thinking what they thought. As a result, a change started to come about in me; I started following trendy fashions; listening to songs; watching movies and yet I would get very good marks. So when my elders saw me that I was studying and enjoying myself as well there was a change in their thinking…. The girls of my family, ten years back, that I remember, were simple [in appearance]; those who were interested in studies just concentrated on studies and all were simple. Now when I see the young girls of our family they are relatively updated [in fashions and all] because the thinking of our elders has changed.

Saba’s experience shows that exposure to education, out of the rural setting, not only changes the thinking of the concerned individual (in this case Saba) but it also changes her subject-position as well. In other words, by learning how to successfully balance pleasure with academics not only makes her an “accomplished” subject but her achievement also changes the thinking of her elder female family members and the know-how of the other younger women. As such, it also makes her a “credible” subject as well. This is further proved when Beenish said:

Definitely, we are given importance and it is believed that since she is educated her suggestion is bound to be better than the others [who are not educated]. Yes, even our elder male members also give importance to our ideas and suggestions. Well, among women there are rarely any decisive issues; at the most it’s about choosing dress designs or prints. And they believe that whatever print [pattern] I like must be better than what they choose because I’m educated and therefore my choice must be more appropriate. And with men…for instance my father was discussing a [legal] case with me. And [later on] a friend told him exactly what I had told him. So my father came to me and acknowledged that what I had told him was correct.
Like Saba, compared to the elder or uneducated women, Beenish’s subject-position changes from a good-to-be-married only subject to a more “accomplished,” “better informed,” and “credible” subject in the family, among both men and women. Although the culturally pre-designated subject-positions of these women continue to be that of a daughter, sister, or a wife but due to secular education there is a change in positionality and the same status becomes familial and socially more influential, reliable, and acceptable.

The respondents in Matti collectively believed that secular education and especially female education had been beneficial for them. However, according to my participant-observation and experience as a member of the Pakhtun sociocultural community, there is a general sense among some Pakhtuns that if women are educated they become liberal which, in this context, means broad-minded; following Western mode of thinking; or perhaps those who violate the set cultural norms. Besides, Musa told me that most schools in or near their village are coed and that is another reason why some families do not send their daughters to schools. The primary reason, for most Pakhtun families, for not sending girls to coed is purdah. However, the subtler reason is to prevent interaction between the opposite sexes which can end up in romantic involvements, which is tabooed in the Pakhtun society. It was interesting to see Moeen respond when I asked him that he had studied in a coed medical college and what were his thoughts about the girls or young women who studied with him. Moeen replied:

I don’t think coed makes much of a difference or that girls get liberated [in a negative way]. In my entire class no girl misbehaved to the extent that anyone regretted her being there. At least, I did not see any such incident in my entire five-year stay at [the medical] college. I mean there can be some ill-disciplined [naughty] girls but you cannot blame education for their behavior. We were a class of 260 and we had about 120 females and if among them two or three girls are a bit liberal [read modern or westernized], so what? Had it been because of education, all 120 should have been liberal.
Mobeen’s response not only made sense to me but in a way it relieved me a little to know that at least the younger generation of men, in Matti were more broad-minded and understanding compared to their elders. Besides, like Beenish and Saba, Mobeen actually claimed, “At least education has made me realize what is important for me.” Acquiring secular education does not make these people the “informed” or “accomplished” subjects only but it also positions them as, what I call, the “economically-desired” subject, both within the family and in the society at large.

In Azmerabad, Charsadda the general opinion was that secular education had improved the way of life for many; it had helped people understand things better. Besides, female education was accepted by most of the people as a good change. Since Amma Jaan was the senior most respondent in this village I was interested to see how she viewed the change over the years. Therefore, regarding secular education, I asked her:

Anoosh Khan: Pakhtuns, especially men, generally believe that if a woman gets educated she tends to know a little too much and is not ready to follow Pakhtun traditions blindly. Do you agree?
Amma Jaan: No, I don’t think so [this happens]. Many women have been educated and they do what is appropriate [according to the Pakhtun culture]. I think education is very important and beneficial for women because it enables them to understand things in a much better way; they can compete in other countries as well. That is why I think the present time is much better than the past times.

Gulshan, a maid, also wished that she were educated and could get a proper job. But she believed that her family lagged behind because of their poverty. Besides, there were so many of them: five sisters and two brothers. Gulshan regretted not being educated and appreciated the benefits of education. She said:

Yes, my younger sister goes to school. She and I are very different in the sense that she understands things better than we do. For example, she can read drama titles; she advises us how to settle family and neighborhood issues in a better way and she helps us in the household accounts as well. Besides, if we go somewhere she can read the [direction/advertisement/street] boards as well.
Mustafa, a tailor by profession, is illiterate but he has allowed his daughters to study up to matric or the tenth grade. He had a similar conviction about education and said:

Because there is no comparison between the two: an uneducated person cannot compete with an educated one. Look at us we can’t read or understand news; read directions: if we go somewhere we have to ask someone what place is this and believe what they tell us; sometimes we are in that very spot for which we are asking directions. Education shows you the way [literally and metaphorically]. In our [immediate] neighborhood almost all girls are educated.

Mahjabeen had similar notions as Mustafa and she explained:

My daughters are better than me because they have gone to schools. Besides, they are way smarter than we are. They are smarter than we are because whenever we discuss some issue among us they always come up with better ideas and solutions than I do or can. (Turning to me): Look, my daughter, we are not educated so we do not understand things the way educated people do. And my daughters are educated so they know all about religious obligations as well as worldly matters. See if there is something written in a foreign language [read English] on the TV they can read it but I can’t. They are better than we are because of education.

In comparison to the common people of the village, the village Khan had more pragmatic ideas regarding female education. All his children, sons and daughters, except one had masters degree in various disciplines. The Khan believed, “Women can become more politically adept through education. And good education should begin at the primary level and it should be accessible to the lower classes of the society as well.” However, in spite of the general trend in favor of education, in Azmerabad, there was a constant struggle between secular and religious education. The interesting thing was that religious education curriculum was also taught in schools and colleges but the common villagers generally appreciated going to madrassahs to get religious education. For instance, Khan Mohammad also discussed with me the benefits of madrassah education.

Khan Mohammad or popularly known as Khanay was a 30-year-old, illiterate man. He was married and had a two-year-old daughter. Khanay worked for the same Khan as did
Gulshan. He cooked and cleaned for the Khan’s household. He was unshaven, with a small beard on his face. He had tobacco-stained, cavity stricken, half broken teeth which he said were because of the excessive candy-eating during his childhood. Khanay mostly tended to talk with pauses but at times talked incessantly. He was lean but not lanky and is considered a simpleton in the village, and people did not tend to take him seriously. Later I learnt from some village women that he had had a love marriage. Though as simple as Khanay may have appeared to be he had some serious thoughts about madrassah education:

Khanay: I did not complete my education [in school] that is why I definitely want my children to go to school. I have plans for my baby daughter: even if she does not go school she will go for Quran classes; one can learn a lot there as well and that is beneficial…. The children get to learn about God’s commands; they [the madrassahs] don’t charge [the students] anything; it is up to each student to pay them what they want to; it’s what each one affords [paying]. The fees are included; they [madrassah administration] give you everything: food and drink; clothes; everything. So they are doing all this for God and the students pay them in the name of God as well. So one pays according to what one affords to pay. There are many places [read madrassahs] like this now in Peshawar and other villages as well. The administration only tells you the admission fee but does not actually take it…. Maybe because of them [the madrassahs] the country may get in better shape.

Anoosh Khan: But some people say that terrorists are actually bred in madrassahs?

Khanay: Yes, maybe. But people may say this because all madrassah students are called Talibans; [all of them] don’t do bad things; the [bad] name has got them into trouble.

AK: Then who are these miscreants who blow up bombs?

Khanay: Poor Benazir also went away [died] because of her husband. Many people say she died because of her husband so that he could take her place.

From my discussion with Khanay it appears that the madrassahs have gained popularity among the economically challenged, especially in the villages because they not only provide education for the children (and at times adults) but they also take care of their basic necessities free of cost. Therefore, it seems that Khanay did not want to admit that madrassahs could do wrong things like produce social miscreants. And Khanay does not answer my question directly when I ask him “who blow up bombs?” Instead of answering my question Khanay mentions Benazir Bhutto, the former prime minister of Pakistan and her death in an election campaign.
rally in December 2007. According to various media sources she was shot at with a pistol in her campaign rally and along with that there have been different speculations regarding Ms. Bhutto’s death. But Khanay does not answer my question directly; he does not tell me who he thinks are the miscreants behind bomb blasts. In fact, he tells me who was behind Ms. Bhutto’s murder; suggesting it was not those whom I said were responsible for the bomb blasts. I wondered if he did not understand my question or whether he was deliberately ignoring my question and trying to evade me. Perhaps he did not or did not want to believe that people trained or educated in madrassahs could commit any social wrongs because the madrassah in their village was providing for their basic needs.

Besides, Nudarat also said, “My daughters are now attending Quran translation and explanation classes. Look, we spend so much time doing other things in life so some time should also be spent on religious education as well.” And her daughter, Naila, in conjunction said, “We learned many things at school but thank God we have learned many things from our Quran translation class. The things that the Quran [teaches] are not present in the school [studies].” Even Mahjabeen told me, “Our daughters go to the U斯塔禁止 (literally means teachers in Pashto but here it specifically refers to a family who specially teaches the Quran) house to learn Quranic recitation.” Here I should clarify that these ustazaan or teachers do not teach at a local school or a madrassah but they voluntarily teach children and at times adults in their own houses; students go to their houses and learn Quran recitation and sometimes translation free of cost. They mostly teach people the Quran as a charitable deed and not as a paid profession.

It is interesting to note here that all the respondents talk about their daughters attending Quran classes. I wonder if this pattern is unconsciously imposed on young women or if women pursue these classes voluntarily due to free time at their disposal. I realized it was more of a
voluntary choice. When I went to interview Naila, she told me that they had a potluck (or “one-dish party” as they call it) at the madrassah in the evening and she had to prepare her dish. This made me think that perhaps one of the reasons why women voluntarily went to madrassahs and were so much in favor of them there was because apart from learning Quranic teachings and recitation, the madrassahs also served as a meet and greet for many women in a society where female mobility was so often restricted and limited. Therefore, madrassah education made the women “knowledgeable” subjects but the madrassahs also provided a socioculturally acceptable space for socializing. Here religious education serves as an institution (ISA) of imparting instruction, knowledge, and entertainment. Yet, at the same time there is a tussle between secular and religious education for those women who are allowed to participate in both academic systems and which in turn tends to create contested subjectivities as well by forcing people, especially women, to think which system of education to adopt. In other words, they have to decide between the “worldly beneficial and materially convenient” secular education system or the “divinely ordained” madrassah education that holds the hope for a better life in the hereafter as well! Some women who cannot go to secular schools have no choice and thus have no option to tussle with.

**Academic Institutions and Curricula as ISAs: Pros and Cons of (Secular) Educational Interpellation**

As I have discussed earlier Pakistani educational system is a three-tiered system. Omar, in his early 30s and a lecturer at a university in Peshawar, almost echoed what I have said above. He said, “We have at least three tiers: the government schools; another is private schools but private schools for lower class people or lower middle class people; and the elite class schools
Omar made an interesting observation and actually nailed down how the Pakistani education system works as an ISA, aiming to change ideological stand points of individuals. Omar explained by giving me the example of how some History and Pakistan Studies textbooks are used for interpellating individuals. For example, Pakistan Studies books give ideas about Hindu religious philosophy by quoting slogans like, “Gaya maata ko bachao, dudh makhan khao” (Save Mother Cow; enjoy milk and butter). According to Omar, Pakistan Studies books suggest that these are the types of statements or slogans that the Hindus would raise from the platform of their political Congress Party in order to propagate Hinduism. It is here that these books act as conduits of ideology and interpellate students as Muslims and patriotic subjects but at the same time infuse ideas of intolerance toward another religion. Omar believed that when one read something as a mature and informed reader one realized that in certain aspects Gandhi was the most superior man in terms of qualities and leadership skills.

Then Omar quoted an example for me from one of his classes. He said:

Back in 2007 once I was discussing [in class] different ideologies and social movements and I just said Gandhi JEE (a term of respect) and there was a Jumaati student, who raised his hand and said, “Excuse me sir, why are you saying Gandhi “Jee”? I simply replied, “If I don’t respect the elders and the leaders of other nations, religions, or ethnicities how on earth I would expect them to treat MY leaders and MY elders and like…my ancestors with respect?” So there was a kind of debate just by saying Gandhi Jee.

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77 The classification difference between Omar and I is that I believe three education systems include: government, private, and madrassahs. Whereas, Omar believes there are government, private and elite-class institutions. But when I talk about private institutes I mean the ones that are well recognized, established, and have a reputation for being attended by the rich students.

78 Pakistan Studies is a subject which discusses the “freedom movement” of the Muslims in India first from the British and then the Hindus until the creation of Pakistan in 1947; it also deals with some current affairs. It is a mandatory subject for students from primary classes up to the undergraduate level. In some of the junior or primary classes in school it is also taught as part of Social Studies.

79 This is used like a common saying. As in other cultures most proverbs and sayings derive strength from rhyming, this slogan also depends on its end rhyme: Bachao/ khao. However, this slogan created/creates an ideological tussle because the Hindus worship cows and the Muslims slaughter cows for consumption purposes.

80 A follower of the right wing political party, Jumaat-e-Islami.
Omar himself rationalized the behavior of that student and therefore explained, “Now this Gandhi “Jee” idea was not acceptable to him because I think the curricula and the type of texts which are taught in [our] education system are a kind of very…conservative.” In a similar vein Naseem (2010:17) elucidates, “In Pakistan…. Controlled strictly and guarded jealously by the state, curricula and textbooks are one of the instruments that produce official knowledge. Official knowledge produces official truths. They work as instruments of normalization that continually try to manipulate people into “officially desirable” forms of thinking and behaving.” Naseem’s stance here echoes Althusser’s (1971:145) explanation of how tacitly ideology works through the state apparatuses. In the present case it’s through (higher) education and curricula. But Omar’s incident also points out the dialectic that can evolve within an ISA like education. For example, according to Omar Pakistan Studies books interpellate the culturally and religiously intolerant subject; and in this case it succeeds by producing the student-subject who opposes his teacher for revering Gandhi, a Hindu political leader. But at the same time higher education and education acquired in countries other than Pakistan has interpellated Omar differently; he is the tolerant and disidentifying subject (Pêcheux 1982:159). Omar is an example of how education through local academic institutions sometimes produces socially and culturally conforming subjects; and those exposed to secular foreign education and through mobility, abroad or out of the local setting, become disidentifying subjects. That is the dialectics of education: it can interpellate the good or bad subject but at the same time it can interpellate the disidentifying subject who can “see” the choices he or she has and can therefore decide to some extent which type of interpellation to respond to and when.

Rabia Saeed believed that the Pakhtun society is confused and morally disintegrating because, “As far as I think, the curriculum is responsible. The curriculum which is being devised
today is very short sighted; there are no chapters about ethics and morality…. Through [such] curriculum you will only receive worldly knowledge.” Almost in agreement with Rabia, Rafiqa Amir, another senior professor at a local undergraduate college for women believed:

Ethical values and ethics promise rewards in the life hereafter. Upholding ethical trends most of the time does not give us anything. But worldly achievements give us rewards immediately…. Only those people abide by ethical values who have strong family connections and are controlled by their families; others who do not have strong [ethical] backgrounds have gone with the flow of the social demands.

It is pertinent to note here that both Rabia and Rafiqa believe that the curriculum lacks material about ethical and moral values (read religiously ethical and moral values). And interestingly, Rafiqa believes, “Only those people abide by ethical values who have strong family connections and are controlled by their families;” thus, she is reiterating the role of family as ISA (as discussed in the previous chapter) in determining the subject-position of an individual.

In spite of systematic nationalistic and conservative religious interpellation through education most of the people, at least in my research sample in Peshawar, were satisfied with the way secular education had and was facilitating Pakhtun female subject-positions and subjectivities. Alamgir Khan also believed:

Many changes have come about: Pakhtun woman is quite educated today. She knows her rights very well and you can’t call her the same old woman she used to be 50 years ago or 80 years ago. Don’t think a Pakhtun woman will always be living in a village or in a restricted place. No! Pakhtun woman of today is working; she is earning her livelihood; she is a teacher; she is a doctor; she is an engineer; she is a lawyer.

On a similar note Qaisara thought that because secular education is on the rise, the attitude of educated Pakhtun families was also changing for the better, especially regarding women. She said, “Besides, I am very thankful to God for having an educated family; they are very supportive. Yes, practicing law is tough but because of the support I have, I manage.”

Gazelle Khan, another female lawyer, was also forthright about the change secular education was
bringing among the Pakhtuns in general and Pakhtun women in particular. Gazelle stated, “A change has definitely taken place; it is still going on. [Pakhtun women are now] lawyers, judges, teachers…. With the passage of time and with more educated women coming in you can’t stop that [change].” In conjunction, Aliya Khatoon, also affirmed, “I have received education and now I look at things from my perspective and at the end of the day when I feel… [though] I don’t challenge my mother because probably it’s difficult to change her but yes I try to follow whatever I think is right. So what happens is that her [mother’s] tolerance level is also developing.”

However, on the flipside, there were respondents who believed that advancement in female education was causing some traditional disruptions, that is, education as an ISA at times clashed with cultural expectations. For example, Asma Faizullah believed that when women get highly qualified their socio-economic standards become very high as well; they do not treat common men like human beings. Such women object to the marriage proposals their parents like for them and opt for shortcuts by looking for men who are already financially, materially, and socially stable. In other words, she highlighted the tussle between two ISAs: education and culture. That is, she believed that education gives women the option to become the disidentifying subjects (Pêcheux 1982:159). But Asma agreed that education was overall beneficial because it raised awareness among people, especially among Pakhtun women.

Yet, the most interesting insight regarding education among the Pakhtuns came from three of my male respondents in Peshawar. For example, Professor Shah claimed, “I think and I may sound a little extremist to some (laughs), I think our women don’t need to be educated [so much]; it’s our men who need to be educated (laughs again). Our men need to be educated, our women have no problem but the [necessary] environment has to be created [for them].” Dr. Gul
Khan added, “A woman will only change when the men will change.” Similarly, Zaheer added, “I think its higher education that makes the difference… the primary thing for woman is that she must be educated…. For this men’s education is very important; quality education is required for them.” These responses show that Pakhtun men welcome educational interpellation and accept the fact that academically interpellated subject-positions of Pakhtun men will further facilitate socially empowered subject-positions of Pakhtun women. As a practical example of what the gentlemen above say, Shaheen Faheem, a housewife, mother, and a writer told me:

And yes, people have become so open [broad] minded that even the most uneducated, illiterate people [in the villages] want their daughters to get educated. They even let them [their daughters] stay in hostels [to be able to get education]. At least in our times [when we were young] nobody gave us this option…. I’m talking about Charsadda, [names her village], so that is why I’m saying that because [coming from an older generation] now it seems very strange that those men and fathers who have not even seen the school gate are allowing their daughters to get educated and claim that getting education is very important. Now girls travel considerable distances, riding buses, or else stay at hostels to get to academic institutes. I’m saying all this because when I compare all this to our times our parents did not allow us to stay in hostels.

Although most respondents agree that secular education is beneficial for the Pakhtuns but along with this, in this chapter, I highlight the competition between secular and religious education which is affecting female subject-positions in various ways. It was worthwhile to note that in Peshawar apparently it seemed that respondents were not really conflating or contesting religious and secular education; the reality yet was different. People like Rabia Saeed and Rafiqa Amir try to use religion in the secular academic setup but in rather a tacit way. As quoted in their actual responses above, using words like “moral values” and “ethics” I think implies that the educational system fails to teach the proper “religiously” moral and ethical knowledge. I infer this from their responses because both these women talked to me about other things like their methods of teaching; dealing with students; and in case of Rabia handling her only son; my participant-observation; and my previous knowledge about them gave me an insight into how
they try to incorporate the religious aspect into their own classrooms. Most of the times they succeeded but they have to be vigilant enough to finish their respective courses with the students as none of them are teachers of Islamic Studies and teach in a college where serious objections against a teacher can be taken up to the University’s Vice-Chancellor (President) or even to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa’s provincial assembly.

Omar’s observation that some History and Pakistan Studies textbooks have blatant ideological undercurrents are plausible; he gives an example and tells me that a student felt uneasy with his respect for Gandhi. Omar himself also rationalizes that the student, who is a follower of a right wing religious party, has been socialized to dislike leaders from other religions, ethnicities, and nationalities. But I think it goes deeper than this; the student reacted negatively toward Omar’s respect for Gandhi not because Gandhi was a leader in support of India and opposed to the creation of Pakistan but because he was a Hindu. Therefore, when some male respondents like Professor Shah, Dr. Gul Khan, and Zaheer believe that Pakhtun men need to be educated for the progress of Pakhtun women and the Pakhtuns in general, they are correct. After all, Pakhtuns are a patriarchal people and the changed mindset of men will help in changing the conditions of women. The aim of this section was to demonstrate that secular educational institutions function as strong ISAs through curricula and teachers. But the problem with Pakistani education system is that it is systematically divided into at least three different tiers which propagate religious or secular ideology and hence interpellate respective subjects. Therefore, the dialectical tussle within the ISAs (educational systems) and the respective subjects continues.
The Educational Subject-Position: The Economically-Desired Subject

Perhaps one of the benefits, apart from creating awareness among the people is that secular education facilitates in producing what I call the “economically-desired” subject(s). This is definitely applicable to men but it is a valid subject-position for Pakhtun women as well, that is, the “economically-desired” daughter, sister, wife, or even mother, at times.

Secular education, for most people is a means to an end; it serves to get better jobs and promises a better life style. In my research I observed that men and women both may benefit from schooling but it positions them differently in the society and the family. In the society they become socio-economically well placed; due to which, at times, there are different familial expectations from them as well. In Matti, Karak, Mainzanay Baba explained to me the education-driven economic evolution in their village and the changes that accompanied it. He said:

[In our village] it was very difficult to earn money as there were no factories; no industries; no jobs; nothing. For sustenance people would survive by raising animals and planting some vegetables and fruits. There was a dearth of water; except our village there was no water anywhere. There were wells about ten miles from here and that is where we got water from.

In a similar vein, the Elderly lady told me that earlier people would take the sick to Peshawar. But only those people could do that who had the material and physical means to do so. Those who could not afford it or did not have the means would die. She said that even now there were many people who could not afford taking the sick to Peshawar; they were the ones who were uneducated; jobless and poor people. Besides, she recalled, “In earlier times there was not as much money as we have now. People would eat whatever they could grow and harvest in their

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81 Since Matti almost has a dessert-like climate cash crop farming is not possible.
lands; those who were lucky would go abroad to work; and that was it. Now, thank God many are educated and have jobs.”

Nasima Bibi also had a somewhat similar opinion. She told me:

_Aflaas tair sho_ (poverty is gone); people have become financially independent… [people] want to be academically sound to get a good job and to earn more wealth. So once one member of the family gets educated and gets a good job then he makes sure that his children get even better education than he. Actually they get to understand the importance of education.

Another woman, Meena, aged 50 also believed, “People got to understand that education is beneficial; it is beneficial because it helps you get good jobs and it in turn becomes beneficial for your children…. Earlier most people used to work on [agricultural] lands and now people get educated.”

The fact that younger men like Mobeen (a medical doctor); Musa (a law graduate); and Qadir (a practicing lawyer) prove that education eventually did help them attain professional degrees and also established them as the economic or “earning” subjects. In the responses given above all the respondents agree that secular education brings prosperity because it provides access to better career choices and job opportunities. However, it is pertinent to point out that in the above responses there is a tacit understanding that the “earning” subject-position is that of men; the “earner” status is culturally understood as a male category. In comparison, women are expected to be influenced by education in a different manner. According to Nasima Bibi, “Now women get educated so that they can understand things themselves.” The Elderly lady remarked, “The women administer household chores better if they are educated; we don’t want their jobs.”

It is interesting to note that with different age groups and different levels of exposure women here tend to have different expectations from educated women. For example, Meena who lives in Peshawar for the better education of her children, in comparison to Nasima Bibi and the Elderly lady, said, “Yes, now women are allowed to work and it is not considered something
inappropriate…. There are those who earn can afford to keep servants and then there are others who opt not to work even if they are educated…. If she doesn’t work and she is educated she can raise her children in a better way.” Here Meena, who is illiterate, comes forth as an educational subject who is interpellated as an “informed” subject through mobility, that is, by moving out of her village to live in Peshawar and is not directly interpellated by education through an academic institution.

Beenish believed, “It is not necessary that every woman gets married but if she is educated at least she can support herself…. Like if you work; do a job you can take care of yourself…. Besides, education is necessary for women because that increases their importance and value.” I think Beenish here makes a very valid point because firstly, both men and women in Matti and perhaps in the Pakhtun society overall believe that girls have to eventually get married and can depend on others (read husbands or sons) for care. Nobody thinks about what if things do not work as they are expected to, say in case of husband’s illness, death, or joblessness; what will happen to the woman? Secondly, most people fail to foresee what will happen to an uneducated woman who never gets married. Who will support her and how? Fortunately, women like Meena, who herself is uneducated but her exposure to Peshawar has made her realize and accept that there is nothing wrong if women decide to work. Similarly Beenish, who is a lawyer, though is not allowed to practice, can see how educated women can support themselves whether they are married or single. In fact, this change, no matter how small, makes me a little hopeful that the attitude of people in Matti is changing. At least people here are beginning to associate the “earner” status with women.

In Azmerabad, Charsadda, most people talked about the general importance of secular education but just touched upon how it produced the economic subject. That was perhaps
because most of my respondents in Azmerabad belonged to the two far sides of the economic
spectrum: the village Khans and the village commoners. All the common village women either
did not work or else served the Khans’ households. Their husbands were mostly illiterate and
were farmers except Mustafa who had his own tailoring shop. While on the other hand I talked to
one of the Khans, who was not employed but lived off of his inherited lands and the women of
his family did not work either. In both cases, economics, especially through professional jobs,
did not affect my group of respondents in this village. For instance, Gulshan believed that
because now that she worked for the Khans’ households their overall life style had improved.
She said:

We were very poor; at times we would go without food for four or five days. But when
the Khan’s mother found out she used to send us bread and curry and other things too.
That helped us a lot. So I also started coming to the Khans’ houses to work. Thank Allah,
we are quite well settled now. Allah has really helped us compared to what our situation
was before.

Or as Mahjabeen stated:

Women, mostly in competition, try to improve the standard of living for their family.
Mostly men earn and women try to save a lot as well so that they can get other things
required at home. Even the young unmarried girls also try to save money [which they get
as charity; their pay; or otherwise from the Khans’ families] to buy jewelry, clothes and
other things for their wedding.

And Mustafa really nailed it down; he was of the opinion that education makes women
economically independent subjects, especially in the time of need. Mustafa explained:

Besides, education is more important for women; let’s say a woman gets married and she
is educated, in case her husband gets sick or dies, she can do a job. She can even tutor
students at home and can put food on the table. But what will an uneducated, illiterate
woman do? At the most she can go and serve in somebody’s house. One has to keep an
eye on the future as well. Besides, even if you marry off a sister or a daughter and for
some reason they do not get along with their husband and come back home, you cannot
afford their expenses. They are your responsibility as long as they are unmarried but once
they leave home and come back [after a divorce or separation] they become a burden.
But if she is educated she can provide for herself and her children; she does not have to depend on anybody.

And the Khan’s mother, Amma Jaan, was also of the opinion, “I think education is very important and beneficial for women because it enables them to understand things in a much better way.” Asma Faizullah, who lives in Peshawar, definitely took into account the economic aspect of education as well. She said, “Nowadays things have become very expensive and as long as a wife does not work [earn] along with her husband it becomes difficult to make both ends meet.” And Qaisara, though much younger than Asma and single had similar notions. She said, “No matter how stable a family you belong to, the inflation rate has increased so much that the woman has to work alongside with the man to make ends meet.” Apart from making ends meet Naeema Gul explained that economic independence helps one socially and it enables women’s voice(s) to be heard also. Naeema said:

Now my [personal] economic condition is better than it used to be…. It gives you a lot of confidence…um…because when you are not earning your own money you are always like, ah, you have a sense of insecurity…. And if you get a bit economic security you will earn people’s respect; by people I also mean the opposite sex; they will respect you more…. You feel that respect…aa…somehow they [the men] give you a chance to speak. Ah…you can express yourself.

Zaheer also echoed a similar idea and said, “Look! This is the advantage of education: you become educated; you can have a job, a profession, and you can have a better living standard. So this has an impact on the society.”

In case of women in particular, Professor Shah told me, “For marriage, educated women were preferred. Educated women were preferred because people realized the advantages of education.” And Shaheen Faheem added to this that educated women “were” not only “preferred” but:
In fact, in the recent years I have noticed that people [men and their families] prefer working women, especially those who are employed [as opposed to self-employed]. This has become the [marriage] demand now; people don’t really bother about the physical beauty but if she is a doctor; a nurse; or a teacher. That is what people are more interested in now. Even this trend has started in the villages as well.

Thus, through secular education women become the desired-subjects; not only physically fit for marriages but also materially they become the economically-desired subjects as well. Besides, as Naeema stated, that as an earning subject women become desirable, and that gives them confidence. She added that it also changed their subject-position from a passive listener to an assertive speaker as well. Therefore, with education Pakhtun women’s subject-positions are enhanced to statuses like the “earner” who provides and the “speaker,” who is actually heard. In addition to the influence of education on men and women it is necessary to mention the role of teachers, both in secular academic institutions and madrassah settings.

The Educational Subject: Teacher-Defined Subject-Position

Teachers anywhere in the world play a major role in influencing a person’s thoughts and character. This influence for some lasts until the high school and for others it can be a life-long impression. Teachers’ attitude, character, and (academic) philosophy affect students positively or negatively to a large extent. Being a teacher myself I always think that a teacher can make or break a person. It is pertinent to point out here that in the Pakistani culture in general and the Pakhtun culture in particular (as seen in the previous chapter) parents and children usually have a formal relationship: personal issues like puberty, love affairs, or marriage choices are seldom discussed among most families. Therefore, the role of the teacher becomes important as he or she most of the times is more experienced than the students. And according to cultural and religious stand points he or she occupies the position of a spiritual parent. But because he or she is not the
real parent therefore opening up to him or her becomes easy as compared to discussing similar
issues with one’s parents or family. However, in the case of Matti there was a struggle between
secular and religious education; the ideas of the concerned teachers; and the influence of the
respective teachers in shaping the subjectivities of the concerned students. Meena told me, “Our
times were different because there was no education then as there is now. Now even religious
studies and its following has also increased.” The Elderly lady added:

Now we have proper madrassahs where we send our children. In the morning children go
to schools and in the evening they attend the madrassah. In the madrassah they learn all
sorts of religious things. They learn all the different prayers: the five-times-a-day prayers;
the prayers while entering a bathroom; and all the different prayers for different activities.

But interestingly, Mainzanay Baba believed, “If you let your children go toward the mullah it
won’t be helpful because the mullah does not have the social know-how.” And in agreement with
Mainzanay Baba, Musa said:

I think religious extremism has decreased in our region. It has decreased because let me
tell you something from my childhood: there used be a mullah here and whatever he used
to say we and not only us but even our elders would say that whatever the mullah says is
correct. So much so, that he used to quote a Hadith (sayings of Prophet Muhammad)
stating that if a married woman raises her hands [to dance] to the beat of drums her
marriage [nikaah] is annulled. In light of this there were many people here who had had
their nikaah re-done. Now if you look at the situation nobody follows that mullah at all
though earlier his word was the word.

However, there is a competition of sorts between the secular and religious teachings and
teachers. But for the purpose of this research it is important to see how different teachers, secular
and religious affect the subject-positions of men and especially women. For example, Qadir
criticized the role of secular teachers. He thought they did not help in creating a “critically
thinking” subject:

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82 Nikaah is the legal contract between the bride and groom in an Islamic marriage. The Nikaahnama or the
written legal document is signed in the presence of two witnesses from each side.
Qadir: The problem also lies with the teachers at school level: they do not encourage creativity. The teacher will dictate an essay to the students and make them rote learn it for the exam or test and that’s it. That is what the students are limited to. If that is how the students are taught for the next ten or at times fourteen years they never develop any critical skills. The students just get used to depending on the teachers. They are not encouraged to question the teachers. By the time such students get to the masters how can they change all of a sudden?

Anoosh Khan: Have you ever experienced such a situation when you thought that you were always taught one thing but the teacher talks about the same thing completely differently?

Qadir: I remember when I was in matric, here in a school in our village, during an Islamiyat (Islamic Studies) class we were discussing wedding ceremonies. The teacher told us that the dhol (drums) should not be a part of the celebrations [read as it is against Islam]. A student questioned him by asking if we don’t play music then what is the alternate way of celebrating happiness. At this question [rather than giving an answer] the teacher got extremely angry at that student. He told the student how dare he asked that question and [explicitly] told him that Islam forbids celebrating happiness! ((AK: The teacher actually said that!)). Yes, he did!

And to this Moeen added:

Besides, most of our teachers at schools and undergraduate level are not inspirational or encouraging enough to let students question them. As a result, the students just get used to not questioning teachers and later not questioning anything or anybody. Our education system does not encourage or inculcate creativity. It only slightly does so at the higher level.

This entire discussion about “dictating essays”; “not encourag[ing] to question the teacher”; and “not encourag[ing] creativity,” I feel is an extension of the familial control that I discuss in the previous chapter. On part of the teachers not allowing students to question is also a control of (mental) mobility of sorts. The “thinking” subject, man or woman, is not allowed and rather discouraged to ask questions that are outside the sociocultural and religious boxes. This practice enables the teachers, whether secular or religious, to have control over the not-questioning subjects. It also reiterates the familial subject-position, that is, to be the quiet and be the no-talk-back subject. This particularly makes girls unconfident and less expressive, as Musa and Moeen pointed out that the rigid attitude of the teachers hampers the development of critical thinking among the youth. This practice of discouraging students and youngsters does not stop at the
academic level; in fact it has further sociocultural and political implications as well. As such, it is not difficult to understand why in countries like Pakistan there is a mass following of corrupt leaders who have brought the country almost to the brink of failing. It is through using school/college/university education as an ISA which interpellates not only the submissive familial or cultural subject but also ensures submissive citizen subject-positions as well. Naseem (2010:14) following Ball (1990:4) suggests, “Identities and subjectivities thus constructed are carried forward by the students into the larger society. By defining what is normal/subnormal, subjectivities are created, stigmatized, and thus normalized.” However, sometimes the social structures or ISAs can become the very force for providing agency to the social subjects. For example, Saba explained that sometimes the teachers also helped in playing an instrumental role in the academic life of female students. It is sometimes their word that outweighs the parents’ decision. Saba said, “If there is a girl who has been a top position holder throughout her school life, even the teachers stress that she should get further education. So parents also feel that she should be further educated.”

Overall, respondents like Beenish, Saba, Mobeen, Musa, and Qadir, who were relatively recent graduates, discussed some serious drawbacks in the education system as well but in spite of a faulty education system most people in Matti, Karak believed that education had brought about a positive change in many ways. Secular education had increased awareness; provided jobs; and brought about prosperity in general. Musa believed, “This change came because of education” and Mobeen added, “With education and media.”

