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Gender Relations in Higher Education in Afghanistan: A case study

AFZALI, YALDA

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Gender Relations in Higher Education in Afghanistan: A case study

Yalda Afzali

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PhD

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ABSTRACT

This thesis reports the findings of a mixed-method case study of female and male academics' perceptions of gender inequality in a higher education workplace in Afghanistan. Despite some positive changes in women's position within the family and within the economic and political spheres in the Post-Taliban era, women remain marginalised and discriminated against in public spaces. Currently, there is no research on academics' perceptions of gender inequality in their workplace. This study employs social survey and in-depth interview methods to understand academics' interpretations of gender inequality in their workplace, drawing on the concepts of public versus private patriarchy, inequality regimes, intersectionality and gender performativity. The data were collected from two universities in Afghanistan. The study shows the complexity of gender relations in an academic environment in Afghanistan. The findings reveal that gender inequality exists in higher education institutions, but that its existence has been normalised. Deep and longstanding gender inequalities in the wider socio-cultural context of Afghanistan, combined with aspects of university policies and practices, render gender inequalities in academia invisible to many, but not all, academics; both women and men. The findings suggest that the private realm of the family provides the support that encourages women to undertake education and career work, while retaining their responsibilities within the family.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

DEDICATION

To my beloved family

Preface/Autobiography

As an Afghan woman who was born in the 1980s, I have experienced war zones and uncertainty almost my entire life. However, I have survived and lived through these challenging times successfully. As the saying goes, "where there is a will there is a way".

I was born in Kabul but due to uncertainty during the Mujahidin period, my family moved to Mazar e Sharif, a city in the northern region, when I was only three. However, the situation worsened all over the country during the Taliban regime, and as a result, my family left Afghanistan and fled to Peshawar, Pakistan. We were in Pakistan for five years where I completed secondary school. After the fall of the Taliban in 2001, my family returned to Kabul. I undertook my high school education and undergraduate studies in Kabul. After my graduation, I was offered a job at one of the universities in Kabul. Due to the workforce shortage of academics, and my educational standing, I was asked by the faculty to start work regardless of any formally vacant positions available at the time. I was told by the university that a vacancy would be available soon. I worked full time for two years without being officially hired by the university. My wage, which was a small amount of money, was paid by the US embassy in Afghanistan. After two years and plenty of effort on my part, I was hired. A few months later in July 2011, I was accepted at Durham University to do my M.A.

During the two years when I was working at the university in Afghanistan, I gained valuable teaching and administrative experience, and met supportive and inspiring individuals. Yet, I experienced a number of significant challenges. One of my worst

experiences was when I was forced to give a month's salary to the head of department because I refused to perform some administrative work that was not my responsibility. I felt helpless and vulnerable. There was nowhere to report the incident. It is worth noting that I was not alone in this situation - there were two other female colleagues in the same position. In addition, throughout those years, I experienced harassment from male students. They used to call me on my personal mobile without any reason. I changed my number a couple of times but they still managed to find it somehow, and persisted to call and text inappropriate messages in the middle of night. I was even followed home by students on a few occasions. As a young woman, I felt I had no choice but to ignore this harassment and continue my work at the university. These personal experiences as a victim of discrimination and harassment fuelled my interest in exploring the perceptions and experiences of other academics, and particularly women, regarding in/equality within their workplace. Therefore, I chose to delve deeper into the subject and to research these issues for my Ph.D.

I went to Afghanistan to collect data in 2014. During my time collecting data, whilst I was seen as an Afghan woman, I did not represent many of the stereotypical Afghan characteristics; I was unmarried, studying for my PhD at a prestigious university abroad and living away from immediate family. I represented different identities in different situations (Arthur, 2010; Milligan, 2016). I was considered an insider because I share the same cultural values and background as the interviewees. But I was also seen as an outsider as I had been living in the UK for a few years and experienced a different culture. My position shifted during data collection depending on the person I was meeting or interviewing.

In some instances, when I was conducting interviews I was often considered an insider. Some interviewees shared some private issues with me, such as their relationship with other family members e.g. brother or sister, or referred to other colleagues as if I was part of their group. Some of the interviewees were also open about discussing inequality within their faculty in greater detail, perhaps because they could relate to me as an insider, Afghan and a previous colleague, and we had more in common to share. I feel the insider position facilitated a positive interaction.

However, to some interviewees I remained an outsider. Although I am an Afghan woman, being a researcher at Durham University made me an outsider. Some interviewees talked in general about women's experiences and progress since the fall of the Taliban. Others tried to portray a positive picture of the overall situation of women at the university despite some of the challenges women face. I felt they aimed to present a positive picture of Afghan women to the world outside Afghanistan, where they are always considered oppressed and restricted in private spheres.

On the other hand, I considered myself as an 'inbetweener' (Milligan, 2016). I was shifting my position and identity in different situations. For example, with some male interviewees in particular elderly male academics, I was more formal, while with female interviewees I was more open. This is partly because I knew most of the female interviewees in advance. It could also be because I was unintentionally creating boundaries due to the sensitivity of the topic and being a woman myself. It is worth noting that all of the academics I interviewed, both women and men, were

very welcoming and keen to share their perceptions. My past experience and position as an insider-outsider or 'inbetweener' allowed me to collect, interpret and present a more nuanced picture of academics' perceptions of in/equality in an Afghan higher education institution. This PhD reflects and incorporates not only my personal journey and experiences, but also uniquely integrates academics' perceptions of in/equality in the Afghan context.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

USAID   **The United State Agency for International Development**

ANDS   **Afghan National Development Strategy**

NHESP   **National Higher Education Strategic Plan**

MoHE   **Ministry of Higher Education**

MoWA   **Ministry of Women's Affairs**

HEI   **Higher Education Institution**

NGO   **Non Governmental Organisation**

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

There are several words and phrases used throughout this thesis that require some definition:

Afghan — Citizen of Afghanistan

Warlord — A military commander who exercises civil power in a region, whether in nominal allegiance to the national government or in defiance of it.

Wasta — *Wasta* in this study refers to family, ethnic or regional connections and relationships with someone in a position of power and authority

Ghairat — Dignity, honour

Quam — Tribe

Pashtunwali — A male-centred honour code

Purdah — Seclusion

Mahram — Male chaperon

Zancho (Dari)/ — a man who behaves in a way that is considered appropriate

Narkhazai — and typical of a woman

(Pashtu)

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Introduction to the Thesis

The thesis examines the perceptions of academics – both women and men – of gender inequality in the higher education workplace in Afghanistan. It draws upon data collected on women and men in one of the universities in Kabul, the capital city of Afghanistan, using survey questionnaires and semi-structured interviews as two primary data collection methods. Primarily the research aims to understand academics' perceptions and social interpretation of gender relations within the Afghan higher education workplace, using Walby's (1990) public-private dichotomy, Acker's (2006) inequality regimes, Butler's (1990) gender performativity and Crenshaw (1989) and Walby, Armstrong, and Strid's (2012) intersectionality.

Although there are a number of studies and reports addressing gender inequality in Afghanistan (Moghadam, 2002; The World Bank, 2014), there is no research attempting to understand Afghan women's and men's perceptions of inequality within the higher education workplace. Using the survey questionnaires and semi-structured interviews, I examine academics' perceptions of gender inequality in an academic environment. Afghanistan is going through a transition process where women are given many opportunities to become involved in public spaces in contrast to previous political regimes such as the Mujahidin and the Taliban. Liberating women was one of the reasons for US military intervention in Afghanistan. Although a number of studies report failure of the intervention to improve the overall situation of women (Saikal,

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2011), it is essential to examine the current situation of women within an academic environment where the majority of people are well-educated.

To give some initial background, women have always been marginalised in Afghan society because of the strong patriarchal ideology and constant state of war. Afghan women, particularly in urban areas, have been through different stages, from working in public spaces without much restriction during the Soviet regime, to restrictions during the Mujahidin regime, to a complete ban from public spaces during the Taliban regime. With the post-Taliban government, while the overall situation of women has improved relatively since the Taliban regime, they have remained marginalised and continue to be discriminated against in public spheres.

Given the patriarchal nature of Afghan society, Walby's (1990) public-private dichotomy is a relevant and useful concept in this study. The public and private distinctions in Afghanistan have been largely gendered (Moghadam, 2002). Women are considered to carry the main responsibility for domestic work and childcare, while men are considered the main breadwinners of the family. Since the study focuses on gender relations within an institution, Acker's (2006) concept of inequality regimes is vital for this study. Acker shows that gender is embedded in the processes and practices of an institution, in individuals' performance and in the norms that govern workplace interaction. Butler's (1990) theory of performing gender and performativity is essential for this study because it establishes the socio-culturally constructed nature of gender at the interpersonal level, and shows how social and cultural practices and roles are reproduced, represented and reinforced within the given society. Although I focus on

gender relations and the social construction of gender, I also acknowledge the relevance of intersectionality, a concept that does not focus on gender but the intersection of gender with other social categories. Intersectionality suggests that the status of employment is influenced by other factors such as ethnicity, age or academic ranking within the institutional setting.

In examining academics' perceptions of gender relations at a higher education establishment, I demonstrate that there is a complex picture. Individuals have different views and understandings of the situation and inequality within their workplace. Some individuals see the existence of inequality, but some do not. My data reveal that gender inequality exists in the Afghan workplace, but it is normalised through cultural and historical norms and is thus invisible. Women and men perform gender based on a public-private dichotomy that is embedded within the structure of society. The findings show that there has not been a shift in the form of patriarchy in Afghanistan. In contrast to Walby's argument that private patriarchy has moved to public patriarchy in Western nations, my data reveal that this is not the case in Afghanistan. Instead, private patriarchy dominates public spaces and affirms gendered relations that result in inequality at the institutional and interpersonal level. The private patriarchy remains dominant because the constant state of war and insecurity produces a climate of fear that leaves only the family, a private male-dominated sphere, as the only safe arena. This study also shows the fluidity of women's identity through ethnicity, age, and academic ranking within academia. The interaction of gender, ethnicity, age, and academic ranking produces and reproduces inequality within the institution. The

interpretation of the findings reveals that ideology rather than legal frameworks for equal opportunities laid the foundation for women's marginalised position within Afghan academic institutions.

The primary importance of this study is that no prior research has been done on gender relations in the workplace in Afghanistan, and thus it is unique in itself. The current reality is that the overall situation of women is poor in Afghanistan, but it is relatively good compared with fifteen years ago when women were not even allowed to go into a public space alone. In Kabul, the overall situation of women has changed particularly in the workplace and many opportunities have been given to women. However, our understanding of the complexity involved in Afghan women's careers within the workplace is limited.

This introductory chapter presents my research aims and objectives, the research problem, my personal interest in gender relations in higher education, the original contribution of the thesis, and the thesis structure. In the following two chapters, I provide the contextual background to the study, and review the relevant literature on the themes that emerged from this study.

Research Problem

Some research has been done looking at women's situation in Afghan society (Rostami-Povey, 2007; Azarbaijani-Moghaddam, 2006; Moghadam, 2002). However, there is a dearth of research on the position of women in the workplace. Most research has focussed on women in general and how they have been oppressed through various

regimes in the country. However, no research has focussed on their employment, in particular within an academic environment. Hence, this thesis will contribute to the currently emerging body of literature on women in Afghan society and their role in employment.

Although the study aimed to understand academics, in particular women's experience of inequality in two universities in Kabul, there were no female participants at University 2 and thus it was excluded from the analysis. The data in this study show a complex picture where some individuals see the existence of inequality and others do not. The thesis considers the following research questions:

1. What are women's and men's perceptions of gender inequality in a higher education institution in Afghanistan?
2. What are the reasons for inequality and/or lack of inequality in Afghan higher education institutions?

Research Aims and Objectives

The aim of this study is to understand academics' perceptions of gender inequality in higher education in Afghanistan. This study focuses on all academics with a primary focus on women and their perception of access, participation and employment in an academic environment. In doing this, the thesis establishes two main arguments. First, gender inequality exists in academic spaces in Afghanistan; however, it is normalised and thus invisible. This thesis argues that gender inequality in academia, similar to the rest of society, is normalised through cultural and historical norms, to the extent that it

is invisible to most men and women. However, women who see the existence of discrimination and inequality and raise their voices against it continue to live their lives in fear of being on the hit-list of Taliban or/and other insurgents within the country. Second, gender inequality in Afghanistan is multi-dimensional consisting of interpersonal, institutional and socio-cultural components. The thesis argues that Afghan women's identity is fluid within institutions, similar to the rest of society. They have multiple and shifting identities (Davis, 2008; Butler, 1990; Mohanty, 1988) embedded in the culture, and social relations of domination and subordination (Rostami-Povey, 2007). In this thesis, I show the fluidity of gender identity, in particular women's identity through ethnicity, age and academic ranking within academia. The intersection of gender, ethnicity, age and academic ranking produces and reproduces particular identities. Individuals see the past, present and future as ideology. In a sense, they go back to the past and see changes; in contrast, they do not see any change in the future. The only thing they see in the future is uncertainty and the fear of a return of the Taliban to the country.

My Personal Interest in Gender Relations in Higher Education

My personal interest in gender relations in the workplace has grown out of my experience in one of the universities in Afghanistan. Prior to coming to the U.K. to do my M.A. and later Ph.D., I was a teaching assistant in one of its well-known universities for almost two years. As a young woman I experienced a number of obstacles including being forced by my head of department to give a month's salary to him because I refused to do some of the administrative work that was not my job. However, I was not alone – there were two other female colleagues in the same position. This was not the end of the story. I was fired from the university. Because I had started my PhD, after the M.A., presumably according to the Ministry of Higher Education laws, I had to go back and serve for two years and come back for my PhD. However, for an Afghan woman to get a chance to get to study for a PhD is not always possible. Interestingly there were some male academics who were not dismissed because their department agreed with their Ph.Ds. However, in my case, my head of department and his circle of friends not only did not accept mine, but they were also actively searching for evidence to fire me. My personal experience as a victim of discrimination made me explore other academics' perceptions of inequality within their workplace. Therefore, I chose to delve deeper into the subject and do research for my PhD.

Original Contribution of the Thesis

This thesis contributes to the limited knowledge that exists on gender relations in the workplace in Afghanistan and attempts to explore academics' perceptions of gender inequality in the workplace through the consideration of macro, meso and micro levels.

It examines the interconnectedness of Afghan culture and history and ongoing security concerns and how they affect gender relations in academia and the workplace in general. This thesis demonstrates the complexity of gender inequality within the workplace, which is highly influenced by the socio-cultural, institutional and interpersonal factors, based on strict public-private distinctions and insecurity. This thesis acknowledges that there have been some improvements to gender-relations at higher education institution in Afghanistan; however, women are still not entirely accepted into public spaces.

This thesis also contributes to Walby's (1990) theory of public-private distinctions. As Walby argues, private patriarchy has moved to the public spheres in the West, but as I show through my findings, there has not been any change in the form of patriarchy in Afghanistan. Instead, it is private patriarchy that dominates public spaces. Given the constant state of war, insecurity and fear of the return of the Taliban, women have only the family to rely on. In contrast to Western theories that consider the intimate realm of the family as a source of oppression, this thesis suggests that family is the source of power for women. The private sphere of family is a site for bonding capital and the safest space for women, both economically and socially. It also protects women from external risks (these terms are expanded upon later). Especially given the provision that male family members provide working women with physical and psychological security. Further, family support shapes women's employment and career progression at the university as my findings show. Social mobility for women incites more risk, particularly for those who work in public spaces due to lack of

security. This results in the continuing dominance of private patriarchy over public spaces.

The thesis also contributes to the theory of gender relations. The majority of Western theories on gender relations have focused on socio-cultural, economic and political aspects of society; however, human security concerns are mostly taken for granted. Human security in this study refers to protection of people's lives from 'critical' and 'pervasive' threats or situations (CHS, 2003:4 in UN Report, 2009). Gender inequality in Afghanistan goes beyond "cultural framework" (Chowdhury, 2015: 79). As Chowdhury (2015) argues inequality, or as she states violence, needs to be understood within a broader "structural inequality" framework which is complex and shaped by "globalisation, neoliberal development, patriarchy and poverty" (p. 79). The processes of neo-liberalism are factors that make women's lives more insecure and vulnerable to structural and interpersonal violence. Although Chowdhury does not specifically refer to security, given the Afghan context and recent insurgencies in Kabul by ISIS and/or the Taliban (The Guardian, 2017), in/security is embedded in the structure of society and it has an enormous impact on the everyday lives of individuals, spreading a climate of fear. The key Western theories I have used in this study, including Walby's public-private distinctions, Acker's inequality regimes and Butler's gender performativity, lack the attention to security issues in understanding gender relations. Therefore, to understand the complexity of gender relations paying attention to the confluence of security concerns is crucial to expand current understandings.

Thesis Structure and Outline

The thesis is divided into eight chapters in addition to this introduction. Chapter Two will provide the historical and political context, which is essential to understanding the complexity of gender relations in academia in Afghanistan. In this chapter, first I give the geographical and current facts and statistics about the country in general, and women in particular. Second, I give a historical and political overview of Afghanistan including Afghanistan in the twentieth century. It explains power relations and how women's bodies are used symbolically in public and private spheres. I also discuss gender roles and the gendered division of work. The chapter concludes with gender strategy/policy and its implications for women in general, within academia in particular, concluding that some of the strategies addressing gender equality are vague and unclear. Chapter Three will provide an understanding of contemporary debates in the West about gender and workplace inequality and the nature of inequality in an academic environment. In this chapter I highlight the advantage of using concepts from Walby's (1990) public-private dichotomy, Acker's (1990, 2006) inequality regimes, Butler's gender performativity and Walby et al., (2012) and Crenshaw's (1989) intersectionality on gender relations in the Afghan workplace. I also review the relevant literature on the themes emerging from my data, including family and career, meritocracy and masculinity, hiring patterns, networking and promotion, sexual harassment, subtle discrimination, and the job satisfaction paradox, and how this research contributes to the existing literature on gender inequality in academia and the workplace in general. Chapter Four will demonstrate how the empirical research into academics' perceptions of gender inequality in academia in Afghanistan was undertaken.

Briefly, this was achieved by gathering and analysing survey questionnaire responses on gender inequality in a higher education institution; and semi-structured interview data. In this chapter, I explain the research design and methods, using the principle of constructivism. I further present the data collection and analysis procedures. Lastly, I explain ethical issues, the limitations of the study and my reflections as a researcher. Chapter Five, the first results chapter, presents the survey questionnaire findings on academics' perceptions of gender inequality in higher education institution (HEI) in Afghanistan. First, I provide a detailed description of the characteristics of the male and female survey participants. Second, I begin to explore potential gender differences in perceived inequality in recruitment, workload allocation and promotion. In the last part, I look at female and male academics' views regarding the equity of formal policies and practices which shape the working environment at their institution. This chapter will show that the academics' perception of gender inequality is complex. When they were asked in general terms, regarding hiring, promotion and workload, they were more likely to agree that men and women were treated equally, particularly the women. However, when they were asked specifically about discrimination and equality at work along gender lines, women were much less likely than men to respond positively. The complexity of findings suggests that women have different understandings of gender inequality. Chapters Six, Seven and Eight draw upon semi-structured interview findings on academics' perceptions of gender inequality and its complexity within the workplace. These chapters show that gender inequality is multi-dimensional, consisting of socio-cultural, institutional and interpersonal components. Chapter Six discusses findings on socio-cultural aspects

of gender relations in higher education institutions using Walby's public-private distinction. It addresses socio-cultural barriers that disadvantage women and minority ethnic groups in hiring and promotion. It illustrates the public-private dichotomy is embedded in academics' perception of women and their place in society. It further shows how ongoing uncertainty reinforces these distinctions. Uncertainty in this study refers to undefined and unstructured situations where there is no objective way to measure the risk (Kessler and Daase, 2008). Chapter Seven examines the institutional processes and practices that create barriers to academics, particularly women and minority ethnic group's recruitment and career advancement.   It further looks at institutional strategies and policies that disadvantage women and minority ethnic groups in academia. Using Acker's theory of inequality regimes, the chapter concludes that the institutional processes and practices which are supposedly based on a meritocratic system of academia are gendered and ethnicised, disadvantaging women and minority ethnic groups, given the public-private distinctions and insecurity. Chapter Eight discusses the interpersonal barriers using Butler's concept of gender performativity. In this chapter, I show that academics' interpersonal relationships are based on culturally accepted gender norms. This chapter shows that women subvert these culturally accepted gender norms by working in academia and as a result, they face harassment and humiliation. The chapter concludes that women, by subverting gender norms, recreate and reinforce public-private distinctions because there is no space within the institution and society in general to resist inequality and the only safe place for them is the private sphere of the family. Chapter Nine will conclude the thesis by focussing on implications for policy and practice within higher

education institutions and will provide recommendations for further study. This chapter concludes that change in the status of Afghan women has to come from the private sphere and building bonding and bridging social capital within the institution.

CHAPTER TWO: HISTORICAL AND POLITICAL CONTEXT

Introduction

In this chapter, I provide a contextual background to this study. Afghanistan is at a critical stage of transformation, following more than three decades of civil war and uncertainty, to a possibly stable future. The majority of people are living in poverty and insecurity. They have suffered from illiteracy, lack of basic sanitation, poor infrastructure and limited employment opportunities for years. Since the fall of the Taliban, in the wake of the US-led intervention in October 2001, there had been some hope that the overall situation would change. However, there has not been a degree of positive change in people's lives that could help them maintain their initial optimism and support for their government (Saikal, 2011:2).

The situation affects women more than men. Women have been a battlefield in Afghanistan. As Saikal (2011) states, "their rights, freedoms, control and ownership over their bodies, and their honour have all been subject to a brutal tug-of-war throughout much of Afghanistan's modern history" (131). In recent years, women have been forced to carry a symbol of family honour as well as becoming the embodiment of the nation's honour; their issues have been politicised (The World Bank, 2007).

The first part of this chapter provides contextualisation in the form of geographical information about Afghanistan, and gives some current statistics about the country in general and women in particular.

The second part gives a historical and political overview of changes in Afghanistan in the twentieth century because of their impact and influence on the current situation of women and their position within Afghan society. It addresses challenges that men and in particular women have faced in education and employment during three regimes; the Soviet Union (USSR), the Mujahidin and the Taliban. Lastly, it focuses on the current situation of women and the role of international agents.

The third part focuses on gender roles and gender divisions within Afghan culture. This part showcases the patriarchal nature of society and discusses the Purdah system that shapes women's role in the private and public spheres. It also addresses the multi-dimensional identities of women embedded in their ethnicity, language, social class, urban/rural background, education and family networks (Amiri, Hunt, and Sova, 2004).

The Afghan Context

The Islamic Republic of Afghanistan is a landlocked multi-ethnic country located in the heart of south-central Asia. This country lies along important trade routes and connects southern and eastern Asia to Europe and the Middle East. For its strategic location, it has long been a prize sought by empire-builders; however, it has laid many ambitious imperial powers to rest, and has, instead, endured civil war for more than three decades (Petrov et al., 2016).

The majority of people (99%) belong to the Islamic faith; there is a small number of people from other faiths such as Sikhs and Hindus. The national languages of the country are Dari and Pashtu. 50 percent of the population speak Dari, and 35 percent speak Pashtu (Central Intelligence Agency, 2015). However, the majority of people understand both languages.

The Afghan population is composed of various ethnic, linguistic and cultural groups forming distinct micro-societies with the majority of these having extensive cross-border ties with neighbouring countries (Saikal *et al*., 2006). These social and cultural divisions have played a crucial role in attempts at reforming women's place in society. As Shahrani (2002) states, Afghanistan has more than one ethnic group and language and has "multiple and multi-layered identities" (pp. 715-722) mostly dependent on ethnicity. In the southern region people speak mostly Pashtu and practise Pashtunwali, a male-centred honour code practised by Pashtuns in various areas of the country. The remainder of the country are ethnically Persians and Turks.

The major ethnic groups are Pashtuns, Tajiks, Hazars and Uzbeks. The other ethnic groups include Baloch, Turkman, Nuristani, Pamiri, Arab, Gujar, Brahui, Qizilbash, Aimaq, Pashai and Kyrghzy. Although the population statistics of the major ethnic groups are open to debate in the absence of an accurate official census since the provincial estimates of 1979 census projections, according to Central Intelligence Agency (2015) the Pashtun ethnic group constitutes 42 percent of the population, Tajiks represent 27 percent and Hazaras 9 percent (Mazhar et al. 2012).

Afghanistan is a poor country with the population below the poverty line estimated at 39.1% in 2015-16, and is ranked as the second worst place in the world to be a woman (The Central Statistics Organisation, 2016). According to a Ministry of Women's Affairs' National Action Plan for the Women of Afghanistan, (2008:7) report, "The women of Afghanistan are among the worst off in the world, both in comparison to Afghan men and with women of most countries". However, the situation of women has worsened since the US-led coalition and NATO left Afghanistan in 2014, due to lack of security. I will discuss this later in detail (see page 35).

According to the National Action Plan for the Women of Afghanistan (2008), approximately 57 percent of girls are married before the legal age and between 70 and 80 percent of marriages are forced marriages. The legal age for marriage is 15-16 for girls and 18 for boys. Many young girls are sold into marriage as soon as they reach puberty, which can occur when they are as young as nine years old (Saikal, 2011) . Child marriage is a common practice throughout the country and is believed to arise from poverty (Bahgam and Mukhatari, 2004). Some families marry off their

girls at a young age to get the brideprice for other members of the family to survive (UNICEF, 2001). Domestic violence is another issue that affects a majority of women both in urban and rural areas in Afghanistan. It is believed that 50 percent of women experience beating (Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission (AIHRC), 2006). However, an Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) reports the proportion of women being affected by domestic violence is approximately 80 percent (Strong Women Stronger Nation, 2009).

The literacy rate is very low in Afghanistan especially among women. Approximately 24.2 percent of women and 52 percent of men are literate (Central Intelligence Agency, 2015). Literacy is defined as individuals aged 15 and over who can read and write. The unemployment rate has been estimated at over 40 percent (IRIN Humanitarian News and Analysis, 2010). The percentage of both men and women in governmental organisations differs depending on the provinces. In 2009, 31 percent of those employed in governmental organisations in Kabul were women (The Central Statistics Organisation and Ministry of Women's Affairs, 2012).

Historical and Political Overview

Afghanistan's history clearly demonstrates how women have been affected by education and employment. More than three decades of war (1978-2001) has had a negative impact on both men and women economically, socially, politically and educationally. Education was a huge challenge for boys and girls. In particular, girls' education has always been an issue in Afghanistan. Most girls in Afghanistan did not continue their education beyond the elementary level in the 1960s and early 1970s. The parents' attitude towards girls' education was that it was a waste of

time since it did not help them in their future lives as wives and mothers. In different cities, there were different attitudes towards girls' education. For instance, parents in Nangarhar and Herat did not consider girls' education as important as boys' education because of the patriarchal ideology. They believed that girls were not able to continue beyond the basic level of education because they would soon forget what they had learnt. In the Northern provinces for instance, Turkmen and Uzbek parents were against girls having any education. Instead, they taught their daughters how to weave carpets and rugs and to cook and raise children (Emadi, 2002).

In terms of higher education, some families believed that higher education alienated their children, and thus they did not allow them to go to secondary school or higher education (Emadi, 2002). A few educated girls who came to study in the capital or other main cities, preferred to stay there and find suitable employment rather than return to their cities and villages because of strict tribal codes on women's education and employment (Samady, 2001). Such behaviour further discourages conservative families from allowing their daughters or sisters to attend higher education.

Higher Education in Afghanistan was first introduced by the establishment of the Faculty of Medicine in 1932 in Kabul (Samady, 2001). Regrettably, there is little data available on early higher education in Afghanistan. However, according to Emadi (2002), in the 1960s and 1970s, enrolment at colleges and universities increased substantially during the Soviet occupation (1978-1987), partly because attending schools and higher education, in particular for boys, was one of the ways that

young people could avoid being drafted into the army. In relation to girls, they were given some freedom to attend higher education and get a job outside the home. According to 1985 official statistics, 65 percent of the students at Kabul University were women (Moghadam, 2002). This is because overall situation of urban areas, in particular Kabul, was good.

The main obstacle to boys' and girls' higher education was a lack of higher education institutions and universities in the region. Rural areas had few high schools for girls and few universities except in the capital of each province. For this reason, the majority of girls in rural areas could not attend higher education while for boys it was less of a problem to travel. Boys could travel alone, but girls had to be accompanied by a male family member. Furthermore, tradition forbids girls from living away from their family until they marry, unless they can arrange accommodation with a relative. There were certain educational institutions that did not admit women, for instance, the School of Aviation and the School of Land Surveying in the capital (Emadi, 2002). There was significant social discrimination against women.

As a result of social and political changes during 1978 and 1979, thirty-eight academics both male and female from various faculties of some universities were executed by the communist regime because they were seen as a threat to the government. 258 academics, 238 males and 20 females, fled to various countries in the West (Emadi, 2002). However, in general, during the USSR occupation, women's access to public space increased. Middle and upper-class women had access to education as well as employment and they could freely move without wearing a

burqa or even a scarf and without mahram, a male family member. During this time women in Kabul and other big cities worked in various areas as scientists, teachers, academics, pharmacists, medical doctors and civil servants (Dupree, 1998). They were present in different ranks of various political parties and government organisations (Moghadam, 2002). However, these women constituted a small minority of urban women who enjoyed considerable freedom while women in rural areas remained excluded (Rostami-Povey, 2007).

On the whole, during the soviet occupation, women were given the right to education, employment and travel (Roshan, 2004). The USSR regime introduced some radical initiatives including compulsory education, the unveiling of women and progressive practices and customs related to marriage (Moghadam, 1992). Although they aimed for a rapid transformation of a patriarchal society and tribal power structure (Moghadam, 2002) as well as their own capitalistic objectives, the compulsory approach towards women's education and employment caused more tensions among urban as well as rural areas because it was believed to be unethical, particularly by Afghans in rural areas, because women would be in contact with men and it was/is considered against Islamic rules.

Further, misinterpretation of traditional gender roles in Afghanistan as backward and in need of transformation was perceived as offensive to those in favour of the traditional life style. As always it was only urban women who benefited from these initiatives, the rural areas were untouched. This caused tensions between rural and urban Afghanistan. As Ahmed-ghosh (2003) states, "rural Afghanistan is the root of tribal powers that have frequently doomed Kabul-based modernisation efforts" (p.

50). Hence, the lack of a thorough understanding of Afghan culture and the symbolic significance of some cultural practices particularly in rural areas constantly led to the breakdown of gender initiatives under this regime (Zulfacar, 2006).

These rights and initiatives were retracted when the USSR withdrew in 1989. Education, particularly of women, declined in the late 1980s and early 1990s during the Mujahidin regime (see Figure 1- women's employment timeline). Women were discouraged from attending schools or universities and from participating in public spaces, despite the fact that some women were working in government institutions, particularly in education and health centres, at their own risk (Moghadam, 2002). The Mujahidin, among other things, redefined the boundaries between public and private spaces for women that had been blurred to some extent during the Soviet regime, partly to exercise their control over women's sexuality and partly to take control over the means of production (Moghadam, 2002). As a result, it produced and reproduced patriarchal power relationships and men's privilege to reinforce gender inequality. In addition, security was not good either. In this study, I use the term security to refer to human security (see page 19) and state security and its use indiscriminately in both contexts. State security refers to the traditional notion of security that the government should protect its citizens from external threats (UNDP, 1994).

Although security affects both women and men, women are more vulnerable to lack of security. According to Shepherd (2007), "security, if seen as performative of particular configurations of socio-political order, is inherently gendered and inherently related to violence" (p. 250). In this sense, different performances

produce different subjects as gendered in specific contexts. Security threats experienced by women and men are linked to inequality and power relations that fuel them (McKay, 2004). Given the patriarchal nature of Afghan society, women have been mostly the subject of insecurity.

The rate of school attendance as well as university attendance declined during this period. A small number of women were working in international aid agencies and some of them continued handicraft production (Barakat and Wardell, 2001). Most of the infrastructure for education had collapsed. According to Samady (2001), 2000 schools were damaged or destroyed and thousands of teachers were victims of war or left the country. There were few schools, with a small number of female teachers. In the 1990s, education was hampered by continued civil war. Schooling and educational activities were only possible within certain areas, under the control of certain groups. There was no uniform educational policy, and religious education was prioritised. Equal opportunities for girls and boys were not provided and in religious schools, boys were encouraged, but girls were not. Schools and universities had become a stage for conflict. One of the oldest university's libraries, which was established in 1964, contained millions of books which were burnt and the rest of them were sold.

The situation worsened during the Taliban regime. Although men and women endured this regime, women suffered the most. The Taliban opposed women's rights (Azizi, 2008) and enforced strict rules based on its interpretation of Islam (Karlsson and Mansory, 2007). The Taliban prohibited women from obtaining education and employment and even from going out without being accompanied

by a mahram, a male family member (Rostami-Povey, 2007). Schools for girls were closed down, and boys were allowed to go only to religious schools. Under the Taliban regime, Afghanistan went backwards to the late 19th century when only traditional education had been provided. In the last few decades, Afghanistan lost an approximately 200,000 teachers and academics as well as around 17 universities which were destroyed by war (UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), 2002).

The restrictive rules imposed by the Taliban were mostly felt in big cities where women had traditionally enjoyed a greater degree of freedom compared with other rural areas. Some educated women were forced to marry Taliban members as Rostami-Povey (2007: 26) quotes from one of her interviews:

> Even a small minority of educated women and middle-class women were forced to marry the Taliban. I know of an educated woman who was the head of the school of medicine at the university and was forced to marry the Taliban. They were either forced or did it out of poverty or fear. Sometimes a woman who was married to one Taliban was raped by ten other Taliban. Sometimes they were taken to outside of Afghanistan, especially to the Gulf region and were sold as sex workers.

The Taliban mostly exercised power over women as a symbol of manhood, and to maintain unity among their forces that were mostly young, and to prevent them from being corrupted by being in contact with women (Goodson, 2001). Their rules and regulations were mainly part of their political agenda and patriarchal beliefs that women should stay in private spaces (Zulfacar, 2006).

During the Taliban regime, huge numbers of women with their families migrated elsewhere, but significant minorities remained in Afghanistan. Although women's access to work in public spaces was limited, they formed bonds and networks with other women to create a form of social capital. This form of solidarity became a mechanism for women's empowerment (Rostami-Povey, 2007).

When the US toppled the Taliban and replaced them with the Karzai government in 2001, men and women achieved progress in various areas including education, but the gains were fragile and reversible. The Post-Taliban government made education a high priority particularly for women. The new constitution of Afghanistan sanctioned women's right to education (Radic, 2010). According to Article 43 of the The Constitution of Afghanistan (2004):

> Education is the right of all citizens of Afghanistan, which shall be provided up to the level of the B.A. (lisans), free of charge by the state. The state is obliged to devise and implement effective programs for a balanced expansion of education all over Afghanistan, and to provide compulsory intermediate level education. (Article 43)

In addition to the constitution, various national and international organisations have fought for women's rights, including the right to education (UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), 2002). The literacy rate for girls is increasing. According to an Oxfam report, girls comprise 38% of the student population and the literacy rate for girls aged 12-16 is 37% (Oxfam, 2011). Nevertheless, girls face challenges including discrimination, insecurity, early marriages, and poverty. According to the Afghan Ministry of Education survey

(2007), 40% of Afghan girls completed primary school (Ministry of Higher Education, 2013b). However, only 5% of girls complete secondary school. The female literacy rate is the third lowest in the world. Despite the increase in the number of girls in education, there is a concern that with growing insecurity and political control by the Taliban and the Islamic State, girls may lose their educational attainments yet again.

Among working age women (15-64), less than half are active in the labour market, in either formal or informal paid jobs. The majority of women work in unpaid labour and their contribution to the paid labour market is invisible and difficult to measure. The fact that there is little data available on Afghan women's contribution to the overall economy has made the problem more complex and difficult to measure. However, lack of employment is reported to be the second biggest issue for women in Afghanistan (The Asia Foundation, 2012).

There has been considerable improvement in the scope of women's positions across the country and in various sectors. Women are emerging outside the normative roles. They have served many key positions in the Post-Taliban government, including as ministers, provincial governors, parliamentarians and senators. A number of women are leading businesses while others are establishing civil society organisations (Nijat and Murtazashviti, 2015).

Since the establishment of the new government (2001-current), certain steps have been taken to increase the participation of women in higher education, including providing female accommodation, and postgraduate programmes within the

country, which provide more opportunities for those women who do not have permission to obtain their postgraduate education abroad (Hayward, 2008).

Although Article 24 of the Afghan Constitution guarantees the right to work for all citizens, the majority of families show resistance to women's work (*Afghan Women's Economic Participation (AWEP)*, 2013). However, people's perceptions towards women working outside the home are changing. According to an opinion poll in 2012, a large majority of the population (64%) believes women should be permitted to work in a public space, with 53.8 percent of men and 72.9 percent of women agreeing (The Asia Foundation, 2015). This is an increase on figures from 2011 but a decrease from the 71% overall who agreed in 2006, and said to be linked to increased insecurity. The Asia Foundation report (2010) shows that more people are starting to regard women's employment in public spaces as normal and it is seen as valuable. A survey in 2012 shows that being educated and having a job are considered good attributes for a potential wife (Echavez, 2012).

However, there are strong views about what is considered appropriate for women to do in public spaces. Teaching, healthcare and government posts including administration are mostly considered suitable for women along with agriculture and raising small livestock. Recently working in the media is also considered increasingly viable for women (Simmons-Benton, et al., 2012). Afghan women face a number of challenges including not being taken seriously, lack of autonomy in decision-making, and restricted mobility that results in perceptions that women are a risky investment in the workplace (AWEP, 2013).

Although some progress in women's education and employment has been made since the overthrow of the Taliban, fear still exists, particularly with the incidents that take place in various provinces every now and then. In 2003, two girls' schools were burnt down by the Taliban who left a note that girls should not be educated. According to Amin *et al.* (2011), the Taliban killed 231 students and teachers, burnt down and destroyed 240 schools and closed 590 schools. Hence, people's fear of the Taliban, and the lack of strong government to prevent such actions from insurgents, prevent many women from obtaining higher education and working in public (Roshan, 2004). Afghanistan is still in desperate need of security and peace in addition to political reforms and reconstruction (Saikal, 2011).

Every Afghan woman who gains access to the public space, either as a student or an employee, continues to live in fear of their lives; in particular, women who advocate women's rights. It is believed that it is not just the Taliban who attack women in public, "but there are a lot of other people who want to take it all back" (quoted in Haussegger (Jones in Saikal, 2011:138-139). As Haussegger (2011) states, women do not have a place in public life and those who are working have a price on their heads. The majority of women attending school, university and/or working in a public space live under the cloud of death threats from the Taliban and/or other insurgents. In the post-Taliban government, supporters of women's rights, both women and men, are weakened because many of them supported the Soviet Union's occupation which resulted in the loss of millions people (Lindisfarne, 2008).

In addition to insecurity, the effects of corruption and drugs in Afghanistan's economy are widely reported (Isaqzadeh and Kabuli, 2014). The gap between the

drug dealers and Non-governmental organisations (NGO) and public institutions'
salaries has created tensions especially in Kabul since the market is rising based on
the salary of rich people (Lindisfarne, 2008).

Figure 1- Women's employment in Afghanistan in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries

| Soviet Union (1978-1989) | Mujahidin (1990-1995) | Taliban (1996-2001) | Post-Taliban (2001-2016) |
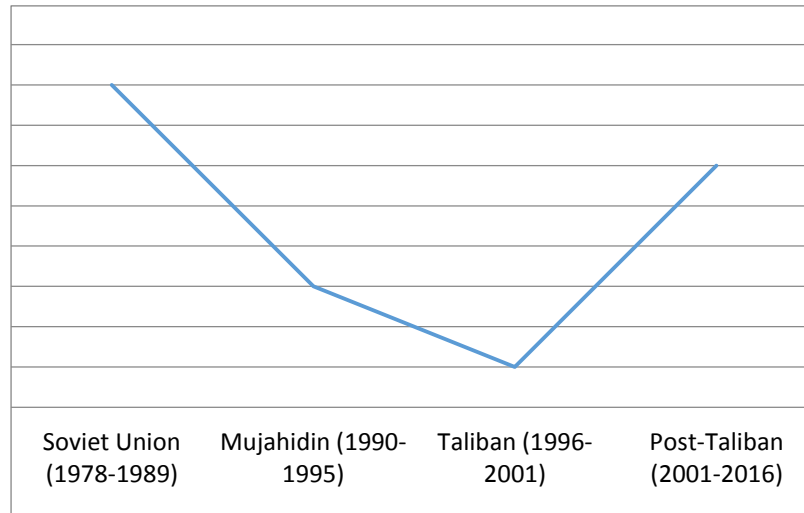
Culture and Gender Role/ Gender Division of Work

Afghanistan is a patriarchal society and is an extreme case, as Kandiyoti (1988) says,
of "classic patriarchy". The gender order does not reflect an innate gender
hierarchy, but is a result of patriarchy claimed (Abirafeh, 2009). Unlike other
patriarchal societies, patriarchy in Afghanistan is more tribal than Islamic (Abirafeh,
2009: 24). Often tribal practices overshadow Islamic laws precisely on gender issues
(Walby, 1990).

The social unit is the patriarchal extended family in which the senior man has
authority over all the family members including younger men. Afghan society is
"elitist at its core, populist in its aura, and misogynist in its heart, where women are
secondary citizens, always one of four: someone's daughter, sister, wife or mother"
(Nijat, 2014:1). Those who are not considered as any of the above may well be

perceived to have less dignity. There is a commonly used phrase: "women either at home or in the grave".

In Afghanistan, the family has a major influence on women's lives. Women's public space is limited and held back by what occurs in the private space (Schmeidl, 2009). Afghan families are usually extended families, in some cases the *quam,* the tribe*,* particularly in rural areas, which includes the elder members of the tribe, fathers, brothers, elder sons, husbands, who are the decision-makers over women's lives (Azarbaijani-Moghaddam and Schmeidl, 2002 in Schmeidl, 2009). Weber (1922) classified these traditional communities as 'pre-modern', ruled by tribal leaders, and face-to-face relationships. As Rubin (2015) states, "the deficits in education, health, social status and economic opportunities of Afghan women are so deeply embedded in family and social structure that it will take a generation to change them" (p. 279).

Many Afghan women live in Purdah, seclusion, which limits their freedom and autonomy and prevents them from taking part in activities outside the home (Karlsson and Mansory, 2007). 'Purdah', which literally means 'curtain' is the term most commonly used to describe the system of secluding women and enforcing high standards of female modesty (Papanek, 1971). The Purdah system restricts women's participation in social affairs and involvement in decision-making especially outside the home. On the other hand, for men, Purdah is about prestige (Papanek, 1971). A man's honour is partially derived from the behaviour of his woman. Women have to behave in certain ways especially when they are in the

public arena. The Purdah system gives men ultimate power and complete control over women's mobility (Ramírez, 2015).

In Afghan society, women are simultaneously described as being very important in the family unit and very vulnerable when they are in a public space. Purdah provides them with a symbolic shelter in the family and gives them a feeling of belonging and dependency that is difficult for the individual to control (Papanek, 1971). Impulse control according to Papanek (1971) "is achieved in ways which are closer to the "shame" mechanisms of social control than those associated with "guilt" (p519). The honour-shame complex which is often written about in relation to the Mediterranean context (e.g. Pitt-Rivers, 1977 in Moghadam 2002) has often been seen as central to women's segregation and a key element of 'classic patriarchy' (Moghadam, 2002). This patriarchal ideological interest in controlling and confining women to private spaces derives from the so-called honour of the family. Women's behaviour determines men's social and moral values within society (Gilani, 2008). According to Moghadam (2002), the honour-shame complex rests on women's behaviour and the control of their sexuality, and this ideological interest derives from the marriage market. Further, limiting women's access to the public space reduces men's competition over public resources (Moghadam, 2002).

Women's dress is also an expression of Purdah. Women are required to dress in certain ways. For instance, when outdoors, women are expected to cover up and wear a burqa. Although it is common among women in rural areas, women in urban areas wear it only when they are in public. However, in Kabul a few women dress more in a western style but they still cover their heads. The custom that women

need to cover up and wear a burqa is another aspect of the culture that affects women negatively, particularly in public spaces. As Emadi (2002) states, men can use the need to be covered up as an excuse to prevent women from obtaining education or a job in public space. He also states that in certain regions women are only allowed to go to school or work if they are covered by a burqa. Although women are not required by law to wear a burqa, they are harassed or threatened if they do not wear one. However, the practice of Purdah, seclusion, is not uniform (Le Duc, and Sabri 1996 in Karlsson and Mansory, 2007). It varies among and within different regions - it is stricter in some regions than others. For instance, the culture is stricter in Kandahar and Helmand than Kabul and Mazar-e-sharif.

The gender role is shaped by the Purdah system. Afghan people define gender roles as separate and complementary rather than egalitarian (The World Bank, 2005: xi). Men and women have specific roles and women's subservient role in private is articulated to complement men's more superior role in public (Manganaro and Alozie, 2011). In a sense, men are usually considered the protectors, breadwinners and decision makers (Moghadam, 2002) whereas women are considered responsible for cleaning, cooking and taking care of children and elderly members of the family (Kehoe, 2008). The protector and breadwinner role of men opens up the space for them to act in the public domain while it limits women to being in private and protected spaces (Schmeidl, 2009).

These roles are assigned to boys and girls in childhood. Boys and girls are expected to behave and do things almost identically until the age of nine or ten. They do not have any restrictions on outside mobility. At this stage, gender roles are not yet

fixed (Karlsson and Mansory, 2007). However, from the age of puberty, girls and boys are not expected to interact and girls, in general, have to adopt more culturally appropriate behaviour towards men, which includes respecting men, and not talking in a loud voice in the presence of men.

Most adult activities are gender-bound (Karlsson and Mansory, 2007). Girls help their mothers with different household activities such as washing the dishes and clothes, cleaning the house, and cooking. On the other hand, boys help their fathers with shopping and other activities outside the home. For girls, life becomes stricter when they approach adolescence. They should not go outside without particular reason. They should not be seen by men outside the family. They are expected to socialise only with other women and girls from their extended family.

Girls who do not behave in accordance with generally accepted cultural norms bring shame to the family. Family honour is of great importance in some regions. Women are expected to behave and perform in certain ways at home and in public arenas because they are seen as the honour of the family and it is the responsibility of men to safeguard them, by means of their control (Moghadam, 1992). Patriarchy in Afghanistan is not only a result of male exercise of power over women; women also practise power over other women. This is due to women entering into a 'patriarchal bargain', where "subordination to men is offset by the control older women attain over younger women and also over their sons" (Kandiyoti, 1988:279). For instance, as Fahimi (1977) indicates, old women discourage young women from attending school by saying "their mother and grandmother had never starved to

death just because they couldn't read and write" (p. 46). In this sense, women in Afghanistan experience double patriarchy, from men and women.

Closely associated with the system of Purdah is the custom of arranged marriage, which is widespread in Afghan society. Marriage is considered an important aspect of life for women and men. It is commonly accepted that a woman cannot have a respectable and secure life without a man's protection. Therefore, in order to have a secure life a woman must get married. In general, marriage decisions are made by the family and the girl does not usually have any choice but to accept. The element of free choice and autonomy is greatly reduced and marriage arrangements are likely to be completely under the control of parents and sometimes even other close family members. It is worth noting that a girl's marriage has economic relationships, in addition to cultural meaning especially in rural areas (Zulfacar, 2006). The more money given to the bride and her family, the higher becomes her status in the eyes of in-laws.

In response to the restrictions placed on women, many try to fight back by running away. The result often is that they are abused or killed for their actions. Many women even end their lives because of the repression, particularly in response to not being allowed to obtain education (Winthrop, 2003).

After marriage, gender roles broaden in scope. Women are mainly responsible for domestic chores with low living standards (Rostami-Povey, 2007), the care of children and elderly family members, whereas men are the breadwinners of the family. Early marriage is one of the challenges young girls face in Afghanistan - they have to choose marriage or education. Family and social expectations of early

marriage as the best option for young women remain an ongoing concern for most women (Burridge *et al.*, 2015). Due to poverty and unemployment, only a few families depend on working women, but it is very uncommon.

Women's role and identity in Afghanistan is multi-dimensional and embedded in ethnicity, language, and social class, which are based on sharp socioeconomic divides, urban and rural background, education and family network (Amiri et al., 2004). Women's roles vary accordingly. However, some gender roles are stricter than others depending on the ethnic group. They are more rigorous and more prominent among the Pashtun tribes. As mentioned earlier, Pashtuns are guided by Pashtunwali**,** a male-centred honour code, which promotes the dependency of women on men rather than equality (Zulfacar, 2006; Kakar, 2005; Rashid, 2001). Although the practices of Pashtunwali vary across the Pashtun tribal areas (Kakar, 2005; Rashid, 2001), gender roles "constitute the core of their overall social structure" (Zulfacar, 2006:37). Pashtunwali has been described as both a 'code' and an 'ideology' (Roy, 2009). The constraints placed on women are so deep-rooted that they themselves resist any efforts at reform that would benefit them and their family members (Kakar, 2005). It should also be pointed out that the code restricts men in some areas as well and they endure as much as women though in very different ways (Stickland, 2007).

On the other hand, gender roles within the Hazara community differ from Pashtuns, as there seems to be more of a gender balance (Saikal, 2012). Historically, gender and social inequality among Hazaras have not been very pronounced and education has been a matter of pride (Saikal, 2012:85). In general, Hazara women are given

much more freedom to act compared with women of other ethnic groups, particularly Pashtuns.

The public-private distinction in Afghanistan has been highly gendered as Moghadam (2002) argues. The patriarchal structure of society, the absence of centralised government and the problematic stance of the international community transformed Afghan women's status to worse than second class citizens (Moghadam, 2002). Afghanistan, like any other developing country dangles between the two forces of traditionalism and modernisation (Manganaro & Alozie, 2011) and with regard to gender roles, there is a 'sexual clash of civilisation' (Inglehart and Norris, 2003). While women are granted access to education and employment, there has been intimidation, threats, harassment and discrimination against them in public spaces. In addition to the imposed burden of the symbol of family honour, Afghan women bear the heavy burden of the nation (The World Bank, 2007). The nation's progress is seen by international agents as being achieved through, amongst other things, the liberation of Afghan women.

Despite recent gains, democratic transitions do not immediately transform the deep-rooted gender roles and attitudes towards them. As Manganaro and Alozie (2011) state, "it is an evolutionary process that must be accompanied by a concomitant shift in traditional gender role attitudes".

Conclusion to historical, political and cultural context

In Afghanistan, men and women have separate worlds. Men's and women's roles are based on traditional values of separation of public and private rather than on equality between genders. Gender segregated social worlds produce and reproduce

unequal power and social exclusion and a form of control by men over women. In Afghanistan, men not only control female relatives' access to public space but also to women as a social group through strict rules and regulations shaped by the Purdah system (Moghadam, 2002). The main ideology behind patriarchy and women's segregation is the honour-shame complex which rests on women's behaviour, and control over their sexuality, as well as the national honour. Thus, the distinction between public and private spheres is crucial to understanding the status of Afghan women.

Women's access to the public sphere in Afghanistan has always been politicised, contested and denied throughout the history of the country (Moghadam, 2002; Kandiyoti, 2005). Looking at the history of Afghanistan with regard to women, it can be said that the female body has always been used as a symbol by different regimes to express their fundamental ideologies and reforms. The communist regime used women to accomplish their socialist and capitalist aim of educating women so that they could join the labour force, although women were paid less than men. On the other hand, the Mujahidin used women's bodies as mothers who needed to be in the private sphere. They gave women limited access to public spaces in contrast to the USSR regime that attempted, but failed to give full engagement to women in public spaces, but failed. In contrast, the Taliban banned women entirely from the public arena. They used women's bodies mainly for domestic work and sex. The Taliban also used women's bodies to exercise power as a symbol of manhood. The Taliban used the mechanism of total exclusion from the labour market, which is what Walby (1990) calls private patriarchy. Hence, there are historical developments in the relationship between patriarchy and politics in Afghanistan.

After the fall of the Taliban (2001), politicisation reached a new, complex level (Koniyoti, 2005). Women's issues have become a symbol of the modernity of the new Afghan state and success for the international organisations supporting it. There is, however, a gap between the rhetoric and reality of women's issues in Afghanistan. On one hand, women are given chances to obtain education and employment in public spaces; on the other, security and everyday life for women in both rural and urban areas remain unchanged (Khattak, 2004; The World Bank, 2005; Abirafeh, 2005).

