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# Rethinking rural entrepreneurship in the era of globalization: some observations from Iran

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## Abstract

This longitudinal qualitative study aimed at investigating and analyzing rural entrepreneurship in the era of globalization. The main goal of this paper is to form and present a theoretical alternative for mainstream economic rural entrepreneurship. For this purpose, 40 entrepreneurs, experts, and practitioners in the agricultural and rural sector were specifically selected and textual data analysis was done by content analysis method using a strategy of theoretical coding (open and axial). The interviews have been done in two time periods from 2015 to 2018 in four Iran provinces. The results show that it is possible to separate four distinct types of rural entrepreneurship in Iran: (1) the orthodox globalized economic rural entrepreneurship, which is based on the productivist approach and economic development in agriculture; (2) the globalized technological rural entrepreneurship with the aim of the commercialization of agriculture through heavy using of technology; (3) the globalized applied scientific rural entrepreneurship with the emphasis on the applied literature in the history of development; and finally (4) the (rural) entrepreneurship as a supplementary of (rural) development, which tries to go beyond the dichotomies like rural-urban, and the mainstream entrepreneurialism. The main suggestion of the research is the so-called “Anti-globalized Cultural Rural Entrepreneurship” that is a constructed rural entrepreneurship, and actually a process aiming to shift and transform the rural entrepreneurship discourse to the multifunctional agriculture and social movement domain.

**Keywords:** Rural development, Globalization, Rural entrepreneurship, Social constructionism, Content analysis, Iran

**JEL code:** R0

## Introduction

What is the future of rural entrepreneurship in globalization era? Although the international entrepreneurship defined it as a process in which the firm would discover and exploit the opportunities in the international marketplace, or international opportunities (Oyson & Whittaker, 2015) and shows a special behaviour across borders (Dimitratos & Plakoyiannaki, 2003) but there is always a context in which it is embedded (Ibid; Baughn & Neupert, 2003). The main point is who can guarantee that local context or conditions will not be co-opted and vanished through the international relations and networks?

Briefly, all three main elements of the entrepreneurship process, that are identification, evaluation, and exploitation of new opportunities (Shane & Venkataraman, 2000), can be influenced by the dominant features of globalization in transnational levels, and by hegemonic characteristics of rurality in local levels. Then, is there any modern solution for these modern problems? Is the old aphorism of “think globally and act locally” a suitable solution? The main and first motive of this research is to postulate a comprehensive and analytic answer to these questions. With regard to Iran, it is argued (Vosooghi & Eemani, 2010) that since 2000, the rural development paradigm has been shifting as a result of the impact of postmodernism, and the emergence of environmentalism and feminism. Meanwhile, it can be said that the mainstream meaning of the rurality is dominated by the (rural) development literature (Shakoori, 2001) and as a result of this, and according to Dabson’s (2005) and Cloke’s (2006) parlance, there is a political-economic and functional interpretation or discourse of rurality which is highly concerned with the agriculture as a main rural profession with the constant flow of agriculture products from rural to urban regions. Also, after a brief review of the titles of the works that have been published in one of the most influential rural-specific Iranian academic journals entitled Village and Development (Roosta va Tose-e in Persian), it will be so clear that the majority of its papers (about 80%) presuppose the political-economic and functional notion of rurality and have the phrasing of “impact of...on...” or “the factors of...” as their titles and the quantitative surveys as their methodologies; consequently, there are a very limited number of the qualitative researches regarding to the deconstruction of rurality or rural entrepreneurship. Recently, one and half billion dollars, saved in the National Development Fund (Sandoogh-e Tosey-e Melli in Persian), was allocated to the development of rural areas of the country (www. Irna.ir). Then, it is relevant to consider the presence of a mainstream economic rural development literature, the absence of the qualitative enquiries in the field of rural issues, and the great governmental focus on the loan-giving to the rural dwellers as a main disenfranchised group, as the necessity of this research. The paper has gained from the social constructionism (Elder-Vass, 2012; Gergen, 2001; Hacking, 1999; Parker, 1998) as a post-modern theoretical foundation for explaining the current rural entrepreneurship discourse and practice, content analysis of the transcripts, and for proposing a theoretical model for the future researches and investigations. Since the social constructionism finds its roots in the post-modern as a school of thinking, so it can be said that the sociological (Thornton, 1999; Thornton, Ribeiro-Soriano, & Urbano, 2011), anthropological (Escobar, 2004, 2005, 2009; Friedman, 2006), and discursive (Cope, 2003; Nicholson & Anderson, 2005, Ogbor, 2000; Shahraki, Movahedi, & Yaghoubi Farani, 2016; Shahraki & Movahedi, 2017) works about the (rural) entrepreneurship and development are able to constitute an enriched background for this research. Within several works, the paper especially draws on the Escobar’s (2004, 2005, 2009) and Ziai’s (2013, 2015) ideas and concepts. Table 1 summarizes some important studies and their results related to the background of the paper.

According to the aforementioned issues and works, the paper argues that the main outcomes of the extension of the entrepreneurship in the rural regions should be the production of new social movements and boosting the multifunctional agriculture (hereafter MA), because both of these phenomena are based on the same resistances against the components of economized globalization in the general term. Through the methodology section and by the research questions, the authors have tried to explain

**Table 1** Some important scientific works related to the background of the paper

The scientific discipline	The author	The publication year (s)	The results
Anthropology	Arturo Escobar	1997–2004– 2005–2009	Rural (entrepreneurship) development is a discursive regime with the hegemonic aspects. Globalization is a western suppressive phenomenon
	Aram Ziai	2013–2015	There must be a blended ontological and epistemological thinking regarding to the development. Development can be modified and continues during the post-modern era.
Sociology	Patricia H. Thornton	1999–2011	Emphasizing on supply side of entrepreneurship and social norms that influencing on the entrepreneurship process.
Discourse analysis	John O. Ogbor	2000	The post-modern deconstruction of entrepreneurship discourse. The rejection of self-evident categories in entrepreneurship discourse.
	Louise Nicholson and Alistair R. Anderson	2005	Discourse analysis of entrepreneurship process.

the role of the critical elements like government, technology, and capital in the current rural entrepreneurship discourse, and also the role of the lived-experience of people that is in its turn the missed circle of the entrepreneurial process. The paper presents a specific theoretical model (please see the last section of the paper) that has some critical implications for the future research and investigations in the field of rural entrepreneurship and is really a conceptual tool for shifting the rural entrepreneurship discourse and practice to the MA and social movement realm. This proposed model, that is actually an inferential outcome of the authors' knowledge about the sociological and anthropological notions of the (rural) entrepreneurship, and of the findings of the paper, based and constructed on the implications of globalization, post-modernism, and post-development (Escobar, 2005), for the development theory and practice. Some scholars (Gardner & Lewis, 1996) believe that development, both as theory and practice, is increasingly polarized. From the one hand, some governments and the international agencies like World Bank or United Nation agencies embrace the neoliberal agendas through globalization, and from the another hand, the post-modern tendencies emphasize on the issues like diversity, giving voice to the specific voiceless groups like women, landless rurals, and on the "bottom-up" or grassroots initiatives. The model presented in this paper has a mixed epistemological and ontological view toward the development; actually, it implies that there is a co-existence between the development promises like eradication of poverty and inequality, and post-modernism hopes like heterogenization, anticolonialization, diversification, and hybridization (Ziai, 2013, 2015). It is worth to mention that there is a little consensus about what entrepreneurship really is. This concept varies between several academic fields (Audretsch, 2002; McElwee, 2005) with large range of interpretations in literature, but according to the abovementioned issues, the paper considers the rural entrepreneurship as a process that in the long term should create the rural social movements and be connected to the multifunctional agriculture; otherwise, it will be nothing just a routine failed developmental project. With regard to the globalization, the paper believes that this global phenomenon must be adopted with the local context, and transformed to the social

constructed event that is reproduced in “in-between” spaces, through hybridization and cross-bordering processes.