In Azmerabad, Khanay narrated to me why he dropped out of school in Charsadda. He explained, “I have studied up to the second grade. I dropped out after the second grade, before being promoted to the third grade because I had flunked a paper by two-three marks and the class
teacher was adamant that I had to repeat the class. I had a little argument with him. The teacher had not even taught us well.” As such, now he believed that teachers in madrassahs taught better and behaved in a more “God-fearing” way toward the students.

However, Faryal gave me the most comprehensive insight into the differences she experienced in the attitudes of teachers in her academic journey from the Murree Hills (where she was in a private and elitist school), through a Convent school, up to her undergraduate education in Charsadda. The teachers’ attitudes through various academic institutions influence the subject-positioning of students in different ways which comes forth through Faryal’s narration of her experience with various teachers at different academic institutions. Faryal narrated:

While I was at the boarding school in Murree most of the teachers were foreigners [Europeans mainly] and the locals also taught us well. I was good at sports and was an average student otherwise. The teachers at [Murree] school were very helpful; they had told us that we could go to them for academic and personal problems. My class teacher would tell us that we could share our problems with her because we were away from home and sometimes when one got homesick one needed to talk to somebody. The teachers would give special attention to those who were rather weak in studies and encourage such students to see them after formal school hours for extra help or facilitation. Some teachers would also arrange extra classes for the subjects which were difficult for the class; they would utilize our study [or homework] time. When I joined the school in Peshawar there used to be a “Values class” in which the students and teacher would discuss different moral and ethical values and how they are important for life. In Peshawar they taught us well too but Murree School was better. We [I] were day scholars in Peshawar. Whereas, in the college at Charsadda the teachers believed their only duty was to deliver the lecture, irrespective of whether they delivered it well or not; or even if they didn’t deliver at all no one really bothered. Even the students didn’t care much; the teachers also understood that most of the girls were there to while away time. The teachers preferred teaching those classes which had a lesser number of students registered in it. That is why some teachers weren’t happy to teach compulsory [core] courses like English and Urdu; these classes have the largest number of students. Besides, almost all the girls were weak in English. Most girls would cheat in the English exam and then get caught! Sometimes the girls would not even understand the questions let alone answering them!
Faryal’s critique of her respective academic institutions is also indicative of the types of students or subjects that the pluralistic Pakistani educational system produces, depending on the attitude of the teachers and their influence on the subject-positioning of students. The Murree School and convents are private schools run by missionaries and nuns respectively and attended by upper or upper-middle class students. Whereas, the college in Charsadda is a government institution attended by students of all economic backgrounds and “most of the girls are [t]here to while away time.” Thus, following a multi-tiered system of education produces subjects for different tiers of the society. In other words, in Pakistan, still following the colonial mentality and system, subjects are produced to propagate respective ideological positions: bourgeoisie; the petite bourgeoisie; and the proletariat of sorts.

In Peshawar many students are exposed to better academic environment as compared to the rural areas. Yet, like rural areas the teachers here affect students positively or negatively as well. Saara, a university faculty, told me that some of her teachers were more encouraging than her parents. Perhaps that is the reason she made it thus far. Even Mohammad Zafar, a male law professor said, “I teach them in a way to encourage the female students to break away from the stereotypes. I teach them constitutional law so I tell them what their constitutional rights are.” Similarly, Qaisara told me how her mentor, a senior lawyer, convinced her father to let her practice law. She said, “My mentor told my father, ‘The girls who intern with me, after two-three months, I tell their parents: some should get married; others can become good judges.’ But he told my father, ‘Allow your daughter to practice because she has the capacity to become a good practicing lawyer.’” Qaisara explained that her parents were skeptical about the environment of the courts because unfortunately no one in their family was in the legal field and nobody could give them the real picture of how women were treated in the legal arena. Gazelle Khan, also a
lawyer, exemplified the influence of teachers on students when she said, “Teaching is a wonderful job! I would say this to my students as well; they should teach.”

Among all these responses, Naeema Gul, herself a lecturer, described to me in great detail the influence various teachers have had on her life. Education, she believed was the cornerstone of success for any society or for any person. Naeema narrated to me that during school years she was not a very confident person. And that she had always been sensitive about the teacher-student relationship. As a kid, she still remembered, a teacher of English once punished her because she did not know the answer to a question the teacher had asked her. Naeema explained that at home they did not have an English speaking environment and their school did not really teach them much spoken English. She recalled that she was about 12 or 13 at the time when her teacher had a big stick with which she hit Naeema on her hand which was humiliating in front of the entire class. Humiliation and degradation of students at the hands of teachers used to hurt her even then when she was a student. Naeema was an average student but she used to have these class fellows who would get the first and second positions in exams and the teacher would give them a lot of importance in the class. Though laughing, Naeema said that she still felt touchy when this subject comes up.

Naeema further recalled that when she was in the ninth grade, she was 15 years old then, she used to like English movies. She used to watch them irrespective of whether she could understand each and every word or not. She also added that when she was in class two she used to watch “The Great Expectations,” not the animated cartoon but the movie serial. Naeema also had some British friends in the neighborhood and somehow she used to speak a little bit of

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83 English is the official language of Pakistan and hence learned in academic institutions as a second language. Urdu is the national language and is mandatorily taught as well. Both with English and Urdu children also acquire the regional language/mother tongue which they mainly speak at home with their parents, siblings, friends, and the extended family members.
English with them. She told me that though she used to be very shy but her British friend used to understand Naeema and she would give her a lot of importance. While in the ninth class one of her teachers asked her to read from a book. So, Naeema stood up and read and read really well. After that the teacher kept looking at her and she asked Naeema, “Have you ever been abroad?” Naeema told me that she was really flattered by this remark as she took it as a great compliment and blushed.

After school Naeema went to college and then she encountered another teacher. This teacher was nice: she used to be frank with the students and was very different from some of the teachers Naeema had experienced in school. This English teacher used to ask the students to speak and just speak in English, irrespective of mistakes, and that is what Naeema liked. Naeema now thought that she used to be incorrect many times but still she would speak up in class. She was still not really confident but she would want to do well in this teacher’s class particularly because she liked the teacher for her encouraging attitude toward the students. “So then one doesn’t want to fail your teacher’s expectations,” Naeema said. Naeema tried to be good in her class, “Maybe the intention was just to make her happy but improvement and change unconsciously comes inside one.” So unconsciously Naeema gained confidence and things started changing for the better. After college, Naeema initially intended to do her masters in Psychology; she was good at the subject and even got admission at the Psychology Department. But whenever she used to think about English she used to think about that teacher, thinking that she worked so much with them and now she (Naeema) will leave this subject and opt for another one. So Naeema instead ended up doing masters in English.

When Naeema started teaching herself she said she would very much imitate that college English teacher. She would be nice to the students; try to teach well and get good results and that
would add to her confidence believing that she was doing something good for some people. She said that she still had students, from years ago, who maintained contact with her. Naeema thought that is how the chain builds: her teacher might have learned it from her teacher; she learned it from her teacher; and Naeema’s students will learn it from her. She believed many of her students have changed with time. One of her students now worked in Afghanistan; he came to Pakistan and came know that Naeema was now working at another university so he specially came to see her there.

And as I thought Naeema’s narrative had finished, she remarked, “Let me finish off with an anecdote: the school teacher that I mentioned earlier comes back!” Naeema continued that a friend of hers once went to see a doctor. The doctor was pretty harsh with her patients. So Naeema’s friend questioned the doctor if she just examined the patients and prescribed medicine or was she ever kind and therapeutic toward her patients too. Now this doctor had been the student of that same English teacher at school. The doctor replied, “I was the student of so and so teacher so how do you expect me not be harsh?” Naeema believed that the things one experiences at a young age become a part of one’s memory and have a long lasting effect on one’s personality. Apparently we forget things but we do not actually forget anything and vent it out at some point in our lives. Naeema rationalized that the wrongs women are facing whether inside the family or outside the family is because we are not imparting proper education: our clerics are playing a negative part; our teachers are not playing their part; and the social responsibility does not fall on any one person. The problem starts with gender disparity but when one looks at the bigger picture it is all because of lack of proper education.

Naeema’s narrative left me contemplating on the strong role the teachers play in Pakistani and Pakhtun society. In a moment of reflexivity I had to but agree with Naeema: some
of my teachers have had a big impact on my life both academically and otherwise. In fact, I would not have been a teacher today had it not been for one of my teachers who not only taught me how to decipher text but how to decipher life and strive for the best until the very last. With the intervention of newer forms of schooling (read formal education) other than those of traditional madrassahs and local village schools Pakhtuns have begun to acknowledge female statuses and subjectivities beyond those of daughters, sisters, and wives. The women are gradually being accepted as doctors, lawyers, teachers, earners, and knowledge-bearers. As such, in Matti, Karak, Musa believed that change, in the Pakhtun society is coming because of education and Mobeen added, “With education and media.” Therefore, in the next section I examine the influence of media an ISA in the Pakhtun culture. I discuss what (female) subject-positions are formed; contested; and negotiated as a result of the influence of media in the everyday life of the Pakhtuns.

**Media as an ISA**

In Pakistan media is used in almost all its forms: printed and electronic. A vast number of newspapers and magazines are regularly published in Pakistan. Print media includes the dailies, the popular magazines, and some alternate press like jihadist newspapers as well. Most publications tend to be in the national language Urdu, followed by a few in English, and fewer more in the regional languages. In spite of the fact that the print media has been a part of the infotainment culture in Pakistan before the advent of electronic media yet the internet, cell phones, TV, radio, the satellite dish and cable channels are more popular among the people. One of the reasons for the popularity of the electronic media, especially TV, can be the lack of education and easy access to the medium. Most of the respondents at all the three field sites
thought that the media in general and TV in particular have affected people in one or another way.

As expected, my research findings suggest that media does have a strong impact on the people. I label them as the “media-defined” subject(s) and the “tech savvy” subject(s). The media-defined subjects include all such people who have changed either positively or reacted negatively (I discuss the positively–negatively changed separately later on) due to the influence of media, especially the TV. It includes both the good and the bad subjects. The good media-defined subjects are those who either benefited positively from the media, that is, by keeping within the cultural mores. Or those also pass as good subjects who did not really get affected by the media at all and thus maintained the cultural status quo. Whereas, the bad media-defined subjects are those who have learned from the media but as a result have defied the cultural expectations and mores. The “tech savvy” subjects use media, like the internet and the cell phones, in such ways that they are sometimes blamed for defying and talking back to the cultural expectations.

Media-Defined Subject-Positions: Conforming Media Subject vs. Disidentifying Media Subject

In Pakistan and particularly in KP where literacy rates are low TV and radio are the most popular forms of media. The respondents that I talked to were those who were more of TV watchers and thus TV affected. Most people in Matti, Karak told me how media affected their lives and in turn I inferred the type of subjectivity that was interpellated by the media. On a positive note Mobeen told me, “Media has played a very important role because initially [at least in our area] nobody knew about the importance of female education. There were no educated females [here] who could serve as role models and inspire other women to spend a good life.” But in the household where I was staying I seldom saw women watching TV. I was told (though
did not really see it myself) that there was a TV at home. The men watched TV, with the satellite channels, in the hujra or men’s quarters. In a conversation with the younger men I found out why there was an active cable connection in the hujra compared to home. Musa explained to me, “Yes, we watch TV and cable. It is installed in the hujra. (AK: Why not at home?). There is another connection at home as well. The reason is one of our [disabled male] cousins mostly stays in the hujra and he really likes to watch cable TV so we have it there for him.” And he added, “Media is really affecting us: for example, look at the way men have started styling their hair [read men have become fashion conscious]. (AK: Have you copied your hair cut from someone?). Yes, I have [names a football player]! Men too copy fashions from the media.”

In spite of the obvious influence that TV has on its viewers, that is, inculcating and encouraging fashion trends I was more interested to find out the substantive, if any, impact media, especially TV had on its viewers. I asked these young men how did watching TV change, if at all, their way of thinking. Musa believed that TV did have an immediate effect but it was a slow process. Whereas Qadir added, “Well you may not feel the effect at that time but it does make a difference later on.” Mobeen had a more nuanced explanation about the role of media. Mobeen said:

The positive effect of media is that it keeps you updated about the political happenings. One gets to know how people are getting politically exploited; and how our ministers are misusing their political powers and other resources. So, one aspect of media is news coverage. Media is also changing the culture and slowly a change is coming about.

Among the women Beenish also suggested that women in their village mostly adopted fashion trends from TV. She said, “Yes, they adopt latest fashions as well now. They get to know because of us (laughs) and they also get to know because of the media especially, TV; they also adopt those styles then. They go to the extent of closely observing the dress designs and embroidery patterns. TV has played a major role in this awareness.”
One of the interesting discussions I had about the influence of media was with Nasima Bibi while she was sitting among a group of other women, young and old. Nasima Bibi was insistent that we talk about the media, that is, TV with these women as most of them were avid TV watchers. Nasima Bibi told me that in earlier days people used to listen to the radio; and she personally did not watch TV. A woman sitting nearby added that people in the village watched Indian dramas (soaps) which were entertaining and were about family affairs. The interesting discussion started when another relatively older woman called Bilquees told me why women do not or rather should not watch TV. She explained:

Bilquees: Elder women don’t watch TV because they consider it a sin. It is a sin because pradee seree (unrelated men) come on TV. ((AK: But you are looking at them; they can’t see you!)). No, our religion says it is a sin [for women] to look at unrelated men. One should also observe purdah from TV. That is the Islamic way because TV has unrelated men on it.
Anoosh Khan: But there are unrelated men on the roads as well?
Bilquees: We are wearing burqas on the roads.
Nasima Bibi (laughing at Bilquees’ response): We are in burqas!
Bilquees: We are covered in burqas on the road but when people watch TV no one observes purdah. So, one should cover one’s face when one sees an unrelated man [even on TV].

I found Bilquees’ perspective interestingly worrisome; it was difficult for me to register how women, even though uneducated, could have such ideas in the 21st century: to observe purdah from men on TV! And at the same time I wondered how many other young women could be influenced by this idea; perhaps not many. Most of the young women in Matti were either educated to a certain extent or the TV talk shows gave them a better insight into controversial issues. All the same there was this woman, Bilquees, who occupied a subject-position of an elder woman in her family and would definitely have some sort of influencing power over other youngsters, especially women. Though her ideas may not affect the younger women completely but I think she can reiterate some of the conservative ideology to some extent. I did not cross-
question Bilquees due to the cultural sensitivity about age, and moved to the other women who watched TV. Most of the TV plays that these women watched were in Hindi especially the Indian soaps. Hindi is easily understood by people who speak and understand Urdu, the national language of Pakistan which is taught as a mandatory subject up to 12th grade. For most of these women Urdu was an acquired language and that too depended on how far they reached in school. They mostly heard Urdu on TV. As such, a constructive aspect of watching TV was that some of these women, especially who had not gone to schools, may learn Urdu through watching TV or else get familiarity with the language. Therefore, I asked:

Anoosh Khan: Those of you who watch TV do you understand Urdu?
Nasima Bibi: The younger ones all go to school or have been to school so they understand Urdu. Those who are not educated watch Pashto songs and watch other things too even if they don’t understand. Sometimes the others, who understand, translate it for them.

Most of the women present were in the 18-30 year-age-group. Those who understood Urdu told me that they primarily watched dramas, both Indian and Pakistani ones. They told me that some of the dramas have good social messages in them but others are just for entertainment; you understand the story even if you miss a couple of episodes. I asked them if they watched the religious programs on TV. They replied in the negative. Yet there were others, like Meena, who told me:

Many people don’t watch TV; few do. The reason is that men go out to the fields and sometimes women accompany too. Otherwise, women are busy with the household chores. We have moved to Peshawar for our children’s education. By the time I finish the household chores it is time for the evening prayers and so there is no time for TV. The children also don’t watch TV because they are busy with their studies.

The general sense that I got was that the younger men and women liked watching TV; it was a means of entertainment and information for them. At least in Matti women tend to benefit from the entertainment aspect of TV while men get to know about the local, national and
international current affairs as well. That means TV served as a neutral field; at least it was not negatively affecting the subject-positions of people in this village per se. However, the contestation of sorts appeared when I asked the young men if they can allow the women from their families to work in TV or in showbiz in general. I asked this question because many people in the Pakhtun society like to be entertained by the media but most people think of entertainment or showbiz as an unacceptable profession for both men and women.

Mobeen: No, we cannot allow them at this stage because change comes slowly: step by step. Yes, maybe after some years we may allow women to work in TV but my sister just can’t suddenly appear on the TV one day; change will come gradually.
Musa: If as an individual you want my opinion, I do not consider it unacceptable or inappropriate.
Anoosh Khan: But at the same time can you allow your sister to work in TV?
Musa: Maybe our generation has no problem with that.
Qadir: See if you look at our elder sisters or cousins they are uneducated. Even 15 years ago women in our family were not really educated but now the younger lot is educated. So how can you expect an abrupt change?

Mobeen seems very forthright and straight away rejects the option of letting the female members of their family work in TV. However, Musa and Qadir are rather rejecting the notion without really committing to the rejection. This can mean that either genuinely on a personal level they have no objection or they have an objection but do not want to commit to the objection as that would make them no different than their elders despite exposure to education.

In comparison to Matti, Karak, at Azmerabad, Charsadda the respondents, especially the younger women, were avid TV watchers and were quite blunt in their critique of TV regarding the things that influenced them positively or negatively. The interesting thing was that these people were very conscious about the influence of TV in their lives. Gulshan believed, “Earlier people used to be simple and now people have become clever. It is so because earlier there was no education; no TV and now you have these.” Similarly, Khanay said, “A lot of things are learned from TV, the dish TV. We note down things mentally from TV and then think about the
issues. We usually discuss issues among friends in the hujra; just like the Khan has his meetings, we too have our little meetings!” (laughs).

TV has had a positive effect on both Gulshan and Khanay; they are rendered as good subjects because TV has enabled them to take from it what makes them acceptably knowledgeable subjects. They are the good subjects because both of them are illiterate and believe that TV provides them with entertainment but at the same time informs them about social issues, thus making them “knowledgeable” subjects of sorts. Yet, both of them pick up only those things from TV which makes Gulshan (positively) “clever” and Khanay can “discuss issues with friends.” For Gulshan and Khanay, at least, TV is acting as an ISA that successfully creates the conformingly knowledgeable good subjects.

Whereas, Mahjabeen, much senior in age than Gulshan and Khanay, believed, “On TV there is so much liberty given to boys and girls and that affects the audience as well. Some young ones don’t realize that what is portrayed on TV is a drama; the actors are getting paid for what they are doing; and if we do all this, our entire family life would become topsy-turvy.”

Naila, however, had a more nuanced critique on what she learned from TV and how TV shows, over the years, had become more liberal (read westernized):

Naila: We watch Pakistan Television (PTV) [the state owned channel] dramas and not the ones that come on the dish or cable TV. By watching these dramas we learn so many things, for instance we recently watched a play that was about women suffering; women rights; and other social issues. Some dramas give you insight on foreign marriage proposals. For example, our people are ready to marry their daughters to men settled abroad; they do it thinking that the man is rich but they never do enough background check about the man. Sometimes, unfortunately, women married to such men meet disastrous consequences when they go abroad. When you think about these dramas you realize that this is all reality.

Anoosh Khan: So what else [read other themes] do you like to see in these PTV dramas? Naila: PTV has become very liberal; there is a lot of modernity [read westernization] shown on it now. ((AK: What? Even on PTV?)). If my father is home and a drama begins I don’t sit in the same room with my father; I watch it from another room. Now the actors dress up in such a way that it is difficult to watch them with one’s father; you can see
female actors’ cleavage. I mean every one [of the female actors] is wearing pants and shirts these days. The themes are good like there is one based on *vani.*\(^8\) These dramas are enlightening but there is a lot of indecent glamour in them now. [There was a time] we used to watch dances on the VCR now all that is performed on TV; PTV.

AK: Do you watch Pashto dramas?
Naila: We don’t have so much spare time; we only watch the evening drama. Earlier Pashto dramas used to be good; had good plots; now they are not. It’s been a long time since I watched a Pashto drama.

AK: Your sister said English is not taught well at school. Why is it important to learn English?
Naila: Earlier Urdu was given importance but everything is in English; English is everywhere. We may speak Urdu or Pashto but in dramas they use English a lot.

AK: You mean you need to know English to understand these dramas?
Naila: No, life is such nowadays that even if you go to the bazaar all people try to speak English. Now you didn’t use a single word of English but people…um…actually try to show off. People think English places you at a higher position in the society.

AK: But do you also get impressed by people who speak English?
Naila: We did not learn much English by studying it [as a subject] at school; we have primarily picked it up from the TV. We still don’t exactly understand English but can make sense of what is being said. For example, there is a program [on TV] where a doctor and a lawyer give medical and legal advice. They use a lot of English and I explain to my mother what they are saying or discussing. That is why it is good to know English; you need it for [understanding] everything.

It is interesting to note that compared to Gulshan and Khanay, Naila admits the benefits of TV but at the same criticizes its liberal policies. As such, Naila becomes the disidentifying media subject (Pêcheux 1982:159), who benefits from TV but at the same time is ready to talk back to some of its policies. For example, Naila mentions that she and her family watch dramas on Pakistan Television (PTV) channel(s). PTV is a state owned institution including a number of other channels specified for special programs: regional, sports, current affairs, and so forth. All of them have PTV as their suffix for example, PTV Home, PTV National, PTV Global, PTV Prime, and PTV News. Since PTV is a state owned institution its policies change with the changing governments. Therefore, PTV, compared to other satellite channels is supposed to work as the prime ISA with regard to media. I was rather surprised when Naila told me that PTV

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\(^8\) *Vani* is the custom of child marriage followed in the Punjab and Sindh provinces of Pakistan. It is mostly done to settle feudal disputes. To some extent vani is comparable to the custom of *swara* in KP.
plays have become very liberal. I remember, with all its channels, PTV used to be quite conservative when compared to other satellite channels. Perhaps, now even PTV realizes the need to compete globally and thus follows prevalent trends. Apart from this Naila admitted that she had learned English from the TV and she feels it is important to learn English because it is used a lot on TV and secondly nowadays everything, more or less, requires a decent understanding of English. Most of the plays that Naila and others watch are in Urdu and as Naila said due to substandard quality people do not watch Pashto shows as much or at least her family did not. There are other Pashto channels as well some of which are satellite channels that telecast private productions. But Pashto plays and shows are also telecasted by PTV National.

Faryal also told me that the common village women tell her that they learn more from TV than they do at school. Besides, she also felt that herself when she discussed issues with these village women. Faryal gave me an insight into Pashto TV shows and explained the reason for their unpopularity especially among the educated class. She compared and contrasted Pashto TV plays and Pashto movies. Faryal explained:

In Pashto movies there is no story line [read plot]; there aren’t any decent dialogues; there are grown up men acting foolishly. It’s mostly comedy; so are Pakhtuns only comedians? They make a joke out of themselves! As a result they are misportraying our [Pakhtun] culture! Pashto dramas and movies have strange and funny titles as well. Wait…let me think… “Cha kawal ka maa kawal” (Was someone doing it or was I doing it?); silly comedy titles (laughs). But sometimes a Pashto channel also telecasts some good and somewhat realistic dramas as well which show the Pakhtun culture and traditions. But most of time there are ridiculous comedies. Or there is Pashto news; there is very little shown that portrays the real culture of Pakhtuns. In Pashto TV dramas at least the women are decently and realistically dressed. But in Pashto movies there are big, fat women, usually our mothers’ age and they are wearing pants and skirts! Now imagine our mothers’ wearing pants (laughs) and running around! Let me tell you of a Pashto movie…I’ve forgotten the name. Just as the movie started the whole screen was covered with something red. Those of us watching, for quite some time, kept on wondering what that was. As the camera gradually zoomed out it was actually a woman’s behind! Besides, the titles of Pashto movies are like: “Topak Zama Qanoon” (The Gun is My Law); “De Spee Lakay” (The Dog’s Tail); “De Yaway Shapay Naaway” (A Bride for One Night); and the like! Such strange titles!
While Faryal and I were discussing the role of the Pashto media both of us laughed a lot; I totally agreed with her regarding the silliness that is portrayed in Pashto comedies, plays, and movies. And most Pakhtuns are not all that comical all the time. In fact, the scholarly literature on Pakhtuns (Khan, G.1990:27 and Lindholm 1988:231) explicitly mentions the reserved nature of Pakhtun men. But it made me wonder if the comic media portrayal of the Pakhtuns was another audience-driven desire that the producers wanted to show. In other words, the Pakhtuns are generally serious, especially in front of their juniors, so the world of celluloid just gives a vent to those pent up desires by depicting the funny and human side of Pakhtuns. The only problem is that they overdo it and as such make it slapstick as opposed to intelligent humor.

Nonetheless, it also made me wonder what the aim of TV and movies was. What kind of subjects do they want to produce and reproduce in the society? Aliya Khatoon almost echoed what I, as audience and a researcher, was wondering. She stated that the electronic media the whole day is showing dramas. If the right-winged Mutahida Majlis-e-Amal’s (MMA) government is in power the showbiz women will cover their heads with dupattas; when it was Nawaz Shareef’s (Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz group) government all the women would just wear dupattas which would not cover their head but only their chests; and when Pakistan People’s Party’s government came into power the showbiz women did not wear dupattas at all. She made a valid point by saying that as audience she could not understand who to follow. That is, that newscaster who today is sitting, wearing a three or two piece outfit (read western pants and coat), once upon a time would almost cover her face! Therefore, Aliya believed these things affect people and they end up following them. The audience directly took inspiration from them or in a way these showbiz women were telling or signaling people that this was the way an ideal woman should be and then the audience tries to be like them.
In conjunction Salma Shaheen also supported Aliya’s argument and said, “Media usually portrays things according to the national policy and planning… [Channels] have their own ideologies and policies through which they want to convince and pull people toward them. They are busy in propaganda even at times against the government.”

Yet, TV is a popular medium because in a purdah oriented culture of the Pakhtun society it is easily accessible and serves as the most legitimate form of entertainment for women. However, Sabina Babar observed:

I think the women watching TV plays desire to be liberated; they desire to have that kind of a life. It’s…an…not in the sense to be rich; they don’t want to be rich, they want to have the independence, to do what they desire to do. So that desire is there and I think it comes out in the plays, I mean it’s reflected in the plays.

On a somewhat similar note both Asma Faizullah and Shaheen Faheem also gave me an insight into the way satellite TV dramas or plays were adversely affecting people. They discussed:

Shaheen Faheem: For instance, during earlier times, in the villages there was no media interference and the people in villages used to be happily living in a world of their own. Now when they sit and watch TV in the evening all [Pakistani] dramas show the high class elites and their life styles. So, when they watch such stuff it inspires and affects them.


SF: Yes, dupattas are no longer there.

AF: Watching these dramas women want such life styles and demand their husbands to pamper them as the husbands in the dramas do and they want to act as spectacularly and authoritatively as the drama wives do! And in practical life such desires are not fulfilled and so the frustration [among couples] increases with all this. The media, therefore, plays a big role in changing women’s thoughts and expectations…. See wrong or corrupt things happen in all societies but their reinforcement, through media, should not be encouraged.

Naeema tried to explain why people, especially women and girls, were getting affected by media as stated by Sabina, Shaheen, and Asma. Naeema said that she remembered that the dish TV came to the country when she was in her teens. What she failed to understand was that maybe educationists, teachers, and home environment were better back then. Her generation
could somehow balance between the world of TV, films, religion, culture, and moral codes. According to her the current society, particularly from 2001 onwards people have lost their track; like liberty is okay; education is good; following a fashion trend is understandable but people have somehow forgotten about their values. What they should do; what they should not do; they have become blind. Naeema clarified that she was not a conservative minded person but she thought that ignoring one’s social, cultural, and moral limits tends to lead the society toward chaos. She further elaborated that people fall into bad things; young girls fall into bad things because “they do not actually realize that in movies things are different because they are movies! It is a fantasy world! One cannot follow the world of movies especially in a society like ours. Fantasy is good but one cannot completely lose oneself to the world of movies.”

However, some people also believed that TV had more far-reaching benefits as well. For instance, Dr. Gul Khan said, “There is a lot of difference between the previous and present Pakhtun woman because of the awareness; because of the media—media has a great role because nowadays many discussions and seminars take place and the topics usually include gender differences. When such topics are discussed they make females become aware of their rights.”

And Alamgir Khan also stated, “There are laws being discussed on TV talk shows all the time. There are more and more TV programs especially made for that purpose with legal advice and all that. So, women or rather the entire society has changed.”

The irony is that almost everyone watches TV but being a part of the showbiz in the Pakhtun culture is still something that is considered extremely inappropriate for women. Even male performers and actors are barely accepted but females are really looked down upon. As Abdul Haq stated, “If a Pakhtun lady wants to become a poet there shouldn’t be anything that
hampers her intention to do so. But if she wants to become an actor or a dancer the Pakhtun society will never encourage her and will rather discourage her from doing so.”

Professor Shah gave a slightly different angle of the same issue and said that according to his observation God had endowed Pakhtuns with many talents: they had beautiful voices; they understood the spirit of songs, and people appreciate it. But singing, in the past, was associated as a profession of a selected group of people; it was considered inappropriate for a Pakhtun woman to get on a stage and sing publically. However, now he thought that one can witness a change. Many Pakhtun women, of good families, now understood music and realized its importance in the culture and have made it to the stage as singers; at least as a hobby if not as a profession.

I also got the chance to talk to Dr. Gul Khan about this discrepancy that the Pakhtuns like to watch TV and movies but are not ready to accept actors and performers as decent individuals of the society. Dr. Gul Khan had also been associated with Radio Pakistan, Peshawar, for a long time. He explained to me:

Dr. Gul Khan: It is not TV’s fault; the fault lies in our minds, our way of thinking. I have worked in the Radio for 35 years—it’s a long time; I left it just recently, this month in fact. The idea that our people have about the radio or TV is that these are corrupt environments. But I don’t agree. I have personal experience. Look corrupt people are found everywhere…. We think that any woman who works in TV is a dumma\(^5\) and every man who comes on TV is a dum. See even the educated women come on TV for discussions but the Pakhtun mentality hasn’t matured to that level yet.

Dr. GK: This mentality will change when people like you come forward; they discuss issues with people and communicate with other people. Secondly, the media should also be made aware that it should talk about issues but they should also educate people that media is not only about entertainment; media deals with education; with culture; it teaches religion.

Dr. AK: What I meant was that we are ready to accept all these things but why don’t we accept a woman who is a singer, a dancer or an actor?

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\(^5\)\textit{Dum} (male) and \textit{Dumma} (female) are derogatory Pashto terms used for actors and performers.
Dr. GK: Because we have not matured enough yet, especially we the Pakhtuns. It depends on our mentality. But it is the responsibility of our media to educate people in this respect as well.

Dr. Gul Khan’s ideas are correct but the Pakhtun mentality is not going change very soon. But where does it leave the women’s subjectivities when: women who watch TV shows want to be like the women they see on TV but they cannot be. And the women who perform on TV are enjoyed on the screen but in reality are unacceptable subjects of Pakhtun society? Besides, women on TV have to change their appearances with changing government policies regarding dress codes. Therefore, I believe Pakhtun women continue to negotiate their subject-positions; contesting between how they want to be and how they are expected to be. Apart from TV and movies now the society has to deal with other forms of media as well. In KP the most popularly used forms include the cell phones and computers, especially the internet.

Media-Defined Subject-Position: The Tech Savvy Subject

In Matti, Karak no one talked to me about the role of technology, especially cell phones but it was one commodity very much used and talked about in Azmerabad, Charsadda and Peshawar. Gulshan told me, “And yes love marriages also happen. The mobile phones are responsible but it is mainly up to the individual’s thinking.” Someone else also told me that a couple had also “made” a telephone with a string-attached to disposable glasses in order communicate with each other. And Mahjabeen said, “Nowadays boys and girls choose their own partners or at least have a say. Earlier the [love] message had to be communicated through someone else. Now they don’t need an intermediate; the mobile is there and the boy and girl can easily communicate themselves. Nobody finds out about them; neither the girl’s nor the boy’s mother.”
In Peshawar, interestingly the cell phone is used for couple-connecting purposes as well. It should be kept in mind that though Peshawar is relatively liberal compared to the villages, Matti and Azmerabad but it is still very much a part of the Pakhtun society and culture. People may have moved out to Peshawar but most of them have a strong connection with their rural roots and therefore many traditions are equally followed. Rabia Saeed, when head of her college disciplinary board, told me her reaction after reading cell phone messages on some of the confiscated phones. She said:

I may not have found this out had I been an ordinary teacher but as a chief proctor when I would confiscate mobile phones from the girls and read the text messages in them, I would feel so embarrassed. In spite of being a married woman I cannot restate those messages. Then we imposed Rs. 500 fine on mobile phones. When the girls came to collect their mobiles I took them into confidence and was rather disappointed to find out that all those mobile phones were given to them by their boyfriends; at least to 90 percent [girls]. And this made me think that our girls…aa…the house’s [read parents] control on them has become so weak or rather why has it become so weak that a boyfriend can give her a mobile phone and the mother does not even know about it?

Some schools and undergraduate colleges do not allow students to carry cell phones during school or college hours. In case of emergency they are allowed to use the office phones. The faculty rationalizes this by stating that students miss classes and are busy talking on their phones or texting each other in class for fun; or during a test or an exam and create a disturbance and distraction for others in the class. Since I have also taught at a local undergraduate college I understand the rationale behind confiscating-cell-phones tradition. However, on a personal level, I think it is inappropriate to read someone else’s text messages irrespective of who they are sent from or written to. There is no harm in maintaining the institutional disciplinary code but ethical decorum (as Naeema Gul pointed out is missing from the society now) has to be maintained as well. In another example Sabina Babar also told me:

In the village this also happens. Then you see, look at the new technology, the mobile phone (lots of laughter). That is available in the village also. So that’s how the…
dating service is done. And it has become acceptable in our society; everyone knows about it; but no one will say our daughter does it; it is somebody else’s daughter who is doing it.

Sabina’s comment added validity to what I was told by the respondents in Azmerabad regarding cell phones and couple-connections.

Another love-hate relationship that the people seemed to have is with computers and the internet. Asma Faheem agreed that with the introduction of the computer and the internet, in the cyber world, physical distances between loved ones had decreased; people became aware of many things like importance of female education; fashion trends; new discoveries in medicine, and so on but “many immoral things have also sprung up though good things outnumber the bad things.” Asma, who is a mother, a mother-in-law, and a writer, made an argument about men watching porn movies on CDs, DVDs, and the internet. The problem arises when they make similar demands to their wives. Asma explained that she had noticed that a lot of immoral activity took place on the computer (read the internet) and viewership of blue movies had increased. The men were being negatively affected and as such were getting negative messages from such activities. What the men watched in those movies or on the internet they compelled their wives to do similar things. Asma was not sure if the young women or their wives were acquainted with all that or not. She said, “Our daughters and sisters are very seldom liberated enough to know about these things. In our society we hand over virgin girls in marriage and the men too, no matter whatever they have been up to, want to marry virgin women.” She continued by saying that when men ask the naïve young women to do or act with them as is done in blue movies then it becomes difficult for the women to do so. She told me that recently she wrote a short story on this theme: moral corruption due to the internet but did she not know how to end it because there seemed to be no end to this menace now. However, she said that she discussed the ending of her short story with a friend who was also a psychiatrist. The friend also told her that
people would not stop using the internet for such purposes now. So, Asma decided to rely on religion and psychology and tried to portray that the protagonist had some psychological problem; he was a depression patient. A little later Asma added, “A woman wrote back to me saying that I had written about men [being hooked to the computer] but now even women were doing all those nasty things on the computer [read internet].” Asma pointed out that men who were influenced by media and expected their wives to behave with them in a certain manner not only imposed male-defined subject-positions onto them but at the same time compelled women to behave as someone who they were not. Asma told me that she did not know how to conclude her story and relied on using religion as the savior which takes me to the next section of my discussion: religion as an ISA. Religion is a strong ISA in the Pakhtun society in general; when there are no solutions for problems religion serves as the solution for all problems. I discuss the influence of religion (most of the times is conflated with), law, and culture in the next chapter.