The Current Legislative Context

Gender equality and women's issues have become vital to the nation-building efforts with the establishment of the post-Taliban government, under considerable pressure from international organisations (Saikal, 2011). A number of commitments were made to promote gender equality in the country. The following is a snapshot of core commitments and key milestones for gender equality:

2002: The Declaration of the Essential Rights of Afghan Women

2003: The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)

2004: The Constitution included an explicit reference to the equality of men and women before the law

2006: The Afghanistan Compact contains the government of Afghanistan's gender equality framework until 2020.

2008: The National Action Plan for the Women of Afghanistan (NAPWA) (2008-2018)

2008: The Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS) (2008-2013)

2009: The Law on the Elimination of Violence against Women (EVAW)

2012: The Tokyo Conference agreed on monitoring and evaluation of the gender framework as a key indicator of progress in Afghanistan.

This is by no means an exhaustive list. Yet, these measures have failed to be translated into practice because they have largely been political. Abirafeh (2009) argues that gender policy in Afghanistan is formulated and designed based on the discourse of "a one-dimensional chaddari-clad figure in need of assistance with transformation of gender order as an anticipated outcome" (p. 11). International organisations tend to make decisions on women's behalves based on what they perceive as beneficial for Afghan women.

Further, a lack of thorough knowledge and analysis of past and current gender dynamics by international organisations has failed to frame effective legislation to promote gender equality. The assumption that women need to be saved from Afghan men not only fails to promote gender equality but also widens the gender gap. Gender role distinctions in Afghanistan are based on public-private distinctions, and thus men have a major role in women's participation in public space as well as the promotion of gender equality.

The current legislation puts contradictory pressures on gender equality and women's rights in Afghanistan. On one hand, international organisations demand that women's rights are the same as in Western societies that implement international conventions; on the other hand, the majority of Afghan people, both

men and women, remain uncompromising on changes to women's status (Kandiyoti, 2004:135). The majority of men in both urban and rural areas believe in strict public and private gender roles. Misrepresentation and misinterpretation of gender issues in Afghanistan has contributed to a resurgence of violence and discrimination against women both at the domestic level and at the national level (Abirafeh, 2009; Kandiyoti, 2004).

Another key reason that gender policy/strategies in Afghanistan have failed is the multiplicity of meanings and goals that this concept (gender) entails. To a large extent, what gender policy-makers mean by 'focus on gender issues' and what it means to their workers is often contested. This is due to the lack of clarity in the use of gender terminology, "which is compounded by an often simultaneous tacit assumption of commonality" (Warren, 2007:189).

The definition of gender and its implications remain under discussion in Afghanistan. However, this is not a problem specific to Afghanistan; the term 'gender' is difficult to translate from English to any other language (Goetz, 1998 in Larsson, 2008). Gender is a relatively new concept in Afghanistan and it does not have equivalent translations in Dari and Pashtu. In Dari, the term 'gender' is translated as jensiyat, which mean sex, and thus, it abandons the idea of a social constructed phenomenon (Abirafeh, 2009; Wordsworth, 2008:22). It can be seen that this translation of gender is similar to the western scholars' view of gender as synonym for sex. This will be discussed in the next chapter in detail. Due to the difficulty in translation, the majority of people use the English term which gives them a perception of cultural imperialism in which their language and culture is under

threat (Rostami-Povey, 2007). Wordsworth (2008) and Larson (2008), in their studies in Afghan ministries, found that participants used various terms to describe gender as indicated in the following table.

Table 1- Translation of the word 'gender' in Dari

Dari	Transliteration	English
جنسییت اجتماعی (جندر)	Jensiyat-e ejtamahi (gender)	Social Sex (Gender)
جنسییت	Jensiyat	Sex
تساوی جنسییت	Tasawi jensiyat	Equality between sexes
قدرت دادن به زنان	Qodrat dadan ba zanha	Empowerment of women
جنس مرد و زن	Jens zan wa mard	Sexes of men and women
موقف اجتماعی زنان	Moghief-e ejtemahi zanan	Social status of women
مساوات بین زن و مرد	Masawat baine zan wa mard	Equality between men and women

Adopted from the study undertaken by Wordsworth (2008)

They found that the terms 'gender' and 'woman' were used interchangeably by the respondents when they were talking about gender issues. Surprisingly, the blurring of terms by internationals which increased the confusion of participants was reported in Larson's study. This indicates that the slippage between women and gender is still common in many contexts.

Gender policy initiatives have not been effective in Afghanistan, causing gender segregation instead, highlighting the difference between men and women (Abirafeh, 2009: 50). The majority of people use the term gender; however, they have not absorbed its depth. In general, the term 'gender' is considered negative, in the

sense that it means women's power over men, which is perceived as a challenge to men's institutionalised patriarchy and misrepresentation of women as victims in need of saving (Abirafeh, 2007, 2009; Wordsworth, 2009).

In addition, top-down state legislation has so far failed to build a sustainable structure to guarantee security and good governance to promote gender equality, among other things. Afghanistan has a weak central state, unable, at least in the 20th and 21st centuries, to implement modernising programmes including promoting gender equality (Moghadam, 2002). The patriarchal nature of Afghanistan, its resistance to external forces (e.g. from the West) and its weak state are interconnected and associate with strong societal resistance to the formation of a modern state and the implementation of gender equality policies (Rubin, 1995). Bearing in mind the failure of gender legislation, in the following section I discuss the gender strategy for higher education and its limitations.

Gender Strategy for Higher Education

The strategy document consists of three main parts. The first part gives brief information on the efforts of the Ministry of Higher Education (MoHE) to provide opportunities for women. Next, it explains the major challenges women students and academics face and finally it provides action plans and a multi-pronged gender strategy with goals for the Ministry of Higher Education, academics, Higher Education Institutions, students, infrastructure and legal framework to ensure that women are treated in a fair and equitable manner in a supportive environment.

Due to the small number of female students and academics, the gender strategy of higher education addresses the following gender challenges: women's access to

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higher education institutions, employment, their limited opportunities to obtain advanced degrees, research and writing, promotion, safety and security, sexism and other issues. Although the number of both men and women students and academics has increased since 2001, women students and academics lag behind compared to their male counterparts. The total number of women students in 2013 was estimated to be 24,854, which form 20% of the total number of students. Similarly, the number of women academics rose to 615 (The Ministry of Higher Education, 2013).

The higher education gender strategy was laid out as a part of the National Higher Education Strategic Plan's (2010-2014) effort, which is one of the requirements of ANDS. The Ministry of Higher Education in Afghanistan proposed the Gender Strategy for 2012-2014, aiming to ensure gender equity, to increase the number of women in higher education and to devise strategies to overcome existing inequalities. The vision of higher education in this regard is:

- To achieve gender equity, the MoHE seeks to create relevant conditions through the establishment of quality improvement and appropriate facilities for women and by fostering values such as equal rights, Islamic values, national unity, and a sense of responsibility and commitment to serve Afghanistan.

The goals to be achieved are:

- To improve gender equity in institutions of higher education by increasing the number of female faculty members and students.

- To provide a safe and secure environment in which men and women can work creatively and freely without harassment or fears for their safety (Ministry of Higher Education, 2013a)

The higher education gender strategy is based on the National Gender Policy. Afghanistan's national policy on gender was structured in the Interim - Afghanistan National Development Strategy in 2001 as a result of the 'Bonn Agreement'. As one of the requirements of the agreement, to structure policies in a way to achieve as far as possible the Millennium Development Goal (MDGs) in which gender equity is its third cross-cutting theme, gender mainstreaming has been incorporated into the I-ANDS and later into the ANDS as a cross-cutting theme, along with counter-narcotics measures, regional co-operation and anti-corruption procedures.

In addition, the higher education gender strategy is linked to the National Action Plan for the Women of Afghanistan (NAPWA), which was adopted as a 10-year (2008-2018) policy framework, aiming to guarantee, with the collaboration of the Afghan government, to protect and promote women's rights. NAPWA was formed as a result of the Beijing 10 UN Women's Conference in New York in 2005.

Current gender policies, both national gender policy and NAPWA, represent an example of transferred policy through international conferences and US and global feminist movements (Larson, 2008; Wordsworth, 2008; Kandiyoti, 2009). Yet the process of gender policy formation was supposed to be mainly undertaken by the Ministry of Women's Affairs (MOWA) and UNIFEM, a bottom-up strategy to provide national ownership of the policy. However, in reality the gender policy was framed by UNIFEM with minor support from the MoWA (Wordsworth, 2008). In addition,

as a policy document, the national gender policy and NAPWA, was seen as a political victory. In this sense, as part of the ANDS, the document was predicted to "prove a significant bargaining tool for those attempting to hold government accountable regarding its commitment to women" (Larson, 2008: 18). However, there is no study to indicate whether the gender strategy in higher education is part of the bigger picture. Hence, in the following section, I address some of the limitations of higher education strategies.

The Limitation of Gender Strategy for Higher Education

The higher education gender strategy has a number of limitations. Gender strategy benchmarks are unclear and immeasurable. A vague intention is given to women without clear strategies (Larson, 2008; Wordsworth, 2008) or action plans. For instance, one of the strategies to achiever gender equality is to "work with institutions to create an environment supportive of women and encouraging their promotion through the ranks" (p. 17). However, there is no mention of what kind of work needs to be done or its feasibility, and how women can be encouraged to achieve promotion. In other places it is pointed out that "all faculty members must report cases of sexual harassment to the proper university authorities and to adopt a position of zero tolerance about sexism" (p. 18). But it has not clear who the 'proper university authorities' are and how they can 'adopt a position of zero tolerance about sexism' in a society where such practices take place on a daily basis.

Further, while gender strategy and gender policy as a whole demand transformative social change, there is no indication of how attitudes towards women are expected to change, nor is there a clear timeframe (Wordsworth, 2008).

There is a lack of attention to detail and a lack of capacity in challenging the broader vision of gender equality, transforming it into strategic and implementable benchmarks. If these are considered, then there is the possibility of gender mainstreaming to be taken seriously as a policy (Larson, 2008).

As mentioned earlier, the aim of the gender strategy document is to ensure gender equity, meaning men and women should receive equal treatment. However, there is no mention of men and their roles. In Afghanistan both men and women have suffered from several decades of war, instability and poverty. Although women suffered the most, and thus special attention should be paid to them, men should not be excluded. Moreover, gender inequality and discrimination towards women is more likely to persist when men's roles are not recognised (Echavez *et al*., 2016).

One of the reasons for the aforementioned problems is that not many Afghans have expertise in gender issues, and thus the document is structured by foreign technical experts, perhaps without a thorough understanding of the social and historical aspects of society. Nevertheless, these problems do not only exist in relation to the Gender Strategy in Higher Education, but throughout the National Gender Policy. As a result, due to political issues and technical interventions policy implementation has failed to achieve any real change.

In addition, while gender-training workshops have been conducted to provide the necessary technical knowledge, there seemed to be relatively limited meaningful gender programmes (Larson, 2008). My fieldwork data, discussed in more detail later, also shows that certain people, particularly those who are in high positions or those who have connections with people in high positions benefit from the majority

of training schemes. The majority of employees are not aware of gender training programmes within their institutions.

My fieldwork notes also show that there is a lack of co-ordination among different national and international organisations promoting gender equality. Government services in Kabul and in other provinces remain extremely weak. The Ministry of Women's Affairs is responsible for providing training and gender mainstreaming, but the Ministry does not have close enough co-ordination with international organisations or the Ministry of Higher Education. During my fieldwork, I found that there is a lack of co-ordination between the MoWA, the Ministry of Higher Education and gender units within the universities. As one of the interviewees told me, the Ministry of Higher Education does not do anything to promote gender issues at the university, while the MoHE claims they have provided many training programmes for the university.

Another issue that adds to this complexity is lack of accountability. There is a major concern centering on corruption in various national and international organisations in Afghanistan. Corruption is reported to be the second major problem after security and it is a major part of the administrative system in Afghanistan (Gardizi *et al.*, 2010) and the academic environment falls under its influence. A National Survey identified corruption as one of the biggest problems after insecurity in Afghanistan (Isaqzadeh and Kabuli, 2014). Afghanistan is prone to different and changing patterns of corruption including bribery, extortion, *wasta* (see Glossary of Terms) and nepotism (Gardizi *et al.*, 2010).

The influence of warlords within the universities is also reported by Rubin (2006). He states that high authorities at the universities, especially the chancellor(s), are pressured by warlords to appoint specific individuals. They may sometimes even "threaten university officials" (p. 5). It should be stated here that Rubin mainly refers to students' access to the university rather than that of academics.

Conclusion to legislative section

The Post-Taliban gender policies/strategies, and programmes by national and international organisations to promote gender equality in the contemporary context, have largely failed due to inadequate knowledge and analysis of Afghanistan's present and past gender dynamics and public-private distinctions. The failure of gender policy and strategy not only fails to promote gender equality and equal opportunities for women and men, but it results in Afghan men being defensive of their masculinity and not allowing women to work in public spaces.

This section concludes that some of the strategies addressing gender equality are vague and unclear. There is no strategy to change individuals' ideology and attitudes, which are one of the main barriers to gender equality. Additionally, while gender refers to men and women, men's issues and the challenges they face in society are neglected. The lack of co-ordination between various institutions prevents any plans and actions for women's progress in general, and within the workplace, from being realised. In short, current gender policy/ strategy create gender segregation within the workplace in particular and society in general. Afghanistan not only needs co-ordination but also accountability to ensure gender initiatives will have a positive impact on both men and women in general and

within the workplace. These observations will be picked up again in subsequent chapters.

CHAPTER THREE: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

In this chapter, I address the relevant literature on gender relations in higher education. Since this study focuses on academics, primarily women, and their perceptions in relation to access, participation and employment in an academic environment, I review the literature relevant to the themes that emerged from my data, including family and career, meritocracy and masculinity, hiring patterns, networking and promotion, sexual harassment, subtle discrimination, and the job satisfaction paradox. The aim of this chapter is to provide an understanding of contemporary debates about gender and workplace inequality and the nature of gender inequality in an academic environment and to establish how this research adds to the existing literature on gender relations in the workplace in general and in academia in particular.

A research focus on gender relations in higher education requires some reflection on what is meant by gender and gender equality in the workplace. Yet, combining gender questions with academia is more than just a matter of equal opportunities in a given area, since gender has different meanings to different people and there is a reciprocal relationship between gender issues and general improvements in a given society. In this chapter, I first review the contemporary debates about gender. Drawing on a diverse range of literature on the concept of gender, this study identifies gender as a socially and structurally constructed phenomenon. The social aspects of this definition refer to gender as a system of social and cultural beliefs and practices that maintain

gender differences, and organise relations of inequality on the basis of these differences. The structural aspects of this definition refer to gendered-institutional aspects of gender inequality in the workplace (Acker, 1990).

The literature review highlights the advantage of utilising concepts like Walby's (1990) public- private dichotomy, Acker's (1990, 2006) theory of inequality regimes, Butler's concept of gender performativity and Crenshaw's (1989) and Walby's (2006) discussion of intersectionality on gender relations in the Afghan workplace. I also review alternative theories, such as socio-cultural theories (Goldberg, 1993; Walby, 1989, 1999; Hartmann, 1979), social capital theories (Padavic and Reskin, 2002; Hakim, 1996), socialisation theories (Parsons & Bales, 1955; Jacobs, 1989) and interaction theories (Ridgeway, 1997) as they are relevant to understanding gender relations in the workplace. Walby's public-private dichotomy is an essential concept in this study because the public-private distinction in Afghanistan is gendered (Moghadam, 2002). Historically a woman's body has had a symbolic and practical value in private spheres (See Chapter 2: Gender roles). Acker's concept of inequality regimes is vital to this study because it shows how institutional practices and procedures within the workplace are gendered and ethnicised, resulting in inequality. I use Butler's concept of gender performance and performativity to understand the dynamics of gender relations at the interpersonal level in the workplace. In this thesis, I argue that gender relations in higher education in Afghanistan are complex and multi-dimensional. Therefore, to understand gender relations in the given context, it is essential to understand the structure of society, the institutional policies and practices, and the

individual's performed gender roles that result in gender and ethnic inequality. In the following sections, I discuss the contemporary themes on gender and gender relations at the workplace.

Contemporary Debates about Gender and Workplace Inequality

Defining Gender

The term 'gender' often refers to socially and culturally constructed roles and practices. Gender identity is fluid and it is something one does or an act or sequence of acts, rather than something one is (Butler, 1990). It is a particular type of process, as Butler puts it, a "set of repeated acts within a highly rigid regulatory frame" (Butler, 1990). This definition of gender suggests that the individual is not free to choose which gender he or she wants to act; it is always determined within this regulatory frame, and individuals have limited options from which to make a constrained choice of gender style (Salih, 2002). Butler argues that gender is 'performative' since it does not have a natural core on which to rest identity and this is as a result of public and social discourses. Butler's definition of gender challenges the binary division of gender as the masculine and feminine categories, which has been a core part of gender conceptualisation for decades.

Initially the concept of gender was considered as synonymous with sex. It was believed that sex was not different from gender and gender was the social organisation of sexual differences (Nicholson, 1994). In this view, gender does not only have to do with male and female distinctions, it also includes constructions that separate male bodies from female bodies. This view has its roots in the confluence of two ideas, self-identity

and the social constitution of human character. One reason for such a view was the notion that the male/female distinction was caused and expressed by the facts of 'biology' (Nicholson, 1994). This conception was reflected in the fact that the word 'sex' was used for male/female, generally referring to sexual/bodily distinctions, and was a word with a strong biological association. On the other hand, the term 'gender' was used to refer to the difference between feminine and masculine forms within the language (Richardson, 2001). Later the term was extended to refer to the differences between men and women in general. Yet, the term 'gender' was not used to replace 'sex', but to complement it (Parsons and Bales, 1955; Nicholson, 1994).

However, the biological concept of gender has been challenged. De Beauvoir (1949) argued that gender is contrasted to sex by being socially constructed rather than biologically evident. This argument suggests that gender differences result from cultural practices and social expectations (Kessler and McKenna, 1978). In this usage, gender typically refers to socially constructed roles that specify the way men and women are expected to behave. This view is clearly articulated by Beauvoir. She asserts that 'one is not born, but rather becomes, a woman' (De Beauvoir, 1949:267).

The systematic articulation of gender as a formal category is expressed by Rubin (1975). Rubin claims that women's subordination is as a result of the transformation of biological aspects of males and females into a gender hierarchy in certain cultural and institutional mechanisms. According to Rubin, sex and gender should be treated separately. As Lovenduski (1998:337 in Dietz, 2003), summarises: "sex and gender are

analytically distinct, gender is relational, and the concept of sex is meaningless except when understood in the context of gender relations."

However, the sharp distinction between 'gender' and 'sex' has been criticised by some scholars. The distinction is perceived as ignoring any interaction between society and biology (Scott, 1999; Young, 2002). According to these scholars (Scott, 1999), there exist some biological traits that are commonalities in all cultures to distinguish men and women and they partially account for men's and women's personalities and behaviour.

Walby (1986; 1990) and Connell (2002) define gender as something done to individuals through social structures. Connell (2002) describes social structures as "the enduring or extensive patterns among social relations" (p. 50). On the other hand, a number of scholars define gender as something individuals do. West and Zimmerman (1987) argue that gender is something one "does" rather than "is". Gender is central to social interaction and gender beliefs shape not only the individual's role, but also how he/she evaluates each other's performance in a certain situation. West and Zimmerman (1987) and West and Fenstermaker (1995) describe this process as 'doing gender'.

Building on gender as social interaction, Ridgeway and Correll (2004) describe gender as a background identity, which is institutionalised through 'social relational context' (p. 511). Social relational contexts include any situation in which individuals define themselves in relation to others in order to act. The authors claim that cultural beliefs and social relational context play crucial roles in the gender system, and the cultural

beliefs that distinguish characteristics of men and women and shape their behaviours are gendered. They refer to this kind of cultural belief about gender as 'gender beliefs' (p. 511). It is worth mentioning that gender is not the only aspect of identity; ethnicity, age and class are important aspects of identity and, similar to gender, they are socially and culturally constructed. In the next section, I discuss theories of gender and other aspects of social identity that are embedded in the workplace.

Gender and Workplace Inequality

There are various ways in which gender roles and ideologies are communicated and embedded in social and institutional practices and procedures. According to Western theories, gender relations differ depending on social and economic relationships that exist in a family, workplace and society between women and men (Walby, 1990). However, as I show throughout my findings, gender relations in higher education institutions Afghanistan are not only determined by socio-cultural and economic relationships but also by wider politics and security concerns. Security is one of the areas that is often taken for granted in western theorisation of gender relations. Esser (2014) drawing from various Western theories argues that security concerns and violence, particularly in Kabul, are highly selective relying on violence that obscures the real cause of victimisation. He refers to this reductionism as "scalar politics of security" (p. 374). This kind of politics determines the 'visibility' and invisibility' of different types of violence. There is a link between the meso-level of insecurity, for example state security, and micro-level violence such as sexual harassment and death threats (Deck, 2011) and gender relations as found in my study.

Hence, a comprehensive account of gender relations in an organisation demands attention be paid to multiple dimensions of women's lives within the workplace and society as a whole since equality in one area often conceals inequality in another (Pettit and Hook, 2009). In this section, I review the relevant literature on gender and institutional inequality based on three major themes, structural, institutional and interpersonal.

Structural Theories

A number of scholars refer to the patriarchal nature of society to explain the subordination of women in the labour market and at home (Goldberg, 1993; Walby 1989, 1999). Goldberg (1993) emphasises biological differences between men and women, making the assumption that men always take the dominant roles and women the subordinate roles. As Goldberg (1993) states, patriarchy is universal and authority is always associated with the male. According to Goldberg (1993), physiological differences between men and women make men, on average, more self-assertive, aggressive, dominant and competitive, than women. Therefore, sex differences that are developed by the process of socialisation create expectations and preferences for male dominance and create barriers to establishing equal and fair work roles and relationships.

However, the idea of patriarchy as a natural phenomenon and the notion of innate male supremacy have been challenged and it has been argued that there is no scientific evidence for such explanations. Hartmann (1979) argues that the reason for the subordination of women at the workplace is due to men's control of women's labour.

Patriarchy, according to Hartmann (1981), is a set of relations which has a marital base; he emphasises occupational segregation as the key mechanism used by men to constrain and restrict women from paid work, thus rendering them financially dependent on men. Hartmann (1979) asserts that men organise collectively to achieve their goals through the labour market, and thus, men's solidarity is the key factor. Walby (1990) also rejects the individualistic notion of patriarchy, affirming that patriarchy is embedded in the structure of society. In the following section, I discuss Walby's concept of patriarchy, and the distinction she makes between public and private spheres that disadvantage women, as an essential concept for this study.

Patriarchy and Public-Private Distinctions

According to Walby, patriarchy is:

> A system of social structures and practices in which men dominate, oppress and exploit women... the use of the term social structure is important here, since it clearly implies rejection both of biological determinism, and the notion that every individual man is in a dominant position and every women in a subordinate one... patriarchy is composed of six structures: the patriarchal mode of production, patriarchal relations in paid work, patriarchal relations in the state, male violence, patriarchal relations in sexuality, and patriarchal relations in cultural institutions (1990:20).

Walby's concept of the patriarchal mode of production refers to the devaluation of women's household labour, which signifies that "housewives are the producing class, while husbands are the expropriating class" (1990:21). The second structure, patriarchal relations in paid work, refers to women's poorer pay conditions and lower

level in the hierarchy because they are considered to be less skilled. The next structure, the patriarchal state refers to the racist and capitalist nature of the state in general. Male violence is another structure that refers to systematic violence by men against women, and the refusal of states to intervene against it.   The fifth structure of patriarchy describes heterosexuality as a norm. The final structure refers to the patriarchal nature of institutions and how women traditionally have been marginalised.

According to Walby (1990), there are two mechanisms used by men to limit women's access to paid work: total exclusion from the labour market to control them, which she refers to as private patriarchy, and the segregation of men and women within the workforce, or public patriarchy. The patriarchal prism within which gender inequality is interpreted is based on a prioritisation of the private over the public. Walby (1990) further argues that patriarchal ideology is maintained through the construction of private and public realms for women and men respectively. Women are kept in a private space because it benefits men materially and women's housework is expropriated by their husbands or other family members. She claims that housewives' labour is not considered work and women are seen to be dependent on their male family members who have control over property and other productive resources.

Walby, argues that within the Western context, private patriarchy has moved to the public sphere. According to Walby (1990), the change in the form of patriarchy from private to public is a result of significant changes in state politics, and women's movements. State policies, such as the ability for women to leave an abusive marriage and to live as single mothers, have changed the form of patriarchy. Changes in

women's sexuality, in household structures and composition have significantly contributed to changes in the form of patriarchy from private to public spheres.

However, Walby's public-private distinctions are based on a capitalist relationship of production in the West, where women's labour has taken on a very specific character, with waged-labour being considered 'productive' and domestic labour 'non-productive' (Fox-Genovese, 1982 in Crowley, 2014). However, public-private distinctions are more complex (Pateman, 1989; Fraser, 1990). As I will show through my findings, men control women's access to public spaces partly to reduce competition over economic resources, and partly as a result of ideological interests (Moghadam, 2002). The notion that women are a symbol of 'honour' that needs to be protected play a key role. Walby fails to account for culture. Her argument is 'culture-blind' (Crowley, 2014). She assumes that women's problems derive from capitalism and there is no other mode of production.

 In addition, Walby does not refer to security concerns and how they affect public-private patriarchy. Security in developing countries such as Afghanistan is a major issue and it influences women and men's relationships in both public and private spheres. As this study shows, the constant state of war and insecurity reinforces patriarchy. Findings of this study show that private patriarchy has not moved to but has been embedded in, public patriarchy. Private patriarchy regulates public patriarchy for Afghan women because of insecurity and uncertainty within the country.   Women perform the roles society has given them, strictly based on public-private distinctions, as they are perceived to be mainly responsible for the private rather than the public

sphere. Women in the workforce continue to recreate, reinforce and at the same time resist their roles located primarily in the private sphere. Given this, in the next section, I review the institutional theories of gender.

Institutional Theories

Gendered-institutions theories shift attention from differences between women and men to the gendered structures and practices of institutions. Gendered-institutions theory claims that separation of the public sphere of work from the private sphere of home is one of the major factors contributing to gender inequality in institutions (Benhabib and Cornell, 1987; Martin, 1990). Martin, (1990), asserts that the separation of public-private is usually perceived as the gender-neutral protection of the privacy of individuals in institutions. However, the public-private dichotomy gives institutions a justification for refusing to deal with private or family issues which disadvantage working women (Martin, 1990) because they have more obligations outside work than men (Acker, 2006).

Gendered-institutions theories argue that institutions are not gender-neutral but they are gendered and employers play a key role in creating and maintaining sex segregation (Connell, 1987; Acker 1990: 2006). Acker, (1990), argues that gender segregation at the workplace is partly created by institutional practices, and income and status inequality between men and women are created through institutional processes. According to Acker (1990), institutions are the place where cultural images of gender are invented and reproduced (p. 140). She further states that interaction between men and women in the workplace produces gendered social structures. For

example, a study by West and Zimmerman (1987), analysing conversations, shows how gender differences in ordinary talk, such as interpretations and turn taking, recreate gender inequality. These institutional processes produce gendered components of individual identity including choice of appropriate work, clothing, language use and presentation of self as a gendered member of an institution (Reskin and Roos, 1987). Acker develops the concept of 'inequality regimes' to refer to interlocked practices and processes that produce and reproduce inequalities in the organisation. In the following sub-section, I discuss this in detail as an essential concept in this study.

Inequality Regimes

Acker's concept of 'inequality regime' is vital for this study because it shows how gender is not only performed by individuals, but is also embedded in the processes and practices that individuals perform and the norms that govern workplace interactions (Christine Williams and Dellinger, 2010). Acker defines inequality regimes as:

> loosely interrelated practices and processes and actions, and meanings that result in and maintain class, gender, and racial inequalities within a particular organisation (2006: 443).

According to Acker (1990, 2006) gender enters into the job description, hierarchy and workplace interaction and culture. Inequality regimes tend to be fluid and changing, and are linked to inequality in the broader society including its politics, history and culture. She argues that to understand inequality regimes, it is essential to understand the bases of inequality, shape and degree of inequality, the institutional processes that

create and re-create inequalities, the invisibility of inequalities, the legitimacy of inequality, and controls that prevent any action against inequalities (p. 444).

According to Acker (2006), the bases of inequality vary depending on gender, race/ethnicity, class and other personal characteristics. She claims that, socially and culturally, gender differences in which men are always in a position of power and women are subordinated are present in institutions. The hierarchal positions, in particular in larger institutions, are linked with class or other social differences such as ethnicity in the wider society. In the case of Afghanistan hierarchal positions are linked to urban and rural distinctions as well as ethnicity.

The shape and degree of inequality depends on the 'steepness of hierarchy' and power differences (Acker, 2006:445). From Acker's perspective, the steeper the institution hierarchy, the more unequal the institution. The steepest hierarchies are found in bureaucratic institutions. Acker argues that hierarchies are often gendered and racialised/ethnicised, particularly in senior positions. In a similar way, the degree of inequality depends on the 'severity of power' in institutions. Power differences are fundamental to gender, race/ethnicity, and class inequality and are directly linked to hierarchy.

Institutional processes and practices, according to Acker (2006), are organised on the model of a man who has no responsibilities for children or domestic work. Job expectations such as long hours of work and being on time portray the image of a good worker, and since women have more obligations outside work than their male

counterparts, these expectations disadvantage them. Gender and sometimes race/ethnicity provide clues as to the assumed appropriateness, followed by perceived appropriate behaviour, depending on the situation and institutional culture and history (Acker, 2006).

Visibility of inequality is defined as the degree of awareness of inequality which varies depending on the position of the individual. Individuals might be privileged based on gender but they may not see their privilege. For instance, as McIntosh (1995 in Acker, 2006) argues, men tend not to see their gender privilege in society. She states:

> only rarely does a man go beyond acknowledging that women are disadvantaged to acknowledging that men have unearned advantage, or that privilege has not been good for men's development as human beings, or for society's development, or that privileged systems might ever be challenged or *changed* (McIntosh 1995:2).

Individuals in dominant groups usually see inequality elsewhere than where they are located. In this study through both survey findings and interviews, I show that gender inequality in the workplace is highly invisible to both women and men. For example, when academics were asked if they perceived their institution to be fair, along the line of gender, the majority of respondents, both men and women, were more likely to agree - which shows that gender inequality is normalised to the extent that it is invisible.

Acker asserts that legitimacy of inequality varies depending on institutions. Inequality is highly legitimised in bureaucratic institutions. Even where anti-discrimination laws

apply to the workplace, gender and race/ethnic discrimination continues. These inequalities are legitimised by biological differences between women and men (Glenn, 2002). In a sense, beliefs about biological differences between men and women and the perceived superiority of men over women legitimise inequality in the workplace. Legitimacy of inequality is linked to its visibility. High visibility and low legitimacy, according to Acker (2006) may enhance the possibilities for change. Acker (2006) describes institutional controls as the dominant group's control over subordinate groups, ensuring that they act to achieve the institution's goal and accept the system of inequality. Controls are practised through hierarchal institutional power that is mostly based on gender and ethnicity/race relations.

Although Acker refers to the link between institutional inequalities and inequalities in the wider society and its history, politics and culture, she does not consider the implication of insecurity and uncertainty in the wider society and how they affect women and minority ethnic groups' practices within institutions. Acker's concept of inequality regimes is based on a Western institutional context where there are often no security concerns such as frequent suicide bombing and explosions. Thus, Acker's recommendation for change through social movements, is not feasible in Afghanistan because of insecurity and a weak state (Ahmed-Gosh, 2013).

In short, the concept of institutional inequalities is important for this study because it focuses not only on institutional processes and practices that disadvantage women but also on the intersection of gender, class and race/ethnicity which is also important to this study. In the following section intersectionality theory is discussed in detail.

Intersectionality Theory

Intersectionality theory seeks to address multi-dimensional inequalities by bringing together the complexities of historical background, social location and experiences (Walby *et al.*, 2012). This is a concept relevant to Afghanistan, as Afghan women's identity is multi-dimensional depending on their class, ethnicity and language and has been influenced by historical and cultural norms. The literature on gender inequality in the workplace has long assessed the significance of individual, family and structural factors that affect women within the workplace (Jacobs, 2004). Further, scholars have noted the importance of organisational discourses that characterise appropriate roles for men and women whereby women are considered the nurturing caretakers of students and academics (Tierney and Bensimon, 1997). Within this traditional discourse women's identity is considered as solid and unchangeable, whereby they are always marginalised.

However, recent changes to the conceptualisation of identity have changed the spectrum of analysis of gender inequality in the workplace. Identity, as Butler (1990) argues, is fluid. Individuals can be privileged and marginalised simultaneously, based on their gender, class, ethnicity and other social characteristics. Hence, understanding the intersection of different social categories is essential in understanding gender inequality in higher education institutions (Risman, 2004; Fenstermaker & Zirmmerman, 2002).

The term 'intersectionality' was initially used by Crenshaw (1989) addressing the discrimination and oppression experienced by black women and developed to examine

the dynamics of various social categories such as gender, ethnicity and other axes of power and how they interact to shape multiple dimensions of inequalities (Walby *et al.*, 2012). According to intersectionality theory, gender, ethnicity and other social categories cannot be studied separately, as this does not reveal the whole picture of how an organisation works (Britton and Logan, 2008).

According to intersectionality theory, gender, ethnicity and other axes of power are interlocked aspects of social status that produce and reproduce multiple and shifting identities. These multiple identities are built into institutional processes and practices which seem normal but at the same time produce and reproduce inequality and privilege (Holvino, 2010). The normality of inequality has its roots in social structure, history and societal beliefs in general (Hovino, 2010; Bradley and Healy, 2008). Intersectionality is viewed differently by different scholars. McCall (2005) views it as a means to analyse categories of difference, while Acker (2012) and Yuval-Davis (2006) view it as a process. Other scholars describe it as paradigm (Hancock, 2007); a simultaneous process (Holvino, 2010); a matrix of domination (Dhamoon, 2011) or a tool (Anthias, 2012). Intersectional 'identity models' focus on the question of 'who' the individual is (Yuval-Davis, 2006) whereas intersectional 'process models' pay attention to "context and comparison at the intersections as revealing structural processes organising power" (Choo and Ferree, 2010:134) rather than focusing on individual identities. The disadvantage of 'identity models' is the difficulty in balancing complex intersections of multiple identities (Mooney, 2016).

Hancock's (2007) process-based approach suggests that differences as fluid categories are dynamically expressed at both individual and structural levels within a particular context. Although Walby *et al.*, (2012) criticise the implementation of fluid categories, they can be easily understood and expressed by performance (Mooney, 2016). In this study I view intersectionality categories as performance. Viewing social categories as performance rather than rigid categories allowed me to explore how differences are enacted through performance norms at interpersonal, institutional and societal levels. In the next section I review relevant individualist theories.

Individualist Theories

Individualist theories reflect on sex differences in individual characteristics as the primary explanation for women's marginalisation particularly in earnings in the workplace. It is argued that women and men invest differently in their careers (Padavic and Reskin, 2002; Hakim, 1996). Polachek (1979) argued that the reason they invest differently is that women bear children, and so they invest in occupations that do not penalise them for child-bearing. On the other hand, since men do not bear children, they invest in jobs that deliver human capital which grows in value over time.

Similarly, Becker (1991) argued that men and women have different levels of attachment to work. Men invest more time and effort both physically and mentally than women in their human capital, education and career development, thus leading women to choose jobs that are less effort-intensive and more compatible with domestic responsibilities (Hakim, 1996). However, contrary to claims of sex differences

in time and effort, Bielby and Bielby (1988) found that a majority of women reported allocating more time and effort to work than men.

Socialisation theories argue that men and women have different roles in society and therefore need to occupy different jobs. The process of gender socialisation is another explanation for gender inequality in the workplace. Socialisation theories assume that people's choices are shaped by their prior experiences/roles, in particular in childhood. Parsons and Bales (1955) argued that gender differences in the workplace are produced in childhood. In a sense boys and girls pick jobs that are consistent with society's definition of masculinity and femininity. However, evidence from other studies show that women's job aspirations have changed dramatically over time (Marini and Shu, 1998) and childhood plans explain very little about people's adult lives (Gerson, 1985).

From a socialisation perspective, women and men develop different traits, values and skills and as a result they approach work differently and make different choices (Jacobs, 1989). However, sex preferences are not static and not strongly linked to the sex compositions of a job (Reskin and Hartmann, 1986). Socialisation theories claim that the different socialisation of men and women leads them to different occupational choices. However, evidence refutes this claim (Kanter, 1977). Kanter (1977) argues that women develop feminine qualities because of the job they are trapped in, not because of early socialisation. She argues that social pressures and tokenism tend to reinforce traditional femininity in the workplace. A 'token', according to Kanter (1977), is a minority group of less than 15% who are "ironically both highly visible as people who

are different and yet not permitted the individuality of their own unique, non-stereotypical characteristics" (p. 384).

Ridgeway (1997) argues that women's subordinate position in the workplace is the reproduction of gender in interaction in institutions (Reskin, 2003). Unlike patriarchy, human capital and socialisation theories that are mainly focused on the individualist views, social interaction theories focus on social relations of work. Social interaction and networking are often reported to be a source of advancement and/or lack of advancement in the workplace. There is evidence from other studies that women tend to be marginalised or excluded from social networks in the workplace (Ibarra, 1992).

Ridgeway (1997) claims that sex differences force gender into the interactionally-mediated work process by cueing gender stereotypes and cultural expectations. Gender stereotypes in the workplace often lead to discrimination. Cued by gender differences, which make them entirely accessible (Fiske and Neuberg, 1990), gender stereotypes shape the individual's behaviours in the setting, depending on the salience of gender in the situation compared with other identities such as race and ethnicity (Deaux and Major, 1987). Research shows that even when other identities are the most powerful determinants of behaviour in the workplace, cultural gender stereotypes become 'effectively salient' (Ridgeway, 1997). Therefore, one's gender may shape behaviour and modify performance and judgment (Ridgeway, 1997).

Ridgeway (1997) further identified a number of gender stereotypes that affect employment inequality. First, the stereotypical assumption that men have greater

competence than women shapes men's and women's assertiveness and confidence and judgement of each other's competence and their actual performance and influence in the situation (Ridgeway, 1997 p. 222). Further, gender stereotypes create expectations for reward which reflect the individual's status and performance, and as a result favour man over women. Gender stereotypes that men have greater competence than women were also identified by Ridgeway (1993). She argues that stereotypes shape an individual's behaviour depending on the salience of identity. Cultural gender stereotypes become very salient, even if other identities are the most powerful determinant of behaviour. Hence, gender shapes an individual's behaviour and changes their performance and judgments, resulting in discrimination.

Butler (1990); however, argues that gender is not based on a perceived notion of biological facts or other essentialist conceptions, but it is created through performances. In her book, *Gender Trouble*, she argues that individuals perform an identity and gender emerges as a reality when it is performed. She goes beyond Foucault's (1992) refusal of a pre-existent element of identity and claims that it is within the act of performing that gender is defined. According to Butler, gender identity is constituted as the effect rather than the cause. One is a man or a woman as an effect of power. Gender identity does not exist behind the performance, but is created by the power of the performance (Butler in Lester, 2008).

Performing Gender and Performative Bodies

Butler's theory of performing gender and performativity is essential for this study because it establishes not only the socially and culturally constructed nature of gender,

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but also how social and cultural practices and roles are reproduced, represented and reinforced (Lester, 2008). There are three key features of this concept. First, the ways gender is performed within the social practices that are culturally defined. Second, the ways in which individuals perform in relation to those culturally performed roles that show forms of acceptance or resistance (Lester, 2008). Third, by performing gender the individual reinforces and reproduces social norms and roles and legitimises/normalises his/her existence.

Butler's theory of gender performance and performativity consists of three main features: identity, agency/structure and power. The first feature is identity. Identity refers to a conscious and unconscious projection of the self in relation to the world. According to Butler, identity is fluid; it is created and recreated through discourse and it can change at any given time and in any context. Hence, identity is not static and is able to change. Individuals can have multiple identities simultaneously and they can choose to perform each identity based on the given time and context.

As Butler argues, gender is, in no way, a stable identity, but rather; 'identity instituted through a stylised repetition of acts' (Butler, 1988:519). In other words, identity is a performative accomplishment constrained by social approval (Butler, 1988: 520). These identities are reproduced through various ways in which "bodies are acted in relationship to the deeply entrenched or sedimented expectations of gendered existence" (Butler, 1988:524). Identities are constituted through performance and they are reproduced through performativity (Butler, 1988).

However, individuals are not entirely free to act and perform any gender identity. Their gender performances are determined to the extent that support or resist the culturally accepted performance. In this sense, the individual's performance is determined by the social norms, thus limiting individual agency (Butler, 1993). She states:

> Gender performativity is not a matter of choosing which gender one will be today. Performativity is a matter of reiterating or repeating the norms by which one is constituted: it is not a radical fabrication of a gendered self. It is a compulsory repetition of prior and subjectivating norms, ones which cannot be thrown off at will, but which work, animate and constrain the gendered subject, and which are also the sources from where resistance, subversion, displacement are to be forged." (Butler, 1993: 22).

Butler argues that an individual's performance is constructed around the social norms and agency that allow for diverse and alternative identities. According to Butler, the gendered body is inseparable from the acts that constitute it. She also argues that through agency/structure individuals can challenge these gender norms by over-performing or by resisting them. Agency is an important concept for Butler because it signifies ways of subverting the norms (Salih, 2002).

According to Butler, some identities are aligned with power and they need to be contextually appropriate, thus limiting the scope of agency and identity. Butler, (2004), drawing upon Foucault's concept of regulatory power states: 'regulatory power not only acts upon a pre-existing subject but also shapes and forms that subject' (p. 41).

According to Butler, regulatory power has its own regimes which mainly function as norms, specifically heterosexual binary and hegemonic gender norms. Hegemonic gender norms refer to traditionally accepted norms for men and women that privilege masculinity over femininity (Butler, 2004). Butler argues that 'a norm operates within social practices as the implicit standard of normalisation' and 'is a measurement and a means of producing a common standard, to become an instance of the norms is not fully to exhaust the norm' (p. 50). According to Butler, successful performances are those which conform to the binary and hierarchies' concepts of heteronormativity. However, she further argues that although the heterosexual binary creates and recreates masculine and feminine norms, these norms can be challenged by performativity through performance against gender norms.

Although the two terms, performance and performativity slide into one another in *Gender Trouble*, in one of her interviews Butler stated that the difference between performance and performativity is that while "performance presupposes a pre-existing subject, performativity contests the very notion of the subject" (Butler, 1994 in Salih, 2002). In other words, gender performance is a repetitive act of doing gender, but performativity allows for the possibility of gender identity to be performed within a social context. Gender performativity shows the means by which gender norms are regulated and how relations between the genders are socially constructed (Butler, 1990). Hence, in this study, performance is considered as acts based on traditional and cultural gender norms within Afghan society whereas performativity is the process

whereby individuals do/act gender norms differently through the use of agency/structure.

Butler's analysis of performativity focuses on the recitation/recreation of cultural norms over time. Butler claims that performative gender/sex means that bodies are never merely described they are always constituted in the act of description. For example, when academics say there is no gender discrimination, they are not simply saying gender discrimination does not exist but they are actually saying that women's place is in the private space and men's in the public one. The statement "gender discrimination does not exist" is performative. The underlying assumption that women should stay at home and men should be in the public sphere is not a fact but an interpretation that initiates the process of discrimination. Not much research has been done on the extent to which performing gender in the workplace marginalises women. However, a study conducted by Lester (2008) in the USA reports that female faculty members performed a variety of stereotypical gender roles through socialisation within and outside the workplace. She also found that individuals constructed and negotiated their gender identity by hybrid performance.

To sum up, in this section gender and workplace inequality I have reviewed the relevant theories for this study including Walby's public-private distinctions, Acker's inequality regimes and Butler's gender performativity. However, there remains a common gap in understanding gender relations. Gender inequality theories have not considered the implications of insecurity and uncertainty and their effects on gender relations within the institution and society in general and this is one of the original

contributions of my thesis. This is because these theorisations are based on Western

contexts where security is often not an issue. By using concepts around public-private

distinctions, inequality regimes and gender performativity, I show that gender relations

in Afghanistan are not only based on socio-cultural and economic relations but also the

politics of the country and ongoing insecurity, resulting in dominance of private

patriarchy over public spheres. In the next section, I review the literature on gender

inequality in higher education in Afghanistan and the empirical research on gender

inequality in academia and in the workplace in Western societies.

Gender Inequality in Higher Education in Afghanistan

There is a small number of studies looking at gender inequality in higher education in Afghanistan. Shayan's (2015) article 'Gender Inequality in Education in Afghanistan: access and barriers', is limited to current articles and available data, reports that there are fewer girls and women in the education and higher education sectors because they are not provided with opportunities to continue their education. He refers to traditional and religious beliefs, insecurity, poverty, a corrupt education system, harassment and lack of female teachers as the main barriers to women's education, and concludes that there is a lack of efficient policies to overcome these barriers.

Burridge *et al*. (2015), in their qualitative study of female and male students in public and private universities in Afghanistan, explored men and women's views and attitudes towards getting higher education. They found that women are motivated to pursue higher education degrees and have access to employment opportunities. Their study also found that women reported a higher level of family support for their higher education. However, they observed a number of barriers to female students' higher education attainment, including national security and an uncertain future, economic concerns and the lack of employment and postgraduate opportunities, street harassment and corruption. The participants also referred to certain cultural restrictions and pressure to make a choice between marriage and education. The World Bank report on the resistance of women in higher education in Afghanistan (2014) identified a number of factors contributing to under-representation of women in higher education institutions including the lower participation of girls in secondary

and high school, resulting in a reduction of the eligible pool of applicants, lack of transportation and childcare provisions. The report found institutional barriers that prevent both university students and academics from attending higher education institutions. These barriers include lack of facilities such as hostels for female students, a weak curriculum and the lack of affirmative action for girls' enrolment.

Mashriqi (2013) in her study of 'Women's Access to Higher Education in Afghanistan: A Qualitative Phenomenological Study', identified a number of barriers to female students' access to Afghan higher education institutions, including entrance exams and admissions processes, higher education leaders and professors, financial status, religion, culture and threats to safety. She also reported perceived benefits of obtaining higher education, such as advancing the country, enhancing knowledge, obtaining better job opportunities, right to make decisions and working towards a peaceful and safe society.

Zoepf (2006), in her study, reported gender biases in Afghan universities. She argues that women in Afghan universities often have difficulty earning the respect of their co-workers, regardless of the field they are in. She has also reported that women are harassed and occasionally kidnapped while entering or leaving the university (Zoepf, 2006a). Research conducted by UNDP and UNESCO (2010) on gender-based violence at three universities in Afghanistan reported the salience of gender discrimination and that women feel they are treated as second-class citizens. This study also showed that women have less engagement in various university activities and are not given many roles to play. However, it was unclear whether women's minimal roles were due to

their personal choice or because of the institutional culture that makes it difficult for them to play a greater role.

Thus, limited evidence base exposes a gap in the literature dealing with gender inequality in higher education in Afghanistan where there has been a predominant focus focus only on female students and socio-cultural aspects of gender inequality. My study addresses this gap, first by seeking both female and male academics' perceptions of gender inequality; second, by looking at inequality from many dimensions, including socio-cultural, institutional and interpersonal. Since there is a small number of research articles on gender inequality in higher education in Afghanistan, it is essential to review the relevant literature from Western and other Islamic countries. In the next section, I review the literature on themes that have emerged from my data.

Gender Inequality in Higher Education

Women have long been a part of the academic profession. However, they have always been marginalised and discriminated against. Gender inequality in academia is deeply rooted in the structure of modern societies. As Risman (2004) asserts, gender is a social structure which perpetuates inequalities at the individual, institutional and societal levels. A number of barriers to women's progress have been identified, including the work-family conflict, masculine organisational cultures, the gender power imbalance, socialisation, and access to networks. In the following sub-sections, I review the most common barriers to gender equality in academia in particular, and the workplace in general, with relevance for this study. Each sub-section deals with particular aspects of the problem.

Family and Career

A number of scholars regard work-family conflict as a major barrier to women's academic advancement (Nazemi *et al.*, 2012; Barnard *et al.*, 2010; Davis, 2001). For women, marriage and childbearing have been negatively linked to their professional career. As Moore *et al*. (2005) argue, the public/private dichotomy makes it difficult for women to be accepted in both spheres. Psychological research on the work-family life conflict identifies a number of negative outcomes for women such as increased sickness absence and decreased psychological wellbeing (Evans and Steptoe, 2002), poorer family relationships (Crouter *et al*., 2001) and lower overall job and life satisfaction (Adams *et al*., 1996).

Similarly, Rehman and Waheed (2012) in a quantitative study examining work-family relationships in Pakistani universities, found that work-family conflict has a

negative impact on women, in particular married women's commitment at the university due to their traditional dual roles. They also found that for couples working at the university there is no difference between men and women's work-family conflict due to the fact that most couples live with their extended families and the intensity of the work-family conflict can be reduced for women, since other family members provide some support. This was also found in the study by Tlaiss and Kauser's (2011) in Lebanon.

Nazemi, Mortazavi, and Borjalilou (2012), in their study on women's barriers to leadership aspirations in Iranian universities, found that work-family conflict decreases women's aspirations which lead them to be disinclined to assume managerial positions. They conclude that family is central to working women, whom prioritise family over their career due to deeply held cultural beliefs about women's roles in private spaces.

Goulden, Mason, and Frasch (2011), in their study of US academics, found that marriage and childbirth have a major impact on women's progress, particularly in science. They conclude that as a result of these challenges, women find it hard to keep up with career pressures. Similarly, Fox (2010) found that caring responsibilities also result in women's lack of advancement in the workplace. Xie and Shauman (2003) report that women with young children not only have lower career prospects, but also less geographically mobile than their male counterparts. They conclude that "the careers of men benefit from marriage and parenthood, while the careers of women are impeded by family responsibilities" (Xie and Shauman, 2003:152).

Meritocracy and Masculinity

The academic workplace is supposedly based on a system of meritocracy that is the base of equal opportunity policies. The system is supposedly transparent because it provides an overview of academic activities which will lead to productivity, which as a result will open the gate to promotion. The belief that meritocracy restricts discrimination based on gender and race/ethnicity is a fundamental principle underlying academic practices (Bailyn, 2003; van den Brink and Benschop, 2011). However, many scholars suggest that a merit-based system of academia has exacerbated gender inequality (Knights and Richards, 2003; van den Brink and Benschop, 2011).

Bailyn (2003) asserts that "the academy is anchored in assumptions about competence and success that have led to practices and norms constructed around the life experience of men, and around a vision of masculinity as the normal, universal requirement of university life." (p. 143). Similarly, Knights and Richards (2003) argue that the meritocratic system of academia is certainly gendered, as it is the result of a masculine way of thinking. Meritocracy reflects and reproduces the domination of masculine values and practices such as long hours of working. Due to an unequal division of domestic labour and childcare, the system favours men over women. The authors further argue that the system serves to legitimise the domination of masculine values and discursive practices.

McCoy and Major (2007) provide evidence that meritocracy can lead to the psychological justification of inequality. They demonstrate that women tend to internalise masculine values and they are more likely to blame themselves for

rejection while men are more likely to view the rejection as discriminatory. They further argue that the belief in meritocracy minimises women's perceptions of sexism and they tend to stereotype themselves.

Van den Brink and Benschop (2014) in their study of network practices in academic recruitment and the selection process in the Netherlands introduced the concept of "mobilising masculinities". They report that masculine values influence who is invited to apply for positions and whose reputations are promoted through support and recommendation from senior colleagues, who are mostly men.

In summary, the literature above reviewed the salience of understanding the variety of ways in which men and masculine values and norms operate within the academic environment alongside the structural and cultural barriers to women's progress in the workplace.

Inequality in Recruitment

A number of studies have addressed gender inequality in recruitment (Jenkins, 1984; Collinson *et al*., 1990; Peterse *et al*., 2000; Acker, 2006). Collinson *et al.* (1990) provide extensive evidence based on their direct observation of hiring processes in various British organisations. They found that presuppositions about women and domestic work represent women as unstable and uncommitted employees often reflecting and reinforcing practices of recruitment. They conclude that gender inequality in recruitment is not only "reproduced" but also "rationalised" and "revisited" by people in position of power.