### **Rurality and rural entrepreneurship**

For over a century, researchers, sociologists, economists, geographers, government bodies, and laypersons have attempted to define “rurality” more precisely using social, economic, and ecological components. There is a cultural hierarchy that considers urbanity as a positive trait and rurality as a negative one. This hierarchy is not in many ways culturally valid, as it is fairly easy to turn upside down, in the form “urban—bad, rural—good” (Rosenqvist, 2007). Rurality is a contested and sophisticated concept, for example Dabson (2005) defines rural regions in America with differences in economy, values, environment, and atmosphere. What can be deduced from his definition which implies that economy is the agriculture occupation, and the values referring to issues such as religion and traditions of self-reliance and self-sufficiency, environment, comprising serene and beautiful landscapes, populated by animals and livestock, and covered by trees and family farms. Finally, it also implies that atmosphere is a relaxed lifestyle that is a safe and wholesome place to raise kids. Another seminal work about rurality is Cloke’s (2006) enquiry; he recognizes three significant theoretical frameworks which have been influential in constructing the conceptualization of rurality. The first can be thought as functional concepts of rurality. In this context, rurality can be defined in terms of areas which are dominated by agriculture and forestry, use of land, contain small lower order settlement and residents, and engender a way of life which is characterized by respect for environment and extensive landscape. A recent national plan in Iran with the aim of awarding 4% interest rate loans to the so-called rural entrepreneurs (Tarh-e Eshteghal-e Roostae in Persian) is a typical exemplar of functional meaning of rurality, in the one hand, and supply-side notion of entrepreneurship (Thornton, 1999) on the other hand, so that unifying the rural entrepreneur with high-productive farmer ([www.mcls.gov.ir](http://www.mcls.gov.ir)). A second conceptual landmark is political-economic concepts. In this second framework, the content deals with what happens within rural areas caused by factors operating outside the supposed boundaries of these areas. The third theoretical framework of rurality which is very important in this paper, since it has conceptual relations to globalization as a universal phenomenon, involves social constructions of rurality based on the postmodern, post-development, and post-structural theories. In this third approach, rural space and rural life are hybrid settings and contextualized. Entrepreneurship also is a concept that requires clear definition owing to the large range of interpretations that exist in the literature (de Wolf & Schoorlemmer, 2005-2008). There is not a consensus on the accurate meaning of entrepreneurship, which varies between several academic fields such as economy, psychology, sociology, and management (Audretsch, 2002; McElwee, 2005; Rezaei-Moghaddam & Izadi, 2019). Many researches (Rudmann 2008; Dutta, 2004; Lowrey, 2003; Millns & Juhasz, 2006) have focused on the indices such as “measurement,” “skills,” “competency,” “organizational productivity,” and the entrepreneur as an “economic man,” “economic growth,” and so on. Therefore, entrepreneurship is considered to be a vital component in the process of economic growth and development (Ulijn & Menzel, 2004). Thornton (1999) argues that entrepreneurship literatures can be divided or classified into two schools: one taking the supply side perspective and the other, demand side perspective. The supply-side school of thought focuses on

the availability of suitable individuals to occupy entrepreneurial roles while the demand-side focuses on the number and nature of the entrepreneurial roles that need to be filled. Rural entrepreneurship as a strategy of development has been discussed in some studies. McElwee (2005), for example, argues that boosting rural entrepreneurship is a consequence of concentrating on psychological traits and improving the skills of farmers through education. Diaz-Pichardo (2011) draws attention to the productivity and organizational competency that are the classic concepts of positivistic ontology. Rezaei-Moghaddam and Izadi (2019) extends a model for rural and agriculture quick-impact enterprises that focuses on the social and environmental factors alongside the merely economic components. The main argument of this paper is that as an outcome of the combination of functional view to rurality and the supply-side point of view to entrepreneurship—that presupposes the entrepreneurship as a sacred realm and a concrete thing that exists out there, not a process that is socially constructed, aiming the economic growth and progress—there is a mainstream rural entrepreneurship discourse in Iran which makes, controls, represents, and reproduces the state-oriented ideals about the “entrepreneur of the year” who is actually the “farmer of the year” on the one hand, and strengthening the policy of “loan-giving/catching discourse” on the other hand that sees the money and profit as a last resort of a business surviving, then these questions are always asked: whether small agricultural businesses are entrepreneurs, and what is the criterion of entrepreneurship in these businesses (Rezaei-Moghaddam & Izadi, 2019)? This profit-based rural entrepreneurship really is—in a most positivistic view—one that deals with entrepreneurship in a capitalist economy (Knudsen & Swedberg, 2009), and reproduces the neoliberal globalization, so it is needed to transform it to the socially constructed rural entrepreneurship based on the new concept of rurality and globalization.

### **Socially constructed rural entrepreneurship: new rurality, MA, and social movements**

Social constructionism as a system of thinking, which was introduced to the recent academic debate through Berger & Luckmann “The Social Construction of Reality” Berger and Luckman (1966) is a radical agenda for condemning, challenging, and rejecting the positive-empiricist philosophy of science, that is, something that is embodied in the “first philosophy,” and the longstanding commitment to objectivity, realism, truth, rational foundations, and determinism. In this respect, social constructionism is a post-modern metatheory. We argue that the social constructionism paradigm has useful implications for revisiting and rethinking both rurality and rural entrepreneurship. The focus of post-development on local culture and knowledge, and its defense of localized, pluralistic, grassroots movements, and cultural hybridization have some echoes in social constructionism. Gergen (2001), for example, maintains that constructionist critique has been enormously appealing to many groups whose beliefs and voices have been marginalized by science and the “authorities of truth”; those who pursue social equality and justice in unorthodox ways. Parker (1998) also has highlighted the issue of “diversity” and “difference” in social constructionism. He says:

Part of the power of social constructionist accounts is that they deconstruct categories and classifications and urge us to recognize the diversity, fragmentariness and locality of experience and subjectivity... Social constructionism makes us conscious of the diversity and difference in humanity. I believe that it rightly

cautions us against assuming that 'we' (whoever 'we' are) can legitimately speak on behalf of 'them' (whoever 'they' are). (Ibid., p. 17).

As Hacking (1999) states, social constructionism is critical to the status quo, and at the same time is connected to post-development. It is a system of thinking that challenges conventional development rhetoric and practice. Difference, marginalization, and diversity are concepts that suits rural entrepreneurship, as this paper argues, to transform to socially constructed processes. Seeing the rural entrepreneurship as a socially constructed process open the gate, for example, to the subjectivity and diversity that are respectively the hard-core of MA that in its turn depends to the new attitudes and mode of life, and of social movements that have the rhizomic characters. In this respect and under the socially constructionism as an umbrella term, it is discussed that the people manage their own rural entrepreneurship on the basis of shared cultural meaning and of their specific lived-experiences. In entrepreneurship mainstream literatures, entrepreneurs are the super-heroes that save the economic system from crisis and stagnation, but Berglund (2015) says this scientific rigor in entrepreneurship studies suspends the "liveliness" of entrepreneurship. We consider this liveliness a very critical concept in our argument about rurality and rural entrepreneurship. In this paper, attention is paid to the (rural) entrepreneurship as an ongoing process which has dialectical interactions with its context. This context includes the opportunities (Shane & Venkataraman, 2000) and roles (Thornton, 1999). The main role of the paper is to provide an alternative paradigm for the mainstream economic rural entrepreneurship through the sociological explanation of it. Through this study, the authors argue that rural entrepreneurship either as a discourse or practice cannot be considered an alternative rural development approach in a globalized era if it does not analyze and explain its relation to some important and problematic notions and concepts which are (a) the concept of rurality, (b) MA as a new emergent paradigm in rural regions, and (c) the new social movements. Through the rural entrepreneurship interactions with three aforementioned concepts, it is possible to distinguish the main features of rural entrepreneurship from entrepreneurship that takes place in other spaces and places and finally to confirm and establish rural entrepreneurship research as a new academic domain. Kyro (2014) points out that in the postmodern historical period, it is necessary that the discourse of entrepreneurship return to its main origins, which are nature, the state, and the human. For him, rural entrepreneurship in post-modern era has an influence capable of emancipating entrepreneurship from the limitations of the firm and intrapreneurship as an organization's collective behavior. It is a fact that the entrepreneurship in general has been reduced in the urban industrial and firm fields, but as Kyro reminded us, we can see the coalition of nature, environment, and economy in the post-modern rural entrepreneurship discipline which is also a way of connecting society to entrepreneurship. So, we can put forward this assumption that rural entrepreneurship discourse and practice are able to reproduce the post-modern construct of rurality specifically and the social construct of space and place in general. In urban entrepreneurship, there is none of such theoretical and practical potential. The notion of rural idyll has several spatial aspects that can be elaborated in multifunctional agriculture discourse, for example the rural recreation and rural tourism (Little and Leyshon, 2003). Many authors have discussed multifunctionality in agriculture (Daugstaad, Ronningen, & Skar, 2006; Dufour et al., 2007; Huttunen, 2012; Morgen, Marsden, Miele, & Morley, 2010; Rezaei-Moghaddam & Tohidyan Far, 2019; Vesala & Vesala, 2010). Some researchers (Niska et al., 2012) have argued that rural entrepreneurship promotes neoliberalism in agriculture, and multifunctionality is a solution for this ideological agriculture process. Based on an