**Conclusion**

In this chapter I demonstrate that education through academic institutions and mobility acts as an ISA and interpellates individuals as subjects. Those individuals who manage to get out of their villages and localities or go abroad to foreign countries for education are interpellated through academic structures and institutions but also through mobility and exposure. Even women like Meena who has traveled out of her village to Peshawar, and Beenish and Saba who have travelled to Peshawar and acquired higher education tend to see the benefits of secular education differently than their seniors.

This chapter also shows the difference, especially in Matti, Karak, between the elder and relatively less educated men compared to the younger but more educated men. This difference greatly accounts for their respective facilitation in changing female subject-positions. In
Azmerabad, Charsadda even the illiterate, common villagers, men and women, vouch for the education of their daughters. And in Peshawar, as expected, it is the educated lot of men and women, irrespective of age that believes in the benefits of secular education in shaping Pakhtun female subjectivities.

Furthermore, in this chapter I demonstrate firstly, the influence that ISAs like education and media have on the subject-positions and sociocultural statuses of Pakhtun women at the three field sites: Matti, Azmerabad, and Peshawar. Secondly, I also illustrate that as a result of these ideological influences women contest and negotiate various subject-positions. Most of the times the women, and at times the men, aim to be the good subjects and do not question the respective ideological interpellation or hail. While at other times they may accept a middle position; and at yet other times may talk back to the interpellation either openly or tacitly. The similarities that I found among respondents at the three sites are that the Pakhtuns are generally influenced by teachers as they can be comparatively more candid with teachers than their family members. Secondly, both men and women at all sites were in favor of secular education and the constructive role of the media. Thirdly, my respondents believed in the overall benefits of media, especially TV, which provided entertainment and information. They also acknowledged the advantages of cell phones, the internet, and computers but some were critical of the inappropriate use of cell phones, like when used for dating purposes; and the internet when used for watching “inappropriate” things.

As far as differences are concerned first of all I could hear a more confident, emphatic, and a louder female voice as I travelled from Matti, Karak, through Azmerabad, Charsadda, to Peshawar; the women in Peshawar were more articulate and open in expressing themselves. I think the reason was that they were educated; employed; and had more exposure compared to
women in Matti and Azmerabad. Secondly, and interestingly, men in Peshawar like Professor Shah, Dr. Gul Khan, and Zaheer believe that the status of Pakhtun women can actually change by educating Pakhtun men. This was something very liberating to hear but I did not get such a sense from men in the villages. In the villages men agreed about the benefits of secular female education but were not liberal enough to admit that men need to be educated first to be able to understand its value for women. Finally, in Peshawar I could get a sense of and agree with one of my respondents who said, “an educated woman is relatively free [than an uneducated one].” Though another respondent was quick at counter-commenting by saying, “The [Pakhtun] society acknowledges such capable people later on but at the time they criticize them.”

Through various ethnographic examples I demonstrate that, no doubt, Pakhtun women are strongly interpellated by various ISAs, yet at different times, through different material conditions, and forms of negotiation they manage to achieve subject-positions that they contest for. However, these women may not totally succeed all the time but the ethnographic data suggests that with the passage of time some Pakhtun women have materially and socially progressed a lot. They have, to a large extent managed to contest and negotiate subject-positions within their particular structures be it the family; profession; or the society at large. The proof of this achievement is the acceptance, by the male members of the Pakhtun culture, of social statuses such as teachers, doctors, lawyers, and earners, among others, beyond the statuses of women as only mothers, daughters, sisters, or wives.

**Chapter Summary**

This chapter demonstrates the influence of Ideological State Apparatuses (ISAs) like education and media on the subject formation and positions of Pakhtun women (and younger men) in Matti, Karak, Azmerabad, Charsadda, and Peshawar in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP)
province of Pakistan. The following ISAs influence my research respondents and interpellate the following subject-positions and subjectivities:

1. Education: which interpellates individuals and produces: i) changing subject-position(s); ii) the economically-desired subject; and iii) the teacher-defined subject-position.

2. Media: which produces media-defined subjects who are: i) either the conforming or the disidentifying media subject(s); and ii) the tech-savvy subject(s).

As a result of the data analysis I conclude that the undisputable subject-positions that Pakhtun women have are that of a daughter, sister, mother, or wife. Various ISAs help in changing the positionality of these statuses thus making them more nuanced, individualized, and acceptable for Pakhtun women and the society. There are similarities and differences among the respondents at all three sites. The similarities that I found among respondents at the three sites are: firstly, Pakhtuns are generally influenced by teachers. Secondly, both men and women at all sites were in favor of secular education and the overall constructive role of media. The differences, however, include: firstly, Pakhtun women in Peshawar were the most vocal; followed by Azmerabad, Charsadda; and in Matti, Karak women were the least vocal. Secondly, some men in Peshawar were liberal enough to claim that the status of Pakhtun women can actually change for the better by educating Pakhtun men. Finally, in Peshawar I could see that women better understood and were more aware of the dilemma of Pakhtun women who are caught between the demands of the Pakhtun culture and the requirements of the modern world.
[Subject-positions] are never unified and, in late modern times, increasingly fragmented and fractured; never singular but multiply constructed across different, often intersecting and antagonistic, discourses, practices and positions. They are subject to a radical historicization, and are constantly in the process of change and transformation. [Hall 2011:4]

It is unimportant whether the institutions in which [the Ideological State Apparatuses] are realized are ‘public’ or ‘private’. What matters is how they function. [Althusser 1971:144]

In the previous chapters I have discussed the influence that ISAs like family, education, and media have on the subject formation and subject-positions of Pakhtun women and young men. This one focuses on the influence which ISAs like religion, law, and culture have on the subject formation of Pakhtun women. Religion, law, and culture are part of a separate chapter because in the Pakhtun society these three ISAs are most of the times conflated and mutually held responsible for hampering the progress of women. According to my data religion as an ISA produces “religious subjects.” For law as an ISA I do not have a subject-position label because this ISA conflates with culture and religion many times and as a result individuals tend to occupy multiple subject-positions. Finally, Pakhtun culture produces more nuanced subject-positions which I label as the i) “honor-oriented” subject; ii) “fearful” subject; iii) “foreign-influenced”
subject; iv) “linguistic” subject; v) “Khan-influenced” subject (positions); and vi) “agentive” subject.

Religion as an ISA

The state religion of Pakistan is Islam\textsuperscript{86} and majority of the people are Muslims. I have observed that people in Pakistan consider people of KP, especially Pakhtuns, more religious because the majority regularly offers \textit{Moonz} or \textit{Manza} (Pashto) and \textit{Namaz} (Urdu) or the five daily prayers and mostly keep the one-month annual fasts in the month of Ramadan. As far back as I can remember there has always been a tug of war between the secular and religious factions of the society. But in the recent years, especially after 9/11, this tug of war has not only become more pronounced but has spread into different walks of life. In fact, the word “religion” is an uncontestable garb for manipulating all kinds of situations and people. No one dares to question anything done or said in the name of religion (read Islam). One can be labeled by other ordinary citizens as blasphemous if one ventures to speak about a religious issue from a logical perspective that is against the opinion or understanding of the majority. Hence, in my research I found out that religion serves as a strong and convincing ISA and its influence can be felt across other ISAs as well. The three main things that I observed in the field were: i) religion (Islam) needs to be theorized as an ISA in these settings; ii) religion as an ISA creates a competition of sorts between the religious and secular systems of education. By religious education system I mean the guidance or education provided systematically in madrassahs established in the respective localities or field sites. It should be kept in mind that even in the secular system of education Islamiyat or Islamic Studies is a compulsory subject for students from grade one to the undergraduate level. Yet, there seems to be a struggle between the secular and systematic

\textsuperscript{86} The 1973 Constitution of Pakistan.
religious education systems. And iii) as a result of this contestation, between secular education and religious education, people tend to become what I call the “religious” subjects, though not always in identical ways.

The Religious Subject: Religio-Conforming vs. Religio-Negotiating Subject

In a Muslim culture it is expected that people, especially Muslims, have the basic religious know-how. In fact, religious education is part and parcel of almost all families. However, the current contestation between systematic religious and secular education and general mode of living is creating difficulties. As discussed earlier, most students and people in general are forced to accept thoughts and beliefs; they never really get a choice to choose what they want to follow. As individuals, religious ideology interpellates them at a very young age and as discussed in the previous chapters it happens through the family, academic institutions, mosques, and at times the media. As these individuals grow up they seem to be religiously driven subjects but on a close inspection most of them become rather “confused” subjects. For instance, the Elderly lady in Matti told me, “All my children are very upright humans: they are religious; follow Islam; and listen to me.” In fact she also told me that when she was a small girl she, along with other children, would go to the mosque where a maulvi saib (a religious teacher and the mosque caretaker) would guide them. And now they have proper madrassahs where they send their children. In the morning children go to schools and in the evening they attend the madrassah. However, Mashar Baba was rather critical of sending children to secular schools in the morning and to madrassahs later in the day. He said, “Our youngsters’ minds are divided: initially as kids they are made to receive religious education and are made to learn to read and recite the Quran. At the same time we want them to get secular education as well. This becomes burdensome for them.” Mashar Baba’s comments make sense; it is not easy to keep up with
school work, learn to read, and at times learn the Quran by heart in Arabic; a language most of
the Pakhtuns neither speak nor understand all their lives. Therefore, Mobeen believed:

    Our people have been religious since a long time but now because of [secular] education
    I got to know about my rights. So if I want to spend my life the way I want to I am free to
    do so and another person cannot come and interfere with my life and tell me to spend it
    religiously. I’m educated now so I can decide how to spend my life but earlier it were the
    mullahs who would instruct us how to spend our life. So now there is a conflict of
    thoughts.

And Musa added, “Since childhood we have been told to do things in accordance with Islam; our
generation still hasn’t changed. When our generation is replaced by later generations they will be
better than us.”

It is worth noting that Mashar Baba, who is less educated than Mobeen and Musa, tends
to see a conflict or at least a barrier between the ways in which individuals are interpellated by
religion through religious education. At this point it may sound ironic that men who are educated
in secular schools tend to criticize religious education imparted through the madrassahs. It is here
that we tend to see a struggle between the two ISAs: religious and secular education. Yet, this
contestation has to be kept under a check because religion tends to act as a stronger ISA and ends
up producing women like Bilquees (mentioned in Chapter 5) who believe it is a sin to watch TV
because unrelated men can see the women who are watching them on TV and as a result mars
those women’s purdah! As religion surfaces to be the more influential and most of the times the
unquestionable ISA therefore individuals that it interpellates become either the “religio-
conforming” subjects or else the “religio-negotiating” subjects because they are products of a
secular education system as well.

    As such, in Azmerabad, Charsadda, it was common to hear people “thanking Allah” for
one or another thing. In fact, Nudarat, whose two daughters had received secular education up to
the tenth grade, stated, “These Quran classes actually started because of us; my daughter used to
tell her teacher that they should establish a madrassah.” Besides, Mustafa, Nudarat’s husband who allowed his daughters to study up to the tenth grade and believed in female self-sufficiency, had religious oriented thoughts and said, “Another thing is that our people depend more on other humans and don’t trust God; any person who merely believes in another human can never expect to achieve anything. In the current times we are all slaves of America. If our people start believing in God America cannot do anything.”

Like Islamic Studies, Pakistan Studies is another subject which is a mandatory subject for students from grade one through undergraduate level. While talking to Naila, Nudarat’s daughter, I asked her about the importance of Pakistan Studies, and Naila replied:

There is nothing special about it though. Thank God we knew about Islamic things but I learned how our elders spent time with the Hindus; how the Hindus treated them (cf. to Omar’s remark about Gandhi “Jee” in the previous chapter); our elders had been mistreated [by the British and Hindus]. That is what we learn; nothing much…We have started [reading] the translation of the Quran in Pashto; in Pashto one really gets to understand the Quran. Until now we did not understand anything in the Quran; we would just read it without understanding.

This discussion reiterates the fact that mandatory subjects like Islamiyat and Pakistan Studies work as ISAs; they do not have a multifaceted approach and the students learn it only to get passing grades. Besides, these subjects reinforce hatred and intolerance for other faiths and nations unless one is willing to do further research and tries to see both sides of the picture which many do not end up doing. Even Faryal, from her convent school days recalled that they used to have a class called “Values class” and “in which the students and teacher would discuss different moral and ethical values and how they are important for life.” Here again proving that irrespective of an academic institution’s specific ideology, the religious interpellation is always at play either through curricula or through teachers themselves.
In Peshawar, unlike Azmerabad,Charsadda and Matti, Karak I did not come across respondents who had claimed a definite or open affiliation with or special regard for madrassahs per se. However, some respondents gave me cues toward religious inclination in academics as well; while others indirectly talked about how religion was acting as a tacit ISA and its influence could be inferred through people’s language and gender performance. For example, Sabina Babar explained to me that the liberal and almost religion-free atmosphere of her academic institution changed over time. Describing most of her colleagues she explained to me that now they are careful not to do or say anything that can be considered un-Islamic; a mentality that is currently prevalent in the entire country. She said she had observed that her colleagues use a lot of words like *Inshallah* (Arabic: God willing); *Mashallah* (Arabic: As Allah has willed); or *Khuday de ooki* (Pashto: May God make it happen). When one sits in the staff room a lot of *Hadiths* (sayings of Prophet Muhammad) are quoted and “whether they are authentic or not, you can never know, but every argument has them.” Sabina believed that as a community and academics they were now training a very narrow minded generation; the teachers had double standards and their thinking was very narrow minded. Sabina felt that her generation was more open minded; accepted change; and could see what was good for them and what was bad. Now there is a sense of fear; the fear that if they question religion or if they talk about religion it is wrong. People have been told not to question religion. Whereas, Sabina believed that one can question religion; raise questions in the Quran; there was nothing wrong with it; one can debate the things in Quran and can come to one’s own conclusions. She added that now people felt if they come to their own conclusions it will not be correct. That is why there were so many *ulemas* (religious scholars) appearing on the media and telling people about small things like whether they should brush their teeth during Ramadan or not. Sabina felt as if people were now
concerned about irrelevant things and they had forgotten the spiritual aspect of religion and how it was supposed to enlighten people. Sabina claimed, “Everyone offers more Namaz or prayers than my generation did; everyone reads the Quran more but they have no understanding of the spiritual aspect.”

Similarly, Naeema discussed her male students who often claimed to be very religious people but when she talked to them about cleanliness; discipline; respect for elders; or for the females: be they teachers, mothers, or sisters, that they (male students) should help the female members at home; or that they should keep their surroundings clean, the male students would just laugh it off; perhaps thinking, “Oh my God we are men and are we going to take care of these small and petty things!” But as faculty, Naeema and her other female colleagues keep on reinforcing these ideas.

Another activity that is rampant in Peshawar is the weekly get-together of a female discussion group(s), not in madrassahs, but at a designated person’s house. An apparently Islamic and Quranic studies expert imparts a sermon which is sometimes followed by a discussion and refreshments. These gatherings are popularly called *daras* (lectures or lessons). Shaheen Faheem’s opinion about such gathering and their facilitators was, “Some of them are extremists who want you to shun worldly life and devote yourself to religion only. If God has sent us to this world we have to live here according to the worldly requirements as well.” And Asma Faizullah explained the role of these *daras* ladies a little more by explaining that the holy Prophet Muhammad had said that if one was affluent enough one should wear good clothes, eat well, and spend a good life but maintain a balance. According to Asma, these *daras*-impacting women try to disrupt that balance. Asma said, “Actually the problem is that most people who give [deliver] *daras* are neither qualified enough nor do they have the vision; they have heard
things at other places and start delivering daras as well.” Asma continued to narrate that once a Talib (singular of Taliban and literally means a student of theology) was being interviewed on TV and the interviewer asked him, “You people are blowing up all girls’ school. Imagine if tomorrow your daughters fall ill who will treat them if you have no female doctors?” The Talib replied, “Who needs doctors? In earlier times did women go to doctors if they got sick? They would get well with home remedies and treatments.” At this Asma commented that now things had changed; science has made so much progress. If these people do not allow female education how will their women be taken care of? She believed that that was sheer conservatism and not Islam and such people were also defaming people like her who are not like them. Therefore, adhering to the religio-negotiating subject-position, Asma condemned such people by saying, “We are an Islamic country and believe in Islam but not in the kind of conservative Islam that these people are propagating. They have ruined some of our youth: young boys have strange beards; wear ankle high shalwars; and have strange appearances! They used to be normal boys!” Asma told me that she had also written a letter to an Islamic scholar requesting him to train the mullahs and educate them to talk about current issues and challenges in the Friday congregational sermons. She rationalized, “For instance, look at Christian priests, the one who is worldly and religiously qualified becomes a priest.”

As I mentioned earlier, while discussing Quran classes in Azmerabad, Charsadda, I felt as if these classes also served as a meet and greet place for Pakhtun women who were primarily confined to female spaces because of the purdah tradition. On a somewhat similar note, Qaisara in Peshawar, pointed out the dual agenda of the daras gatherings as well. She told me, “[Let me] tell you what daras are usually organized for! My mother’s friends tell her that she should start attending daras because she’ll be able to find good matches for her daughters. So that is one
reason for holding and attending daras.” The type of daras that Qaisara is talking about here refers to all-female religious gatherings where one or at times two women recite verses from the Quran and explain them; the rest of the women are usually passive listeners. Men too have such gatherings but they are arranged separately and are male-only gatherings. Daras are more or less socializing sermons for women in the urban areas; they serve the same purpose like the women’s madrassah in Azmerabad which I think is a meet and greet space for women. As such, at these daras in the cities, apparently women come to listen to sermons and Quranic teachings but at the same time use this opportunity for socializing with one another and hence use the space for finding suitable matches for their children, grandchildren, siblings, and other relatives. Qaisara continued telling me about a certain daras lady, whose name she did not disclose. This lady was a married woman and in the meantime had an affair with another man. She left her husband and two kids and eloped with the other man. Qaisara questioned, “So what sort of a daras is she preaching? What kind of Islamic teachings?” Qaisara continued that this particular daras lady also owns a gas station where they always cheat customers who buy gas there and then she sits and preaches about weighing and measuring correctly! “So, you know what kind of preaching and preachers are these? You spend your whole life in a corrupt way and toward the later years of your life, when your conscience pricks you, just for the satisfaction of your conscience, you start talking about religion.” In a similar vein Dr. Gul Khan also said, “Besides, a lot of depression in our society, especially among women, is created by the mullahs. Whatever the mullah does himself is OK but he will tell [the women] to hide [their] faces!”

As such, in Peshawar respondents talked about the general religiosity and how religion as an ISA imposed its influence on people, especially on women who become what I call the “religio-conforming subjects”—a subject-position expressed through their beliefs; others’
influence; linguistic choices; and social meetings. The religio-conforming subjects not only demonstrate their own inclination through various means or by reacting in the affirmative to the religious interpellation but at the same time become conduits for interpellating others as well. As a result, Pakhtun women are rendered “good” daughters, sisters, wives, and mothers when their religious subjectivities are strong enough to interpellate their children and others. But on the other hand this religious subject-position is at contestation with the secular “teacher” subject-positions as in the case of Naeema Gul and Sabina Babar; the “lawyer” subject-position of Qaisara; and the “writer–mother” subject-positions of Asma Faizullah, rendering these women as the religio-negotiating subjects.

(Islamic) Law vs. Culture: The ISAs Conflated

As I have shown, in the Pakhtun society men are the primary decision makers and in a way initiators and propagators of cultural trends; the women are mostly the followers in advancing decisions and cultural mores. As such, many a time law, both Islamic and secular, is conflated and there is no cultural regret, shame, or concern per se about it. For instance, Islam has a systematic division of inheritance shares. There are debates and explanations about discrepancy in the male and female property shares especially after the death of the primary property owner, but all the same women in Islam are clearly entitled to a share in the inherited property. In Matti, Kashar Baba told me about the status of most women in his village and their fate regarding the law of inheritance. He tried to explain that for the sake of convenience culture mostly prevailed over Islamic law. Kashar Baba claimed:

There is not a single woman here who has received her share of inheritance from her father. ((AK: Even now?)). Yes, even now. There is a man who lives nearby who declared his daughters dead so that he does not have to give them a share in his property. No woman here gets her rights. There are 95 percent people here who sell their sisters and daughters. Yes, education has come here; roads have been built; women go out and enjoy the fresh air or the sunshine now, that progress has taken place but women don’t have
their rights and [intellectual] progress has not taken place…. We are divided between Pakhto and religion but this issue is due to neither Pakhto nor Islam; it is a personal whim.

The phrase to be noted in the above quote is “We are divided between Pakhto and religion.” Kashar Baba qualifies his stance regarding this particular man that he is not following either Pakhto or Islam but his “personal whim.” In this case it may be true but in most cases it is Pakhto that prevails. Pakhto is the Pashto word for the language Pashto. As a language Pakhto is used as a noun. But Pakhto is also used as a verb which means following the tenets of Pakhtunwali or the Pakhtun code of ethics. Therefore, if one “does” Pakhto it means he or she is trying to follow the Pakhtun traditions as they should be followed. Sometimes doing Pakhto can apparently be interpreted in a negative way as in the case quoted above: the father is not ready to give a share in the property to his daughters. I tend to disagree with this notion of “doing Pakhto.” Pakhtunwali is an unwritten text (though documented and written now) but it is a text. And with the passage of time as all texts written, spoken, artistic, or visual can have different meanings in different contexts, so does Pakhtunwali. Therefore, my understanding is that just like people tend to take refuge in religion for their convenience that is how at times Pakhtuns tend to take refuge in doing or not doing Pakhto for the sake of convenience. Doing Pakhto, like Islam, is unquestionable for the Pakhtuns. And Kashar Baba aptly pointed out that the man under discussion did not give a share in the property to his daughters because of a “personal whim.”

Qadir, a practicing lawyer in Karak explained how Pakhto intervened in the legal courts as well:

Qadir: Even if we look at our courts there are two types of systems that are practiced: the law and Pakhto. For example, there is a man who everyone knows has committed offense but the convicted will involve the local elders in order to finish the case [without legal proceedings]. Yes, it turns into jirga-type proceedings [rather than civil or criminal proceedings]. And the courts are bound to follow that decision. This is what happens in majority cases. The laws are there but if a jirga takes place the case is dismissed [from the
court of law]. This is what happens in most cases whether they are criminal or civil cases. (AK: Even in the case of murder?). Yes; the parties agree on the diyat\(^{87}\) amount, say nine to ten hundred thousand rupees or ten lacs [approximately US$10,000].

Anoosh Khan: In all this what is actually the status of the law itself? And which system do you think is better: jirga or the legal proceedings?

Qadir: Let’s [first] talk about criminal law. When the police here investigate they take such heavy bribes that they mess up or mar the actual case [facts] that the chances of conviction [of the perpetrator] almost finish. The police also know that most criminals will be set free anyway. And those [police officers] who do not take money [or are rather not given a bribe] challenge and say, “OK, even if the courts set him or her [the criminal] free how will she or he free herself or himself from us?” Criminals are seldom convicted. The investigation process is very negligent.

Besides, during fieldwork and before that I had also heard that the judges and the concerned parties are happy with such out-of-court settlements. Perhaps it saves them time and money; more so the socio-economically stronger party tends to have the decision, ultimately, in their favor. Jirgas or the congregation of tribal elders is organized to make decisions, based on consensus, and the case(s) is decided on the basis of the majority’s decision and usually according to Islamic laws. It is a parallel legal system followed along with legal courts.

However, Qadir and I continued talking about the non-implementation of law. Qadir explained:

The reason for non-implementation is because our society is not ready to obey laws. The laws are for us; constitutionally one is bound not to harm others in society. But this is how people like you, who have been to the university, understand this. Here, in a nearby village, if someone is murdered, before the funeral of the victim takes place, his family members have to take their revenge. They are very violent people and the violation of the law is still very rampant there. The problem is that our people don’t like to be restricted and the law bounds you. We [our people] are not mentally prepared to obey laws.

At this point Musa and Mobeen also joined us and gave their perspectives of why laws were not implemented and how Pakhto further marred legal proceedings.

\(^{87}\) Diyat or blood money is an Arabic word used in the Quran which is the decided amount of money paid in compensation to the family of the deceased or the victim. It is in contrast to Qisas, which means retaliation or revenge.
Musa: The implementation is a problem because our police are also very corrupt. For example, if there is a criminal, the police will become partners with him. Before raiding the criminals they will call them [in most cases] and tell them that they are about to come and raid them and that they should take precautions and do whatever they can to protect themselves. So how will the police catch that criminal?

And we discussed further,

Mobeen: Even the [state] institutions are not very strong to enforce implementation. For example, the judiciary is not as free as it is made to appear; even if the judiciary gives the correct decision, the implementation becomes problematic because politicians get involved and use their pressure; and as a result the situation remains as it was. If institutions were stronger than personalities then they would be able to make a difference.

Anoosh Khan: You are the youth, the future generation: how and when are our institutions going to become strong?

Qadir: They will change when we change our customs; change some of our [cultural] principles like discourage [unlawful] favors to friends and relatives. For example, [it’s like] if Mobeen asks me to give a certain statement [in the court of law or during police investigation] and [wrongfully] expects me to favor him just because he is my relative.

AK: Is law practiced in medico-legal cases like domestic violence or dowry burning, especially in hospitals?

Mobeen: Yes, the protocol is followed there; all the evidence that is available [for a certain case] is documented and secured in the [hospital] ward and then handed over to the police. I have not worked a lot in that [hospital] ward but there are chances that records and facts can be messed up if someone wants to do that. But for most part the law is followed and evidence including fire arms, X-rays, et cetera are documented in the [hospital] ward.

The discussion with these young men, two of whom are lawyers, suggests that firstly:

Pakhto plays a vital role in the Pakhtun culture to the extent that it can be used as a garb to make the apparently unacceptable traditions appear acceptable and accepted as a norm. In other words, doing Pakhto adds to the notion of belonging and forces people to favor each other even wrongfully. Thus, doing Pakhto is an important subject-positioning marker of and for the Pakhtuns. Secondly, with respect to Pakhto there is a constant struggle among Pakhto, law, and Islam. And according to my understanding and discussion with the men above, Pakhto (read Pakhtun culture) prevails over the latter two. Thirdly, jirgas, in comparison to the legal courts, are also an extension of Pakhto as decisions are made according to Pakhtunwali, Islamic
jurisprudence, and the general cultural sensibilities. Thus, the subject-positions that various individuals occupy because of law (or not) is grounded in “Pakhtun-ness.” Here I cannot label the subject(s) as legal or religious; they are simply culture-driven subjects, who no matter what the context may be, legal or religious, they uphold their Pakhto. Therefore, being a good or bad Pakhtun subject is not determined by how law abiding or at times how strictly religious (I do not mean ritualistically religious only) a person is. In fact, a good Pakhtun subject is the one who adheres to Pakhto and does Pakhto. As such, culture is the most influencing ISA for the Pakhtuns; at times it interpellates more strongly than religion as well. Therefore, responding in conformity to the Pakhtun cultural interpellation is very important for Pakhtun men and women to keep intact their “good” subject-position(s).

In Azmerabad, Charsadda, Faryal who has an undergraduate degree in law, told me that in her village and in the Pakhtun society majority of the women do not know about their legal rights. And even if they do, most of the times they cannot ask for those rights because it is not done; it is considered culturally inappropriate even if the law permits it. Faryal gave me a comprehensive explanation of the status of dower in Islamic law and she also narrated the village women’s reaction to her explanation. The following excerpt from my conversation with Faryal shows how Pakhtun culture supersedes law. Faryal explained:

Faryal: For example, one of our Islamiat teachers told us that men and women have equal rights in Islam. Some scholars say that a [married Muslim] woman [in a way] gets two shares [of property]: one from her father’s inheritance and the other from her husband as mehr. In Islamic jurisprudence we also studied that a woman has the right to ask for “prompt dower,” which is the share in property [of the husband] that a wife can ask for, at any time, from her husband; it is called mehr-e-muajal in Arabic. Once a wife asks for mehr the husband has to pay it there and then and if he fails to do so he can be taken to courts. But the local people [read especially mullahs] hardly ever take this into consideration [or simply ignore it]. There is also the “deferred dower” or mehr-e-ghair muajal, which is payable by the husband only after the marriage is dissolved either by

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88 In Islam Mehr or dower is the prerequisite and mandatory gift in cash, gold, or property, given by a Muslim groom to his bride as a security in case of divorce or his death.
husband’s death or divorce. To begin with women here don’t know about this [distinction between the two kinds of dower] and even if women get to know about this they will never ask for it. The reason is that if a wife asks a husband for [prompt dower] he will tell her that it is only given when a husband divorces his wife. He will say, “Here take a divorce and get your dower!” So that becomes a problem too; even if a woman asks for this right she cannot get it.

Anoosh Khan: You mean the women in your family also don’t know about it?
Faryal: One of my sisters and some of my [female] cousins have studied law so I think they will know about this [dower distinction]. When I told the [common] village women about this distinction they laughed and said, “You Khans can at least afford all this business about shares. If we tell our husbands all this, they will turn us out of our houses saying, “If you want this, then go back to your parents’ houses! We don’t need you anymore!” I think if any woman asks her husband for this [that is prompt dower] she will be asked to leave or will be told to take divorce and then get everything; women [practically] can’t ask for this right. I would always talk to these village women and young girls about whatever I learned at college about laws, all kinds of laws.

Faryal highlighted how due to cultural constraints the common female villagers and even the educated Pakhtun women had to negotiate between their legal rights and cultural ethics in order to maintain and uphold their assigned cultural statuses

Pakhtun Culture-Defined Subject-Positions

As a member of the Pakhtun culture, through participant-observation in the field, and from the responses of the research participants I conclude that Pakhtun culture and traditional practices play a vital role in shaping the subject-positions of Pakhtun men and more so of women. When individuals are interpellated by culture they react to the interpellation and in turn become what I label as, the i) “honor-oriented” subject; ii) “fearful” subject; iii) “foreign-influenced” subject; iv) “linguistic” subject; v) “Khan-influenced” subject; and v) “agentive” subject.

The Honor-Oriented Subject

Honor plays a serious role in Pakhtun society; it is important for all, irrespective of their socio-economic status. This honor can be interpreted in terms of honor attached to women; honor
tied to respecting guests; revenge as a form of honor; and generally “doing” Pakhto as a form of honor as well. In this section I discuss honor that is linked with women in general and with womenfolk of the family in particular. The greatest disrespect for a Pakhtun man is perhaps dishonoring of his womenfolk by other men. But where does this honor-debate leave the women? How does it affect their positionality as subjects? To some extent, perhaps, responses from the field and my analysis of the data may provide answers to these questions.

There are some Pakhtun cultural practices that further demonstrate the struggle between law and culture. One such practice regarding women is the custom of swara, which in Pashto, literally means, aboard or embark (on a horse or camel). Swara is the Pakhtun tribal custom in which usually a very young girl is given away to settle blood disputes.89 A young girl from the accused party, as settlement price, is given in marriage to a man from the victim’s party. The Khan at Azmerabad explained to me the background of swara and informed me that the custom was still practiced but was appropriated to some extent. The Khan explained that swara, as a custom, began with good intentions. He gave me an example from his own tribe: the Mohammadzais. He said that the Mohammadzais of Charsadda and the Mohammadzais of Kandhar in Afghanistan are basically the same people. About 750 or 800 years ago, due to internal fights, the Kandhari Mohammadzais forced a group of Mohammadzais out of Kandhar. The ancestors of the evicted group came and settled down in the plains. Their internal conflicts were very severe; many compromises were made and peace truces held but one or another thing would go wrong again. There were many cross murders. So one day all the tribal elders got together and said that so many times they had tried to hold peace among these two clans but they could not maintain it for long. This meant they did not want to finish off the enmity; the elders

89 Weiss (2012:2) uses the phrase “marriage in exchange for vengeance” which, I think, aptly describes the custom of swara.
would publically promise to maintain peace but the youngsters for some reason would end up fighting again. Swara was the only option, they thought, that could finish enmity between the two clans. The rationale was that if a member of one clan died another member of the clan would seek revenge. And if they decided not to seek revenge their women would taunt them of cowardice. Hence, if a woman came from another clan as swara to the bereaved clan there would not be room for taunts. In order to finish the tribal feuds this arrangement was made; it was done with a good intention and nobody looked down upon this custom. And since the Pakhtuns were living in a communal system the woman who came as swara was treated like other women in that family; nobody taunted her. In fact, she was respected more because the feud was settled due to her. The Khan believed that the reason people tend to misinterpret this tradition is because they do not take the material reality of those earlier times into account. The Khan meant that if in modern times someone followed swara, it was rightly condemned because now the material and economic realities were different. He said that swara was still practiced among the tribal people. He narrated, “In our area, the other day I was presiding over a peace settlement jirga and I told the participants that the custom of swara is no longer practiced per se. Some Afridis were sitting with me and they said that they still practiced this custom.” The Khan told me that swara was practiced in Charsadda as well. He had made settlements on similar basis but appropriated the custom according to present times. While talking at the peace settlement jirga he said that he told the party at fault that in order to settle the dispute they would have to pay the damages in cash or kind to the aggrieved party and also send a swara. The Khan said that he knew it was a matter of honor for the aggrieved party as well. But beforehand he had talked to the aggrieved party not to accept the swara and only accept the settlement money or lands. Therefore, when he asked for

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90 Swara is the custom but the word is also used as a noun for the woman who is exchanged as compensation; hence she is the swara (that is, the one who boards).
the swara in front of the whole jirga, the representative from the aggrieved party got up, hugged the representative of the party-at-fault and said he will not accept the swara but only the settlement money or lands. Actually the aggrieved party had lost a family member and the only respectable revenge for them was either by killing a member of the opposite party or by getting a swara. So they told the Khan to make the swara offer in public to them (the aggrieved party) and their representative would forgive and forego the swara part. In such pre-planned compromises regarding swara the elder or the party representative usually says, “Their daughter or sister is our daughter or sister too; we do not want her swara. And in case we ever thought of marrying a woman from their clan we will do it properly; they are now our brothers.” The Khan said that he had settled scores of such disputes. Whereas sometimes some parties actually inter-married in order to settle a dispute forever. In such cases, he (as the jirga head) advised them not to call it swara and he would personally become a guarantor for the aggrieved party whenever they decided to marry a woman from the opposite party. At times he would also accompany the aggrieved party to the party-at-fault’s house for the proposal or wedding. But they will never tell that woman that she came to their family as swara. The Khan concluded by saying that all the tribes, like Afridis, Mohmands, Mehsuds, people in Malakand and Swat still practiced this custom. The Khan believed that swara was a good practice especially in the tribal areas where they have generation long clan feuds and this was the only way to settle those disputes.