Jenkins (1984) found that subjective assessments carry a great weight in hiring. She argues that selection criteria and recruitment procedures directly and indirectly

disadvantage women and ethnic minorities. Despite explicit and objective criteria, the selection criteria are mostly about acceptability rather than suitability. Confirming Jenkins, Petersen *et al.* (2000) in their study of a mid-sized high-technology organisation found that although the hiring process was entirely based on meritocratic criteria, there were some differences at most stages in the hiring process. They concluded that social networks and contacts play a crucial role in hiring, and since women and minority ethnic groups may have less access to social networks and people in decision-making positions, they are disadvantaged.

Acker (2006) also emphasises the significance of social networks in hiring. She argues that gender and racial/ethnic inequalities are maintained through these networks. Further, she asserts that "the image of appropriate gendered and racialised bodies influences perceptions and hiring" (p. 449). Women's bodies are considered appropriate for some jobs, and male bodies for other jobs, and thus they are hired based on this image.

A few scholars have looked at the issue of gender in the process of academic recruitment and selection (Van den Brink, 2010; Abramo, *et al.*, 2015). Van den Brink (2010), in her study of appointments to full professorships in the Netherlands provides a systematic analysis of the subtle gender practices underpinning recruitment procedures. Her findings show that academic recruitment mainly takes place within closed procedures, which reduces transparency and accountability in the process, resulting in the marginalisation of women. She also reported on unclear criteria before the selection that results in applying criteria differently to men and women candidates due to gender stereotypes. Further, gate-keepers:

"deliberately lobby for or construct new positions, framing the profile to suit a particular candidate and resisting or undermining the policy measures of administrative staff" (p. 229).

Abramo *et al.* (2015), in their study of the Italian academic context found that merit is not always the main criterion for selection; instead favouritism strongly conditions the selection outcomes. Academic recruitment is an informal process in which a few people in positions of power select applicants through mechanisms of co-optation (Van den Brink *et al.*, 2010 Abramo *et al.*, 2015). Women's under-representation in decision-making positions leads to the conclusion that the probabilities for recruitment of women are reduced (Moss-Racusin *et al.*, 2012 in Abramo *et al.*, 2015). The study concludes that in places "the low intensity of competition among universities is further associated with high levels of corruption and favouritism" (p. 12). In a similar way, Vázquez-Cupeiro and Elston (2006) in their qualitative study of Spanish academics found that academic recruitment is based on pre-selection.

In sum, practices such as the use of informal selection criteria, preoccupation with domestic responsibilities, the hierarchal structure of the organisation and social networks all facilitate the reproduction of gender inequality in recruitment.

Gender and Networking

Networking and informal systems of social and professional support have a significant role in women's slower advancement (Kjeldal, *et al.*, 2006; Barnard et al., 2010). As Bagilhole and Goode (2001) state, "academia values reputation above all, ... [and is] heavily dependent upon integration into formal and informal

networks" (p. 170). Networking constitutes the basis for exchanging valuable insights and resources for opportunities for career advancement and increased career performance (Etzowitz *et al*., 2000).

Kjeldal *et al.,* (2006), using personal histories, assert that informal networks provide individuals with access to more privileged information than formal networks. However, women lack those networks to provide them with guidance and support in seeking promotion (Burton, 1997). Informal networking often takes place after work and revolves around traditionally masculine activities such as sport and drinking which have traditionally excluded women.

Allen (1991) argued that women's chances of promotion would be improved if they developed networks for information and support from their colleagues. Singh *et al*. (2002:77) argue that networking is based upon self-promotion that has been constructed by men. Further, Northcraft and Gutek (1993) assert that informal networks lead to the 'normalisation' of men's perceptions of work and those who are not part of these networks have difficulty in succeeding within the institution. This is confirmed by Benckert and Staberg's (2000) study. Showing that women scientists report being excluded from the men's network, this had a clear impact on their chances of promotion with decision-making bodies being dominated by men (Barnard *et al*., 2010).

Barnard *et al*. (2010) refer to informal networks as 'a boys' club' within Science, Engineering and Technology (SET) organisations. They argue that a boys' club automatically excludes women but also creates problems for men who do not operate within the dominant masculine norms of the institution. In the same vein,

participants in Davis's (2001) study refer to the 'old boys' network' as 'competitive, aggressive and less than honest, discouraging and discriminatory' (pp. 377-378).

In this study, I use the term 'old boys' network' because the word 'network' is more relevant than 'club' in the Afghan context. An 'old boys' network' is an informal network of men in an institution that wields power and influence and often excludes individuals who are not part of the network including women. The members of a network often convert power in a formal structure into friendship patterns within an informal system (Oakley, 2000:328).

Women in Professorial and Leadership Positions

Women in different positions experience different inequities(Collins *et al.*, 1998) and these increase as they move up the ladder (Monroe *et al.*, 2008). In general women are over-represented in the lower positions (Moss-Racusin *et al.*, 2012). The under-representation of women in professorship positions has been well documented around the world (Farber, 1977 in Spurr, 1990; Weiss and Lillard, 1982).

Gender stereotypes including women's lack of confidence to apply for promotion, women being less ambitious than men, and less productive (Weiss and Lillard, 1982), women spending more time on domestic work and caring and nurturing tasks within the workplace which reduce the amount of time they spend on research and publications (Nazemi *et al.*, 2012; Todd and Bird, 2000; Acker, 1990) are common and disadvantage women in academia. Nazemi *et al.*, (2012) identified the role of motherhood and cultural gender-role expectations as major barriers to

women's career development in academia in Iran, concluding that gender-role expectations contribute to women's decisions to limit their career development.

Lack of women in decision-making positions is reported to have an impact on women's promotion. Studies by Van den Brink *et al*. (2010) in Netherlands indicate that regardless of unequal systems of promotion, women are underprivileged in promotion decisions. Additionally, subtle discrimination, such as exclusion from certain committees, research grants and teams, lack of access to resources (Fox and Colatrella, 2006), being given long hours of teaching and lack of access to decision-making positions have been reported (Monroe *et al.*, 2010). All these exclusionary practices negatively affect women's promotion chances (Roos and Gatta, 2009).

This kind of bias is widely recorded in the literature with metaphors such as 'chilly climates' (Hall and Sandler, 1982), and 'glass ceiling' (Monroe *et al.*, 2010). The existence of a culturally 'chilly climate' for women in academia (Hall and Sandler, 1982) highlights the ways in which women's contributions are not recognised or valued, creating a context and culture where women are marginalised (Savigny, 2014). These practices are seen as a chilly climate, disempowering women in two ways: first women internalise this marginalisation and as a result do not put themselves forward for promotion; second, the chilly climate becomes the 'norm' whereby women are not expected to progress (Savigny, 2014).

Other micro-inequities include "denying the status and authority of women and minorities; devaluing women through sexist comments, anecdotes and 'jokes', excluding or impairing access to information; signalling women's lesser importance through words, behaviour, posture, tone and gestures which indicate that women

are not as powerful, intelligent or competent as men and therefore, do not need to be taken seriously; evaluating male and female behaviour and experience differentially, etc" (Prentice, 2000:198). These behaviours and practices constitute a chilly climate.

Monroe *et al.* (2010) found the existence of a glass ceiling that manifests itself as a 'sorting mechanism' not only in high positions but throughout the academic environment. They concluded that gender equality in academia remains a partially achieved goal. Women are still struggling "to crack a glass ceiling that remains strong and oppressive for all but a fortunate few" (p. 304).

Sexual Harassment

Overt discrimination such as unfair job expectations, sexual harassment and humiliation, is also reported as affecting female academics' career development. Previous studies of sexual harassment in academia identified gender differences in definitions, attitudes and experience with sexual harassment and perceptions of academics about who to blame (Mckinney, 1990). McKinney (1990) found that women have more experience of being sexually harassed than men and are less tolerant of it. Another study undertaken by Kenig and Ryan (1986) reports that male academics are more likely than female academics to believe that victims of sexual harassment are to be blamed because they might have provoked it, and thus they should expect such behaviour.

A number of studies highlight incidents of harassment of female academics by male colleagues (McKinney, 1990; Fitzgerald, 1996). In a study of 156 university faculty, McKinney (1990) found that significantly more women than men reported sexual

harassment by colleagues. Forms of harassment such as sexist comments, body language, physical advance and sexual bribery were reported to be common. The study also showed that in 90% of cases the offender was of the opposite sex (p. 431). In a similar way, Carr *et al*. (2003), in a self-administered mailed questionnaire found that more than half of female academics reported having been sexually harassed by a colleague or superior compared to male academics. The study also reported ethnically based sexual harassment. It has been argued that the intersection of racism and sexism is more likely to place women from ethnic minorities at a high risk of being sexually harassed (Paludi and DeFour, 1989).

Two explanations are given for such behaviour. One of the explanations emphasises the hierarchal authority relations and structures of the institution that make sexual harassment possible (Tangri *et al*., 1982). In relation to the academic context, it focuses on differences in power based on academic ranking and gender and such power differences are combined with competition for resources such as promotion, publication, and the desire to be the dominant individual in the group (Grauerholz, 1989; McKinney, 1990).

Sometimes sexual harassment takes the form of intimidation, which is usually practised by individuals in a position of power to maintain control over lower-status individuals. From this explanation it could be expected that harassment would most often be committed by men, who are mostly in positions of power towards women and those in the lower ranks.

The second explanation focuses on the position held by individuals in the society and the responsibility and privileges associated with each position (McKinney,

1990). In a sense, sexual harassment can be seen as a result of the larger patriarchal society where traditional gender roles and expectations must be maintained (Sundt, 1994 in Dey *et al.*, 1996). In this case, gender plays an important role. In male-dominated societies certain forms of behaviour are not considered sexual harassment. This is because some individuals may see such behaviour as an expectation of the male role.

Further, studies report sexual harassment of academics by students (Benson, 1984; Grauerholz, 1989; McKinney, 1990). This kind of harassment is often called 'counter-harassment' (Benson, 1984:518). Grauerholz (1989) in her study of a major U.S. university, using questionnaires, found that a high number of female academics claimed to have experienced at least one kind of sexual harassment including sexist comments and sexual assaults by their students. Respondents reported receiving obscene phone calls they believed to be from students. In the same vein, another study in the U.S. conducted by Fitzgerald *et al*., (1988) reported that students offered sexual favours as a reward and that they have attempted to stroke or touch the female faculty members. A small number of respondents in this study reported of being sexually harassed by students. Other forms of harassment such as uninvited sexual teasing, jokes or sexually aggressive looks or inappropriate body language, uninvited date requests, gifts and letters have also been identified in the U.S. state universities (Carroll and Ellis, 1989).

The reason for female academics being harassed by students, according to both McKinney (1990) and Grauerholz (1989), is that despite the fact that female academics have a greater position of power than male students, they lack power in

terms of their ascribed status as female. Moreover, since high numbers of women are in low academic ranks, students may not view their status as legitimate and important. Therefore, students may feel they have power over female academics and seek to assert it through sexual harassment. However, women are not the only victims of sexual harassment; men are reported to be harassed and humiliated as well. A number of studies (McLaughlin *et al*., 2012) reported humiliation of men in low ranks by men in position of power.

Although women and men are harassed in academia, there is reluctance to report incidents of sexual harassment (Brooks and Perot, 1991). A number of reasons for not reporting incidents have been identified. First, the person who has been harassed may simply not want to share the experience due to embarrassment, shame, and/or fear of the perpetrator (Brooks and Perot, 1991). It could also be due to the individual's rejection of victimhood (Bobo and Suh, 2000) because family or friends discourage him/her from thinking of themselves as being the victim of discrimination.

It could be that the individual may fail to conceptualise him/herself as being harassed. Brooks and Perot (1991) refer to this as 'an unacknowledged harassment victim' (P. 32). A study in the U.S. by Goodwin *et al*. (1998) found that the majority of respondents did not report sexual harassment. However, they identified unwanted behaviour that constitutes sexual harassment. This could be due to lack of awareness and ignorance of the commonly accepted definition of sexual harassment.

Another reason victims do not take any legal action is that it would be damaging to their career to confront the person, especially if he is in a position of power (Monroe *et al.*, 2008; Kaiser and Miller, 2003). The other reason for a victim's reluctance to take any action against the offender could be fear of not being believed since it is not always easy to prove sexual harassment. In contrast, the chances are that it is the victim who ends up being blamed of having 'invited it' (Akhtar, 2013). The victim, particularly in patriarchal societies, cannot inform her/his family primarily because it would be embarrassing to discuss such matters with family members, and also they might ask the victim to leave the job. Therefore, a victim of sexual harassment finds it safest not to report the incident.

Subtle Discrimination

Recently a number of scholars have focused their attention on subtle and covert discrimination within the academic environment. Monroe *et al.* (2008) identified two types of gender discrimination within the academic workplace: overt and subtle. Overt discrimination is more obvious discrimination ranging from misinterpretation of the behaviour of women to harassment. On the other hand, subtle discrimination occurs through the process of gender devaluation by which administrative positions lose their status, power and authority when held by women. The authors argue that academic women experience invisibility from male colleagues, devaluation of their talent and ability. For instance, when a man chairs the department, the position confers status and power; but when it is held by a woman, the power seems to be diminished (Dominelli and Gollins, 1997).

In a similar way, Bagilhole (1993) reports the existence of subtle discrimination through undervaluation and stereotyping of women in British universities that leads to the isolation of women socially and professionally. She states that subtle discrimination, sometimes well-intentioned, seems 'normal' and 'invisible', 'yet creates an environment that wastes women's resources, takes time and energy to ignore or deal with, undermines self-esteem, and damages professional morale' (p. 270).

Carr *et al*. (2003), in their study involving in-depth semi-structured telephone interviews with 18 female academics, found that subtle discrimination created a more hostile environment for women. Women find it difficult to recognise subtle discrimination, particularly "separating limitations of family and their abilities from *actual* discrimination" (emphasised in the original text: p. 1012).

Foschi (2000) first used the term 'double standard' to refer to subtle gender mechanisms influencing academic practices and evaluations. She describes situations where "group members use status difference as the basis for double standards that disadvantage those in the devalued category" (p. 25). In her study, she found that a double standard mechanism is activated with the male/female dichotomy and leads to the expectation that women should perform a higher standard than their male colleagues. Valian (1999) in her study shows that 'gender schemas', cultural embedded assumptions about men's and women's characteristics, operate to privilege men and undervalue women's performance. Further, Van den Brink (2010) asserts gender bias in academic practices and evaluations are contingent on contextual factors such as national context.

Job Satisfaction Paradox

Furthermore, institutional inequality is addressed with respect to job satisfaction (Tack and Patitu, 1992 in Okpara *et al.*, 2005), and a sense of personal and professional marginalisation (Aisenberg and Harrington, 1988). In relation to job satisfaction, a large number of studies have found that women are more likely to be satisfied than their male counterparts(Brown *et al.*, 2012; Clark, 1997; Sousa-Poza and Sousa-Poza, 2003). However, these are rather counter-intuitive findings, as women's relatively disadvantaged positions in academia, in particular, and in the labour market in general, have been widely documented (Hakim, 1996; Zou, 2015). There is extensive evidence of discriminatory practices faced by women in the workplace including recruitment (Jenkins, 1984; Petersen *et al.*, 2000; Collinson *et al.*, 1990), and promotion (Knights and Richards, 2003; Fisher, 2007).

A number of explanations have been given to explain this paradox. Clark, (1997), provides two: one refers to men's and women's different personal and job characteristics, such as age and ranking, while the other explanation rests upon men's and women's expectations. She argues that women's higher level satisfaction could be due to the fact that they have lower expectations from the same job in comparison with men (Sloane and Williams, 2000).

However, the greater job satisfaction of women does not reflect happiness in their job or that their jobs are better than men's, but rather perhaps, that their current job is better than in the past or might otherwise be, and thus they have lower expectations (Clark, 1997). Similarly, Walters (2005) found that part-time workers are not as satisfied as some surveys report. In-depth interviews revealed that few

women were fully satisfied and the majority said their jobs were 'OK for now' (p. 212). Clark's (1997) study concludes that women were 'making the best of a bad job' instead of being truly satisfied. A recent study by Kaiser (2007) reports that the gender-job satisfaction paradox is because women occupy a disadvantaged position in the labour market in general. She argues that the gender-job paradox emerges in societies where women have restricted access to the labour market.

The interpretation of survey findings in my study also confirms both Walters (2005) and Kaiser's conclusions that women are more likely than men to agree that their employing institution (2007) is fair along the lines of gender since Afghan women have limited access to public space in general, and thus they use the limited access they have in the academic environment to the maximum.

Conclusion

This review of the literature on gender, particularly with respect to women, offers a vivid picture of gender inequality in academia. Gender inequality becomes entrenched through the structures of society; in the sense that social structures shape individuals while individuals simultaneously shape the structure of society (Giddens, 1984). However, there is a gap in the literature. Much of the literature reviewed in this chapter is based on ideas and situations theorised mostly from a Western context (Omar and Davidson, 2001) and empirically tested predominantly within Western contexts. Although some research has been done on various aspects of women's role in higher education in a number of Islamic countries including Pakistan (Rehman and Waheed, 2012), and Iran (Nazemi *et al*., 2012), these studies have dealt with different aspects of employment that affect women, by using either qualitative or quantitative data collection. But no research has been conducted to examine barriers to women's employment using mixed methods and looking from cultural as well as historical perspectives at the socio-cultural, institutional and interpersonal levels. A few studies on higher education in Afghanistan (UNDP and UNESCO, 2010; Burridge et al., 2015), mainly focus on female students' access to higher education institutions and the socio-cultural and security barriers they face; however, there is no extant research examining academic staff's perceptions of gender relations within the workplace. Given this situation, there is a gap in the literature in general, and in particular in Afghanistan, in the conduct of systematic research and empirical investigation into academics' perceptions of gender inequality in higher education. This thesis contributes to filling this gap and aims to support the development of effective strategies and

policies to practice gender equality in academia in Afghanistan. In the next chapter,

the methods used in this study are discussed.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This study focuses on gender relations in higher education in Afghanistan, with a primary focus on women. Gender relations in Afghanistan are culturally, historically and politically constructed. In this study, I attempt to understand academics' perceptions of gender inequality in an Afghan academic environment. The ontological position I take is that of constructivism. Constructionist theorists argue that social reality and its meaning are continuously being accomplished by social actors. I take the view that gender relations in an Afghan workplace are socially and historically constructed and are particular to a given context and time frame. Little is known about Afghan women working in higher education and Afghan working women in general, and through this study I focus on their perceptions and experiences in an Afghan environment.

I use mixed methods by employing questionnaires, semi-structure interviews and observation to address the research questions. The data were collected from two universities, one public and one private, in Kabul, Afghanistan. However, due to the lack of any women participants in the private university, only the data from the public university was used for the analysis. Further, I used the public university statistics from the Ministry of Higher Education to contextualise the findings.

The aim of the study was to understand female and male academics', perceptions of gender inequality in their workplace; this was achieved through semi-structured interviews. Throughout this study, I present findings from both methods and my

observations but with a primary focus on interviews because they provided more detailed information on academics' perceptions of gender inequality. Interviews are considered as appropriate method to give voice to women's experiences (Bryman, 2012:697). As I show in this study, interviews have the potential to reveal women's perceptions and experiences in a context of uncertainty and insecurity in the country. I used interview data to understand women's perceptions of gender inequality and subsequently to develop emerging themes. Hence, in this chapter, first I discuss the research design and methods and provide information about the sample population. Next, the data collection procedures and data analysis are explained. The chapter concludes with the limitations of the study and the researcher's reflections.

Research Design and Methods

The literature in the previous chapter highlighted the relevant concepts for this study. Various studies used systematic methodology, a step-by-step procedure, to understand gender relations in academia (*Carr et al*., 2003). Although a range of research methods is used by researchers in social sciences, the appropriate methodology is central to achievement of the aims and objectives of the research (Robson, 1996) because differences in various research methods can result in miscommunication (Neuman, 2011). In this study,   mixed methods were employed. Scholars view mixed-methods differently; some as simply a method (Greene, Caracelli and Graham, 1989) while others more as a methodology (Johnson, Onwuegbuzie, and Turner, 2007; Creswell, 2011). I view mixed methods as a methodology, as Johnson et al., (2007) define it:

Mixed methods research is the type of research in which a researcher or team of researchers combines elements of qualitative and quantitative research approaches (e.g., use of qualitative and quantitative viewpoints, data collection, analysis, inference techniques) for the purposes of breadth and depth of understanding and corroboration. (p. 123).

However, combining qualitative and quantitative methods presents a potential problem from different epistemological positions. From an epistemological standpoint, quantitative methods and qualitative methods emphasise different ideas of what constitutes knowledge. I will discuss quantitative and qualitative methods in the next section in further detail. However, despite traditional conflict between these two epistemological stances, there are strong arguments that combining methods is complementary in terms of the quality of research findings (Johnson *et al.*, 2007). According to Creswell (1994), using mixed methods adds complexity to the research by working between inductive and deductive models of thinking.

Therefore, to understand what type of method would generate data to address the research questions, it is essential to review both qualitative and quantitative methods.

Qualitative and Quantitative Methods

There are number of debates with regard to the merits of qualitative and quantitative methods. Despite some similarities between these approaches, such as both approaches needing research questions to be answered, and both producing a large amount of data (Bryman, 2008), there are a number of differences. A

quantitative research method is considered highly objective, that it focuses on facts and produces numerical data, whereas a qualitative research method is considered highly subjective that involves data that are rich in material and produce textual information (Bryman, 2012: 280). Qualitative research is seen as interpretative and it places emphasis on the detailed accounts of a specific case. A qualitative data collection method involves close human involvement and it allows the researcher to develop new theories (Walliman, 2016). On the other hand, quantitative research relies more on positivist principles and purports to measure data objectively (Robson, 1996; Neuman, 2011). In quantitative studies, data are gathered and analysed statistically based on one or more hypotheses. In gender studies, a number of scholars have used survey questionnaires to show that women are crowded into lower rank positions in academia and that there is a lack of women in positions of power and decision-making (Hakim, 1996). However, these studies do not reveal the narratives behind women's marginalisation in the workplace because they primarily focus on numerical data rather than the respondents' perceptions and experiences. Although a quantitative method is preferred to a qualitative method by some scholars because it is based on scientific objectivity, I show in this study that it does not entirely capture the respondents' perceptions of gender inequality.

Bryman (2012) warns against too many distinctions between these two approaches. The quantitative approach can be analysed from an interpretative perspective just as a qualitative method can be used from positivist perspectives (Walliman, 2016). In this study, I also use the interpretative approach with quantitative data. A number of scholars have referred to the advantage of mixing qualitative and

quantitative methods (Walliman, 2016), the advantages and disadvantages of which

I refer to in the next section.

Mixing qualitative and quantitative methods

There are a number of advantages to mixing qualitative and quantitative methods. It has been suggested that mixing methods allows the researcher to exploit the strengths and weaknesses of each approach (Walliman, 2016). Hence, a quantitative approach using questionnaires for example can be used to collect numerical data while qualitative-based interviews can collect rich, in-depth narrative data.

The mixing of methods and data takes place at different stages in the research process. The decision regarding the research stage at which different data are mixed differs. For instance it can be mixed during interpretation, data collection or data analysis (Creshwell, 2009). In this study, I mixed the data at the level of design. Both methods are mixed sequentially within a case study. In this study, the case becomes a place-holder for qualitative and quantitative data (Sweetman, Badiee, and Creswell, 2010). Data were collected in two distinct but interactive phases. In the first phase, a questionnaire was used to establish a calculated level of academics' perceptions of gender inequality in the workplace. In the second phase, the qualitative method, semi-structured interviews were used to seek elaboration and clarification of the findings from the questionnaires.

Some scholars (Greene *et al*., 1989) argue that the use of mixed methods strengthens the validity of a study. Other researchers claim that it is more complementary rather than validatory (Woolley, 2009). In this study, the results are seen as complementary. Although I aimed to use a qualitative method to explain

findings from the quantitative method, the quantitative findings are not entirely consistent with the qualitative findings.

I also used mixed-methods because this enabled me to collect findings more useful to policy-makers, which is one of the main intentions of this study. Policy-makers need multiple forms of evidence to document and/or inform a practical problem. Questionnaire findings provide a base for measurable phenomena while interview findings provide more holistic and deeper, richer data for analysis (Ritchie and Spencer, 2002).

Case Study/ Interpretative Case Study

Case study is a commonly used design in social science research. Case studies aim to contribute to new theories rather than to represent a population (Yin, 2009). The uniqueness of a case study, knowing one single case in depth, has been discussed by a number of authors (Ragin, 1989; Stake, 1995; Yin, 2009). I chose a case study design focusing on the study of a single case of academia, with two separate universities, one public and one private, as a means of obtaining valuable knowledge about gender relations within the workplace, the university structure and gender policy in higher education as a whole (see figure 2). According to Yin (2009), two or more units in a single case-study constitute an embedded case-study design. Yin (2009) further suggests, "the sub-units can often add significant opportunities for extensive analysis, enhancing the insights into the single case" (p.52-53). The pitfall of such a design is that it focuses on sub-units and fails to capture the bigger unit of analysis. However, in this study, I referred to individuals'

perceptions and experiences of women as well as the structure of the institution and society in general to ensure the thorough analysis of the case-study.

The nature of this research is complex and historically influenced. It is complex due to longstanding individual, institutional and socio-cultural discrimination against women combined with the effects of several decades of war, instability, insecurity and poverty. A mixed-method case study entails the detailed and intensive analysis of cases and facilitates an understanding of the complexity and particular nature of the cases (Stake, 1995) using multiple sources of data as well as multiple types of data. Thus, a mixed-method case study allowed me to investigate the complexity and diversity of the phenomena providing a powerful basis for interpreting cases historically (Ragin, 1989: viii, ix).

Further, case study design allowed me to look at the case as a whole as well as looking at the individual experiences of academics. The holistic character of case study has been supported by a number of scholars (Stoecker, 1991). In addition, case study researchers assume that the individual reader and researcher construct unique personal understandings of the issues which help to 'maintain openness to meaning-making and to sustain the disequilibrium that presses toward ever deeper thinking and understanding' (Marby, 2008:221).

Figure 2- The case study structure

University 2 → Quantitative method → Questionnaire → Qualitative method → Interview

Shah University → Quantitative method → Questionnaire → Qualitative method → Interview

Descriptive analysis

Thematic analysis
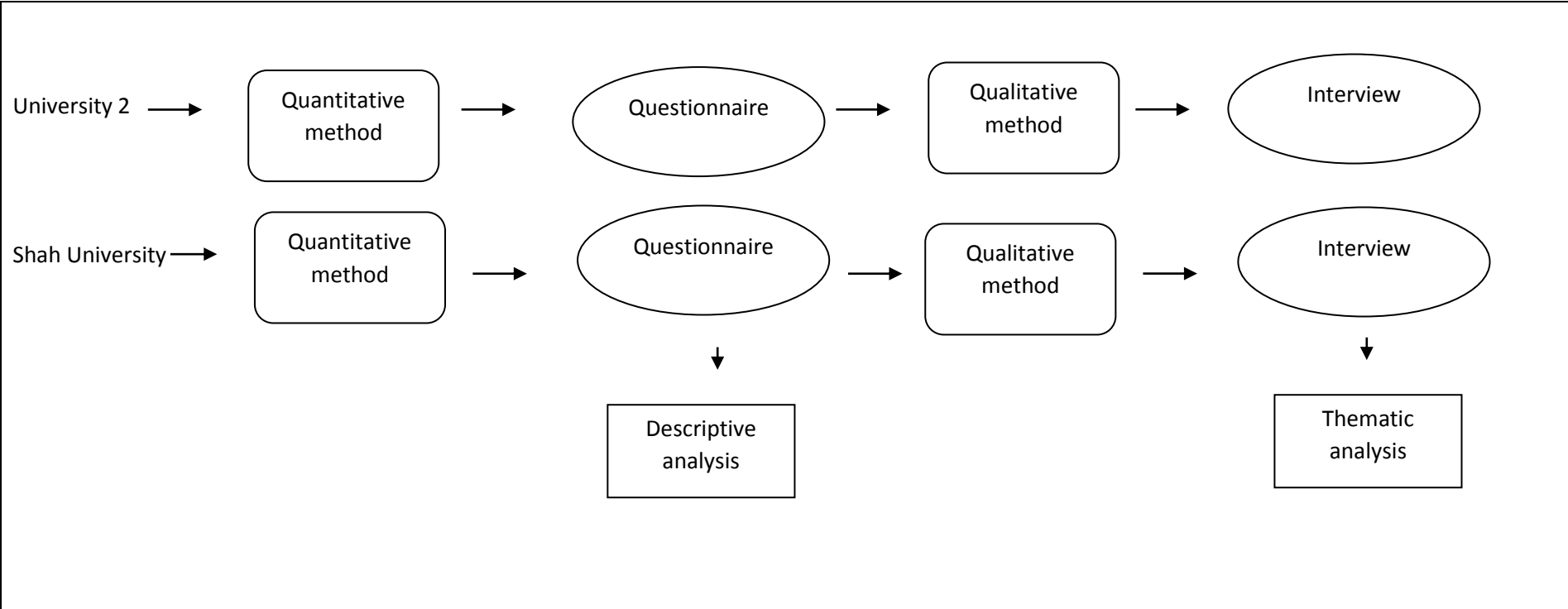
Generalisability of the study

The study is primarily concerned with the findings from the data gathered within a public university in Kabul, and from this, it cannot be generalised to all female academics in the country. The situation of women is different in various cities of Afghanistan. In general, academics, particularly women, in big cities including Kabul have more access to facilities such as the internet, libraries, or research funding. Some of the those issues would be more of an issue in one city but less so in another. Although generalisability is considered a quality standard in quantitative research, generalisability of qualitative data can be problematic (Punch, 2005). However, it is argued that qualitative research can be generalised 'theoretically' (Mitchell, 1983) or 'analytically' (Yin, 2009). Analytical generalisation can be used as a template to compare the empirical results of the case study with some broader theory (Yin, 2009). In this study, quantitative data cannot be generalised because of the small population, but qualitative data can be generalised analytically. As my findings show, unlike Walby's (1990) argument that private patriarchy has moved to public patriarchy in the West, in Afghanistan, private patriarchy has long dominated public spaces and the family is the only source of change. This may resonate in other contexts such as Pakistan. Malala Yousafzai, who was shot in the head by Taliban in Pakistan in 2012, but survived and was awarded the Nobel Peace Price in 2014, offers a good example of family support and change in women's lives. Yousafzai attended the school her father founded and she has always been supported by her family, especially her father. Now Malala is a women and children's education activist.

The study population and the research site

The target population in this study is academics from two distinct universities in Afghanistan. I chose Kabul, the capital, as my research site for several reasons. First, the security in Kabul is better than in other provinces. Despite frequent suicide attacks in the city, Kabul is considered relatively safe. However, in other locations, in addition to suicide attacks, there are high rates of insurgency, terror and ambush by the Taliban and ISIS. One of their main targets is women, particularly those who work for international organisations, and are women's advocates, which applies to me as a female researcher, looking at gender issues. However, during my three months of fieldwork, the country, including Kabul, was going through an extremely critical phase of presidential elections. I went to Kabul after the first election and I was there when the second election took place. It took more than five months before the results were announced and during this period the country faced various political, economic and security challenges. Even in Kabul the number of suicide attacks increased. One of the attacks was at the university where I was collecting data. Due to the attack, the university was closed for almost a month.

Another reason I chose Kabul is transportation. The transportation in other locations is not good. Even in some parts of Kabul, there are not enough transportation services. For cultural reasons, and mostly safety, women do not take taxis alone or with other male strangers. However, men usually enjoy sharing inexpensive taxis while women cannot. Women either have to wait until there are enough women to hire a taxi or take the risk of taking a taxi alone, paying twice as much as men, or to sit in the front seat. Whenever I experienced this situation, I felt

the pain women go through on a daily basis. However, during my stay, sometimes my brother drove me, but most of the time I had to take a taxi. The taxi driver was one of our neighbours.

Another reason I chose Kabul is that there are several universities and I had spent a portion of my life there. I found it practical to conduct my research there because of time constraints. If I had had to go to other provinces, for which I had only a few options, I should have had to be accompanied by a mahram, a male family member during my trip. Furthermore, due to security reasons I could not risk my life or those of other family members.

I chose Shah University because it is one of the leading tertiary institutions in Afghanistan. Shah University is a co-educational institution with four-year undergraduate and postgraduate programmes. It incorporates several faculties and departments. With the assistance of various international organisations including USAID, the establishment of other Masters' programmes is planned. And there is a Research Centre at the university that provides capacity-building programmes such as research methodology in social sciences for academics.

The number of academic degrees of academics, and their job positions differs according to Faculty. The academic degrees of men and women and their academic position differ as can be seen in Tables 2 and 3. From Table 2, it can be seen that few women have higher degrees, in particular PhDs (only 4.9 % females), in comparison with male academics. In a similar way, there is only one, female full professor (0.5 %) at the whole university compared to 8.1% male full professors. In

general women are over-represented in lower positions with lower academic degrees, compared with their male counterparts.

Table 2-Academics' academic degree by gender

	Women (Col*%)	Men (Col%)
PhD	4.9	14.2
MA/Ed/Sc	46.2	51.8
BA	49	34

Source: Ministry of Higher Education, Kabul (2015)

*Col = Column

Table 3- Academics' academic rank by gender

	Women (Col%)	Men (Col%)
Pohand (Full professor)	0.5	8.1
Pohanwal (Associate professor)	1.1	6.5
Pohandoi (Assistant professor)	10.5	9.5
Pohanmal (Senior teaching assistant)	14.4	24.3
Pohanyar (Junior teaching assistant)	40	26.2
Pohyalai (Teaching assistant)	22.7	17.7
Probation	10.5	7.4

Source: Ministry of Higher Education (2015)

The study sample and the sampling process

The first stage of the sampling process was the selection of two universities. Next, I chose an entire population sample to administer the questionnaire because the size of the population was relatively small. I attempted to take a 'census' in two selected universities. However, I got a poor response rate that could suggest a biased sample, which has implications even for the limited validity and generalisability of my results.

In the third phase, purposive sampling was employed to interview academics, both men and women, to obtain detailed information on their perceptions of the complexity of gender inequality in their workplace(s). Purposive sampling is a strategy where the researcher selects the sample based on certain criteria relevant to the research topic and theoretical framework. It allows the researcher to generate new theories by gaining new insights about the phenomenon (Miles and Huberman, 1994). In this study, I used purposive sampling based on certain criteria to find participants, both women and men who were:

- In different academic ranks, both professorship positions and non-professorship positions
- From different ethnic groups including Pashtun, Tajik and Hazara.

Sample Size

Achieving an appropriate sample size is important due to the reason that a small sample size reduces the likelihood of statistical significance of quantitative findings

while in a qualitative method an inadequate sample size limits the theoretical saturation (Collins, 2010). Sandelowski (1995) asserts that the sample size should be large enough to increase the validity of the findings. However, a large sample size in a case-study oriented approach might jeopardise the validity of results (Sandelowski, 1995) as it needs to be in-depth. In mixed method case-study design, inadequate sample size "limits the degree to which appropriate meta-inferences can be drawn from conclusion based on both phases of the study" (Collins, 2010:361).

As I used a sequential design where the questionnaire was followed by semi-structured interviews, the sample size in both phases was carefully chosen. In the first phase, all academics in both universities, i.e. about 950 were invited to participate. The official letter I received from Shah University gave permission for me to invite all academics to participate. I tried to give the questionnaire to any academics I met in each faculty.

306 (32%) respondents of whom 77 (31.4%) were women and 172 (68.6%) were men from Shah University, and a further 57 (100%) were men from University 2. University 2 employs only a very small number of women as academics, and none of those women completed my questionnaire (see Table 4 for demographic information of academics at University 2).

Table 4- Academic rank, degree and ethnicity of survey respondents from University 2 by gender

		WOMEN (%)	MEN (%)
ACADEMIC RANK	Professor	0	0
	Non-professor	0	78.2
	Probation	0	21.8
ACADEMIC DEGREE	PhD	0	1.8
	Masters	0	56.1
	Bachelor	0	40.4
ETHNICITY	Pashtun[1]	0	68.4
	Tajik	0	17.5
	Hazara	0	0
	Other[2]	0	14

Accordingly, I focus in this chapter on contrasting the findings responses of men and women from Shah University. As Table 5 shows, most survey respondents, whether men or women, occupy the middle-ranking position of non-professor, and only a minority are professors or probationary staff. However, it is clear that the percentage of women in professorship roles (10.5%) is only half that of men who are professors (22.6%). Conversely, women are substantially more likely than men to occupy junior probationary positions (13.2% and 8.3% respectively). The differences between men and women in terms of academic rank are borderline statistically significant (p = .058), suggesting that the observed gender differences are real and not simply due to sampling error, and broadly reflect the Ministry of Higher Education statistics (2015) mentioned earlier.

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[1] This includes Pashtuns from Afghanistan and Pakistan.
[2] This includes academics from other countries such as Pakistan and India.

Table 5- Academic rank of survey respondents from Shah University by gender (N=249)

	Women % (N)	Men % (N)	All % (N)
Professor	10.5 (8)	22.6 (38)	19.1 (46)
Non-professor	76.3 (58)	69 (114)	71.4 (172)
Probation	13.2 (10)	8.3 (13)	9.5 (23)
Missing data	1.2 (1)	1.9 (7)	3.2 (8)
Total	100 (77)	100 (172)	100 (249)

Pearson chi-square value: 5.685   P.value: .058

As Table 6 shows, in Shah University male academics are more likely to have postgraduate degrees than female academics. Very few female academics (5.4%) have PhDs compared with male academics (13.3%) and whereas the majority of male academics have Masters' degrees (61.4%) the percentage of female academics who have Masters' degrees is lower (45.9%). These gender differences in the highest degree held are statistically significant (p = .003) which again matches the Ministry of Higher Education statistics (2015) of Shah University.

Table 6- Academic degree of survey respondents from Shah University by gender (N=249)

	Women % (N)	Men % (N)	All % (N)
PhD	5.4 (4)	13.3 (22)	10.9 (26)
Masters	45.9 (34)	61.4 (102)	56.9 (136)
Bachelor	45.9 (34)	23.5 (38)	30.1 (72)
Diploma	2.7 (2)	1.8 (3)	2.1 (5)
Missing data	1.2 (3)	2.8 (7)	4 (10)
Total	100 (77)	100 (172)	100 (249)

Pearson chi-square value: 13.759   P.value: .003

In the second phase, from the above population, sixteen faculty members were chosen from Shah University and six from the private university based on gender

and academic rankings. Purposive sampling was used to select interview participants at both universities (see page 121). Although I was aiming to interview similar numbers of men and women in different academic ranks, due to lack of many women in various academic ranks I could not do so. The following tables show the number of academics interviewed based on their gender, academic ranking and ethnicity. It is worth noticing that some academics did not mention their ethnicity.

Table 7 - Academic rank of interview participants from Shah University by gender

	Women (N)	Men (N)
Professor	1	2
Non-professor	6	7
Total	7	9

Table 8 – Ethnicity of interview participants from Shah University by gender

	Women (N)	Men (N)
Pashtun	1	2
Tajik	0	2
Hazara	1	1
Not mentioned	5	4
Total	7	9

Data Collection

Sequential design was used to collect the data in two phases. In the first phase, a survey questionnaire was used to collect statistical data on academics' perceptions of gender inequality. The questionnaire was administered by email and in person. In

the initial step, in December 2013, I sent out the questionnaire to the private university participants (N=99) through email, to which I received twelve responses. It is worth noting that some of the email addresses I was given by one of the university administrative staff were inaccurate. I also received emails from some academics saying that they no longer work there anymore, suggesting the list was not up-to-date. A month later, in January 2014, I sent the first reminder to them. I presumed I would not get many replies online, so, I needed to see participants in person.

Regrettably, I could not email the questionnaire to Shah University participants because I could not obtain their email addresses. Additionally, some of them do not have access to the internet and those who have do not check their emails regularly. The data collection procedure took much longer at Shah University, compared with the private university, due to the structure of the university and the number of participants.

I started administering the questionnaire in person in April 2014. First, I met the Dean of the Faculty and gave him some preliminary information about the aims and objectives of the study. I also presented the information sheet (see Appendix 2) I had prepared. The information sheet was in English, which most of the deans could understand. When I got permission from the Dean of the Faculty, I went to each department and met the head to describe the aims and objectives of the research and to seek their permission. After getting permission from the Dean and Head of each Department, I went to each individual academic's office and asked him/her to complete my questionnaire. I used different strategies. Once I asked the Head of

the Department if I could attend the staff meeting and ask academics to fill in the questionnaire. With this agreement, the Head of the Department introduced me to all the academics and asked them to cooperate with me. At the beginning, it seemed very promising and everyone agreed to do so, but the questionnaire response was very low in that department. Although I gave each of them a questionnaire personally and told them that I would collect it myself, most of them left it blank in the meeting room when I checked the room after the meeting. I tried to go to their offices in person and asked them to complete it, but it was not very successful either. They took the questionnaire, but did not fill it in. For instance, one of the older male academics took the questionnaire and told me a Dari proverb: 'ta gul nai kuna' meaning that he was not going to fill it in. In general, I found young academics more co-operative than older academics.

I tried the same strategy of going to staff meetings and asking academics to fill out the questionnaire, but some departments did not let me. In one of the departments, the Head of the Department did not let me to meet the other academics. The Head of the Department took one of the questionnaires and said it would be enough for the whole department. Another Head of Department told me that the questionnaire was too long; he was busy and could not fill it in. I also sought the administrative staff's help with regard to current number of academics in each department and I could find them. Overall, I found them helpful particularly given the bureaucracy within the University and Ministry of Higher Education.

In a similar way, in other faculties, I first sought the permission of the Dean then the Head of the Department and went to each individual academic's office to

administer the questionnaire. Sometimes I had to go to the same office because several times they were not in the office at the time they had given me. The overall procedure of administering questionnaires in Shah University was very tiring and time-consuming.

In the second phase, I selected the same individuals, I administered questionnaire, for the interview to follow up on the quantitative findings. Although I was aiming to choose equal numbers of men and women to be interviewed, I could not manage to find many female academics in each academic rank for this purpose. Some of the female academics, perhaps due to sensitivity of the topic, declined my request for an interview. However, I managed to identity a few female academics and men in various ranks willing to be interviewed. The interview location was set at the convenience of the participants, mostly in their offices, in some cases in the library over lunchtime.

Overall, I interviewed 16 academics comprising seven female academics and nine male academics at Shah University. I used various means to approach them, especially those who were very busy. First, I asked them when I was given them the questionnaire if they wanted to be interviewed. Each of the participants selected the time, date and location of the interview that suited them. Most of the interviews took place in the academics' office. I also interviewed one of the academics while she was filling in the questionnaire. I asked her to elaborate on the questions in each part. The interview was recorded. Due to time constraints, towards the end of my fieldwork, I interviewed any academics, I previously administered questionnaire, who were available. Given the high number of men

within the university, they agreed to be interviewed. Perhaps this could be one of the reasons for the higher number of male interviewees than female interviewees.

Questionnaire

Before constructing the questionnaire, I reviewed many research papers to find examples of standardised questionnaires that could serve as a model for this study. However, I could not find one entirely suitable for the objectives of the study due to its particular nature and its cultural context. Nonetheless, a number of scholars had investigated gender inequality in various contexts using questionnaires (Heijstra, 2013). I adapted some of the questions from the questionnaire used by Heijstra (2013) to investigate gendered life among Icelandic academics, and from the survey in the 'Workplace Employment Relations Study 2011' available on 'gov.uk[3]'. Using those questionnaires, I developed one for my own purposes. The questionnaire was in two languages: Dari (see Appendix 4b) and English (Appendix 4a), because not everyone in Afghanistan can speak English. The Dari version of the questionnaire had been translated by one of my colleagues in Afghanistan, but I edited it.

A questionnaire has several advantages. It allows the researcher to collect large amounts of information from a large number of people in a relatively short period of time and at low cost (Bryman, 2012). The results of a questionnaire can be easily analysed by the researcher or with software such as SPSS. It can also be free from interviewer's bias (Kothari, 2004). However, it has a number of drawbacks as well. One of the disadvantages of a questionnaire is the low rate of return (Kothari, 2004). It is also sometimes inadequate for understanding information such as behaviour

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[3] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-2011-workplace-employment-relations-study-wers

and feelings (Creswell *et al.*, 2006). Additionally, there is no way of determining how truthful a respondent is and how much thought he/she put into answering it. Respondents may also read and interpret questions differently. Respondents' assumptions of what is important and what is not may result in their leaving some questions unanswered. This was evident in this study. Some of the questions, especially in relations to salary, remained unanswered and because of that I had to exclude the salary section in final analysis.

Questions are the basic components of the questionnaire. Bryman (2001) refers to a number of guidelines on constructing a standardised questionnaire. In the questionnaire, questions should be simple and clear and only relevant questions should be included. In addition, leading questions that could lead to biased responses and double-barrelled questions should be avoided. Bearing these guidelines in mind, I designed the questionnaire using closed questions, i.e. when the researcher provides various alternative answers to respondents who need to choose the answer/s which best represent/s his/her perception. I used close questions because they allow participants to complete the questionnaire quickly and return them. Moreover, due to the sensitivity of the topic, closed questions were the best option for the questionnaire. However as I explain later, some of questions were abstract and could not capture academics' beliefs and perceptions.

The majority of the questions utilised a six-point Likert scale comprising strongly agree, agree, partly agree, slightly disagree, disagree and strongly disagree. The reason I did not include 'I don't know' or 'neither agree nor disagree' was to oblige participants to make up their minds whether they agreed or disagreed with the

questions. In addition, from personal experience, most of the participants would have chosen ''I don't know' category, if I had supplied it.

The questionnaire consisted of six parts. The sections follow a logical order (Bryman, 2012). The first part focused on employment information, consisting of ten multiple-choice and yes/no questions. In this part, academics' academic rankings and total years of teaching at the particular university were asked for. Additionally, participants were asked to evaluate the status of academics currently, during the Islamic State (Mujahidin and Taliban) and under Soviet Union dominion using multiple choices: very good, good, poor and very poor. They were also asked the number of hours they work at the university, and whether they have a second job. Participants were also asked about the university facilities.

The second part asked about hiring procedures. This part was composed of five Likert scale questions. The aim here was to examine academics' perceptions of fairness in hiring practices and procedures. It also aimed to seek academics', both men's and women's perceptions of merit-based hiring.

Next, the workload and salary part comprised eleven Likert scale questions. This section aimed at examining perceptions of academics regarding their workload and whether there was a lack of work balance among academics that stressed them. Further, it sought to examine their perceptions of salary procedures and payment and allowance.

The fourth section consisted of twenty-two questions, comprising two multiple choice and twenty Likert scale questions. The aim of this section was to examine academics' perceptions of gender inequality in promotion procedures and policies

and whether the university provided them with good opportunities for promotion and publication.

The next part focused on university policy, in particular gender policy/strategy. This part had two sub-sections. The first sub-section was made up of thirteen questions. In this section, academics were explicitly asked whether they perceived gender and/or ethnic inequality within their workplace. The second sub-section consisted of seven questions examining academics' perceptions of the reasons for there being fewer women than men in Afghan universities. Finally, the last part asked for personal information including, gender, age, marital status, whether they have children under 16, ethnicity, field of study and what degree they hold.

A few (N=4) of the completed questionnaires were excluded from the analysis as they did not make their gender known. In general women were underrepresented. The sample is not considered to be representative of all public universities in Afghanistan, since each university has its own structure and dynamics.

Pilot Study

The questionnaire was piloted with four people including three Afghans and one Indian. I presented the questionnaire to two teachers who taught at one of the Afghan universities and one administrator in a private university. In addition, I asked an Indian who had experience in teaching to go through the questionnaire. The reason I chose an Indian is that some of the academics in University 2 were of Indian origin. I sent the questionnaire together with ten pilot study questions to the aforementioned people. The questions included logic questions, for instance clarity of directions and questions, appropriateness of response choices and the range of

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response choices and others. No remarkable changes were suggested, the clarity and length of the questionnaire were satisfactory. Although I was expecting more suggestions, I did not get many. One of the pilot study participants suggested some technical/format changes such as adding a drop down menu to select the university name.

This could be due to the reason that a questionnaire, in particular online, is a recent phenomenon in Afghanistan and perhaps the people to whom I had sent the questionnaire were not very experienced in designing and evaluating a questionnaire. Upon reflection, in the future I would send it to experienced researchers or someone who has experience of designing and evaluating questionnaires. It is worth noting that I got support from my supervisors who have had such experiences.

Interview

Social science researchers typically classify the interview approach as structured, semi-structured and unstructured (Bryman, 2012). This study employed a semi-structured interview construction with purposefully selected participants. Semi-structured interviews are the most common qualitative data collection method in mixed methods studies (Sweetman *et al.*, 2010). They allowed me to understand the participants' perceptions of their experiences and attitudes.

The interviews were a mixture of dialogue and questions I had designed based on the participants' questionnaires and general themes affecting women. The focus of the interview was to understand academics' perceptions and experiences of gender inequality in recruitment and promotion and salary processes and procedures. The

interviews mostly sought participants' perceptions on a specific subject matter (Bowden, 2005).

Prior to starting the interviews, the interviewees were assured that they would remain completely anonymous and no named records of the interview would be kept. They were reminded that they were free to choose to take part or not, or they could withdraw or refuse to participate at any stage without giving any reasons.

The interview guide (see Appendix 5) consisted of several parts, similar to the questionnaire. The first part asked about their perceptions of the position of academics currently, during the Islamic State (Mujahidin and Taliban) and under Soviet Union dominion. The second part focused on hiring procedures. The third part asked about their families and careers, and the balance between being an academic and their family and career. The fourth part consisted of questions with regard to salary and promotion. The last section focused on the administrative system within the university and whether respondents thought discrimination based on gender and ethnicity existed. I also asked about the recent mainstreaming of gender in higher education and the gender unit within the university (see Chapter 2). All participants were asked identical questions in the same sequence most of the time, but they were probed inductively on key responses.

A semi-structured interview has a number of advantages. It allows the researcher to adopt a flexible approach to interviewing the participant. As Gratton and Jones (2004:141) state, "the researcher adopts a flexible approach to data collection, and can alter the sequences of questions or probe for more information with subsidiary questions". In this study I used face-to-face interviews, which permitted me to

observe participants' verbal and non-verbal behaviour and reactions. Through observation in particular, body language is key to an interview. Although I did not observe all the participants' body language, I made some notes of the ones that I did in my research journal. For instance, I observed a culture of tea-drinking among men more than women.

The semi-structured interview approach helped me in several ways. It allowed me to seek participants' feelings and perceptions. It also allowed me to gain greater, in-depth insight from participants regarding the complexity of gender inequality in the workplace. It helped me to explore facets of the study that had not initially been foreseen, such as sexual harassment and humiliation. In addition, face-to-face interviews allowed me to develop rapport, which is one of the most significant factors in the interview. It facilitates building trust and potential honesty (Bryman, 2012: 668). Since I had worked for a while at the university, some academics knew me, which helped me to develop rapport.

In face-to-face interviews, 'self-consciousness' is essential (Goffman, 1959a). Thus, it is essential for the researcher to present himself/herself as professional both in speech and appearance. According to Hammersley and Atkinson (1995), a researcher's dress code can give a message to the interviewee. Accordingly, in my interviews I tried to look as professional both in appearance and speech as I could.

However, the semi-structured interview approach has a number of drawbacks. One of the potential weaknesses of this approach is the amount of the information that emerges from the interviews (Anderson, 2010). Another potential drawback is that it lacks consistency (Patton, 1980). In addition, face-to-face interviews require more

time and financial resources (Brustad *et al.*, 2003) which may lead the researcher to draw on a small sample size. Although there is no specific number for determining purposive sample size (Miles and Huberman, 1994; Bernard, 2006), Guest *et al.*, 2006) argue that twelve interviews should suffice, if the aim of the study is to understand common perceptions and experiences among a group of relatively homogenous individuals both women and men. The following table provide list of interviews with demographic information.