expansive literature on agriculture multifunctionality (Daugstaad et al., 2006; Huttunen, 2012; Huyelenbroeck, Vandermeulen, Mettepenningen, & Verspecht, 2007; Morgen et al., 2010; Smith, 1998; Vesala & Vesala, 2010; Wilson, 2007), specially the work of Wilson (2007) and Garzon (2005), this study emphasizes on a normative and socially constructed stance in MA and argues that agricultural multifunctionality is a developmental discourse with anti-hegemonic functions, which emerges within the dialectical duality of structure and agency and crosses time and space. Shahraki et al. (2016) disputed how we are able, through an analytical reversion of Escobar's Three Component Theory of Development Deployment (Escobar, 1997b; Escobar, 2005; Escobar, 2009), to pave the way for an anthropological and democratic discourse of rural entrepreneurship which is interconnected with MA. In this point of view, rural entrepreneurship, though professionalization, institutionalization, and integration of MA, reproduces the post-positive and post-productive paradigm in agriculture (Wilson, 2007) something that is so important in new rural and agricultural development approaches. Rezaei-Moghaddam and Tohidyan Far (2019), in consent with the argument detailed in this paper, argue that MA is based on a transition in philosophical perception of the world, i.e., the MA emphasizes on the plurality, multiplicity, individuality, and dispersion of concepts rather than the homogeneous, general, comprehensive, or universal concepts that are accepted in productivism. So, in this section of the paper, it is possible to present this assumption that rural entrepreneurship, in contrast with urban/general entrepreneurship, transform the agricultural and rural policies to the post-productive paradigms and as a result of this can play a key role in another critical function, which is the making and producing of new and essential social movements especially in rural regions. Arturo Escobar's (2005) post-development era has a special focus on the role of social movements. For Escobar and in the post-development era, we are confronted with two orders of social development discourse—the old and the new—characterized by specific historical features. The new social reconfiguration of social movements discourse can be explained with the components such as “social actors, the promotion of democratic, egalitarian and participatory styles of politics, and the search not for grand structural transformations but rather for the construction of identities and greater autonomy through modifications in everyday practices and beliefs” (Ibid, p. 344). The peasant mobilizations, women's and ethnic movements, and grassroots movements are the new forms of social movements in the new post-modern era. Regarding to the extreme diversity among and between the “organization” of the post-modern social movements, from segmented, polycephalous, and reticular, (Diani & Della Porta, 2006) to rhizomic that has diverse forms and unexpected connections (Escobar, 2005), one can argue that either there are not any specific and concrete structures for the new post-modern and post-development social movements, or at least we have faced with an articulation of structures and entities of diversified social movements. The research's main argument in this part is that the rural entrepreneurship as a multifaceted process and with the permanent interconnections with MA needs to be a new social movement if reaching to the sustainability, feminism, and globalization are its goals in the long-term (Vosooghi & Eemani, 2010). As Dabson (2005) outlines in his accounts of the rural regions challenges in the new world, the socially constructed rural entrepreneurship is the only post-modern social movement that is able to overcome the inherent elements of globalization or the impediments like urbanization, commodification, exploitation, and integration,

### **Globalization**

As Gills (2002) says when “globalization” is rephrased as “neoliberal economic globalization”, its broad meaning becomes much clearer. He believes “The economy” becomes the master of society and of all within it. Rather than the economy and

capital, being embedded in society and existing to serve socially defined needs, the relationship is inverted and society exists to serve the needs of capital and its “self-expansion.” (Gills, 2002, p. 228). Also, we see a similar argument in Polanyi’s (1957, 1977) influential idea of formal and substantive economy, and Granovetter’s (1985) notion of embeddedness. Globalization has at least two other common meanings: the increased integration of various countries into the world economy, and the effects of vastly improved transportation and communication systems on multidirectional cultural flows (Edelman, 2005). Although globalization is a protean term, with distinct connotations for different people, a moving target that is not the same from one day to the next or different locations or social situations (Ibid, p. 21). According to Bourdieu (2001), globalization is a simultaneously descriptive and prescriptive pseudo-concept that has taken the place of the word “modernization,” long used by American social science as a euphemistic way of imposing a naively ethnocentric evolutionary model that permits the classification of different societies according to their distance from the most economically advanced society, which is to say American society (Bourdieu, 2001, p. 2). As Bourdieu points out, globalization is only an American index which is defined in liberal sphere. Balfour, Mitchel, and Moletsane (2008) suggest that globalization has a hegemonic power over those nations still regarded as developing. He argues that nations which still rely on productive capital such as agriculture, on the other hand financial nations are very vulnerable in the global economy in this globalization era. If the rural entrepreneurship has a concrete context that is “local” space or place, and the globalization has the urban and global substantive, the real problem or dilemma is that is it possible to reproduce the locality and rural social agency which is the milestone of rural social movements in the global age? Is it possible to reinforce the socially constructed rural entrepreneurship against the hegemonic power of globalization that emphasizes on the high productive paradigm in agriculture, and then reach to the post-productive sphere of post-productive MA field?

#### **Rural entrepreneurship and globalization: a fractional linkage**

The paper recommends post-modern rurality and anti-globalized rural entrepreneurship as a counter-hegemonic alternative (rural) development strategy which can operate in a very humanistic manner within international (business) environment. The issue of post-modern deterritorialization inevitably leads to rethinking the notions of “locally” and “globally” and to a blend of both in the phrase of “local village.” Rural entrepreneurship can be considered as an “anti-globalization movement” (Escobar, 2004; Santos, 2004) because there is a conflict between the functions of these two phenomena. Anti-globalization is a movement against neoliberalism, and for creating new forms of global democracy (Gaeber, 2005). Dabson (2005) argues that globalization has four destructive outcomes in rural areas that are homogenization (the loss of rural identity and advantage), commoditization (the loss of diversity), urbanization (the loss of the “non-urban”), and colonization (the loss of rural power). Actually, the paper disputes that rural entrepreneurship should gain sufficient power to struggle with and neutralize four dramatic changes in rural areas that are the outcomes of globalization in a committed manner. In contrast with the Mukherjee (2018), who—based on the Indian economy—argues that globalization increases the cross-border cooperation in terms of innovation, the productivity, efficiency, average incomes, wages,



greater competition, and quality, the argument of this paper is that, there are some critical differences between the Iran economy and the economic systems of the countries like India, Brazil, Russia, China, and South Africa. From 1999 onwards and with the beginning of Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani's structural adjustment policies and his neoliberal economy, an extreme privatizations with the emphasis on high productivity in agriculture influenced by modernization theory put on the agenda. Environmental devastations, long-standing droughts, proletarianization of labor forces, and transferring of the value-added from the economic system to the abroad are just a part of these catastrophic outcomes of the development practices during this historical period. Naturally, the Schumpeterian capitalist rural entrepreneurship as an ideological rhetoric with the buzzword like "empowerment of the rural", and "job-making" and under the functional point of view to the rurality, was followed by the rural policy makers and practitioners. Meanwhile, Iran does not gain from a democratic political system like India, then the pre-supposed benefits of the so-called "competition" allocates to an oligarchic class that has the power and upper hand.

Succinctly, our main argument about globalization, rurality, and rural entrepreneurship can be expressed thus:

- (a) Globalization and rurality operate through the interrelated systems of discourses and practices. The paper believes that even the "measurable things" or "indices" such as flows, migration, markets, poverty, material or basic needs, remoteness, agriculture (as a profession or means of livelihood) are socially and culturally constructed and therefore are the subject to meaning of the notion of (rural) development/entrepreneurship.