Azmerabad’s Khan believed that the practice of swara has been appropriated at least in the settled areas of KP. Appropriated or not, the fact still remains that the traditional practice is present in some form. Shaheen Faheem exclaimed, “Swara is a problem of the Pakhtuns…. Oh we don’t even get to hear from the tribal areas! It is prevalent even in our settled areas.” The Khan also verified that swara, as it is, was practiced in the tribal areas but it was rather
appropriated in areas like Charsadda. I had quite a long discussion with the two ladies, Shaheen Faheem and Asma Faizullah, about the practice of swara. Both of them are writers; have active rural connections; and tend to look at the world with a writer-sensitive eye. The Khan had talked to me in detail as well. But as biased as I may sound the feminist researcher in me could not believe the Khan in toto. I had to listen to the female side as well. In the next paragraph or so I paraphrase my conversation with Shaheen Faheem and Asma Faizullah.

Asma told me that she came across a female member of the national assembly, from a right wing party; the member of assembly was accompanied by a tall, pretty woman from Bannu.91 This woman told Asma that she was now 38 years old and had done her masters in Political Science. She asked Asma if she had ever written about or on the traditions of Bannu. Asma replied in the negative and asked her what the traditions of Bannu were. This woman told Asma that in spite of the fact that Bannu and Kohat were settled and somewhat urban areas yet traditional customs were practiced there. She told Asma that if a boy liked a girl, whether a relative or from outside the family, he would fire a couple of gunshots outside the girl’s house; and announce that so and so girl from that house belonged to him. Even if they are social equals or not and even if he is a fool that girl has to wait and marry him. As a result, no one else can propose or marry that girl. This woman further told Asma that her paternal uncle’s son, a loafer, an addict, and a morally corrupt man, went to her house; fired a couple of gunshots in the air; and announced that no one could marry her except him. She said to Asma, “Just look at me I’m an educated woman and how could I marry an uneducated loafer? I was not willing to marry him and my parents were equally unwilling. But that man wandered outside our house announcing now and then that if any man came to propose me he would kill him!” As a result of this man’s

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91 Bannu district is approximately 120 miles to the south of Peshawar and its boundary touches Karak as well.
doing no one dared to propose this woman who thought, “I’m now 38; who will marry me now?” She said that this tradition was prevalent in the entire region of Bannu.

However, Professor Malak Naz\textsuperscript{92} (e-mail to author, Dec. 2, 2011) of Peshawar University, who is originally from Bannu told me that this used to be true 50-60 years back but has been obsolete since long. He explained that when a boy wanted the hand of a girl in marriage, he would send a proposal through the women of his family and if accepted, then men from both the families would sit in the hujra and settle the details of marriage in the presence of the Khan, the village Mullah, and other notables of the village. If the proposal was turned down, then the case was considered “closed.” In extreme cases, when the boy turned (proverbially) mad or his family took the refusal as an insult to their honor, then the boy would go to the house of the girl, along with a few of his diehard friends, and fire gunshots in the air and announce publicly that the girl belonged to him and that anybody attempting to marry her would do so at his own risk. Normally, this would end up in blood feud because, while doing so, the boy could be attacked by men from the girl's family or somebody else in the village who may take it as an offense to the whole village. In most of such cases, the girl was never given away in marriage to the same boy while nobody else would marry her because of the enmity of the boy’s family. Consequently, the girl remained unmarried throughout her life while the boy would marry somebody else. These girls were later known as \textit{buqra trore} (unmarried aunty).

In addition Shaheen Faheem said, “And as far as swara is concerned my own cousin has been bartered in swara.” Shaheen Faheem continued that her cousin was very young when she was sent as swara. It was all about a feud where a man was killed and in order to restore peace her cousin was used as the tradeoff price. The opposing party asked for the girl and Shaheen

\textsuperscript{92} Professor Malak Naz wanted me to acknowledge his real identity as opposed to using a pseudonym for him as I was just double-checking information with him; otherwise he was not a research participant in this project per se.
Faheem’s relatives handed her over. “They gave ten jiribs [40 canals] of land and this girl as well,” Shaheen added. She further said that as long as this girl’s mother-in-law was alive, she would make her do household chores; make her cook and bake doday or bread and the poor thing would burn her hands. “This cousin,” said Shaheen “must have been 15 or 16 years old. It was after her mother and father-in-law passed away and her children grew up that her life got a little better. All I want to say is that swara is still practiced in our society; the practice hasn’t stopped,” she added.

Shaheen Faheem said that in the recent past she had not come to know of any swara incidence. She believed that now rural fights were seldom settled by old methods. Maybe that was the reason she had not heard about swara recently. She explained, “Now if a party kills someone from another party the other party will ensure to kill a man from the first party; that’s it now.” Shaheen believed that now people did not settle scores by exchanging women because even if a woman was exchanged as a settlement deal both the parties’ enmity continued in a way; nothing was really settled.

From swara practiced in the settled areas of KP our discussion shifted toward the selling of women in Chitral, a mountain town in the north of KP which serves as a direct route to Kabul, Afghanistan as well.

Asma Faizullah: People still buy girls in Chitral and bring them to Peshawar but I think educated people don’t do this as much as they used to do it in the past.
Shaheen Faheem: Recently someone, I know, went to Chitral for a girl for their son but they were told that the girl’s family will first see the boy and inquire about him and then give them their daughter. And they told the boy’s family that they will not sell their daughter.
AF: So may be education has changed the mindset a little.
SF: Somebody else I knew wanted to find a wife for her husband as they were issueless. The woman told her husband that she can’t find him a wife here [in Peshawar] but they will go to Chitral to look for a new wife for him. This happened about a month or so ago. This woman told me that when she went to Chitral the situation is not as it used to be in the past. She said people there asked her many questions like “Why do you want a wife
for your husband; you are so beautiful?” She would tell them that she is doing all that willingly because they are issueless.93

AF: I know of someone who underwent a permanent contraceptive treatment. Her husband got angry at her for undergoing a surgery without asking him. She went to Chitral, paid 80,000 rupees (approximately US$ 910) and got a young Chitrali woman for him.

SF: Maybe there is a certain class among the Chitrals who still sell off their daughters solely for money.

AF: But someone else was telling me that because of education and thus awareness some people in Chitral have formed groups, led by elderly women and they decide about their young girls when someone approaches them with a proposal.

Anecdotes like these: the woman from Bannu; Shaheen Faheem’s cousin traded off as swara; the Chitrals selling or not selling women; and Pakhtun women hunting brides for their husbands, are a part and parcel of the traditional cultural practices. The purpose behind all these anecdotes is to demonstrate that women and perhaps some men may not be happy with such practices yet alongside the presence of constitutional law these traditional practices are prevalent in the society. The Pakhtun society, as a whole, may condemn them yet it has not been able to eradicate them completely. As a result of these practices Pakhtun female subjectivities are doubly forced into “men-defined” subject-positions (as discussed in Chapter 4); women bear the brunt of traditional practices and the law cannot even protect them. Besides, these cultural practices show how culture, law, and religion are conflated and most of the times culture overrides law and even religion in a country where Islam is apparently the dominating force.

Among other ethnic groups living across the country, a traditional practice that the Pakhtuns are also generally condemned for is honor killing, which is a practice of killing mostly women for marrying against the wishes of their family. Abdul Haq believed, “If we look at honor killing, no doubt that it is a cruelty; it is unjust; it is against Islam; it is against the law; it cannot

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93 However, adoption is sometimes practiced as an alternative. But surrogacy is not common in Pakistan; I have not so far read or heard about systematic surrogate pregnancies or cases.
be supported in anyway, but it is something which occurs very rarely…. It is a part of culture and this culture is not specific to Islam.”

However, Mohammad Zafar, as a law professor, narrated to me in detail the flaws of the legal system and the precedence culture had over law and religion. Zafar explained to me that elopement, love marriages, honor killing, and such types of cases are what people read about in the newspapers but such cases seldom came up to the judiciary; regardless of the fact whether they were from settled or tribal districts. It is taken for granted that the woman will be killed and that keeps on happening every day. So I asked him if that meant that the Pakhtuns were correctly accused of honor killing. Zafar replied in the affirmative and added that the law did not allow honor killing. There is a legal process but 99 percent of the cases did not end up at all in the courts. People tend to deliver justice themselves by killing the person on the spot. Zafar told me that he had been associated with a couple of fact finding missions of the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan. Zafar quoted the case of Ashiq Naveed, who was killed in Cherat in 2006. Zafar claimed that in such cases he observed that the masses were led by the prayer leader and the prayer leader very openly, in all the cases, issued a fatwah (Islamic juristic decree) for killing the person concerned. The police never stopped or punished the wrong doers and acted more as an accomplice with the provoked people. Zafar explained that the police were also part of the society. When they see the public, as a whole, is angry in a particular case, or elopement involving women, or blasphemy they also do not take any action. They do not take action that they are required to take under the law. For example, if someone is inciting somebody else for committing a crime, the punishment is the same for both of them. For the one who actually kills the person and the other one who aids or incites. Zafar stated that he did not blame the courts but

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94 Cherat lies 34 miles south east from the city of Peshawar and divides the district of Nowshera from Kohat.
the prosecution, that is, the police; the basic force. He believed that the attitude of the police had been influenced by the Taliban ideology that emerged after 9/11. The police would not touch anything that they suspected would invite the wrath of the Talibans or the public, for example, in cases of elopement or blasphemy. The police would not take those steps that they are required to take under the law, that is, to make arrests or to stop the killing. At this point, Zafar actually narrated Ashiq Naveed’s case: Ashiq was beating his wife and she picked the Quran and he accidently hit the Quran. Somebody saw that and the whole village went into frenzy. Ashiq fled away for three days in the Cherat Mountains. Villagers organized search parties to find and kill him. Zafar and his team went to the village Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP) to inquire about why they did not do anything to protect the man and prosecute him according to the law. But the DSP had no answer. The police did not want to take any action to offend the general public.95 As such I asked Zafar, “So, my question is that the village went into frenzy because the man kicked the Quran or because he was beating his wife?” And Zafar replied, “The beating of his wife is something that is taken for granted in our society. You know, a man in our rural society, by [cultural] implication, has the right to beat his wife sometime” (laughs).

This incident all the more shows that the law, on popular demand of the people (read cultural mores), was chasing a man not because the man was committing violence against his wife but for (accidentally) hitting the Quran. Here again it becomes apparent that due to the religious sincerity, which the relgio-conforming subjects believe renders them as good subjects are ready to enforce compromised subject-positions of and for women even if they occupy vulnerable subject-positions like that of battered wives. Although violence against women is

95 Zafar’s comments regarding the inefficiency of the police reinforces Qadir’s stance a little earlier who also blamed the police for inefficient investigation and corrupt practices.
condemned in Islam and is punishable by law in Pakistan but here once again we see the conflation of religion, law, and cultural expectations.

Besides, in case of traditional practices when some decisions have to be made they are made through the jirgas as was suggested by the Khan in Azmerabad, Charsadda and Qadir in Matti, Karak (who also said that legal court cases at times were decided in a jirga manner as well). Even in Peshawar, Alamgir Khan said, “Jirgas are mostly conducted in the rural areas; not much in the urban localities. These are men oriented [procedures]; women do not participate [in the decision making procedures]. Women do not have recourse to a jirga…. Shariah laws are normally applied in the jirgas.”

Besides, Gazelle Khan also made it clear that culture takes precedence over law. She said:

The major reason is culture; besides, there is no implementation of laws in Pakistan. It is not as strictly implemented; the laws are there on paper; the constitution gives one the fundamental rights, yet there is no implementation in the strict sense of the word…. [This is because] our law enforcement agencies have slack systems; or they are not duty conscious; basically it’s our government’s flaw that it does not either check or pressurize the law enforcing agencies. Nobody takes it seriously, with the view, “OK, it’s all right; let it be.”

In conjunction with Gazelle, Professor Shah was of the opinion:

I think…still men [in our society] can get their rights and when women, through men, want their rights it makes the equation even more complicated…. The society gives you legal rights; they are in books not in practice…. Only the ordinary man is bound to abide by the law but he also ultimately “purchases” or “buys” law.

Qaisara also had a similar complaint about the inefficiency of the legal institutions and the overpowering cultural expectations. She said:

When are laws actually implemented here? Women are coming for litigation; for civil cases women are coming for litigation procedures but no woman comes forth for criminal litigation. They don’t come for the criminal litigation because starting with the police,
who try their best that no First Information Report [FIR] is launched or written about a woman.

The reason women do not come forth for criminal procedures as Qaisara points out is that the police tries to do away with the First Information Report or FIR, which is a mandatory first step to officially register a criminal case. There can be some reasons for not registering the FIR: firstly, women in Pakhtun culture are not “supposed” to commit or report crimes because it is culturally inappropriate for women to go to police stations; it renders them as bad subjects just like it does when women go to courts (as discussed in Chapter 4 where I said, “Only the morally and culturally bad female subjects go to the courts”). Secondly, it shows that they do not have men to represent them; again women come forth as bad subjects because they are trying to do what is men’s job; or they have done something so bad that their men choose not to accompany them due to the social shame they may have to face. Thirdly, she may be registering a case about a social superior which can go against the men in her family; against the police officer who notes down the complaint; or against both. And lastly, if for some reason the woman does not have a son, husband, brother, or father to represent her, she is culturally labeled as a “cursed woman” anyway. In short, only “bad” female subjects come to police stations and the police try to “help” them by keeping them away from (cultural) shame by not registering their case.

Qaisara also told me that in the legal system there are provisions for women; the Women’s Protection Bill was passed in the Parliament on November 15, 2006. And apart from only three things, that is, terrorism; section 302 (of Pakistan Penal Code) cases or murder cases; and anti-corruption cases of moveable and immovable assets, filed by the National Accountability Bureau (NAB), a female accused can be bailed out on a plea of being a woman. However, the issue still remains: culture overrides law and religion. In other words, some cultural practices prevalent in the society prevail over religious and legal concepts.
Now I turn my attention to some more focused discussions which I had with my respondents regarding honor as it translates for them on personal levels. For example, in Matti, Karak, Beenish and Saba told me that their main concern in a coed university was to safeguard their honor. They said:

Beenish: Well at the undergraduate level in college, it was a segregated college so adjustment was not difficult. But comparatively in Law College [which was coed] we were very conscious and careful so that nobody finds faults with our behavior.
Anoosh Khan: Why were you conscious and careful?
Saba: We had to be careful about our honor. Not because we were afraid that someone will inform our family; no one could really do that, we were away from home. It was just our own conscience.

In Azmerabad, Charsadda again honor was an important thing; especially the family honor. While discussing marriage issues Gulshan told me that couples had various ways to see each other and that many couples in their village had had love marriages. Although their families agree to marriage by choice but overall such marriages were still considered undesirable. The villagers generally did not approve of such unions and the couples would end up facing challenging familial situations later. Therefore, I asked Gulshan if love marriage was something bad. Gulshan replied, “Yes, extremely bad! Because by doing such things you mar your parent’s izzat (honor). One should keep one’s parent’s honor intact that is something very important. My sisters also got married according to my parent’s wishes.” Similarly, Faryal said, “But even now most people leave it to their parents to choose partners for them, especially girls because they believe that parents can think better for them; they don’t want to dishonor their parents.”

With respect to our conversation on women-associated-honor it was interesting to hear people’s thoughts when I asked them if it was okay for women to run for candidacy in elections. I had a variety of responses; some were in favor while others were not. But the idea of women’s honor was a consideration, rather a mandatory condition, in both cases. Khanay believed:
I think our people [in our village] will vote for a woman; why not? ((AK: Won’t they object that this is a region where women are expected to observe purdah?)). Well, some people may not like the idea. Yes...even I do not consider it proper [for a woman to run for candidacy] because one has to keep one’s family in mind too. See, it is OK for men to contest elections because they don’t have to worry about their sharam (modesty or honor) as much as a woman has to. People tend to wonder why a woman wants to contest elections; what is the need?

Besides Khanay I asked the village Khan the same question; the Khan is educated and has contested elections himself. However, I asked him why he did not allow his female family members to contest elections. The Khan told me that in order to be a political figure one had to know how to face public; one had to talk to people according to the mood of the masses; and one had to have knowledge of various aspects of life, politics, and current affairs. He said that women of his family did not have these qualities and “besides, I think a woman has her honor and purdah to uphold as part of the traditional values of our culture.”

Although I was getting a little skeptical about my findings and wondered if I would really be able to prove that Pakhtun women are not as suppressed as they are shown to be. I asked Mustafa the same question. Mustafa’s reaction gave me some hope. Mustafa responded:

Now that mentality is gradually fading away. When Benazir appeared for the first time, after Bhutto sahib’s (sir) death, people made fun of her. Even the political leaders made fun of her. When Wali Khan became [politically] weak his wife, [Naseem] Bibi, stepped up. After Bibi’s coming into politics the Pakhtun mentality changed a little. The person who has awareness voted for her. See we [read Pakhtuns] are uneducated people; a country cannot run without women.

And even the Khan’s mother, Amma Jaan had more progressive thoughts than her son, though she too believed that a woman should uphold her honor. Amma Jaan said, “It is important for [a woman] to know her limits. She should do whatever she wants to do but she needs to be conscious of what is honorable and decent. She should not forget that she is a Pukhtana and we have to stay within the perimeters of Pakhtunwali.”
Thus, protecting and upholding honor in general and a woman’s honor in particular is one of the main cultural expectations of the Pakhtun society. If a man or a woman falls short of upholding this honor, it can lead to some serious consequences like honor killing. Therefore, the Pakhtun culture enforces the “honor-oriented” subject-position both for men and women. Although for men the honor-driven subjectivity may seem to be more important because their honor depends on the honor of women. But on a subtler level the honor-driven subject-position for Pakhtun women becomes a double burden because Pakhtun women have to uphold their honor, which in turn upholds men’s honor. In other words, Pakhtun women are responsible for maintaining their honor as well as men’s honor in the society. However, Professor Shah added, “Because women are sacred and we honor them a lot.” Irrespective of how Pakhtun men justify “honoring women,” honor does become an arena for female subject-position negotiations: Pakhtun women have to choose between who they want to be and who they have to be in order to safeguard the family honor and cultural expectations.

The Fearful Subject

My data also suggests that cultural expectations and the current socio-political climate of KP have given rise to what I label the “fearful” subject; a subject-position which in some ways perhaps is the consequence of all the interpellating ISAs discussed here. I look at two components within the Pakhtun culture that propel fear. Firstly, it is the cultural expectations: like familial obligations; teacher’s role, or honor-driven expectations, which produces a certain fear, especially among women. Sometimes this fear is consciously portrayed while at other times it is unconsciously driven. Secondly, the current unstable political conditions of the region have made people uncertain, insecure, and fearful at all times.
For example, the culture-family initiated fear can be seen in a dialogue between Mashar Baba and his niece who is also his daughter-in-law:

Mashar Baba: (pointing to his niece): She was admitted to school but she gave it up herself.  
Niece: I was scared.  
Mainazany Baba: She was scared because her cousin said if she went to the [same and only] school he will drop out [because of embarrassment].

Or the fear that is present among girls and their families when it comes to marriage issues:

Anoosh Khan: Why do you think [your elders] refuse to marry children outside the family?  
Beenish: It’s a matter of trust.  
Saba: Besides, they have no experience with outside marriages; perhaps if they do marry someone outside of the family, they may develop some trust.

Gulshan, from Azmerabad, echoed the same thoughts, as Beenish and Saba, when she said:

I understand marriage is all a matter of luck but when I generally look around, say at my mother: poverty; restrictions; dependence on somebody else; all this makes me anxious. I know there are restrictions at one’s parent’s house as well but it is different than the restrictions after marriage. You can still have your way in your parent’s house but in the other house you have to do what you have to do.

Whereas, Khanay observed, “Earlier women were better; they were stronger. Nowadays a woman feels scared even if she has in-laws at home. What does that mean?” And continuing with this thought Faryal, though from a stable socio-economic background told me, “See, even if I don’t have support at the back I will not be able to deal with people in the outside world. I don’t have the guts to go alone and fight for myself. I will get the guts if a family member accompanies me. It requires time and experience to develop guts.”

Then Shamsher, being a man, shared his fear: the fear for his daughters:
For the poor things work differently; others make fun of you [for sending your girls to school]. When girls pass or walk through the streets there are boys and men standing in the path [and they catcall or pass remarks at the girls]. If you people [the rich] acquire education you travel by your private cars; our daughters have to walk a considerable distance to get to school or college and men are standing here and there. The government does not even pay attention to this problem; it can ask the police to keep a check on such activities.

Shamsher’s observation definitely points to his own economically challenged status; the poor government infrastructure; and the unchecked law and order situation. But at the same time it also points to the tacit cultural acceptance of men hanging around on streets and catcalling women who pass by. Thus, as in this case, the women become fearful subjects but their family members also becomes fearful subjects; occupying the (subject) position of uncertainty, reinforcing the stereotype that women are supposed to stay indoors, and reiterating women’s cultural subject-positions as the “damsels in distress” who cannot take care of themselves.

Apart from the culture instigated fear, current socio-political situation has also aided in perpetuating the fearful subject. For example, in Matti, Beenish’s mother said to me, “Besides, these days the bomb blasts are a big problem; when there are blasts in Peshawar I get worried because our children are there and other Muslims are there too. Or even if there is a blast in Kohat; I wonder what’s gone wrong with this country. Why are we killing each other?” And in addition to culture and socio-political situation, the natural disasters also added to the fright of the fearful subjects. Mahjabeen, talking about the floods in 2010 reported:

We also went to see the affected areas; the waters had risen as high as three storey buildings and houses. Many women had to leave without their chadaars; they were ser toray (without head covering); being panic stricken some pregnant women got very sick as well. But it was inflicted by Allah; it was His will that people went through such a panic; fright; and loss.
I do not intend to say that only natural disasters produce fearful subjects; man-made disasters; socio-political situation, and cultural traditions also psychologically affect the already fearful subjects; they add to their fears and uncertainty.

In Peshawar also there were two kinds of fearful subjects as well: one who felt insecure due to the cultural practices; and two, who felt uncertain and fearful due to the local socio-political culture which had developed due to the war on terror in this region. I include the fear produced by the war on terror as culturally defined category because that is something which I personally felt in Peshawar on my field visits and not in that Peshawar where I grew up. I was never scared of anything or anyone. However, when I went from the United States to Peshawar in the summer of 2009 I felt very insecure and uncertain due to the bomb explosions everywhere. Even during my fieldwork in 2011, the feeling of insecurity was lesser than before but it was still there. Therefore, though this uncertainty is an outcome of the geo-political situation in the region yet it is psychologically affecting the local people. It is making them fearful subjects—a subject-position and a part of the local subjectivity which I think is a post 9/11 development.

Zaheer, like Shamsher in Azmerabad and some respondents in Matti, reminded me of the cultural constraint due to which people in the villages and at times in Peshawar were hesitant to send their daughters or sisters to educational institutes. Zaheer said, “My father was not prepared for the education of girls beyond matric or the tenth grade. The reason was that boys in our vicinity would try to tease the girls.” And Abdul Haq also pointed out, “Eve-teasing forces women to leave their education because they are chased and teased on daily basis; nobody is paying attention to these incidents that are happening to majority of women every day.” Perhaps the reason for this teasing is that Pakhtun men, as Dr. Gul Khan stated earlier, are not yet mature enough to tolerate women on the streets. Besides, the segregated and sexually defined social and
private spaces do not allow both, men and women, to understand each other. They do not even learn, unless they get educated in coeds, how to behave in the presence of the opposite sex. For example, Qaisara told me her experience when she initially joined a law firm for work. She said:

The first two weeks went smooth but during the third week I went with my senior lawyer to the high court and during break-time as I sat down, five [other] senior lawyers also came down and sat there. All of them were introduced one by one; I was sitting next to my boss, totally dumb folded. Whatever they offered me I declined…and very mechanically. The reason was that this was the first time I was all alone in the company of six men! One does get overwhelmed in the company of men; you do feel a little scared.

Naeema, who teaches at a local university which predominantly has male faculty and students, also had almost a similar experience. She said, “In the beginning I used to feel a bit scared because it is such a [male] dominating sort of an environment but if you have command over your work; are confident about yourself; and do not get involved in petty politics; you manage to survive.” Naeema also recalled the uncertainty she felt during her teens and said:

I spent most of my twenties, now I’m in my thirties, in the 1990s which was the time I grew through my teens into the college and post graduate years. When I compare [those years to now] I can see that previously we [young girls] used to feel shy even to talk [to strangers]. Previously [the girls of my age] wouldn’t feel very confident; somehow the fear used to be kind of an unknown, an uncertain fear, that is, what will happen if we do something or say something. The fear used to be… kind of an unconscious pressure.

Naeema, perhaps, also means the fear or the pressure that was and to some extent is still present among the Pakhtun women. It is the fear of the unknown: the men. Aliya Khatoon, told me that she was proud to be a Pakhtun woman but, “Not the one who is taught to fear the world and made to sit in a corner.” Just like Aliya, who was ready to talk back to the culture mores, Salma Shaheen depicted yet another picture of some women, especially single Pakhtun women. She said that single, middle-age Pakhtun women who are somewhat economically independent are women who:
Struggle so much socially that they do become brave because they accept all sorts of challenges as there is no other choice. As a working woman, I have personally never cared about anyone. I think I am very bold. Look at my poetry, some people criticize what and how I write. I write whatever I feel. I have never feared about whatever I write. I have never bothered about the men who work in my office with me. I recently wrote a book and I dedicated my book to the “moment that gave me confidence.” I am not afraid of anything or anybody.

There are women like Salma Shaheen who manage to talk back to the society but they have to reach a certain age and attain a certain status in the society to be able to get away without condemnation. And there are younger ones like Aliya, Naeema, and Qaisara who are following her footsteps.

The geo-political situation in KP has given birth to yet another kind of fear among the Pakhtuns. This fear affects women and men both which further aggravate things for women. For instance, Zafar narrated to me that two of his female cousins had to abandon their jobs at foreign-aided local non-government organizations (NGOs). Zafar lives in Peshawar but belongs to Waziristan. Two of his female cousins, after finishing their studies two or three years back, started working in NGOs. After 9/11 many NGOs started working in Peshawar on different projects. One day Zafar’s family received a letter from the extremist group Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), Waziristan, asking the girls’ families to explain why they were working in the NGOs. According to TTP the NGOs were involved in projects that were against Islam. The concerned families had to go through emotional, mental, and physical stress to clarify their position and the women had to abandon their jobs. In addition, Zafar said that although he repeatedly asked his wife to learn how to drive so that in his absence she could take care of the family but she is resistant to the idea. She says if she were in Islamabad or Lahore it would have been okay but she cannot do it in Peshawar because here people look at you as if you are doing something that is very wrong. Besides, Zafar also told me that every day when he took his child
to school he was not sure whether he will return or not; whether he (Zafar) will be alive or not. Zafar also explained that this was never the situation four or five years ago. He told me, “You know in September, October, and November 2009 people and families literally stopped going to Saddar (a popular bazaar); Saddar used to be deserted. There was a lot of financial loss; shop keepers started delivering things at home.” Zafar’s comment also reiterated the fear and insecurity I felt in Peshawar during my visit in 2009.

Zaheer added credence to Zafar’s take on women not driving by stating, “People are scared; I do agree, particularly women. Scared of the bomb blasts; they would lose their lives. So…aa…if a girl or a woman would be driving, it is felt as…aa…going against Islam.”

Even Asma Faizullah said to me that these constant wars, inflicted on them, in which so many sons, husbands, fathers, and brothers have lost their lives have made people extremely insecure. She narrated that a few days ago her eight-year-old grandson was peeking out of the gate and she told him to get inside. He asked her, “Grandma, why can’t we go outside?” Deep down Asma felt very upset; she thought when her sons (the boy’s father and uncles) were kids every Sunday morning they would tell her to make sandwiches because they would have a cricket match at the College ground. They would leave in the morning and return in the evening; and she would never care. Now she was afraid and even for a second she could not let the kids go out of the house. What to speak of the kids, she said she gets very anxious when the grown-ups are late by five minutes worrying what if something had happened to them and that she starts reciting various Quranic verses for their protection and safety. Asma said, “We worry whether our kids and husbands would return home alive or not!” In a similar vein Professor Shah also stated:

There is [religious] fanaticism. If our women, like earlier times start going out freely they are more at risk or danger than men and they are an easier target as well. They [the
religious fanatics] propagate that women should observe purdah and stay indoors. They can do all sorts of illogical things, so we [the men] are scared and women themselves are also scared.

This situationally-created fear was too strong among the people in KP to go unnoticed. Omar told me about the insecurity he felt while he was doing his masters in the U.K. and his family was in Peshawar. While in the U.K. Omar, every alternate day would hear in the news that there was a bomb blast somewhere in Peshawar or the surrounding cities and as a result he developed this fear, “What if I am here and my little daughter, wife, and my mother are no more….and aa…like it became a kind of habit [to say]: ‘if I were alive,’ whenever I referred to future.” Since that time Omar has observed himself frequently using this statement, “if I were alive.” He added, “I realized that I have this fear because I was very much worried about what was happening in Pakistan. Maybe it was nothing else but I was homesick and that’s why I was like this.”

Perhaps, Omar was homesick but the fear of uncertainty was real as well. Thus, in this section I wanted to demonstrate how and why Pakhtun men and more so Pakhtun women are first culturally fearful subjects and secondly situationally-fearful subjects. This leads me to another category which I call the “foreign-influenced” subject. This subject-position may be more applicable to Pakhtun men but I intend to show that it has an indirect bearing on the women’s subjectivities as well.

**The Foreign-Influenced (Female) Subject**

The foreign-influenced subject is a category that no one really talked to me about in Matti, Karak or Azmerabad, Charsadda but in Peshawar I realized that some respondents alluded to it in one or another way. By foreign-influenced subject I mean the ideological subject-positions that the Pakhtuns have accepted due to responding to various foreign interpellations.
over the years. The men have been directly responding to such interpellation and the women have been indirectly responding to these interpellations through their men; that is the men respond and in turn interpellate the women who respond to them. Most of the foreigners came to Pakistan and especially to KP as war refugees during and after the 1979 Afghan war with the former Soviet Union. Since then, due to various political situations, this influx of immigrants from across the Afghan border has not come to a halt. As a result of the geo-political situation over the years Professor Shah explained, “[Pakhtuns] tend to flourish, progress, and rise [as a nation] and then something happens politically, socially or materially and we collapse. Then again we try to rise but circumstances collapse us again.”

Ibrahim analyzed the foreign-influence on the Pakhtuns in a substantive manner. He told me that after the 1990s, when the Afghan-Soviet war came to an end, it had its effect on the Pakistani society, especially on the Pakhtun society; the war’s cultural impact was latent during that time and invisible to the people. But that effect started emerging slowly and gradually. For instance, Ibrahim said, “Our society was not as conservative [about women] that they should observe purdah and should just sit at home.” This was the influence of the Arab legacy left behind as a result of the 1979 Afghan war. At the same time another complication was created: the madrassah culture flourished. Ibrahim made it clear that whatever he was going to explain to me was his personal knowledge and understanding about the flourishing of the madrassah culture. He believed that when the Afghan war reached a certain stage people from Egypt, Lebanon, and especially those from the Middle Eastern countries did not want to go back to their homelands. Ibrahim recalled that as a kid he remembered that many Middle Eastern Arabs used to live in a residential area (close to the Afghan border) in Peshawar. Ibrahim explained that at that time he did not know whether they were Arabs or not and for what purpose had they come.
But his elders used to tell him that they had come from Saudi Arabia and were their guests.

Ibrahim also admitted that at that time he did not know who guests are and what do guests look like, culturally speaking. These people who came to Pakistan had a lot of money but at the same time they received a lot of protocol, respect and importance as well. Some of the local people would call them by titles such as Ameer sahib or Commander sahib, and these men felt very good about all this respect given to them. They realized that they could prosper in KP; they were welcomed by the locals; there was no point in going back to their own countries from which they had been cut-off for the past ten, fifteen, or even twenty years; and they may not get the same respect there. Ibrahim pointed out that if an individual goes to an alien society where nobody knows him or his background then he stands a chance to establish his reputation as he wants to.

So was the case with these warriors: irrespective of the status they had had in their own societies, whatever their position was, there was no protocol, no salutes, no salaams (reverential greetings), and they lived like ordinary men. But when they came to Pakistan, especially when they participated in the Afghan war, they were given a royal treatment by the local people. And these foreign men started dominating the local people; they started judging their cultural values.

Ibrahim further explained that Pakhtuns have the quality that they accept people ethnically different from themselves but they do not let such people dominate them (cf. to the Khan’s claim about belonging in Chapter 3). In other words, if there is a guest Pakhtuns will host him for a year or two but they will never make him the head of their tribe or clan. So these foreigners had their own ideology but they could neither totally dominate nor preserve their cultural traditions.

But at the same time, before some of them left, they spread some germs amongst locals who got corrupted. Up to the mid-1990s, Ibrahim believed, the socio-political situation was fine: calm

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96 Ameer in Arabic means the leader or the chieftain of a group or party; Commander is the English word: one who orders or instructs; and sahib in Urdu means Mr. or sir.
and smooth. Around 2002 once again there was a turning point in the global politics and once again it was because of Afghanistan. He meant the incidence of 9/11 in the U.S., which happened in 2001, followed by U.S. attack on Afghanistan which brought suffering on the Pakhtuns. And yet once again the Pakhtuns were victimized. He further explained that those people who had come for the 1979 Afghan war and then left for their countries mostly used the Pakistani tribal borders of KP to go out of Pakistan but these people had left routes and passages open. That in case of crisis, they could return in such and such a way, from this or that route. Besides, not all of them had gone back to their countries of origin. So once again, after the 9/11 incident and the U.S. led attacks on Afghanistan those old jihadis (religious warriors) and their new allies returned to Pakistan to their friends who were already present in this society.

Ibrahim further narrated that he met two or three families from Syria; one of whom was initially in the Syrian army. They developed an interest in jihad and came to Pakistan. This family’s children were born in Pakistan and later they married some of their daughters to local Pakhtun men. As a result they managed to mix with the Pakhtuns and started infusing, slowly and gradually, and the Pakhtuns did not realize what they were doing to them. According to Ibrahim, the second thing that these foreigners did was that in the name of madrassah culture, they gave local Pakhtuns another alternative educational institute; they systematically institutionalized this madrassah culture. Now again some of those people might not be physically among the locals but they have left behind the madrassah legacy. According to Ibrahim some of the foreigners whom he met, “Knew about three, four different languages. They knew Arabic, Afghani Persian, Irani Persian, and Pashto. They spoke Pashto so fluently, that is, their children, household women…yes, women too.” Ibrahim continued, “Once when anyone becomes a part of
this society; accepts the Pakhtun code of conduct or Pakhtunwali, then the Pakhtuns welcome them; accept them; and also support them.”