Table 9- List of interviewees with demographic information (N = 16)

Interview	Ref.	Gender	Academic Rank	Ethnicity
Interview 1	Khalida	Female	Professor (Pohand)	N/K
Interview 2	Ayesha	Female	Non-professor (Pohyalai)	Hazara
Interview 3	Khatera	Female	Non-professor (Pohanmal)	Afghan
Interview 4	Mariam	Female	Non-professor (Pohanyar)	Pashtun
Interview 5	Sarah	Female	Non-professor (Pohanmal)	N/K
Interview 6	Ameena	Female	Non-professor (Pohyalai)	N/K
Interview 7	Arzou	Female	Non-professor	N/K
Interview 8	Naser	Male	Professor (Pohandoy)	Tajik
Interview 9	Naseem	Male	Professor (Pohand)	N/K
Interview 10	Elyas	Male	Non-professor (Pohanyar)	Tajik
Interview 11	Ali	Male	Non-professor (Pohanyar)	Afghan
Interview 12	Masood	Male	Non-professor (Pohanyar)	Pashtun
Interview 13	Mujtaba	Male	Non-professor (Pohyalai)	N/K
Interview 14	Shoaib	Male	Non-professor (Pohanyar)	Pashtun
Interview 15	Aarif	Male	Non-professor	N/K
Interview 16	Omar	Male	Non-professor	N/K

(Names have been fictionalised to maintain anonymity)

Recording and Transcription

Most of the interviews were electronically recorded. Only two of the informants' interviews were not recorded, as one man and one woman, both in non-professorial positions, were not willing to be recorded, so I took notes instead. I also made notes and observed informants during the interviews. Observations are an important part of data collection because they focus on naturally occurring activities. Observations were recorded in my research journal.

Since most of the interviewees spoke Dari, I translated all the interviews into English. First I listened to all the interviews to familiarise myself with data, then I translated and transcribed them into English at the same time, i.e. while listening to the interviews. The process was tedious and time-consuming, but it helped me to become familiar with the data and themes emerging from them. Further, transcribing the data myself allowed me to develop the analysis and recall the details of the interview.

Data Analysis

Quantitative analytical procedure

In the first phase, for the analysis of the quantitative data I used SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences). To explore the data, I started with descriptive statistics such as percentages. Bivariate cross-tabulation was used to explore possible differences between male and female academics with respect to their perceptions of gender inequality in their workplace. Cross-tabulation was selected as the appropriate form of analysis because it enabled me to examine bivariate

relationships within the data. Bivariate cross-tabulation was used to examine the relationship between two variables such as gender and academic ranking.

Multivariate cross-tabulation was used to explore how respondents' perceptions of discrimination are shaped by the interaction of gender with their other personal and professional characteristics. In other words, it was used to understand the relationship between independent variables and dependent variables, the latter being measured at category level consisting of six Likert-scale categories that were modified into binary classification: agree vs. disagree. 'Agree' was given a value of 1 indicating strongly agree, agree and partly agree, while strongly disagree, disagree and slightly disagree corresponded to the value 0, indicating disagreement. I modified the six categories into a binary division because most academics' responses fell into partly agree or/and slightly disagree. Looking at the pattern, it was the deciding point at which to collapse the categories.

Inequality in different aspects of employment such as hiring, promotion and payment was measured by a number of explanatory variables including age, academic ranking and ethnicity. It is worth noting that the section on salary was excluded from analysis because there were not enough data. Some of the questions in the salary section were left unanswered perhaps because academics, both women and men perceive the salary is based on academics rank and thus the same for women and men. Age was measured by the question "Which category below includes your age?" (1) 21-29; (2) 30-39; (3) 40-49; (4) 50-59; (5) 60 +. Since not many academics were in the age groups of 50-59 and over 60, I combined the two age groups for data analysis purposes.

The second explanatory variable for measuring academics' perceptions of discrimination in employment is academic ranking. The variable was measured by the question "What is the highest job position you have attained at the university?" (1) full professor (2) associate professor (3) assistant professor (4) lecturer (5) assistant lecturer (6) instructor/teaching assistant (7) proposed teaching assistant (8) part-time teacher. I used several categories because the Afghanistan Higher Education System has its particular ranking system consisting of seven ranks, which in order to better understand them, were divided into three distinct categories; professor, non-professor, and probationary. The professor category includes full professor, associate professor and assistant professor, while the non-professor category includes lecturer, assistant lecturer and instructor/teaching assistant. The probationary category includes proposed teaching assistants and part-time teachers. The following shows categorisation in Shah University:

- Professor = Pohand, Pohanwal, Pohandoi

- Non-professor = Pohanmal, Pohanyar and Pohyalai

- Probation = Namzad e pohyalai

The reason I have categorised them in this way is that according to higher education rules and regulations, only Pohand, Pohanwal and Pohandoi can conduct teaching, mentor graduate students, conduct administrative and managerial functions and assess students in their field of expertise. Pohanmal, Pohanyar and Pohyalai are supposed to work under their supervision. Further, Namzad e Pohyalai is the preliminary step to the aforementioned academic ranks in public universities. At this stage, academics are placed on probation for a year. In a sense, they need to

be under the supervision of a Pohand, or Pohanwal or Pohandoi. They are hired to learn teaching and academic standards, and thus they are supposed to be evaluated on their performance.

Another explanatory variable is ethnicity, which was assessed by the question "which ethnicity best describes you?" (1) Pashtun; (2) Tajik; (3) Hazara; (4) Uzbek; (5) Turkman; (6) other. Since not many academics were in the last three categories I combined them as 'other' for the purposes of analysis. Moreover, the study was focussed mainly on the three largest ethnic groups.

Further, for the purposes of analysis, I recoded the explanatory variables into three major categories; gender and age, gender and academic rank and gender and ethnicity. These recoded categories allowed me to determine relationships between more than two explanatory variables and their relationship with independent variables in different parts. In short, the three explanatory variables allowed me to examine academics' perceptions of the complexity of gender inequality in the workplace in Shah University.

Qualitative analytical procedure

Thematic analysis was undertaken to analyse the semi-structure interview data. Thematic analysis allowed me to go beyond the description and examine underlying ideas and experiences of academics within the Afghan context. The thematic analysis process involves the identification of themes through reading and re-reading of interview transcripts (Rice and Ezzy, 1999).

I used Nvivo to code and analyse verbatim data. First, I uploaded all transcripts to Nvivo. Next, I coded the data as nodes: this involved recognising key points or

concepts and encoding them prior to interpretation (Boyatzis, 1998). In a sense, an inductive approach was used to code the data. Encoding the data allowed me to identify and develop themes from them. Themes, according to Boyatzis (1998), are "a pattern in the information that at minimum describes and organises the possible observations and at maximum interprets aspects of the phenomenon" (p. 161).

In initial coding a number of topics/themes emerged. The highest number of references related to discrimination including gender discrimination and the patriarchal nature of the society. At the next stage, I grouped these codes into different categories and three main themes emerged, socio-cultural, institutional and interpersonal in relation to academics' perceptions of gender inequality within higher education in Afghanistan.

Ethical Issues and Potential Problems

Ethical issues arose at all of stages in this research including: research design, access data collection, data analysis and writing up the thesis and dissemination. There are some key ethical issues which need to be considered throughout the research as, for example, the privacy of the participants, confidentiality and anonymity of individuals, the voluntary nature of the participants and the sense that they can withdraw partially or completely at any time during the research process. Anticipated ethical issues at the various stages of the research process are explained in the following sections.

During Design and Initial Access

In this study, initial access to Shah University was challenging. The first challenge was the administrative system, since there are two major issues in governmental institutions in Afghanistan: bureaucracy and *wasta. Wasta* in this study refers to family, ethnic or regional connections and relationships with someone in a position of power and authority (see Glossary of Terms). There were bureaucratic procedures at various levels and stages of the research as well as gender bias and ethnic privilege. To make sure the research would be conducted successfully; I sought university permission in my first visit to Afghanistan in 2013. I went there to visit my family and the research sites. I first went to Shah University where I had held a position as a teaching assistant, and thus knew most of the academics, particularly in the department in which I was teaching. I managed to meet the Chancellor and the Vice-Chancellor of Shah University and give them some preliminary information about the aims and objectives of the research. They welcomed me and indicated their support. As mentioned elsewhere, although they agreed to give me permission to do my fieldwork, it took them a month, after several emails as a reminder, to provide a signed letter of permission (See Appendix 1).

However, in 2014 I had to go through the paperwork again. Eventually, I was given an official letter from Shah University introducing me as one of the members of the University and asking all faculties to cooperate with me regarding the questionnaire and interviews. The letter was very useful, as it allowed me to obtain permission from each Faculty and Department within the University.

Moreover, gaining access was a bureaucratic and political process since it involved negotiation. As Bryman (2012) asserts, ethical issues are part of a wider consideration of the roles that values play. These values are not just to do with ethical issues, but also with politics. In this study there was negotiation and re-negotiation to gain access. As mentioned earlier, initially I sought permission from the Chancellor of the University and then from each Faculty separately. I also sought permission from each Department.

In addition, access to official documents, was a challenge. I had to get access to documents such as up-to-date statistics of academics in each faculty through the University administrative offices. At the outset they showed resistance because of the sensitivity of the topic, or perhaps because of bureaucracy. Then I had to introduce myself and explain the research motives. Although I had the information sheet, it was not needed most of the time. This was due to the reason that I knew some of the administrative staff and through them I could find out more and as a result managed to get some of the documents I needed. Upon the reflection, building professional networks with administration staff can be a great help in various areas given the bureaucratic nature of Afghan institutions.

During Data Collection and Data Analysis

The data collection procedure is associated with a number of ethical issues depending on which method of data collection is used. Nevertheless, there are some general issues that could be applied to almost every data collection method. These general ethical issues include privacy, confidentiality and anonymity of participants and the collected data and storage. The latter aspect is also important

in terms of gaining access to the organisation and the individual participants. Nonetheless, the need for confidentiality can present dilemmas. The participants may narrow the scope of the information in the sense of what and how much should be disclosed and to whom (Bryman, 2012). Initially I had assumed that in this study some of the participants might show reluctance to provide information, given the sensitivity of the topic and/or I would be seen as an outsider because I had been in the UK for more than two years and was doing my research as a student in an institution based in the UK. To avoid such a problem I gave sufficient information about myself to those who did not know me and information about the research to provide them with an informed decision about whether or not to participate in the study. However, most of the time it was not an issue since I knew most of the academics. In general, I noticed that they found it relatively easy to trust me and share their perceptions and experiences.

It is worth indicating that I did not give all the details about the research, such as my main emphasis on women's experiences to participants because it could have contaminated the participants' answers to questions. Participants might have changed their behaviour or perhaps their opinions towards a particular issue if they had known of this emphasis. Another reason was the sensitivity of the topic in a country where conservative traditions are practised. Moreover, linguistically the word 'gender' is controversial in the Afghan context. It does not have an equivalent in the Dari language. It means different things to different people, and it is usually associated with the biological forms of men and women. However, I did explain the broad aims and objectives of the study. I also explained the significance of their participation in the study information sheet (See Appendix 2).

Prior to the questionnaire and/or interview I explained the aims and objectives of the research, its importance and the reason why they had been invited to participate, confidentiality and anonymity, and what would happen to data collected. I let them know that they could ask me questions anytime they wanted to. I also informed them of the research process and that they could withdraw or refuse to participate at any stage for whatever reason. The consent was verbal. Although I had a consent form (See Appendix 3) with me in each interview to make sure they had understood the purpose of the study, and to help me to have the signed record of the consent if any concerns were subsequently raised by participants, none of the participants signed it, and therefore, I had to take their verbal consent. This could be due to the reason that participants did not want to take any risks by signing the paper. As mentioned earlier, some of the interviewees refused to be recorded. I took notes and sent the transcripts back for some of them (N= 1) to check. I could not send to all of them because I did not have their email addresses and it was not available at the University website.

To make sure no harm occurred to participants, I kept the data confidential. One of the ethical issues that I had assumed might arise while collecting and analysing data would be harm to participants. Harm can entail a number of facets: physical harm, harm to participant's development, loss of self-esteem, or stress. To avoid any harm, I maintained confidentiality through anonymity. I coded the questionnaires and interview materials and kept them separately. Electronic files were kept in a password-protected computer accessed only by me.

I faced a number of challenges while analysing the data, in particular with the questionnaire. The responses for the category format, a 6-category Likert scale, did not seem to be a useful way of categorising. I used a 6-point Likert scale to oblige participants to make up their minds whether they agreed or disagreed with questions. However, most of the responses were crowded in the middle of the scale as in partly agree or/and slightly disagree. Perhaps a yes/no answer could have achieved a clearer distinction. This could be due to the reason that perhaps categories were relatively close together in meaning that led participants to systematically skip certain response categories; or they might have used, for instance, 'strongly agree' interchangeably with 'agree'; or 'agree' interchangeably with 'partly agree' (Chang, 1994).

Another reason could have been a lack of stimulus knowledge with respect to what was being measured (Chang, 1994). In this study, participants were perhaps unable to apply a 6-point scale in making the better stimulus distinctions of which they were not fully aware (Chang, 1994: 213). The heterogeneity of participants with respect to their knowledge and experience could also be one of the reasons. Several categories allowed them to draw more freely on their 'divergent frames of reference' (Chang, 1994: 213). In such a situation, several categories capture more individual differences rather than reflecting attitudes towards the issue. It could also be because I was a lone researcher in Afghanistan and did not have contact with my supervisors on weekly basis because of lack of access to internet. Upon reflection, in the future I will make sure I keep regular contact with any research team.

Researcher's Position and Reflection

In this study, I was constantly an insider as well as an outsider. I sometimes shared opinions, perceptions and experiences with the participants that made me an insider while at other times it did not (Dwyer, 2008). I was occupying the space between the insider and outsider positions. According to Dwyer and Buckle (2009),

> There are complexities inherent in occupying the space between. Perhaps, as researchers we can only ever occupy the space between. We may be closer to the insider position or closer to the outsider position, but because our perspective is shaped by our position as a researcher (which includes having read much literature on the research topic), we cannot fully occupy one or the other of those positions (p. 61).

As I have mentioned elsewhere, I had been a teaching assistant at Shah University, and therefore, I knew some of the academics. I had pre-knowledge of the research site. Hodgkinson (2005) refers to the researcher with pre-existing knowledge as having 'insider' knowledge. A number of scholars refer to the advantages of being an insider. Kanuha (2000:444) asserts:

> For each of the ways that being an insider researcher enhances the depth and breadth of understanding a population that may not be accessible to a non-native scientist, questions about objectivity, reflexivity, and authenticity of a research project are raised because perhaps one knows too much or is too close to the project and may be too similar to those being studied.

Labaree (2002) identified several advantages of being an insider. She argues that insiders have greater chances of access to participants and better understanding of participants' thoughts. Another advantage of insiders, according to Labaree, (2002:

103) is "the value of the shared experience". As an insider I held a privileged position in gaining access to the University and participants. The administrative system and academia in Afghanistan as a whole are strongly based on connections and relationships. Without knowing anyone in the office, especially in governmental institutions, it is sometimes even impossible to gain access. Being an insider helped to a great extent and it gave me a certain amount of legitimacy (Adler and Alder, 1987) to achieve access. It also allowed me to be rapidly accepted by the participants and, as a result, participants, particularly women, were more open with me. Sharing experiences, opinions and nationality allowed me to access a common ground from which to conduct the research.

On the other hand, a number of scholars argue that having a relationship with the research topic and participants has the potential to bias the data collection and data analysis processes (Coffey, 1999). For instance, participants may assume the similarities, and thus fail to share their individual experiences fully (Dwyer and Buckle, 2009). In addition, the researcher's perceptions might be clouded by his/her personal experience and he/she may find it difficult to separate that from that of the participants (Dwyer and Buckle, 2009). As an insider researcher, I faced the same problem. When I was transcribing interviews, I sometimes felt participants' accounts were exactly what I had experienced. As a woman working in the same University environment, I shared many common experiences with the female participants. To avoid any personal biases, I tried to distance myself from being an insider and tried to look at the data from an outsider's perspective. I found some level of strangeness essential (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995) because it allowed me to understand the perspectives of participants and override self-deception.

Despite being an insider, I was also considered an outsider because I had been in the U.K. for a few years. In the U.K., I have had experience of a different academic environment and culture, which raised my awareness and made me more reflective of two different contexts (e.g. bureaucracy, hierarchy). I have critically engaged with the literature, which has added to my outsider position as I had an in-depth understanding of the relevant literature. This allowed me to contextualise different theories and make better-informed interpretations of the data in the analytical process.

I was also considered an outsider because I was a researcher rather than a colleague. My role in the setting was not to teach but to explore academics' perceptions of inequality within their workplace. In addition, the 'subject' of my study made me an outsider, as there are not many Afghan researchers and/or projects supported by the Afghan government investigating gender issues. Being an outsider helped me to earn more respect as staff members and academics recognised my position as a funded researcher. On some occasions being an outsider made it challenging to have access to departments and faculties. For instance, in one of the faculties that I did not know many academics, I could not obtain many questionnaires.

In addition to my role as an insider-outsider researcher, I am also a woman. I feel my gender had a role in the data collection procedure as well. As a young woman, I faced some problems. On a number of occasions, I found some male members of staff, particularly younger age academics, flirting with me. One of the Ministry of Higher Education staff even called me a few times without any particular reason. I

also sometimes experienced rudeness from older male academics. Most of the time, I had to ignore their actions because some of them were old, and due to respect I could not say anything. On a number of occasions, I had to ignore their acts because as a woman, I did not have power to say anything and there was nowhere to register complaints.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have discussed the research methodology. Firstly, I explained the research design and methods. A mixed-method case study was used to explore academics', both women and men's perceptions of gender inequality within their workplace. Mixing quantitative and qualitative data allowed me to understand the complexity of the phenomena. Next, I addressed the case study approach and its importance in exploring a case as whole as well as focusing on individual experiences. Generalisability of the study, the study population and the research site were explored. In this study, I employed a survey questionnaire to gather numerical data on academics' perceptions of inequality in the workplace while semi-structured interviews were used to understand academics' perceptions in depth. I also discussed quantitative and qualitative data collection as well as data analysis.   Next, ethical issues and potential problems during initial access and data collection and analysis were addressed. In the last section, I reflected on my position as a researcher as both an insider and outsider. In the following chapters, I discuss the quantitative and qualitative findings respectively. I start by reporting the survey findings on academics' perceptions of inequality in their work environment.

CHAPTER FIVE: QUANTITATIVE FINDINGS: GENDER INEQUALITY NOBODY TALKS ABOUT

Introduction

In this chapter, I present the findings of the survey of perceptions of gender equality in an academic environment in Afghanistan. I used a survey questionnaire to explore whether men and women differ in their perceptions of equality in their workplace. Given the marginal position of women in the labour market and strict public-private distinctions, it was expected that women would be less likely than men to agree that recruitment, promotion procedures and workload allocation are fair at the University. However, the findings portray a more nuanced picture.

Following a summary of the headline findings at the outset, I discuss the survey findings, which give a complex picture, in detail throughout this chapter. When respondents were asked *in general terms*, if they considered their institution to be fair and equitable with regard to hiring practices, promotion opportunities and workload allocation, the majority of respondents said yes and female respondents were *more likely* than male respondents to respond positively. However, when respondents were asked specifically about discrimination and inequity at work *along gender lines*, women were much less likely than men to respond positively. The complexity of the survey findings suggests that individuals have different understandings of inequality within their workplace. Women cannot see the problem from inside because the institution is procedural and it functions based on meritocratic assumptions. Women also cannot see the inequality from outside, due to strict public-private distinctions and insecurity.

Even if they see the problem, they cannot challenge it because the risk is too high, given their uncertainty and insecurity.

The current study confirms previous research in the West that found women report higher levels of job satisfaction than their male colleagues (Clark, 1997; Steinpreis *et al.*, 1999; Sloane and Williams, 2000; Sousa-Poza and Sousa-Poa, 2003). However, Western women's relatively disadvantaged positions in academia, and in the labour market in general, have been widely documented (Hakim, 1996; Zou, 2015), with extensive evidence of the existence of the discriminatory practices in the workplace including recruitment (Jenkins, 1984; Collinson *et al.*, 1990; Petersen *et al.*, 2000), promotion (Knights and Richards, 2003; Fisher, 2007) and workload (Ward, 2001).

A number of explanations have been given to approach this paradox. One explanation refers to men and women's different job and personal characteristics, such as gender, class and age (Clark, 1997). The other explanation rests upon the men's and women's expectations of work. It has also been argued that the higher satisfaction of women could be due to women having lower expectations of the same job in comparison with men (Hakim, 1996; Clark, 1997; Sloane and Williams, 2000). However, the higher job satisfaction of women does not necessarily indicate that they are happy with their job or that their jobs are better than men's, but rather that their current job is better than alternatives and thus they have lower expectations (Clark, 1997). Further, the gender-job satisfaction paradox has also been explained in terms of women's disadvantaged position in the labour market in general (Kaiser, 2007), a Paradox that emerges in societies where women have restricted access to the labour market (*Kaiser, 2007*).

In general, it seems likely that the aforementioned explanations can contribute to understanding women's higher level of job satisfaction. In this chapter, I examine whether personal and job characteristics such as age, ethnicity and rank affect Afghan women's overall job satisfaction, or whether their positive responses are as a result of non-job variables such as personal experience in the past, and/or structural and ideological constraints in general. By presenting the data, I begin to provide a detailed description of personal characteristics of the female and male survey participants, including age, ethnicity, marital status, and whether or not they have dependent children, to achieve an understanding of whether these characteristics influence their perceptions of inequality in the workplace. Section two begins to explore potential gender differences, which, in fact, are mostly not statistically significant; for that reason, I did not report significant differences. In this section, first I present findings on perceived inequality in recruitment in light of the fact that women are under-represented among academics. Section three explores perceived inequality in workload allocation. Section four focuses on perceptions of inequality in promotion opportunities. In the section five, I look at male and female academics' views regarding the equitable nature of the formal policies and practices, which shape the working environment at their institution. I conclude the chapter with a discussion of findings and some problems that need further research.

Demographic Information

In this section, I describe the personal characteristics of the respondents who took part in the survey I conducted at Shah University. I explore differences in the personal characteristics of male and female respondents and consider whether these characteristics influence their perceptions of inequality in the workplace. As Table 10 shows, a high percentage of respondents, both women and men, are in the 21-39 age groups. This is because the majority of current academics in Shah University are recent graduates. A large number of academics, both women and men, were executed during Soviet Union regime because they were seen as a threat to the government; others fled to other countries.

While the modal age category for male respondents is 30-39 (33.1%) the modal category for women is younger, at 21-29 (43.4%). Correspondingly a very small percentage of women (3.9%) are over 50 compared with a relatively high percentage of men (25%). The reason why a high number of women is in the young age-group is that they have been hired since the post-Taliban government (2001-current) as a result of the international community's pressure to empower women in higher education institutions.

Table 10- Age of survey respondents by gender (N = 249)

		Women Col% (N)	Men Col% (N)	All % (N)
	21-29	43.4 (33)	28.4 (48)	33.2 (81)
	30-39	35.5 (27)	33.1 (56)	34 (83)
Age	40-49	17.1 (13)	13.6 (22)	14.3 (35)
	50+	3.9 (3)	25 (42)	18.4 (45)
Missing data		0.1 (1)	1.8 (4)	2 (5)
Total		100 (77)	100 (172)	100 (249)

Additionally, around half of all female respondents (52.5%) are single and do not have children under 16, compared with male respondents (47.5%) as Table 11 shows. A relatively small percentage of women (21.4%) are married and do not have children under 16 compared with 78.6% of men, as Table 11 shows. The reason such a high percentage of women is single is that the majority of them are young, as mentioned earlier. However, a study by Burridge *et al.* (2015) shows that some girls resist marriage, particularly arranged marriage, in order to pursue their goal of attaining an education and employment. This is a strategy young girls use to resist the patriarchal nature of society. Women, particularly those who are single, do not only resist the pubic-private distinction that does not allow women to work outside, but also resist the cultural practices of getting married at a young age. They fought for their rights and for the change, starting from within the family.

Table 11- Marital status and number of children under 16 of respondents by gender

		Women row% (N)	Men row% (N)	All % (N)
Marital status and number of children	Single	52.5 (42)	47.5 (38)	100 (80)
	Married with no children under 16	21.4 (12)	78.6 (44)	100 (56)
	Married with children under 16	21 (22)	79 (83)	100 (105)
	Unmarried/divorced	0	100 (2)	100 (2)
Missing data		0.4 (1)	2 (5)	2.4 (6)
Total		31.3 (77)	68.7 (172)	100 (249)

Shah University is a multi-ethnic university. The two prominent ethnic groups are Tajik and Pashtun, as my findings show. 59.7% of female respondents and 40.1% of male respondents were Tajik. The second most common ethnicity was Pashtun for both women (27.3%) and men (30.2%). A small number of respondents were Hazara and

from other minority ethnic groups, such as Uzbek, as Table 12 shows. The reason there are more women and men from the Tajik ethnic group is that historically Tajiks were considered intellectuals and skilled people despite Pashtuns being in positions of power in government, including the presidency (Mazhar *et al.*, 2012). Hazaras have always been the marginalised group in the region (Rais, 2008).

Table 12- Academics' ethnicity by gender

		Women Col% (N)	Men Col% (N)	All % (N)
Ethnicity	Pashtun	27.3 (21)	30.2 (52)	29.8 (73)
	Tajik	59.7 (46)	40.1 (68)	46.5 (114)
	Hazara	5.2 (4)	9.9 (17)	8.6 (21)
	Other	7.8 (6)	19.8(31)	15.1 (37)
Missing data		0	1.6 (4)	1.6 (4)
Total		100 (77)	100 (172)	100 (249)

In addition, there are certain ethnic differences in academic ranking by gender. As Table 13 shows, an almost identical percentage of Pashtun and Tajik female respondents is in professorial positions (4.2% and 4.5% relatively). However, a high percentage of Tajik women is in non-professorial positions compared with Pashtun women and Hazara women (31.3%, 20.8% and 14.3% respectively). A high percentage of Pashtun male respondents are in professorial positions (19.4%) compared with Tajik and Hazara male respondents (12.5% and 9.5% respectively) as Table 13 shows. Similarly, Pashtun men are more likely to be in non-professorial positions compared with Tajik men (39.3%).

Table 13- Academics' ethnicity by gender and academic ranking

	Pashtun Col% (N)	Tajik Col% (N)	Hazara Col% (N)	Other Col% (N)	All % (N)
Female: Professorial	4.2 (3)	4.5 (5)	0 (0)	0 (0)	3.3 (8)
Female: Non-professorial	20.8 (15)	31.3 (35)	14.3 (3)	12.8 (5)	23.8 (58)
Female: Probationary	2.8 (2)	5.4 (6)	4.8 (1)	2.6 (1)	4.1 (10)
Male: Professorial	19.4 (14)	12.5 (14)	9.5 (2)	20.5 (8)	15.6 (38)
Male: Non-professorial	51.4 (37)	39.3 (44)	66.7 (14)	53.8 (21)	47.5(116)
Male: Probationary	1.4 (1)	7.1 (8)	4.8 (1)	10.3 (4)	5.7 (14)
Missing data	1.4 (1)	2.6 (3)	0	205(1)	2 (5)
Total	100 (73)	100 (115)	100 (21)	100 (40)	100 (249)

In short, compared with the male respondents, the female respondents are younger, more likely to be single, or, if they are married, less likely to have children. However, they are similar in terms of ethnic composition.

In the following sections, I explore academics' perceptions of inequality in recruitment, promotion and workload taking personal characteristics such as gender, age and academic ranking and whether they impact their perceptions of in/equality within their workplace into consideration.

Perceived In/equality in Recruitment

Female respondents were substantively more likely than male respondents to report feeling that hiring processes were fair and not discriminatory. As Table 14 shows, high percentages of both women (71.4%) and men (75.6%) agreed with the statement that "there are fair hiring practices at this university". Moreover, women were slightly more likely than men to agree with the statement that "academics are hired according to their merit" (75.7% and 65.7% respectively), and that "hiring practices are transparent" (68.4% and 62% respectively). However, women were also more likely than men to report that "male job applicants are more likely to be hired than female job applicants" (71.4% and 65.6% respectively). This contradiction in women's responses could be because they believed recruitment procedures to be meritocratic.

Table 14- Gender and recruitment by percentage of agreement with the following statements (N=249)

	Women	Men	Missing Data
	% (N)	% (N)	% (N)
There are fair hiring practices at the university.	71.4 (54)	75.6 (127)	2 (5)
Employees are hired according to their merit.	75.7 (56)	65.7 (111)	2.4 (6)
The hiring procedure is transparent to all applicants.	68.4 (52)	62 (103)	2.8 (7)
Men job applicants are hired more than women job applicants at this university.	71.4 (50)	65.6 (101)	10 (25)

The reason for women's overwhelmingly positive responses to fair recruitment could be due to different personal and job characteristics such as age, academic rank and ethnicity. A number of studies found age to have a positive relationship with job satisfaction (Clark, 1997; Clark *et al*., 1996), with older employees reporting higher job

satisfaction compared with younger ones (Clark *et al.*, 1996). Other studies found a U-shaped relationship between age and job satisfaction. According to Clark *et al.* (1996), U-shape relationship is "declining from a moderate level in the early years of employment and then increasing steadily up to retirement" (p. 57). However, there is inconsistency in the literature in relation to those of a younger age being more or less satisfied compared with older ones.

The women in this sample are, on average, younger than the men (see Table 10). As a further check on whether age had an influence over the women's positive responses, I used gender-age cross-tabulation. As Table 15 shows, there is no U-shaped relationship between age and job satisfaction for women and men. Women in their 30s and 40s were more likely to agree (77.8% and 76.9% respectively) compared with women in their 20s and 50+ (62.5% and 66.7% respectively) with 'fair hiring practices'. The reason more women in their 30s and 40s agreed could be because their jobs seem fairer and more satisfactory than earlier in their careers. Another explanation could be perhaps wider changes in society. Women in their 30s and 40s have mostly experienced war and uncertainty, with a lack of employment; while women aged 50+ have experienced relatively better early career employment situations during the Soviet Union regime.

However, women's perceptions of transparent procedures of hiring increase with age, as Table 15 shows. Women in their 40s and 50s (69.2% and 100% respectively) were more likely than women in their 30s and 20s (66.7% and 65.6% respectively) to agree that the procedure is transparent. This could because women in their 30s and 20s have recently been hired, and given the prominence of *wasta* and corruption (see Chapter 2)

in the last few years, they are less likely to perceive the hiring procedures as transparent. On the other hand, women's perceptions of hiring based on merit decreases with age. Younger and middle-aged women were more likely to agree than older-age group women that 'employees are hired according to their merit', as Table 15 shows.

Table 15- Gender and age cross-tabulation by cell percentage of agreement (N= 249)

	Female 21-29	Female 30-39	Female 40-49	Female 50+	Male 21-29	Male 30-39	Male 40-49	Male 50+	Missing Data
	% (N)	% (N)	% (N)	% (N)	% (N)	% (N)	% (N)	% (N)	% (N)
There are fair hiring practices	62.5(20)	77.8(21)	76.9(10)	66.7(2)	70.2(33)	72.7(40)	69.6(16)	90 (36)	3.6 (9)
The hiring procedure is transparent	65.6(21)	66,7(18)	69.2(9)	100(3)	64.6(31)	66(35)	50 (11)	60 (24)	4.4 (11)
Employees are hired according to their merits	78.1(25)	74.1(20)	75 (9)	66.7(2)	62.5(30)	66.7(36)	52.2(12)	75.6(31)	3.6 (9)

Women's higher level of satisfaction with recruitment procedures could also be associated with ethnicity. Although no previous study exists to show whether ethnicity affects women's job satisfaction, given the role of ethnicity in Afghan institutions and society in general, it can be assumed that Tajik women were more likely to agree than Pashtun and Hazara women because there is a higher percentage of Tajik women, both in professorial and non-professorial positions (see Table 12). As Table 16 shows, Tajik women agreed more than Pashtun and Hazara women that 'the hiring procedure is transparent' (71.1%, 66.7% and 50% respectively) and that hiring is based on merit (79.5%, 70% and 50% respectively). In addition, Pashtun men agreed more than Tajik

and Hazara men that hiring practices were fair (88%, 70% and 62% respectively) and recruitment was merit-based (72.5%, 65.7 and 52.9% respectively). This could be due to the reason that a high number of Pashtuns, in particular men, hold positions as full professors, despite the overall high percentage of Tajiks in professorial positions.

Table 16- Gender and ethnicity cross-tabulation by cell percentage of agreement (N= 249)

	Pashtun female	Tajik female	Hazara female	Pashtun male	Tajik male	Hazara male	Missing Data
	% (N)	% (N)	% (N)	% (N)	% (N)	% (N)	% (N)
There are fair hiring practices	71.4(15)	71.1(32)	75 (3)	88 (44)	70.6 (48)	62.5 (10)	2 (5)
The hiring procedure is transparent	66.7(14)	71.1 (32)	50 (2)	66 (33)	68.2 (45)	29.4 (5)	2.8 (7)
Employees are hired according to their merits	70 (14)	79.5(35)	50(2)	72.5(37)	65.7 (44)	52.9 (9)	2.4 (6)

Another possible reason that women were more positive than men could be their academic rank. The rank which an individual holds within an institution has some influence on overall satisfaction. It is argued that more positive responses could be expected from individuals in higher positions since they have more opportunities and power within the institution (Reilly *et al.*, 1993). However, as Table 17 shows, women in non-professorial positions are more likely to agree that there are fair hiring practices, the procedure is transparent and with merit-based recruitment (72%, 71.9% and 80% respectively) than women at the professorship level (75%, 50% and 50% respectively). Since a high proportion of women are in the lower academic ranks (see Table 5), overall, they portray a positive picture. One explanation could be that women in non-professorial positions are less experienced, and have lower expectations and thus are

more positive. Hence, personal characteristics such as age and ethnicity and job characteristics such as rank do not seem to affect women's perceptions of the fairness of recruitment practices.

Table 17- Gender and academic ranking cross-tabulation by cell percentage of agreement (N= 249)

	Female: Professorial	Female: Non-professorial	Female: Probationary	Male: Professorial	Male: Non-professorial	Male: Probationary	Missing Data
	% (N)	% (N)	% (N)	% (N)	% (N)	% (N)	% (N)
There are fair hiring practices	75 (6)	72 (41)	70 (7)	81.6 (31)	75.2 (85)	71.4 (10)	3.6 (9)
The hiring procedure is transparent	50 (4)	71.9 (41)	70 (7)	51.4 (18)	65.8 (75)	64.3 (9)	4.4 (11)
Employees are hired according to their merit	50 (4)	80 (44)	80 (8)	65.8 (25)	64.9 (74)	71.4 (10)	4 (10)

Women's positive responses could be relative to their past experience. Walters (2005) in her study in the North-West of England found that most women who were highly satisfied were so because their current job was better than their previous jobs. Although there are no data available to show whether female academics had previous jobs, their experience of several decades of war may have had an impact on their perceptions. Decades ago, during the Taliban regime, no women were allowed to work in the public sphere without a mahram, a male family member; however, in the post-Taliban government a number of women have been hired. Upon reflection, if I were doing this study again, I would ask about their previous job explicitly. A further reason could also be the belief in the meritocratic system of academia. A number of studies have found that the belief in the meritocratic system minimises perceptions of

inequality within the workplace (McCoy and Major, 2007). Although there is no evidence in my quantitative data to support this argument, women may believe in the meritocratic system of academia more than their male counterparts. I will discuss this further later (see pages 237-238).

To sum up, the majority of academics, both women and men, were likely to agree with the statement that hiring practices and processes were fair. However, women more than men agreed with this statement. Women's personal and job characteristics such as age, ethnicity and academic rank did not significantly affect their perceptions of fairness in recruitment, perhaps because of small sample size. This is an area that requires further research.

Perceived In/equality in the Workload

Based on the survey questionnaire, women were less likely than their male counterparts to feel that their workload was greater than that of their female and male colleagues (47.7% and 45.6% respectively) compared with 60% and 69.3% for men, as Table 18 shows. However, a majority of both women and men agreed that there is a lack of fair distribution of work tasks across academics (67.1% and 75.1% respectively) and that their workload stresses them out (60.9% and 62.5% respectively). As Table 18 shows, there are small differences between women's and men's responses in relation to workload stress in contrast with other statements such as recruitment and promotion. This could be partly because of workload at the university and partly due to cultural expectations. Women and men have similar academic activities, including teaching. All academics are expected to work 38 hours per week and their workload differs depending on their academic rank. However, given the public-private distinctions, women have family and childcare responsibilities as well as housework with basic equipment, which adds to their stress at the workplace. On the other hand, given the high living expenses particularly in Kabul as discussed in the chapter 2, men are obliged to earn more. As one of the male interviewee in our friendly conversation said that the University salaries are not high; therefore, male academics need to find another job and as a result, it stresses them at the workplace.

	Women	Men	Missing Data
	% (N)	% (N)	% (N)
My workload is more than some of my female colleagues'	47.7 (30)	60 (96)	9.6 (24)
My workload is more than some of my male colleagues'	45.6 (31)	69.3 (104)	12.4 (31)
There is a lack of work balance among academics	67.1 (47)	75.1 (127)	4 (10)
My workload stresses me out	60.9 (42)	62.5 (105)	4.8 (12)

The reason women are less likely to agree compared with men that their workload is more than other men's and women's could be because the majority of them are single and they do not have many responsibilities compared with married women. But compared with men they might have more responsibilities due to public-private distinctions. In general, women are expected to do all domestic work and take care of children and elder family members. As Table 19 shows, married women were more likely to agree than single women, that their workload is more than some of their female' as well as male colleagues. However, slightly more single women compared with married women perceive that 'there is a lack of work balance among academics'.

Table 19- Gender and marital status cross-tabulation by cell percentages of agreement (N=249)

	Single Women	Married women	Single men	Married men	Missing Data
	% (N)	% (N)	% (N)	% (N)	% (N)
My workload is more than female colleagues	43.8 (14)	51.5 (17)	59 (23)	61.2 (71)	11.2 (28)
My workload is more than male colleagues	40.5 (15)	51.6 (16)	60.5 (23)	72.9 (78)	14.1 (35)
My workload stresses me out	68.4 (26)	51.6 (16)	72.5 (29)	59.3 (73)	6.4 (16)
There is a lack of work balance among academics	68.4 (26)	65.6 (21)	75 (30)	75.8 (94)	5.6 (14)

Women's positive responses to workload could also be due to their ethnicity. Given ethnic differences associated with ethnic in academics' perceptions of hiring process, women from the minority ethnic group might be expected to perceive they are given more work compared with women from other ethnic groups. However, there is no such a pattern. But, Hazara women agreed more than Pashtun and Tajik women that their 'workload is more than male colleagues' (50%, 41.2% and 43.9% respectively) and that 'there is a lack of work balance among academics' (75%, 57,9% and 68.3% respectively), as Table 20 shows.

Table 20- Gender and ethnicity cross-tabulation by cell percentages of agreement (N=249)

	Pashtun female	Tajik female	Hazara female	Pashtun male	Tajik male	Hazara male	Missing Data
	% (N)	% (N)	% (N)	% (N)	% (N)	% (N)	% (N)
My workload is more than my male colleagues	44.4 (8)	48.7(19)	33.3(1)	60.0(30)	73.0(46)	31.2(5)	9.6 (24)
My workload is more than my male colleagues	41.2 (7)	43.9(18)	50(2)	70.8(34)	73.3(44)	46.2(6)	12.4(31)
My workload stresses me out	68.4 (13)	58.5(24)	50.0(2)	62.7(32)	70.6(48)	31.2(5)	4.8 (12)
There is a lack of work balance among academics	57.9 (11)	68.3(28)	75(3)	68.6(35)	82.6(57)	56.3(9)	4 (10)

Overall, women were less likely than men to agree that their workload is more than their male colleagues. This could be due to the higher number of women in low academic ranks with lower workloads than women's and men's in high academic ranks. However, as Table 21 shows, women in professorial and non-professorial positions were less likely than men in the same positions to agree that their workload was less than that of other male and female colleagues. This could be because women

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underestimate their work, while on the other hand men exaggerate their work (Park *et al.*, 2008). This area needs further investigation.

Table 21- Gender and academic ranking cross-tabulation by cell percentage of agreement (N=249)

	Female Professorial	Female Non-professorial	Female Probationary	Male Professorial	Male Non-professorial	Male Probationary	Missing Data
	% (N)	% (N)	% (N)	% (N)	% (N)	% (N)	% (N)
My workload is more than that of female colleagues	66.7 (4)	51 (26)	14.3 (1)	76.5 (26)	55 (60)	61.5 (8)	11.6 (29)
My workload is more than that of male colleagues	60 (3)	51.9 (27)	10 (1)	78.8 (26)	66 (66)	64.3 (9)	14.1 (35)
My workload stresses me out	57.1 (4)	61.5 (32)	66.7 (6)	57.1 (20)	63.5 (73)	57.1 (8)	6.8 (17)
There is a lack of work balance among academics	71.4 (5)	71.2 (37)	50 (5)	78.4 (29)	72.8 (83)	85.7 (12)	6 (15)

Perceived In/equality in Promotion

The findings indicate that the female respondents do not perceive there to be discrimination against them in relation to promotion opportunities. In fact, in some of the indicators women again paint a more positive picture than their male counterparts. The majority of both women and men agreed that the university provides them with good opportunities for promotion (85.1% and 84.2% respectively) and that the promotion criteria are clear and transparent (84.9% and 78.7% respectively). More women (59.2%) than men (44.8%) agree that they have unlimited opportunities for promotion as Table 22 shows. The majority of women and men also agree that job promotion is based on job performance and achievements and that their job is compatible with their qualifications and experience, but the percentage agreeing with these statements is notably higher for women than for men. However, only a minatory of women and men agree that they have been rewarded for their good performance (29.2% and 24% respectively). However, they are more likely to agree, particularly women, that they are recognised for their accomplishments (65.7% and 58.2% respectively). This shows that perhaps both women and men value extrinsic dimensions of job such as pay and reward, but women more than men give importance to intrinsic aspects of the job such as recognition. This finding is in line with Zou's (2015) findings that show that women emphasise intrinsic dimensions of work while men value extrinsic aspects.

	Women	Men	Missing Data
	% (N)	% (N)	% (N)
My present job at the university provides me with good opportunities for promotion	85.1 (63)	84.2 (144)	1.6 (4)
I am aware of the criteria for promotion	90.5 (67)	92.9 (157)	2.4 (6)
The promotion criteria are transparent	84.9 (62)	78.7 (129)	4.8 (12)
The promotion procedures are clear	86.1 (62)	76.5 (124)	6 (15)
It is easy to get promotion in public universities	45.8 (33)	36.6 (60)	5.2 (13)
My opportunities for promotion are unlimited within the university	59.2 (42)	44.8 (74)	5.2 (13)
Job promotion is based on job performance and achievements	78.9 (56)	63.6 (105)	5.2 (13)
The university helps me to pursue my professional growth	76.1 (54)	65.9 (108)	5.6 (14)
The university helps me to pursue my personal growth	63.8 (44)	57.1 (92)	7.6 (19)
My job is compatible with my qualification	97.2 (69)	88.0 (146)	4.8 (12)
My job is compatible with my experience	95.9 (70)	91.7 (154)	3.2 (8)
I have been rewarded for my good performance	29.2 (21)	24.0 (40)	4 (10)
I have been recognised for my accomplishments	65.7 (46)	58.2 (96)	5.6 (14)

In a similar way, high percentages of women and men agree that 'university work is a highly secure job' (93.2% and 92.2% respectively), and that they 'have sufficient professional authority and autonomy at work (85.7% and 80.6% respectively). On the other hand, relatively low percentages of both women and men agreed that they are given 'fewer hours of teaching in order to carry out research' (37.7% and 44% respectively) and that they have 'enough resources to undertake research' (40.2% and 37% respectively). The majority of academics, both women and men, agreed that 'there is a lack of funding for research' (77.2% and 73.2% respectively).

	Women	Men	Missing Data
	% (N)	% (N)	% (N)
I feel university work is a highly secure job in comparison with other public and private sector jobs	93.2 (68)	92.2 (154)	3.6 (9)
In general, my comments and suggestions are usually considered by peers/dean	77.6 (52)	66.5 (109)	7.2 (18)
I have sufficient professional authority and autonomy at work	85.7 (60)	80.6 (137)	3.6 (9)
I am given fewer hours of teaching in order to carry out my research	37.7 (26)	44 (73)	5.6 (14)
I have access to enough resources to undertake my research	40.6 (28)	37 (61)	6 (15)
There is an easy procedure for research proposal approval	50.7 (35)	40.5 (66)	6.8 (17)
There is a lack of funding for research	77.2 (44)	73.2 (109)	17.3 (43)

To examine whether women's age affected their overall positive responses with regard to promotion opportunities and processes and procedures, I used a gender-age cross-tabulation. As Table 24 shows, the majority of women in all age categories agreed that promotion procedures are fair. Women in the 30-39 age group, however, were less likely to agree than women in the 21-29 and 40+ age groups that 'opportunities for promotion are unlimited' and that 'job promotion is based on job performance and achievement'. This could be because women in their 30s have more family responsibilities. This is in line with the family-conflict literature which suggests that women in middle age are less likely to be satisfied due to increased family responsibilities at this particular stage of life compared with younger and older women (Georgellis *et al*., 2012). Women especially in their 30s negotiate their identity with culturally accepted gender roles to be able to advance their career.

It could also be due to the socio-political situation in the country. Women in their 30s and early 40s have been through civil war and uncertainty. They have not had opportunities to do research and get promotion, given the insecurity during the Mujahidin regime and the closure of the university for women during the Taliban rule. Even in the current situation, the majority of working women have limitations as to what they can do, where they can go and until what time they can work, particularly given the insecurity and fear of the Taliban and ISIS.

Table 24- Gender and age cross-tabulation by cell percentage of agreement (N=249)

	Female 21-29	Female 30-39	Female 40-49	Female 50+	Male 21-29	Male 30-39	Male 40-49	Male 50+	Missing Data
	% (N)	% (N)	% (N)	% (N)	% (N)	% (N)	% (N)	% (N)	% (N)
The promotion procedures are clear	78.1(25)	92.3(24)	100(11)	66.7(2)	72.9(35)	74.1(40)	73.7(14)	87.2(34)	6.8(17)
My opportunity for promotion is unlimited within the university	65.6(21)	45.8(11)	66.7 (8)	66.7 (2)	46.8(22)	40 (22)	45.5(10)	46.2(18)	6 (15)
Job promotion is based on job performance and achievements	81.3(26)	68.0(17)	90.9 (10)	100 (3)	56.3 (27)	61.8(34)	66.7(14)	74.4(29)	6 (15)
My job is compatible with my qualification	100 (32)	96 (24)	90.9 (10)	100 (3)	89.6 (43)	91.1(51)	80 (16)	87.8(36)	5.2(13)
University work is highly secure	90.6(29)	96.2(25)	91.7 (11)	100 (3)	87.5 (42)	94.5(52)	86.4(19)	97.5(39)	4.4(11)

The reason for women's positive responses could also be due to ethnic differences. As Table 25 shows, a higher percentage of women from all ethnic groups agreed that promotion procedures are clear. Hazara women were even more likely than Pashtun and Tajik women to agree that 'promotion procedures are clear' (100%, 84.2% and 83.7% respectively). However, Hazara women were less likely than Pashtun and Tajik women to agree that there were unlimited opportunities in promotion (25%, 63.2%, and 57.1% respectively). This could be because Hazara women acknowledged that promotion procedures were based on equal opportunities but their own opportunities for promotion were fewer. It is worth noting that there is a hierarchy in the responses of men from different ethnic groups with regard to promotion procedures. As Table 25 shows, a higher percentage of Pashtun men than Tajik and Hazara men agreed that promotion procedures were clear (84%, 73% and 62% respectively). This important finding needs further research. A slightly higher percentage of Tajik women than Pashtun and Hazara women agreed that job promotion is based on job performance and achievements (79.5%, 77.8% and 75% respectively). Tajik and Pashtun women agreed more than Hazara women that their job is compatible with their qualification (100%, 94.4% and 75% respectively). Women as well men overwhelmingly agreed that 'university work is highly secure', as Table 25 shows.

	Pashtun female	Tajik female	Hazara female	Pashtun male	Tajik male	Hazara male	Missing Data
	% (N)	% (N)	% (N)	% (N)	% (N)	% (N)	% (N)
The promotion procedures are clear	84.2 (16)	83.7 (36)	100 (4)	84 (42)	73.4 (47)	62.5 (10)	6 (15)
My opportunities for promotion are unlimited within the university	63.2 (12)	57.1 (24)	25 (1)	44.9 (22)	50 (33)	41.2 (7)	5.2 (13)
Job promotion is based on job performance and achievements	77.8 (14)	79.5 (35)	75 (3)	63.3 (31)	65.2 (43)	58.8 (10)	5.2 (13)
My job is compatible with my qualification	94.4 (17)	100 (43)	75 (3)	86.3 (44)	87.9 (58)	94.1 (16)	4.8 (12)
University work is highly secure	95 (19)	95.5 (42)	100 (4)	96.1 (49)	92.5 (62)	87.5 (14)	3.6 (9)

Further, although some studies (Ssesanga and Garrett, 2005) suggest that promotion satisfaction depends on rank, no evidence for this was found in this study. In general, women in all academic ranks were more likely than men to agree that promotion procedures are fair, as Table 26 shows. Women in professorial positions agreed more than women in non-professorial positions and probationary posts that 'promotion procedures are clear (100%, 85.2% and 80% respectively).

In contrast, women in professorial and non-professorial positions agreed less than women in probationary posts that 'opportunities for promotion are unlimited' (57.1%, 55.6% and 77.8% respectively). This could be due to the reason that women on probation are at the beginning of their academic career and they have not yet been through promotion procedures, thus they tend to be more positive about the procedures. In addition, women in non-professorial positions are less likely to agree than women in professorial and probation positions that 'promotion is based on job performance and achievements' (72.2%, 100% and 100% respectively). This could be

due to the reason that women in non-professorial positions are struggling to publish papers, which is required for academic promotion (Eyupoglu and Saner, 2009). Although there is no previous research done to show women face challenges in promotion in Afghan universities, given women's dual role as they hold main responsibilities for domestic work and children along with the job responsibilities, they may find it difficult to do research or/and publish a paper.

Table 26- Gender and academic ranking cross-tabulation by cell percentage of agreement (N=249)

	Female: Professorial	Female: Non-professorial	Female: Probationary	Male: Professorial	Male: Non-professorial	Male: Probationary	Missing Data
	% (N)	% (N)	% (N)	% (N)	% (N)	% (N)	% (N)
The promotion procedures are clear	100 (8)	85.2 (46)	80 (8)	88.6 (31)	74.3 (81)	64.3 (9)	7.6 (19)
My opportunities for promotion are unlimited within the university	57.1 (4)	55.6 (30)	77.8 (7)	48.6 (17)	42 (47)	50 (7)	7.2 (18)
Job promotion is based on job performance and achievements	100 (8)	72.2 (39)	100 (9)	70.6 (24)	59.3 (67)	78.6 (11)	6.8 (17)
My job is compatible with my qualification	100 (8)	96.2 (51)	100 (10)	86.5 (32)	89.3 (100)	78.6 (11)	6 (15)
University work is highly secure	100 (8)	92.7 (51)	100 (9)	100 (36)	90.3 (102)	92.9 (13)	5.6 (14)

In general, the gender job satisfaction differential remains the same even after controlling for personal and job characteristics. The finding is in line with the study by Asadullah and Fernández (2008) in the UK, showing that women's higher level of satisfaction remained robust even after controlling individual and institutional characteristics. However, they found that the family-work conflict is an important determinant of intrinsic and extrinsic aspects of job satisfaction. A number of other

studies show that work orientation shapes an individual's job satisfaction, and that women and men differ in their work orientations (Asaduallah and Fernández, (2008); Zou, (2015). Zou (2015) in her study found that women were more likely to value flexible hours and social relations while men placed emphasis on extrinsic and intrinsic job rewards. She also reported on varieties in job orientation among women. According to Zou, those who placed emphasis on intrinsic rewards were more likely to report high job satisfaction than those who valued the effort aspects of the job.

Although in this study respondents were not asked about the intrinsic and extrinsic aspects of the job directly, as mentioned earlier, when academics were asked whether they had been recognised for their accomplishments, women were more likely to agree than men. However, both sexes were less likely to agree that their performances were rewarded. Given public-private distinctions, women and men may differ in their job orientation. The majority of women are not the main breadwinners of the family and it is often the responsibility of the men to support the family financially (AWEP report, 2013). A woman's salary is often used for her own and sometimes her children's expenses (AWEP, 2013). In addition, working women in Afghanistan have to balance work and family obligations. The division of labour between the sexes is highly specific, a situation derived from public-private distinctions. Women's main responsibilities relating to domestic work, children (often more than two), and elderly and disabled family members reflect their attitudes in the workplace. I discuss the family-work tension in detail in the next few chapters (See chapter 6). Given women's roles as secondary breadwinners, mainly responsible for domestic work and the children, they

perhaps value flexible working hours more than extrinsic aspects of the job such as salary.