Globalization has dramatic effects on opportunities and challenges facing business firms (Wright & Dana, 2003). Globalization under our perspective in this paper neither overlooks the contributions and accounts of Marxists critiques nor does it exclude the liberal ones, but goes beyond these issues, and puts the passive aspects of post-structuralism behind, reaches to the realist social constructionism<sup>1</sup>. From this perspective, globalization is not just the radicalization and universalization of modernity (Escobar, 2004), but it entails "the local" as a core element which is reproduced in "in-between" spaces. We can say that globalization is time-space compression or a special ordering of space and time which has a great influence on cross-bordering activities such as international entrepreneurship.

- (b) In accordance with social constructionism that opposes naturalistic notions, there is no "intrinsic character" for rurality (Bosworth & Somerville, 2014). In our dawn of realization, we argue that rurality also contains material, represented and contested aspects<sup>2</sup>, then variables such as space, place and time, that are negotiated, experienced and practiced through dialectical relations of rural-urban are able to connect the theories of rurality to the notions of globalization and identity.
- (c) It can be argued that rural entrepreneurship which is dismantled and conceptualized in this paper is the point of convergence of socio-cultural constructed globalization and rurality, so this new version of rural entrepreneurship can struggle with the hegemonic and dominant features of globalization and rurality and become a counter-hegemonic globalization,

a “globalization from below” with the ordinary transnational ties and communication, and not ideological and dominant rules (Evans, 2008).

### **Geographical context of the research**

Iran is located in the heart of Middle East with a dry and semi-dry climate. According to the last National Population Census in 2016 (Statistical Centre of Iran, 2016), 20,730,625 out of 79,926,270 amount of populations (about 26%) live in the 2589 rural areas (*Dehestan* in Persian). In the historical point of view, Iran’s government initiates many entrepreneurial plans and programs but apart from a period of 2 or 3 years after the Islamic Revolution of 1979 that was marked by great rural activities (albeit limited to the creation of rural infrastructure) on the part of Construction Jihad (*Jihad-e Sazandegi* in Persian) (Ghaffary, 2006), the newly established revolutionary state organization, there have been no apparent academic or practical acts, projects, or plans that consider the internal dynamisms of rural and peasant lifeworld or societies. Instead, we are faced with hegemonic rural discourses aimed at strengthening the power of rural magnates and the state while weakening the peasant middle class. Even the Construction Jihad was an administrative system “based on the mobilization of the masses” (Shakoori, 2001) with a very strong political ideology behind it, so it is obvious that when its ideology was paling, its corresponding projects also have been vanished. Right now there are some state organizations in the country which are responsible for rural and agriculture entrepreneurship, for example Agriculture Jihad (*Jahad 'e Keshavarzi* in Persian), Rural Cooperative Organization (*Sazman 'e Taavon 'e Roostaee* in Persian), and Social Welfare, Cooperative and Labor Organization. Recently, the rural development paradigm in Iran is shifting as a result of the impact of postmodernism and the emergence of environmentalism schools and feminism (Vosooghi & Eemani, 2010), but still there is an attitude prevailing between the local and national rural authorities that see the rural dwellers as “loan-catchers,” and the evidence is the recent 1.5 billion dollars national plan with the aim of making jobs in rural regions (*Tarh-e eshteghal-e roostaee va ashayerie* in Persian). According to Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM), 2015-2016 global report, Iran economy is a factor-driven economy with at least entrepreneurial scores. Although the government organizations represent “entrepreneur of the year” and set up big entrepreneurship festivals, but all of them have top-down bureaucratic system which is ignorant about the internal dynamism of rural life. In the case of multi-functional agriculture, the situation is so vague and there is not any statistical or academic score about this new rural development approach. Presently, in this section of the study and through data collected from some rural entrepreneurs, we try to explain whether the rural entrepreneurship in Iran has the potential to reconfigure rurality, be connected to the MA, and finally be a socially constructed and post-modern social movement or not.

### **Research methodology**

Neergaard and Ullhøi (2007) argue that between the nine journals in entrepreneurship, only 10% were based on interviews; meanwhile, in Iran the majority of (rural) entrepreneurship researches have the quantitative methodology (regression analysis, correlation analysis, and structural equations model) and there are few works with qualitative methodology based on interviews or observations because the conceptual paradigm of entrepreneurship is very vague and problematic (Vakili & Ansari, 2011). This research

has been done through a qualitative survey that is really “inquiry from the inside” rather than “inquiry from the outside” (Creswell, 2014). According to the inter-active model, the methodological stages of research are outlined below:

- a) Conceptual framework: a combination of theories, beliefs, and prior research findings will guide or inform our research. The conceptual framework goes beyond “literature” and includes unpublished works, communication with other researchers, and our own experience and pilot studies.
- b) Research questions: in line with research background, scholar’s interest, and with conceptual framework, we extracted the five critical questions listed below:

1. When you refer to your own life experience, practices, and believe, what are the main definitions of “globalization” and components of it? Is it a positive or negative term?
2. What are the dimensions of entrepreneurship, the barriers in front of it and its motivators? Are there any differences between rural entrepreneurship and urban entrepreneurship?
3. Is rural entrepreneurship a labor-oriented or capital-oriented phenomenon?
4. What are the roles of institutions (especially the state or government) in the entrepreneurship process?
5. Is entrepreneurship a public or private project?

c) Data collection and analysis method: we conducted this research through in-depth expert interviews with the 40 university teachers, practitioners, and entrepreneurs settled and worked throughout the country, all of which have great responsibilities in entrepreneurial courses, projects, fieldworks, and policy making. This study is a longitudinal research and the interviews have been done in two phases: (a) 20 out of 40 interviews have been done between February and August 2015 in the west and center Iran (Hamedan, Tehran, and Kermanshah Provinces), and the rest of them between April and October 2018 in the east of the country (Sistan and Baluchistan province)<sup>3</sup>.

Qualitative content analysis (QCA) method has been used for analyzing the data, involving in a bundle of techniques for systematic text analysis.

- d) Sampling method: purposeful sampling method was used for the recruitment of participants (interviewees). This involves selecting research participants according to the needs of the study; so participants must give a richness of information that is suitable for detailed research.
- e) Credibility and dependability of research: credibility of the research was handled by the “triangulation” method. Triangulation can be a useful tool to examine and reduction data overload, and to avoid from over-reliance on one portion of the data which could then skew the analysis.

Table 2 shows the job classification of the respondents.

### Qualitative data analysis

In the entire analyzing process, we always keep in mind a helix perception which means that conceptualization, collecting, and analyzing data in qualitative research can be done altogether (Blaxter, Hughes, & Tight, 2001); meanwhile, we follow these stages respectively in the analysis process:

- a) Open coding and segmenting the data. This is the process of dismantling the interview transcripts in order to reach meaningful units. Open coding refers to the naming and categorizing phenomena through close examination of the data and represents the operations by which data are broken down, conceptualized, and put back together in new ways. It is the central process by which theories are built from data (Smit, 2002).

In this paper, open coding process was carried out only for some parts of the transcripts that contain important information that is really a type of sampling within materials (Flick, 2009). In Table 3, the research questions (Q1 for first question, Q2 for the second and so on), selective transcripts, and codes were related and allocated to each question shown. As a matter of fact, codes are not the actual words used by the respondents, instead the conceptualization of these words by the researcher.

- b) Axial coding. After dismantling the transcripts in the form of codes listed in Table 3, the extracted categories (codes) were assembled to configure axes. Axial coding is that part of the analytic process in which the researcher puts the parts of the data identified and separated in open coding back together in new ways to make connections between categories or the codes. In this way, the complexity of the context is brought back into the picture (Smit, 2002). Axes are the backbone of content analysis and the output of it.

Table 4 shows the axial coding process. In definition column, we have tried to give a comprehensive definition of axes, and divide them to subparts or subcategories (italic words or phrases) in order to form more precise and complete explanations of the phenomena.