Ibrahim further explained that since the Holy Quran is in Arabic therefore anyone who is either from an Arab country, especially Saudi Arabia, or anyone who can speak Arabic, is considered, by some Pakhtuns to be a very pious and saintly sort of a person. Therefore, whether the Pakhtuns accepted or did not accept these people but the reward and punishment phenomenon sat in their heads and which is why they welcomed these foreigners. For the Pakhtuns the Arabs were and are very good people because Prophet Muhammad was an Arab and they believed that if they upset these people Allah will be displeased; these people should be listened to and respected. Ibrahim believed that what the Pakhtun men learned and thought regarding Arabs they enlightened their children and women with similar ideas. As a result, the women also believed what the men told them to believe or not to believe.

Ibrahim’s long narrative explanation makes it somewhat clear that the Pakhtuns are being labeled as extremists or fanatics because this was done through a systematic, well planned strategy which the Pakhtuns to date cannot get rid of. Some of them have responded to the interpellation of Arab nationalism in the name of Islam (read misreading (Saudi) Arab supremacy as a religious ISA); while there are others like Ibrahim who can see through and are trying to defy this ideological misconception. Even Salma Shaheen said, “We confuse both Islam and Pakhto [traditions]. Islam has now started dominating us…. Besides, our people do not even get any encouragement because some forces are also working against western education as well which [further] inculcates extremism that is why schools are being destroyed.”

Zafar, like Ibrahim, believed that the process of extremism or conservatism basically started in the late 1980s, with the Afghan war against Russia. He also believed that the Pakistani
state started promoting conservatism because at that time the state needed jihad; they needed jihadis to fight against the Russians; and for that matter many madrassahs were established; and thus the Arabization, especially Wahabism,\(^97\) of the Pakhtuns started taking roots. According to Zafar it was during that time that the status of the mullah also attained prominence. The local mullah used to perform only the functions of a prayer leader or at the most would lead funeral congregational prayers or \(Eid\)\(^98\) congregations; thus he played a very limited role. That role was transformed into a very active role: the mullahs started leading the communities in various ways with the help of state money and state patronage; weapons started coming in for them. This also had an impact on the sociocultural dynamics; on the society; and also on the status of women. And as a result, one could see the mushrooming madrassahs; the rise of mullahs, and support for a strong Arab flavored version of Islam. Zafar was of the opinion that at the same time the idea of multiculturalism, multi-ethnic subjectivities, and linguistic diversity were ignored and an artificial Islamic religious subject-position was tacitly interpellated by the state institutions.

Interestingly Ibrahim blames the Pakhtuns for their ignorance for accepting the so called jihadists among them as friends and family because the Pakhtuns could not speak Arabic, the language of Prophet Muhammad themselves so they were in awe of these foreigners; they were guests in their region; and the locals’ Pakhto compelled them to show hospitality toward these “guests.” But Zafar goes a step further and blames the Pakistani government who tacitly supported the Saudi Arabian version of Islam. Perhaps Zafar and Ibrahim are talking about the same thing but from different perspectives. Ibrahim believes that the Pakhtuns have foreign-

\(^{97}\)Wahab\(i(sm)\) is a sub-sect of Sunni Muslims and is a dominant form of Islam in Saudi Arabia.

\(^{98}\)Eid is an Arabic word which means happiness or festivity. Two Muslim holy festivals include Eid-\(ul\)-\(Fitr\) observed at the end of \(Ramadan\) or the month of fasting and \(Eid-\(ul\)-\(Adha\) or the eid of sacrifice which is observed after the performance of Haj or the holy pilgrimage to Mecca. This is observed by all Muslims irrespective if they have performed or not performed Haj.
influenced subjectivities because the foreigners were clever enough to adopt the Pakhtun culture but at the same time spread their ideological thoughts among the local Pakhtuns as well. However, Zafar believes that Pakistanis and more so the Pakhtuns were made to adopt a fraction of the foreign, pseudo-subjectivity patronized by the government. As a result the Pakhtuns have adopted an Arab influenced subject-position because they conflate religion and culture; for them being a good Pakhtun subject also means a good or what I call the religio-conforming subject as well. And religion as an ISA, in this case Islam works stealthily and the Pakhtuns respond to the religious ideological interpellation unawares; unconsciously mistaking Arab-ism for Islam. So here we see a clash of multiple ISAs: Islam, Arab nationalism, and Pakhtun culture. This ideological clash or confusion is evident when Pakhtun women like Rabia Saeed explained, “I wore the abaaya and Anoosh I felt the difference especially when I sat among the male faculty. I observed that the sides of my thighs were also covered in the abaaya; I had never thought of this. And I sat there so peacefully; the abaaya was loose…. I feel very protected [secure].”

Abaya is the long, loose coat worn mostly by Arab women over their clothes for purdah purposes, along with hijab or the headscarf. The Pakhtun women’s equivalent is the chaadar or burqa. With regard to borrowing attire and some traditions from “foreigners” Abdul Haq claimed, “But if these things [hijab and all] come, so many things have come from the West. OK. So many things: in the dress code; fashion is directed by the western fashion designers. So, we cannot remain static in that dimension.” I agree with Abdul Haq that the people are being influenced by the Arab world just as people were and are influenced by the West. Yet, there is a difference of degrees especially when it comes to the majority. The majority of Pakhtuns were never West-stricken as they appear to be Arab-stricken now. Once again I notice a conflation of
religion and culture. The Pakhtuns could easily be duped by the government and its apparatuses for political motives to adopt features of (Saudi) Arab culture in the name of religion.

One of the respondents, Sabina Babar, has already talked about the frequent use of some Arabic terms like *Inshallah* (Allah willing); *Subhanallah* (Allah is great); *Allahumdulallah* (thanks be to Allah), and so on. In the following section I demonstrate that language is an important subject-position marker for the Pakhtuns. Arabic expressions may have found their way into Pashto but for Pakhtuns Pashto language is one of the main cultural subject-position markers.

**The Linguistic Subject**

In this section I illustrate the importance of language as a form of cultural subject marker of and for the native speakers of Pashto. As I have observed Pashto creates the initial bond between strangers, especially if they are out of KP and in other non-Pashto speaking regions of Pakistan; and more so if they are in a foreign country. So much so, that a non-Pakhtun is immediately accepted as an insider if he or she can speak Pashto. The reason I use the label “linguistic subject” is because Pashto language or the capability to speak Pashto language endorses an individual as member of the ethnic group.

Secondly, speaking Pashto ensures the notion of belonging for the individual and acceptance on part of the others. However, it should be noted that Pashto has two major dialects: the “soft” or the Kandhari Pashto, spoken in Karak and some other surrounding regions; and the “hard” or the Yousafzai Pashto, spoken inCharsadda and Peshawar among other places. The point is to show that the language, overall, develops a sense of camaraderie among the speakers. Yet, the speakers are conscious and more loyal to their own dialects as well. However, the interesting thing is that English as a colonial, official, and second language has always
maintained its status along with the national and regional languages. With particular reference to language ideology, Irvin and Gal (2000:37) aptly state that respondents’ ideologies about language locate linguistic phenomena as part of, and evidence for, what they believe to be systematic behavioral, aesthetic, affective, and moral contrasts among the social groups indexed. As such, in a conversation with Saba, she out rightly showed me her preference for the dialect she spoke:

Saba: Language is one factor.
Anoosh Khan: But you can communicate with a person of different Pashto dialect. In case you get a proposal from Charsadda will that not be acceptable to you or your family?
Saba: No; it won’t be acceptable to me or my family.
AK: What would be your reason?
Saba: I prefer my dialect of Pashto; and there is a difference in our traditions as well, for example there is a difference in our [Karak] and your [Charsadda] traditions.

In Matti, Karak and Azmerabad, Charsadda young (common village) women watched TV dramas most of which are in Urdu and English. While some of them have been to school others have not. However, those who never went to school seemed to understand Urdu as well. Some of them pick up English words and expressions from others who speak English like the Khan's daughters. Gulshan said, “I pay attention to what people are saying in a drama (read dialogues) because I understand Urdu. No, I haven’t been to a school but because I work for my Khans and am usually at their house I have learned a lot from them also. See, I understand some words of English also. For example, like (laughs) “thank you” and “welcome” (laughs again).

Similarly, I had a remarkable conversation with Naila. The following excerpt shows Naila’s perception about the three languages: English, Urdu, and Pashto:

Naila: Earlier Urdu was given importance but now everything is in English; English is everywhere. We may speak Urdu or Pashto but in dramas they use English a lot.
Anoosh Khan: What is more important: should we be able to speak well in Urdu, English, or Pashto?
Naila: Nowadays it is a computerized (she said “computerized” in English) world; everything is said in English. Personally I feel English is the most important of all. I can
read and write Pashto because I learned it, in a course, at school. We were taught Pashto from the elementary classes; later a choice is given if students want to opt for Pashto or Home Economic (what a comparison, I thought). I had opted for Pashto because it’s our own language [mother tongue] and I think you can express yourself better, even in the exam paper. For example, if we get a topic like “Life in your village?” It is easy to write [an essay] in Pashto as compared to English.

AK: The little bit of English that you guys have learned do you ever speak in English with each other?

Naila: We only speak to get a kick out of it or make fun of each other. For instance, if she [sister] walks in [from outside] I’ll say, “Hi!” So it’s just for fun that we speak in English (Naila, was a little hesitant to show me a demo of her English vocabulary). Otherwise, you know our language is Pashto.

While Naila and I were talking, her mother also told to me that she had learned the word “disturb” from a doctor’s conversation with someone and she had learned “kidneys” (which she pronounced “kidkay”) from a Khan’s wife after a holy slaughter on one of the Eids. This shows that some of the women in Azmerabad learn English and Urdu by association of sorts. This listen-and-learn technique was used mainly by watching TV. However, Naila’s stress on English made me think that after 1947’s independence most Pakistanis are still stuck in the colonial mindset and consider English language a symbol of social status. It is true English is the need of the day but Pakistanis in general are way too conscious about acquisition of the language. Besides, English is a mandatory subject from grade one to undergraduate level; and is used a lot on TV as the respondents pointed out. Therefore, the consciousness about English language acquisition is transmitted through the two major ISAs: education and media; not to mention that it is the official medium of instruction and communication in academic and legal circles. The reason that English is endorsed by the ISAs, especially by education, is to ensure that the society remains socially and economically stratified. As I mentioned in Chapter 5 that in Pakistan at least three systems of education are currently prevalent. If a child goes to a school run by the government (generally known as government schools), he or she does not get the same exposure to English, academics and the extracurricular activities as a child who goes to a private school,
especially the schools which are administered by nuns or missionaries. Thus, this difference accompanied by the consequent lack continues to go all along an individual’s life; some manage to overcome it but the majority lag behind in the socio-economic race and on the flip side also develop what I call the “English language syndrome.”

Faryal, who had had exposure to some of the finest schools in the country, had a slightly different opinion. She also believed in the importance of English but at the same time thought it was important to learn to read and write Pashto as well. Faryal said, “I think English is important because it is the international language and is needed all the time. I think teaching Pashto is also necessary. See as a Pakhtun one should know his or her language. For example, look at me: I can read and write Urdu and English but I can neither read nor write Pashto.”

From the above discussion I recognize that the young women are aware of Pashto’s importance; being a fluent Pashto speaker further strengthens women’s subject-position as an authentic member of the society. But these women also want to be well versed in English because that too is important to maintain a subject-position: Pashto ensures an authentic female cultural subject and English qualifies one as an accomplished social subject. Therefore, these women become “linguistic” subjects because of the material conditions that surround them and the way various ISAs interpellate them. They respond accordingly in order to be the good linguistic subjects culturally through speaking Pashto and socially through speaking English. As such, Rahman (1995:151) aptly suggests, “In Pakistan [Pashto] is not used in the domains of power—administration, military, judiciary, commerce, education, and research—in any significant way…. Perhaps, because of the devaluation of Pashto in the domains of power, ordinary people feel that it cannot be used in those circumstances.”
People in Peshawar tend to speak other languages than Pashto as well. The most dominant languages are Urdu, the national language and thus the main language of communication after Pashto. English is used for official purposes; to some extent in academic circles; and by the social elites. Naila and Faryal, in Azmerabad, Charsadda, emphasized the importance of English but they also believed that it is important to be academically functional in Pashto. Shaheen Faheem informed me, “Even here in Peshawar [apart from government schools] Pashto is not taught at the school level. When we were children it was taught in schools.” And Asma Faizullah added, “Yes, they used to teach us Pashto but now they no longer do so…. The reason Pashto is losing its vitality as a language is because the Pakhtuns don’t really force the government to take any concrete steps for the growth of the language. That is the tragedy of the Pashto language; even if we are Pakhtuns most of us cannot read or write Pashto.”

Perhaps, being well versed in Urdu and especially English seems to validate a socially high subject-position; a good social subject. Being articulate and academically functional in Pashto endorses a culturally good subject-position. The former enables one to be socially and therefore culturally agentive; the latter gives one cultural agency but only locally or amongst the Pakhtuns. However, all the respondents agreed that speaking Pashto was a cultural subject marker for and of being a Pakhtun. Besides the Pashto language one of the requirements of Pakhtunwali or the Pakhtun code of ethics, is loyalty (as mentioned in Chapter 3). Therefore, allegiance to the village Khan by the common villagers in some rural areas of KP is also a subject-position that validates cultural authenticity.

The Khan-Influenced Subject (Positions)

One of the cultural subject-positions that I did not see in Matti, Karak and Peshawar was the influence of the Khan on his villagers. In other words, the subject-position of the Khan and
the subject-position(s) of the common villagers is an important position in a rural setup where the feudal tradition(s) is still intact. In Matti, I did not witness such a relationship because I was confined to a village which was relatively a new settlement, outside of the old village. And secondly, in this village people were more or less of the same economic status and most were employed as opposed to owning hereditary agricultural lands. As Karak is an arid region people did not have as large, productive, and expensive (ancestral) agricultural lands as people in Charsadda did. Peshawar, on the other hand, is a metropolitan city and not a rural area with feudal traditions. However, the Khans who reside in Peshawar have their little hujras in their houses in Peshawar and follow the village traditions there as well.

The common village women in Azmerabad generally come in contact with the Khan’s wife and other female members of the family. Their duty is to help with the household chores, accompany the Khan’s female family members during social visits, and in general give them company. Gulshan told me, “I work for my Khans and am usually at their house. I have learned a lot from them also. Yes, I do pay attention to fashions and trends but more to their [good] manners. By observing my Khan’s family I learn how to be decent; and I also pay attention to their makeup” (laughs).

Gulshan also told me that the Khan’s daughter, Faryal, had helped her sister, Gulraiz get admission in school. She told me that her sister was quite small when she started going to the Khan’s house and one day Faryal asked Gulraiz if she would want to go to school. Gulraiz told Faryal that they were poor and their parents could not afford sending them to school that is why her other sisters were illiterate and she would be too. So Faryal told Gulraiz that she would get all the books for her; would pay all the fees and dues; and Gulraiz should join a school. Gulshan believed that it was actually Faryal who was responsible for sending her sister to school and
providing for all her needs there. Gulshan also said, “I do the cleaning: sweeping and mopping; wash dishes; and cook food. This work does not seem a restriction to me; this is more like taking care of my own house. My Khans are nice; they don’t really interfere with what I do.”

In a similar vein Nudarat also told me the devotion her husband had toward the Khan(s). Talking about loyalty to the Khan Nudarat told me that one of her husband’s brothers was killed in a quarrel because of his Khan; it was the Khan’s fight with someone else. Now the rest of her husband’s brothers wanted to take revenge for the death of their deceased brother. But Nudarat was adamant and convinced that her husband should not listen to his brothers. Even Nudarat’s husband wanted to settle the dispute with the other party rather than play the revenge game.

Mustafa, Nudarat’s husband, gave me considerable insight into the relationship of the Khans with their villagers or hamsaayagaan, as they are generally called. Mustafa thought that the Khans had also changed with time. He explained that in the earlier days when a poor villager would go to a Khan’s hujra traditional etiquettes were observed: for example the Khan would sit at the head of the kut (woven wooden-framed bed) and the poor person would sit at the foot side of the kut. This practice would show the difference between the poor villager and the Khan. Now when a common villager went to see the Khan, he specially gets up to greet the villager and gives him a hug as well. In fact in olden times the Khan used to sit on the kut and the common villagers would sit on the upside-down kuts. But now, Mustafa believed things had changed;

99 Hamsaya, the singular form, means a villager who has been given a small house by the Khan to reside in and in return he and his family or some members of his family work at the Khan’s house, hujra, or the lands. Apart from the residential quarters the Khan pays the hamsaya in cash and kind and is responsible for the entire family’s general well being. Barth (1998:127) states, “Political supremacy may variously be maintained through an integration of serfs as true clients (hamsaya), or it may be maintained on less committing obligations.” Here Barth uses the word serf, which according to my understanding is not the correct word for hamsayas, at least now. Most of the hamsayas or their children have acquired education and do independent jobs as opposed to serving the Khan and his family; sometimes they also buy the house given to them from the Khan; while some simply leave the village and settle elsewhere once their economic conditions become better. Thus, the hamsayas no longer remain bound to the Khans per se, especially if they have bought the house once given to them by the Khan but if they continue to live in the same village they still feel a general sense of allegiance toward the Khan(s) and the Khan(s) expects them to behave as social inferiors but not necessarily as serfs per se.
even the Khan(s) did not really care who was sitting where on the kut. Mustafa further said that now their Khan(s) gave them respect by making them sit at the head side of the kut. And because the Khan(s) gave them respect they could even murder for him. But if the Khan(s) did not respect them they would not be able to do anything because they were poor people living in his village; they would only change their path at his sight. Mustafa recalled:

For instance, our eldest Khan was a man out of this world; may Allah grant him place in heaven. He was a learned man; he was a barrister; and he was a Khan but when he would come to visit me in my shop he would sit wherever everybody else sat, even if it were sitting on the floor. He was such a humble man; he knew how to respect both the poor and the rich. Whenever he came to his hujra he would call for all of us; get tea prepared; and bring out the sitar [a stringed musical instrument] and play it for us through the night. He would create such a cordial environment in the hujra that it would be hard to differentiate between the Khan and the poor villagers. Whenever I would accompany him to the lands [or ranches] we and the cows would sleep in the same shed!

Mustafa also explained that he and the other common villagers vote for the Khan during elections because they are a part of the feudal system; he will vote for the Khan or whoever the Khan would want him to vote for. Besides, if the Khan himself decided to be a candidate, it will be a matter of Mustafa’s and the Khan’s honor (honor becomes important again). Mustafa believed that when he campaigns for the Khan and if he wins, Mustafa will expect him to do something for them in return as well: like repair or construct metal roads; or get employment.

Similarly, with regard to allegiance to the Khan, Khanay told me:

Last night I and another man were sitting with the Khan. We told him that one cannot guarantee one’s life. But as long as we are alive we are there for you. We may go out of the village for jobs but we are still there for you. Our father passed away and now you take his place [for us]. Even if you hit us we can still not turn away our face from you. We are like your sons.

It is pertinent to take note that Khanay says, “We are ‘like’ your sons”; he does not say we are your servants, slaves, serfs, or even sons but “like” your sons. This remark is evident of how cultural hierarchy is ideologically at work all the time.
However, Shamsher, though loyal to Khans, was a little upset with them because they were not doing anything to get his son employed at a respectable place. Shamsher had his own logic and he stated:

Two of the Khans took [my son’s] papers [credentials] from me but neither of them did anything for us. I know why; we [my family] work and serve the Khans’ households and both of them [out of their sheer jealously for each other] don’t do it for us. One of the Khans really helped people in the village with their problems especially when he had won the elections and was in the government.

And Shamsher continued, “That is the reason when we request someone else for our son’s job they quickly tell us, “Why? You have your own Khans!” Shamsher’s wife, Mahjabeen, also added, “Even when we show our national ID cards and people read our residential address they know who we are [or which Khan’s village we come from]” and Shamsher further added, “Besides, all the local officers know we are his men.” Then Shamsher’s wife, Mahjabeen, told me that at least twenty times (which was an exaggerated figure) she had complained to the Khan’s wife directly about their son’s job but in vain. Mahjabeen also told me an incident regarding how one of their daughters was accepted, with some difficulty, for a government-run social development program in the village. The government established a stitching and embroidery center nearby for women. Her daughter also went there to get registered for a course. One of the officers looked at her daughter’s admission card and asked her, “Who did you vote for this time?” Another officer remarked, “Come on, she seems under age; she may not have even voted!” The first officer replied, “Yes, but I’m sure she has parents who would have cast their votes!” Mahjabeen said that her daughter did not answer the first officer but after a while he asked her where did she live and she had to reply that she lived in such and such Khan’s kanday (neighborhood). Mahjabeen said that her daughter was accepted for the program but the officer told her that these days they favored those who had worked for their political party which was
currently in power as well. Her Khan belonged to the opposition party but they still accepted her in the program. Mahjabeen told me that she had narrated this incident to their Khan’s wife and the Khan’s wife started laughing and simply remarked, “Oh never mind! Your daughter should have told those men that now my Khan and your Khan have patched up!” However, in the end Mahjabeen said that no matter what but their loyalty was with the Khan(s) of their village.

It is important to see how the relationship between the common villagers and their Khans work. It is a very dialectical relationship; the Khans help the village poor with cash and kind during good and bad times; through health issues and illness; feed them when and if required and the village poor are expected to show allegiance to the Khan(s) during his good and bad times. I look at this relationship not only as a dialectical one but it also appears as a clash of ISAs: the Khans are social and cultural elites; the poor villagers are mostly at the mercy of the Khans in one way or the other. The Khans help the poor villagers and thus maintain their power over them. They and their family members are good subjects as long as they help the poor villagers; and the poor villagers, both men and women, are good subjects as long as they obey the Khan(s) and prove their allegiance to him. But if one of them falls short of his or her expectations they become the bad subject. For instance, Shamsher’s example verifies this; his wife would try to say neutral things off and on because a certain power dynamics was working between them as the respondents, and I as the researcher. They were the village poor and I belonged to the Khan’s family. So my position as a researcher was not totally acceptable or trustworthy because I too occupied multiple subject-positions. Besides, Shamsher’s and at times his wife’s reactions were an apt example of what Scott (1990:4) calls the “hidden transcripts to characterize discourse that takes place “offstage,” beyond direct observation by power holders.” In other words, some villagers use linguistic markers to show their displeasure about the village elites. The villagers
are perfectly aware of what is happening to them but they also recognize the limits of their ability to resist openly without jeopardizing their dependent livelihoods and without inviting the displeasure of local elites. These villagers behave quite rationally in terms of their limited political, economic, and symbolic resources and opportunities (Scott 1985). This behavior, on part of the villagers, shows that all subjects, irrespective of their social statuses, practice some sort of agency at a given time.

The relationship of the common villagers with their Khan(s) is a cultural feature that I witnessed in Azmerabad but not in Matti. Whereas, in Peshawar it was a subject-position and a relationship upheld only by the Khans who had migrated to the city; otherwise this relationship was a feature of the villages where feudal system and the landed gentry still exists. However, within the cultural structures of the Pakhtun society, men and more so women, have their own ways to achieve agency and thus become the agentive subjects as well.

**The Agentive Subject**

By agentive subject I mean individuals who within their cultural structures find their own means and ways of talking back to the structures. In the above discussion and the previous chapters we see that the Pakhtun women and some young men show their own ways of responding to the interpellation of various ISAs: family; education; media; religion; law; and culture. In spite of the fact that at times they may have come across as restricted subjects and kept in check by various ISAs, nonetheless, irrespective of how confined these individuals seem to be, they do have some agency and thus I label them as the agentive subject(s). I discuss agency, especially of Pakhtun women, as a separate theme and a subject-position in the next chapter in which I use Pashto folk songs; poetry; their appropriation through media; and other mundane practices as examples of Pakhtun quotidian female agency.
Conclusion

In the previous chapter I discussed the influence ISAs like education and media have on the subject formation and positions of Pakhtun women and men. In this chapter I take the argument further and demonstrate the influence ISAs like religion, law, and culture have on the subject formation and positions of Pakhtun women and men. According to my data analysis religious interpellation produces what I call the “religious subject” which further includes the “religio-conforming” and the “religio-negotiating” subject. For law as an ISA I do not have a respective subject-position-label because law is conflated with culture and religion many times. And as a result individuals tend to have multiple, overlapping subject-positions. And finally Pakhtun culture which produces the i) “honor-oriented” subject; ii) “fearful” subject; iii) “foreign-influenced” subject; iv) “linguistic” subject; v) “Khan-influenced” subject; and v) “agentive” subject.

This chapter also demonstrates similarities and differences among the Pakhtuns from Matti, Karak, Azmerabad, Charsadda, and Peshawar. As observed in the previous chapters Pakhtuns generally get influenced by mothers and teachers; and the present chapter demonstrates that they are equally affected by foreign (read Arab) influence. Like Chapters 4 and 5 respectively, in which the data analysis suggested that both men and women get influenced by mothers but men tend to get more influenced by teachers. Similarly in the present chapter it is the men who get affected by foreign influences and in turn affect the women. The reason perhaps is the same: men are exposed more to the outside world compared to women. Yet, the Pakhtuns on the whole get influenced quickly and this is perhaps due to their lack of education; lack of exposure to and competition with other ethnic groups outside of KP. Secondly, one would think that in Peshawar people were more educated so law would be followed and not conflated with religion and culture per se. But the data suggests that law, religion, and culture are conflated at all three sites.
irrespective of people’s levels of education, exposure, and regional location. However, it is
heartening to note that people are gradually becoming aware of this dilemma. Thirdly, another
similarity that I noticed was the promotion of madrassahs or religious gatherings especially by
women of both rural and urban areas. Perhaps, these gatherings serve as meet and greet spaces
for women. Fourthly, Pashto language is considered an important cultural marker, yet women
(especially) believe that being able to speak English marks one as a social superior; it is an
acclaimed subject-position. Finally, at all three sites culture comes forth as the most dominating
ISA.

As far as the differences are concerned, firstly the allegiance to the Khan is a feudal
classification and a subject-position interpellated only in Azmerabad, Charsadda, and not in
Matti, Karak or Peshawar per se. Secondly, women in Peshawar are more vocal in terms of their
ideas regarding the influence of law and religion. Thirdly, the male respondents in Peshawar
compared to women in Peshawar and the men in rural areas are more vocal in expressing the
influence of foreign-mediated powers on the people in KP. Finally, in the villages in Matti and
Azmerabad, I could still sense some reluctance in sending women away from home or for long
distances to attend academic institutions or otherwise. The reason given was that it was culturally
inappropriate for women to walk through village streets with men hanging around and catcalling
at them.

Female lawyers like Qaisara or teachers like Naeema may feel uncomfortable dealing
with men, yet, overall, Pakhtun women have, managed to establish subject-positions beyond the
predetermined statuses of mothers, daughters, sisters, and wives within their particular structures
be it the family; profession; society, or the Pakhtun culture. The proof of this achievement is that
by staying within the predetermined domains of being mothers, daughters, sisters, or wives, they
have also achieved parallel-subjectivities like that of lawyers, doctors, teachers, and writers, among others. There is no doubt that some Pakhtun women are still contesting and negotiating their subject-positions, however, for many it is an achievement which is proved by the acceptance and adjustment that is shown by the male members of the Pakhtun society to the new subject-positions that Pakhtun women have achieved or are aspiring to achieve. Thus, Pakhtun women manage to practice agency by working within the cultural structures rather than resisting against them. In the next chapter I demonstrate the everyday agential role of Pakhtun female subjects as it comes forth with the passage of time.

**Chapter Summary**

In this chapter I take the argument further and demonstrate that other ISAs that influence the subject formation and positions of Pakhtun women (and men) include:

1. **Religion**: this is an ISA which produces what I call the “religious subject;” including the “religio-conforming” and the “religio-negotiating” subject.

2. **Law**: I do not have a label for the subject-position produced by this ISA as it conflates with culture and religion many times and as a result individuals tend to occupy multiple subject-positions.

3. **(Pakhtun) Culture**: this produces the i) “honor-oriented” subject; ii) “fearful” subject; iii) “foreign-influenced” subject; iv) “linguistic” subject; v) “Khan-influenced” subject; and v) “agentive” subject.

Like the previous chapters this chapter also demonstrates similarities and differences between the three sites when the above mentioned ISAs interpellate subjects. For example, men due to exposure get influenced more, especially by foreign influences, and in turn affect the women. This is perhaps due to their lack of education; lack of exposure to and competition with
other ethnic groups outside of KP. Secondly, in spite of more education and the general know-how even in Peshawar law, religion, and culture are conflated as done in Matti and Azmerabad. Thirdly, there is promotion of madrassahs and religious gatherings by women of both rural and urban areas. Perhaps, these gatherings serve as meet and greet spaces for women. Fourthly, Pashto language is considered an important cultural marker, yet women (especially) believe that speaking English marks one as a socially superior subject; it is an acclaimed status. Finally, at all three sites culture comes forth as the most dominating ISAs.

The differences include firstly, the allegiance to the Khan is a subject-position which is a feudal characteristic and a position interpellated only in Azmerabad, Charsadda, and not in Matti, Karak or Peshawar per se. Secondly, women in Peshawar are more vocal in terms of their ideas regarding the influence of law and religion. Thirdly, the male respondents in Peshawar are more vocal in expressing the influence of foreign-mediated powers on the people in KP. Finally, in the villages, Matti and Azmerabad, there is some reluctance in sending women over long distances to attend academic institutions. However, as a result of the data analysis I conclude that the predetermined statuses that Pakhtun women have are those of a daughter, sister, mother, or wife. But by negotiating their subject-positions Pakhtun women have acquired and the Pakhtun society has accepted other Pakhtun female subject-positions such as the lawyer, doctor, teacher, writer, and so forth. During this contestation and negotiation of subject formation and positions Pakhtun women manage to practice their agency through various mundane and creative means some of which I discuss in the next chapter.
CHAPTER 7
CULTURAL STRUCTURES: BREAKING BARRIERS THROUGH
PROSAIC AND POETIC FORMS OF RESISTANCE

Even those who are least empowered in a certain setting have some measure of agency in that setting, and their agency is bound up with (though not determined by) the cultures, institutions, and practices that gave rise to it. [Honig 1999:39-40]

The aim of ethnopoetic representation is not prescriptive—a frozen score enabling an oral reading of a text—but descriptive—an unfolding of cultural patterning.... Ethnopoetic description consists of close listening and representation. [Grima 1992:167]

In the previous chapters I have discussed some of the ways in which some Pakhtun women contest the culturally preexisting subject-positions like mother, daughter, sister, or wife by negotiating and claiming other subject-positions like doctor, lawyer, teacher, and so on, to practice agency. In this chapter I demonstrate that Pakhtun women, in addition to the long tradition of agency which persists into the current context, also appropriate some old statuses as sources of agency. Therefore, here I particularly look into the more mundane but nuanced ways, from the past and present, to highlight the agentive role or the agentive subject-position of Pakhtun women.
The issues I explore in this chapter are:

1. Evidence from earlier times showing that, regardless of subject-position, Pakhtun women could assert themselves and their ideas into the social discourse through:
   a. The women who coordinate(d) resources at home.
   b. Women’s participation in jirga(s).
   c. Evidence from folk songs: a venue which opens a space for women’s voices in the public arena when that space may otherwise be foreclosed.

2. Modern-day extension of earlier practices which include:
   a. Extension of sorts of 1.c. made possible by education through women’s poetry, in the present, with particular reference to works of a Pakhtun female poet.
   b. And extension of 1.c. as made possible by media.

According to Western standards, non-Pakhtun perimeters, and perhaps through some inference from previous chapters, Pakhtun women may appear to have restricted agency. However, within the patriarchal structures, without challenging the cultural setup per se, some Pakhtun women do have varied levels, different ways to express, and practice agency because “[the] strategies of resistance also have to be located within the same discursive practices” (Naseem 2010:6) and hence some Pakhtun women are the “agentive” subjects within their social settings and cultural structure(s).

In order to develop my argument in this chapter firstly, I begin with analyzing data that I collected at the field sites regarding the agency of Pakhtun women in ancient times; the near past; and the present times. To maintain consistency in my methodology, as done in previous chapters, I examine responses from Matti, Karak, Azmerabad, Charsadda, and Peshawar respectively. However, I break this consistency initially only to include a historical description,
as narrated to me by the Khan in Azmerabad, Charsadda, in order to put into perspective the status and role of Pakhtun women in olden times; the changes that gradually took place, and finally how the (progressive) evolution of the current Pakhtun women came about. Secondly, I also refer to Pashto folk songs from the oral tradition; the currently published and unpublished but publically recited poems; and finally a contemporary visual rendition of a Pashto folk song with a feminist approach. There is a wide variety of literature in print (Abu-Lughod 1986, 1990, 2008; Briggs 1985; Friedlander 1975; Grierson 1884, 1886; Henry 1975; Jacobson 1975; Karp 1988; Kolenda 1984; Munda 1975; Narayan 1986; Raheja and Gold 1994) that justifies the use of folklore materials as a resource base for purposes of ethnographic inquiry. Somewhat following Raheja and Gold (1994) I have included some Pashto folk songs and poetry to show that “the boundaries between words and lives are fluid and permeable, and they are sites of contestation and struggle” (Raheja and Gold 1994:182). However, it should be kept in mind that Pashto folk songs and poetry are not the focus of this dissertation. Therefore, I only use a few examples to support my main argument which is to show that Pakhtun women had mundane agency in the past and due to a change in their subject-position(s), especially through exposure to secular education and media, they appropriated past practices and have achieved greater levels of agency now.

In previous chapters of this dissertation the responses of the research participants, at all three field sites demonstrate that secular education and media have helped Pakhtun women achieve some levels of agency. In order to support my argument in this chapter I continue to look into the role of ideology (Althusser 1971) and processes of recognition (Pêcheux 1982) to determine subject-positions and subjectivities. In order to further substantiate my argument I also use the theory of structuration (Giddens 1979) and functioning of habitus (Bourdieu 1977) to
explicate the ideological underpinnings of the Pakhtun cultural structures and its impact on women’s agency as social subjects. In addition, I also use some feminist theoretical frameworks, like the importance of positionality (Abu-Lughod 2008; Collins 1991; and Naples 2003). With the help of anthropological theories, feminist paradigms, and Pashto literary compositions I demonstrate that Pakhtun women effect, validate, and give “agential voice” to sociocultural gender issues in a patriarchal society.

In order to understand the nuanced meanings of agency I analyze my data and some couplets from Pashto folk songs, poems, and the lyrics of a televised feminist rendition of a Pashto folk song. Raheja and Gold (1994:42) state, “[Folk] songs imagine rather than replicate human interactions, making speakers forthright in unlikely contexts, and at times making women articulate and assertive where they would be tongue-tied or acquiescing.” By studying some Pashto folk song texts and incorporating some comments from my respondents, I show that since long, women have used folk songs as agentive means to demonstrate their dissatisfaction with certain cultural expectations and taboos. The folksingers, poets, and media performers may not have complete agency to bring about a cultural revolution but their singing, writing, and visual presentations definitely help in raising awareness and advocating for sociocultural change. With the passage of time, though the patriarchal structures remained intact, some women got the opportunity to attend academic institutions and get formal education. As a result they continued to express their emotions through writing and publishing their work and also by “showing” and performing their emotions and concerns through the visual media.