However, it could also be argued that given the public-private distinctions, women may look at the extrinsic aspects of the job such as job security, status as an academic and the overall quality of life. An academic job is very secure and it considered a prestigious job for both women and men. Being an academic enhances an individual's importance and prominence within the family, recognition and social acceptance within society. Several studies have found a positive relationship between job satisfaction and social status (Rostamy *et al*., 2008) and job security (Rose, 2003). However, given the broader context of insecurity, women are taking a huge risk by working in the education sector. The recent attack on the American University of Afghanistan in Kabul that left 12 people dead and a dozen injured after nearly 10 hours of fighting (Farmer, August, 2016) is a clear example of the risk academics, particularly women take. Women working in such circumstances show their enthusiasm and passion for their work that goes beyond individual need. It demonstrates their resistance to and commitment to social change.

To sum up, women again portray a positive picture in relation to promotion procedures. However, their personal and job characteristics, including age and academic rank, did not seem to make any difference to their perceptions of fair promotion procedures. Women's relatively positive responses could perhaps be due to their work orientation, which is determined by the family-work tension and public-private distinction.

Perceived Inequality in University Policy and Practice

The survey findings indicate that a majority of academics, both women and men, agreed that "the work policy of the university is fair to all academics" (70.8% and 63.7% respectively) as Table 27 shows. Women (47.9%) were less likely than men (70.2%) to say, "there is no gender discrimination", "the university considers equal participation of men and women" (57.3% and 74.2%) and "the university promotes gender equality" (49.3% and 75.6% respectively). There seems to be a big difference between women and men's responses. However, the survey questionnaire does not often capture the reason informing participants' perceptions.

In contrast with the academics' responses regarding gender discrimination, less than half of the women and men agreed that 'there is no ethnic discrimination (48.6% and 49.1% respectively), as Table 27 shows. In addition, women were slightly less likely than men to agree that "university policies cover gender issues (52.2% and 64.2%) and that the institution provides an "equitable supportive environment for women" (45.1% and 53.2% respectively). Approximately half of both women and men also agreed that the university ensured equal treatment of all academics (53.4% and 53.1% respectively). Women were more likely than men to agree that "the university ensures safety and security of all academics" (59.7% and 35.4% respectively). However, women were less likely than men to agree that "the university adopts a policy of zero tolerance for unsocial behaviours" (57.6% and 62.7% respectively) and that "the university fosters a women friendly environment" (67.4% and 76.9% respectively).

	Women	Men	Missing Data
	% (N)	% (N)	% (N)
The work policy of the university is fair to all academics	70.8 (51)	63.7 (107)	3.6 (9)
The administrative system is good in this university	58.3 (42)	37.9 (64)	3.2 (8)
There is no ethnic discrimination in the work environment	48.6 (35)	49.1 (81)	4.8 (12)
There is no gender discrimination in the work environment	47.9 (35)	70.2 (118)	3.2 (8)
University policies cover gender issues	52.2 (36)	64.2 (104)	7.2 (18)
The university considers equal participation of men and women academics	57.3 (43)	74.2 (121)	4.4 (11)
The university promotes gender equality	49.3 (37)	75.6 (121)	5.6 (14)
The university ensures equal treatment of all academics	53.4 (39)	53.1 (86)	5.6 (14)
The university provides an equitable supportive environment for men	65.7 (46)	49.4 (82)	5.2 (13)
The university provides an equitable supportive environment for women	45.1 (32)	53.2 (84)	8 (20)
The university ensures the safety and security of all academics	59.7 (43)	35.4 (58)	5.2 (13)
There is lack of participatory governmental structures	69.7 (46)	76 (117)	11.6(29)
The university adopts a policy of zero tolerance for unsocial behaviours, such as personal insults and sexual harassment	57.6 (38)	62.7 (101)	8.8 (22)
The university fosters a women-friendly environment on campus	67.4 (46)	76.9 (120)	10 (25)

As a further check on whether age had an influence on women's negative responses, the gender-age cross-tabulation (Table 28) shows that women in their 20s and particularly in their 30s (50% and 29.6% respectively) were less likely than women in their 40s and 50s (72.7% and 100% respectively) to agree that 'there is no gender discrimination'. Women in their 50s all agreed more than women in other age groups that 'the university promotes gender equality' (100% and 54.5% and 40.7% and 41.7%

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respectively). This suggests that younger and middle aged women, rather than older age groups are more likely to perceive that women are discriminated against. This could be because older women might have achieved their potential and are not at the academic stage to achieve promotion or go through different procedures that disadvantage them.

As Table 28 shows, women in their 20s and 30s were less likely than women in their 40s and 50s to agree that 'there is no ethnic discrimination' (43.8% 42.3%, 66.7% and 100% respectively). The intersection of gender and age shows that perhaps younger and middle-aged women face multiple inequalities (Walby, 2012) simultaneously, depending on the context (Holvino, 2010). Similarly, men in their 20s were less likely than other age groups to agree that there is 'no ethnic discrimination' (29.2%, 50%, 60% and 65.9% respectively). There seems to be a hierarchy among men from different age groups in their perception of ethnic discrimination. Overall, these findings suggest that young and middle aged women and men perceive the existence of ethnic discrimination more than older academics. This could be due to the salience of ethnic discrimination in recent years (see Chapter 2). This area requires further investigation.

Table 28- Gender and age cross-tabulation by cell percentage of agreement (N=249)

	Female 21-29	Female 30-39	Female 40-49	Female 50+	Male 21-29	Male 30-39	Male 40-49	Male 50+	Missing Data
	% (N)	% (N)	% (N)	% (N)	% (N)	% (N)	% (N)	% (N)	% (N)
There is no gender discrimination	50 (16)	29.6 (8)	72.7 (8)	100 (3)	62.5(30)	72.7(40)	69.6(16)	78(32)	3.6 (9)
The university promotes gender equality	54.5(18)	40.7(11)	41.7 (5)	100 (3)	74.5(35)	83.3(45)	76.2(16)	64.9(24)	6 (15)
There is no ethnic discrimination	43.8(14)	42.3(11)	66.7 (8)	100 (2)	29.2(14)	50 (28)	60 (12)	65.9(27)	4.8(12)

To further check whether academic rank influences perceptions, I used gender-ranking cross-tabulation (Table 29). Women in non-professorial positions and probationary posts were less likely to agree with 'no gender discrimination' than women in professorial positions (45.5%, 50% and 71.4% respectively). Women in non-professorial positions were less likely than women in professorial positions and probationary posts to agree that 'the university promotes gender equality' (44.6%, 62.5% and 70% respectively). In addition, both women and men in non-professorial positions were less likely to agree than women and men in other ranks with 'no ethnic discrimination'. This suggests that younger and middle-aged women and younger men who are most likely to hold a non-professorial position are more likely to perceive discrimination based on their gender.

Table 29-Gender and ranking cross-tabulation by cell percentage of agreement (N=249)

	Female Professorial	Female Non-professorial	Female Probationary	Male Professorial	Male Non-professorial	Male Probationary	Missing Data
	% (N)	% (N)	% (N)	% (N)	% (N)	% (N)	% (N)
There is no gender discrimination	71.4 (5)	45.5 (25)	50 (5)	70.3 (26)	72.8 (83)	61.5 (8)	5.2 (13)
The university promotes gender equality	62.5 (5)	44.6 (25)	70 (7)	54.5 (18)	81.1 (90)	83.3 (10)	7.6 (19)
There is no ethnic discrimination	62.5 (5)	45.3 (24)	60 (6)	62.9 (22)	49.1 (56)	7.7 (1)	6.4 (16)

In addition to gender, ethnicity seems to play a key role. To further understand whether there are any differences between women and men's perceptions from different ethnic groups, I used gender-ethnicity cross-tabulation. As Table 30 shows, Pashtun women and men were more likely to agree (55.6% and 80.8% respectively)

than Tajik and Hazara women and men that 'there is no gender discrimination' (see Table 30). In a similar way, Pashtun women and men, were more likely to agree (60% and 82% respectively) than other ethnic groups that 'the university promotes gender equality'. This could be due to Pashtuns' more conservative approaches compared with Tajik and Hazara ethnic groups, with respect to women and women's issues (Zulfacar, 2006). And this could be the reason that they agreed more than other ethnic groups that 'there is no gender discrimination' and that 'the university promotes gender equality'. Around two thirds Pashtuns, both women and men (63.2% and 64.7% respectively) agreed that 'there is no ethnic discrimination', a higher proportion than the other ethnic groups, as Table 30 shows. This could be because a higher number of Pashtuns, men in particular, hold the position of full professor and have always been part of the dominant ethnic group within the country (Mazhar *et al.,* 2012). Thus they are less likely to see or be personally affected by the existence of ethnic discrimination.

Table 30- Gender and ethnicity cross-tabulation by cell percentage of agreement (N=249)

	Pashtun female	Tajik female	Hazara female	Pashtun male	Tajik male	Hazara male	Missing Data
	% (N)	% (N)	% (N)	% (N)	% (N)	% (N)	% (N)
There is no gender discrimination	55.6 (10)	46.7 (21)	25 (1)	80.8 (42)	66.2 (45)	62.5 (10)	3.2 (8)
The university promotes gender equality	60 (12)	48.9 (22)	0 (0)	82 (41)	75.4 (49)	75 (12)	5.6(14)
There is no ethnic discrimination	63.2 (12)	41.9 (18)	50 (2)	64.7 (33)	46.3 (31)	31.3 (5)	4.8(12)

When academics were asked about the reasons for there being fewer women in academia, both women and men were more likely to agree that it is because of socio-

cultural as well as institutional barriers. As Table 31 shows, more women than men agreed that fewer women are in academia because of conservative ideas (77.1% and 63.8% respectively), and because women's main responsibility is considered to be domestic work (68.6% and 66.3% respectively). Women were more likely to agree than men that this is because of the academic atmosphere that provides men with advantages (59.2% and 44.1% respectively). However, women were slightly less likely than men to agree that this is caused by organisational factors, such as long hours. Women were more likely to agree than men that "it is too early to compare the proportion of female academics to that of male academics" (74.6% and 67.9% respectively) and that the reason for few women in academia is 'insensitive gender policies' (60.6% and 41.4% respectively). This is because university policies are perceived to be gender neutral. However, although gender neutral policies are often combined with the acceptance of principles of gender equality (McKie and Hearn, 2004), they disadvantage women more than men due to women's main responsibilities being domestic work and child care (Knights and Richards, 2003; Acker, 1990, 2012). Although the Ministry of Women's Affairs is working on mainstreaming gender at various institutions, this has not been implemented in higher education institutions.

Table 31- Academics' responses as to why there are fewer women than men within Afghan universities by percentage of agreement (N=249)

	Women	Men	Missing Data
	% (N)	% (N)	% (N)
This is caused by organisational work factors within the universities (e.g. long working hours, a lot of work pressure etc.)	52.8 (38)	55.6 (91)	5.6 (14)
This is because of conservative ideas, traditions and habits about what is most suitable for men and women	77.1 (54)	63.8 (104)	6 (15)
This is because women hold the main responsibility for domestic and caring tasks at home	68.6 (48)	66.3 (108)	6 (15)
This is because within academia the atmosphere and accepted customs favour men	59.2 (42)	44.1 (71)	6.4 (16)
It is too early to compare the proportion of female academics to that of male academics within Afghan universities	74.6 (53)	67.9 (108)	7.2 (18)
It is because of insensitive gender policy.	60.6 (40)	41.4 (60)	14.9 (37)

Overall, the findings show the complexity of academics' perceptions of inequality. They suggest that academics, in particular women, have different perceptions of inequality within their workplace than men. Women's responses to university policy and practices contradict their responses on hiring, promotion and workload. This could be because when they were asked questions about hiring practices, promotion opportunities and work conditions, their responses were based on institutional procedures and the ideology of equal opportunities for both sexes. However, when they were asked specifically with regard to gender discrimination their responses were based on women's experience. In this sense, women as well as men do not tend to see the inequality within the institution because it is based on meritocratic procedures, which are supposedly gender neutral. I discuss this point further in the next section.

Discussion and Conclusions

The survey findings show that in general academics, both women and men, were more likely to agree that the hiring processes, workload allocation and promotion opportunities are fair and equitable, but women reported a higher level of satisfaction than men. However, when they were asked specifically about gender discrimination, women were less likely to agree than men that there is no gender discrimination. Initially I assumed that women's higher level of satisfaction was as a result of personal and job characteristics. However, as further analysis shows, personal characteristics such as age and ethnicity, and job characteristics such as rank, do not explain women's higher level of satisfaction perhaps because of small sample size.

The interpretation of women's higher job satisfaction suggests that women's responses could be relative to their experience. Women in the labour market in Afghanistan have had varied experiences from working in public without many restrictions, particularly in urban areas during the Soviet Union regime, to being banned from working during the Taliban regime. Considering the different regimes, in particular the Mujahidin and the Taliban, the situation of women in the labour market has improved in recent years as against the Taliban and Mujahidin periods (See Chapter 2). However, their role remains marginal. In general, participation rates of women in the Afghan labour market are low (See Chapter 2) due to lack of education, skills, job opportunities, security and the public-private distinctions (AWEP Report, 2013).

The ideology that locates women in private spaces and men as the breadwinners in the family and occupants of public spaces, disadvantages the majority of Afghan women. Women who are working, particularly in prestigious jobs such as in academia, are given an advantage; therefore, they tend to be positive about the overall situation of the workplace, despite their marginal roles. In such situations, as Clark (1997) argues, women's higher job satisfaction does not mean that their job is better than their male colleagues, rather it is because they have experienced much worse situations; therefore, they have lower expectations. However, it is not just past experience but also the uncertain future that perhaps contributes to women's positive responses. Women are trapped in the present and they do not know what the future holds for them, particularly given the rise of attacks and uncertainty within the country, including Kabul, since 2014 when the US led coalition and NATO left Afghanistan (see Chapter 2). Therefore, past instability and future uncertainty could be one of the reasons for women's positive responses.

This leads to the second interpretation of findings that suggests public-private distinctions and women's marginal position in the current labour market in general could be one of the reasons for their high level of satisfaction. As mentioned elsewhere, women are considered to be mainly responsible for domestic work, child care and looking after elderly family members within the private spaces, while men are responsible for financial matters in public spaces. The socio-cultural barriers combined with lack of education and skills as well as job opportunities make it difficult for women to enter the labour market. Therefore, women who are given a chance to participate in the labour market, particularly in such a culturally prestigious job as in academia, are given an advantage and are more likely to be

satisfied with their jobs. This is in line with Kaiser's (2007) findings. As she argues, "the more restrictive labour market access is for women, the more likely a gender-job satisfaction paradox is to emerge" (p. 90).

Family-work conflict and restricted labour market access for women shape their work orientation, which can have an impact on shaping their overall job satisfaction. Many women in Afghanistan are not able to make 'real' and 'free' choices concerning their work in public spaces (Walters, 2005). They make choices based on factors such as family and domestic responsibilities and social expectations. The majority of women in Afghan society face both structural and ideological constraints. Structural constraints such as domestic work and childcare are the main barriers for working women (Knights and Richards, 2003) However, some women may be able to deal with structural constraints with the help of their extended family members, such as mothers, sisters, or mothers-in law, but dealing with ideological constraints is not simple. Given the strict ideology (see Chapter 2) on the role of women in Afghan society, resistance rooted in everyday life is minimal and invisible, and perhaps that is the reason that women do not consider their job to be unequal until they are asked about their own experiences.

Female academics' overall positive responses to fair hiring processes, workload distribution and promotion procedures could be because of their belief in meritocratic procedures. Women cannot see inequality from within the University because promotion is procedural. Shah University functions on the assumptions of a meritocratic system. According to Van den Brink and Benschop (2011), the presumption that a merit-based system of academia restricts discrimination of any

type is the key to academics' practices and perceptions. Women similarly cannot see inequality from the outside because they have a symbolic public space. Although women are now given the chance to work in public spaces and participate in the labour market, following the ban during the Taliban regime (see Chapter 2), there are strict public-private distinctions and public insecurity that affect women's freedom. As mentioned earlier, for women, working in public spaces, particularly in the education sector involves taking risks. However, those women who are able to see the problem still cannot challenge it because the risk is too high for them (Hayssegger, 2011).

As mentioned earlier, when women were asked specifically about gender discrimination they were less likely than men to agree that there is no gender discrimination. As further analyses based on personal and job characteristics show, younger and middle-aged women, who were most likely to be in non-professorial positions, were less likely than older women in professorial positions to agree that there is no gender discrimination. Similarly, younger and middle aged women and younger men were less likely to agree that there is no ethnic discrimination. The findings also show that Pashtuns are more likely to be in position of power and less likely to see the existence of both gender and ethnic discrimination. Ethnic differences in academia need further investigation.

Women's positive responses to recruitment and promotion procedures could also be due to the reason that they might be afraid to disagree with the statements, for fear of being punished in future decisions within the university. As findings show, women in non-professorial positions were mostly young and from less dominant

ethnic groups within the University and perhaps for reasons of fear they painted a positive picture. Women are more likely than men to experience social isolation and lack their colleagues' support (Ibarra, 1992). Given their social isolation in the workplace, women need to learn some negotiation skills. Negotiation skills are documented as an important factor for academic success (Applegate and Williams, 1990) particularly in a male-dominated environment. Negotiation skills for achieving academic success include, but are not limited to, establishing position, promotion, work schedule, time flexibility and work responsibility (Sarfaty *et al.*, 2007). According to Sarfaty *et al.* (2007), although negotiation in all stages of career is necessary, it is essential in the early stages of a career.

Women's greater job satisfaction in this study does not mean that they are happy and satisfied; instead, it may show women's resilience. As my findings show, although the majority of women are in lower positions, they have not given up on university work. They are trying to get the most out of the current situation and empower themselves, despite being marginalised. To reduce the paradox, ongoing institutional interventions that promote equal opportunities for men and women (Kaiser, 2007) are essential.

Women's positive responses could also be a sample selection problem (Clark, 1997; Sousa-Poza *et al.*, 2000). In this study, the number of women is relatively lower than men and it may be that sampled women are not representative of the overall female population in academia. It could also be assumed that women who are dissatisfied with their jobs are also more likely to leave and become housewives. In

Afghan society, there is less pressure on women to work outside the home and/or to be successful at work than there is on men (Clark, 1997).

Women's positive responses could also be a methodological issue. A study by Walters (2005) shows that some employees are not as satisfied as some survey questionnaires have reported. Walter's in-depth interviews revealed that few women were fully satisfied and the majority of them said their jobs were 'OK for now' (p. 212). The study concludes that women were 'making the best of a bad job' instead of being truly satisfied. The interpretation of findings in this study paints a similar picture. Perhaps a survey of this kind is not the best option for women to voice their views on equality within their workplace. In this study, the survey questionnaire did not sufficiently capture women's nuanced perceptions of in/equality within their workplace. These are revealed the qualitative findings discussed in the next chapter. The semi-structured interview findings confirm the complexity of academics' perceptions of inequality and show that the majority of academics, both women and men, perceive the existence of inequality in various aspects of their jobs. In the next chapter, I discuss academics' perceptions of equality in detail.

CHAPTER SIX: SOCIO-CULTURAL BARRIERS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Introduction

In this chapter, I draw upon the findings of qualitative semi-structured interviews conducted with seven female and nine male academics at Shah University. The purpose is to present and analyse academics' perceptions of gender inequality within the academic environment in Afghanistan, using the term 'perceptions' to refer to beliefs and/or opinions held by academics about how things seem to them in their institution. The survey findings in the previous chapter revealed that perceptions about gender relations in higher education are complex. Gender relations in this study refer to socio-cultural and economic relationships that exist in higher education and society between women and men. When academics were asked if they considered their institution to be fair and equal with regard to hiring practices, promotion and workload allocations *in general*, most respondents said 'yes', women being more likely than men to respond positively. However, when they were asked specifically about discrimination and inequality along gender lines, women were more likely than men to say that gender discrimination existed. My interpretation of the survey findings was that gender inequality in the workplace appears to have been normalised, and thus rendered invisible. However, quantitative data, by its nature, cannot reveal why academics and female academics in particular appeared to largely discount overall gender inequality that the survey findings show to exist in Afghan universities. This chapter therefore focuses on the more detailed accounts of perceived experiences of gender inequality within academia given by the academics who agreed

to be interviewed for this study. The semi-structured interview findings reported in this chapter help to answer some of the questions left unanswered by the survey data; in particular, questions about how female and male academics experience and make sense of gender inequalities in their institution. The findings confirm the complexity of academics' perceptions of inequality. These academics had different understandings of their situations. Some strongly perceived that there was gender inequality while others did not. Some had mixed feelings towards gender inequality in the workplace. Responses were overly influenced by cultural and historical norms, as the data will show. The strict public-private distinctions, and several decades of war and uncertainty, have normalised gender inequality throughout everyday life in a way that academics, particularly women, do not consider unequal until they are asked particularly about women's experience.

This is the first of three qualitative findings chapters. Throughout these chapters, I focus and reflect upon the three themes that emerged from interviews; socio-cultural, institutional and interpersonal factors that influence academics' perceptions of gender inequality in the workplace. My first intention, however, is to summarise the main theoretical perspectives employed in analysing the qualitative data.

Using Walby's public-private distinctions (Walby, 1990), I show that public-private distinctions are complex in Afghanistan. Women are largely invisible in academia as a result of cultural norms and wider societal expectations, as well as ongoing uncertainty that reinforces these norms. Drawing on Acker's conceptualisation of gendered institutions and inequality regimes (Acker, 1990, 2006), I reveal the ways in which

institutional processes and practices as well as strategies/policies disadvantage women and minority ethnic groups. In addition, I use Butler's concept of gender performativity (Butler, 1990) to illustrate that women's identity is fluid, constructed through social and cultural norms, and these social and cultural practices and roles are reproduced, represented and reinforced (Lester, 2008) within Afghan society.

The multi-dimensional analysis of inequality allowed me to unpack the complexity of academics' perceptions of inequality. By analysing the interview data in relation to socio-cultural, institutional and interpersonal factors I have been able to capture not only the structural roots of gender inequality but also the individual experiences of inequality and uncertainty that impact on gender relations in general and Shah University in particular. These three components establish masculine norms and values as the most accepted way to survive within Afghan society. These masculinise social relations to create gendered hierarchies of inequality and oppression by valuing some attributes and devaluing others (Dominelli, 2009a). However, it is the lack of security that reinforces these social relations within Afghan society. I show throughout my data that Insecurity is embedded in every aspect of social structure, and thus sustains and reinforces masculine norms and values.

Individual inequality, which includes prejudices and negative attitudes practised by one category of individuals to deny equality to another category, often draws upon institutional and cultural inequality for legitimacy (Dominelli, 2009a). Institutional inequality includes institutional practices and policies that marginalise one group more than another, whereas cultural inequality comprises traditions, ideas and social values

and norms that are embedded in widely accepted cultural ideologies (Sidanius and Pratto, 1999) and guide social interactions, valuing some and devaluing others. Institutional and cultural inequalities are sustained through power and social resources within structural inequality (Dominelli, 2009). However, structural and individual inequality are reinforced by ongoing uncertainty at the family and socio-political levels. In this chapter, I show that gender relations in higher education in Afghanistan are complex; both women and men perform in a gender-based fashion on the public-private dichotomy that is embedded in the structure of society. However, it is the insecurity and uncertainty within the country that reinforces these distinctions as my data show. Throughout my analysis I show that there has not been a shift in the form of private patriarchy in Afghanistan. However, my data reveals that private patriarchy extends to govern public spaces resulting in inequality in both institutional and interpersonal levels; in contrast to Walby's argument in the West that private patriarchy has moved to public patriarchy.

I begin by providing a broad picture of the complexity of the interviewees' perceptions by classifying them into three different categories: those who strongly perceive there is gender inequality, those who strongly believe there is no gender inequality, and those who have mixed feelings, and then I discuss how socio-cultural and historical norms as well as insecurity, shape their overall perceptions. In the next section, I first discuss socio-cultural barriers to women's employment, and then refer to socio-cultural opportunities and the importance of family to women's access and advancement in public spaces. Third, public-private dichotomy and security concerns are discussed.

Categorising academics' perceptions of gender equality at the workplace

The semi-structured interview findings portray a complex picture of academics' perceptions of gender inequality in the academic workplace. However, there is one concept, the performance of gender and production and reproduction of traditional norms. Each interviewee reflects on the role of society in general and the institution in particular as important aspects of working women's lives. Academics' perceptions are complex, showing that men and women's performance is based on the public-private dichotomy embedded in the structure of society. Throughout this chapter, I reflect on the socio-cultural and historical aspects of society in relation to their perceptions of gender inequality at the workplace. 'Socio-cultural barriers' in this study refer to traditions, customs and values that characterise a society.

As Table 32 shows, the majority of participants, both women and men, perceive that gender discrimination exists in the university. Only one of the female academics perceived that there was no discrimination of any kind at the university. A number of participants had mixed feelings about gender inequality within academia. Three of the seven female participants and six of the nice male participants explicitly referred to gender-based inequality in the academic environment, three female participants and three male participants had mixed feelings about it. They were more likely to refer to broader society to explain gender inequality in the workplace, which will be discussed later in detail. However, only Arzou clearly rejected any kind of discrimination including gender at Shah University, as Table 32 shows. Participants, both men and women, of different academic rank and ethnicity referred to a wide range of factors affecting

gender performance within the university. Three main themes that emerged from these interviews were socio-cultural, institutional and interpersonal factors. Through these themes, I demonstrate how gender performance is constructed through macro, meso and micro categories and relations. I also reflect on power dynamics and the individual agency of workers within the context of social structures and institutional processes and practices.

Table 32- Academics' perceptions of gender inequality in academia

	Men			Women		
		Academic rank	Ethnicity		Academic rank	Ethnicity
Those who perceived gender inequality	Naser Elyas Ali Masood Mujtaba Aarif	Professor Non-professor Non-professor Non-professor Non-professor Non-professor	Tajik Tajik Afghan Pashtun N/K N/K	Ayesha Khatera Mariam	Non-professor Non-professor Non-professor	Hazara Afghan Pashtun
Those with mixed perceptions	Naseem Shoaib Omar	Professor Non-professor Non-professor	N/K Pashtun N/K	Khalida Sarah Ameena	Professor Non-professor Non-professor	N/K N/K N/K
Those who perceived no gender inequality				Arzou	Non-professor	N/K

Considering the participants' complex perceptions of gender equality in the workplace and the themes emerging from the interviews, the participants are further categorised in order to see which factors, socio-cultural, institutional and/or individual, academics perceive to be the main barriers to gender equality at Shah University. I found that

socio-cultural and institutional factors have a strong impact on women's career advancement. As Table 33 shows, a majority of academics both male and female referred to socio-cultural issues that prevent women from gaining employment and advancing their career in Shah University. Many also referred to institutional factors as impediments to women's success in the workplace.

Some participants, for example Ayesha, Khatera, Mariam, Mujtaba, and Aarif mentioned both socio-cultural and institutional factors that negatively affect working women. Participants who had mixed feelings tended to refer to socio-cultural aspects of society while a few believed it is the institution that creates barriers to women. Two participants also addressed interpersonal discrimination that disadvantages women, as Table 33 shows.

Table 33- List of academics' perceptions of equality/inequality based on socio-cultural, institutional and individual factors

	Gender inequality	Mixed	Gender equality
Socio-cultural	Ayesha Khatera Mariam Elyas Ali Mujtaba Aarif Naser	Naseem Khalida Sarah Shoaib Omar	
Institutional	Ayesha Khatera Mariam Masood Mujtaba Aarif	Khalida Shoaib Ameena	Arzou
Interpersonal	Khalida		Arzou

In the next section, I discuss the complexity of academics' perceptions of gender inequality, focussing on the first theme, socio-cultural barriers and women's recruitment and advancement within the workplace.

Socio-cultural Barriers

There is strong evidence, emerging from interviews, that participants, both women and men, see socio-cultural barriers as major obstacles to women's employment. As Naser stated:

> … this is a patriarchal society. There are fewer opportunities for women and women's development. There are cultural barriers, regional customs, and restrictions... they [men] don't want women to participate. They think it is against their ghairat [honour] when women work... Overall in our society, a woman is accepted as a mother, sister, and wife. However, they don't let them work. (Naser, male, professorial position, Tajik).

Naser was reflecting on the patriarchal nature of society where women are kept away from the system of power that has been constructed through private and public realms for women and men respectively (Walby, 1990). There are defined boundaries between private and public spaces for women in Afghan society, unlike Western public-private distinctions where the two components blur into each other and are sometimes combined in various ways despite the differences (Weintraub, 1997). In Afghanistan women are seen as a symbol representing the honour of the men as indicated by Naser. A woman who works outside the private sphere, in paid employment, is considered to dishonour the man, father or husband, and his family, and thus, it is the responsibility of the man to safeguard women and control them as the honour of the family (Moghadam, 1992).

This is as a result of ideological interest (Moghadam, 2002). The breadwinner ideology of the men's role opens the space for them in public while it restricts women to private

areas (Schmeidl, 2009). In addition, women's work outside the home is considered to be threatening to masculine norms and values. A man who cannot protect his family is usually called 'beghairat', someone with no honour and dignity, as indicated by Naser using the word 'ghairat'. It is because he does not practise hegemonic forms of masculinity (Connell, 2006, 2009). Men are expected to perform their gender norms by exercising power over women and by limiting their access to public spaces. It is worth noting that the hegemonic forms of masculinity also put pressure on men who do not practise this form of masculinity. In this sense, patriarchy disadvantages both women and men but in different ways (Dominelli and McLeod, 1989). It is worth noting that Naser, as well as other participants, did not mention Islamic rules as barriers to women. In Afghanistan the cultural and tribal practices have a stronger hold than Islamic rules and constitutional laws (Ahmed-Gosh, 2003) particularly given the weak state (see Chapter 2).

Mariam mentioned the male dominated nature of Afghan society and importance of time to change patriarchal ideology. she said:

> We have a male dominated/patriarchal society. We need time to change people's mentality (Mariam, female, non-professorial position, Pashtun).

Naser also referred to the slow pace of change in ideology:

> Positive changes do not change the ideology and culture of people. If we expect such a change, it would be slow. It will change slowly (Naser, male, professorship position, Tajik)

Mariam and Naser's descriptions clearly show that patriarchy in Afghan society comes in the form of ideology, which often takes longer to be challenged and changed. It further reveals that the underlying reason for women's limited access to public spaces is not materially based, as Walby has argued, but ideological. However, men's control of women's access to public spaces could be because of competition over economic resources. It is perhaps no accident that every time, throughout the history of Afghanistan, women have been relatively visible through education and employment in public spaces, there has been a backlash and demand for women to return to private spaces. Walby (1990) argues that individual men in the private sphere use exclusionary strategies to keep women in a private space because it benefits them materially. However, there is no evidence found in my study.

It appears to be the ideological nature of patriarchy that explains the lack of change in the form of private patriarchy in Afghanistan. The key is that ideology cannot be changed from outside. As Naser stated:

> Peoples ideology changes when their needs are recognised. It is necessary for both women and men of the country to work together to develop the country (Naser, male, professorship position, Tajik).

Naser's explanation shows that the change has to come from within and both women and men should work towards it. The history of Afghanistan has also shown that change from outside, particularly in relation to women's status, does not work (see Chapter 2). Therefore, I argue that ideology has to be challenged from within, otherwise there can be no change in the form and degree of patriarchy. Instead, it may

become stricter in both degree and form as was evident during the Taliban. If the Islamic State were to emerge victorious, it could become worse, as has occurred in Iraq and Syria (McNally and Amiral, 2016).

Women's lack of autonomy in decision-making and access to public spaces is the main barrier to their employment, given the patriarchal nature of Afghan society. The family is often the main determinant of women's access to public spaces. Family limitations were one of the common themes mentioned by interview participants, both women and men. The following extracts illustrate this point:

> The reason is family limitations because women can't choose what they want to do—they can't choose their own occupation. Once they [women] get married due to some family issues their husbands/in-laws may not allow them to work in a university environment (Mujtaba, male, non-professorial position).

> Women can't get into academia because of family issues—they need to cook, take care of the family and children and etc, and because of the economy. Since women have to do housework and they have got responsibilities at home, they can't complete the standard (Omar, male, non-professorial position).

Mujtaba and Omar's descriptions above indicate the role of family in women's education and employment. Women's access to public spaces is usually restricted by what occurs in the private space (Schmeidl, 2009). The majority of women's decisions such as engaging in employment and marriage are made by their families and they usually do not often have autonomy. In Afghan society autonomy is often associated with men. Being autonomous, as Stoljar (2013) argues, "is acting on motives, reasons,

or values that are one's own" which is "associated with the characteristic ideal of a "self-made man" (p. 1-2). However, women lack these ideal characteristics of autonomy due to conservative customs and traditions, which disadvantage them in the workplace.

Women's autonomy also depends on the availability of options, structures and laws in place within society to support it. As Brison (2000) argues, "if one has an inadequate range of significant options to choose from, one's autonomy is diminished and the extent to which significant options are available to someone depends on the kind of society she lives in" (p. 285). Given the strict public-private distinctions and the weak state, Afghan women have very limited options.

Although women have legal rights to marry or divorce, the latter is against cultural norms. The majority of girls are married at a young age (see Chapter 2). As Naseem explained:

> There is family problem-- there is one more thing in Afghanistan that the legal age to get married is 22 or 23 or 24 but most of families marry their daughters off at the age of 17 or 18—they are forced to marry and once they get married their husbands don't let them... Some families don't consider their daughters wishes— it may not be like this 100% (Naseem, male, professorial position).

As Naseem's description shows marriage at an early age not only prevents women from pursuing their education, but also prevents them from gaining possible access to independent work in public spaces. Further, the study by Bahgam and Mukhtari (2004)

shows that girls married off at a younger age are more likely to experience domestic violence. The structures of femininity and masculinity often normalise violence against women (Moghadam, 2005). Traditionally, once a girl is married, she mostly cannot leave even if she is in an unwanted, abusive marriage. This was evidenced in Khalida's description:

> I have worked in [one of the] women's associations and there were some cases that women, despite being academics, were beaten by their husbands. I felt really sorry. The teacher should have the power and authority over others not vice versa. Unfortunately, we have had such issues. The solution was to get a divorce, but because of the children she couldn't. She had to compromise and get retirement even in low rank e.g. pohanyar [Junior teaching assistant].

Khalida's narrative suggests that it is uncommon for a woman to leave a marriage despite facing domestic violence. If she attempts to go against these norms, she cannot afford to live alone, especially as a young girl/woman. Women in Afghanistan often cannot live alone because adequate social protection does not exist (Azarbaijani-Moghaddam, 2014). They need to stay in their parents' house before the marriage and in their husband's house after marriage. Women who live alone are stigmatised and become more exposed to patriarchal practices. They are not considered good women and perhaps perceived as deviants because by living alone women threaten the logic of patriarchal ideology and male dominance (Sanday, 1987). It is worth noting that there are a few women's shelters that accept abused women who have fled their homes but there is a fear of the Taliban returning and undoing all this progress (Bezhan, 2012). For

example, according to the recent Human Rights Watch report on Afghanistan (2016), the Taliban looted women activists' offices and shelters and threatened them, which compelled activists to leave the city of Kunduz.

The reason for such restrictions is that women's sexuality is conceptualised as needing to be controlled, and this is best done within the family. The reason for regulating women's sexuality is the continuation of the family, the main site of male power and dominance for producing and reproducing patriarchy (Rubenberg, 2001) and assuring its future through child bearing and rearing. Women who engage in pre-marital sex are rejected by men and they are stigmatised by society. Contraception is not readily available for women. There is low contraceptive use among married women because of poverty, youth and lack of education (Rasooly *et al*., 2015). Similarly, abortion is not a common practice among Afghan women although it is legal in certain circumstances. This is one of the reasons why women have several children. Women's strictly controlled sexuality has been one barrier to any change in the nature and form of patriarchy. In fact, it has become stricter due to insecurity (Human Rights Watch, 2016). A woman's body is the symbol of the family and the nation and needs to be protected (Yuval-Davis, 1994).

According to Walby, the state and its policies play a key role in women's lives. She argues that changes in the state result in change in the form of patriarchy and following these changes in the state, from private patriarchy to public patriarchy. However, the Afghan central state has often been weak and patriarchal. Patriarchal practices of the state are visible in developed countries such as Britain where women's

income is determined by the patriarchal state or patriarchal structure of the labour market (Walby, 1990). But given the weak Afghan state, the laws and policies to enforce women's empowerment have frequently failed because they have often been a top-down strategy (see chapter 2). The state is also poor. Afghanistan does not have an income to support its citizens. There is no welfare support for women mainly because the state is weak and unable to make men pay taxes to support women. Therefore, a weak and economically poor state lacking law and legal enforcement and strict public-private distinctions can contribute to the lack of change in the form of patriarchy.

Further, my findings show women are not usually given permission to travel abroad alone and that affects their chances of being hired. As Khatera stated:

> ... due to the conservative ideas, women have some problems, for example, women cannot go abroad, to pursue their higher education, they don't take night classes, they are less present in the afternoon. These are the limitations. (Khatera, female, non-professorial position, Afghan).

Khatera's explanation suggests women's lack of geographical mobility that acts as a barrier to participation in higher education. Culturally, women are not allowed to travel alone; they need to be accompanied by a mahram, a male family member. This finding is in line with Almansour and Kempner's (2016) findings on the role of Arab female academics in public spaces. They found that barriers to transportation and international travel are the main cultural impediments to women's participation in public spaces. Given the family responsibilities and the need for a mahram, women

usually are not geographical mobile. As a result of these cultural limitations, women are often considered less active and less productive, and thus they are not hired. They are blamed for characteristics that are ascribed to them. Collinson *et al.* (1990) refer to this as 'blame the victim'. Women are blamed for the results of the cultural customs and traditions that are imposed on them.

Naser pointed to the conceptualisation of men and women as complementary rather than equal (Zulfacar, 2006; Kakar, 2005; Rashid, 2001). He said:

> Only a small number of people accept the fact that men and women have equal rights—very low percentage. But most of the people believe that women are for home. There is a saying 'women either at home or in the grave' (Naser, male, professorial position, Tajik).

Naser's description reveals the patriarchal ideology that reinforces and reproduces gender-segregated social worlds and unequal power, which result in the social exclusion of women. However, these ideologies have been normalised and seem natural and necessary aspects of gender relations (Yuval-Davis, 1994). The normality of ideology and inequality is rooted in social structures, history and beliefs of society in general (Holvino, 2010; Bradley and Healy, 2008).

Culturally, men are dominant (Kehoe, 2008) and women are considered as semi-men (Brodsky, 2004). Women are not considered equal to men, either physically or intellectually. These kinds of stereotypes and prejudices against women with regard to

hiring are evidenced in this study. My findings show women and men referring to these gender stereotypes differently. Ameena in her interview said:

> There is gender discrimination. Women are hired less than men because high authorities who are mostly men think they [women] are not intelligent (Ameena, female, non-professorial position).

In his interview Naser said:

> ... it is most people's mentality not to give opportunities for women because they can't do or they don't have talent (Naser, male, professorial position, Tajik).

Although both Ameena and Naser demonstrated that academics in a position of power hold strongly stereotyped views about women which influence their hiring decisions, Ameena is more specific in referring to senior authorities who are mostly men. However, Naser generalises by referring to 'people's mentality'. His statement suggests that he does not see his privilege but sees the inequality elsewhere (McIntosh, 1995; Acker, 2006).

However, their descriptions suggest that senior authorities do not select women, not because they are unsuitable but because of the stereotypical assumptions about the intellectual capabilities of women as compared with men (Collinson *et al.*, 1990). This finding is in line with the study by Steinpreis *et al.* (1999) that shows both men and women recruiters were more likely to select a male candidate than a female candidate with identical records. They concluded there was a gender bias on the part of both male and female recruiters towards male candidates.

From the perspective of social cognition theory, people categorise others into an 'ingroup' and an 'outgroup'. Categorisation occurs unconsciously through ingroup preference which leads to negative stereotyping of members of the outgroup (Fiske, 2000). In general, people are more comfortable with, hold more positive views of, and feel more obliged to, members of their own group (Perdue *et al*., 1990 in Reskin, 2000), and hence, try to avoid outgroup members and favour ingroup members (Fiske, 2000).

The visibility and cultural importance of sex and its role as a core base of stratification make it an almost automatic base of categorisation (Reskin, 2000). The categorisation is then accompanied by stereotyping that influences people's perceptions, interpretations and evaluations (Reskin, 2000:320) and results in discrimination (Brewer and Brown, 1998). Each stereotype and attribute bias is unique and reflects the broader culture and social structure of society (Fiske, 2000). Bias in this study refers to the inclination for or against an individual or a group of individuals in a way that is considered to be unfair.

Biases could also be as a result of conscious actions that are motivated by ignorance or purposeful effort from dominant group members to preserve and enhance their status. Power affects the degree to which people act to stereotype. They cannot usually afford to stereotype others on whom they depend, but they can afford to stereotype subordinate groups (Fiske ,*et al.* 1999:241). In addition, their dominant position is more likely to give them particular confidence in their stereotypes (Risken, 2000). Therefore, the dominant group, that is men in this study, tend to favour ingroup members, other men rather than outgroup members, i.e. women (Brewer and Brown, 1998: 570).

My findings further show that both women and men believe that the cultural division of work is the main barrier to women's advancement, which again indicates the prominence of private patriarchy within public spaces. The division of labour between the sexes in Afghan society is highly specific, which also is consistent with a high degree of separation implied by the public-private distinctions. Within the home, men do not usually do things defined as being "women's work", such as cleaning, washing and cooking but expect women to do them. As Naseem stated:

> Women are responsible for housework, child care, and academic work. Some of educated men when they go home they order their wives to 'bring me food or wash my clothes'. I don't think all academics help their wives in cooking, washing clothes or cleaning the house, it might be limited. This society is traditional—they [men] say 'wash the clothes because it is your job and they say to take care of the children too' (Naseem, male, professorial position).

Naseem's description shows that the majority of men do not usually help their female family members with domestic work because it is considered to be a woman's job. There is also a distinct cultural norm that when a man helps a woman with domestic work, he is considered as '*zancho*' in Dari and '*narkhazai*' in Pashtu by the community, meaning a man who behaves in a way that is considered appropriate and typical of a woman. It also implies that a man who helps with domestic work is not a real man and it lessens his manhood (Echavez, 2016). The term is offensive for men.

In Afghan society, there is a hegemonic idea of manhood that is imposed on other masculinities. This hegemonic form of masculinity is practised more by Pashtuns than

other ethnic groups such as Tajiks and Hazaras. According to Saikal (2012), within the Hazara community, there appears to be more of a gender balance than is the case with the other ethnic groups, particularly Pashtuns. However, men who do not perform hegemonic masculinity in a patriarchal society are considered as showing 'complicit masculinity' (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005:832). Complicit masculinity is a type of masculinity that describes men who benefit from patriarchy without performing and challenging the strong version of male dominance. Men are pressurised by social norms to maintain their hegemonic masculinity which legitimises the division of work between men and women that privileges men (Connell, Messerchmidt, 2005; Messerschmidt, 2012).

Naseem also referred to educated men's lack of support with housework. This is in line with Mason and Goulden's (2002, in Baker, 2012) findings that show, even among well-educated men, the acceptance of family responsibilities seems to be unequally distributed between men and women. Although there is no evidence as to whether unemployed men help their wives in the household and/or with childcare, given the complete acceptance of sexual division of labour, the majority of them seem unlikely to help. A study by Morris in the UK (1984) reported the lack of any major increase in undertaking housework by men despite being unemployed.

Naseem's description not only says that women and men have different tasks and responsibilities but that it is the social relations in which these tasks are performed (Delphy, 1984 in Walby 1990). Social relations are constructed and reconstructed through cultural beliefs about the place of women and men within society. Cultural

acceptance of masculine values legitimises hierarchal gender relations between men and women (Connell and Messerchmidt, 2005).

My findings show that women and men refer to women's main responsibilities for domestic work and the impact of child care upon their experience in the workplace slightly differently. Men tend to be implicit while women are more explicit. Naseem, in his interview, indicated:

> Perhaps women have family problems more than men do - child responsibility, housework responsibility. They [women] are busy with family responsibilities. Perhaps family responsibilities don't allow them to work on their academic work. They are obliged to prepare materials, get promotion - this is a challenge. Men can do research outside the university but women can't do it (Naseem, male, professorial position).

Similarly, Elyas said:

> ... we know that some of female academics have got family issues and responsibilities and they have less time to do research or write an academic paper and that's the reason they [female academics] can't get promotion in 3 years (Elyas, male, non-professorial position, Tajik).

Naseem and Elyas's explanations show that family responsibilities are major barriers to women's lack of advancement in academia. In particular, child care and domestic work have been put forth as explanations for women's slower advancement. Culturally women hold the main responsibility for domestic work and childcare and elderly family members' responsibilities in spite of working full-time or/and part-time. Domestic work and child care responsibilities influence the career trajectories of women in two ways.

First, children (there are usually more than two) take time and energy; in particular, that of women, as most of them have the main responsibility for domestic and caring tasks; second, people in the academic environment consider them as less motivated about their career (Nazemi et al., 2012). In addition, Naseem also refers to women's lack of geographical mobility, as discussed earlier.

It is worth pointing that although Naseem knows women hold the main responsibility at home, as he stated in his second statement, he used the word 'perhaps' to refer to women's lack of advancement. He implicitly refers to women's domestic responsibilities because the patriarchal nature of society normalised a gendered division of work. However, Khalida explicitly refers to women's main responsibilities at home and the cultural expectation that women's work, outside the home, is peripheral to their lives and how such expectations affect their performance within the workplace. She stated:

> It's difficult for female academics. As you know women have got many responsibilities in Afghanistan and the reason for lagging behind men...There are very few female academics in higher positions. There are different reasons for it e.g. family responsibilities, children and family protection. They can't find time out of housework ... The reason is that it takes time, they have to be in the office from morning to late afternoon and they won't be able to take care of their children. The number of children is a lot in Afghanistan. Mothers usually have several children who need to be educated, going to school, prepare food. It is not like other countries to just buy a burger; mothers have to prepare, breakfast, lunch and dinner. These are reasons

that don't allow women to improve themselves. They can't find the time to study and do research and as a result, they can't get promotion. They can't go abroad. These are the issues that cause fewer women in academia and those women who are in academia and have high positions are single. This is because they have less responsibility at home and they have enough time to study and work on their research (Khalida, female, professorial position, Pashtun).

Khalida was reflecting on women's many responsibilities in private spaces in Afghan society. She pointed to women's responsibility for children and family protection. Women are the 'anchor' of the family (Dominelli, 2016)[4] . They provide stability and protection to the family within the private sphere. Women's presence strengthens the family life in Afghan society. Further, Khalida's description shows that women are more likely to have several children. Having a child or perhaps a number of children has both moral and economic reasons in Afghan society rather than just economic ones, as Walby argues. Children are seen as blessings to parents and to the family. They can also be the source of income for the family. However, this also suggests women's lack of control over their reproduction (Walby, 1990). Although medical intervention has improved the situation of some women to some extent, not all women can afford to pay the doctor's fee for contraception. In addition, having several children is a common practice and often encouraged. Unlike Western societies' interventions in the sphere of reproduction, which did not only involve women activists but also doctors (Gordon, 1979 in Walby, 1990), in Afghanistan, women encourage other women to have more

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[4] The idea came in one of our supervision meetings.

children, especially if the couple does not have a son, because of social rivalry or/and needing a successor and heir to family property. Although men and women are the determinants of reproductive control, social pressure and poverty strongly influence reproduction. Aunohita (2012) in her report reveals that poverty and lack of education are the main reasons for families having more children in Afghanistan.

In addition to women's main responsibilities being domestic work and children, Khalida points out the traditional families' lack of modern household aids at home. Afghanistan is one of the poorest countries in the world with low living standards, except in the case of a small number of people (see Chapter 2). The majority of families do not have access to household aids such as washing machines, microwaves, ovens, and vacuum cleaners at home, and even if they do there is a lack of power and electricity. Although the electricity supply is relatively good and regular in urban areas including Kabul, it is not constant enough to use electrical equipment. Thus domestic work with basic facilities, and childcare, take up the majority of women's time and as a result, they do not get enough time to focus on their career development. Baker (1975, in Baker, 2012) in her study of academics in Canada found that women who maintain a traditional division of work at home generally hold a lower-level position in the workplace.

On one hand, there is a traditional culturally sanctioned family lifestyle where women are expected to do domestic work with basic household aids and take care of children - usually more than two, as mentioned by Khalida; on the other hand, the University is a modern workplace where women are expected to work similar hours to those of men. The majority of working women in Afghanistan struggle between a traditional family

with low standards of living and modern workplaces as Khalida indicated. There has been a change in employment, but not in the private sphere. According to Walby, the change in household structure shifts the form and degree of patriarchy. However, as Khalida's description suggests, there has been a slight change in the form and degree of patriarchy, in comparison with the Taliban regime when no women were allowed to work in public spaces, but not to the benefit of women - because the shift doubles the load for working women. They carry the burden of both private and public patriarchy simultaneously. In contrast to Walby, who argues that working women and men perform within the capitalist relations of production, working women in Afghanistan perform under both patriarchal relations of production as well as the capitalist relation of production. Hence, public-private distinctions and lack of modern household aids make it difficult for women to be successful in both spheres (Moore *et al.*, 2005).

It is important to notice that female participants, in addition to male participants, accept the sharp division of work, with women allocated the main responsibility for the home and children, men being responsible for financial matters. This shows that women are not just passive recipients of power, but they receive and exercise power simultaneously because they gain economic security as women do in the West. Their acceptance of the division of labour not only produces gender-segregated worlds but also reproduces gender norms, which Butler calls performativity (1990).

However, women's acceptance of the division of labour is strategic. It is a passive form of resistance used by women to maximise their autonomy in Afghan society (Kandiyoti, 1988). Women's strategy of resistance is to keep the family together, as indicated by

Khatera by taking the paradoxical form of challenge for increased responsibility and control by men in order to claim half of this particular patriarchal bargain-protection (Kandiyoti, 1988). Family security links directly to women's autonomy in public spaces. Public and private spheres reinforce each other (Goffman, 1959b). By maintaining both family and work, women protect their social position of respectability (Connell, 2009). Women perform their culturally accepted gender norms to negotiate gender roles in public spaces. It is the family that can be an obstacle to women's career development, as mentioned throughout this section, but it can also be the reason for their success. In the next section, I discuss socio-cultural opportunities to women's employment.

Socio-cultural Opportunities

There is evidence, emerging from the semi-structured interviews, to show that family plays a crucial role to women's success in employment. My findings show women and men referred to family support differently. While all women referred to psychological and physical support from their families, some men referred to financial support. This was evident in Masood's description when I asked him if he gets any supports from his family, he said:

> Actually, for now I do not get support from my family because I independently come here and work ... – I support my family (Masood, male, non-professorial position, Pashtun).

Masood's description shows that for him 'support' means financial support, and thus, he does not get it from his family. Instead, he supports his family. This could be because of men's role as the main provider of the family implied by patriarchal ideology. In Afghan society, a man is obliged to provide financial support to the family especially if he is the only man in the family (Echavez *et al*., 2016). Further, Masood's description shows men's autonomy and geographic mobility, in comparison to women as discussed earlier.

On the other hand, women were more likely to refer to the importance of family support. This was clearly stated by Khalida, when asked how she has managed her family and career:

> It depends on family and individual's life style. At first, I was living with my family. My husband and in-laws have been supportive... my husband and sons support me. When I am working on my book, they help me on housework. Whenever I go late,

they don't ask me. They support me as much as they can. My family support is very

important to me... (Khalida, female, professorial position, Pashtun)

Similarly, Sarah associates her development with her family, particularly her father.

She stated:

My family encouragement was the only reason for my development. They have had

an important role in my personality formation. My dad always encouraged me...He

was encouraging me to study and work and serve the people. My family supports

me too. I am here from morning until 7 or 8 in the evening teaching, and doing

administrative and departmental work. My family can understand me that my work

is a lot. They always encourage me and tell me to be more patient (Sarah, female,

non-professorial position).

