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Cultural Clashes and Cultural Bridges: My Story in Afghanistan

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CULTURAL CLASHES AND CULTURAL BRIDGES: MY STORY IN AFGHANISTAN

A Dissertation

by

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ABSTRACT

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Narrative inquiry and grounded theory are the methodology used to tell the story of the researcher's experiences in Afghanistan. This entailed identifying and researching a process of storytelling and weaving experiences together into a coherent and meaningful whole. The narrative inquiry method is appropriate for this project because the critical sources of data consist of the researcher's perceptions and experiences in Afghanistan, as reported in the form of narrative stories. This qualitative analysis focuses on examining and interpreting concrete pieces of evidence, formulating quantitative analysis along with sharing personal and professional experiences. To that end, external resources, including letters and data from numerous sources inform the overarching thesis of the dissertation. Topics examined include education, cultural differences, and levels of acceptance. The pieces of evidence supported by eight years of living in Afghanistan and working with diplomatic officials enriches the insights shared. Narrative inquiry, along with grounded theory, allow for greater understanding and analysis of these issues. Narrative inquiry addresses the qualitative components, while grounded theory addresses the data and evidence that is presented.

DEDICATION

The completion of my doctoral studies would not have been possible without the love and support of my family and friends. The memory of my mother, Bertha Hinojosa, and the memory of my father, Joe Hinojosa, Sr., who gave me life; they were the impetus to accomplish this degree. My sincerest gratitude to my entire family and friends. Thank you for your love and patience.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

Page

LIST OF FIGURES

Page

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction and Research Backgrounds

Reconstructing a society torn by armed international conflict requires education in multiple areas. According to New Security Learning (2011), education heals the psychological wounds of armed international conflict, decreases youth unemployment, encourages decentralization in all areas of government, promotes democracy, and promotes socio-economic development. Moreover, education removes the perceived and actual obstacles for successfully competing in the global economy (Freire, 1970/2009; McLaren, 2009). For young women and girls in Afghanistan, however, the lack of available educational opportunities presents ongoing challenges that require effective interventions (Beath, Christia & Enikolopov, 2015; Chowdhury, 2016; Kabeer & Khan, 2014; Tlaiss, & Dirani, 2015). Furthermore, many women in Afghanistan were denied opportunities by being unable to even leave the house in many cases (Rasanayagam, 2005). 2005 also saw massive changes in mental health in Afghanistan citizens as well, exacerbating this issue (Ventevogel, 2005). As a whole, the educational system in Afghanistan reinforces gender and class divisions as reflected in fundamentalist religious doctrine. Similarly, the collaborative decisions of policymakers in Afghanistan, most of whom are Muslim clerics, influence the instructional curricula that teachers may deliver.

The same types of decision-making processes applied by policymakers in Afghanistan reinforce disparities in learning outcomes (Chauhan, 2008; Cherkesova, Belikova, Popova, Sukhova, & Demidova, 2015). Yet, despite how government officials in Afghanistan collaborate to influence educational policy that benefits young men and boys, a lack of joint planning efforts is an indication of how the national economic infrastructure will remain weak if educators and students continue to experience limitations in academic freedom. In fact, many of these limitations reflect how Muslim clerics responsible for policy-related decisions believed that Western education will corrupt young women and girls of their religiously-bounded innocence. Reputedly, the educational system in Afghanistan is anti-intellectual to such an extent that all students must comply fully with fundamentalist Muslim doctrine despite how the Taliban government lost power in 2001 as the result of a coup. Young women and girls, therefore, continue to risk imprisonment or death.

Many young women and girls in Afghanistan are subject to religious persecution as they remain subject to the prevailing Islamic government that considers modern education a strictly Western idea that corrupts all young children. Accordingly, young women and girls are the targets of an anti-intellectual discourse that requires them to adopt patriarchal norms. Despite all efforts to reform educational policy in Afghanistan and introduce Westernized ideas of reform, cultural differences entice policymakers to maintain a state of inequality in the South Asian country (Christen & Jakobsen, 2015; Freire, 1970/2009; Gee, 2010). Furthermore, the educational system in Afghanistan has strong historical roots that demands more detailed analyses as more young women and girls gradually acquire access to formal institutional knowledge. Despite how the Taliban remains active as a political organization, all attempts to

prevent young women and girls from acquiring formal educational knowledge constitute persistent threats to religiously-bound traditions. Many attacks were made toward women around 2005, especially those wearing clothing deemed unacceptable or pursuing unacceptable things, like an education (Rasanayagam, 2005).