### Limitations of the study

The main limitation of the research was the semantic mix-up that exist around the meaning of the “entrepreneurship” inside the governmental organization thorough

**Table 2** Job classification of the sample respondents

The profession of the respondents	Number	Provincial stratification <sup>a</sup>
Entrepreneurs	23	Hamedan→1
Experts and university professors	7	Kermanshah→2
Entrepreneurship practitioners	10	Sistan and Baluchistan→3 Tehran→4

<sup>a</sup>This stratification is due to connect a selective transcript in column 2 of Table 3 to its related province

**Table 3** Open coding of the transcripts

Q1: Definitions, dimensions, and evaluation of globalization.	<p>Quotes or selective transcripts of interviews (sampling within materials)<sup>a</sup></p> <p>Globalization is a positive and an opportunity that brings about competition and communication and saves the country from solitude and underdevelopment.(1)</p> <p>Be a member of WTO is an inevitable and incredible good.(1)</p> <p>Rural traditions vanished due to globalization, but this is not a concern. After 1 year or more, we can gain a suitable position in the global economy.(4)</p> <p>As a result of globalization and telecommunication, we consider the unification of cultures as a negative phenomenon, but we have no choice.(4)</p> <p>Rural dwellers and their cultures and mode are a past, from which I choose to move on.(2)</p> <p>The multi-national and trans-national companies and firms have very good economic effects but we must be prudent. (3) (1)</p> <p>Codes    Neoliberal economy as a universal inevitable phenomenon, demising the rural cultures, communication, trans-national firms.</p>
Q2: Definition of entrepreneurship in rural and urban, its barriers, components, and motivators.	<p>Entrepreneurship is a fundamental element in prevention from immigration.(2)</p> <p>Entrepreneurship has several dimensions but finally is an economic one.(2)</p> <p>There are no differences between entrepreneurship in rural and urban areas and in the near future we will not have any rural areas.(3)(1)</p> <p>In rural areas, we must pay attention to and provide the suitable infrastructure for commercial agriculture and eco-tourism.(1)</p> <p>Entrepreneurship depends on communication, therefore it is easier to fulfill in globalization era.(4)</p> <p>Entrepreneurship has individual, societal, and modernized aspects. It is extreme connected to norms and culture.(4)(2)</p> <p>Marketing is a key element, you should present the local culture and taste to the global economy(3)</p> <p>Virtual marketing via the social networks such as Telegram and Instagram is so important. (3)</p> <p>Codes    Multi-dimensional, subjectivity, commercialism, communication, immigration.</p>
Q3: The Role of the institutions in rural entrepreneurship.	<p>Entrepreneurship education is an important factor for filling a gap between university and labor market.(1)(2)(4)</p> <p>We should combine the theory with practice.(4)</p> <p>Local institutions and rural communities have very little roles in globalization age, and we do not possess any potential in this field.(3)(4)</p> <p>Entrepreneurship is crucial, but who wants to risk and clashing with the rural traditions?(1)</p> <p>Codes    Education and knowledge, theory and practice, tradition and rituals</p>
Q4: Entrepreneurship as a labor-oriented or capital-oriented?	<p>Because of low-price labor force in third world and developing countries we should concentrate on capital accumulation.(1)</p> <p>Labor and capital complete each other. Entrepreneurship must pay attention to the capital even in rural areas.(1) (4)</p> <p>Technology and capital have an upper-hand in entrepreneurship. (1)(2)(3)(4)</p> <p>Entrepreneurship means wealth producing and profit-making throughout the capital accumulation.(4)</p> <p>Although the profitable activity or practice in commercial agriculture is good but occasionally the high value-added agri-product may not be adapted with local conditions, anyway capitalism is the heart of entrepreneurship and put attention to labor and its needs is not just a moral thing!(3) (1)</p> <p>Many rural entrepreneurs do not access to the high-tech then wasting the governmental loans and budgets.(3)</p> <p>Codes    Capital accumulation, capitalism, technology, value-added agriculture product</p>

**Table 3** Open coding of the transcripts (*Continued*)

Q5: Privatization-based or public-based entrepreneurship?	<p>The role of government is like a leader in an orchestra, only monitoring and coordinator to reach to the harmony.(1)</p> <p>We are the king of burned opportunity, all of these opportunities destroyed by the government awful interventions.(1)(2)</p> <p>The government should only be a supervisor, for example the management of water resources and restraining the cultivation of high water-consumer agro-product such as potato. The only role of government should be supportive one. (4)</p> <p>All of the entrepreneurship plan or apparatus must be supported by the government especially in the deprived regions. (3)</p> <p>The entrepreneurship as a whole and rural entrepreneurship as a specific issue is not just a fraud for loan-catching. (3)</p>
	Codes Privatization, supportive government

<sup>a</sup>The numbers in the parentheses reference to the provincial stratification presented in Table 2

the country and then between the people especially the rurals. So, the authors tried to explain of and focus on a common-sense meaning of the entrepreneurship at the first place before asking the questions. Another problem was a pervasive difficulty that is related to the data gathering within the breath-taking bureaucratic system in the country. Many practitioners and state employees do not have a scientific point of view and many data are not updated. Finally, the geographical scattering of the rural regions and villages is an obstacle that increases the costs of the research.

### Findings and discussion

This section of the paper provides the analysis of the findings that have reached in the former section, and argues that the mainstream entrepreneurship discourse and practice in Iran can be transformed to the new one that is able to reconfigure the new concept of rurality, MA, and new post-developed social movements. Many respondents (interviewees) of this enquiry—practitioners and academics more than the entrepreneurs—were dominated by this mainstream literature of entrepreneurship, rurality, and globalization, and by virtue of suppressing their own agency, did not have any believe in the critical role of rural culture, experiences, and meanings in establishing the rural entrepreneurship process. Regarding the quotes like these:

Rural traditions vanished due to globalization, but this is not a concern (4)/ rural dwellers and their cultures and mode is a past, from which I choose to move on.

There are no differences between entrepreneurship in rural and urban areas and in the near future we will not have any rural areas (2)/ in rural areas, we must pay attention to commercial agriculture and eco-tourism. (1).

All abovementioned quotes refer to the demising of rural culture. So we see clearly that the dichotomy of rural/urban, as the respondents believe, develops in the expense of rural culture, space, or world. So the lived-experience of rural people and (rural) entrepreneurship (Berglund, 2007, 2015) is something that is being suppressed in the current discourse and practice of rural entrepreneurship that are dominating from the government bodies and academics to the rural entrepreneurs. Meanwhile, the rural dwellers that are entering to the entrepreneurship domain are trying to link their own local values and indigenous



**Table 4** Axial coding of the transcripts

Axes	Definition
The economic world which is depended on the free market.	In the <i>free market</i> , any actors or economic units neither able to change the prices nor determine the type of productions. Emphasizing on the concepts such as free market and <i>competition</i> show us that respondents have an everlasting believe on the economic age as the base of entrepreneurship, while in the recent years we see the emergence of <i>multidisciplinary</i> period which is characterized with <i>social values, sociological factors, embeddedness, and networks</i> , all of them as the determinants of entrepreneurship (Granovetter, 1985; Murphy, Liao, & Welsch, 2005; Thornton, 1999; Thornton et al., 2011).
Globalization and entrepreneurship have roots in orthodox and deterministic paradigm of neoliberalism.	Multidimensional development and entrepreneurship generally mean that <i>values and cultural norms</i> are critical, and that every economic phenomenon embedded in a specific <i>social context</i> (Giannetti & Simonov, 2004; Granovetter, 1985; Westlund, 2011), but in the <i>orthodox positivistic paradigm</i> , entrepreneurship is a very economic event, and globalization is absolutely effective and <i>inevitable phenomenon</i> that every effort against it has doomed to the failure (Gaeber, 2005).
Dialectical relationship between theory and practice.	Many philosophers and sociologists argue about theory and practice interaction. <i>Karl Marx</i> coined the " <i>praxis</i> " concept to explain what he means practiced theory or a practice appearance from the theory (Ritzer, 2007). Maybe we are able to offer the entrepreneurial university as an exemplar of praxis concept, an institution that blends the theory and practice. For doing such a great effort, <i>the hegemonic discourse of entrepreneurship</i> needs to be completely reversed.
The very essence of capital	Nowadays, capital has the several forms, <i>social capital, cultural capital, educational capital</i> ; consequently, the economic capital in the forms of tangible or intangible resources is not the only capital in one's ownership. (Arenuis & Kwon, 2010; Kaasa, 2009).
Government vis a vis the privatization	We cannot say that the role and intervening of state in economy completely eliminated in the historical period, but we can argue that <i>the state or government must be only a supportive actor</i> . Keynesian economy for example is an evidence for the importance of government action to stabilize the economy. Capital imperialism and market fundamentalism both are extremist in their orientation. Entrepreneurship rethinking special in rural areas should considers role of state. Especially the influential debate of (economic) development and entrepreneurship is so critical here. Also, the role of technology and its relation to the entrepreneurship and embarking the startup is so important.

culture to the global level and actors and, by virtue of this linkage that is established via social networks, reproduce their locality and agency, in the middle of global age, through socially constructed process of rural entrepreneurship. For example, right now in Sistan and Baluchistan province, there are a limited number of rural entrepreneurs who are so active in the virtual world for marketing and selling their handicrafts and other multifunctional products and ideas. The virtual marketing refers to the deterritorialization and reterritorialization that are embedded in the post-modern rurality and can overcome the positive and material imagination of rurality (Cloke & Little, 2005) and lead to rural-urban hybridization and imaginative hybrids that is the lost circle of the discursive aspect of the respondent's statements and ideas. Kyro (2014) argues that in the post-modern era, entrepreneurship must return to *nature* and from this word he contends "agriculture," but the authors of this paper argue that the rural entrepreneurship process is able to go beyond the rural/urban dichotomy in the long-term.