Khalida and Sarah both referred to family encouragement and support. Given the

patriarchal nature of Afghan society, family support becomes the key to women's

access and success in public spaces and this is how private patriarchy governs public

spaces. The family determines the social structure that shapes gender relations

(Walby, 1990: 88), and it is a potential source of power for Afghan women

(Azarbaijani-Mogahddam, 2006; Deutsch, 2007; Schmeidl, 2009). A number of

studies found that family support, in particular parental support, shapes

educational and employment choices for women (Reay *et al.*, 2001). Families who

are educated and/or who value education and occupational success usually

encourage their children, no matter girls or boys, to attend school, continue their

higher education programmes and aspire to professional careers (Baker, 2012).

Khalida also referred to support from her in-laws. This finding is in line with Tlaiss and Kauser's (2011) study of Lebanese women managers. They show that family, in particular the extended family, can be very helpful to working women. She found that the majority of married women received help in relation to housework and child care from their extended family members. Both Khalida and Sarah pointed to the male family members' support as a reason for their success in academia. As Azarbaijani-Moghaddam (2006) states, "the family is obviously where the most profound societal changes in gender relations start and it is mostly the reaction of males to external stimuli which bring change for the women of the family" (p. 59). Male family members' support plays an essential role in women's lives particularly given the ongoing political uncertainty within the country.

My findings show show that family, especially the male family members, provide security, both physical and psychological to women. Physical security in this study refers to protection of individuals from physical actions and events that cause them serious damage. Psychological security refers to absence of fear and anxiety. Mariam asserted:

> My husband gives me lift every morning to come to come to university. And when I had nightshift which I had to leave the university at 7:30pm [quite late], my husband picked me up. Otherwise it was difficult to go back home (Mariam, female, non-professorial position, Pashtun).

Mariam's description shows that the private sphere provides women with physical and psychological security which allow them to work outside the home without any fears, and again shows the prominence of private patriarchy within public spaces.

Women only have the private space to seek help and support. Private space also provides women a potential place to practice power. As my findings show, women are not powerless, especially within the family. This was evident in Mariam's explanations, she said:

> Fortunately, the person I married has always encouraged me. My wish was to be an academic. When I was at the university, I was working hard to get high scores. Although I got married in my second year, had baby in my third year and was pregnant in my fourth year, I was studying hard. He is completely different from other Afghan men. He has always supported me. Although my in-laws, my husband's brother, were not happy for me to work, they were not even happy about my university, I came to work here because my husband was supporting me (Mariam, female, non-professorial position, Pashtun).

Mariam's narrative shows that women are often able to obtain what they want to achieve by using different strategies such as patience and obedience through the family structure. Women use bargaining and negotiating strategies (Kandiyoti, 1988) or what Rosen (1984) calls 'reality bargaining' because they do not have control over patriarchal ideology and external factors such as insecurity (See the next section). The resources and bargaining process that women and men have is the key to the outcome of any negotiation (Rubenberg, 2001).Given the context of Afghanistan, women have family especially the male family members, as indicated by Khalida, Sarah and Mariam, as a resource of power and that is another sign of the dominance of private patriarchy in the public sphere.

Family is the key site for bonding capital. Family bonding, as a form of social capital is a valuable asset for women in Afghanistan, particularly given a weak and

economically poor state that suffers from high unemployment and insecurity. Bonding in this study refers to family ties based on trust and respect. Bonding social capital according to Putnam (2000) occurs among homogenous individuals and it often benefits those with internal access. In societies where the majority of the population have little economic capital and face various challenges to get access to paid jobs, social capital becomes the key to their welfare (Putnam, 2000). Putnam (1993) defines social capital as norms, regulations, trust and reciprocity that are embedded in social relations and social structures of society to facilitate actions for mutual benefits (Narayan, 1997).

In Afghan society, family is the safest net for women both socially and materially. For the majority of women, including working women, family is the only source of financial support. As mentioned elsewhere, the majority of women do not work (outside the home) and they do not have an income other than family income. Those who work in various governmental institutions do not earn enough wages/salary to live alone. The state is economically poor and does not have a budget to increase employees' salaries. The low salary of civil servants is also one of the main reasons for corruption in most governmental institutions (see Chapter 2). Family bonding is also an effort to protect members from any kind of external risk, vulnerability and violent exclusionary strategies (Burke, 2002). Given the political uncertainty, women cannot live alone. Leaving the family or husband is not only abandonment to poverty but also insecurity and perhaps putting their lives at risk (Rostami-Povey, 2003).

In the context of strictly public-private distinctions and constraining external conditions, family bonding becomes a matter of maintaining 'short-term regime security' (Jackson, 2013). There has not been any clear-cut case where women in a strictly patriarchal society have gained their freedom, in a short period of time. The fundamental challenge facing Afghan women lies in achieving a greater level of identity/status towards improved levels of genuine freedom and equality. However, the challenge lies in the willingness and ability of women as well as men to substitute short-term regime security for long-term gender equality. It also depends on external factors such as security. In the next section, I discuss the role of security in public-private distinctions.

Public-private Dichotomy and Security

My findings show that uncertainty as well as strict public-private distinctions has often limited women's employment in Afghan society. As Mujtaba said:

> You know that Afghanistan has been through several years of war and for a long time women were not allowed to work in public. In general, this is a male dominated society and they [men] don't like it when women are in higher positions than them [men] for example to teach them (Mujtaba, male, non-professorial position).

Mujtaba reflects on the war and uncertainty, and patriarchal nature of society where women have been invisible in public spaces. Many women live in seclusion, (Karlsson and Mansory, 2007) which limits their freedom and autonomy and prevents them from taking part in activities outside the home as discussed earlier. This is not unique to Afghanistan. In other Islamic countries, such as Turkey and

Egypt, women were as oppressed and excluded from public spaces just like Afghan women. However, in these countries, the situation of women has been changed by women's movements, which begin with women activists. For instance, in Egypt the reform in women's education, employment and social mobility was as a result of women activists and male modernists as well as support from the state. Similarly, in Turkey, the legal reforms of the state and women activists' movements have changed the situation of women drastically. In both countries, women activists with similar demographic characteristics, mainly urban and educated, have breathed life into women's status within society.

However, in Afghanistan there have not been any women's movements, although there have been some efforts by reformers and modernisers, both women and men in urban areas, to improve the situation of women (see Chapter 2). Nonetheless, the changes have often been fragile because of uncertainty and insecurity. Khatera referred to the fragility of the situation particularly during the Mujahidin and Taliban regimes. She stated:

> During Mujahidden [sic] regime academics could not teach at the university due to rocket launches from different political parties. University student and academics were going to different places such as shrines, mosques and sometimes in … [Higher Education Institutions]. … After 1375 [1996] it was Taliban regime and academics' work was limited. I can give an example of myself, I supposed to be … [in one of the non-professorial positions] during Mujahidin regime, but due to political crisis and uncertainty I couldn't get promotion which was left until Taliban regime. In one of the meetings in which I was the only woman among men during Taliban regime, the dean of the faculty after knowing the issue insulted me and

locked my book in his office cupboard for 5 years. From this example we can say how the situation of academics was during Taliban regime (Khatera, female, non-professorial position).

Khatera's description shows that all students and academics, both women and men, faced challenges during the Mujahidin regime, but the situation became worse particularly for women during the Taliban regime. Further, it shows women's symbolic public spaces provided by the government, both during Mujahidin and Taliban regimes. The government provided its citizens with education but in an instable and insecure situation where the majority of them lived their lives in fear of death. Although uncertainty negatively affects both women and men, it disadvantages women more than men because of the patriarchal nature of society, as Khatera stated.

Historically women have accessed public spaces because of political demands, mostly by Western allies, and capitalist demands. As Arzou pointed out:

In Afghanistan there is an issue that every political regime has had political treatment of civil and social issues—they haven't been separated. (Arzou, female, non-professorial position)

Arzou's statement reveals the influence of politics on social issues including women's rights. While women's issues have become a part of the political agenda in different regimes, including that of the Soviet Union, the Mujahidin, the Taliban, and Post-Taliban, the methods of oppression and marginalisation they employed differed (see Chapter 2). For instance, during the Soviet Union regime women's reforms were part of the broader political agenda (see Chapter 2) and resulted in

failure of any positive changes to women's lives, particularly in rural areas within Afghan society. As Naseem referred to it:

> In first regime [Soviet Union], [academics] didn't have social experience—
> Democratic party didn't know people, they were following socialism books and
> theories which was not accepted/welcomed in [Afghan] society. They [Soviet
> Union allies] didn't have much awareness of society and culture (Naseem, male,
> professorial position).

Naseem's description points out the Soviet Union regime's top-down strategies with a lack of sufficient knowledge about Afghan culture and traditions that resulted in failure of gender reforms.

However, the public-private distinctions became blurred and reduced, to some extent, during the Soviet Union regime as a result of social and economic changes as well as relatively good security, particularly in big cities as Arzou suggested in her interview:

> There was one public university and men and women were studying and the
> educational services were good—it was based on the needs of the society. The
> security was good—security plays an important role in this case (Arzou, female,
> non-professorial position).

As Arzou's description indicates, security plays a crucial role in women's access to public spaces because it allows them to participate in public spaces, with no fear of their lives being in danger and fewer family restrictions due to insecurity. In addition, due to patriarchal ideologies and the assumption that women were being

'Westernised' (Abirafeh, 2005), it resulted in a strong reaction against the government and changes in women's status.

However, in the Post-Taliban governments, there have been some positive changes as indicated by Arzou:

> We can see that Afghan women have been active in all sphere of society beyond the expectations especially in educational sectors. For example, in the past we might have had 10 girls in one class, but now in both public and private universities we are expecting more than 30% female students. This shows a positive change and it shows improvement of the situation.

Sarah also said:

> Recently we can see that women are given chance. There were 2 or 3 female academics in our faculty but now we have 10 female academics. It is a good number compared to past years (Sarah, female, non-professorial position).

Arzou and Sarah were reflecting on the positive changes to women's lives, particularly in urban areas in recent years. Sarah also referred to an increase in the number of female academics compared to the past, since the interim government (2001). However, despite these changes, the strict public-private distinctions are maintained as discussed earlier (see Socio-cultural Barriers). This is because of the ongoing uncertainty and insecurity. Naser said:

> The problems of academics in Afghanistan are the security, unacceptable security for academics (Naser, male, professorial position, Tajik).

Further, findings show that one of the primary reasons for fewer women in higher education institutions is insecurity. As Shoaib said in his interview:

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> The only issues would be security and some other issues out of the academic environment (Shoaib, male, non-professorial position, Pashtun).

Although security is relatively good in big cities compared with that under the Mujahidin regime, it limits women's access to public spaces as mentioned by Naser and Shoaib. A study by Hayssegger (2011 in Saikal) makes clear how security challenges limit women's access to public spaces. Women working in public spaces continue to live in fear of their lives due to several assassinations and acid attacks there (Haussegger, 2011). Afghan women's lack of autonomy is not only because of the patriarchal nature of society but also because of ongoing uncertainty that impede their practical control. There is no physically secure environment for women, which makes it dangerous for them to live alone and/or work in public spaces. Security compromises the individual's freedom and autonomy. As Ameena pointed out, security plays a crucial role in women's access to public spaces.

> There are less educated women and the reasons are family issues, economic issues and security (Ameena, female, non-professorial position).

Ameena's description shows that in addition to family, economic and security issues play a key role in women's lives. The majority of families are living in poverty, and for some families, a girl's marriage is a source of money (Zulfacar, 2006), as mentioned earlier. As Ameena's description reveals, security also play a key role on women's autonomy. According to Oshana (2006), the presence of certain external conditions determines one's autonomy. She argues that social constraints limit women's autonomy. A woman's lack of autonomy is due to her personal relations with others and the social institutions of her society (Oshana 2006, 62).

As my findings reveal, security reinforces the ideology of public-private distinctions. According to Stern (2005), security is gendered and is imbued with certain identities. Identities during 'securitisation' (Waever, 1995) often become less fluid and more fixed and only correct identity, which rests upon the historically embedded cultural differences stays uncertain (Stern, 2006). According to Campbell (1999), the correct identity relies on the "being of the subject of security" (p. 24). Culturally, women are the ones that need to be saved and protected by security forces. Additionally, Afghan women's identity has also been politicised by international communities to justify military intervention (Cole, 2008; Cockburn, 2010; Detraz, 2012) (see Chapter 2). Hence, insecurity affects women's and men's social relations. The relationship of protector/protected becomes more salient with insecurity, as Wibben (2010) argues:

> [It} resembles a protection racket, where the protected loses all autonomy and is dependent upon the protector who defines the threat (and the response to it). The chivalrous protector faces the dangers of the outside world but is also burdened by the need for protection and personal liability if protection fails, in which case the protector might direct his anger at those closest—by limiting their movement and ideas (p. 22).

The patriarchal divide is increasing with the uncertainty within the country, insecurity often reinforcing these patriarchal ideologies and practices that subordinate women (Daley, 1991; Kay, 1988). Tickner (1992) also identified a link between lack of security and inequality. Insecurity often limits women's options, resulting in inequality and discrimination. A study of men and masculinteis in Afghanistan by Echavez *et al*. (2016) showed 97.8% of men and women, agreed that

men should be responsible for the security of the family. However, ethnic groups varied significantly in terms of the degree of agreement. Pashtun respondents were more likely to strongly agree (73.5%) compared with Hazara and Tajik (60.8%, 53.7% respectively). This could be because in most of the predominantly Pashtu-speaking areas, including Nangargah, where the study was conducted, security is not good - particularly for women, and thus men and women in these areas were more likely to strongly perceive that it is men's responsibility to protect women.

Insecurity and uncertainty affects gender relations and this is another reason for the lack of change in the form of patriarchy from private to public. In uncertain situations, individuals fall back on traditional norms and expectations to help them identify the situation (Keynes, 1921 in Kessler and Daase, 2008). According to Kessler and Daase (2008), uncertainty is a realm "where common standards of rationality break down, where situations are undefined and unstructured and only over time gain more fixed contours" (p.223). Although Walby's public-private distinctions do not consider security concerns, they do apply to gender relations. In the Afghan context, insecurity is one of the main reasons that private patriarchy has been maintained and has dominated public patriarchy for several decades. Insecurity creates a climate of fear and leaves only the private sphere as a safe sphere particularly for women.

Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to present academics' perceptions of gender equality and to explore the complexity of gender relations in higher education in Afghanistan. The first qualitative findings regarding socio-cultural barriers to and opportunities for women's employment revealed that in Afghanistan there has not been a shift in the form of patriarchy, from private to public as Walby argues. Instead private patriarchy dominates public patriarchy. Private patriarchy, in contrast to Walby's strategy of exclusion which mainly has a material base, has both a material and ideological base in which the latter suppresses the former in Afghanistan. Women, whose bodies as a symbol of honour (see page 198) need to be controlled and whose sexuality needs to be protected, play a crucial role in women's employment. In addition, women's symbolic public space due to insecurity reinforces patriarchal ideologies (see page 224). In addition, as findings show, there have not been any remarkable changes in the patriarchal structures identified by Walby that shift private patriarchy to public.

The findings also show that the Afghan culture and history contributed to academics' perceptions of gender inequality in their workplace. However, throughout the findings, it was also revealed that it is not just the culture and historical events but also current socio-political, economical and security issues.

Gender relations in Afghanistan are not only determined by 'culture, history, economic and political norms' as the majority of western theories phrase it. It is security that determines Afghan women and men's relations to each other and to broader society. The notion of insecurity and uncertainty plays a key role in gender

relations in Afghanistan so that women are obliged to continue relying on their families (in the private sphere) informed by Afghan culture, for security. The security is not good in general and for women, Afghan culture in the private sphere provides it.

The family play a key role for women in uncertain situations. Uncertainty and insecurity is a part of reality in Afghan society, which reinforces patriarchy. In such situations, women are the anchor, both culturally and politically. Women keep stability within the family (see page 213). The family as bonding social capital plays a key role in women's life. In contrast with western societies where equality initiatives start with women's activist movements, in Afghanistan the change starts within the family. Historically there has been a backlash every time women have attempted to gain equality in public spaces. However, in the current situation, women are resisting both external and internal oppression by keeping the family together and undertaking a paradoxical form of challenge (see page 216) for greater responsibility than before and control by men to claim the patriarchal bargain-protection (Kandiyoti, 1988).

Overall, patriarchal ideology that is reinforced by insecurity affects women at the institutional and interpersonal levels. In the next chapter, I discuss the institutional practice and process that disadvantage women and minority ethnic groups.

Introduction

In this chapter, I discuss the findings on institutional barriers - the second theme emerging from the semi-structured interviews. 'Institutional barriers', in this study, refers to the practices, procedures and policies that systematically disadvantage one individual or group of individuals over another based on their gender, ethnicity and other personal characteristics. Using Acker's (2006) concept of inequality regimes, I show the ways institutional practices, procedures and policies marginalise women and minority ethnic groups. Throughout this chapter, I will indicate the ways that institutional practices and procedures are gendered and ethnicised as Acker argues, and demonstrate that there are also policies that disadvantage women. The reason is that although the institution is perceived to be based on a meritocratic system, it is the public-private distinction and wider politics and security concerns that govern the practices within the institution. As I show, despite Shah University being in a public space, it is dominated by cultural private patriarchy and its assumptions about women and men's positions in society.

Inequality in the workplace constitutes, as Acker argues, disparities among individuals in power and with control over resources, outcomes and decisions. Although Acker's theorising is based on institutional inequality in Western societies, it is valuable in this study because she recognises the links between institutional inequality and the wider society and its history, culture and politics. Given the Afghan context, inequality within

the institution, to a great extent, has been influenced by the socio-cultural and historical condition and politics of the country. As I will show through my data, institutional practices and decisions are often reached by means of culturally accepted gender norms and wider politics and the institution is not strong enough to implement policies and strategies against such practices. In addition, *wasta* makes it more difficult to challenge inequalities. As a result, it is enormously challenging for women and minority ethnic groups to resist inequality within the institution. The lack of policy implementation by both the institution and the state has allowed private patriarchy to dominate public spaces. In addition, security concerns also reinforce inequality at both institutional and individual levels, a consideration often missed in Western theories, the majority of which take security concerns for granted with regard to gender inequality particularly within the workplace. Given this, in the next section I discuss institutional barriers that disadvantage women and minority ethnic groups in recruitment and career advancement.

Institutional Barriers

Together with the socio-cultural barriers women face in employment, a number of institutional barriers emerged from the semi-structured interviews. A number of academics referred to bureaucracy at Shah University. For example:

> There is lots of bureaucracy in administrative systems in Afghanistan in general and ... [Shah University] in particular... Complaints are not heard... Everyone refers it to someone else higher than himself/herself (Elyas, male, non-professorial position, Tajik).

> I think it is better for the universities to be independent [from the Ministry of Higher Education] in relation to recruitment, promotion... there would be less bureaucracy... (Shoaib, male, non-professorial position, Pashtun).

Elyas and Shoaib's descriptions suggest Shah University is a bureaucratic institution with a hierarchal structure that limits academics' entry. Bureaucratic institutions are often organised along departmental lines, emphasising supremacy (Connell, 2006), which results in inequality (Acker, 2006). In other words, such institutions maintain inequality through the institutional hierarchy which is structured in a way that advantages individuals in position of power, who are often men, representing their own interests in institutional processes and practices rather than individuals in lower positions who are often women (Bridges and Nelson, 1989). Although in some countries, such as Pakistan and Iran, the categorisation has changed and women can be found in higher-level positions (Roomi and Parrott, 2008), the hierarchal categorisation is unchanged in Afghan institutions. As my quantitative findings show,

men occupy the majority of senior positions while women are in lower-ranking positions (see demographic information in Chapter 5).

Bureaucratic and hierarchal systems of institution are considered organisational logic (Acker, 2012) in my study. Acker (2012) refers to organisational logic as the understanding of how organisation, not necessarily the bureaucracy and hierarchy, is put together and how it works as a whole because of the changes in western bureaucratic institutions where women constitute almost half of management positions. My study, however, refers to the logic of the institution as the logic of bureaucracy and hierarchy because, as Elyas and Shoaib's explanations showed, the bureaucratic hierarchy has not changed, and women are at the bottom of the hierarchy (as my quantitative data showed).

Organisational logics are often based on an abstract worker who does not have any obligations outside work and who would be able to work continuously for several hours, and give his/her entire attention to work (Acker, 2006, 2012). Men are more likely than women to correspond to the abstract workers because of women's main responsibilities, i.e. domestic work and childcare. Work flexibility to reduce these expectations is often available to individuals in higher positions, and since the majority of women are mostly in lower positions compared to men, they lack flexible working hours. In contrast to some academic jobs that are organised as part-time, for instance in the UK or US, Afghan academia, in particular public universities, does not offer academic part-time positions, an area that needs further policy consideration. Given women's main responsibility at home, the gendered institution simultaneously

produces and reproduces gender inequalities on the basis of everyday and work obligations (Acker, 2006). The organisational logic implicitly differentiates men from women, with men being seen as real workers (Acker, 2012) something suggested by Khatera in this study:

> Some Faculties make some limitations themselves. They prefer to hire more active, productive and punctual. Perhaps since women have family responsibilities as well, they [women] can't take more responsibility. All these cause Faculties to prefer to hire men than women (Khatera, female, non-professorial position, Afghan).

These practices are usually guided by what Acker (2006) calls 'textual materials' that are designed by individuals in positions of power and authority that disadvantage one group over another. In this study, I refer to them as meritocratic procedures that produce and reproduce gender and ethnic inequalities. As I show throughout this chapter, the meritocratic system of academia has often been used by respondents to justify the fact that there is no discrimination based on gender and/or ethnicity in recruitment and promotion.

Bearing in mind the bureaucratic nature of Shah University and public-private distinctions and insecurity, discussed in the previous chapter, in the following sub-sections I discuss the institutional practices, procedures and policies within Shah University that prevent women and minority ethnic groups from gaining access to academic jobs in higher education institutions and obtaining promotion.

Institutional barriers to women's recruitment

The findings show that academics, both women and men, perceive recruitment processes and practices as based on a meritocratic system of academia. As Sarah stated:

> If there is discrimination, it does not exist in our Faculty. Fortunately, in our department we have always thought about it, merit is considered and recruitment is based on merit (Sarah, female, non-professorial position).

Sarah's description shows that although she does not entirely reject the idea that there is discrimination against women in recruitment, she emphasises merit-based recruitment in her Faculty. The assumption that the meritocratic system of academia restricts discrimination based on personal characteristics is a key precept underlying academics' practices (Bailyn, 2003; Van den Brink and Benschop, 2011). Sarah cannot see the inequality because it is embedded in meritocratic procedures and equal opportunity policies. According to Ministry of Higher Education policies, hiring should be strictly based on merit, as was also re-emphasised in NHESP 2015-2019 (Ministry of Higher Education, 2015). Therefore, she perceives recruitment to be meritocratic in her Faculty, which could also be because she holds a relatively high position within the Faculty, and so, she is more likely to be expected to practise Ministry of Higher Education policies. In a similar way, Shoaib, who also holds a higher position in his Faculty, referred to merit-based recruitment and equal opportunities for men and women in recruitment, saying:

Recently the recruitment of men and women has been equal. Position is announced, both men and women can apply and after being shortlisted and passing the exam, the one that has the [greatest] merit will be hired (Shoaib, male, non-professorial position, Pashtun).

Shoaib's description suggests gender-neutral hiring procedures through social networks. However, as Acker (2006) argues, online recruitment is one of the ways in which gender inequality is maintained within the institution, particularly in Afghanistan where not many people have access to high-speed internet services. They need to go to an internet café to get access to a fast internet service and given the public-private distinctions and women's limited geographical mobility, women cannot go there. Therefore, women are less likely than men to know about job advertisements and as a result they are disadvantaged. Although the Ministry of Higher Education has attempted to apply Western and developed countries' policies of equal opportunities to employment, it still offers advantages to one group rather than others due to limited access to new technology and public-private distinctions.

In addition, although job advertisements are open and gender- and ethnic-neutral, the criteria of competence do not translate into gender- and ethnic-neutral selection decisions. As Acker (2006) argues "competence" entails judgement and the gender of applicants and the decision-maker can affect that judgment, which results in decisions that consider men as more competent and suitable for the job than women (p. 450). My findings confirm that applicants' gender does affect committee members' judgements. As Mariam stated in her interview:

There are two main reasons. First women are generally fewer in number. Second, they are hired less. In general, there are more male academics in each department. On the committees, men are more numerous than women. There is gender discrimination… It depends on committees, but men are more numerous than women when voting for something. Men usually vote for other men, rather than for women. In recruitment, Departments have an important role (Mariam, female, non-professorial position, Pashtun).

In the same vein, Elyas said:

… those who hire academics are men and they don't want female employees (Elyas, male, non-professorial position, Tajik).

Although Mariam's description points out that men in general do not vote for women, Elyas refers to mainly men in decision-making positions, without seeing his own privilege as a man. As McIntosh (1995) states, "one privilege of the privileged is not to see their privilege". Individuals in dominant groups often see inequality somewhere else (Acker, 2006).

However, both refer to the male-dominated recruitment committees that disadvantage women more than men. In general, the Dean of the Faculty is responsible for the composition of the recruitment committee, although the proposed membership requires the approval of the Board of the University. In addition to the Faculty Recruitment Committee, there is a University Recruitment Committee the composition of which is the responsibility of the Chancellor and/or the academic Vice-chancellor of the university. On both Committees, the majority of the members are

men, as Mariam affirmed. Van den Brink *et al.*'s (2006) study found that the composition of the Recruitment Committee has an important impact on the recruitment of female applicants. They argue that a predominantly male committee can have a negative impact on women. The greater the number of women on the Recruitment Committee the better the chance female applicants have of being hired. However, given the male predominance in Recruitment Committees in Shah University, women are disadvantaged.

It is worth noting that in policy documents, including NHESP and the Higher Education Gender Strategy, there is no mention of the composition of committee members, an issue that needs further consideration. However, according to the Higher Education Gender Strategy (2013), the Ministry of Higher Education should establish a committee on gender to review university practices. However, no committee has yet drawn attention to the lack of policy implementation.

Mariam's description also shows the open nature of the recruitment procedure. In a sense, committee members can openly vote for the applicants. Although some studies show that an open procedure provides great opportunities for the appointment of women (Van den Brink *et al.*, 2006), it seems to disadvantage women at Shah University. Voting openly on a committee decision is often a collective choice in the Afghan context. People, both women and men, vote for what the majority of people are voting for, not based on their own preferences. In that sense, open voting in recruitment does not increase opportunities for women to be hired, rather it biases committee members' votes including women's.

Selective recruitment is a form of power and control (Acker and Houten, 1974 in Acker, 2006) practised by men over women (Connell, 2006). Power differences are fundamental to gender inequality within the institution. Individuals in senior positions, mostly men, are more likely to have institutional power derived from the hierarchal structure of the institution. Elyas's description portrays the picture:

> Certainly discrimination exists in recruitment … some departments are entirely against women and the reason they [high authorities] give is —I witnessed that approximately around 9 people were supposed to be hired and among them were… 3 men and 6 women—unfortunately 6 female applicants were not accepted which is gender discrimination and 3 male applicants were accepted—although some talented [female] applicants were among them. When we asked the reason, they said we don't want to invest in people who can't decide for themselves—when they get married whether their husbands are open-minded or not or whether they let them work at the university or not, this was one reason. The other reason they said was that we don't want to give 3 months maternity leave for all of them and their responsibilities will be to men. These were two reasons for gender discrimination (Elyas, male, non-professorial position, Tajik).

Elyas's description shows the double bind that applies to women (Baker, 1975 in Baker, 2012:103). It suggests high authorities, the Head of the Department and his circle, who have institutional power derived from the structure of the University to recruit, do not reject female applicants because they are unsuitable for the job but because of their familial roles and cultural expectations. Rejection is based on two assumptions. First, those female applicants will get married and their future husbands will not let them

work at the University. This shows men are privileged vis-à-vis women. As discussed in previous chapter, men are considered the decision makers of the family and they are the ones who consider what family member especially women are allowed or not allowed to do.

The description shows how women's position in the workplace is influenced and structured by social norms and values about women's familial role and responsibilities as wives and mothers. As Witz (1992) argues, women's subordination in the private sphere and their subordination in the workplace are dynamically interrelated and reinforce one another. Hence, it becomes clear how women's perceived and actual familial demands influence their relationship with the workplace, how masculine ideologies are attached to the job and how, as a result, women are disadvantaged (Kanter, 1977 in Walby, 1990).

The second assumption is that they will require maternity leave. Although women are legally allowed to have three months maternity leave, they are not recruited for that very reason which is also anti-merit. Such presuppositions about women and domestic work represent women as unstable and uncommitted employees, often reflecting and reinforcing practices in recruitment (Collinson *et al.*, 1990). A number of scholars used the concept of 'motherhood penalty' or 'child penalty' to refer to employment consequence of having children (Crittenden, 2001; Zhang, 2009). One of the indicators of the 'child penalty' is that female applicants, particularly if they are pregnant, or of prime child-bearing age, are considered less committed and competent. Although the concept is usually used to refer to the marginalisation of pregnant women or mothers

in the workplace compared with childless women or men, in the Afghan context it refers to almost all women, married or single. Thus, hiring women is seen as a wasted investment or additional costs for the institution (Hakim, 1996).

Elyas's description clearly shows how cultural assumptions about 'a woman's place' (Connell, 1987) remain influential in high authorities, such as the Head of the Department and/or the Dean of the Faculty's informal selection criteria. This confirms Petersen *et al.* (2000) and Jenkins's (1984) findings that subjective assessments carry considerable weight in hiring. According to Jenkins (1984), selection criteria are mostly about acceptability rather than suitability. In Afghan society, women's performance is usually considered acceptable for the home rather than for public spaces. The underlying presumption, of not hiring women because they will get married and have children, is that women should stay in private spaces and perform their ascribed gender roles which are based on a strict public-private distinction.

The patriarchal ideology and women's place in society are the main reasons for men's preference for other men rather than women. High authorities' decisions initiate gender division of work (Cohn, 1985) and institutional processes and practices produce and reproduce "cultural definitions of masculinity and femininity" (Grant and Tancred, 1992 in Connell, 2006:838). Institutions often sustain the institutional gendered culture by ensuring men stay at the top and women at the bottom of the hierarchy (Connell, 2006).

Elyas's description further suggests that senior authorities in the department and their circle enjoy extensive autonomy in controlling recruitment practices, and other academics in junior and senior positions contribute to the reproduction of sex-discrimination practised by high authorities (Collinson *et al.*, 1990). As the description above affirms, although Elyas witnessed discriminatory behaviour, he remained silent. It might not have been in his career's best interests to challenge ideological rationalisations that are embedded in the dominant structure of power (Bradly and Healy, 2008) or it was perhaps for purposes of his "self-interest" to remain silent or to concur with discriminatory rationalisation (Collinson et al, 1990).

My findings further show an absence of policy implementation. As Arzou mentioned:

> We don't have strategic plans for academics. Despite having it [National Higher Education Strategic Plans], we don't have the capacity to implement it because we are funded by foreign donors. Ministry of Higher Education is ministry that consumes instead of producing revenues.

Arzou's description points to the lack of institutional strategic plans and Ministry of Higher Educations' financial capacity to implement policies. Gardizi *et al*., (2010) also report absence of policy implementation in public institutions because of low financial capacity and the weak state administration. According to ANDS (2008), there are "weak public sector institutions" and a "poorly defined justice system" (ANDS, 2008-2013). Although none of the interviewees explicitly referred to Shah University as a weak institution lacking policy implementation, given Arzou's description, it is likely to be weak in implementing policies and strategies. According to Mukhopadhyay (2009),

Afghan institutions are weak but formal, with informal power, particularly in the hands of politicians and warlords. This is discussed later in details (See page 263-264). However, informal power within institutions is not unique to Afghanistan: it also exists in Western societies, but given a situation where there are high tensions and weak institutions, it becomes more prominent. The strong patriarchal ideology regarding women's place within society and the absence of policy implementation maintain private patriarchy within the public spaces.

Interview findings also showed the visibility of women despite their relatively small number in Shah University (see demographic information in Chapter 5), as is evidenced in Shoaib's description:

> I think gender discrimination is not very pronounced—only in one or two Faculties or one or two offices. It is much less compared with other places. Fortunately, in most of the Faculties this kind of discrimination does not exist and in each faculty we have female academics (Shoaib, male, non-professorial position, Pashtun).

Shoaib's assertion clearly illustrates invisibility of gender inequality at Shah University, and in fact he is exaggerating women's presence at the university. The effect of being in a minority as women at Shah University is also an important factor in their marginalisation. In such circumstances, women are usually hired as 'tokens' to deflect criticism, (Kanter, 1977), and/or accountability. As a token, then, women are more likely to be visible and their presence is exaggerated. According to Dominelli (2009), exaggeration is a strategy of avoidance used to magnify any small changes toward equality, where inequality is part of everyday life. However, it is important to note that

the number of women has increased since 2001 when not many women were at the University, and thus it adds to their visibility within Shah University (See Chapter 6).

Despite the meritocratic system that gives advantages to men over women, findings confirm the existence of *wasta* in hiring which, by definition, violates merit principles (Martin, 2009). *Wasta* in this study refers to family and/or ethnic and regional connections with someone in a position of power. *Wasta* is considered to be a cultural phenomenon (Marktanner and Wilson, 2016) often practised in collectivist societies (Kropf and Newbury-Smith, 2016). A number of studies consider *wasta* as an aspect of networking and a type of social capital that can have many facets, both positive and negative (Kropf and Newbury-Smith, 2016). From institutional economic perspectives, *wasta* can be beneficial as a trust-building function, particularly in institutions that lack law enforcement. However, in general, it is considered a type of favouritism that provides advantages to a dominant group, not based on merit but on family or regional connections. This type of *wasta* was evident in this study. Khalida in her interview stated:

> Some are hired according to their merit. However, some people put pressure on the committing of… and do *wasta*. We have tried to do our best but it is not 100%, a number of other issues have a role in hiring (Khalida, female, professorial position, Pashtun).

Khalida's illustrations show that the hiring process is a mixture of meritocratic system and *wasta*. In this sense, it is not entirely meritocratic - *wasta* assumes a major role. A number of studies report that ethnic, personal and family connections have become

major vehicles for mobilising access to public jobs in recent years in Afghanistan (Pike, and Brown, 2011). *Wasta* is mainly associated with connections and networking with people in positions of power and influence. Its existence shows the absence of policy implementation. Since women do not usually have these connections and, due to the public-private distinctions, they are disadvantaged. I discuss this further in the next section. This finding is in line with the study by Tlaiss and Kauser (2010) of Lebanese women, in which she found that those women who do not have *wasta* are disadvantaged in recruitment, thus underlining the assertion that family *wasta* plays an essential role in women's recruitment, particularly given cultural restrictions (Tlaiss and Kauser, 2010).

Given the absence of policy implementation, academics use *wasta* as social capital to gain access to institutions. Putnam (1993) defines social capital as norms, regulations, trust and reciprocity that are embedded in social relations and social structures of society to facilitate actions for mutual benefits (Narayan, 1997). This use of *wasta* in recruitment is also addressed by a number of scholars in Middle Eastern countries (Mohamed and Mohamad, 2011 in Al-Hussain and Al-Morzooq, 2016). Al-Hussain and Al-Morzooq (2016), in their study of Saudi women and men's work participation found that *wasta* was a useful tool for women to achieve access to male dominated institutions. They reported that *wasta* was used particularly by women as a facilitator to overcome cultural barriers that disadvantage them in the workplace. However, the findings in this study do not reveal any gendered pattern usage of *wasta*.

Given the public-private distinctions and insecurity, building networks as social capital is one of the ways women can achieve access to employment and change the male-dominated culture of the university. Although according Acker (2006), a social movement would be essential to bring change within the institution, in the Afghan context it is not feasible because of insecurity and the weak state. Women have symbolic space within the institution and society in general, due to strict public-private distinctions and uncertainty, as discussed in the previous chapter. As a result, they cannot resist inequality through formation of social movements. Therefore, the change has to come subtly and slowly. Women need to negotiate some of these dilemmas by building social capital and professional networks with other women and men.

Additionally, evidence from both women and men reveals that *wasta* based on ethnicity plays a crucial role in hiring. As Ayesha stated:

> In hiring, if you know anybody, you are hired, or if you are of the same ethnicity... Pashtuns want Pashtuns to be hired... the procedure for some ethnic groups in hiring is easier than for others (Ayesha, female, non-professorial position, Hazara).

Ayesha's description shows that hiring procedures differ depending on an individual's ethnicity. Recently, ethnic clan-based *wasta* has become common practice in most Afghan governmental institutions (Pike and Brown, 2011). Several decades of war in the country have drastically changed the balance of power and influence among the traditional social and political forces and Afghans, due to ethnic and social pressures, are more conscious of their separate identities today than at any other time in Afghan history (Mazhar *et al.,* 2012). Mashriqi (2013) reports the existence of ethnic

discrimination in higher education institutions. She cites one of her interviewees as saying: "if a higher authority is Pashtun, ... he will definitely be in favour of Pashtuns. If he is Tajik, he will be in the favour of Tajiks" (108).

It shows that ethnicity is used as a form of social capital to gain access to higher education institutions. According to Zhou (2005) ethnicity as social capital forms an essential aspect of an ethnic group's institutional structure. Ethnic bonding is reported to be advantageous for some ethnic groups within the workplace, particularly in societies where structural inequalities are more pronounced (Shah, 2007). Ethnic capital can also have negative impacts on minority ethnic groups because they may not know many people in position of power (Mellor and Gilliat-Ray, 2015). Elyas also referred to ethnic-based inequality in hiring, stating:

> ... in some faculties or departments, in particular concerning high rank academics, and they are for example from the Pashtun ethnic group they don't want to hire other people who are not Pashtun or who can't speak Pashtu. I think this example covers both language and ethnic discrimination (Elyas, male, non-professorial position, Tajik).

One thing in common in Ayesha and Elyas's descriptions of ethnic discrimination in hiring is Pashtuns' positionality within Shah University. Their descriptions suggest that Pashtuns are more likely to be in positions of power and decision-making, particularly in hiring processes and procedures. My quantitative findings also show that although there are more Tajiks in professorial positions, a high number of Pashtuns hold full-professor positions, and, thus, are in higher positions of power concerning decision-making.

The findings further confirm the positionality of Pashtuns in Shah University. Pashtuns do not perceive themselves as being discriminated against, as Mariam affirmed:

> Since I am Pashtun, ethnic discrimination does not exist for me... (Mariam, female non-professorial position, Pashtun).

Mariam's statement suggests that she sees her ethnic privilege within Shah University. Historically, Pashtuns have particularly dominated the political leadership within the country (Saikal, 2012; Mazhar *et al.*, 2012). They have held most positions of power in various governmental institutions. As mentioned earlier, they have also held full professor positions within the university. It is not uncommon for an individual from a dominant ethnic group to become a means to recruit someone from the same ethnic group (Azra, 2016). It might be the case that Pashtuns are more likely to use their ethnic privilege to control resources and procedures within Shah University. This area needs further investigation. Hence, the University hierarchy is ethnicised in addition to gendered, especially at the top. Those at the top of the hierarchy, Pashtun men, exercise power and control over women and minority ethnic groups. This clearly illustrates what Acker (2006) argues: control that is derived from organisational power can also draw on gender and ethnic relations (p. 454).

The intersection of gender and ethnicity is an interlocked social status that produces and reproduces multiple and shifting identities (Davis, 2008; Butler, 1990; Mohanty, 1988). Individuals can be privileged and discriminated against based on their gender and ethnicity simultaneously, depending on the context (Calas *et al.*, 2014). The

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intersection of gender and ethnicity that shapes the multi-dimensional aspects of inequality in the workplace has been addressed by a number of scholars (Acker, 1990; 2006 Holvino, 2010; Walby *et al.*, 2012). According to Acker, images of gendered and ethnicised bodies influence perceptions of academics in decision-making positions. At Shah University, the gender and ethnicity of applicants partially define who is suitable for a job.

However, ethnic discrimination, similar to gender discrimination, is invisible and is camouflaged by an academic meritocratic system. Reyes and Halcom, 1991:168) argue that racism/ethnicism involving minority faculties in institutions of higher education is "generally covered by and often masked by adherence to a mythical academic meritocracy regarding professional qualifications" that subtly favours certain race/ethnic groups, in accordance with which a candidate's selection is more in line with the personal preferences of high authorities than with the myth of objectivity of "equal hiring opportunities" (p. 176). As Mujtaba pointed:

> As you know that the hiring procedure in education institutions are in a way that the department holds a meeting and ask other academics to vote for the candidate and in the same way in faculty meeting and university meeting… Since the vote is explicit, it is seen that some people without any legitimate reasons, voted negatively … (Mujtaba, male, non-professorial position).

Mujtaba's explanation shows that for academics', particularly in higher positions, personal preferences play an essential role in recruitment. Invisibility of inequality, according to Acker (2006), depends on the degree of awareness of inequality. As the

findings indicate, academics are aware of inequalities and the bases of inequalities, i.e. gender and ethnicity, but still they remain invisible for the majority. This is because meritocracy legitimises the ideologies that result in discrimination and social inequalities through equal opportunity procedures and make them appear natural (Sianius and Pratto 2001 in Browne and Misra, 2003; Acker, 2006). Meritocratic procedures are symbolic and it is private patriarchy that governs the academic environment and thus inequalities particularly based on gender are normalised and invisible. In addition, the absence of policy implementation also adds to the invisibility of the inequalities. In a sense, if the law against discrimination is not reinforced, then it becomes a common practice, eventually normalised within the institution. However, for those individuals for whom inequality based on gender and ethnicity is visible, it is too risky to challenge it, particularly given the male-dominated nature of the university and insecurity in general.

In addition to institutional practices and processes that work against women and minority ethnic groups at Shah University, some policies/strategies of the Ministry of Higher Education disadvantage women, in particular, in recruitment. As Khatera said:

> I think one of the main reasons is that the Ministry of Higher Education insists on recruiting MAs and PhDs. Unfortunately, we don't have many women who have got an MA or a PhD which is one of the problems... (Khatera, female, non-professorial position, Afghan).

Although having an M.A or a Ph.D. is a key to an academic career, it disadvantages women more than men in a developing patriarchal society. Regrettably there are not

many postgraduate programmes specifically in Kabul or in Afghanistan in general. According to Higher Education Gender Strategy, several M.A. programmes in Education, Public Policy and Administration have been established but the Ph.D. programmes are slower in process. However, these programmes often accept limited number of academics due to lack of capacity and funding. To obtain a postgraduate degree, academics need to go abroad. However, because of the public-private distinctions and traditional customs women are not allowed to travel alone, which disadvantages them in employment as a result. Hence, the policy/strategy of Higher Education which is based on the Western model is not pragmatic particularly for women in Afghanistan. Despite these cultural barriers, some faculties take initiatives to recruit female applicants, as Khatera stated:

> In general, we try to hire the best students and then provide them with opportunities to get their MA and/or PhD. It is the same in some other Departments as much as I know. They [the Head of the Department or Dean of the Faculty] choose the best students and after passing the cadre exam they send them to Master programmes and here the differences between men and women are less (Khatera, female, non-professorial position, Afghan).

Khatera's description suggests that some faculties take affirmative action to reduce inequality within the university. Although affirmative action is illegal in some countries such as the U.K., the affirmative action law in Afghanistan was passed in 2005 guaranteeing seats for women in parliament and provincial councils, and was later linked to education sectors (International Monetary Fund, 2008). As a result, the

Ministry of Higher Education drafted the Higher Education Gender Strategy (see Chapter 2). However, the provisions in this strategy have not been formally implemented, because of that some faculties take informal initiatives. However, not all faculties take such actions because these initiatives are informal. The problem with such initiatives is that they provide strategies rather than solutions. The formal policies also lack clear strategies and actions to increase the number of women (see Chapter 2: The Gender Policy section). Therefore, this fails to engage with the nature of the problem, which is the social relations within a bureaucratic and hierarchal institution.

My findings further show a lack of co-ordination between the Ministry of Higher Education and the University. As Ali said:

> Another main issue which is a big challenge for academics is lack of coordination between the University and Ministry of Higher Education.

The finding is in line with Larson's (2008) report. She found that there is no co-ordination between various departments and ministries, resulting in failure of gender mainstreaming. My fieldwork notes also show a lack of co-ordination and cross-ministries communications (see Chapter 2: The Limitation of Gender Strategy for Higher Education).

In sum, women are hired in a male-dominated institutional culture, where the terms and conditions, particularly in relation to promotion, are often set by men. In the following section, I discuss institutional barriers to women's promotion.

Institutional barriers to women's advancement

Strong evidence emerged from the interviews to indicate that men more than women emphasise the meritocratic system of promotion, as follows:

> The research procedure does not have any problems. It depends on the merit of an academic: it depends on their experience and knowledge (Naseem, male, professorial position).

> Discrimination does not exist in payment and promotion—it means that there aren't any kinds of discrimination … in relation to promotion, the promotion procedure and conditions are the same for both men and women—spending 3 years writing an academic article/book/thesis and giving conferences. It is the same for both - there is no difference (Shoaib, male, non-professorial position, Pashtun).

> If your piece of work is good and your supervisor is happy with that and if you have chosen a good title and have worked hard on it, they are not creating any problems, but they will help you. For example, when I was promoted, my supervisor gave me sources... for every decision, the person is 50 percent responsible (Arzou, female, non-professorial position).

The above descriptions show academics, both women and men, rely greatly on the meritocratic system of academia, which is based on equal opportunities. This is because according to Ministry of Higher Education policies, academics' promotion should be based on criteria of merit and equal opportunities. Although meritocratic values aim to restrict discrimination based on gender, ethnicity and other personal characteristics, they militate against equal opportunities for women in patriarchal

societies (Knights and Richards, 2003; van den Brink and Benschop, 2011). Given the public-private distinctions where women are mainly responsible for domestic work, children and elderly family members, the meritocratic system decontextualises them. In other words, the meritocratic system of academia does not consider the "domestic division of work and the gender asymmetry in child care" (Knights and Richards, 2003: 219) which gives men an advantage over women in career development.

The meritocratic system also has the power to pass the responsibility back to the individual, and thus stigmatise the unsuccessful person as "incompetent" and "incapable" (Knights and Richards, 2003:218). As Naseem said:

> Both men and women are promoted the same way. I don't know about other Faculties, but in our Faculty we encourage female academics [to get promotion] and if we have resources or teaching materials we share with them … There is one law for men and women… both men and women should go through the same procedure - why not… Women in Afghanistan claim that men and women have equal rights, then they should be equal - they have to be equal in work as well. They [women] need to take the responsibility - when a man takes the responsibility a woman has to take it too - if they [women] don't then it is not equal. But traditional problems/challenges exist in Afghanistan, they exist (what to do about it). I hope these traditional problems would be reduced so that both men and women work in a better environment (Naseem, male, professorial position).

Naseem's explanation is a clear example of gender-blind comments. Although he is aware of the fact that women face many challenges in Afghan society and that men do

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not usually help them in domestic work and childcare as quoted earlier, he passes the responsibility to women. It further reveals the normalisation of inequality. Naseem sees gender inequality and acknowledges traditional problems but not his own privilege within the workplace because men's advantages are normalised and have become part of daily life. The normalisation of inequality shows that private patriarchy dominates the culture and the structure of the institution.

Naseem's distinctions between men 'we' and women 'they' also suggests the stereotypical assumption that men are self-motivated and they do not need to be encouraged while women lack confidence and are less ambitious and productive than men (Weiss and Lillard, 1982). Studies indicate the existence of gender status beliefs that entail gender stereotypes, in which men are considered more competent - and therefore, more worthy of status than women (Ridgeway, 2001).

Findings also show that meritocratic beliefs minimise academics' perceptions of gender inequality and discrimination at Shah University, as is evident in Sarah's statement:

> One reason is that they [women] haven't worked [hard]. The second reason could be
>
> that they are discriminated against (Sarah, female, non-professorial position).

Sarah asserts that the reason women occupy lower ranks is that they have not worked towards their promotion while using the word 'could' she refers to discriminatory practices against women. Sarah's belief in meritocracy minimises her perception of discrimination and justifies the existing status inequality at Shah University. This finding is in line with a study by McCoy and Major (2007) which reports that meritocratic

beliefs minimise women's perceptions of sexism and discrimination. Their study shows that women are more likely to view rejection and discriminatory practices as deserved and fair. That is to say, they blame themselves for the rejection rather than attributing rejection to discrimination. On the other hand, men are more likely to view rejection as discriminatory.

The supposed meritocratic system of academia serves to legitimise social inequalities based on "competitive demonstrations of comparative superiority in academic and other spheres of competence" (Knights and Richards, 2003: 219). It rationalises and reproduces the domination of masculine values and discursive practices (Bailyn, 2003; Knights and Richard, 2003). Bailyn (2003) argues that the academic assumption of 'competence' and 'success' is constructed around men's experiences and masculine norms and values as a universal requirement of academia as Naseem shows he is gender-blind to men's privilege because women carry a double burden.

However, the findings show the use of *wasta* in promotion. More women than men referred to the existence of *wasta* as disadvantaging women and minority ethnic groups since the majority of them are in the low-ranking positions. Mariam indicated:

> In general, women are discriminated more. In addition to that other discrimination is the relationship and connection [networking]. If someone knows somebody in the position of power, he/she without merit can be promoted. There would be a number of other people with good opinions but their opinions are not considered (Mariam, female, non-professorial position, Pashtun).

Mariam points to the importance of networking. Her description shows that being part of circles and networks of eminent academics plays a key role in career development. As Etzowitz *et al.* (2000) note, networking is the base for the transformation of valuable information and resources into opportunities for better performance and career advancement. It also allows individuals to get advice and mentoring from other academics in particular high positions.

However, Afghan women lack these networks and connections for cultural reasons. Culturally, women are expected to form a social bond with other women rather than men, and since the majority of high authorities are men, women are disadvantaged in establishing useful networks. As a result, they do not easily get promotion, as addressed by Mariam. Although there is no mention of mentoring, men may get advice and mentoring from other men in high authority, while women are excluded. However, since 2001, with a Post-Taliban government, the situation has changed slightly: more women are mentored by men due to the lack of women in high academic positions. Yet, it is mostly formal. Women are still expected to socialise and establish networks with other women rather than with men.

Ayesha also referred to the role of networking and wasta in promotion, she said:

> It is not easy to be promoted because of corruption. If you know anybody on the Promotion Committee, it would be easy to be promoted otherwise not. There is a relationship/connection [Networking] issue. There is no opportunity for promotion; scholarships are given to friends. (Ayesha, female, non-professorial position, Hazara).

Ayesha's description shows that promotion is not limited to academics' merit but rather depends on their connections with academics, particularly on promotion committees. Although there is no data available on the composition of promotion committees at the University, due to the lack of many women in professorial positions, as was found in survey findings, there may not be many women on its Promotion Committees. According to the Higher Education Gender Strategy, there is a very small number of women in senior positions within public institutions. This lack of women in decision-making positions seems to limit opportunities for women to get promotion and hold decision-making powers throughout University structures.

In addition, as Ayesha stated, the scholarships do not seem to be distributed evenly. According to the Ministry of Higher Education's regulations on scholarships, the distribution should be equitable and based on evaluation and consideration of the Faculty and/or university needs (The Ministry of Higher Education, 2013). However, the rules and regulations do not seem to be implemented, instead scholarships are distributed on the basis of friendships with higher authorities.

Ayesha refers to these practices at Shah University as corruption. There is no definition given in Afghan law of corruption, but there is a list of practices that are considered acts of corruption (Gardizi *et al.*, 2010). These practices include bribery, embezzlement, illegal use of power, favouritism and nepotism (Gardizi *et al.*, 2010). Corrupt practices such as favouritism and nepotism have various implications for academics in general, and women and minority ethnic groups in particular. In order to be recruited and promoted, academics need to establish useful relationships with the higher authorities

not only at the university but also at the Ministry of Higher Education. However, women lack these networks due to the public-private distinctions discussed earlier.

Favouritism in promotion, particularly in terms of family relations, was also found by Abramo *et al.* (2015). In their study of the efficiency of promotion processes in Italy they found that favouritism was a stronger determinant of promotion rather than merit. They also reported a positive relationship between the applicant's gender and composition of committee members, concluding that representation of women in promotion committees, particularly in a presiding position, results in a more 'fair' promotion process. This shows that favouritism is not only practised in developing but also in developed countries. However, in general it shows that absence of policy implementation results in inequality.