Evidence From Earlier Times: The Women Who Coordinate(d) Resources at Home

In this section my objective is to show that once the predetermined subject-position(s) of mother, daughter, sister, or wife were established there were mundane ways through which
Pakhtun women achieve(d) agency. I begin with the Khan’s narrative, who explained to me the agency Pakhtun women had within the household and if or when required outside the house as well. The Khan explained to me that the Pakhtuns still follow some of the older traditions. He said that the Pakhtun men from the times of Alexander handed the household control to one, senior most woman; a very democratic system was followed. Whenever there would be elections or some kind of a voting process a tribal elder would be selected and one hearth (read household) would equate to one vote, that is, one vote from each household in the tribe as opposed to one individual vote. The nagharay (cooking hearth) represented one household. “This I’m talking about 5000 years ago and this tradition is still in practice,” said the Khan. He continued telling me that this tradition was still practiced among the Mohmands, the Afridis, and upper regions of Malakand. These sorts of traditions were followed right up to Jhelum in the Punjab and were done away with after the British rule. Some Pakhtuns in Jhelum still follow some of these traditions. The Khan continued to narrate that even if a man had eight or ten sons and all of them lived in the same house, whatever each son earned was handed over to the elder woman responsible for the nagharay or the cooking hearth. This woman was the nagharee mashira or the female head of the cooking hearth or the household. The nagharee mashira would buy similar clothes for all the children at home; similar shoes; similar chaadars; and everyone got exactly the same food. “After all the nagharay or the hearth was one [read the same].” And outside the house, in the men’s space, there used be the nagharee mashir (male head of the hearth) as well. His vote was that one representative vote of the entire household. The Khan added, “I began

100 Alexander the Great, the Macedonian (Greek) king, with his army, came up to India and on his way passed through the region which is now called Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) in Pakistan.

101 Jhelum is a city situated in the north of the Punjab province. The distance between Peshawar and Jhelum is approximately 200 miles. Jhelum was also a battle site of one of Alexander’s battles.

102 As in those days there were no stoves or gas cooking ranges and all cooking was done on coal or wood-burning pits.
narrating all this to you with reference to why the Pakhtuns think that they are unique.” He continued to explain that whenever there was a battle the men used to be away from homes for at least a year but they would not worry about their families and household. The nagharee mashira would be there; even if there were ten-twenty women they lived together. The men would not worry about their children because they knew that their families will receive clothes and food; and will be safe and secure by living together. The Khan added that nowadays when somebody got married they immediately wanted to have a separate house and also got separated from parents and siblings as soon as possible. He further explained that even now the Mohmands and Afridis go to Dubai and elsewhere to earn and visit their homes after two or three years. They never worry about the material needs of their wives and children because they know that their mother(s), being the head of the family, will look after all sorts of needs: she is the nagharee mashira.

The Khan also admitted that the fights some of these women had or have among themselves were and are because they feel angry toward the mother(-in-law) who is the nagharee mashira. The Khan said, “My wife still feels resentment toward my mother [they are married for the past 36-37 years now] because she is the “mashira.”” The practice of being the nagharee mashira was an important thing for women because whatever the sons, grandsons, or any male member of that household earned would be handed over to the mashira. She would equally distribute everything. Nobody would really differentiate between his son and nephew therefore some Pakhtuns still refer to their cousins as their brothers, especially in public spheres. All of them would have similar clothes and eat the same food. According to the Khan all these traditions were responsible for the Pakhtuns’ victories in battles whether fought in Hindustan
(present day India) or with the Persians in Samarkand or in Bokhara. The Pakhtun soldiers had no worries about their families left behind. The men, who were away, would empower, the mashira inside the home, to get money from all those men left behind. She would be either their mother or elder sister. This was very unique to the Pakhtuns, the upper hand given to the nagharee mashira, “This was our strength,” claimed the Khan, “Otherwise, we [the Pakhtuns] are like any other humans: Hindus or anyone else; we are all humans.” He continued that this sort of a mashiree (authority or seniority) is given to the Pakhtun women and this tradition, according to the Khan, sets them apart from other ethnicities. Even now among the Pakhtuns if this mashira goes elsewhere the people there also treat her likewise. For example, if she gets married (say she is the eldest sister) and goes to another household or family when the time comes she is given the same status as she had in her home. In other words, mashiree (seniority) is not reserved only for the family mothers or daughters; eventually daughters-in-law gain this status as well.

**Women’s Participation in Jirga(s)**

With the subject-position of mashira (seniority) established the women in olden times had also negotiated for other social (subject) positions as well. The Khan further narrated that during ancient times when hereditary lands were divided among offspring or brothers, only men got their shares of inheritance; women were not given a share. As a result, the Pakhtun women sort of revolted. The nagharee mashiraanay (plural of mashira) got together and went to a jirga to complain. At times, if the problem or the situation required, the jirga would invite the household mashiray (also plural for mashira) to register their complaint or version of the problem(s). At this point in our conversation I had to interrupt because I thought jirga is and always was men’s domain and women were never part of it. So I asked:

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103 These are now cities in Uzbekistan.
Anoosh Khan: Really? I thought a jirga always meant “men only”; women were never a part of it.
Khan: Yes, yes, they would be requested to come out [to the hujra where the jirga would convene].
AK: In the presence of all men!
Khan: Yes, in the middle of all men. Those were all mashiraanay khazay (elder women); they were either someone’s mothers or grandmothers. The biggest female jirga ever held was held in Hashtnagar.\footnote{Hasht in Persian means eight and nagar in Sanskrit means town. A part of Charsadda is also known as Hashtnagar. It includes the eight villages: Charsadda Tehsil, Prang, Rajjar, Sherpao, Tangi, Turangzai, Umarzai, and Utmanzai.} Charsadda. It was our family jirga! It was convened around 1857. ((AK: Oh really?)). So the women revolted; there were certain households that had many daughters and there would be fewer sons. So the women questioned as to why the lands were distributed according to the number of sons in a household [there were extended families as well who were a part of this communal living]. Initially there was tribal division in which the Pakhtuns were divided into major tribes like the Afridis, Mohmands, and so on. Then these bigger tribes were divided into sub-tribes and these sub-tribes were allotted land on the basis of the number of nagharee or the household hearths in that sub-tribe or clan.

The Khan explained that in olden times the mashiraanay or the female elders were also invited to participate in the jirgas with the intention that the jirga did not end up making any unconscious decisions against the women and their interests. “And, by the way, mashiraanay did not have to be elder age wise; they were the household elders who, through experience, had the know-how about relevant problems and issues faced by the women,” the Khan clarified.\footnote{Yousafzai and Gohar (2005:29) also claim, “The patriarchal system extends into the practice of Jirga where currently women do not have the precedent of participation, although Bushra Gohar, a renowned social worker and activist says that in the past women did participate in the proceedings of Jirgas.”}

The Khan also told me that in communal houses families were not bothered about everyday groceries. If something was not available in one house, they would get it from another family.\footnote{The Khan was correct in saying this because in Matti, Karak I was told about a somewhat similar practice still prevalent among them. Beenish’s mother told me that in their extended family everyone had separate houses but they moved around freely in each other’s house. For example, one would eat at another’s house and sleep in someone else’s house. One of the male elders would get all the rations and groceries and then divide it equally among the four or five households. They still live in a semi-communal way. Beenish’s mother said, “All of us have separate houses, divided by walls but what is cooked at one house goes to all other houses.” There were four or five} The Khan believed that many fights and quarrels began after division of resources;

104 Hasht in Persian means eight and nagar in Sanskrit means town. A part of Charsadda is also known as Hashtnagar. It includes the eight villages: Charsadda Tehsil, Prang, Rajjar, Sherpao, Tangi, Turangzai, Umarzai, and Utmanzai.

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even fights between husbands and wives as well. He further explained that among the Pakhtuns there was no concept of divorce; according to him it came with the Hindu influence. It is true that the Pakhtuns had many wives (the limit is four at a time according to Islam) but husbands never divorced their wives. And all those wives living together were happy. Once again I had to interrupt and ask:

Anoosh Khan: No but how can they be happy? There are ethnographies set elsewhere that don’t support this claim.\textsuperscript{107}

Khan: The problems mainly arose between or among wives with the concept of property division; they would worry if their husband re-marries then the other wife too will have children and the property will get further divided. Besides, there used to be a quarrel on the \textit{mehr}\textsuperscript{108} as well. In \textit{shareeq} (shared) or the communal system all the wives knew no matter how many children they individually have all resources will be equally distributed among all. And the women in the house were resentful toward the mashira because all the sons [if she was the mother] would give all the earnings to her and so all the daughters-in-law, especially the eldest daughter-in-law, would be resentful toward her. They could only get the nagharee mashiree after her death.

In the conversation with the Khan at Azmerabad I learned that women used to be a part of the jirga; the informal voting system included one male-vote per household; and the concept of the nagharee mashira, who used to be the elder woman in control inside the house. However, he did not really explain why the power dynamics shifted so drastically over the years. But one thing that I infer from his conversation is that the problems concerning matters of property division arose with multiple wives and more so with the passage of time. Perhaps, the advent of capitalism and neoliberal individualism also disrupted the communal living among the Pakhtuns as well. As such, the tribes or the so called tribal regions, which are comparatively away from the households that she was talking about. The proof was that I was not actually staying at my host’s house per se but at his paternal uncle’s house.

\textsuperscript{107}At this point I was particularly thinking about Lila Abu-Lughod’s 2008 analysis.

\textsuperscript{108}In Islam \textit{mehr} or dower is the prerequisite and mandatory gift, in cash, gold, or property, given by a Muslim groom to his bride as a security in case of divorce or his death. Faryal explains this concept in more detail in the previous chapter.
urban capital Peshawar and even more further away from other cities of Pakistan, continue to carry on their communal-style living system even now. Therefore, the struggle is not between men and women per se but with the growth of individual private ownership the contestation is actually between the (economically) powerful and the independent and the (economically) weak and the dependent, that is, between men, mostly the socioculturally powerful and women, mostly the socioculturally weak.

Pakhtun Women Then: The Women’s Version

Similarly in Azmerabad, Charsadda, Amma Jaan, explained to me the ways in which Pakhtun women, over the years, have attained some forms of freedom and thus agency. Amma Jaan, like the Babagaans in Matti, Karak, believed that now Pakhtun women had the freedom to buy clothes for themselves; went out visiting; took their children visiting friends and families; and now women were not as restricted to private or household spaces as they used to be in the past. In the past even if women had to go to a funeral, they had to be accompanied by their husband, father or brother. Amma Jaan recalled a personal incidence and stated:

In earlier times even if one’s husband allowed her to go anywhere she wanted to go, other people would talk negatively about such a woman, like, “Oh God so and so goes to the bazaar [alone] or she goes here or there!” Once I wanted to buy some sandals so I went to Peshawar where there used to be a shop that had all kinds of shoes. I went to Peshawar and got the sandals I needed. When I came back one of my husband’s relatives, from another village, came and asked my husband, “Why did she go to the bazaar? Look at her! She went to the bazaar all by herself and bought sandals.” My husband told him, “Yes she did and bought what she had to buy, so what?” The relative retorted, “You should have bought 20 pairs of shoes; all kinds of shoes for her but you should not have allowed her to go to the bazaar all by herself! People must have seen your car there and when she would have gotten out of it people would have recognized her as your wife! You have done something utterly wrong!” But my husband would not pay much attention to what others said or did; he would always have his own way. And honestly, he never stopped me from doing anything; never told me what to do or what not to do.
Amma Jaan believed that now more people are educated so more people have the right to decide for themselves; they have options and at the same time have better conscience as well. According to her, earlier it was believed that women do not have a conscience; they have no likes or dislikes; and the way people (read men) used to control animals that is how they thought about and treated women as well. She thought that a lot of change in attitudes had come about because of secular education. Since many people were now educated they were not the Pakhtuns of the past who used to be the illiterate, uneducated, and unaware barbarians busy doing wrong things like murdering people and oppressing women. Amma Jaan continued that during her grandmother’s time there were no other means of commuting but by riding horses. Women could not leave the house without wearing a burqa. So women used to wear burqas while seated on horsebacks and would be accompanied by their male family members when they had to go out for fulfilling social obligations. Now even the less privileged people did not do such things with their women. She added, “The Pakhtuns are now progressive people. In the past the way people used to define Pakhtuns as a fierce race was true. But the Pakhtuns are not like that anymore.”

Amma Jaan also told me that when she was young (she is now 80+) she loved watching movies in the theater, “It was in Murree [the summer resort] that we used to go to the cinema [movie theater] to watch movies.” She said that her husband used to accompany her to the cinema or theater but she could not go there alone because even if there were women in the cinema there would be a lot of men as well. She explained that there were cinemas in Peshawar as well but she would not go to the cinemas in Peshawar because the cinemas in Peshawar usually had people from the villages and it was considered inappropriate for women to go there. Besides, she would not go to the cinemas in Peshawar even if her husband accompanied her because she would be afraid if he ended up quarrelling with some man or men who behaved
inappropriately toward her or in her presence. She recalled that she also enjoyed listening to the radio as well which was a luxury way before the cinemas were introduced. She said, “The radio was there since I was a young girl. Yes, there used to be both Urdu and Pashto programs broadcasted on radio. The movies I watched used to be Urdu ones [and Indian ones as well].” She added that she understood Urdu because when they used to go to Murree, during the summers, people there did not speak Pashto so she and the others accompanying her had to learn the basics of Urdu to understand and communicate with the locals.

Not only did the Pakhtun women have restricted or no agency, even men had no individual agency either. Amma Jaan told me how her father “saw” her mother and decided to marry her. She explained that the boys did not have the permission to choose their wives. She narrated that there was a wedding in a nearby village and her father, aunts and uncles went to attend that wedding. There her father and his brothers clandestinely sat in a balcony that overlooked the female-only space where women were dancing and celebrating; they secretly watched these women. That is how her father saw her mother. Amma Jaan said that her mother too was dancing among other women; she was related to those people who were hosting the wedding ceremony. The next morning her father told her aunts that the girl, in the wedding, who was wearing a brown dupatta with mukaish (silver thread embroidery) on it, was the one who he wants to marry. They should go and propose her for him. Naseem (2010:23) states, “The protagonists of struggle/resistance…do not hope to find solutions in a distant future. They rather look for them in the here-and-now.” As such, Amma Jaan’s account is an apt example of the fact that (cultural) structures which apparently curb individual and at times collective agency in fact also provide the very means to counter the restrictions or the barriers those structures impose. However, this only becomes possible when the individual interpellated by the culture responds as
the disidentifying (Pêcheux 1982:159) subject and finds a way to achieve his or her goal without disturbing the cultural expectation equilibrium. Therefore, in olden times one of the ways Pakhtun women voiced their emotions was through folk songs sung at festive gatherings.

The Cadenced Catharsis

Singing Pashto folk songs at festive occasions and sometimes without any particular celebration or observance was and still is a venue which opened a space for women’s voices in the public arena when that space may otherwise be foreclosed. However, Pakhtun women only sing and dance to these songs (unlike the North Indian women described in Raheja and Gold (1994) who had accompanying performance acts as well) or else just sing among friends or female relatives while fetching water, sewing and embroidering clothes, or just sitting together.

In order to show another cultural venue for voicing opinion, in this section I draw examples from Pashto folk songs. The aim of this section is to illustrate that in earlier times Pakhtun women composed and sang Pashto folk songs to express their emotions and desires for their lovers publically. Singing folk songs establish women as the disidentifying (Pêcheux 1982:159) subjects but it is and was a subject-position that was culturally tolerated by men and elder women.

Pashto Folk Songs: The Oral Expression

Pashto folk songs are generally composed in lyrical couplets which are called *Landai* or more commonly *Tappa* (plural: *Tappay*). Mohmand (2010:n.p.) explains that Pashto folk songs are couplets of a unique cadence, authored mostly by females addressing their lovers. Their authorship has remained anonymous for all these centuries. Tappay have been sung over hill and vale and before the practice of printing tappay were learned by heart and passed down by the word of mouth. According to Mohmand (2010:n.p.) every verse ends with a (stretched) “aa”
sound as a mark of exclamation. Each verse is composed of twenty two syllables. The first line with nine syllables is shorter than the following line with thirteen syllables. The shortfall is made up for during singing with expressions of love and pathos differing from area to area. The themes vary from love to social problems, nationalism, patriotism, and even anathema and sarcasm.

According to Shah, R. (2011:n.p.) (some) tappay begin with a fond opening phrase of ya qurban! (Oh, dear one!), meaning respect to the listener. Tappay are sung with loud melodious voice and could be accompanied by mangay, tabla, baja, and sitar (musical instruments). Tappay are generally sung during weddings, celebrations or just to tide over the long winter nights. In wedding ceremonies it might have the form of two-person duet presented by male and female singers or two male singers. Tappay covers all form of Pakhtun life: love, passion, anger, hate, wars, history, heroes and villains. The love for environment, flower, cities and mountains is also the topic of many. Shah, R. (2011:n.p.) believes that “the Pakhtun loves his cities with reverence and this emotion is commonly noted in the verses of tappay and is a therapy for the soul of the inhabitants of these mountains and valleys.”

Gendered expectations in Pakhtun society usually require men and women to convene in separate spaces. Therefore, composing and using folk songs as mode of expression and communication should not come as a surprise. With regard to Pashto folk songs Salma Shaheen, as a Pashto scholar and poet, says:

We have 85 percent folklore that is created by women. Why they created it is because they are the marginalized class. These Pakhtuns have a strange psyche…where [romantic] interest is generated or developed, there has to be a separation. You cannot meet anyone [you like]. When you cannot meet anyone, you are unhappy and when you are unhappy art is created… for creativity separation is necessary.

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109 Mangay is an earthen pot-bellied pitcher used for producing a hollow sound; tablas are two small upright drums used mostly in South Asian and specifically in Indian compositions; tambal is a tambourine-like instrument; baja is the harmonium; and sitar is a stringed instrument (guitar-like) usually held and played (mostly plucked as opposed to strummed) vertical or sideways; it is also used in most South Asian compositions.
Since the Pakhtuns are a segregated society it is not easy to meet one’s lover or beloved in public. Therefore, couples resort to other discreet ways and places for meeting each other. The following lines from a folk song reveal a beloved’s plight:

Secretly, by the spring waters,
My love, let’s meet.
Secretly, in my heart, I missed you a lot,
But, I will not welcome (greet) you in front of someone else!¹¹⁰ [Shaheen 1995:70]¹¹¹

These lines are uttered by a female because in the Pashto text the place suggested for meeting is the gudar gharaa (spring or river bed).¹¹² In the rural areas women would go to fetch water from the rivers, springs or wells for the daily chores. Therefore, a woman would only invite her lover to meet her when she would go to fetch water because she would be away from home and from an elder’s eye. While fetching water women were and are usually accompanied by other girlfriends, who act as confidants and keep the meeting(s) a secret. However, the speaker tells her lover that although they will meet secretly but she will not openly greet him in public. Perhaps, she cannot do that because of the spatially segregated arrangements or according to cultural expectations she cannot publically reveal her feelings for him.

In another example from a Pashto folk song we can hear a bride waiting for her groom:

On the red bridal bed,
Without my love,
I feel summoned

¹¹⁰ Tappay are traditionally composed or written in couplets (not in quatrains) but in order to convey the grammatically correct thematic sense and meaning I have translated some tappay in triplets or in quatrains.

¹¹¹ I translated some Pashto folk songs, Salma Shaheen’s poems, and the lyrics of Bibi Shireenay, myself. But I am also greatly indebted to Dr. Nasir Jamal Khattak for helping me with some of the translation. In order to show more examples of folk songs I include some more tappay in Appendix C of which some are translated by another scholar, which I acknowledge in parentheses. Since folk songs are anonymously composed therefore all the Pashto folk songs (originally in Pashto) quoted in this chapter are collected and compiled by Dr. Salma Shaheen that is why I cite her in the references.

¹¹² This was perhaps a common practice in most of the villages but can now be rarely seen only in some remote villages of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.
By the fires of hell.

The bed looks attractive with the lover
I loathe beds without the lover! [Shaheen 1995:70]

In conjunction with Salma Shaheen’s comment that Pashto folk songs and poetry is mostly composed by women there are some linguistic cues in the above lines that suggest a female voice here as well. In the above lines, “on the red bridal bed” suggests that it is a bride (read a woman is saying this) waiting for her groom to come and be with her on the wedding night. According to the cultural customs among Pakhtuns and other Pakistani communities, first, the color red symbolizes wedding, as brides usually wear red bridal dresses. Second, on the wedding night, after the celebrations and traditional rituals are over the bride is taken to her room to wait for the groom. The groom may be busy with the male guests celebrating the occasion or his friends may deliberately or teasingly be keeping him away from the bride. However, keeping up with the Pakhtuns’ habit of restraining emotions in public, the bride has these thoughts cross her mind. The groom too, on the other hand, will have a similar state of mind but would not be able to share it with his friends. However, it should be kept in mind that these folk songs are sung on festive occasions by women, suggesting any bride and groom’s feelings on their wedding night.

The separation and subsequent waiting of a beloved is also expressed in the following lines:

Oh Moth! May God bring thee tonight
I am like a flared-up flame,
Of love-lamp! [Shaheen 1995:70]

The speaker in these lines is a woman. According to the original Pashto lines the word used for moth, has a gendered noun ending *patangaa*, the gendered verb ending *raoraa* (bring you),

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113 The flared up flame is an illusion to a burning passion.
suggesting a male moth \textsuperscript{114} and thus a male lover. Besides, in the original Pashto lines (see footnote 114) the person speaking or the “I” is qualified by the gendered verb ending \textit{bula} and \textit{aimaa} which in Pashto suggests a female voice. However, in the following lines the moth clearly refers to a female:

\begin{quote}
The moth sacrificed (\textit{sati}) itself over the candle flame
The bee enjoys “topping” the flower! [Shaheen 1995:70]
\end{quote}

Here, unlike the previous lines, the moth refers to a woman because it has sacrificed itself through \textit{sati} (original word used) over the candle flame. Sati refers to the old Hindu practice where widows would willingly or coercively immolate themselves on the funeral pyre of their husbands. Since this sacrifice was made only by women, the moth, in these lines symbolically refers to a woman. While the bee is busy enjoying being “on top” of a flower: an allusion to the bee penetrating a flower either for nectar or pollination.

In spite of linguistic cues in the folk songs and Salma Shaheen’s revelation, it was a little difficult for me to understand and believe how Pakhtun men and women not only managed to meet but they also successfully communicated through and circulated these folk songs in the past, which I assume was more difficult to do. I asked:

\begin{quote}
Anoosh Khan: As you say that women created most of the Pashto folk songs, so how did they get commercialized? I mean during those times, many women did not know how to write. There were no publication facilities, and nor could women go out of their houses so frequently.
Salma Shaheen: This happened through the word of mouth, from one place to another. For example, according to the traditions of those old times, poetry or folklore was a part of engagement ceremonies, weddings, or any festive celebrations and [for women] poetry composition was considered a skill. Women used to play musical instruments like small drums and tambourines. This was done by women [in their separate domains], inside the house. Outside, in the men’s quarters, men would play their instruments like the sitar and \textit{rabaab} (also a stringed instrument). These festive musical gatherings had another benefit:
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{114} In Pashto these lines are: “Patan gaan shapa de rub raora/Laka deewa de meenae bula aimaan.” The underlined words suggest the grammatical gendered distinctions.
during the quiet of the night, the womenfolk, through these songs, would make other people [read men] hear their hearts’ desires. Besides, during weddings [young] men and women would have [somewhat sanctioned] freedom to see each other and like each other. But it was very seldom that lovers could otherwise meet openly in public.

Some of the linguistic cues in the folk songs validate Salma Shaheen’s claim that most Pashto folk songs were composed by women to express their yearnings that they could not publically express or practice. The explicit female emotions expressed through folk songs, sung at celebrations amongst the women to be overheard by men, suggest that their messages would get communicated loud and clear.\footnote{Compare to Amma Jaan’s anecdote about how her father “saw” her mother at a wedding and later sent his family to propose the girl who was wearing a mukaish dupatta.}

Similarly, Abu-Lughod (2008) also discusses female desire among Bedouin women which is apparent from some of the stories and songs the Bedouin women recite: like the sensual verses (Abu-Lughod 2008:80); the story of an old woman and the dead hyena (Abu-Lughod 2008:82-84); and the wedding songs (Abu-Lughod 2008:175-192). She also explicates the importance of songs and stories as a medium of expression in traditionally gendered societies. And Raheja and Gold (1994:123) aptly justify women’s folk songs by stating, “[Women] are envisioning a world in which relationships among and through men are not always given moral primacy. It is this fact that gives women’s songs their status as a “hidden transcript” (Scott 1990) that challenges some fundamental tenets of the dominant discourse.” Perhaps, just as Abu-Lughod explores the desires of Bedouin women, Raheja and Gold look into the lyrical gendered performances of North Indian women, Salma Shaheen explores and gives voice to the desires of

\footnote{It is not possible for me to include, in the main text of this chapter, hundreds of tappay that have been composed and sung so far. However, to show the thematic variation in tappay I include some more tappay in Appendix C. The tappay in Appendix C have been compiled and some translated into English by Mohmand (2010). I have also translated some tappay which I acknowledge as “translation by author.”}
Pakhtun women through her written literary works, which I will discuss a little later in this chapter.

**Pakhtun Women Today: They Say It All**

Many Pakhtun women of today feel empowered with the spread and acquisition of secular education because it gives them the intellectual and economic independence. In the following interview excerpt this is precisely what Beenish and Saba, in Matti, Karak told me:

Beenish: There has been a tremendous change...aa...in everything. Our thinking is different than theirs [the elders']. Our thinking has really changed (laughs).
Saba: Our thinking is modern compared to theirs.
Anoosh Khan: What do you mean by modern?
Beenish: Modern in a sense that earlier there were restrictions on what is proper and what is improper but now most of the things that they considered inappropriate seem appropriate to us.
AK: For example what?
Beenish: For everything we now give reasons [that is justify what is right and wrong]; for example, wearing half sleeves [shirt]: we were told [by our elders] not to wear them. But we rationalized and did not agree saying that we need to weigh the pros and cons. If we are not wearing them to show skin or have any other [wrong] intention then it’s all right to wear short sleeved shirts. Or cutting your hair [to a shorter length]; or following some fashion trends.

Beenish states, “For everything we now give reasons.” This statement is an example of how formal academic education provides intellectual agency which the family elders, especially men, have also come to accept. Besides, not only do the secularly educated women become broad minded themselves but they also serve as agents for change. Saba also told me that she believed that their coming generations will have a different and better mindset than the present generation.

Beenish added that she will give full liberty to her children to choose their marital partners. Her rationale was that if she had been negatively affected by the tradition of no-choice-in-marriage she would not want her coming generations to be affected in the same way. She said that she will not interfere with their choice, at least. Beenish clarified, “I mean one should not even give so
much of a free choice where you can see that the other person is being adversely affected, but in case if she or he likes a nice person they should be given the choice to marry them.”

Even the Elderly lady told me that her daughter had moved to the city (Peshawar) for her children’s education. She claimed, “My granddaughter tells me that she will become a pilot! She says, ‘I don’t want to be a doctor but a pilot so I can fly people!’” Mainzanay Baba also commented on the changing conditions of and for women including the change in the condition(s) of Pakhtun women. He told me that they used to study about Razia Sultana, the female Muslim ruler of the subcontinent and would wonder, “Oh God! How could a Muslim woman be a king?” Now when Benazir became the prime minister nobody had any problem.”

Mainzanay Baba believed that the sociocultural conditions for women were improving. He told me that in their family men and women sang and danced together at weddings; there are many Pakhtun tribes where this did not happen. He also added that now one could see women walking in the village streets; in old days people would wonder why a woman was walking in the streets.

Women never went to the bazaars shopping; now they did. To this Kashar Baba added, “In those days nobody wore these black [straight] burqas; everyone wore the white [shuttlecock] burqas: the tent like. Now in fact women mostly wear chaadars and some just use the dupatta instead of chaadar as well.”

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117 Razia al-Din or popularly known as Razia Sultan. She ruled the Sultanate (kingdom) of Delhi, India from 1236-1240.

118 The straight burqa, mostly black, is a long loose coat-like dress covering the body right up to the ankles. The headgear includes a long scarf-like covering tied at the chin, with a thinner covering used as the veil to cover the face. As explained before also, the shuttle-cock burqa, mostly teal blue or sometimes white, is a long, loose covering, from head to ankles with a cap-like head-piece attached to the loose covering. The part that covers the face usually has lattice patterned holes for breathing and vision. It is perhaps called the “shuttle-cock” burqa because it somewhat resembles the shuttle-cock used for playing badminton. Both types of burqas are usually made of silk based materials.
Besides, Nudarat pointing to her husband claimed, “Whatever he earns he puts all of it in my hand. After that all the household expenditure is in my hands. I take Rs. 200\textsuperscript{119} a day from him with which I buy food for the house; pay the gas and electricity [utility] bills; and fulfill kali ulas [social obligations]. Unless I help him out it is not possible for us to make ends meet.” A sum of Rs. 200 per day may seem like peanuts but it should be kept in mind that these are poor villagers with only one man as the earning head, feeding six others. Although limited but is this not an example of, literally and metaphorically, giving economic agency? Nudarat added, “[My son] has to give me a share of his pay as well.” This too is an example of, though limited, agency; she has the “power” to tell or instruct her son. It is limited because the son may not always listen to her. But the fact is that she has the freedom to express herself and her feelings.

Similarly, Nudarat’s daughter, Naila told me, “I know how to stitch clothes so I do that now. [I stitch for others] I have never given any money that I earn to either of my parents. I like to buy clothes and chaadars; with the money I earn I buy this stuff with it.”

As I mentioned in Chapter 5 that secular education and media have had a positive effect on people as well. Perhaps that is the reason why Mahjabeen, who is herself an illiterate woman, believed that children should be given a free hand at choosing their spouses. She said:

That is a good thing because even the mullahs say that both the girl and boy should be given a choice to decide; and if they mutually agree it is better. The Quran states this right too but earlier people did not approve of this. If my son or daughter wants to marry someone of their choice I will agree even if I don’t approve of their choice. I will have to agree to avoid future problems.

It is pertinent to note her that Mahjabeen makes a reference to the “mullah” and the “Quran” both of which, according to Althusser (1971), function as ISAs. However, it is equally important to note that she makes references to and finds justification in religion for believing in allowing

\textsuperscript{119} Pakistani Rs. 200 approximately equal US$ 2.22 (at the exchange rate of $1=Rs.90).
her children to self-select partners. This should be taken as a step forward, a progress toward achieving agency even though the discourse and justification are rooted in religion. After all a life time of religious and cultural interpellation cannot be undone in a few years. But the fact that there is a change in the thinking and that even an illiterate, poor Pakhtun woman has the freedom to voice her otherwise socially and culturally tabooed point of view is reflective of progressive cultural tolerance, acceptance, and Pakhtun female agency.

Similarly, Faryal also confirmed:

But overall, I think men’s thinking has changed; they don’t mind marrying a girl now if they had a pre-marital affair; even my own cousins think differently now. Even [Pakhtun] girls now have the option to choose their own husbands. Some of my female cousins too have married by choice; they knew their husbands before marriage. Although some female cousins were proposed by family members but they refused and frankly told their parents they like someone else. There were times when in our family men could not marry by choice but now women can do it too.

Therefore, it does not come as a surprise when Naeema Gul also believed that with the passage of time things have changed; women have become more vocal and less shy. Naeema thought that a lot of change had come due to education, work, and technology like the computer and internet. She explained, “With these technological gadgets one can exercise a lot of liberty. You can communicate with people who you don’t actually know.” So, I interrupted and asked:

Anoosh Khan: Are you trying to say that it is the economic independence that gives you confidence or is it the work you do that gives you confidence which also gives you economic independence?
Naeema Gul: You see…um…work gives you confidence…um…I’m personally not conscious about such things but somehow the world judges you a lot by your economic status and position and people will only be in a position to shout at you if you are economically insecure. And if you get a bit of economic security you will earn people’s respect; by people I also mean the opposite sex; they will respect you more.

Dr. Gul Khan also added that now Pakhtun women had the courage to discuss family issues and sociocultural matters. He explicated that 30-40 years back, women had no right to discuss
cultural matters. What the father said was done; what the brother said was done; sons were given priority in the household but not anymore. Now they were treated equally; the sisters competed equally with the brothers. At this point in our conversation I was reminded that one of my other respondents, Abdul Haq, had also said that now Pakhtuns did not really care whether a son or daughter was born. Dr. Gul Khan believed that previously, sisters used to be in a bit of inferiority complex. In earlier times parents used to worry for their daughters’ lives but now they do not worry that much. He believed that now women were on their own: if they want to or did not want to marry; get further education; work; or want to be a housewife was their own decision. He added, “In the present situation you cannot impose something on her.” Then Dr. Gul Khan narrated an incident to me. He recollected that once when he went to his clinic, which used to be in their neighborhood, a young man was showing off with his car, in front of a young woman, by constantly braking and screeching on the roads. The woman got out of her car and said to him, “Hey mister! What do you think that by screeching on the road all the women in this market will start noticing you? Have you seen your face in the mirror? It seems you have illegally obtained wealth, perhaps someone else’s car too!” The woman insulted him so much that the man sheepishly went away. Dr. Gul Khan claimed:

I really appreciated that woman. The credit goes to the women of today because they can guard themselves. That system has come to an end when a wife had to be escorted by her husband or when a daughter had to be escorted by her father or brother. I’m sure if a woman wants to guard herself she has the capability to do so now. I know you will say, “How so in a Pakhtun society?” Look if someone behaves rudely with me in the bazaar I have to deal with it myself. But if a man insults or behaves rudely with a woman in a bazaar all the shopkeepers and other men present there will not spare the perpetrator. This is a very positive feature of the Pakhtun society; you will not find this elsewhere.

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120 As a member of and participant-observer in a Pakhtun community I do not totally agree with this notion. In Pakhtun culture sons are still given priority and are preferred over daughters. Women, too want to have more sons than daughters. Besides, in many cases the birth of many sons is not problematic as is the birth of many daughters.
Later on Dr. Gul Khan also told me about one of his own female classmates during his medical school years. He recalled that there was a particular girl (names her) who had come from Murree convent and she started a movement for creation of female seats. That is how female seats were created in the Medical College and Engineering University. Dr. Gul Khan admired that one young woman’s effort made all the difference. And he added, “Nowadays [Pakhtun] women have become so bold that they can guard themselves so I do not believe in segregated colleges; I prefer coed.”

In a similar vein, Alamgir Khan, also believed that due to media-publicity people had become aware of their rights and now they wanted to secure those rights. As such, he thought that Pakhtun women were now not lagging behind; they too were becoming aware of their rights. They knew what a court of law was; laws were discussed on TV talk shows all the time; many TV programs were especially designed for providing legal advice which has had its impact on women or rather the entire society. Besides, Alamir Khan also stated, “The Constitution [of Pakistan] is for all; it does not say this provision is for women and that article is for men…. The law does not differentiate between men and women.”

Mohammad Zafar, who taught Constitution Law, said that his focus had always been on the fundamental rights in the Constitution and the status women theoretically and by law have.