Considering quotes like these:

In rural areas, we must go for commercial agriculture and eco-tourism (1)/  
Technology and capital have an upper-hand in entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurship  
means wealth production and profit-making throughout the capital accumulation.  
(1)(2)(3)(4).

Regarding the quotes and codes like capitalism, technology and capital accumulation, it is clear that the interviewees see agriculture under the shadow of productivity approach (Wilson, 2007). Although there are some recent professional efforts like establishing rural enterprises, self-employment projects, and some SMEs in Iran rural regions, but affirming MA as a distinct and alternative rural development discourse and practice is not the case. Many post-productivity functions of agriculture like cultural and social functions, as well as notions like multi-occupation, plural activity (the combination of on-farm and off-farm), and rural living having interconnection with urban domain, are being neglected. If rural entrepreneurship is detached from urban relations and forces, then it is not able to form a linkage and constant engagement with MA. Due to the fact that majority of the consumers of agriculture section of an economic system have residency in urban regions, so if we decide to reinforce the MA, based on the post-modern and socially constructed hybrid affairs, then the praxeology analysis (Holcombe, 2013; Von Mises, 1963) of rural entrepreneurship, an analysis that considers both the producer and consumer at the same time, is a vital point. The darkest side of rural entrepreneurship in Iran is that from the social stratification perspective, there is no maneuvering space for rural entrepreneurs as a “social class” in-itself. Considering quotes like these:

As a result of Globalization and telecommunication, we consider the unification  
of cultures as a negative phenomenon, but we have no choice (4) / Local  
institutions and rural communities have very little roles in globalization age,  
and we do not possess any potential in this field.(3)(4).

It can be said that rural entrepreneurs feel that they are completely isolated, without any “agency”. Contrary to what Esteva and Prakash (1998) believe, the paper believes that it is not possible to close the door to the fantasy of global thinking in order to regain the human agency and autonomy, instead, the rural entrepreneurs should acquire their agency through everyday experience of going beyond the dichotomies like rural/urban/, productivity/multi-functional, and through socially constructed rural entrepreneurship. Rural entrepreneurship needs to make and set its special post-modern social movement with the features like be rhizomic, cross-bordered—in Cloke’s (2006) parlance “spreading-city-into-the-country” (urbanization of the rural) and bringing-nature-into-the-city (ruralization of the urban)—merged identities, and fluid entities. Right now in Iran, there is a pervasive rhetoric political apparatus in support of rural and deprived people (*gheshr-e mahroom* in Persian); meanwhile, many of the financial supports and the loans go for the rural or urban elites and oligarchy even for the lay rural persons who have deep relations with the authorities and benefit from a developed social capital. Permanent marginalization of Iran’s rural society since the 1960s is an outcome of the 1962 land reform program, and the increasing focus on petrol inside the national economy (Shakoori, 2001). It is ideal to incorporate globalization during the twenty-first century as a new important actor to Ehsani’s (2006) argument about rural degradation. The hegemonic and propaganda discourse of rural as

“loan-catchers” has bred rural magnets who gain several benefits under the corrupted bank and governmental system as presented in quote below:

The entrepreneurship as a whole and rural entrepreneurship as a specific issue is not just a fraud for loan-catching. (3).

## Conclusions

As final discussion, the paper distinguishes between four main types of rural entrepreneurship in the globalization era. They are outlined below:

### Orthodox globalized economic rural entrepreneurship

This version of rural entrepreneurship returns to its origin, its economist ancestors the persons like Jean-Baptiste Say and Joseph Schumpeter (Murphy et al., 2005); meanwhile, the entrepreneurial thoughts of the sociologists like August Conte are veiled and neglected. This type of entrepreneurship is completely economic, and its final goals are to make profit, accumulation of capital, competition, and value added. Everything is material and rural-urban dichotomy is very strong and highlighted. Here, we face with the hegemony and authority of neoliberalism notions in theory, and of the positivism in methodology. Rural entrepreneurship is not just a classical “development strategy” aimed at a productive approach (Huttunen, 2012) throughout the high land usage in agriculture and increasing productivity. Rural dwellers are “vulnerable groups” and rural workers the poorest men in the world. Food and fibers being conveyed to the cities and instead “administrative admiring” from state ministries to the rurals! Globalization without any critiques, actually the hyperglobalist attitudes, being imposed on rural dwellers. Briefly, issues like meanings and subjective rural matters thrown away as “forgotten items” (Clove & Little, 2005). The concepts like privatization, technology, communication, and commercialism are the upshots of neoliberal economy. Majority of codes, listed in Table 3, are going around what we mean in this paper “the positivistic, materialistic, and deterministic approach” to the entrepreneurship and globalization; the similar ideas were expressed by Cloke about rurality (Clove, 2006). Lester Thurow (2010) believes that all the industrial revolutions are frightening with unknown ends, thus, why entrepreneurship especially in the complex context of rurality should adhere to the neoliberal free market or other left-hand or right-hand thoughts? As Arturo Escobar says (2004), the main result of neoliberal accounts of globalization and development is a new type of social fascism which sparks the fire of exclusion, insecurity, and marginalization throughout the society.

### Globalized technological rural entrepreneurship

Industrialization and commercialization of agriculture in rural areas are the vantage points in this brand of rural entrepreneurship. The technologically inclined man is an improved version of the farmer, and the cultural and social side effects of technology are neglected. In this type of rural entrepreneurship, it is assumed that productivity and mathematical calculations of input/output ratio have the ability to create job and wealth, but it is argued in economic science noble prize winner Paul Michael Romer’s endogenous growth theory, and in the Schumpeter’s thought reflected in his seminal work entitled *The theory of economic*

*development* (1911), that the increasing of productivity must be an inner mechanism and character of an economic system, then the dynamic policymaking of the states and firms are very important in this regard. Here, we should state that in the Foucauldian perspective, the technology is the nexus of power and one cannot gain benefit from it without losing anything. It is necessary to point out here that the colonialization is one of the outcomes of tech-oriented practice and intervention.

#### **Globalized applied scientific rural entrepreneurship**

In “applied” literature, every idea or theory should be plasticized and led to the short-term concrete outcomes and benefits; it means that the “applied” as a term refers to the colonial context of knowledge or science (Gardner & Lewis, 1996). In the applied field, rural dwellers are inclined to the self-interest and are unable to understand and perceive abstract problems or investments like aesthetical rural folklore that can be fruitful in the long-term. This type of entrepreneurship reminds us the time–space compression articulated by Harvey and Giddens (Giddens, 1981) that refers to the scarcity of time in modern days, so we should transform every idea to the practice immediately, without putting enough attention to the adaptability of local conditions and take into consideration rural agencies. Here, it is worth mentioning that the “entrepreneurial praxis”—something that we want to emphasize on it instead on “applied” concept in the entrepreneurship process—has a great difference from what that is in respondent’s parlance “entrepreneurial university” or “linkage of university and industry”. Praxis here does not refer to the some sort of application of a theory or device; it means just-in-the-moment practice or thinking and contesting grand-narrations about profit, idea, skill, modern, opportunity, exploitation, creativity, and buzzwords or empty signifiers like these that configure the hegemonic entrepreneurship mainstream.