Although *wasta* is referred to as a negative phenomenon and a part of corruption (see Ayesha's description, p. 266), given the socio-cultural barriers, it can be used as social capital by women to build professional networks with other women and men at the University and the Ministry of Higher Education to advance their careers within the institution. Al-Hussain and Al-Marzooq (2016) in their study found that a high percentage of women in leadership positions have used *wasta* to become socially accepted within the workplace (62%), create a friendly working environment (61%) and to convince their families to accept their position at work (p. 195). Therefore, it is essential for Afghan women in academia to build professional networks with women and men. The process of professional socialisation can change the attitudes of individuals and reduce the level of sexism within the workplace (Ostroff and

Rothausen, 1997). In the longer term, it can change the ideology which is the main barrier to gender equality within Afghan society.

Although women have their family as a key network, family bonding as social capital has limited value in promoting women's social mobility and reducing inequality within the workplace (Edwards *et al.*, 2003) because it is narrow and resistant to change (Fukuyama, 2002). Therefore, for women to advance their career within the institution, 'bridging' social capital (Barr, 1998; Narayan, 1999) with outside family networks is crucial. Bridging in this study implies networking outside the family. Women need to bridge social capital with colleagues, both women and men, to bring about changes within their workplace and society in general. Structural bridging or networking with people within the institution is found to be positively associated with advancement and income (Lancee, 2010). Bonding and bridging produce outcomes, both positive and negative, combinations of which bring changes over time (Woolcock and Narayan, 2000).

The findings also reveal that both women and men referred to ethnic-based discrimination in promotion, as follows:

> There is ethnic discrimination at the University [Shah University] particularly in promotion... certain ethnic groups get scholarship easily and get promoted easily (Ameena, female, non-professorial position).

> I don't accept that there is no ethnic discrimination. Unfortunately, it does exist among most of educated people. Their priorities are language and ethnicity rather than talent or academic treatment (Naser, male, professorial position, Tajik).

Ameena and Naser's descriptions show that ethnicity plays a key role in academics' promotion. Although Ameena and Naser do not refer to a particular ethnicity, given the positionality of Pashtuns within Shah University as discussed earlier, other ethnic groups including Tajiks and Hazaras might be disadvantaged. A study by Aziz (2008) on 'Leaders of Higher Education in Afghanistan' reveals the ethnic biases in institutions of higher education. He concludes that some people have been placed as a result of ethnic preference despite a lack of experience in leadership positions. Individuals in positions of power promote academics from their own ethnic group and create problems, with or without legitimate reasons, for other ethnic groups. However, there is no evidence in this study as to whether women from minority ethnic groups are further discriminated against in promotion.

The findings also suggest the influence of politics in academic institutions, as Khatera mentioned in regard to the connection with warlords. She stated:

> We have some academics in our Faculty who don't even teach the required hours allocated to them by law. It is far from them to take part in seminars or publish something for promotion. Some of them have political power or they have connections with warlords ... the university environment is part of the larger society and it is influenced by it. The law is not 100% implemented and this problem exists (Khatera, female, non-professorial position, Afghan).

Khatera's affirmation suggests that the academic environment is politicised. Azizi (2008) also reported that two out of seven leaders in higher education in Afghanistan believe that in the current government everything is about politics and less about experience. According to Ibrahimi (2014), a number of politicians and religious leaders have invested financially in higher education institutions including Shah University. He further asserts that the university campuses serve as places for "political socialisation of educated people" (p. 16). This shows the absence of law enforcement, and the influence of external factors such as politics. Given the male-dominated nature of society, men are more likely than women to have connections with government officials, and warlords, and they use these connections to their own advantage in the workplace.

Despite the institutional barriers women and minority ethnic groups face within Shah University, the findings demonstrate that for women the challenge of getting promotion appears to be made greater by stipulations from the Ministry of Higher Education. As Khatera indicated:

> In the past there was much more discrimination including gender, language and age, particularly among older and high ranking academics. However, it is reducing in the current situation. It still exists but not to the extent it was in the past. Women are getting promotion easily with the new Minister of Higher Education and changes in academic conditions … and *insejam Umor academic* [the Department of Coordination of Academic Affairs] and people working in those posts. Female academics can easily get promotion without any problems. Female academics couldn't get promotion which

now they can... Yes! *Insejam Umor academic* in the Ministry was responsible for all promotions. There were some tough conditions, from the title of the paper to the submission and the Department did not have any part to play. However, now the Department has a role in promotions. Dean of Faculty and Heads of Department can choose the subject area based on the needs of the Department and when it goes to the Department of Academics Affairs, it will be accepted because it is the needs of the Department. In the past it was not like that and the Department could not choose the subject area (Khatera, female, non-professorial position, Afghan).

Khatera's description reveals a number of issues relevant in promotion procedures. First, it shows that there is not only gender, language and ethnic discrimination but also age, which was more pronounced in the past in comparison with the present situation, perhaps because of the new rules and regulations defined in the National Higher Education Strategic Plan 2010-2014 (see Chapter 2). It is worth noting that some academics use the term 'language' to refer to ethnic/language-based discrimination (see Elyas's description on ethnic discrimination in hiring).

Culturally, Afghan people, similar to other southern/central Asian societies have a high regard for age. From childhood they are taught to respect elders at all times. It is mostly expected to respect elders for reasons of age, regardless of their contribution to society, to the community and even to people. It is age, in addition to gender, that determines a person's ability to make decisions at home and in the public arena. At Shah University, older academics are respected regardless of their academic position or what they do. The statement further shows the lack of gender-sensitive conditions at

the Ministry of Higher Education that has disadvantaged women more than men. However, these conditions have changed in line with the Ministry of Higher Education's policy/strategy to ensure equality (Ministry of Higher Education, 2013c). Some initiatives have been taken including permission to prove or disprove the relevance of the research topic to the Dean of the Faculty and the Head of the Department to avoid discriminatory practices. According to Ministry of Higher Education Bylaws (2013), the Head of the Department is responsible for following up departmental decisions on hiring and promotion.

However, the findings show that the same discriminatory action was practised by the Dean of the Faculty and/or the Head of Department. Women more than men reported that academics are not only guided and supported by the Department, but also discouraged from getting promotion. As Khalida said:

> It is the same with academics. We had an academic who wanted to get promotion but the Department was creating problems. We talked to both sides and solved the problem. We had a problem in another Department and we changed the academic. We had the same problem regarding promotion in another Department but solved it legally (Khalida, female, professorial position, Pashtun).

Khalida's explanation shows the institutionalised discrimination where the Head of the Department and the Dean of the Faculty, who are more likely to be men, create barriers, without a legitimate reason, to academic promotion. Although there are no data available on the number of women who have held the position of Head of the Department, there are very few, as I observed during my fieldwork. It is worth noting

that creating problems such as delaying someone's promotion without legitimate reason is illegal. However, there is no one to evaluate these practices.

Khalida's statement suggests the existence of a glass ceiling that "manifests itself as a filter at the highest rank and levels of prestige" (Monroe *et al.*, 2010: 304). Men hold positions of power and thus make most of the institutional decisions which have considerable bearing upon shaping the current status and the future of the institution (Connell, 2006), a systematic strategy that shows men's resistance to women's and perhaps minority ethnic groups' advancement. Men's resistance to women's advancement at Shah University could partly be because of what Connell (2006) describes as '*the emotions of gender transition*' (p. 843). According to Connell, these emotions are men's resentment about changes in a male-dominated culture. Afghan society has always been patriarchal to varying degrees, depending on different regimes. Under the Taliban regime, a few men had total control of society including women and children, and many men still maintain that control over women. Partly, this takes the form of power and control over resources and decision-making. Men in decision-making positions do not want to share power and they resist through creating problems for lower-ranking academics, who are mostly women. In this way, men resist any change that lessens their power and control over women.

The findings further show a strong bond between the Dean of the Faculty and the head of the department. As Mariam stated:

As I said before, the Dean just knows the Head of the Department. He does not listen to individual academics. We have a problem with our Head of Department who we need to seek help from. From the beginning of the term until the end, my problem was not solved by the Head of the Department ... When I went to report this to the Dean, he sent me back to the Head of Department. It is like they have a contract with each other. Each of them rejects complaints against the other in order to maintain their own positions (Mariam, female, non-professorial position, Pashtun).

Mariam's explanation shows a lack of women in decision-making positions at Shah University, as both the Head of the Department and the Dean of the Faculty are men. The lack of women in positions of power and authority has had a negative impact on women's promotion (Van den Brink *et al*., 2010). As I mentioned elsewhere, from my observation the majority of the Head of the Departments and Dean of the Faculties were men.

Mariam's description shows the invisible "old boys' network" where only people in closed circles are included and supported. The "old boys' network" is described as the informal network of men in an institution that wields power and influence and often excludes under-represented members, such as women. The members of the network often transfer power in formal structures to friendship patterns and alliances within an informal system (Oakley, 2000: 328). In Afghan institutions, especially governmental ones, there is a culture of tea-drinking, chatting and gossiping. Similarly, academics, mostly gender segregated, get together in one office and drink tea and talk about different issues, and even hold professional conversations. This is where the majority

of academics change formal power relationships into friendships. This was addressed by Masood:

> To talk about co-workers so we—these guys and some other co-workers besides being teachers we are like friends. If I have some problems these teachers help me so if they need help, I help them. So we have good relationship with each other. There might be some other teachers that we have only formal relationship.

Masood's description shows that men tend to support each other and change the formal power relationship to friendship. According to Hartmann (1979), men support other men and their solidarity is the key factor in their success. Further, Masood's quote reveals the gender-segregated networks, which provide advantages for men more than for women because of the high number of men in higher positions. In contrast to men, women lack of support from colleagues. As Ayesha stated:

> No I don't get support from my co-workers. Not even from female academics. Some female academics support in face but do not do anything (Ayesha, female, non-professorial position)

Ayesha's explanation shows that women lack support from both women and men in Shah University. Given the lack of professional networking, especially among women, it is essential for women and men to act together in common cause to bring a potential transformative change regarding women's position in the workplace.

The Department further disadvantages women by an unfair distribution of workload. The findings show that there is lack of work-life balance among academics, which

disadvantages women more than men, affecting their chances of promotion. As Mariam said:

> ... I just saw the teaching schedule for next term. The Head of Department has given me the same teaching hours as a newly-hired academic. It is the same with all women. I don't know which category I am in, senior, newly-hired or junior. They always pressurise us. I gave my example, but all women have this problem. Nobody asks our opinion. The Head of Department and some of his friends do everything (Mariam, female, non-professorial position, Pashtun).

She continued:

> As I said earlier when I saw the schedule, a [male] colleague and I, both ... [in the same position] have been given different teaching hours. I was given 5 classes which is 20 hours per week and my colleague was given 2 classes for the second class of which was just an hour each week. He was given 5 hours' teaching because he is '[5]male' and I am 'female'. I have always been given more hours of teaching. For example, last year I was given 24 hours, 6 classes, but others [male colleagues] were given 2 to 3 hours teaching. I have always worked hard and had more classes compared with male colleagues. It is just not me; others [women] have the same experience. They [people in positions of power] do it because they know she is present and she can do it. Men are given fewer hours of teaching because they are working on committees. Although I am head of one of the important committees, they haven't given me fewer hours of teaching. I have been planning trainings for my colleagues for two years. Each week in

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[5] The interviewee emphasised.

winter, nobody has appreciated me (Mariam, female, non-professorial position, Pashtun).

Mariam's descriptions highlight visible gendered divisions in modes of employment. Women are given time-intensive teaching, which is not very helpful for their career progression. Discrepancies between men's and women's workload allocations are commonly cited as one of the major reasons for women's limited access to decision-making positions (Knights and Richards 2003; Monroe *et al.*, 2010; Barrett and Barrett, 2010). Mariam's explanations also show the mechanism the Head of the Department uses to maintain his control and power over the employees, particularly women. He not only draws on his hierarchal institutional power, but he also uses power derived from gendered relations (Acker, 2006).

These descriptions suggest a chilly climate for women within the University. They show that work contributions are valued unevenly based on gender. Although Mariam was the Head of one of the Committees, her work was not valued the same as that of her male colleague. This shows the 'double standard' (Foschi, 2000) that women face at Shah University. Women's and men's strengths and weaknesses are assessed differently in ways that reflect cultural assumptions about women's capabilities. Women are often considered less competent compared with men, and thus they are held to a higher performance standard than the male incumbents in the same position. The culturally embedded assumptions about men's and women's characteristics that operate within the University privilege men and undervalue women's performance, and demonstrate the persistence of private patriarchy operating within public spaces.

However, my findings show that it is not only women who are discriminated against in the workload distribution, but also younger men in lower ranks. As Mujtaba said:

> The work pressure is mainly on lower rank academics—lower than pohanmal. In some Faculties high-ranking academics send their assistants to the day shift classes because it doesn't pay extra money. They [assistants] attend the class, mark the exam papers, do other administrative stuff and sometimes even teach. These high-ranking academics are there in name only [not actually contributing to the work] (Mujtaba, male, non-professorial position).

Mujtaba's description reveals that the high-ranking academics are credited with responsibility for jobs done by their assistants. On the other hand, the assistants do not get any credit and this contributes to their poor promotion prospects. Higher status and older academics seem to use the respect relationship to act in a discriminatory way. Similarly, Sarah said:

> They [older/high-ranking academics] are an asset to the country, we can't ignore that, but in relation to work, lower-ranking academics do more teaching work than high-ranking academics (Sarah, female, non-professorial position).

Mujtaba and Sarah's descriptions show that the age gap as well as ranking differences result in older and/or higher-ranking academics discriminating against younger, lower-ranking employees, and since the majority of women are younger and in the lower ranks, they are disadvantaged more than their male counterparts. Ransford (1980) argued that individuals who hold a lower position in two or more social categories experience the greatest disadvantages in any process and in any group; on the contrary,

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great power and privilege accrues to individuals who occupy a high position. Older and/or higher-ranking academics seek to maximise their advantage by controlling younger academics through limiting their access and power (Weber, 1978). They create social closure for younger academics (Weber, 1978). Older academics have both culturally status-based power and positional power that derives from the workplace hierarchy (*Roscigno et al.*, 2007).

Conclusion

The aim of this chapter was to present academics' perceptions of institutional barriers to women and minority ethnic groups. Findings from the semi-structured interviews demonstrate that Shah University is a bureaucratic institution with a hierarchal structure that advantages men more than women in hiring and promotion. The findings further show that the institutional practices, processes and policies are symbolic, and thus they disadvantage women and minority ethnic groups because private patriarchy dominates public spaces and wider national politics influence the practices of the institution. Furthermore, findings show the prominence of *wasta* in Shah University and an absence of legal enforcement that make it more challenging to tackle inequalities based on gender, ethnicity and age.

Professional networking and socialisation with both women and men play a crucial role in academics' advancement. Given the cultural restrictions on women's and men's socialisation, women can only build professional networks, with both men and women, to gain access to resources and advance their career within the workplace.

The findings from these interviews suggest that Afghan institutions are not ready to promote women to leadership positions. Findings in the next chapter on interpersonal barriers further show that female academics despite being in positions of power as members of staff within the institution, lack power as women and are also subject to harassment by male students.

CHAPTER EIGHT: INTERPERSONAL BARRIERS AND GENDER PERFORMATIVITY

Introduction

In this chapter, I discuss interpersonal barriers - the third theme that emerged from the semi-structured interviews. Interpersonal barriers in this study refer to relationships between two or more individuals within an academic environment that disadvantage one more than others. Using Butler's gender performativity, I show that academics' interpersonal relationships are rooted in culturally accepted gender norms. However, women subvert their culturally accepted gender roles, based on strict public-private distinctions, by working in academia and as a result they face a number of challenges. As I show in this chapter, younger women and men in particular face harassment and humiliation within their workplace. Harassment in this study refers to unwanted behaviours which affect an individual's dignity and create a hostile, humiliating and intimidating environment. Humiliation is described as strong feeling of being dishonoured and insulted (McCauley, 2017). Given these challenges, women reconstruct and negotiate their gender roles on a daily basis within the workplace (Lester, 2008). By subverting traditional gender norms women recreate and reinforce public-private distinctions because they do not have space in the public sphere to resist, given the bureaucratic, corrupted administrative system, the weak state and insecurity. The only safe place for women is the private sphere. Throughout this chapter, I show that women have mixed perceptions with regard to academics' attitude, but in general,

it reveals that women are not welcome in positions of power and they are more likely

to face harassment than men.

Interpersonal Barriers

The findings show a complex picture. There are mixed perceptions of attitudes and treatment of academics, in particular of women, at Shah University. Attitude in this study refers to positive and negative evaluations of an individual, situation and/or environment. Some academics perceive the University environment as very satisfactory, as was evident in Arzou's description. She said:

> I am more than satisfied because as a woman I haven't been treated in a bad way until now. For example, it has never happened to me that because I am a woman I haven't got promotion or not been allowed to use sources or couldn't go to… [a place to use internet]—these things do not exist (Arzou, female, non-professorial position).

Arzou gave a very positive picture of the University environment for women. This is because she has experienced more challenging environments within different public institutions. As she stated:

> I can say it surely because I have worked outside the university as well, for example I have worked in other governmental organisations. We can't compare those environments with this.

Arzou's description shows that the University environment is relatively better than the other governmental institutions for women. However, there is no research done to showing women's perceptions or/and position in other governmental organisations in Afghanistan, an area that needs further investigation.

It also because her perception is relative to the past. Several decades earlier, particularly during the Mujahidin and the Taliban regime (see Chapter 2: Historical and Political Context), attitudes towards women in public spaces were extremely negative. Women were not allowed to be in public spaces at all without a mahram. As she asserted:

> If we consider Islamic Emirates [Taliban], especially women were banned/prohibited from this right. They didn't have right to study, they didn't have right to work. Even if they had right, it was limited. This is not comparable because in itself it shows development (Arzou, female, non-professorial position).

As Arzou's description shows, at the present time women's overall situation has relatively improved and they are treated reasonably better (Amiri *et al.*, 2004). Women are allowed to work in different institutions, both public and private, and they are able to advance their career, as mentioned earlier. They do not face the extreme discrimination and inequality they used to encounter, particularly during the Taliban, and thus they are relatively satisfied with the current situation. Clark (1997) in Britain argues "women's higher job satisfaction does not reflect that their jobs are unreservedly better than men's, but rather that, perhaps because their jobs have been so much worse in the past, they have lower expectations (p, 365)." Arzou's high level of satisfaction with the university is relative to other public institutions and relative to the past and does not mean that her job is better than, or as good as, those of her male colleagues.

In contrast to Arzou's perceptions of academics' attitudes and treatment, Khalida points to negative attitudes towards female academics particularly in higher ranks. She stated:

> It is an academic environment and we have scholars, some of whom don't like women to be in position of power. They [men] don't like to work for a woman (Khalida, female, professorial position, Pashtun).

Similarly, Sarah in her interview said:

> Some academics envy others. Some academics might have not got promotion for years and when I do they may envy me or might say inappropriate things. I can feel it. It happens and that's academic discrimination (Sarah, female, non-professorial position).

Khalida and Sarah's statements show that women are not welcome in positions of power. There is often more resistance to women in higher-level positions compared to lower-level ones (Baker, 1975 in Baker, 2012) not only in developing countries, but also in developed countries (Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA), 2014). Women make up almost half the workforce around the world, but the ratio of women to men in senior positions is low (Guney *et al.*, 2006). According to Vernos (2013), women hold 18% of full professorships in Europe. The percentage of women in professorial positions in the UK is also reported to be low (22.4%) (HESA), 2014). The reason for resistance to women in positions of power in Western societies is mostly reported to be gender stereotyping (Owen and Todor, 1993). Traditionally, high positions are associated with men and masculine qualities, such as authoritativeness. On the other

hand, women are considered to be emotional and lack self-confidence (Owen and Todor, 1993).

However, in Afghanistan, in addition to gender stereotypes, strong cultural norms are accepted and practised by men and women. In their study Echavez *et al.*, (2016) found that the majority of respondents in Afghanistan, both women and men, agreed that 'the power goes with men', although this view decreased as educational attainment increased (p. 35). And, in Kabul a higher percentage of women agreed with this view than men (67.6% and 60% respectively). Women and men were more likely to agree with 'men being more powerful' (71.8%). Women and men in Kabul agreed with 'men having the last word' (77.5 % and 71,3% respectively). The strong belief in men's power and women's lack of power, grounded in the structure of society, disadvantaged women in the workplace. Echavez *et al.*, (2016) also found that Pashtun men were more likely to agree with these normative principles than those from other ethnic groups. Given Pashtuns' prominence in higher positions, as found in this study, women in senior positions may face more challenges.

Sarah also refers to some academics' inappropriate statements. Although she did not clarify the 'inappropriate things', in relevant literature (Robinson and Bannett, 1995) such behaviour is referred to as verbal abuse. According to Robinson and Bennett's (1995) typology of deviant workplace behaviours, verbal abuse is any harmful behaviour that is directed at an individual rather than an organisation. Verbal abuse often results in psychological injuries particularly when it occurs in public spaces where

individuals are expected to act and behave in certain ways. It also diminishes good working relationships with colleagues.

One reason Sarah did not clarify 'inappropriate things' could be that the interview took place in the library with the presence of some students. I did not find the space appropriate for probing questions especially when the interviewee did not seem willing to expand. It is worth noting that I did not feel the need to tread carefully for fear of losing the interview. Second, it could also be because of lack of my experience in interviewing and probing questions.

In general, while interviewing women who were mostly older than me, I found it more comfortable than when interviewing men. Women tended to be open about some of their own and other women's experiences perhaps because I am a woman and that made them feel comfortable. In addition, I knew most of the female academics before the interviews. With regard to men, the majority of them did not know me prior to the interviews. It is essential to point out that as a young woman I did not feel threatened while interviewing men despite being alone with them in the office. Although being alone with a strange man in the office is generally culturally unacceptable, it did not seem to be an issue within the academic environment. This is because an academic environment is considered a place for intellectuals and a safe environment for exchanging knowledge.

The underlying reason for is that women's performance subverts hegemonic gender norms and values around public-private distinctions, and thus they are not welcome in

male-dominated institutional cultures. As Butler (1990) argues, the correct repetitions of culturally accepted gender norms are vital to gender performance and its performativity. However, women in positions of power in public spaces trouble the coherence of gender norms and as a result they are unwelcome. Men who occupy high positions feel threatened by women and see them as their rivals because they consider their high position as their right and are not ready to share it with women (Povey, 2016).

However, according to Butler (1990) women can use agency to create alternative ways to perform gender to subvert these norms. Female academics subverting the norm have also been reported by Lester (2008) who found that women 'adopt', 'negotiate' and 'construct' their gender identity within the workplace (p. 229). She uses the term 'hybrid performance' to refer to women's dual performance given the context. However, given the strict public-private distinctions and insecurity, Afghan women cannot negotiate for change in the public sphere to any great extent. And, agency cannot capture the subversive possibility of women being in positions of power, given the context of corruption and absence of policy implementation (Azizi, 2008). Theprivate sphere is the main place where women can exercise agency, the place to rely on for support and safety. In public spaces, women recreate and reinforce culturally accepted gender norms within the workplace.

As my findings show despite some women being in relatively high positions, their voices are only partly heard. As Khalida stated:

Sometimes despite the fact that it is a legitimate/ good opinion, but because of the workplace environment it is not accepted. In that there are exceptions. My comments are partly accepted (Khalida, female, professorial position, Pashtun).

Khalida's explanation shows that in spite of being a woman in a professorial position and more likely to hold a high position, her suggestions and comments are not given due consideration or recognised. This could be because of the strong belief in men's power and decisions deriving from strict public-private distinctions. Khalida also suggests that women who are in relatively high positions have symbolic power and they lack power in terms of their ascribed status as women (Mckinney, 1990). Women in the Afghan parliament is another example of women who are in positions of power but lack power to make decisions (Nijat and Murtazashviti, 2015). They are there in a token way (Povey, 2016). As Abirafeh (2005) quoted from an Afghan woman "right now our women are all over the place, being used for politics, used like dolls" (p. 8).

This shows the different forms of power relationships that operate within the University. Women have symbolic power because there are covert forms of power that control the decisions (Lukes, 1974, 2005). Lukes (1974, 2005) views this form of power as 'non-decision making'. This dimension of power is hidden, and does not reach the gaze of the public sphere. Additionally, the wider structure and politics of the institution (Dominelli, 2009b), and Afghan society in general, influence women's power and powerlessness within the workplace.

Khalida's description also suggests that women are accustomed to perform their culturally accepted gender roles within the workplace. Culturally, women are expected

to be obedient and subordinate to men. As Ahmadi-Nia (2001 in Shojaei *et al*, 2010) argues with regard to Iran, women's lives are affected by the ideologies of men in their environment. At home, women are expected to be obedient to their fathers and/or husbands and in the workplace to be obedient to men, particularly older men and those in higher positions.

Given the male dominated culture of the University and society in general, and lack of security, the majority of female academics do not have space for resistance, even those in relatively high positions such as Khalida. As a result, they tend to negotiate their roles as women by keeping silent. In Western literature, silence is often linked with passivity and powerlessness while voice is linked with power, authority and agency (Gilligan, 1982). However, given the Afghan context where women cannot raise their voice to any great degree because of fear of the consequences within and outside the institution, the combination of silence and voice is a strategy that thrives within the workplace (Moloney, 2015). The socio-cultural and workplace expectations of women are high in Afghanistan as discussed in previous chapters. Faced with uncertainty and insecurity and with demands on their time and voice, women need a thoughtful combination of silence and voice to increase their chances of success within the workplace (Moloney, 2015). Women's silence can be perceived as a strategy of resistance in Afghan society. As Glenn (2004) argues, silence can be as powerful as the voice. Keeping silence as Moloney (2015) argues is "a judicious keeping back for one's self, not always doing or saying what one is expected to do or say all the time" (p. 113). Although the combination of silence and voice enables female academics to subvert

gender norms based on public-private distinctions, the combination also reproduces and reinforces these culturally accepted gender norms (Butler, 1990).

However, it is not only men who resist women's power but also women. Findings show women's lack of preference for other women in positions of power. As Mariam mentioned in her interview:

> They [high authorities] always create problems for women... it is not done only by men but also by other women. Believe me! Women can't see other women in a position of power (Mariam, female, non-professorial position, Pashtun).

Similarly, Ameena stated:

> There is no co-operation among women. Women discriminate against other women. In contrast, men support other men, they support each other (Ameena, female, non-professorial position).

Mariam's and Ameena's descriptions show that women also participate in the patriarchal dividend (Connell, 2006). The findings are in line with the study by Güney *et al*. (2006). They found that both women and men in Turkey had negative attitudes towards women in leadership positions. A number of studies in the UK has also found that women usually prefer a male boss rather than a female boss (Hakim, 1996). And psychologists (Gilligan, 1982; Miller, 1976) argue that women often accept male dominance as a matter of habit. They accept hierarchy as long as a man is in a position of power. According to Goldberg (1993), sex differences developed by socialisation processes in the workplace create expectations and preferences for male dominance.

However, women's rivalry has changed to some extent in Western societies and women tend to ally themselves with other women with few exceptions e.g. Margret Thatcher (Purvis, 2013), but the situation has not changed in Afghanistan. As Ameena's description suggests there is a lack of co-operation and support among women in contrast to men. This finding is in line with Luke's (2001) study of female academics in Singapore. She found rivalry and lack of support among women, affirming that women tend to gossip about each other "[which] often transforms innocuous comments into backbiting and potentially subversive rumour-mongering" (2001, p. 169). As a result, of wrongful gossip some women avoid building networks with other women. Although in this study respondents did not refer to gossiping, a number of studies refer to Afghan women's gossip. According to Mills (2011) women who gossip "use institutions of public invisibility to achieve mobility for illicit purposes" (p. 61). From my observations, female academics sometimes gossip when they get together. Hence, the lack of support among women could be one of the reasons for the lack of any activism to challenge inequalities within the higher education institutions.

My findings (see quotes from Khalida, Sarah and Ameena) show that Afghan society is not yet ready to accept women in positions of power because patriarchal ideology is embedded in society to the extent that both women and men resist significant change to women's status. Although some positive changes are evident in women's lives (see Chapter 6: Socio-cultural Barriers and Opportunities), and there are some women activists who challenge the patriarchal nature of society they cannot achieve a substantial change because of insecurity and fear of the return of the Taliban and ISIS

(Saikal, 2011). Given this, there is no room for the significant transformation of women's status within society. Beath *et al*., (2013) in their study of women's empowerment through development aid found that such initiatives improve women's social, economic and political participation; however, they do not produce any changes to women's role in family decision-making or attitudes towards the general role of women in society. Change is a long-term matter in Afghanistan. However, where change is possible, it is mainly through family support, which is limited. In addition, it is essential for women to support each other and build strong and professional networks with men within and outside the institution, to challenge the patriarchal nature of the institution collectively. In the next section, I focus on sexual harassment and humiliation that can directly affect academics' career development.

Harassment and Humiliation

My findings show men more than women tend to refer to harassment within their institution perhaps because it is considered taboo to discuss such issues in public spaces. A report on sexual harassment against women in public spaces in Afghanistan shows that women face sexual harassment in various public spaces (Women UN Reporting Network, 2015). According to the report, sexual harassment victims are mostly women who experience many forms of harassment, including verbal, non-verbal and physical in public spaces, on the street, at bus stops, in shops, and almost everywhere in public spaces. It is reported to be a common practice. Women also face sexual harassment in the workplace and the perpetrators are mostly those in positions of power and authority over them.

This UN report also identifies sexual harassment of women by male colleagues. It has been reported that sexual harassment is more likely to occur in male-dominated environments (Fitzgerald, 1996) by colleagues at different levels (McKinney, 1990). In this case sexual harassment would most often be committed by men, particularly those in high academic ranks, against women and those in lower ranks (McKinney, 1990). However, there was no evidence of such harassment in this study. Considering the patriarchal nature of the academic environment, female academics might be harassed by male colleagues particularly those in higher positions, but perhaps out of fear, they do not report it. A study by UNDP and UNESCO on gender-based violence at one of the universities in Kabul identified men, students and staff as perpetrators of sexual harassment (UNDP and UNESCO, 2010).

In this study, findings highlight the incidence of harassment of female academics by male students. This kind of harassment in the academic workplace has received attention from a number of scholars in Western societies (Benson, 1984; Grauerholz, 1989; McKinney, 1990). As Mujtaba said:

> Unfortunately, there are some issues between female academics and male students—something to be worried about. Some male students don't behave appropriately with female academics or they [students] create problems for female academics compared to male academics (Mujtaba, male, non-professorial position).

When I asked him what he thought the reasons might be, he said:

> The reason is our society and culture. Another reason is low level of acceptance. Because our society didn't have women in the workplace for a long time, even it didn't have in educational spheres. For me this seems something new and they [people/students] tend to react to this new phenomenon… especially male students with female academics who are relatively young—they may create problems for them. The negative culture has been in Afghanistan for a long time (Mujtaba, male, non-professorial position).

Mujtaba's descriptions show that although female academics have formal power over male students, they lack power in terms of their ascribed culturally gendered status as women (McKinney, 1990). Culturally, women are subordinated while men hold all the power within society. They lack power within academia the same way they do as women in society. This kind of sexual harassment is often called "contrapower

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harassment" (Benson, 1984:518) which usually takes an anonymous form of harassment that "safeguards the offender from retribution from the more powerful victim" (McKinney, 1990:423). The anonymity of the behaviour such as obscene phone calls, sexual text messages and so forth leads female academics to punish the students or prevent such behaviour from recurring (Benson, 1984). Other sexual harassment behaviour includes students shouting obscenities and directly and indirectly insulting or saying inappropriate things to the female academic while she is teaching or walking on the campus (Grauerholz, 1989).

The underlying motive for sexual harassment at Shah University is that women subvert gender norms by working outside the home. Men want women to perform their culturally accepted gender roles, based on strict private-private distinctions. Walby (1989) calls sexual harassment institutionalised violence which has a relatively autonomous patriarchal structure. However, she argues that it is not the basis of patriarchy. She argues that "male violence against women should be seen as a systematic phenomenon, which is largely an effect of other patriarchal relations, but which has a degree of influence on them in turn" (p. 62). In a sense, violence against women helps to sustain patriarchal relationships.

Women's harassment by male students clearly shows the dominance of private patriarchy within public spaces. Given the sexual harassment in almost all public spaces, the only safe space for women is in the private sphere. The family plays an essential role, particularly given the absence of law against sexual harassment (Daimerkisha, 2015). Report of sexual harassment against women in public spaces (2015) show that

although some families stop victimised women form continuing with their education or work, 11% of respondents said that their family helped them to continue with their work and that their family reported the occurrence to the police (11%) or tried to identify the perpetrator (9%). Family bonding is the key to women's safety and success within the workplace.

Similar to Mujtaba, Ameena also referred to students' disturbance of young female academics, she said:

> Students disturb the class especially when it is a girl and young. There is both gender and age discrimination (Ameena, female, non-professorial position).

Ameena's description shows that younger women are more likely to experience harassment. The intersection of age and gender creates a unique identity for younger women within the institutions that disadvantage them in various areas of employment due to strict public-private distinctions. Younger women are harassed and discriminated against because of the way they act and appear in the workplace. Image, both in public and in general, is particularly important for Afghan women especially if they are working in mixed gendered jobs that requires interaction with men. In Afghan society the way a woman acts and the way her body appears in public explains her personality and character. Women, especially young unmarried or not engaged, are judged by the way they dress and act or interact with students and colleagues. As a result, they often have more restrictions about who they talk to and how they talk.

Age plays a key role in women's lives in Afghan society. Women often gain more power, freedom and authority with age, which increases their status and position in society

(Stromquist, 1999 in Karlsson and Mansory, 2007). The power dynamics change for women in their old age. They can sometimes have power over younger men, in particular their sons. Ironically, as Kandiyoti (1991) notes, some women when they get into position of power and authority, tend to reproduce a thorough internalisation of patriarchal ideology. Women internalise culturally accepted gender norms and become, what Foucault calls 'self-policing' subjects (McNay, 1994). According to Foucault, society operates mainly through normalisation and "individuals are controlled through power of norm and this power is effective because it is relatively invisible" (McNay, 1994: 94-95).

However, the power dynamic is linked to a woman's age and her gender. Age affects women's identity in the workplace. Older-age women are more likely to be respected than younger-age women and perhaps young men. It is worth noting that age dynamics in Afghan workplaces are different from Western societies. In contrast to the Afghan workplace, older individuals, both men and women, are discriminated against in various areas of employment (Duncan and Loretto, 2004). However, older women are more likely to be discriminated against than older men (Duncan and Loretto, 2004; Roscigno *et al.*, 2007). It has been argued that older women are discriminated against more than older men because they are valued according to their sexuality and bodily attractiveness and usefulness to men (Arber and Ginn, 1991). However, this is not the case in Afghanistan. Older women are respected because of their age and life experience. However, young women are perhaps harassed because of their bodily

attractiveness. Men cannot have access to women easily given the strict public-private distinctions, and perhaps out of aggression, they harass women.

Culture and ideologies are central to justification of unequal treatment based on age (Roscigno *et al.*, 2007). Broad cultural assumptions pertaining to young women's performance undoubtedly play a role within the institution, particularly for people in position-based hierarchies. Although there is no explicit evidence as to whether younger women from minority ethnic groups such as the Hazara are discriminated against, given the public-private distinctions, ethnic discrimination and age dynamics in Shah University, they may experience multiple acts of discrimination simultaneously. However, one of the Hazara female academics in her late 20s and early 30s complained about the academic system and the discriminatory practices she suffered from men and high authorities in our initial meeting in her office. However, when I asked her if she wanted to be interviewed, she refused, perhaps for fear of the power of high authorities and her marginalisation as a young woman from a minority ethnic group. I contacted her a few more times, but she was not willing to be interviewed. A number of studies have reported women and minority ethnic group employees' reluctance to come forward with complaints about being discriminated against for fear of job security or exacerbating their situation (Chovwen and Ivensor, 2009). This could have been the case with the younger Hazara woman who did not wish to be interviewed.

There is reluctance to report incidents of sexual harassment. My findings show that academics' concerns and complaints are not heard. As Ayesha said:

> Nobody listens. Nobody listens to complaints and there is nowhere to register your
>
> complaints instead [they] create obstacles (Ayesha, female, non-professorial position).

Further Mujtaba referred to the unreliability of the complaint system. He said:

> Theoretically there are some places (to fill the complaint) … but the complaint system
>
> is not reliable (Mujtaba, male, non-professorial position).

Mujtaba's explanation is in line with study by UNDP and UNESCO (2010). This study found that there exists a lack of trust that any action would be taken by the authorities, and fear, on the part of the victim, of being blamed. The study concludes that academics' and students' complaints in Afghan institutions should be addressed. Mujtaba's description also reflects Mariam's explanation that the Head of the Department and the Faculty Dean rejects complaints against each other (see page 268). In addition, Aarif pointed to the risk of complaints due to security concerns. He stated:

> Female students and academics are afraid to complain because of insecurity and there
>
> is also nobody to listen to them (Aarif, male, non-professorial position).

Security plays an essential role in this context. According to the UNDP and UNESCO report (2010), there is fear of the unwanted consequences of reporting, such as threats from the offender. There is a strong belief among academics that people in positions of power are under the influence of socio-politically powerful people and hence afraid to take any action (UNDP and UNESCO, 2010). Given the male dominated nature of the University and uncertainty and insecurity in general, women, and

perhaps men, prefer to keep silent particularly given the unreliable system of complaints.

However, victims of sexual harassment are not only women; men are also targeted. A number of studies confirm this finding (Dey *et al.*, 1996). The findings in this study indicate that in some cases the 'old boys' network' within the University has led to humiliation and threats to low-rank academics including men. As Elyas stated:

> I even witnessed that once the Head of the Department insulted the young and low rank academics (Elyas, male, non-professorial position, Tajik).

Aarif said:

> They asked me to sign a contract saying that you [the academic] have bad behaviour with academics and students and so on and then you will be promoted. Everybody supports the one who is in position of power. The Dean encourages female students to complain about the teacher [himself]. I was/am given certain hours to use internet and book [at the university]. After one and half years I was promoted (Aarif, male, non-professorial position).

These excerpts provide palpable evidence of the humiliation of low rank academics. It also shows sexual harassment in the form of threatening and intimidating. Humiliation and intimidation are two of the ways for higher status individuals to maintain their power and control over lower ranking individuals (McKinney, 1990). The findings confirm results reported in a previous study at these universities in Afghanistan (UNDP and UNESCO, 2010). The UNDP and UNESCO (2010) findings show that some people in

positions of authority were seen as dominating and insulting rather than empowering. It is worth noting that although Aarif was humiliated and intimidated, he was promoted perhaps because of his persistence. This shows that despite some barriers being created by some individuals in position of power, academics can achieve their goals. It could also be because of pressure from the Ministry of Higher Education to promote academics.

Sexual harassment and humiliation usually used as a form of control have negative effects on victims, who are mostly women. The harassed individuals are likely to experience stress and tension and become gradually unsatisfied with their job which may slow down their academic achievements (Schneider, 1987). It also makes individuals "feel ambivalent about their self-worth and identity" (Delgado, 1982:137). Studies also suggest that work environments that are hostile towards women and low-rank academics "create an undesirable work atmosphere that is tied to poorer outcomes" (Settles *et al.*, 2006:48).

In summary, findings in this section point out that harassment in academia depends on differences in power based on gender, age and academic rank. Moreover, they highlight the complexity of the concept of power. Although it was initially assumed by many scholars in this area that harassment occurs only when the offender has formal power over a victim (Benson, 1984), it was found in this study that informal power can be used by an offender, e.g. a student. Female academics being harassed by students reflects cultural power differences between men and women and the dominance of private patriarchy over public spaces. This also explains the impact of patriarchal

institutions, and society in general, upon the ability of female academics to remain within the institution and develop their academic careers. In such circumstances, the main priority of women is survival, carrying out daily work-related activities and family duties rather than working towards career advancement.

The underlying reason for violence and sexual harassment is not only to exclude women from access to public spaces, but also make them to perform certain tasks, such as domestic work (Hanmer, 1978 in Walby, 1989). Violence against women in the workplace is mainly the result of other sets of patriarchal relations. At Shah University and in Afghan society in general, men's violence against women in the workplace is facilitated by the ideology of the public-private distinction and is used to maintain men's control over women as well as 'occupational closure against women' (Walby, 1990: 39).

Conclusion

This was the last of those findings chapters. Its aim of this chapter was to present findings on academics' perceptions of interpersonal barriers to women in a higher education institution in Afghanistan. The findings show academics have different perceptions regarding academics' attitudes towards women. Some academics perceive the university environment as satisfactory for women but others did not. Overall findings show that women are not welcome in positions of power and authority. Women's voices, especially those who are in relatively higher positions, are not heard.

The study further shows the existence of sexual harassment and humiliation. Women and men; especially in lower ranks are harassed and humiliated. Young women are more likely to be harassed than older women. And younger female academics are harassed by male students. The power dynamics between women and men suggest that society is not yet ready to accept women in public spaces. It further confirms the dominance of private patriarchy within public spaces. In the next chapter, I conclude the thesis by discussing the implications of the study for policy and practice within a higher education institution in Afghanistan and making recommendations for further research.

CHAPTER NINE: CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICY AND PRACTICE

In this thesis, I explored Afghan academics'—women's and men's perceptions of gender inequality within their workplace, using Walby's (1990) public-private distinctions, Acker's (1990) inequality regimes and Butler's (1990) gender performativity. I argued that gender inequality exists in higher education institutions in Afghanistan but this has been normalised through cultural and historical norms, and is hence invisible.

Gender inequality and women's marginal role in public spaces in Afghanistan has been widely reported (Kandigoti, 1988; Moghadam, 2002; Abirafeh, 2009; Saikal, 2011). According to Abirafeh (2009), the main reason for women's oppression in Afghanistan is the patriarchal nature of society, which is tribal. However, there has been no research to focus on women in academia and working women's perceptions and experiences of inequality in Afghanistan. Using mixed methods in a case study, my quantitative findings have shown that academic women and men have different understandings of inequality within their workplace. Both women and men see institutional processes and practices from a meritocratic perspective which is procedural and based on equal opportunities. However, when asked specifically in relation to gender inequality, women perceived the existence of gender discrimination more than men. My findings further showed that, with a few exceptions, the majority of women in higher education are in lower-ranking positions. My data show that there was only one female academic who made it through to the rank of full professor.

However, the quantitative findings did not explain the reasons women are predominantly in lower ranks,

My qualitative findings confirm the complexity of academics' understandings of inequality within their workplace. Some academics believe that women are discriminated against while others do not. Semi-structured interviews demonstrated that gender inequality in higher education is multi-dimensional, consisting of socio-cultural, institutional and interpersonal factors. Throughout my qualitative findings I have shown that, in contrast to Walby's theory whereby private patriarchy moved into public spaces in the West, private patriarchy has not moved, to any great extent, to the public sphere in Afghanistan. Instead, private patriarchy in Afghanistan dominates public spaces because of the weak state, ongoing war and insecurity. As I have shown, institutional processes and practices are based on culturally gendered norms that are procedural, institutionalised and supposedly meritocratic. As those practices have become normalised they have been rendred invisible. At the interpersonal level, I have shown that working women, despite subverting culturally accepted gendered norms, reproduce and reinforce those norms in the workplace given the weakness of the state and insecurity in public spaces. My findings further reveal a lack of professional networking especially among women. Networking and bonding capital with both male and female colleagues are vital to bring women and men to act together in a common cause for making a potential transformative change with regard to women's success in the workplace.

Given the debilities within the Afghan state, bonding capital with family is the only option for women, and plays a key role in Afghan women's lives in both private and public spheres. As my findings demonstrate, family provides women with economic, physical and psychological security. In addition, family can provide women with a place to exercise power, frequently by means of various strategies, such as obedience, through the family structure, to achieve their ambitions. Although it is contrary to most Western theories of change, private space is the more effective source of change in Afghanistan. As the history of Afghanistan has illustrated (see Chapter 2), processes of change initiated from public spaces result in a backlash from people within the country.

In this study, it is suggested that Western models and theorisation often do not work in countries such as Afghanistan and thus need to be local, specific, and culturally relevant (Dominelli, 2014). In addition, as can be seen in my study, the key Western theories used, i.e. those of Walby, Acker and Butler, have not considered human security concerns linked to conflict and how this affects an individual's work performance at interpersonal, institutional and socio-cultural levels. Given the rise of insecurity in both developed and developing countries, it is essential to consider security concerns in connection with gender relations.

This study concludes that change in gender relations in higher education institutions and Afghan society in general cannot be transformative. As Nijat (2014) argues, it is about:

sustainable and socially responsive change (original emphasis), which among others will involve building mass capacity for habit and behaviour questioning, value shift, and cultural transition -processes that necessitate patient persistence and involvement of men and women both, and which are going to take significantly longer (p. 4).

Therefore, change will be a slow process and the private sphere is the main source of change for women in Afghanistan.

In the following section, I answer the two questions I posed in the first chapter.

Answers to Research Questions

At the beginning of this study, I posed two questions. In this section, I relate the findings to each of the questions.

What are women's and men's perceptions of gender inequality in a higher education institution in Afghanistan?

My quantitative and qualitative findings have shown that women and men academics' perceptions of inequality in their workplace are complex. Academics have different understandings of gender inequality in higher education institutions depending on their gender, age, academic rank, and ethnicity. Some academics, both women and men, strongly perceive the existence of gender inequality while others do not. Younger and middle-aged women who are more likely to be in non-professorial positions were more likely to agree than older women in professorial positions that there is discrimination against women. Some academics have mixed feelings about gender inequality within their workplace. In general, the majority of study participants, women

and men, perceived that there is gender inequality within the higher education institution (where the research was undertaken). There was only one female participant who completely rejected inequality based on gender or/and ethnicity perhaps because her perception seems to relate to her experiences in other public institutions and the past under the Taliban, when no women were allowed to pursue education and or undertake employment in public spaces. The reason is the strict public-private distinctions within the structure of society and the constant state of war and insecurity, which have normalised gender inequality throughout daily life to the extent that it has become invisible to women and men, until they are asked specifically about women's experiences.

What are the reasons for inequality and/or lack of inequality in Afghan higher education institutions?

My findings show that gender inequality exists in the higher education institution in Afghanistan and the reason for the inequality is multi-dimensional, consisting of socio-cultural, institutional and interpersonal components. The strict public-private distinction that is embedded within the structure of society is one of the main reasons for women's marginalisation within academia. Unlike Walby's theory, that private patriarchy has moved to public patriarchy in the West, my findings show that private patriarchy in Afghanistan dominates public spaces. Although private patriarchy has moved slightly to support women more than in the past (especially during the Taliban regime), Afghanistan's weak and patriarchal state, the lack of women's autonomy, their symbolic occupation of public spaces, and insecurity have allowed private

patriarchy to take over public spaces. In addition, institutional processes and practices are gendered and ethnicised. Institutional inequality sustains the patriarchal structure of society as well as the bureaucratic and hierarchal structures of the institution. My findings support Acker's theory of inequality regimes and gendered institutions. The findings show that the institution's processes and practices are gendered and ethnicised but these practices are legitimised and camouflaged by the meritocratic system of academia, presented as equal opportunities. However, Acker's theory does not consider human security concerns, which my study contributes. The findings show that lack of security affects women's performance in the workplace and geographical mobility. The interpersonal aspects of the inequality indicate that women, by working in public spaces, subvert culturally accepted gender norms and as a result face sexual harassment on a daily basis within the workplace. And, my research makes clear that by subverting gender norms, women inadvertently reproduce, represent and reinforce these norms within a bureaucratic and corrupted administrative system, in a braoder context of policy failure and insecurity.

Implications for Policy and Practice

In this section, I discuss the implications for policy and practice and suggest recommendations for higher education institutions in Afghanistan arising from my study.

Recommendations for the Higher Education Institution

The findings in this research suggest that reducing inequality within Shah University requires multiple solutions (Stamarski and Son Hing, 2015) because if change is brought to one aspect of the institution such as policy, but not in institutional processes and practices, such change would be ineffective (Gelfand *et al*., 2007). The underlying reason for gender inequality in the higher education institution is patriarchal ideology that can be transformed over time through change in institutional policies, processes and practices. However, insecurity enormously affects the pace of change. Given recent insurgencies and suicidal attacks in Kabul, any change would be slow and fragile and there are less chances of any transformative change at the university level or society in general in a short period. The government's greater priority is to establish security and then implement and mainstream gender polices and strategies. Considering this, in the following sub-sections, some solutions for policy and practice are put forward.

Policy Recommendations

My findings show that gender sensitivity must be reflected in all policies and strategies including recruitment, workload and promotion. Policies should provide clear guidelines and directions for dealing with gender and other types of discrimination within the workplace.

This study specifically calls for gender sensitive policies for recruitment and promotion. The study shows that although the number of women has increased since 2001, they remain underrepresented and mostly in lower ranks. There is a need to extend quotas at all levels of the University, not only access. This will ensure that women have both access to the University and to promotion. As a result, there would be a greater presence of women in different ranks and committees.

My study highlights the need to develop family-friendly policies, whereby the implications of the division of labour at home must be considered. The findings in this study show that women's main responsibilities (i.e. domestic work and childcare) affect their academic careers. Family-friendly policies such as flexible timetables, job-shares and part-time work are essential (Galinsky *et al.*, 2008).

In addition, availability of affordable and accessible childcare provision to meet the needs of all academics, women and men, is necessary. It is also important to encourage equal sharing of family roles and responsibilities between women and men. Although it is argued that family-friendly policies may partially reduce women's work-life conflict and that the assumption on women's role as the main responsible for domestic work and childcare are unchanged (Li and Peguero, 2015), they significantly affect Afghan women's participation in public spaces in the short-term. They allow women to have an independent source of income.

There is a need for practical strategies to reduce sexual harassment to ensure effective services and resources for those, especially younger women, who are subject to harassment. The University should set measureable goals to protect

women and men in an academic environment. Gender sensitive and practical policies are needed to enhance the safety of both women and low-ranking men academics, and sexual harassment policies should be implemented and evaluated to make sure they are practised within the workplace.

The need for diversity policies is also apparent in this research. As I found in this study, ethnic discrimination exists in Shah University. However, there is no policy addressing this form of discrimination. Given the sensitivity of ethnic issues in Afghanistan, strategic diversity initiatives should be designed (see Mujtaba, 2013) and should encourage awareness and tolerance in order to create an effectively functioning culture whereby individuals from different ethnic groups work without any discrimination due to their unique differences (Mujtaba, 2013). Diversity initiatives should facilitate the reduction in discrimination not only based on ethnicity, but also age. My findings also revealed that age discrimination existed. Therefore, diversity initiatives should address a range of issues such as ethnicity, age, and other personal and professional characteristics.

The need for policies and strategies to tackle corruption within the University and Ministry of Higher Education is also highlighted in this research. The prevention of corruption requires strategic leadership and practical, relevant strategies which are in alignment with Afghan cultural norms (Mujtaba, 2013). As such, the candidates for recruitment and/or promotion, without political considerations, should be selected and supported to create strategies to challenge corruption and ensure an inclusive work environment for both women and men. Additionally, for the system to be effective the institution, as well as the Ministry of Higher Education, must be

held accountable and those who are corrupt must be reprimanded. There should also be protection for those who challenge corruption and gender and ethnic inequality.

Further, my research calls for the University and Ministry of Higher Education to ensure the articulation and dissemination of current and new policies. As my findings show, although there are equal opportunity policies in place, they are not put into action. In addition, there is little evidence of women's activism within the University and/or Ministry of Higher Education to ensure the implementation of those policies. They need to make sure all academics are aware of their rights and responsibilities at the University. There is a need for leaders and high authorities to commit to gender equality, including gender mainstreaming and diversity by means of implementation and regular monitoring. The University should set up support for gender equality by strengthening the gender unit within the institution as well as the Ministry of Higher Education.

On the whole, my findings call for policies with clear strategies to tackle patriarchal ideologies and discriminatory practices within the University and the safety and security of academics. These policies need to be practical given low financial capacity and enforceable to reduce such practices and processes within the workplace. Although these recommendations are 'ideal changes' to policies that would require a longer time frame, pragmatic changes could be implanted in a shorter time framework that can be helpful even if not entirely solving the problem that exists. For example, the University could do an assessment for recruitment

processes and promotion procedures and contextualise women's work to ensure more women are recruited and promoted in each academic rank.