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121 Here Dr. Gul Khan means that perhaps earlier, during his student years, women in KP did not really opt for professional colleges because they were coed. The only all-female medical college in Pakistan was Fatima Jinnah Medical College (FJMC), in Lahore, Punjab. I came across a lady, almost the same age as Dr. Gul Khan and she told me that she could not go to Khyber Medical College in Peshawar because it was coed; her only option was to go to FJMC but her father was also reluctant to send her away from home all the way to Lahore. As a result she did not become a doctor and ended up doing her masters in Political Science. After some years female quota of seats was allotted for women in professional colleges in KP but now young men and women compete equally for admission in medical colleges and other universities in KP.

122 Since its independence in 1947 Pakistan has had three constitutions: 1956; 1962; and 1973. It is the 1973 constitution of Pakistan that is currently practiced as the supreme law of the country.
He said, “In my individual capacity I try to help them [the students] to get out of those influences which the conservative forces in our society are generally bring in.”

Qaisara explained that in most of the family cases, filed by women, 98 percent women got relief; only two percent men received relief. And most of these cases were decided by female judges, who most of the time were not even ready to listen to the men. Most women petitioners got relief whether they appeared or did not appear in the court. There are such favorable provisions in the Family Laws and Civil Procedure Code (CPrC) for women. She explained, for instance, if a male plaintiff did not appear before the court his suit would be rejected but if some female plaintiff did not appear in courts even after four or five hearings summons are constantly sent to her; and at the very end, after all efforts, ultimately a final notice is issued but until then her case is not dismissed. Qaisara wanted to suggest that the courts of law, especially under CPrC, gave women a lot of space compared to men. I believe women are given concession for not appearing before the courts due to cultural empathy as it is deemed inappropriate for women to come to courts of law (as discussed earlier). However, the point that Qaisara wanted to make here is that law and litigation procedures also give concessions to women as much as possible, though legal decisions should be fair and not based on gender biases.

Gazelle Khan, however, was a little skeptical about Pakhtun women having the agency to secure their legal rights. She stated:

Rural women face [more] cultural constraints. Even now there are places and families where, even among the educated families, women are not given property rights or their share in the property and only men get the shares. Consent in marriage is not an option for many [women] even though the right is given by the Muslim law and it is given in the fundamental rights. So, the cultural constraints are there. Urban women can avail most of these rights.
Though somewhat unconvinced, Gazelle Khan does admit that urban women can avail more legal rights as compared to their rural counterparts. The reason is that women in the urban areas are more educated and financially independent than women in rural areas.

Besides legal agency, some educated Pakhtun women tend to witness a gradual change in parental attitudes as well. Shaheen Faheem told me that when women in their times would get married the fathers would tell them not to entertain any thoughts of returning to their house if they could not settle down with their husband or in-laws. According to her, there was no such option; they could only come to visit their parents. Therefore, obviously these women had to tolerate all that happened to or with them in their marital lives. In other words, the women were told to make the marriage work no matter what, and that they should not entertain the thoughts of dissolving the marriage. And this is why most families continue to consider divorce a stigma. Shaheen Faheem believed that now even mothers supported their daughters after marriage. The mothers now tell their married daughters not to let their husband or his family suppress them because, “‘you are their equal: in education; in social status; and so on.’ This is how mothers train their daughters nowadays and the daughters too believe that they are in no way lesser than their in-laws.” On the one hand, this may be considered as a rather unexpected familial interpellation of Pêcheux’s (1982:157) “subject of enunciation” or the bad subject but on the other hand, it also shows the interpellation of a disidentifying subject (Pêcheux 1982:159) by secular education which has given the female earning subject the awareness of and the right to choose what she wants to do. This once again shows the dialectical relationship among the ISAs.

Professor Shah convincingly elaborated the gradual agency-achievement of Pakhtun women: he explained that the confidence; the self sufficiency; and the level of awareness that Pakhtun women have achieved was the change that gradually came about with the passage of
time. These achievements add to the rich Pakhtun culture. He believed that apart from political representation the actual milestone for Pakhtun women was their intellectual development. For example, Pakhtun women who have acquired higher education have changed things for the better. Professor Shah continued to explain that earlier when Pakhtun women would go to hospitals most female doctors and nurses would not speak Pashto and it would become difficult to communicate with each other. So the situation became much better when Pakhtun female doctors started working in hospitals. Things have changed so much that now female doctors run their own private clinics. He said, “I think [Pakhtun] women have come at par with men; in some areas they have superseded men and in others they still lag behind. So I think, step by step, a change has come about.”

Salma Shaheen also pointed out the personal agency Pakhtun women have achieved with acquisition of secular education. She said, “Besides, after getting educated one cannot spend a very restricted or controlled life. I broke off my engagement for similar reasons. This affected my sisters: they wanted their daughters to get properly educated rather than preferring marriage.” Salma Shaheen’s comment shows that education is a powerful tool for achieving sociocultural agency. As such, Pakhtun women who are allowed to or manage to get education tend to reach a level of self dependency, usually through economic independence, and can take control of their lives even if partially. On a certain level to some Pakhtun men it may appear as if education and awareness made women talk back to the cultural systems. For example, like Salma Shaheen said, “After getting educated one cannot spend a very restricted or controlled life.” Here she points out that one cannot spend a “very” restricted life; in other words she is not totally rebelling against the sociocultural norms but is trying to stay within the cultural structures and practice her agency; she cannot spend a “very” restricted life but can negotiate within some levels of
restrictions. And perhaps she managed it well which is why her sisters also wanted their
daughters to get educated first and prefer marriage later. However, I continued to question
Salma Shaheen:

Anoosh Khan: So do you feel that Pakhtun women are changing with times?
Salma Shaheen: Now the thing is that being women we have to be strong and resilient. I
know writers before me were criticized but they paved a way for me. So it’s my duty now
that I act morally. Usually professions are defamed but I have to be careful for my
profession and not go beyond [moral] boundaries that are chalked out by the society. So
women have to be inspirational for other women. Now fathers, brothers, and husbands
feel proud if their daughters, sisters, or wives are doctors, lawyers, or pursue other
professions.

The fact that Salma Shaheen believes in being “strong and resilient” but at the same time she
also has to “be careful for my profession and not go beyond [moral] boundaries that are chalked
out by the society” proves that she, staying within the cultural structure, tends to talk back to the
sociocultural mores through her poems.

**Modern-Day Extension of Earlier Practices: The Written Word**

Interestingly, Salma Shaheen is a product of the Pakhtun patriarchal culture and
expectations but at the same time being a secularly educated woman, through her literary works,
she expresses her concerns and voices the concerns of other Pakhtun women as well. As such,
she performs a double duty: firstly, her literary works give her the agency to express, explicate,
expose, and critique some of the Pakhtun cultural traditions; and secondly, through her works she
also echoes the voice(s) of other Pakhtun women and at times men as well. Thus, Salma Shaheen
establishes her subject-position as a writer, a poet, and a cultural critic. The subject-position that
Salma Shaheen occupies is in fact a modern-day extension of the subject-position occupied by
the tappa (folk song) singers. It is a modern extension of the olden days’ female subject-position

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123 Notice that the option of marriage is never ruled out though.
because Salma Shaheen, the “poet-subject” is an academically and culturally interpellated subject-position compared to the culturally (only) interpellated female folk song singer-subject. Salma Shaheen is more informed and better positioned strategically as a subject. She becomes the agentive subject who secures agency for herself; for Pakhtun women; and encourages others to attain agency as well. This stance becomes clear as I discuss some of Salma Shaheen’s poems in the following section. Like the female folksingers Shaheen may not have changed the cultural mores but some Pakhtuns, especially readers of Pashto literature, hear the plight of the modern day Pakhtun woman in her poetry.

Secondly, with exposure to education and media, the themes of love and separation have become more nuanced. Themes like cultural and patriarchal oppression have become part of the written tradition; followed by a more explicit representation of women’s voice(s) and issues portrayed through the visual media. Finally, I specifically choose to give examples from the works of Salma Shaheen, one because she is a folklorist and her research specialty, among other things, is Pashto folk songs. Second, among the very few other Pashto female poets she is considered to be a representative female poet; she is one of the few who is read, recited, and researched.\(^{124}\) Besides, I also got a chance to talk to her personally which to a great extent helped me in confirming my interpretation of her work.

**Salma Shaheen’s Poetry: Extension of the Oral Tradition Made Possible by Education**

Salma Shaheen informed me:

In my creative pieces, I usually write about class division and gender issues… [Pakhtun women] possess a lot of skills and talent. It is because of our cultural and traditional expectations that all this [female] talent remains dormant… I wrote my first poem, with

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\(^{124}\) During a visit in May 2008 I found out that Salma Shaheen was the only female Pashto poet whose work was present in the Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. as well.
reference to gender in 1980. It was called Khazaa (Woman). When it got published, I used to recite it a lot in mushairo ke (literary gatherings) and people would really like it.

Bolton (1999:118) highlighting the reflexive nature of creative writing states, “The writing of poetry profoundly alters the writer because the process faces one with oneself…. Talking to a piece of paper is much more private: it can’t answer back, interrupt, embarrass, or worst of all—remember” (Bolton 1999:120). However, Handelman (1994:344) observes, “To compose a text is to empower it—to set it loose in the world as an autonomous force with the intent to persuade its reader of something.” Therefore, looking at some of Salma Shaheen’s poetic themes it becomes evident that poetry provides her the agentive means to critique the gendered cultural and social issues prevalent in the Pakhtun society. Hilsdon (2007:127) states, “Agency needs to address the gaps between everyday reflection and practices and hegemonic discourses or symbolic structures.” This is precisely what Salma Shaheen’s literary work does. Shaheen in the poem Ae Haseenae Nazaneenae (O Beautiful Damsel) sketches a vivid picture of a (Pakhtun) woman who, complete in her faculties and talents, has to succumb to male pressures. In Ae Haseenae Nazaneenae (O Beautiful Damsel) Salma Shaheen states:

Enchanting shades of beauty
you are Beauty, you are Love
you are Reason
you are Peace
but in this jungle, full of beasts,
jackals\(^\text{125}\) and wolves,
who are blind to Love,
you crush Beauty to dust,
and burn Reason to ashes,
and mess up Peace.

Compromise is your universe
and your hopes very delicate.
Your skills and rhetoric
you beautiful artisan,

\(^{125}\) In Pashto, jackal is used in the derogatory sense; it symbolizes cowardice, treachery, and betrayal.
you sacrifice all this to a man
even though you live with him
like a deer in fear
from a predator in a jungle. [Shaheen 2004:55-56]

In this poem Salma Shaheen portrays a sad but true picture of what happens to some women in the (Pakhtun) society. In spite of their physical beauty, mental capabilities, and professional skills they are married off to men who are absolutely insensitive to their beauty and talents. Besides, Shaheen’s imagery in the first stanza of the poem is very strong: she compares men to beasts and the marital cosmos of (some) women to a jungle. In the second stanza, Shaheen illustrates the fate of most women: a life of compromise, dependence, and fear.

Shaheen, through *Ae Haseenae Nazaneenae* (O Beautiful Damsel) explicates the life of most women who are bound to be married off without given any choice. However, in her poem *Ya Tapos* (A Question) she portrays what usually happens to a couple who is in love:

    Our griefs
    are strange.

    Though we love each other
    we are happy for each other
    but we can’t share our love, our happiness
    with each other.
    You have the mountain of modesty to climb
    and I, my ego to overcome.
    Tormenting and torturing our souls in vain.
    This is no life.
    Like a gambler for a win after a loss.
    Like an obsessed person chases a mirage.

    At times a thought crosses my mind
    to ask you what we will say to each other
    after the winds of time have withered our youths
    and our eyes have no strength to see.
    What the hell was that ego for?
    What good was that modesty? [Shaheen 2004:137-138]
In this poem Salma Shaheen reiterates the themes expressed by women’s voices in Pashto folk songs: the themes of separation, unexpressed love, and emotional restraint. However, Shaheen explains the reason for the lovers’ unexpressed love: one has “the mountain of modesty to climb” while the other the “ego to overcome;” thus “tormenting and torturing our souls in vain.” It is pertinent to note here that one of the lovers is modest; perhaps the man, because of the Pakhtun cultural expectations he cannot express his love publically and maybe did not get a chance to express it otherwise. Whereas, being a Pakhtun woman, in accordance with the cultural mores, she cannot take the lead in romantic expressions; the woman here cannot let go of her ego and make the first move. A similar idea of male reticence is also heard in a popular folk song where the singer wants to go and greet his beloved but he refrains from doing so because he does not want to mar his beloved’s honor in public. As a result, both the lovers will remain separated because of their *habitus* (Bourdieu 1977) or cultural dispositions due to which they have “learned” to act as they are doing so.

In the poem *De Meenae Dushmunaan* (Love Enemies), Shaheen paints the overall Pakhtun patriarchal structure that prevents not only women from decision making but also controls men’s choices as well. She says:

You lustful,
selfish
Pakhtun tribes!
For how long
restrictions,
traditions,
tying, untying (the knots)
will be of your choice?
For how long will intelligent,
and handsome young men—

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126 For details listen to Shams ur Rehman Shams’ “Te che pa baam banday walara wae” (While you were standing at the entrance), sung by Gulraiz Tabbasum (and some other singers). Here I specifically refer to lines: “Zra raata wai che wersha te pukhtana oka/Ghulae che pata shwama da mein staa haya ta katul!” (My heart urges me to greet you/I refrained because of your honor).
capable young men
for how long will innocent,
pressed young women
be crucified at the altar of your choice
and
murdered publically?
The reins of whose heart and mind
are in the hands of another, faraway.
What is love
with an empty body
and restless soul?
Ignorant of time,
you murderers of human generations.
Why do you say,
no one can be forced into anything? [Shaheen 2004:235-237]

In the above lines Salma Shaheen explicitly states that life choices and decisions, among the Pakhtuns, are usually made by the male (read patriarchal) elders. Those who decide the fate of others, most of the times, do not realize the damaging effects their decisions can have on the relationship of the concerned individuals and on the subsequent generations as well. Perhaps due to the gendered cultural and social constraints, Shaheen’s poetic persona in lines from Haga Se Wara Wae (I Wish I Were a Kid Again) wishfully states:

I wish I were a blooming bud, and
blossoming in a garden,
without attracting a gaze.
I wish I were a kid again.

I wish they never gazed at me
the way they do now.
And my parents could rejoice my being,
I wish I were a kid again. [Shaheen 2004:8]

These apparently simple lines are powerful. The persona wants to be a kid again because as a grown up woman she feels the constant “gaze” of people and wishes “they never gazed at me as they do now.” Obviously, this gaze refers to the male gaze. However, according to Pakhtun cultural interpretation this gaze can also mean the gaze of other women, especially those who
scrutinize and analyze her to guess how good a wife she can be for their sons or brothers. Therefore, the persona constantly feels gazed at by both men and women, and thus making her parents conscious about their grown up daughter as well. Not that her parents do not rejoice her womanhood but the happiness now comes with a price: the risk of ensuring that they have raised a physically beautiful, culturally acceptable, and a socially capable daughter. At the same time parents have to make sure that she is safe from the socially unacceptable gazes as well. Hence, the persona wishes she were a child again because then she would be free from the cultural burdens and expectations of womanhood in the Pakhtun society. Nonetheless, Salma Shaheen is optimistic and confident about the gradual progress and achievements of Pakhtun women. She thinks:

Now times have changed and so have I. With the passage of time other countries have progressed a lot; we are slowly progressing. However, there is a change that people have now accepted. In fact, [this change] has given confidence to parents that they want their daughters to achieve [a high social] status. And they want that their daughters should become doctors, professors, and adopt a professional line and they should introduce themselves, and make people [society] accept them...not as females...no! But as [equal] citizens.

I also got a chance to listen to Salma Shaheen’s recitation of her latest work which she described as “just lines and not really a poem.” She told me that she wrote these lines on October 24, 2010 while on a personal visit to Canada. This piece did not have a title and was unpublished at the time of our discussion. Shaheen recites:

Are the intoxication, love, and euphoria the same?  
Has autumn hit you yet or is spring still around?  
Tell the truth about the nights of separation.  
Tell me! How are they?  
My love, my passion, my restlessness, my wait are the same.

The nights of terror and fear had shrouded the country  
Has the storm subsided or the chaos of mourning still continues?  
The believers and the infidels still wage wars in the name of religion  
Humanity bemoans loss and pain, and chaos continues.
The head here has found its joy, and the feet are lying next to it  
Our children  
Voiceless, self-serving, smooth-talking spin doctors  
Opportunist state intellectuals determine the zeitgeist

Have the times changed or there is some hope for change?  
Poverty-stricken masses seek justice and the rich flourish  
Truth is told; truth is written; tell this truth too  
Pen and thought are imprisoned and continue to be sent to gallows.

I don’t believe you cherish the same ideals you used to when I come back  
Times, things, life—nothing has changed.

The land of milk and honey where only labor leads to heaven  
This land is blessed with plenty  
Where there is no arrogance, pride, or negative competition  
Where all humans have equal rights.

Here where the disabled, the weak, and the helpless are better off  
Here where people fight for animal rights  
All religions, books, and laws be sacrificed to it  
The system revolves around mutual respect. [Translation by author]

Salma Shaheen told me that in these lines she was drawing a comparison of life between Pakistan and Canada. The reason I include this piece as a part of the chapter’s text is to show that female Pakhtun writers and poets in general and Salma Shaheen in particular do not just talk about love and lovers but like other educated women they have the vision to comment on the prevalent cultural, social, and political issues.¹²⁷

¹²⁷ I also got a chance to attend a meeting of Women Writers’ Forum (WWF), Peshawar. WWF is a group of female writers and poets in Peshawar who get together on a monthly basis and discuss literary and personal issues. The monthly meeting was held at Khana-e-Farhang or the Iranian Consulate in Peshawar. In one of my earlier interviews in 2009 a respondent had told me that they held the monthly meetings of WWF at Khana-e-Farhang because the KP government did not provide them with female literary spaces. The female writers mingled-in with men sponsored events but they wanted to have their own space as well. So Khana-e-Farhang gave them that space where they now meet, discuss, read or recite their latest works, and plan other literary activities. While I was at the WWF meeting two poets recited some lines from their poems. Interestingly both women recited lines concerning environmental degradation. The first poet claimed,

The fresh blowing breeze of the city  
Now whimpers through the skyscrapers  
The jasmine and roses  
Now await their gardener
Salma Shaheen said that Pakhtun women have come a long way in achieving agency through literary genres. Her claim is endorsed when some Pakhtun women manage to go a step further than she has; they move from the printed text to the visual media to represent Pakhtun women voices. As argued in Chapter 5, media, especially TV plays an important role in shaping the sensibilities of people. Although in the Pakhtun society people may have mixed feelings about the intervention of media in their lives but most certainly believe that it is a means of creating awareness and thus a means of paving way for female agency.

**The Visual Expression: Extensions of (Oral) Poetic Traditions Made Possible by Media**

So far I have focused on the everyday agency that Pakhtun women practice: beginning with the power Pakhtun women enjoyed as the nagharee mashiraanay in the olden times up to the present in which Pakhtun women have achieved intellectual and economic agency as subjects of today, through education, law, and media. In this section I use the feminist version of the Pashto

The night-glory in my courtyard
Now yearns for a drop of water.

The second poet said,

I will only come when
The sky turns azure
The flower beds turn red
The mustard flowers bloom yellow.

What is the ratio of hatred
In the village-winds now?
I will only come when
The hearts are cleansed.

Come my dear!
I will take thee to my village
It has been a while in foreign lands
That I have been venting my emotions.
folk song “Bibi Shireenay: Where Honor Comes First.” I use this particular song as an example to show that in any society, the positionality of the speaker or the subject changes with the advancement of education and technology and determines the agency he or especially she can enjoy; this is prevalent in the Pakhtun society as well. This particular song was aired on various Pakistani TV channels but was blocked from mainstream media after a couple of telecasts by the then provincial government, Muthaida Majlis-e-Amal (MMA).

Women composers of Pashto folk songs and scholars like Salma Shaheen prove that although the Pakhtun society is a gendered biased, patriarchal, and restricted society, yet women find ways to express themselves and devise agentive means to actually “voice” their concerns in order to create some cultural ripples if not cultural storms. In addition to folk literature, communicated through the word of mouth, and published literature, Pakhtun women have also used visual media to rewrite and re-represent some folk songs from a purely feminist standpoint. One such example is the feminist rendition of the Pashto folk song called “Bibi Shireenay.” I choose to call it a “feminist” representation because in its various earlier versions the lyrics of this folk song are solely romantic in nature; a lover’s praises and requests to his beloved. I have heard and seen this folk song sung and performed on TV only by male artists. The song which I incorporate in this chapter is written by another female Pashto poet Zubaida Khatoon; produced and directed by a Pakhtun female visual anthropologist Samar Minallah; sung by a male artist Gulraiz Tabassum; and is sponsored by a national women’s NGO Aurat Foundation and the

128 The song can be seen on YouTube by searching the song’s title. Traditional versions of this song can also be found on YouTube.

129 MMA is a right wing political party in Pakistan. It formed the provincial government in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) province during 2002-2007.

130 Samar Minallah has also worked on other productions which highlight different aspects of Pakhtun women’s life.
German organization The Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ),\textsuperscript{131} to advocate women’s rights appropriated according to the Pakhtun cultural framework. “Bibi Shireenay” illustrates the everyday life of an average rural Pakhtun woman:

Bibi Shireenay!
You wake up with the rooster’s first call,
The day’s chores wait you a while;

Morning till evening you tire yourself away,
Sleep and rest are at bay.

Your life passes away serving others,
And when you fall ill
The shrines and amulets become your fate.

Nobody acknowledges your hard work,
Though you tire yourself away;

You surrendered your lands to Lala,
And now you have but empty hands
Bibi Shireenay!

You are the honor and integrity of the house,
Your chastity
Makes Baba twist his turban with pride,
Bibi Shireenay! [Translation by author]

\textit{Shireen or Shireenay}, as it would be called in Pashto, is a common name for women. \textit{Bibi} means miss or lady and \textit{Shireenay} means the “sweet one” and by extension “my loved one.” Here it is a metaphor for any Pakhtun woman. The song illustrates that even in the 21\textsuperscript{st} century Pakhtun cultural traditions, in the rural and at times in urban areas, are above all forms of law: divine and man-made. Thus, Bibi Shireenay, the epitome of female sacrifice, serves others throughout her life as a daughter, sister, wife, and mother but at the cost of giving up her own individuality and rights; symbolizing the good familial subject that I discussed in Chapter 4. Therefore, she

\textsuperscript{131} Until January 2011 it was called GTZ but is now called GIZ or The Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit. For details please visit: http://www.gtz.de/en/weltweit/europa-kaukasus-zentralasien/1176.htm.
sometimes “willingly” gives her share of the inherited land to Lala (elder brother), and is made to reinforce cultural gender stereotypes which “may refer to customary laws, meaning laws that are not written into legislated statute books, and sometimes includes customary practices that are built on commonly accepted usages and traditions” (Cook and Cusack 2010:34). While at other times, she serves as the symbol of honor for Baba (father), portraying that “women are thought to embody the honor of men, thus enabling the subordination of women through the control of behaviors not approved by family members” (Cook and Cusack 2010:35-36). Although “Bibi Shireenay” does not portray the life style of all Pakhtun women in totality, for example, the song does not represent intersection of class, education, and spatiality. Yet, it serves to create awareness for and among many women and men. I have to admit that I do not have any data that justifies the reaction for and against this song per se. But the very fact that the then provincial government blocked the national telecast of this song to some extent proves that the song definitely made a cultural, political, and a feminist statement. This in turn suggests that the government, acting like the Repressive State Apparatus (RSA), realized that this song could potentially interpellate the subjects of enunciation (Pêcheux 1982:157); the talk back subjects; or simply the socioculturally bad subjects. It is no surprise that the female producer and director of this project herself was the disidentifying subject who produced a popular Pashto folk song with a feminist twist to it but the government feared it could interpellate a mass of bad (female) subjects. However, even if this song was banned from mainstream Pakistani TV channels it still remains present on various websites, CDs and DVDs, showing the influence, power, and permanence of sorts that the media has now.  

132  

132 Mentioning the role of media in awareness raising also reminds me that while I was doing fieldwork I was invited by a local Pashto TV channel (though based in Islamabad with a Peshawar-based facility) to participate in a panel discussion on a special program with reference to the International Women’s Day on March 8, 2011.
Gaining Grounds: Ascertaining Agentive Subject-Position(s)

Listening to the Khans’ explanation, Amma Jaan’s narratives, respondents’ responses, and examining Pashto folk songs, poems, and media representation suggest that although the Pakhtun society is patriarchal yet many women within the cultural structures get the opportunity to practice their agency by voicing their concerns in one way or another. In this chapter, among other things, I use different literary genres to show some of the ways through which some Pakhtun women practice agency and in turn become an agential medium or voice for those women who cannot do the same. Alcoff (1988:434) states, “The position that women find themselves in can be actively utilized (rather than transcended) as a location for the construction of meaning, a place from where meaning is constructed, rather than simply the place where a meaning can be discovered (the meaning of femaleness).”

The anecdotes, folk songs, and the poems discussed above reveal that women in the Pakhtun social structure do not resist or rebel against their customs, traditions, or even men per se. The Pakhtun women are born within a certain habitus (Bourdieu 1977) or dispositions and share experiences which they unconsciously internalize and transmit onto generations. However, sometimes people can acquire new dispositions and change social structures. As such, even Pakhtun women with the passage of time have acquired new dispositions through secular education, mobility, social exposure, and technological access. Yet, these women have stayed within their social structures and critiqued them rather than out rightly rebelling against the cultural setup. Althusser (1971) suggests that the Ideological State Apparatuses (ISAs) interpellate individuals subtly; covertly affecting their ideological thinking, opinions, and actions. In the case of Pakhtun women ISAs like secular education and media have had a strong effect on molding public thoughts, opinions, behaviors, and attitudes: one teaches while the other
visually projects those teachings. According to Appadurai (1996:35-36), mediascapes or the impact of different forms of (visual) media, “help to constitute narratives of the Other and protonarratives of possible lives, fantasies that could become prolegomena to the desire for the acquisition and movement.” Pakhtun women have been pressurized and at times suppressed by cultural ideology but at the same time they have also benefitted from the dialectical influence of the ISAs. In other words, ISAs like culture, religion, and family have restricted the agency of Pakhtun women but at the same time exposure to ISAs like secular and institution-based education and media have enhanced their horizons and many Pakhtun women have managed to find alternate ways, both by acquiring professional careers and through literary expressions, to practice their agency within the prevalent social structures.

In furthering the debate about the dialectical relationship among the ISAs it is pertinent to mention here that in conjunction with personal efforts of the individual women and the Pakhtun society in general, the government of Pakistan has helped and continues to help in promoting the self-sufficiency and agency of women. One such program is implemented at the Women Business Development Center (WBDC), Peshawar which is a project facilitated by Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority (SMEDA). Although the government-initiated programs and their impact on the development or empowerment of women is not the focus of this dissertation but I only allude to WBDC to show that the government also tries to work for the cause of women in KP. The building that this organization occupied was an all-female space so that no male family member or others could have any objection to women working with or among men. All most all the employees and business owners were women with an exception of

133 There may be other such programs as well but this was one program that I came across and had access to interview some of its employees during my fieldwork. For details please see http://www.smeda.org/main.php?id=436.
one or two office boys or peons. I had a chance to talk to the project manager. She explained to me:

[This project is] funded by Pakistan [government]. The basic concept of this project is, since half of the population of Pakistan, 52 percent is female, and most women stay at homes, they only [economically] unproductively look after and fulfill household chores. This [economic unproductivity] adversely affects their personal economy and the overall economy of the country as well. For the home-based entrepreneurs, we provide such a platform, especially for the novices who want to start a business. Or those women who want to enter the field of business. We are specially focusing on the [female] youth; university students, especially those young women who will become business graduates, sooner or later, should know that there is a platform for them to help establish their businesses for them or to help them start their business.

The project manager also told me that most of the women they had helped so far were Pakhtun women. Apart from business-based knowledge they also educated those women who were not very educated; they also polished their business and personal skills. And those who could not afford to establish a personal business the Center helped them find attachments with other businesses, like get them employed with a famous designer, exporter, or a businessman–woman. She added, “This project is a golden opportunity for the women of this region because we are seriously investing in the women who come for help or guidance. I think if I have ten ladies at hand and even if two manage to properly establish their businesses, we have done our job well!”

Here I wanted to mention that this project in order to show that Pakhtun women are also practicing economic agency through self employment and business other than working as doctors, lawyers, or teachers.

**Conclusion**

The West generally considers Pakhtun men oppressive and Pakhtun women doomed to eternal suppression and misery. My aim in this chapter was to demonstrate that there are multiple arenas for mundane but nuanced meanings of agency. It is important to understand that there are
some predetermined and preexisting culturally interpellated female subject-positions like mother, daughter, sister, or wife in the Pakhtun cultural setup. With the help of secular education, mobility, and media exposure some Pakhtun women have contested and negotiated to establish subjectivities such as teachers, lawyers, doctors, performers, writers and poets. Therefore, in every culture the meaning and levels of (female) agency depends on the context of discursive practices prevalent in that particular society and culture. No doubt, the Pakhtuns are a gender segregated and patriarchal society. But Abu-Lughod (2008:xvi) aptly states that, “the “Muslim woman” is troupe of great symbolic power, [not] restricted by her veil or burqa, [nor is really] under the thumb of religion and her men.” The same is true for Pakhtun women as well. Therefore, juxtaposing respondents’ anecdotes, responses, Pashto folk songs, some poems, and the feminized rendition of “Bibi Shireenay” shows that according to the Western standards Pakhtun women may not have complete agency; they only have restricted agency. But Saltzman (1987:550) suggests, “People can and do make conscious choices within their historical constraints, choices that are not always consistent with our theories about their ideologies.” For example, during our interview, Salma Shaheen had mentioned the changing perceptions about Pakhtun cultural expectations. She had also stated that parents now wanted their daughters to be recognized “not as females...no! But as [equal] citizens.” Perhaps, some Pakhtun women may not have the freedom to choose their partners, professions, and lifestyles but with the passage of time a gradual change is underway. Mahmood (2001:206) suggests, “Even in instances when an explicit feminist agency is difficult to locate, there is a tendency to look for expressions and moments of resistance that may suggest a challenge to male domination.” Similarly, Raval (2009:505) also believes, “When individuals act within the boundaries of their social structures but do not challenge them, they might appear to outsiders as “victims” of an oppressive system
who lack agency. It is only when one examines their lived experiences from their perspectives that a more nuanced picture of their agency emerges.”

Thus, literary expressions, whether in the form of folk songs, published poems, or visually expressed through media, should be understood and accepted as agentive tools used by women in the Pakhtun culture that may not change the cultural power dynamics but they definitely create some awareness among both men and women and to an extent challenge the cultural taken-for-granted perceptions. Finnegan (1991:112) explains, “A [folk] tradition, furthermore, has to be used by people for it to continue to exist. And whether in artistic, personal, or political contexts, this actual usage maybe as liable to exploit, to modify, or to play with tradition as to follow it blindly.” And Geertz (2003:36) believes, “But that is what listening to the voices of our own literary tradition…brings on as well: the sense that there is more to things than first appears and that our reactions are where we start, not where we end.”

As such, female Pakhtun folk song composers, poets, and media persons have also adopted the position of disidentification (Pêcheux 1982:159): they neither passively accept nor violently reject but strategically critique cultural patriarchal structures through literary and visual expressions, among other forms. For example, the female composers of the Pashto folk songs remained within their female spaces and sang their songs to be heard by men or their lovers in the men’s quarters. In their songs the women expressed their desires and discreetly planned meetings with their lovers by the spring or river beds; yet they confessed they will not welcome or greet their lovers in public.

In a similar vein, Salma Shaheen expressed her gender concerns and tradition-based discrimination against both men and women; however, she did not rebel or act as a complete outlaw against the cultural setup. On the contrary, she decided to stay within the social structure
and critique it. Perhaps, this is a better position. By staying within the social group her criticism is validated as an insider’s experiential critique rather than an outsider’s solution for rescuing the Pakhtun damsels in distress! Collins (1991:54) also believes that, “rendering experienced reality [i]s a valid source for critiquing sociological facts.”

Similarly, the feminist audio-visual rendition of “Bibi Shireenay” also shows that the lyricist, director, and producer(s) gender appropriated a well known Pashto folk song. They used a rural backdrop: depicting rural life which is the way of life of the majority; everyday chores; common issues; and traditional expectations. Besides, the song aptly illustrates that in the given cultural arrangement women’s “desires do not necessarily focus on their own needs; rather they involve the needs and well being of their children [and others]” (Raval 2009:500). The song was written, directed, produced, and primarily enacted by women but it was sung by a male artist. Perhaps, this is another culturally appropriate technique: validating the required change in gendered ideology and expectations voiced by a man; a man’s “voice” literally and metaphorically makes the song, the culturally required gender sensitization, and its acceptance more plausible.

The Khan’s narrative, Amma Jaan’s anecdotes, responses from the other respondents, the blending of Pashto folk songs, modern poetry, and visual media demonstrate firstly, that Pakhtun women always had some level of agency. Perhaps the difference was there due to the socio-economic status. For example, Amma Jaan was a Khan’s daughter and then a Khan’s wife so she enjoyed more liberty compared to other less privileged Pakhtun women. Secondly, these factors also highlight the dialectical relationship between female agency and Pakhtun cultural structure. On the one hand, some ideological apparatuses like, family, religion, and culture restrain Pakhtun female agency. While on the other, some ideological apparatuses like education and
media act as agentive tools that raise female consciousness and give Pakhtun women a platform to express their views about the culturally prevalent gender biased issues. Thus, stimulating an ideological shift among Pakhtun women in particular and Pakhtun men in general. Due to secular educational advancement, economic independence, and media-driven awareness most Pakhtun women now feel they have more agency as social subjects in public spaces as compared to yesteryears when their agency was mostly restricted to private spheres. Even Mustafa said, “When people get educated awareness also comes; that is the difference between us and the animals.” In short, the above discussion explicates the flexible and culturally situated nature of agency. Women in traditional cultures can use literary expressions whether auditory, textual or visual, as agential means for self expression. In accordance with the theory of structuration, it is the Pakhtun cultural structure that both enables and constrains women as social actors (Emirbayer and Mische 1998:1003; Giddens 1979:69-70; and Hays 1994:61). Raheja and Gold aptly sum up the relationship between cultural traditions and expressive voices by stating:

First…tradition and resistance are seldom antithetical, that each culture harbors within itself critiques of its most authoritative pronouncements; second, that while such critiques frequently take the form of such ostensibly “traditional” forms of speech as proverbs, songs, and folktales, they enter at the same time into the realm of the political, as they are deployed in the construction of and re-construction of identities and social worlds in which relations of power are deeply implicated. [Raheja and Gold 1994:193]

Thus, literary expressions whether oral, written, or visual may not bring about a cultural revolution per se but they definitely set the tone for subversive thinking. In addition to secular education and media-driven awareness, literary expressions have helped in revising ideological standpoints and provide agency to Pakhtun women in particular and the Pakhtun society in general.
In this chapter I show that agency cannot have fixed meanings; it has to be understood with reference to the historical, material, and cultural nuances of a society. In order to prove my stance I use Pakhtun women as an example. According to Western and perhaps non-Pakhtun standards in Pakistan, Pakhtun women may not have agency at all or at the best may have restricted agency. In this chapter I argue that Pakhtun women have quotidian agency which they practice without challenging the cultural setup per se; they rather stay within the Pakhtun cultural expectations and manage to achieve agency and get their voice(s) heard by different means. In Chapter 5 I discussed that education and media as ISAs have overall played a constructive role in shaping and affecting the Pakhtun female subject formation and subject-position(s).