#### **(Rural) entrepreneurship as a supplementary of (rural) development: some empirical results**

As a matter of fact, some can say that “entrepreneurialism” is an emerging economic development strategy, initially in urban areas, but increasingly spreading to rural (Mitchel & de Waal, 2009). However, since the debate of the pioneering of economic development to entrepreneurship or vice versa can be traced back to the early periods, the 1950s and the theories of Karl Menger (1902–1985) and Joseph Schumpeter (1883–1950), so, based on the distinct and empirical findings of this investigation, the authors believe that in Iran specially in the deprived and secluded rural communities like Sistan and Baluchistan province, with the very long-term, catastrophic, and devastating drought, development and entrepreneurship should be engaged simultaneously in policy making; meanwhile, the classical economic development with the aim of creation of infrastructure must have the privilege. In the other word, the rural entrepreneurship should be the supplementary of rural development. Like Ziai (2015), we believe that the modern manifestations of development are still alive and have a role then we should go beyond mainstream entrepreneurialism something that has limited itself to the agricultural productivity, the rural-urban dichotomy, job creation through infrastructure, productivism, and economizing agriculture, positivism, etc., hence all of them reproduce hegemonic discourses. Briefly, the empirical results of the study are listed below:

- The rural entrepreneurship discourse and practices should be considered as a supplementary of the classic rural development strategies.
- The agency of the rural people must be activated through social and local networks; this is some sort of globalization from below that reproduces the local within the global mechanisms.
- The government as an institution is still the main agent of rural development, so the entrepreneurship as a capitalist process based on the profit-making and individualism has some contradicts with the governmental process of development.
- The rural development is a labor-oriented project versus the rural entrepreneurship that is a capital-oriented multi-faced phenomenon.
- The rurality, MA, and social movements, both as post-modern concept and practice, should overcome the old and enduring dichotomies like rural/urban, man/woman, state/private, and labor/capital.
- The rural entrepreneurship should be linked to the rural social movements and MA in the long-term.

### **Policy implications and guidelines for future research**

As policy implications and guidelines for future research, a conceptual and theoretical model entitled *Anti-globalized Cultural Rural Entrepreneurship* (hereafter ACRE) is presented that actually is the main proposal of the paper for rethinking the rural entrepreneurship. The founder of the theory of the “world” system, Emanuel Wallenstein, believes that what is called “globalization” is actually the final phase in the development of the world capitalist system that started around the 1450s, and imposed on theory by powerful groups (Stefanovic, 2008). So in such an inequality conditions in the international political system, we are unable to defeat the tyranny of globalization and as a result of this, empower rural dwellers throughout the entrepreneurship process unless we try to take into consideration another institutionalized and professionalized rural entrepreneurship based on “cultural turn” point of view. Now and here, we hear the echoes of Herder’s voice about multiculturalism, as he says: “divide the nations of the earth into hunters, fishermen, shepherds, and husbandmen; and not only to determine their rank in civilization from this division, but even to consider civilization itself as a necessary consequence of this or that way of life.” (Denby, 2005). As Da Costa and Saraiva (2012) argue, the entrepreneurship as a specter is haunting modernity; however, we should bear in mind that those global relations that are embedded in modernity and globalization do not have a uniform impact everywhere, then the issues of social heterogeneity should not be overlooked (Long, 2005). There is a huge gap among the unification or Americanization of cultures on the one hand and take the heterogeneity and rural-urban hybrid settings for granted in the cultural way of seeing in virtual entrepreneurship on the another hand, and in a sense we mean it. The “anti-globalized rural entrepreneurship” that is shaped, managed, and controlled in the hyper-real commodities spheres reminds us the importance of the post-modern standpoints, reckon on indigenous knowledge, grass-root and local co-operations, embeddedness (Granovetter, 1985), and multi-functionality (Fleskens, Duarte, & Eicher, 2009) without any idealization of “the local.” What we mean here from dialectical relationship between theory and practice in entrepreneurship literature refers to the “reflexivity” notion (Ross, 2004-2005) in social science where believes and thoughts of rural inhabitant (as

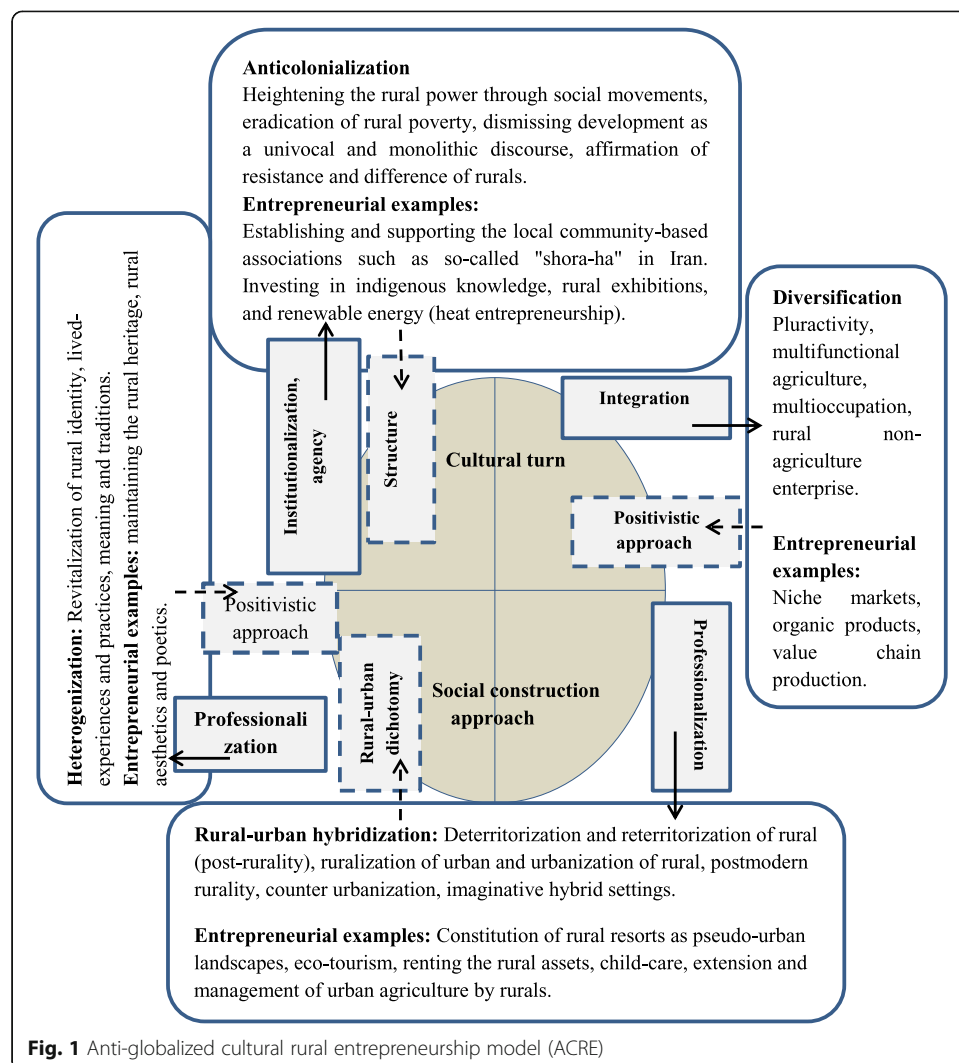
an actor) emerge within rural action (is not confined to land cultivation or agri-business) and reflect the lived-world of him or her. ACRE model is the main suggestion of this paper, a pathway for seeing and analyzing rural entrepreneurship in a cultural point of view. In this theoretical model, the authors have redesigned Arturo Escobar's (2009) model, and synthesized it with the post-development and constructed concepts. The ACRE is shown in Fig. 1.