Practice Recommendations

A number of institutional process and practice issues were raised by my study in relation to women and minority ethnic groups. There is a need for job advertisements to be open and to reach all sections of community. This might be achieved by the use of different avenues including the Ministry of Higher Education, the University website and/or board, and commercial employment agencies.

My findings also show that there is a need for transparency in decision-making processes and hiring, workload allocation and promotion practices. Transparent approaches to academic decision-making would allow the University to improve the university environment (Barrett and Barrett, 2011) and reduce corruption (Van den Brink, 2010). The University should ensure that the decisions, particularly with regard to recruitment made by the Department and/or Faculty are open and the information is equally and accurately accessible to both insiders and outsiders. The Faculties should be held accountable for their decisions. In this study I use Giddens' definition of accountability. He asserts:

> to be accountable for one's activities is to explicate the reasons for them and to supply the normative grounds whereby they may be justified' (Giddens 1984: 30).

Attention should be given to gender-balanced compositions of committee members both in recruitment and promotion at the University, as my findings showed that there was a preponderance of men over women in each committee, which disadvantaged women especially in recruitment. So the Chancellor and/or the

Academic Vice-chancellor of the University and the Deans of the Faculties should make sure the committees are gender-balanced.

In addition, supportive practices among women, and women and men, should be encouraged by individuals in positions of power. All academics should be provided with networking and mentoring schemes. Although mentoring is not seen as a significant factor in women's advancement in some non-western societies such as Pakistan, lack of mentoring is associated with slow advancement (Arifeen, 2010). Although there has been an increase in the number of women employed, their representation at the bottom of the hierarchy, as found in this study, suggests that increasing numbers alone cannot shift the nature of inequality within the institution. More women in positions of power and decision-making are needed to articulate a unifying vision to mobilise women. According to Bagilhole (2000), women must strategically and systematically place themselves in gate-keeping roles and activities within the University to promote gender equality.

There is also a need for monitoring practices - especially those of individuals in positions of power - to ensure individuals are hired and promoted on the basis of their merit. Individuals in positions of power should be "role models of inclusion and ethical standards" and should provide development opportunities to academics, especially women (Prahalad, 2010 in Mujtaba 2013: 256). The University should also collect information from different faculties and departments based on equal opportunities legislation. These areas include gender, ethnicity, age and academic ranks of employees. These practices should be enforced by the Ministry of Higher Education.

To reduce bureaucracy, the Ministry of Higher Education should allow a University to be independent with regard to hiring, promotion and financial matters. Most importantly, there is a need for transparency and co-ordination among the University, the Ministry of Higher Education and the Ministry of Women's Affairs to ensure gender initiatives are enforced.

Overall, my findings showed that institutional processes and practices are based on patriarchal ideology and the wider politics of the country rather than any meritocratic system of academia. Therefore, to ensure equal opportunity policies are implemented and to minimise discriminatory practices, ongoing culturally relevant training programmes and awareness of equality and diversity are needed. Particularly for people in positions of power, such as the Chancellor and Vice-chancellors of the University, who play a key role in changing the institutional culture (Ostroff *et al.*, 2012). Training is needed for the Deans of the Faculties, the Heads of the Departments, and academics in decision-making positions, especially in recruitment and promotion committees.

For the training to be fully effective it should be conducted by gender and/or management professionals who are aware of equality and diversity policy and legislation. These training programmes should aim to explore the concept of gender as well as gender equality and diversity within the workplace from an Afghan perspective, and identify their implications on women and men from different ethnic and age groups. Training programmes should also encourage all academics to reject stereotypes and cultural assumptions about women's roles in Afghan society; and negative attitudes towards certain ethnic groups.

A clear mechanism for complaints should be put in place. The University should also establish a reporting, documentation, mediation, and investigation centre at the University. There is a need for a reliable complaints system for academics, both women and men, who are victims of discrimination and harassment. A separate complaints procedure is required because, as my findings show, the perpetrator can be someone in a position of power and authority, and thus it would be insufficient / inappropriate for the victim to report the incident.

There is also a need for women's activism to challenge inequalities within the institution and Ministry of Higher Education. Women and men should work across the universities, Ministry of Higher Education and Ministry of Women's Affairs to promote gender equality within the institution.

Recommendations for Society

Education plays an essential role in reducing inequalities within higher education institutions and society in general. Although my findings show educated people also carry a patriarchal ideology, education can eventually shift cultural assumptions and ideologies regarding the roles of women and place emphasis on the importance of engaging women in employed work, thus improving Afghan society (Mashriqi, 2013). Therefore, the Afghan government should encourage education for all, especially younger girls.

This research calls for women and men to work together to change patriarchal ideology, as my findings show that there are some men who understand the challenges women, in particular working women, face in Afghanistan. However, given the harsh reality of Afghan society, e.g. poverty and uncertainty, men try to

reconstruct their identity (Rostami-Povey, 2007). There is a need for some programmes to assist men in understanding their perceptions of masculinity (Schmeidl, 2009) and how they, along with women, would be able to challenge gender inequality. Therefore, it is essential to target both women and men to promote equality within Afghan society.

The results reveal that family bonding is the source of change for women. Women must begin, from the private sphere, to negotiate culturally accepted gender norms. Doing that will allow them to 'loosen the grip of patriarchy' (Azarbaijani-Moghaddam, 2014) and stay safe. According to Azarbaijani-Moghaddam (2014), women can use their salary and professional status to negotiate their role within private spaces.

The Afghan government must ensure the safety and security of all Afghan citizens. Women should be able to participate in the workplace without feeling threatened or harassed. Without security, neither women nor men can function effectively in public spaces.

Recommendations for Future Research

In this study, I have explored academics', both women's and men's, perceptions of gender inequality in a university in Afghanistan. I have demonstrated how private patriarchy governs public spaces in Afghanistan especially given the uncertainty and absence of policy implementation, and that the institutional processes and practices are based on culturally accepted gendered practices that are covered by supposedly meritocratic procedures and normalised, thus becoming invisible. This study led to new insights and questions for possible future research. Additional

research is needed to expand this study to obtain a greater understanding of the intersections of gender, age, ethnicity and academic ranking and academics' perceptions of fairness in various aspects of employment both in public and private universities.

Future research could focus on questions such as:

- the paradox between women's apparent satisfaction with their jobs and working conditions and experiences, and their evident location in power structures (socio-culturally and institutionally).

- differences between women's and men's assessment of the value of their work within Afghan institutions.

- ethnic/tribal aspects of differential experiences of men and women in higher education.

- the impact of insecurity on working women post-2014?

- How women assess risk and uncertainty within the workplace.

Among the limitations to this study, I found there was a small number of women at University 2, but there were no women participants to complete my questionnaire and/or to be interviewed. Therefore, the future research could aim to:

- Investigate the reasons for the apparent lack of women in private universities compared with public ones.

- Explore women's experiences and perceptions of fairness within private universities.

- Undertake a comparative study of women's positions in public and private universities.

- Undertake a study to investigate whether women are harassed by students and/or male colleagues.

In addition, there is a need for an improved collection and dissemination of gender data with regard to workforce composition, to institute actions to promote gender equality in various areas of employment, including recruitment and promotion. The availability of gender data is essential for effective gender quality policies and strategies. Furthermore, future research could also use alternative methodologies such as longitudinal studies, conducted over a period of time in various provinces of Afghanistan, to assess the generalisability of findings in this study.

Conclusion

The participation of women in economic development in the current situation in Afghanistan is crucial to reduce poverty (Azarbaijani-Moghaddam, 2014). Although education is a vehicle for change in Afghanistan (Kehoe, 2008) my findings show that educated individuals in higher education continue the patriarchal ideology, cultural practices and wider politics of the country. This study concludes that the source of change is within the family. Family as an agent of change needs to encourage and support women to pursue education and develop their careers. Further, it is suggested that change at the institutional level has to be multi-dimensional because change in one area, such as processes and practices but not in another such as policy, would be ineffective.

The way forward towards to a fair and diverse working environment for women needs an ideological change towards the role of women in society. Gradual progress with strategic and culturally relevant measures and policies is required to make more sustainable gains for women in the future. Gender equality is essential for poverty reduction and economic growth. Therefore, policies need to be implemented and supported by institutional processes and practices, which need to be monitored.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1- Letter of permission

Appendix 2- Study information sheet

Appendix 3- Consent form

Appendix 4- Survey questionnaire

Appendix 5- Interview information sheet and topic guide

Appendix 6- Ethical approval form

Appendix 1- Letter of permission

No: 1112   Date: 20, oct, 2013

20 October 2013

Professor Lena Dominelli, Ph D, AcSS
Head of Social, Community and Youth Work
Associate Director, Institute of Hazard and Risk Research
Durham University

Dear Professor Lena Dominelli,

I am writing to let you know that I, as Vice-Chancellor of the Shah University give permission for Yalda Afzali to undertake her research on the position and experiences of men and women academics in Shah University. I understand that this research include administering questionnaires and interviewing male and female academics. Moreover, Shah University will accept Durham University's ethical approval.

If I can be of further help, please do not hesitate to contact.

Yours faithfully,

Professor
Vice-Chancellor for Academic Affaire

Information Sheet

Study Title: The Status of Academics in Higher Education in Afghanistan

You are being invited to take part in a doctoral research project. Before deciding to take part in this research, it is essential to read the following information carefully so that you can understand the aim and objectives of the research, the reason you are chosen and what is expected of you if you decided to take part.

Who is the researcher?

I am currently enrolled as a postgraduate researcher at Durham University, working on the Status of Academics in Higher Education in Afghanistan. I got my first degree in English Language and Literature from Faculty of Languages and Literature, Kabul University, and my second degree in Applied Language Studies for TESOL (Teaching English for Students of Other Languages) from Durham University.

What is the aim of the research?

The research aims to understand the current position of academics, men and women and their experiences in relation to access to employment and participation in the university. It will look at university as a workplace, study environments, its structures and interaction between academics and among them and students. Within these, it examines hiring patterns, promotion procedures, publication rates, job satisfaction levels, and sense of personal and professional accomplishment.

What is the importance of the study?

The reason I have chosen to focus on academics in higher education is that universities have a considerable impact in the development of society. I am particularly interested in how they contribute to the development of post-conflict

societies, such as Afghanistan. Moreover, there is not much research done in this area, and thus it could be a rich piece of data collection to help academics develop their career, and policy makers to improve policy and procedures in higher education.

What does the research entail?

The study will collect and analyse official documents, survey questionnaires and interviews to which I am seeking your assistance. Initially I would like to analyse official documents as policy of higher education and strategic plans of the university. Then I would like to administer survey questionnaire to academics, and finally I would like to interview academics, both men and women.

Why have you been invited to participate?

You are invited to participate because you are employed in an Afghan university. Thus, you can make a significant contribution to the development of higher education in particular and to the society in general. You are invited to complete a survey questionnaire, which asks you about your experiences as an academic in an Afghan university. Then, if you were willing, you would be interviewed by me. The interview will be a follow up to the survey questionnaire where your experience will be explored in greater depth.

What will happen if I do not want to take part or if I change my mind?

You are free to choose whether you would like to take part or not in this study. Moreover, if you have participated you can withdraw or refuse to participate at any stage without giving a reason. Participation is entirely voluntary; however, I whole-heartedly appreciate your contribution if you were to agree to participate.

How is confidentiality maintained?

Confidentiality will be maintained through anonymity. You will be given choice to be anonymous or choose an alternative name for the research purposes; unless, it does not put another person at risk. Your questionnaires and interview materials will be coded and will be locked in separate locations. The electronic files will be kept in a password-protected computer, accessed only by me.

What is the duration of the research?

A survey questionnaire will be administered to academics over the period of a week. Additionally, you will be asked if you would like to be interviewed. The average time for the interview will be about one hour.

What happens to the data that is collected?

The collected data will be analysed and will be used in my doctoral thesis. The thesis will be available through Durham University and Embassy of Islamic Republic of Afghanistan in London as a condition of studying abroad. Some of the results will be used in other publications, for instance journal articles, books or conferences. You will also receive a summary of the findings as will they funder, Open Society Foundation (OSF).

Who is organising and funding the research?

Durham University and Open Society Foundation fund the scholarship.

Contact for Further Information

If you have got further queries and questions, do not hesitate to contact me, Yalda Afzali.

Email: yalda.afzali@durham.ac.uk

Post: School of Applied Social Sciences, Durham University, Elvet Riverside, Durham, DH1 3JT.

If you have any complains about my performance as a researcher, you can also contact my supervisors Lena Dominelli, lena.dominelli@durham.ac.uk and Vikki Boliver vikki.boliver@durham.ac.uk.

I whole-heartedly thank you for taking the time to read the information sheet and considering whether or not you would like to take part in this study.

Appendix 3- Consent form

Durham University

Consent Form

I, the undersigned, confirmed that:

1	I have read and understood the information about the research project provided in the information sheet.	☐
2	I have been given the opportunity to ask questions about the project.	☐
3	I agree to take part in the project that includes being interviewed and recorded.	☐
4	I agree to participate in this study voluntarily.	☐
5	I understand that I can withdraw or refuse to participate at any stage without giving a reason.	☐
6	The confidentiality procedures have been clearly explained.	☐
7	The use of data has been clarified.	☐
8	I, along with the researcher, agreed to sign and date this informed consent form.	☐

Participant:

_____   _____

Name of Participant   Signature   Date

Researcher:

_____   _____

Name of Researcher   Signature   Date

Position of Academics in Higher Education in Afghanistan Survey Questionnaire

This survey is designed to investigate the current position of men and women academics and their experiences in relation to accessing employment and participation in the University in Afghanistan. It will look at the university as a workplace, the study, teaching and research environments, its structures and interaction among academics and between them and students. Within these, it examines hiring patterns, promotion procedures, job satisfaction levels, research and publication rates, and sense of personal and professional accomplishment.

The survey is composed of six parts. There is no right or wrong answer, please answer as truthfully as you can. The information will be kept confidential and anonymous. You are free to choose to take part or not to take part or you can withdraw or refuse to participate at any stage without giving a reason. Your sincere answers will guarantee the success of this investigation. I whole-heartedly appreciate your participation.

Employment Information

I. Please choose/ tick a response for each question

1. What is the highest job position you have attained at the university?

☐ Full Professor ☐ Associate Professor

☐ Assistant Professor ☐ Lecturer

☐ Assistant Lecturer ☐ Instructor

☐ Proposed Teaching Assistant ☐ Part-time Teacher

☐ Other:_____

2. How many years in total have you been working at this university?

_____

3. How would you evaluate the status of academics currently?

○ Very good ○ Good ○ Poor ○ Very poor

4. How would you evaluate the status of academics during the Islamic State (1992-1994)?

○ Very good ○ Good ○ Poor ○ Very poor

5. How would you evaluate the status of academics during Soviet Union (Communist regime?

○ Very good   ○ Good   ○ Poor   ○ Very poor

6. How many hours do you usually work at the university each week?
_____

7. Which of the following do you receive in your job at the university?

Tick all that apply

Health facilities ☐

Paid maternity leave ☐

Child care facilities free of cost ☐

Transportation ☐

Research facilities (funding) ☐

Library facilities (printer, photocopy machine) ☐

Trainings ☐

Office with use of the desk ☐

Internet ☐

No facilities offered ☐

8. Do you work somewhere else besides university?

○ Yes   ○ No

If your answer is 'NO' proceed to section III. If yes, go on to question 9.

9. Please specify your other workplace.

_____
_____
_____

10. Do you work at your other workplace

○ Part-time   ○ Full-time

○ Other:_____
____

II. **Please rate how much you personally agree or disagree with these statements-how much they reflect how you feel or think personally. Use the following scale: Strongly agree, Agree, Partly agree, Slightly disagree, Disagree, Strongly disagree.**

	Strongly agree	Agree	Partly agree	Slightly disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
There are fair hiring practices at the university.						
Employees are hired according to their merit.						
The hiring procedure is transparent to all applicants.						
Men job applicants are hired more than women job applicants at this university.						
Women job applicants are hired more than men job applicants at this university.						

Workload and Salary

III. **Please tick a response for each statement.**

1. How much do you agree/disagree with the following statements?

	Strongly agree	Agree	Partly agree	Slightly disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
My workload is more than some of my female colleagues.						
My workload is more than some of my male colleagues.						

My workload stresses me out.						
There is a lack of work balance among academics.						
The procedures for determining salary are transparent.						
This university has clear policies regarding salaries and allowance.						
Academics in private universities have higher salary than in public universities.						
My pay is higher than women in the same position.						
My pay is higher than men in the same position.						
My pay is lower than women in a lower position.						
My pay is lower than men in a lower position.						

Promotion and Publication

IV.   Please rate the following statements.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Partly agree	Slightly disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree

My present job at the university provides me good opportunities for promotion.						
I am aware of the criteria for promotion.						
The promotion criteria are transparent.						
The promotion procedures are clear.						
It is easy to get promotion in public universities.						
I have been rewarded for my good performance.						
I have been recognised for my accomplishments.						
My opportunity for promotion is unlimited within the university.						
Job promotion is based on job performance and achievements.						
The university helps me to pursue my professional growth.						
The university helps me pursue my personal growth.						
My job is compatible with my experience.						
My job is compatible with my qualification.						

I feel university work is highly secure job in comparison with other public and private sector jobs.						
In general my comments and suggestions are usually considered by peers/dean.						
I have sufficient professional authority and autonomy at work.						
I am given less hours of teaching to carry out my research.						
I have access to enough sources to undertake my research.						
There is an easy procedure for research proposal approval.						
There is lack of funding for research.						

Tick the box/boxes that best describe you.

1. I last published
   ☐ This month   ☐ This year
   ☐ Last year   ☐ 2-5 years ago
   ☐ Never

2. I often publish
   ☐ Twice a year   ☐ Once a year
   ☐ Once in two years   ☐ Once in five years
   ☐ Other: _____
   ____

V. **Please rate how much you personally agree or disagree with these statements-how much they reflect how you feel or think personally. Use the following scale: Strongly agree, Agree, Partly agree, Slightly disagree Disagree, Strongly disagree.**

1. Rate the following statements.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Partly agree	Slightly disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
The work policy of university is fair to all academics.						
The administrative system is good in this university.						
There is no ethnic discrimination in the work environment.						
There is no gender discrimination in the work environment.						
University policies cover gender issues.						
The university considers equal participation of men and women academics.						
The university promotes gender equality.						
The university ensures equal treatment of all academics.						
The University provides an equitable and supportive						

environment for men.						
The University provides an equitable and supportive environment for women.						
The University insures the safety and security of all academics.						
There is a lack of participative governmental structures.						
The University adopts a policy of zero tolerance for unsocial behaviours, such as personal insult and sexual harassment.						
The University fosters a women-friendly environment on campus.						

2. Fewer women than men are within Afghan universities. How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Partly agree	Slightly disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
This is caused by organisational work factors within the universities (e.g. long working hours, a lot of work pressure etc.)						

This is caused by conservative ideas traditions and habits about what is most suitable for men and women.		330				
This is because women hold the main responsibility for domestic and caring tasks at home.						
This is because within academia the atmosphere and accepted customs are in the advantage of men.						
It is too early to compare the proportion of female academics to that of male academics within Afghan universities.						
It is because of insensitive gender policy.						

Personal Information

VI. Please choose/ tick a response for each question.

1. Please identify your gender.
   - ○ Male ○ Female

2. Which category below includes your age?
   - ○ 21-29 ○ 30-39
   - ○ 40-49 ○ 50-59
   - ○ 60 or older

3. What is your marital status?
   - ○ Single ○ Married
   - ○ Divorced/Separated ○ Widowed

4. Do you have children under 16?
   - ○ Yes ○ No

5. Which ethnicity best describes you?
   - ☐ Pashton ☐ Tajik
   - ☐ Hazara ☐ Uzbek
   - ☐ Turkmen ☐ Other

   Please specify other:_____

6. What is your field of study?
   - ☐ Arts and humanities ☐ Agriculture
   - ☐ Business Administration ☐ Economics
   - ☐ Engineering ☐ Journalism
   - ☐ Computer Science ☐ Social Sciences
   - ☐ Science ☐ Law
   - ☐ Veterinary Science ☐ Pharmacy
   - ☐ Other:

   _____

7. What is the highest academic degree you hold?

☐ Associate Degree ☐ Bachelor Degree (BA/BSc)

☐ Master's Degree (MA/ MSc/M.Ed) ☐ Doctorate Degree (PhD)

☐ Other:

_____

8. Where did you get your degree?

○ Within the country

Please specify the
institution_____

○ Outside the country

 Please specify the institution and
country_____

Thank you for taking this survey!

پرسشنامه برای استادان پوهنتون

این مطالعه به منظور بررسی موقعیت فعلی زنان و مردان دانشگاهی و تجارب شان در ارتباط به دسترسی اشتغال و مشارکت در پوهنتون کابل و کاردان در افغانستان طراحی شده است. این مطالعه به پوهنتون منحیث محل کار، محیط مطالعه، آموزش و پژوهش نگاه نموده و ساختار و تعامل آن را میان اساتید با اساتید و اساتید با محصلین بررسی می نماید. درضمن ، این مطالعه به بررسی الگو های تقرر، روش های ترفیع، سطح رضایت شغلی، میزان پژوهش و انتشارات و حس موفقیت شخصی و حرفه ای می پردازد.

این مطالعه از شش بخش تشکیل شده است. هیچ پاسخ درست یا غلط وجود ندارد، پس لطفآ تا حد ممکن صادقانه پاسخ دهید. این اطلاعات محرمانه و ناشناس نگه داشته می شود. شما آزادی انتخاب دارید که درین مطالعه سهم بگیرید و یا نه و شما می توانید که در هر مرحله بدون ارایه دلیل کناره گیری نموده و صرف نظر کنید. پاسخ صادقانه شما موفقیت این تحقیق را تضمین می کند. من از صمیم قلب از اشتراک شما سپاسگذارم.

اطلاعات وظیفه

الف) لطفا یک پاسخ برای هر سوال انتخاب کنید.

1. بالاترین موقعیت شغلی بدست آمده شما در پوهنتون چیست؟

پوهاند

پوهنوال

پوهندوی

پوهنمل

پوهنیار

پوهیالی

نامزد پوهیالی

استاد نیمه وقت

سایر موارد: ــ

(نوت: ترجمه شماره یک نظر به محیط و ماحول و اصطلاحات مروج در افغانستان ترجمه شده است)

2. به صورت کل، چند سال می شود که شما دراین پوهنتون اشتغال دارید؟

ــ

3. شما درحال حاضر وضعیت اساتید را چگونه ارزیابی می کنید؟

بسیار خوب   خوب   ناچیز   بسیار ناچیز

4. شما وضعیت اساتید را در زمان امارت اسلامی (1994-1992) چگونه ارزیابی می کنید؟

بسیار خوب   خوب   ناچیز   بسیار ناچیز

5. شما وضعیت اساتید را در زمان اتحاد جماهیر شوری (1991-1979) چگونه ارزیابی می کنید؟

بسیار خوب   خوب   ناچیز   بسیار ناچیز

6. شما در هفته چند ساعت مکلفیت درسی دارید؟
_____

7. کدام گزینه های ذیل را شما در پوهنتون دریافت می کنید؟
درصورت صحت، همه موارد را انتخاب کنید
   ○ سهولت های صحی
   ○ رخصتی ولادی با معاش
   ○ سهولت های مراقبت از کودکان بدون هزینه
   ○ ترانسپورت
   ○ سهولت های تحقیق (وجوه مالی)
   ○ امکانات کتابخانه (ماشین های کاپی و چاپ)
   ○ برنامه های آموزشی
   ○ دفتر با میز کاری
   ○ انترنت
   ○ هیچ امکانات موجود نیست

8. درکنار پوهنتون، آیا شما جای دیگری هم کار می کنید؟

بلی   نخیر

اگر جواب شما منفی است به بخش **ب)** مراجعه کنید. اگر جواب شما مثبت است، به سوال شماره نهم پاسخ دهید.

9. لطفآ در مورد وظیفه دیگر تان جزئیات ارایه نمائید.
_____
_____
_____

10. در وظیفه دیگر تان به کدام منوال کار می کنید؟
تمام وقت   نیم وقت   سایر موارد:
_____

ب) لطفاً مشخص کنید که شما شخصا به چه مقدار با این اظهارات موافق یا مخالف هستید. به چه مقدار این اظهارات احساس شما را بازگو می نماید. از مقیاس ذیل استفاده کنید: کاملا موافق، موافق، تاحدی موافق، کمی مخالف، مخالف، کاملا مخالف.

	کاملا موافق	موافق	تاحدی موافق	کمی مخالف	مخالف	کاملا مخالف
شیوه های منصفانه استخدام در پوهنتون وجود دارد.						
کارکنان براساس شایستگی خود استخدام می گردند.						
روش استخدام به تمام متقاضیان شفاف است.						
از جمع متقاضیان، مردان نسبت به زنان زیادتر در این پوهنتون استخدام شده اند.						
از جمع متقاضیان، زنان نسبت به مردان زیادتر در این پوهنتون استخدام شده اند.						

حجم کار و معاش

ج) لطفا برای هر اظهار یک گزینه را انتخاب کنید.
1. به چه اندازه با اظهارات ذیل موافق/مخالف هستید؟

	کاملا موافق	موافق	تاحدی موافق	کمی مخالف	مخالف	کاملا مخالف
حجم کارم بیشتر از برخی از همکاران اناث من است.						
حجم کارم بیشتر از برخی از همکاران ذکور من است.						

						حجم کار برمن فشار وارد می نماید.
						عدم تعادل کاری میان اساتید وجود دارد.
						روش برای تعیین معاش شفاف است.
						این پوهنتون دارای پالیسی مشخص و روشن در مورد معاش و کمک هزینه می باشد.
						اساتید در پوهنتون های خصوصی معاش بالاتر نسبت به پوهنتون های دولتی دارند.
						معاش من زیادتر از معاش زنان در عین پست است.
						معاش من زیادتر از معاش مردان در عین پست است.
						معاش من کمتر از معاش زنان در پست پایین تر است.
						معاش من کمتر از معاش مردان در پست پایین تر است.

ترفیع و انتشار

د) لطفا اظهارات ذیل را ارزیابی نمایید.

	کاملا مخالف	مخالف	کمی مخالف	تاحدی موافق	موافق	کاملا موافق
کار فعلی من در پوهنتون فرصت های خوبی را برای ارتقا و ترفیع برایم فراهم می نماید.						
من از معیار های ارتقا و ترفیع آگاه هستم.						
معیار های ارتقا و ترفیع شفاف است.						
روش ارتقا روشن و واضح است.						
ارتقا و ترفیع در پوهنتون های دولتی آسانتر است.						
برای عملکرد خوبم پاداش برایم داده شده است.						
بخاطر موفقیت هایم مرا رسما میشناسند.						
فرصت هایم برای ارتقا و ترفیع در دانشگا نامحدود است.						
ارتقا شغلی براساس عملکرد شغلی و دستاورد ها می باشد.						
این پوهنتون به من کمک می کند تا دنباله رو رشد حرفه ای ام باشم.						
این پوهنتون به من کمک می کند تا دنباله رو رشد شخصی ام باشم.						
کار من سازگار با تجربه من است.						

						کارمن سازگار با میزان تحصیلات من است.
						من احساس می کنم که کار پوهنتون من در مقایسه با سایر شغل های بخش دولتی و خصوصی امن تر است.
						به طورکلی نظرات و پیشنهادات من معمولا توسط همکاران/ریس در نظر گرفته می شود.
						من به قدر کافی از استقلال و خودمختاری حرفه ای در وظیفه ام برخوردار هستم.
						ساعات کمتر درسی بخاطر انجام تحقیق به من داده می شود.
						من به منابع کافی جهت انجام تحقیقم دسترسی دارم.
						روش آسان و ساده برای تصویب طرح تحقیق وجود دارد.
						کمبود بودجه برای تحقیق وجود دارد.

گزینه های ذیل که شما را به بهترین وجه توصیف می کند را نشانی کنید.

1. آخرین باری که (مقاله) نشر نمودم
   - o همین ماه
   - o همین سال
   - o سال گذشته
   - o 2-5 سال قبل
   - o هیچ وقت
2. من اغلبا (مقاله) به نشر می رسانم
   - o دو مرتبه در سال

○ یک مرتبه در سال

○ یک مرتبه در دوسال

○ یک مرتبه در پنج سال

سایر موارد: _____

پالیسی پوهنتون

ذ) لطفآ مشخص کنید که شما شخصا به چه مقدار با این اظهارات موافق یا مخالف هستید. به چه مقدار این اظهارات احساس شما را بازگو می نماید. از مقیاس ذیل استفاده کنید: کاملا موافق، موافق، تاحدی موافق، کمی مخالف، مخالف، کاملا مخالف.

لطفا یک گزینه را برای اظهارات ذیل انتخاب کنید.

کاملا مخالف	مخالف	کمی مخالف	تاحدی موافق	موافق	کاملا موافق	
						پالیسی کار پوهنتون برای تمام اساتید مناسب است.
						سیستم اداری درین پوهنتون خوب می باشد.
						در محیط کار هیچ نوع تبعیض نژادی و قومی وجود ندارد.
						در محیط کار هیچ نوع تبعیض جنیستی وجود ندارد.
						پالیسی پوهنتون تمام موضوعات جنسیتی را پوشش می دهد.
						پوهنتون به اشتراک مساویانه اساتید زن و مرد می اندیشد.
						پوهنتون تساوی جنسیتی را ترویج می دهد.
						پوهنتون از برخورد مساویانه با تمام اساتید مراقبت می نماید.

						پوهنتون یک محیط منصف و حمایوی برای مردان را مهیا می سازد.
						پوهنتون یک محیط منصف و حمایوی برای زنان را مهیا می سازد.
						پوهنتون از سلامت و ایمنی تمام اساتید مراقبت می نماید.
						کمبود ساختار های اشتراکی دولتی موجود است.
						پوهنتون پالیسی عدم تحمل را برای رفتار های غیراجتماعی مانند آزار و اذیت شخصی و جنسی اتخاذ می نماید.
						پوهنتون یک محیط دوستانه و صمیمانه برای خانم ها را در فضای پوهنتون پرورش می دهد.

1. تعداد اساتید زن نسبت به مرد در پوهنتونها کمتر است. شما تا چه اندازه با اظهارات ذیل موافق یا مخالف هستید؟

کاملا مخالف	مخالف	کمی مخالف	تاحدی موافق	موافق	کاملا موافق	
						دلیل این است که عوامل کاری نهاد در داخل پوهنتون ها می باشد. (مانند ساعات طولانی کاری ، فشار زیاد کاری وغیره)
						این از سبب ایده های قدیمی، رسم و رواج و عادت های میباشد که مناسب برای مردان و زنان پنداشته می شود.
						دلیل این است که زنان مسئولیت

						اصلی برای کار و مراقبت و نگهداری در خانه دارند.
						دلیل این است که در داخل پوهنتون جو و فضا و رسوم قبول شده به نفع مردان است.
						هنوز بسیار زود است که تناسب اساتید زن را با اساتید مرد در پوهنتون های افغانستان مقایسه نمود.
						این به دلیل پالیسی غیرحساس جنسیتی می باشد.

اطلاعات شخصی

ر) لطفا یک گزینه را برای هرسوال انتخاب کنید.

1. لطفا جنسیت خویش را مشخص سازید.

        مرد   زن

2. سن شما شامل کدام ردیف پایان می گردد.

        39-30   29-21

        59-50   49-40

        60-بالاتر

3. حالت مدنی شما چیست؟

        مجرد   متاهل

        طلاق شده/جدا شده   بیوه

4. آیا شما اطفال زیر سن 16 دارید؟

        بلی   نخیر

5. ملیت شما کدام است؟

        پشتون   تاجیک

        ازبک   هزاره

ترکمن   سایر: _____

6. رشته تحصیلی شما چیست؟

هنر و علوم انسانی   زراعت

مدیریت تجارت   اقتصاد

انجنیری   ژورنالیزم

کمپیوتر ساینس   علوم اجتماعی

ساینس   حقوق

وترنری   فارمسی

سایر: _____

7. بلندترین سند تحصیلی شما چیست؟

دیپلوم   لسانس

ماستر   داکتر

سایر: _____

8. سند تحصیلی تان را از کجا بدست آوردید؟

داخل کشور

لطفا نهاد را مشخص سازید _____

خارج از کشور

لطفا نهاد و کشور را مشخص سازید _____

تشکر از اشتراک شما درین مطالعه

Appendix 5- Interview information sheet and topic guide

Interview Guideline

Thank you for being willing to take part in a follow up interview to the previous survey. First of all, I would like to assure you that you will remain completely anonymous and no records of the interview will be kept with your name on them. You are free to choose to take part or not to take part or you can withdraw or refuse to participate at any stage without giving a reason.

1. Can I start by asking you when did you start working in academia?
2. How did you first come into academia?
3. Tell me about your experience of working at the university.
    - What is the nature of your work?
    - Is it personally and professionally secure?
    - Does the job help you to make more progress towards your career?
    - Do you think it is the best career choice for you?
4. I am interested in learning, how do you manage family and career.
5. How your family and co-workers provide you with professional support?
    - In what kind of situations do they offer support?
    - How do they communicate their support?
    - What kind of support do they provide?
6. Can you recall the situation of academics in the past?
    - How was the situation of academics during Soviet Union's invasion?
    - How was it during Taliban regime?
    - How is the situation now?
7. How do you feel they compare?
    - What were/are the similarities of these regimes?
    - What were/are the differences of these regimes?
8. Does instable situation/insecurity affect academics? If it does in what ways?
9. Do you think the situation of academics getting better? Why and Why not?
10. Tell me about challenges you face in the university (Refer to questionnaire)
    - Corruption
    - Favouritism
    - Ethnic discrimination

- Gender discrimination

- Pay discrimination

- Promotion discrimination

11. What opportunities do you think you missed out?

12. Do you think the road to the top is different for men and women?

- How is it different?

- Why is it different?

13. What do you think of recent mainstreaming of gender policy in higher education?

- Do you have gender policy in your university?

  If yes:

- What do you think of the strengths of gender policy?

- What do you think of its weaknesses?

- Does it have positive effect on participation of students and academics in general?

14. Is there anything more you would like to add?

I will analysis the information for my PhD and submitted a draft report to my supervisors at Durham University. I will be happy to send you a copy to review at that time, if you are interested.

Thank you very much for your time!

Appendix 6- Ethical approval form

School of Applied Social Sciences

RESEARCH ETHICS AND RISK ASSESSMENT FORM

All research that involves access to human participants or to personal data with identifiable cases must be assessed for ethical issues and risks to the research participants and researcher(s)[6]. The research ethics form starts this process and must be submitted by the principal investigator for *all* such projects that staff or students of the School intend to undertake. Students and PGRs completing the process should seek guidance and support from supervisors. Staff members are invited to seek advice and support from the co-chairs of the SASS ethics sub-committee. Research that is purely literature-based does not require ethical approval.

Applications for ethical approval are reviewed in line with relevant codes of ethical practice, such as that of the British Sociological Association [7] or ESRC Research Ethics Framework[8]. Data should also be handled in a manner compliant with the Data Protection Act[9]. Researchers seeking funding from a research council must work within the appropriate research ethics framework.

When completed, this form should be submitted to the designated approver for your type of project. The form must be approved before any data collection begins.

Type of project	Default Approver
Students undertaking dissertations on taught courses (including MSW students)	Your dissertation supervisor
All other students undertaking project work as part of taught modules	Your module convenor or workshop leader
Research students	Director of Postgraduate Research

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[6] http://www.dur.ac.uk/research.office/local/research_governance/
[7] http://www.britsoc.co.uk/equality/Statement+Ethical+Practice.htm
[8] http://www.esrc.ac.uk/about-esrc/information/research-ethics.aspx
[9] http://www.dur.ac.uk/research.office/local/research_governance/data_protection/

	(via SASS Research Secretary (PGR))
Staff	Chair of Ethics Sub-Committee (via SASS Research Administrator)

PART A. To be filled in by all applicants

Section A. I Project outline

Name of investigator: Yalda Afzali

E-mail address: yalda.afzali@durham.ac.uk

Dissertation/project title: Gender Equality in Higher Education in Afghanistan

Degree and year (students only): First year PhD

Student ID (students only): 000229700

Project funder (where appropriate): Durham University and Open Society Foundation (OSF)

Estimated start date: 23/11/2012   Estimated end date: 30/09/2016

of project   of project

Summary (up to 250 words describing main research questions, methods and brief details of any participants)

Dissertation/project title

Gender Equality in Higher Education in Afghanistan

Main research aims/questions

The research aims to understand the current position of men and women academics and their experiences in relation to access to employment and participation in two universities in Afghanistan. It will look at the university as a workplace, the study environments, its structures and interaction among academics and between them and students. Within these, it examines hiring patterns, promotion procedures, job satisfaction levels, research and publication rates, and sense of personal and professional accomplishment. Thus, my research seeks to answer the following questions:

- How do the institutional structures, procedures and processes of these two universities impact upon Afghan academics' work experiences and positioning within each university hierarchy?
- How do Afghan academics experience working in a university?

Proposed methods

In this study, a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods is used to broaden the scope of investigation and enrich my ability to draw effective and valid conclusions to the problem. It increases the validity and reliability of the collected data (Bryman, 2012).

Two case study sites involving one pubic and one private university in Kabul is used to investigate the position and experiences of academics. A case study will facilitate an in-depth study of various social, political and economic problems in their environmental contexts (Gilgun, 1994). Moreover, it will help me to analyse the overall reality of men and women's position and experience in academia in Afghanistan so that strategies for overcoming the disadvantages could be devised. Hence, this research would be valuable contribution to the academics and policy makers.

Sample/participants

Men and women academics in one public and one private university in Kabul will be interviewed and a questionnaire will be administered, to determine the current position and experiences of academics in an Afghani context. The survey questionnaire will be distributed to all academics in both universities.

Next, 25/26 academics, 12/14 in each institution, will be interviewed on the basis of data collected from the questionnaire and who volunteers to participate in the interview. Cluster sampling will be used to choose which volunteers to invite for the interview. Cluster sampling helps me to maintain the representative nature of the research (Bryman, 2012). In the sense, I may not be able to interview all academics, but I can include one from each cluster, which would be based on gender, age, academic job positions, professional degree held, ethnicity and economic status.

Section A.2 Ethics checklist (please answer each question by ticking as appropriate)

	Yes	No
a). Does the study involve participants who are *potentially* vulnerable for example, children and young people; those with a learning disability or cognitive impairment; those unable to give informed consent or individuals in a dependent or unequal relationship?	⊠	☐
b). Will it be necessary for participants to take part in the study without their knowledge/consent (e.g. covert observation of people in *non-public* places)?	☐	⊠
c). Could the study cause harm, discomfort, stress, anxiety or any other negative consequence beyond the risks encountered in normal life? Does the research address a sensitive topic?[10]	⊠	☐
d). Will financial inducements (other than reasonable expenses and compensation for time) be offered to participants?	☐	⊠
e). Will the project involve the participation of patients, users or staff through the NHS or a social services department?	☐	⊠
f). Will you be required to undertake a Criminal Records Bureau check to undertake the research?	☐	⊠
g). Are appropriate steps being taken to protect anonymity and confidentiality? (in accordance with an appropriate Statement of Ethical Practice).	⊠	☐

If you have answered **'yes' to any of questions a) to f) or 'no' to question g),** you must complete Part B of the form. Now go to Section A.3.

Section A.3 Risk assessment checklist

	Yes	No
a). Does the study involve practical work such as interviewing that requires the researcher(s) to travel to and from locations outside the University?	⊠	☐
b). Does the study involve accessing non-public sites that require permission to enter?	⊠	☐
c). Are there any identifiable hazards involved in carrying out the study, such as lone working in isolated settings?	⊠	☐

If you have answered **'yes' to any of questions a) to c)**, you must complete Part C. of this form.

Section A.4 Next steps

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[10] Sensitive topics can include participants' sexual behaviour, their illegal or political behaviour, their experience of violence, their abuse or exploitation, their mental health, or their gender or ethnic status. Elite Interviews may also fall into this category.

a) If *only* Part A is required, please go to Part D of the form and ensure you complete the checklist and sign the completed form. Submit the form to the designated approver

b) If you need to fill in Part B (this is required if you have answered 'yes' to any of questions a) to e) in Section A.2) please continue and complete Part B and add any further attachments.

c) If you need to fill in Part C (this is required if you have answered 'yes' to any of the questions in Section A.3) please continue and complete Part C.

PART B

Part B must be completed if you have answered 'Yes' to any of questions a to e in Section 2 of Part A.

Section B.1 Other approvals

If your project requires approval from an NHS or Social Services ethics committee, you should submit a draft NHS/SS application to your designated approver within SASS, along with this form, prior to submission to the appropriate external ethics committee. If you are submitting a draft NHS/SS to your designated approver within SASS, you only need to complete Section 1of Part B. Once approval has been granted by SASS, including meeting any conditions, you must submit the approved forms together with evidence of this approval. Researchers undertaking studies in an NHS or social services setting must abide by the *Research Governance Framework for Health and Social Care*[11].

a) Does the research require ethical approval from the NHS or a Social Services Authority?

Yes ☐   No ☒

If 'Yes', please ensure the draft documentation is attached.

b) Might the proposed research meet the definition of a clinical trial? It may do so if it involves studying the effects on participants of drugs, devices, diets, behavioural strategies such as exercise or counselling, or other 'clinical' procedures.

Yes ☐   No ☒

If 'Yes', a copy of this form must be sent to the University's Insurance Officer, Procurement Department. Tel: 0191 334 9266. Insurance approval will be necessary before the project can start and evidence of approval must be attached with this form.

Section B.2 Project details and ethical considerations

a) Who are your research participants? (please describe sample size, characteristics and sampling procedure)

In this study, men and women academics in one public (Shah University) and one private (University 2) universities in Kabul will be interviewed and a questionnaire will be administered to both. The questionnaire will be administered to all academics -approximately a total of 821 in both universities. According to the statistics on faculty members 2011-2012 in Shah University, there are 741 academics, 143 female and 598 male. All the academics in Shah University are Afghan origin.

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[11] http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Aboutus/Researchanddevelopment/AtoZ/Researchgovernance/DH_4002112

In contrast, the majority of academics in University 2 are from different countries, including Pakistan, India and Canada. Some of the Shah University academics are teaching in University 2 as well. Thus, total number of academics in the private University is 80 in which all but 5 are female academics. The questionnaire will be kept anonymous. I will use study codes, for instance, 1002, instead of subject's identity and keep the code separate from address in a locked cupboard.

In the next phase, cluster sampling, based on gender, age, academic job positions, professional degree held, ethnicity and economic status will be used to select participants for the interview. I expect to have 7 male and 7 female participants from Shah University and 5/6 male and 5/6 female from the private University. The reason I have chosen 7 from each category in Shah University is that there are 7 academic ranks in that university, and thus, it is essential to have one participant from each category to better understand their position. However, I have chosen 5/6 from the private University because that is the total number of female academics. Overall 25/26 participants will be interviewed.

If any of the participants do not cooperate from the cluster sample, I will select another person, based on the questionnaire, with the same aforementioned features. Similar to questionnaire, I will code interview materials and will keep them locked in separate locations.

.

b) Are there any people who will be excluded? If so state the criteria to be used

Yes, non-academics members of staff, e.g., administrators and students.

c) Who will explain the investigation to the participant(s)? And how? (attach information sheet or similar)

I will explain the research and give participants an information sheet (See Appendix 1) to make them aware of the aims and objectives of the research, its importance, the reason why they are invited to participate, guarantees regarding confidentiality and anonymity, and what use will be made of the data. I will give them choice of language English/Dari. The potential respondents will also have the opportunity to ask questions about the research.

d) How and where will consent be recorded? (attach consent form)

I will give participants an information sheet to make them aware of the aims and objectives of research, importance of study, the reason they are invited to participate, their confidentiality and anonymity, and what will happen to collected data, I will also explain all these to them in English and Dari, one o the

national languages of Afghanistan, and let them ask me questions, before assign them to sign the consent form.

Two copies of the consent form (See Appendix 2) will be given to each participant to sign to make sure they have read and understood the purpose of the study. One copy will be kept by me and the other copy will be given to the participant. The signed record of consent form will be locked in a separate location from the data. The participants will be informed that they can withdraw consent at any point without any penalty.

e)   What steps will be taken to safeguard the anonymity of records, to maintain the levels of confidentiality and security of data storage promised to participants and to ensure compliance with the requirements of the Data Protection Act?

Confidentiality will be maintained through anonymity. I will give participants fictitious names for the research purpose and keep their real names and other personal information separate from transcripts. The questionnaire and interview materials will be coded and will be locked in separate locations from the data. The electronic files will be kept in a password-protected computer, accessed only by the researcher.

f)   Will non-anonymised questionnaires, tapes or video recordings be destroyed at the end of the project?

Yes ☒ Go to B.3   No ☐ Go to next question   Not Applicable ☐ Go to B.3

g)   What further use do you intend to make of the material and how and where will this be stored?

It will be used for publications and educational use which will be available in academic journals within and outside of the country.

h)   Will consent be requested for this future use? Yes ☒   No ☐ Not Applicable ☐

Section B.3 Risk or discomfort

A. To Participants

What discomfort, danger or interference with normal activities could be experienced by **participants**? State probability, seriousness, and precautions to minimise each risk.

Risk/Discomfort	Probability (high/medium/low)	Seriousness (high/medium/low)	Precautions
Emotional stress Breach of confidentiality	Low Low	Low Low	Avoid stressful questions Keep the data anonymous

B. To the Researcher[12]

Risk/Discomfort	Probability (high/medium/low)	Seriousness (high/medium/low)	Precautions
Insecurity	Extreme	High	Avoid insecure places. Extreme has given by Control Risk website for overseas visitors. However, as an Afghan from Kabul, I would have local knowledge that keep me away from unsafe places
Sensitivity of topic (anticipating strong feelings, rudeness focusing on gender issues)	High	High	Neutral questions
Strikes	Low		Avoid visiting site of strike
		Low	

PART C. FIELDWORK RISK ASSESSMENT AND HEALTH DECLARATION

All applicants who intend to conduct research with human participants outside the University should complete these forms. For further guidance please consult the University's Health and Safety Manual Section F1 at: http://www.dur.ac.uk/resources/healthandsafety/manual/f1.pdf

Section C.1 Fieldwork Risk Assessment (participants and researcher)

<table>
<tr>
<td>DEPARTMENT
Applied Social Sciences</td>
<td>LOCATION
Afghanistan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACTIVITY
Interview and Questionnaire</td>
<td>PERSONS AT RISK
The researcher and participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td colspan="2">DURATION OF ACTIVITY
September 2013- March 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td colspan="2">POTENTIAL HAZARDS:

Insecurity, terrorist attacks, crime, such as kidnapping, or being caught in an insurgent attack or of a violent demonstration
According to Control Risk website, the aforementioned crimes and terrorist attacks are relatively low in Kabul, where I am conducting my research.
Lone working
Insurgence
Behaviour of others e.g. rudeness because of focusing on gender issues
There will be perhaps low chances of misbehaviour since all of the participants are well-educated. However, if any of the participants show misbehaviour, as in not considering me as a researcher or show reluctant in providing information, I will give them enough time to get to know me and sufficient information as might be needed to make an informed decision about whether or not to participate in the study. In the sense, I will follow ethnography method of meeting people before the interview. If anyone seems to become abusive verbally, I will end the interview.

</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td colspan="2">POTENTIAL CONSEQUENCES:

Being harmed
Isolation
Intimidation

</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td colspan="2">EXISTING CONTROLS:

Avoid insecure places
Use local knowledge
Maintain contact with supervisors and local authorities, e.g., university security guards
Carry mobile phone
Phone someone before I go in and when I have finished out.
Keep questions neutral

</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td colspan="2">RISK RATING (SEVERITY X LIKELIHOOD) WITH EXISTING CONTROLS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td colspan="2">HIGH ▪
Severity ......3…............ X Likelihood ....2.......... = Risk Rating ....5......MEDIUM ▫
LOW ▫</td>
</tr>
</table>

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NEW CONTROLS REQUIRED:
Stay away from unstable and high risk areas.
Contact a professional partcipatns to talk to the participants if they get emotional

RISK RATING (SEVERITY X LIKELIHOOD) WITH NEWCONTROLS

HIGH ☐
Severity ......2............... X Likelihood ....2......... = Risk Rating ....4.........MEDIUM ■
LOW ☐

ASSESSOR
NAME:
SIGNATURE Helen Chamley   JOB TITLE: Director PSL
DATE

Section C.2 Fieldwork Health Declaration

During your research you may undertake one or more periods of fieldwork, involving visits to locations some of which will require a reasonable degree of physical health and fitness. In order to ensure that each research project operates with due regard for health and safety - in addition to being rewarding for those involved - all students and staff who expect to participate in fieldwork must declare any medical condition or incapacity which could prevent them from fully participating in the expected activities, or which may endanger the health and safety of themselves and others. As a condition of undertaking the research, you must complete the form below, after first becoming familiar with the details and expectations of the proposed fieldwork activities. All information will be treated in the strictest confidence and used only for determining the suitability of a fieldwork activity.

Please note that answering YES to any of Part B does not automatically exclude you from a fieldwork activity and every effort will be made to provide alternative arrangements where these are necessary, but it is essential that you provide full information. Where YES is answered, or the Part C declaration is not signed, the matter will be referred for a further medical opinion.

PART A

Department of: Applied Social Sciences

Location of research: Afghanistan   Start and End dates: Oct 2013- April 2014

Name of researcher: Yalda Afzali   Name of supervisors: Lena Dominelli and Vikki Boliver

PART B

Do you have a medical condition, allergy or intolerance that may restrict your taking part in the expected fieldwork activities?

NO

DETAILS _____

Do you have any physical injury or incapacity that may restrict your taking part in the expected fieldwork activities?

NO

DETAILS _____

Do you take medication to control any of the above conditions?

NO

DETAILS _____

PART C

I declare that I am not knowingly suffering from any medical condition or disability that could prevent me from participating fully in the fieldwork activities.

My last tetanus booster.: 20/09/2013 _____

Signed _____Yalda_____ Date___03/10/13_____

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PART D. CHECKLIST AND SIGNATURES

Section D.1 Checklist of attachments

All applicants should tick which parts of the form you have completed and the documents you are attaching with this form:

1. Part A (all applicants) ☒
2. Part B (for research with vulnerable people, on sensitive topics, etc) ☒
3. Part C (for research outside the university) ☒
4. Completed draft NHS or social services ethics form (students only, if applicable) ☐
5. Confirmation of insurance cover (if applicable; see Part B, section B.1.b.) ☐
6. Information sheet for participants (required if consent is to be obtained) ☒
7. Consent form for participants (required if consent is to be obtained) ☒
8. Draft questionnaire (required if you are using a questionnaire) ☒
9. Draft interview/focus group guide (required if you are using interviews/focus groups) ☒
10. Written confirmation from all agencies involved in the study that:
    a. they agree to participate;
    b. a CRB check is or is not required. ☒
    (STUDENTS ONLY ARE REQUIRED TO SUBMIT THIS - the agreement to participate may be 'in principle', pending ethics approval by the university or the agency. An e-mail from a manager or other appropriate gatekeeper is acceptable).

Section D.2 Signatures

All applicants must complete this section

Principal Investigator[8]

Name: Yalda Afzali ....*Yalda*...Date: 03/10/2013..........................

Supervisor/tutor (research students only):

I have read this form and am happy for it to be considered for ethical approval

V.Br

Name of supervisors: Lena Dominelli and Vikki Boliver Date: //2013 ....19./.11./ 13

Section D.3 Next steps

This signed form with all attachments should be submitted to the appropriate person for review and approval, as indicated on the front sheet of the form.

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[8] For student dissertations and projects, the principal investigator will usually be the student

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FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

PART E: OUTCOME OF APPLICATION

Please tick

a)	The proposal is satisfactory and is approved as it stands.	
b)	The proposal is accepted subject to approval of an NHS, Social Services or other external Ethics Committee (copy to be submitted to SASS when approved)	
c)	The proposal cannot be approved and the applicant should submit a new/revised proposal in the light of the comments noted below.	

Comments *(for forwarding to the applicant)*

Signed ...*Helen Charnley*......... Date ...20.11.2013.....

Name (block capitals) ...HELEN CHARNLEY....... Designation ...Director PGR....

A COPY OF THE APPROVED FORM MUST BE KEPT ON FILE.
STUDENTS ON TAUGHT PROGRAMMES AND PGRs MUST SUBMIT A COPY OF THE
APPROVED FORM TO THE RELEVANT PROGRAMME SECRETARY.

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