In this chapter I begin with tracing the role of Pakhtun female agency from the olden times when Pakhtun women were given the responsibility of the nagharee mashira or the household elder. With the help of my research participants’ responses I also show how education and media have helped Pakhtun women achieve intellectual, economic, and in some cases personal agency. Furthermore, to prove my stance I also use Pashto folk songs, especially tappay, modern Pashto poems, and a feminist visual rendition of a famous Pashto folk song for TV. Pashto folk songs, since times immemorial, were anonymously composed and sung mostly by women. Since these compositions were spontaneous creations they expressed genuine and unedited emotions. However, with the spread of formal secular education Pakhtun women started composing and publishing literature and it was followed by audio-visual poetic representations as well. I choose to use poetry as a tool that promotes Pakhtun female agency because it is one of the most heard, read, and accepted means of self-expression; it is something culturally legitimate and socially sanctioned. Besides, by using this form the speakers do not out rightly reject cultural mores; they actually critique cultural traditions by remaining within the cultural structure. The
fact that Pakhtun women themselves highlight and critique cultural biases validates their opinions and claims more compared to a non-Pakhtun scholar or critic doing that. As such, in addition to secular education and media-driven awareness, literary expressions also provide agency to Pakhtun women in particular and Pakhtun society in general.
CHAPTER 8

PAKHTUN MEN ARE NOT TALIBANS AND THE WOMEN HAVE
MOVED AHEAD WITH AND WITHOUT BURQAS

Seeing culture as open to change emphasizes struggles over cultural values within local communities and encourages attention to local cultural practices as resources for change. [Merry 2005:9]

As soon as [some] complete the course and return to the community with the resources they did not formerly possess, they either use these resources to control the submerged and dominated consciousness of their comrades, or they become strangers in their own communities. [Freier 2011:142-143]

The subject-positions of Pakhtun women are dependent to a significant extent on the mainstream cultural ideology but the action and behaviors of these women show that they have their own ways of negotiating their desired subjectivities. The aim of this dissertation was to ask whether the subjectivities of Pakhtun women are defined and shaped with reference to men’s subject-positions, for example, as fathers, brothers, husbands, sons, and tribal heads. Or, is there space for a) an autonomous sense of “women’s” subject formation and position(s). And, b) does each woman have a sense of herself as an individual? By analyzing the discourse around and about Pakhtun women’s past and present I have established that in spite of a preexisting patriarchal setup some Pakhtun women find ways to contest, negotiate, and achieve adequate
levels of agency and independence for self-expression without disrupting the cultural mores per se.

In order to prove my stance that Pakhtun women are somewhat independent and agentive members of the society I have combined Althusser’s (1971) theory of ideological interpellation and Pêcheux’s (1982:156-159) processes of recognition as the foundational frameworks to support my argument. These frameworks specify the processes employed in the subject formation and the subject-position(s) of Pakhtun women which in turn help me specify quotidian agency in different contexts including both public and private domains. I have demonstrated how the Ideological State Apparatuses (ISAs) “interpellate” or “hail” (Althusser 1971) and form a subject-position(s). In addition, I also employed Pêcheux’s (1982:156-159) “processes of recognition” to discuss the formation of various subject-position(s) depending on an individual’s response to the respective interpellation which gives him or her a certain subject-position.

Althusser (1971:175) also suggests that it is possible, though difficult, for social individuals to stay “outside” of ideology. Althusser (1971:175) explains, “It is necessary to be outside ideology, i.e. in scientific knowledge, to be able to say: I am in ideology (a quite exceptional case) or (the general case): I was in ideology.” In other words, Althusser (1971:175) suggests that everyone does not have to respond to an interpellation and he or she can function through the realm of rationale and logic because “ideology represents the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence.... (ideology = illusion/allusion)” (Althusser 1971:162). But he further adds, “That ideology has no outside (for itself), but at the same time that it is nothing but outside (for science and reality)” (Althusser 1971:175). Again suggesting that it depends on the individual’s perspective, that is, whether one wants to stay in the realm of
the imaginary and abstract (read as a response to ideology) or decides to think rationally or consciously (read through scientifically-driven knowledge).

Analyzing my data in the light of Althusser’s discussion about the function of ideology and formation of the subject it is important to point out that the transformation of an individual into a subject involves a hegemonic process. In other words, the ideological interpellation and the response to it, which transforms an individual into a subject, works within certain material and power-driven hierarchical conditions and not in isolation. As such, in this dissertation I have used subject, subject-position, and subjectivities, as opposed to identity(ies), for describing the various social statuses assigned to or adopted by social actors as a result of responding to the ideological interpellation. My premise is that some scholars (Bailey and Gayle 2003; Block 2011; Bucholtz and Hall 2006; Cooper and Brubaker 2005; Dorothy et al 1998; Hall 2011; and Riley 2007) who use the word identity give a broad definition of what identity means but nonetheless they do not really admit that or show how individuals develop, establish, and transform their identity(ies); the word “identity” sounds flat. The ideological interpellation and the response of the individual signify a process through which an individual transforms into a subject; establishes a subject-position(s); and has a subjectivity(ies). However, once a subject-position is established it determines the subject’s level of agency (or not) and the power to act.

Some scholars (Eagleton 2007; Hennessey 1993; Rooney 1995; and Thompson 1990) critique Althusser’s (1971) framework of ideology as a closed system in which the subject is completely agency-less. Therefore, in this dissertation I show that some social actors have restricted quotidian agency which, ironically at times, is also achieved through and within the very structures or ISAs that they resist. Yet, one way by which I demonstrate that the Althusserian framework is not an absolutely closed system is by using Pêcheux’s (1982:156-159)
three modalities of recognition. It eventually depends on the individual in question to respond to an ideological interpellation the way he or she wants to respond. Another way to understand this as not so close a system is by being “outside” of ideology, as Althusser (1971:175) suggests. This he believes is possible through “scientific knowledge” as opposed to the abstract working of ideology through interpellation. Althusser (1971:175) acknowledges that it is difficult to step out of ideology but he also believes it is something that is do-able. Hence, in spite of the critique levied against him, the Althusserian (1971) premise, as demonstrated in various chapters of this dissertation, theoretically supports and explains my research findings.

**Pakhtun Female Subject-Positions: Contested, Negotiated, and Attained**

After analyzing the data in light of Althusser’s (1971) framework of ideology, the role of Ideological State Apparatuses (Althusser 1971:143), and Pêcheux’s (1982:156-159) processes of recognition I have discussed various subject-positions of Pakhtun women and men. In this research project the Ideological State Apparatuses (ISAs) that affected the subject formation and subject-positioning of Pakhtun women (and men) include family, education, media, religion, law, and culture. In the preceding chapters I have discussed in detail how (gendered) subject-positions are formed through processes of interpellation which include, international, national, local, and cultural apparatuses. I began by demonstrating that citizenship, belonging, and globalization are vitally connected. That they impact each other on several levels and in turn form, re-form, and at times transform gendered subject-positions and individuals’ respective notions about citizenship and belonging as understood and accepted within the Pakhtun society. After establishing a “belonging” status, family emerged as the immediate ISA according to my data, which produces what I have called the “familial subject.” From the family as an ISA I looked into education and media both of which interpellate individuals and initiate changing subject-position(s) including
the good subjects and the disidentifying subjects. Furthermore, I discuss that religion as an ISA produces what I call the “religious subject”: including the “religio-conforming” and the “religio-negotiating” subjects. For subject-positions interpellated and established through the legal structures I do not have a specific label(s) as many a time in the Pakhtun society law is conflated and confused with culture and religion and as a result individuals tend to occupy multiple subject-positions. Next I discuss that Pakhtun culture produces a variety of subject-positions which includes the “honor-oriented” subject; “fearful” subject; “foreign-influenced” subject; “linguistic” subject; “Khan-influenced” subject; and “agentive” subject. Finally, I demonstrate that Pakhtun women with the long tradition of agency, unfolded through the chapters of this dissertation, persist into the current context. Therefore, in the end I particularly look into the more mundane but nuanced ways, from the past and present, to highlight the “agentive” subject-position and role of Pakhtun women through the years. The agentive subject-position has become more pronounced and productive with exposure to secular education, general mobility, and media intervention.

Encouraging Observations

I began my ethnographic analysis with data collected from Matti, Karak, followed by Azmerabad in Charsadda, and then finally Peshawar. This order was intentional to signify the literal and metaphoric travel from the rural Matti to the urban Peshawar with Charsadda as an intermediary between the two. This periphery-to-center journey also demonstrated how and why Pakhtun women’s subject-positions and subjectivities are shaped and transformed once there is a spatial, material, mental, and physical concentric journey.

In spite of the detailed typological subject-positions that I have discussed in the previous chapters I have observed that there are broad, self-negotiated, categorical subject-positions
through which Pakhtun women are able to create a difference in the Pakhtun society. Furthermore, by encouraging and securing these subject-positions they can potentially be beneficial for future generations of Pakhtun women as well. The three foremost subject-positions which have positively helped and can further aid in the sociocultural progression and agency propagation of Pakhtun women include the “locally–globally aware” subject; the “restrained–mobile” subject; and the “educated subject.”

The “Locally–Globally Aware” Subject

The locally–globally aware subject is a subject-position defined by awareness of broader spatial, social, and linguistic geographies that are not directly experienced by or heard about through stories, media, or indirect sources. Although Pakhtuns, through their discourse(s), come forth as locally–globally aware subjects but their sense of “belonging” is very culturally driven and locally rooted; a sense of belonging to the Pakhtun culture is well marked among men and women both in the rural and urban areas.

Pakhtun men and women from both rural and urban backgrounds or from a mixture of the two more or less, form, re-form or transform their notions of cultural authenticity, belonging, and citizenship—local, national and international, through the territorialization of global assemblages (Collier and Ong 2005), appropriation of language, and sexuality. In today’s age of globalization Pakhtuns appropriate their notions of citizenship and belonging by responding to the interpellation of ISAs like family, religion, and culture, and tend to adopt certain subject-positions which further authenticate and endorse their statuses and sense of belonging and cultural citizenship. Nonetheless, interpellated as locally–globally aware subject(s), especially through secular education, media exposure, and general mobility from familiar to the not-so-
familiar places, has obviously better equipped some of the Pakhtun women for the current sociocultural and political challenges.

The “Restrained–Mobile” Subject

The restrained–mobile subject is a subject-position defined by regulations imposed on movement within and outside locations by family, conservative Islamic obligation, and other traditional Pakhtun practices including purdah observation and separate male–female spaces. Within the Pakhtun patriarchal structures family acts as one of the foremost Ideological State Apparatuses which interpellates Pakhtun men and women. However, women bear the greater brunt because Pakhtun culture tends to interpellate and carve women’s subject-positions more forcefully than men’s subject-positions throughout their life time. And by “forcefully” I mean that the subject-positions occupied by Pakhtun women are kept under a vigilant check by the patriarchal heads in order to ensure that these women abide by the cultural mores. The Pakhtun culture interpellates men as the “head,” the “provider,” and the “care-taker” of the family. As such, the Pakhtun culture, as an ISA, endorses men with the power to control and mobilize family resources both human and material. Therefore, due to (male) familial interpellation Pakhtun women react in a certain way due to which their subject-position(s) is mostly (pre)established as a mother, daughter, sister, or wife. It is only when these women openly or tacitly contest and negotiate these established subject-positions that they manage to achieve other pioneering subject-positions or social statuses like those of lawyers, teachers, doctors, and others within their families and the society. Once some Pakhtun women manage to establish subjectivities beyond the preexisting subject-positions they also manage to become more aware, mobile, and independent. That is why women at all three sites said that in the present times women were freer to move around on their own as opposed to earlier times when they could not
go out unless accompanied by the male family member(s). The data demonstrates that compared to the rural sites, women in Peshawar were more outgoing. I could see lesser independent female mobility in Matti; a little more in Azmerabad; and much more in Peshawar where women were free to go anywhere, anytime, and that too on their own. But with the passage of time, especially due to academic exposure within and outside villages female mobility has increased a lot with the consent of male family elders.

The “Educated” Subject

The educated subject is a subject-position defined by accumulation of knowledge drawn from varying experiences of secular and religious schooling and training. Besides, the educated subject also encompasses a subject-position which includes individuals who acquire knowledge not only through systematic schooling but also through unsystematic and informal experiences like mobility and exposure to the world outside their villages and localities. Furthermore, the educated subject also acquires knowledge from media sources as well. Education and media, two of the most common and perhaps the most influential ISAs have had their influence on the subject-positions and sociocultural statuses of the female respondents at all the three sites. Most of the men and women at my research sites supported secular education and the constructive role of media. Secular education not only made them educated or “knowledgeable” subjects, it also gave them economic citizenship by making them “earning” subjects which in turn ensures a better lifestyle. As a result of these ideological influences some women contest and negotiate for various other subject-positions. Most of the times these women, and at times some men, aim at being the good subjects and do not question the respective ideological interpellation. Sometimes they accept a middle position; at others they talk back to the interpellation either openly or tacitly. Most of the respondents accepted the overall benefits of media, especially TV, which
provided entertainment and information. They also acknowledged the advantages of cell phones, the internet, and computers but some were critical of the inappropriate use of cell phones, as and when used for dating purposes; and the internet when used for watching inappropriate things.

ISAs definitely shape and influence the subject-position(s), voices, and subjectivity, of individuals. The subjectivity, agency, and voice of people are more pronounced as we move from rural areas to the urban where education is common and the society is more heterogeneous. Therefore, I could hear a more confident, emphatic, and a louder female voice(s) as I travelled from the rural through the not-so-rural to the urban area. Women living in Peshawar were more articulate and open in expressing themselves. The reason for this openness and confidence was that the women in Peshawar were more educated; most were working women; and socially were more exposed compared to women in Matti and Azmerabad. Secondly, and interestingly, some men in Peshawar like Professor Shah, Dr. Gul Khan, and Zaheer also had more progressive opinions and they out rightly said that the status of Pakhtun women could actually change by educating Pakhtun men. This was something very liberating and encouraging to hear from Pakhtun men about women. However, in the villages men agreed that (female) secular education, overall, had proved to be beneficial but these men were not broadminded enough to admit that men need to be educated first to be able to understand its value for women.

Furthermore, the respondents’ responses, the blending of Pashto folk songs, modern poetry, and visual media suggests that Pakhtun women always had some level of agency. The change in voices and subjectivity of the respondents was always there; the exposure to the outside environment through media and education accelerated the change. Tappay or folk songs, published literature, and media participation by Pakhtun women points to this marked difference and growth. Due to secular educational advancement, economic independence, and media-driven
awareness most Pakhtun women now feel they have more agency as social subjects in public spaces as compared to yesteryears when their agency was mostly restricted to private spheres. Therefore, on the one hand, some ideological apparatuses like, family, religion, and culture restrain Pakhtun female agency. While on the other, some ideological apparatuses like education and media act as agentive tools that raise female consciousness and give Pakhtun women a platform to express their views about the culturally prevalent gender biased issues and thus stimulate an ideological shift among Pakhtun women in particular and Pakhtun men in general.

**Supporting Voices: Ethnographic Examples of Female Agency in Culturally Interpellated Societies**

In my research I found out that Pakhtun women primarily achieved agency through building their intellectual capacity which in turn (subject) positioned them as the economic, knowledgeable, and mobile subjects. It is interesting to see, through various ethnographic accounts, how other women in tradition-rooted cultures negotiate their apparent “voiceless” subject-positions to achieve agency and agentive roles in their societies. In other studies I see some similarities and some differences with my research but at the same time I see some pronounced points of convergence in terms of what counts as agency for some women around the world. For example, Abu-Lughod (1986; 2008) also relies on literary devices for her analysis of tribal Egyptian women and their ways for achieving agency. However, Abu-Lughod (2008) also demonstrates the dialectics of apparent simplicity and deceptive realities of a culture, its people, and their negotiating techniques to achieve agency in any given situation. Abu-Lughod (2008:14) aptly says, “In the face of the complexity of individual lives even in a single family, a term like “Bedouin culture” comes to seem meaningless, whether in the sense of rules that people follow or of a community that shares such rules.” Abu-Lughod’s (2008) description of the wedding and the “virginity test” particularly points to a cultural practice which renders women
voiceless in the face of cultural interpellation as a response to which they publically accept the subject-position of good women which is proved by their virginity before marriage.

Another example, which is very different than the Pakhtun female subject-position negotiation in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), is Schroder’s 1999 study about the gender politics and eco-political economy of the Gambian food production after the drought season of the 1970s. He clearly describes the intrafamilial and social coping tactics of female gardeners of the Kerewan Muslim society in Gambia. He shows that the women invested more time in these gardens and the local men metaphorically referred to the women’s gardens as their “second husbands.” Schroeder (1999:41) says, “The women’s absence was simply viewed as a loss of control, and by extension a loss of male prestige.” Schroder (1999:49) explains that the women also gave “cash gifts” or “in-kind contributions” to their husbands “to buy good will” and some husbands were eternal “loan” defaulters. In this case, I think the “second husband” label-acceptance and giving of cash–kind gifts to husbands shows how women maintained their agentive subject-position(s) within their cultural restrictions and expectations.

Whereas, Hodgson (2005) in her historical ethnography of the Spiritan missionaries’ endeavor to convert the Maasai communities of Tanzania to Catholicism aptly shows that religion and spirituality can also be a ground for agentive contestation among the genders. Hodgson (2005:258) believes, “Spiritual beliefs and practices maybe central to the production, reproduction, transformation, and negotiation of gendered identities, of masculinities and femininities. As such, they can then serve as a site of struggle or sustenance.” And Hodgson (2005:259) concludes, “The particular configuration of gender and power relations in missionary encounters is historically contingent and ever changing.”
In a similar vein, Mahmood (2001) also explicates an analogous idea prevalent among the urban Muslim Egyptian women of the mosque movement in Cairo. Mahmood (2001:203) also highlights that teaching and preaching in Islam is mainly men’s domain, when overtaken by women becomes a form of female agency in the non-liberal traditions. She (2001:223) concludes, “Desire for freedom and liberation is a historically situated desire whose motivational force cannot be assumed a priori, but need to be reconsidered in the light of other desires, aspirations, and capacities that inhere in a culturally and historically located subject.” Thus, pointing to the fact that women in tradition-bound cultures over time find ways to practice agency without creating a sociocultural imbalance and they manage to pave way for change.

Interestingly, Allison (1997) shows how Japanese mothers affirmatively respond to the ideological cultural hail through making artistic obentō (lunch boxes) for their young children. Nonetheless, coming up with novel ideas about food contents; their artistic arrangement; and attraction for the child to actually finish all his or her lunch mean responding to the cultural ideological interpellation as a good (mother) subject. However, Allison (1997) explains that arranging attractive-enough-to-eat obentō boxes also points to some Japanese women’s way of proving their artistic and motherly (capable) agency. Allison (1997:308) says, “Women are what they are through the products they produce. An obentō therefore is not only a gift or test for a child, but a representation and product of the woman herself.” This reiterates the fact that women in different cultures, situations, and moments have their own specific ways of achieving and practicing agency.

Moving Forward

There is a marked difference between the Pakhtun women of yesterday and today. This difference is evident from the data; it is acknowledged by the people involved; and recognized
by participant-observers like me. At times I could sense that most people from all the three sites wanted and at times even demanded for ideal social democratic standards, as is evident from my discussion with the young men in Matti, Karak; or wanted cultural democratic standards as evident from the responses of Beenish, Saba, Naeema Gul, Aliya Khatoon, and Salma Shaheen; or spoke in favor of democratic religious standards as well which was evident from the discussions of Mashar Baba, Asma Faizullah, and Qaisara, to name a few respondents. The actions and behavior of people was different than the beliefs they professed and the traditions they lived by. Ironically, at times, they were opposed to each other in some cases. For example, the adal-badal (exchange) marriages that Beenish and Saba discussed is a dichotomy of thoughts (of Beenish and Saba) and actions (of which Beenish’s marriage was an example) which is not so perceptible and pronounced as we move toward the urbanized heterogeneous area.

Through various ethnographic examples I have categorically demonstrated that Pakhtun women are strongly interpellated by various ISAs. Yet, I highlight that at different times, through different material conditions, and forms of negotiation some Pakhtun women manage to achieve subject-positions that they contest for by negotiating mostly as disidentifying subjects (Pêcheux 1982:158-159). These women may not totally succeed at all times but the ethnographic data suggests that with the passage of time some Pakhtun women have materially and socially progressed a lot. They have, to a large extent, managed to contest and negotiate subject-positions within their particular structures be it the family; profession; or the society at large. The proof of this achievement is demonstrated by some Pakhtun men’s acceptance of female social statuses such as teachers, doctors, lawyers, poets, and earners beyond the culturally labeled preexisting statuses of women as only mothers, daughters, sisters, or wives.
However, this research shows that the main ISAs which primarily influence the formation of a good, accepted, and endorsed Pakhtun female subject-position include family and Pakhtun culture. In contrast, secular education and media (for most) help in establishing the culturally disidentifying subject-positions which, though with some reservations, is now mostly accepted by the Pakhtun society. As demonstrated by the responses of the participants, secular school education has had a positive impact on the subject formation and more so on the subject re-formation of Pakhtun women for better. One of the issues that comes forth in the data for not allowing or partially allowing women and girls to acquire school education and higher education in some cases is poverty and lack of local infrastructure for supporting female education as a result of which women either drop out of school early or discontinue schooling after primary level (matric or tenth grade). This is an issue which was brought up a number of times by different respondents like, Mainzanay Baba, the Elderly lady, Nasima Bibi, Nudarat, Mahjabeen, and Gulshan. Therefore, in my encounter with the respondents, especially in the rural areas, I realized that one of the ways that access to secular education both primary and higher can be made more feasible is by providing more structural facilities in the rural areas. These structural facilities should include more metaled roads, better public transportation options, establishment of more schools, and provision of basic relevant infrastructure. I think that the government should provide these basic civic amenities but where possible the rural elites should also play their part to achieve these goals. With provision of more facilities in the rural areas access to higher education should be increased both in urban and rural areas. One of the ways of achieving this is the establishment of institutions of higher education in rural areas. This will not only provide opportunities for men but will be more beneficial for those women whose families still deem it improper for women to leave their native villages and go to Peshawar for higher
education. As such, establishment of more public sector or government-run universities, especially women-only institutions, in rural areas will provide academic opportunities for women at their proverbial doorsteps. Besides, it will provide more job opportunities as well.

One of my respondents, Omar, mentioned curriculum textbooks as a site of gendered, ethnical, and religiously biased interpellation. These include textbooks taught in schools, colleges, and universities. As such, institutions of education should be in line with the outside world; interaction between institutions of national and international higher education should be increased. And most importantly textbooks about and on Pakistan should highlight the real social issues facing people in and outside Pakistan rather than stupendously glorify past achievements or obnoxiously stereotype other nations, ethnicities, and gender issues. In other words, the academic discourse should celebrate diversity and reality. Naseem (2010:25) states, “The educational discourse, through the use of textbooks and curricula, discursively constructs spaces of power that in turn construct and constitute docile and marginal subjectivities and identities.”

Therefore, not only do the syllabi and textbooks need a re-vision but pedagogical methods need an overhauling as well. Being a part of the academia myself I understand that due to lack of human and material resources this may not be possible for academic institutions in all parts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP). However, up-to-date pedagogical skills can be practiced in private and some government institutions where many faculty members have higher degrees from abroad and are familiar with updated pedagogical skills and syllabi. These faculty members in turn can organize pedagogical training workshops for faculty in the rural parts of KP who in turn can further impart the same trainings to faculty in more far flung areas. However, these trainings can be partly (financially) supported by the government especially in the case of institutions in far off rural areas. And partly can be self-supported especially by the more established and
economically sound academic institutions. Besides, as part of the curricula public sector universities should encourage critical thinking and introduce it (at least) as a formal graduate level course. Critical Thinking, as a course, should be made mandatory at graduate level just like Islamiyat and Pakistan Studies are mandatory up to the undergraduate levels. In fact, training in critical thinking will automatically enable students to see and question some of the distorted ideological historical “facts” and the current socio-political issues for which they may be able to suggest substantive solutions.

I have discussed at length the different tiers of educational systems present in Pakistan. Along with the public or government-run and private institutions there is also the madrassah system. Madrassahs mostly impart systematic religious education only. The state needs to seriously streamline this system by properly registering various madrassahs; scrutinizing faculty selection; monitoring syllabi; and other curricular and extra-curricular activities of faculty and students. Apart from systematic education there should be a clear state policy about issues like education, health, and development of infrastructure especially in the rural areas.

Besides education, the data demonstrates that media, especially TV, can play an even more effective role in doing away with gender stereotyping especially by promoting the idea that (Pakhtun) women generally and those who work as performing artists particularly should neither be looked down upon nor be considered social outcasts. This can be done through formal talk shows and by telecasting relevant plays and dramas. The media, as apparent from the respondents’ responses, is already doing great work in raising awareness but it can do even better. Furthermore, Pakhtun women should also seriously compete for executive and decision making spots in media-oriented careers in order to highlight women’s issues from a personal vantage point of view as opposed to an assumed male point of view. The medium of Pashto films
and TV plays should also aim at portraying a more realistic picture of social problems and suggest do-able solutions for the sociocultural issues faced by Pakhtuns in the present times. The producers, directors, and actors should try to do away with the exaggerated and fantasized version of Pakhtun female subjectivity as described by Faryal in Chapter 5 while discussing Pashto movies and TV plays.

Some of my respondents like Rafiqa Amir and Abdul Haq suggested their skepticism about the role and performance of non-government organizations (NGOs) working in KP. Zafar also narrated an incident about the extremist forces pressurizing NGOs to stop their work and threatened the people who worked for them. In spite of uncertain conditions and life threats NGOs continue their work in KP. However, there should be more interaction among local, national, and international NGOs and other agencies working for sociocultural and developmental betterment. Besides, NGOs should help portray the true picture of Pakhtuns as well rather than show them as barbaric and patriarchal ethnic group who imprison their women in houses; keep the women clad in burqas; deny them basic necessities; and expect their women to be completely voiceless. In other words, the NGOs should not only work for securing their funds by embezzling facts, figures, and real-life situations.

By and large some Pakhtun men and especially women have greatly benefitted by acquiring systematic secular education, exposure to media, and general mobility from their villages and localities to urban centers or advanced foreign countries. Nonetheless, it is high time that the Pakhtuns should “be outside ideology, i.e. in scientific knowledge, to be able to say: I am in ideology…or…I was in ideology” (Althusser 1971:175). As such, they should now “lend an ear” and “listen” to what kind(s) of interpellation they are responding to; “think” for themselves;
stop accepting cultural, social, and political proxy subject-positions; and continue to lead their lives progressively with or without burqas!
APPENDIX A

TRANSCRIPTION CONVENTIONS USED

1. Block quotes other than scholarly quotes show the verbatim responses of the respondents.
2. In a longer dialogue I spell out the full names of the respondents on first occurrence where the respondent preferred using his or her first and last names and then use initials on subsequent occurrences, for example,
   Anoosh Khan:
   Sabina Babar:
   AK:
   SK:
   And re-employ the above pattern if the same respondent appears in another context or dialogue in the same chapter or another chapter. But I use full names if:
   a. The respondent and I have the same initials e.g. Anoosh Khan and Alamgir Khan or Aliya Khatoon; or, mostly for Salma Shaheen to avoid confusion with Shaheen Faheem.
   b. The name suggests cultural or familial entitlement e.g. Babbo (aunt/aunty used instead of the real name for an elderly woman), Elderly lady, Mashar Baba (the elder father) etc.; or,
   c. The respondent preferred using his or her first name only, for example, Beenish, Saba, Musa, and so forth.
3. (xxx): anything incorporated in single parenthesis indicates translation of a word or phrase from Pashto or Urdu into English or else it is the author’s clarification or explanation of a word/phrase/concept used. It can also indicate the action or gesture of the respondent which I equate as “explaining” a physical behavior as opposed to a verbal clarification.
4. [xxx]: anything parenthetically incorporated in square brackets is my addition to make the response grammatically correct or otherwise clear in a direct quote.
5. ((AK: xxx)): my initials, “AK” when parenthetically incorporated in double parentheses indicate my interruption with a counter question or response in the middle of a respondent’s answer.
6. Ellipsis (… or …): at the end of a word/phrase/sentence or in the middle of sentence indicates a short pause. But in a scholarly quote indicate omission of words or sentences.
7. Multiple Ellipses (… … …): in a respondent’s quote indicate that a portion of unnecessary response or quote has been omitted.
8. (!): exclamation.
9. CAPS: indicate emphasis except where I use OK instead of okay.
APPENDIX B

MAPS

MAP 1: LOCATION OF PAKISTAN IN THE WORLD

MAP 2: MAP OF PAKISTAN WITH PROVINCES AND PROVINCIAL CAPITALS

MAP 3: MAP OF KHYBER PAKHTUNKHWA (KP) PROVINCE (PREVIOUSLY KNOWN AS THE NORTH-WEST FRONTIER PROVINCE OR N-W.F.P.), SHOWING KARAK, CHARSADDA, PESHAWAR, AND OTHER CITIES OF KP.

APPENDIX C

TAPPAY

1. 

Yar me pa zeen ke ratha kooz sho  
Da parhoen sooke lagawum khula warkawuma (Mohmand 2010:2)  
(He comes on horseback, bends in his saddle and says adieu  
I raise myself on tips of toes for a blissful kiss on his lips anew)

2. 

Janana rasha ka me gore  
Pa sro jamo ke laka gul walara yama (Mohmand 2010:3)  
Darling come if you want to see me  
In a red dress I stand like a rose (translation by author)

3. 

Khudai de da roed da gharhe gul krha  
Che da obo pa bhana darsham boe de krhama (Mohmand 2010:4)  
(How I wish you were a flower, fragrant, in the wild  
Beside the stream I visit for water with you on my mind)

4. 

Khabare krhe shoonde de reegdi  
Laka soor gul da sahar shumal waheena (Mohmand 2010:5)  
(Your ruby lips so quiver with the loving words you speak  
As a blossoming red flower the morning breeze is out to seek)

5. 

Khawanda ma da gudar pul krhe  
Che shah-laila me pa seena gdee qadamoona (.Mohmand 2010:6)  
(The bridge on the brook I would, indeed, wish to be  
If the dainty steps of my Love would fall on me)

6. 

Zrha me mashoom sho rana ghwarhi  
Zama na ghawarhi da prado seeno khoboona (Mohmand 2010:7)  
(My heart like a stubborn child  
Insists on having my beloved’s bosom pillow my head) (translation by author)

7. 

Ma da kunar da seend na zar krhe  
Zama laloo ba pake makh weenzale weena (Mohmand 2010:9)  
(I can perish for river Kunarh  
My lover may have washed his face in its waters) (translation by author)

8. 

Thar da soorko shoondo de zar sham  
Kala ghotai shee kala usparee guloona (Mohmand 2010:10)  
(I can perish for your ruby red lips  
That sometime clamp up and sometime blossom) (translation by author)
9.  
*Da beganae ajaba shpa va*

*Da che da yar pa gheg ke laka panaa rapedama* (Mohmand 2010:14)

(It was, indeed, the night of all nights, last night
When I quivered as a leaf pressed to his bosom tight)

10.  
*Da pas shafaq che taaso veenai*

*Ma da veene pa aasman sheendale deena* (Mohmand 2010:15)

(It is the blood from my broken heart that bled
Strewn up to heavens to paint the horizon red)

11.  
*Halak mayan shee watan pregdee*

*Jeenai mayana shee makh pat krhee ojarhee na* (Mohmand 2010:22)

(A man in love can even leave his country for the beloved
A woman in love can only cover her face and cry!) (translation by author)

12.  
*Pas pa aasman ke stoorree za ve*

*Yar me oda wai ma-e okre deedanoona* (Mohmand 2010:26)

(How I wish to be a star above in heavens high
To watch my restless lover sleeping happily under the bare sky)

13.  
*Da toro zulfo pa zangal ke*

*Yar pa mangul ke garmzum che wrak ba sheena* (Mohmand 2010:27)

(In the dense, dark jungle of my tresses black
I lovingly lead my Love so he does not lose my track)

14.  
*Tha da akhtar pa sahar rasha*

*Za ba dar-oozam thore starge sra laasoonaa* (Mohmand 2010:28)

(Come over on Eid morning
I’ll come out, kohl eyed and henna-stained hands) (translation by author)

15.  
*Patke pa mianz da roozo kaigda*

*Watan prade de che dada darsara zama* (Mohmand 2010:31)

(Between the eyebrows let your turban rise in a tilt
With your turban so placed my faith in your valour is built)

16.  
*Da stha ba yada yam ka hera*

*Za che qadam pa qadam gdam thaa yadawama* (Mohmand 2010:33)

(I wonder if you remember or have forgotten me
I think of you with every step I take) (translation by author)

17.  
*Zama janam nadaan halak de*

*Che khulgai warkham pa bedya wae aee haloona* (Mohmand 2010:36)

(My lover is a naïveté
When I kiss him he tells our secret to all) (translation by author)
18. *Zama chargul ke sa guna wa*
   *Tha ba da sro anango na akhistal khwandoona* (Mohmand 2010:37)
   (Don’t blame my jewellery
   You could have still relished on my cheeks) (translation by author)

19. *Seena palang leche balakhth de*
   *Zama napoya yar pe sar na lagweena* (Mohmand 2010:40)
   (My bosom the bed
   My wrists the pillow
   My naïve lover doesn’t recline) (translation by author)

20. *La larey mram, la nizde swazam*
    *Za lewanai, thaqath da dwarho na larma* (Mohmand 2010:51)
    (How puzzled I am to know that separation is mortality
    But to come and join you in love is also fire and fatality)

21. *Ka mi pa toora sar qalam vee*
    *Da rala kha da na che kore sah warkawuma* (Mohmand 2010:68)
    (To die in bed in my house is not an option for me
    I would rush with sword in hand to battle and die free)

22. *Thar de boorhee topak de zar sham*
    *Pa gharha stha de kaga za dar sara zama* (Mohmand 2010:77)
    (Your short decorated rifle which you carry by the sling
    Gives me pride to walk by your side in sway and swing)

23. *Rababa maath she war de ther sha*
    *Mayen pa ma de gham pa tha ghalataweena* (Mohmand 2010:90)
    (How I wish the rabab to break and grow out of fashion
    My lover dismisses thoughts about me by strumming on its strings.) (translation by author)

24. *Rababee hase rabab tang wa*
    *Che mi da zrha tharoona okrhee awazoona* (Mohmand 2010:91)
    (Praise raise the sweetest notes from the strings of the rabab
    As music of the heart in love is telling its tale with every throb)

25. *Da dunya war daase thereegee*
    *Laka da thoaro ghroona baad pa shanrha zeena* (Mohmand 2010: 101)
    ([Listen] to the whistle of the wind racing across hill and vale
    As life speeding to its end with no breath to tell its tale)
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Map 1
Maps of World
Map 2
World Food Program

Map 3
Maps and Charts

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