In Escobar's (1997, 2005) post-structural point of view, development as a "discourse" has three major mechanisms for reproducing and circulating itself. These mechanisms involve the discipline and normalizing instructions that lead to the deployment, establishment, rigidity, and fixation of discourse, which are (a) professionalization, (b) institutionalization, and (c) integration. The first refers to a set of techniques and disciplinary practices through which the generation, diffusion, and validation of knowledge are organized, managed, and controlled: "the process by which a politics of truth is created and maintained, the consolidation of "development studies" in most major universities set into motion a powerful mechanism for producing truth and norms about the third world." (Escobar, 2009). The implication of professionalization process for discourse of development is the "economizing" of it. The second mechanism refers to the "establishment of an institutional field in which, and from which, discourses and techniques are produced, recorded, stabilized, modified and put into operation." (Ibid.). Escobar believes that through an institutional mechanism, the strategies such as "rural development" resulting in a profound transformation of the countryside and peasant societies. The last mechanism refers to development as a multidimensional issue that is analyzed in the different academic fields. The mainstream discourse invents the "development abnormalities" then prescribes itself as a remedy. The result of all three former mechanisms is that development has become an apparatus for marginalizing and precluding other ways of seeing and doing and exerting a hegemonic power over the local resistance, social movements and all the other "alternatives to development" (Escobar, 2005). Escobar's Foucauldian perception of development makes a unique and influential way for deconstructing the discourse of development. In his point of view, development is nothing but just a "unifying vision" and a "construct" (Ibid.) for colonialization of the east by the west. So what is the escaping way for this overwhelming apparatus? As Friedman (2006) says to us, there is an impasse here in post-structural stance in anthropological development studies:

"The anthropology of development is at an impasse; it remains bound to an overly structural interpretation of the development process, a construction that privileges not only structure over agency but also hegemony over dialectics. The post-structuralism critique is also overly structural in its orientation, and as a result it has some serious problems with regard to agency" (Ibid, 203–204).

So, if the dodging method, as Friedman have proposed, is the dynamic interplay between conscious, living actors, and redefine, resist, and manipulate development by conscious subjects not hapless victims, we hear the distinct echoes of post-development and realist social constructionism in Friedman's suggestions<sup>4</sup>. The question is what will happen if we set the Escobar's aforementioned three mechanisms over their heads in order to reach a new version of rural entrepreneurship which is consistent with the features of globalized and post-globalized societies? Through this "analytical reversion," we are able to transform the three development deploying





mechanisms to the three “alternative development” deploying mechanisms, and through this transformation process able to cross through space and time, and emphasize on the notions such as agency and self-monitoring actors. The logical philosophy that is behind the model explained in Fig. 1 is that the strengthening of above-mentioned analytical reversion is gained through the professionalization, institutionalization, and integration of ACRE based on the cultural turn, domain, or point of view, and under the social construction approach. Only this version of entrepreneurship can overcome and overwhelm the hegemonic aftereffects of globalization and its co-opted entrepreneurship; otherwise, “who, exactly, might be interested in the dissemination of an entrepreneurial model that is capitalist, Western, white, male heterosexual, regarded as of European or North American origin, correct and as a standard to be copied by everyone else.” (Da Costa & Saraiva, 2012). The four big boxes of the model reminding the anti-globalization outcomes of ACRE. The small boxes and arrows that enter these big boxes display one of the mechanisms that were pointed out by Escobar in his model of development, which are the preconditions for related anti-globalization outcomes. For example, institutionalization and agency can be seen

as a precondition of anti-colonialization which means that in way of heightening the rural power and supporting rural resistance we need an institutional field and also to concentrate on agency as an intrinsic essence of an individual. Without institution and agency, there is no chance for a person living in a rural area to get power and overcome colonialism. The exit dot small boxes and arrows, present an idea or notion or paradigm that must be withdrawn. For example, diversification demands a pulling back from the positivist approach to agriculture and rurality, grasping multifunctionality, plural activity, and so on (Seuneke, 2014). In every big box, there are presented examples of entrepreneurial practices that contain the several new fields of rural entrepreneurship. All the small boxes embedded in the “cultural turn domain” remind us of immersion in the constructionism sphere, which is the heart of the theoretical orientation in this research. Cultural turn refers to the social constructivist approach to rurality and entrepreneurship.

Having presented the ACRE model in detail, now in the last section of the paper, it is possible to provide some guidelines for future researches that are all based on the ACRE and are listed below:

- (a) A paradigm shifting is needed in the concept of rurality from the functional rurality to the socially constructed and post-rurality, a construct that takes place within the rural-urban hybridization and crosses the rigid entities of absolute rural or urban.
- (b) As a result of item (a), the discourse analysis of rural entrepreneurship is an inevitable point of view in the future research. Rural entrepreneurship not only has an objective context (rural places and landscapes) but also includes the subjective component that is produced by the mindset of rural dwellers.
- (c) The nexus of (rural) entrepreneurship/ (rural) development especially in the deprived regions should be explained.
- (d) The agency of the rurals has a key role in the recent rural entrepreneurship forms like MA, and in the new rural social movements, so as boosting the entrepreneurship in rural areas it is necessary to reinforce the community-based rural association and to analyze the classical aspects of the rural entrepreneurship in rural sociology discipline.
- (e) It must be acknowledged - that rurality is an outcome of lived-experience of habitants, and then the subjective matters have the upper hand, so the future researches should put enough attention to the qualitative methodology that is concerned about the issues like fluidity, subjectivity, agency, and grounded narrations.
- (f) MA is a post-productive form of agriculture and then a key element of sustainable rural entrepreneurship and development, so it seems that the analysis of it in the future is so useful and necessary.
- (g) Instead doing the quantitative studies about the rural entrepreneurship, and accepting the effects of entrepreneurship on welfare and prosperity of rural regions as presupposes and the prior facts, the scientific researches must focus on deconstructing the discourse of rurality and entrepreneurship.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup>Elder-Vass (2012) differentiates between trivial or extreme social constructionism, and moderate social constructionism which is combination of realism and constructionism. In his theory entitled discourse circles (Ibid, p 154–6), through the rethinking Michel Foucault's ideas, Elder-Vass believes that there are not any systems of formation residue in discourse itself; instead, 'it is groups of people with the collective commitment to enforce those norms that are the source of their causal influence.' (Ibid, p.154). The Elder-Vass's theory is a steering path between constructionism and realism in order to combine these and reach concepts such as discourse efficacy and structure-agency linkage. So, Discourse is to be understood here, in this paper, in a post-Foucault sense, based on Elder-Vass' description of a realist, or post-Foucauldian, theory of discourse as '[a] way of theorizing the impact of discourse on the social world that is moderately social constructionist without denying the significance of material reality, the human individual or social structures (for in detail information please see: Shahraki & Movahedi, 2017).

<sup>2</sup>Many contributions which are collected in volume *Contested Countryside Cultures* edited by Paul Cloke and Joe Little (1999, 2005) criticize the dominant and positivist imagination of rurality and present the post-modern discourse about the countryside, especially the research done by Murdoch & Pratt, 2005 (Ibid., pp. 49–67). Another influential work about this analytical perspective to rurality is *Interpreting Rurality: Multidisciplinary approach* (Bosworth & Somerville, 2014).

<sup>3</sup>There wasn't any statistical indication or formula for distribution of respondents between the provinces. The attribution of 20 out of 40 interviewees to the Sistan & Baluchistan province is because of these data has been extracted from the recent research plan entitled: "The situational analysis of rural entrepreneurship in Sistan and Baluchistan Province" that is ongoing right now by the authors. Also Sistan and Baluchistan province is the greatest and one of the most deprived province of Iran that is really a suitable field for entrepreneurial researches. Recently the governmental budget of 60 million American dollars attributed to this province under the so called "4 percent interest rural loans" for boosting the entrepreneurship in rural regions of this province.

<sup>4</sup>The dialectical interplay between agency and structure and leaving away the "hegemonic" essence of development discourse as a social reality are the fundamental features of Giddens's Structuration Theory. Friedman (2006) references to the Jean & John Comaroff's notion of "dialectical process in a double sense" which is so close to the Giddens's idea of "double hermeneutic" in respect to the monitoring actions of humans or actors of development process.

## Abbreviations

ACRE: Anti-globalized Cultural Rural Entrepreneurship; IE: International entrepreneurship; IMF: International Monetary Fund; MA: Multifunctional agriculture

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## Availability of data and materials

The datasets generated and/or analyzed during the current study are not publicly available due to the corresponding author does not have any permission from some interviewees for publishing his interview transcript publicly, but are available from the corresponding author on reasonable request. All the transcripts are in Persian.

### Authors' contributions

Corresponding author collected (setting and doing interviews) and analyzed the data until the "open coding and segmenting" phase. The second author analyzed and provided the axial coding of the transcripts (Table 3). All authors read and approved the final manuscript that includes the discussions.

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The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

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