Considering how Afghanistan is a country that, according to the United Nations, belongs to the Global South, the intersections of culture and politics determine which strategies policymakers may adopt. Still, the historical overview of the research problem informs this study as young women and girls in Afghanistan once had equal rights as guaranteed by an early draft of the national constitution ratified in the early 1920s. After the government in Afghanistan ratified its first constitution in 1923, the South Asian country functioned as a constitutional monarchy before it eventually transformed into a communist dictatorship. When the Soviet Union gained control of the government, Muslim fundamentalists occupied top government positions and effectively had a detrimental influence on how young women and girls acquired formal knowledge that ultimately lacked intellectual substance. Muslim fundamentalists went further as the Taliban advanced a religious-nationalist ideology and mandated that all citizens be required to comply with Koranic doctrine. However, the overthrowing of the Taliban government in 2001 prompted gradual reforms.

1.1.1 Historical Overview of the Research Backgrounds

From the turn of the twentieth century until the mid-1920s, Afghanistan did not have a formally ratified constitution implemented into national law. Governance in Afghanistan existed primarily along provincial, monarchical, or tribal lines. On April 9, 1923, however, the Amir of Afghanistan modernize Afghanistan to grant young women and girls equal rights by ratifying the

first national constitution (Travis, 2005). Interestingly, the first national constitution ratified in Afghanistan granted equal rights to non-Muslims and, perhaps, anyone who espoused Western beliefs of formal democratic government. Still more interesting is how *Shari'a* law that conformed to Koranic doctrine informed how the Amir of Afghanistan helped ratify the first national constitution. The irony here is that a theocratic lens informed the process of ratifying Afghanistan's first official national constitution.

Initially, the first national constitution of Afghanistan contained recommendations that all Muslim clerics should act as government officials responsible for carefully scrutinizing religious texts and determining which statements found within them would have the most positive influence on all citizens living in the South Asian country (Travis, 2005). During the early 1920s, however, Afghanistan was not under the influence of fundamentalist principles and Muslim clerics who held official government positions were not bound to interpret Koranic doctrine as strict, literal interpretations of reality. Instead, Muslim clerics used events occurring in the immediate social environment as a context for interpreting Koranic doctrine and implementing effective policy mechanisms. Yet, despite how many contemporary scholars describe Afghanistan's first officially ratified constitution as containing some elements of fundamentalist religious ideas, the rights of young women and girls were of the utmost concern as the Amir acted on promises of not treating individuals as second-class citizens under the law.

For example, the Amir of Afghanistan banned child marriages in 1921 and helped open the first schools for young women and girls (Travis, 2005). The Amir, moreover, encouraged young women and girls to study away from home and obtain a university-level education. The Amir also banned polygamy despite how fundamentalist Muslims believed that having up to four

wives, some of whom were children, strictly conformed to Koranic doctrine. Religious fundamentalists dissatisfied with how the Amir exercised political power denounced the first official constitution as part of a communist plot to undermine values contained in the Koran. Consequently, young women and girls in Afghanistan were in a precarious position despite how the Amir granted them equal rights to education.

The dissatisfaction expressed by Muslim clerics was so intense that resistance to gender equality led to the advancement of arguments for extreme conservatism as well as a repealing of equal rights legislation (Kabeer & Khan, 2014). Many of the fundamentalist Muslim clerics also attempted to overthrow the Amir by insisting that educating young women and girls would corrupt their innocence. Yet, in 1926, the Amir of Afghanistan became King and evidently maintained his belief that young women and girls should have equal access to education regardless of what fundamentalists thought would promote a strong nation. Much to the dismay of religious fundamentalists, the King of Afghanistan believed that Western ideas of education would promote success.

While it was the case that the King of Afghanistan wanted young women and girls to succeed in their academic endeavors, the British Parliament was not as supportive. Afghanistan was open to the cultural and political values espoused by members of British Parliament. However, members of the British Parliament were more interested in colonizing land located in the Indian subcontinent (Travis, 2005). Furthermore, members of the British Parliament were strongly intent on creating an empire to shape how citizens of countries like Afghanistan learned. Because of what members of the British Parliament believed, Afghanistan transformed from an egalitarian society to a constitutional monarchy that effectively removed the rights to education

that young women and girls initially had. Particularly in 1930, when Afghanistan officially transformed into a constitutional monarchy, the new king ratified a second constitution that granted provided religious clerics with the authority to comply fully with *Shari'a* principles (Travis, 2005). While the second constitution required all citizens of the South Asian country to have an education, religious law mandated that all women wear the *burqa* and prohibited them from actively participating in political campaigns. Ironically, women in Afghanistan were eligible to vote but had limited decision-making powers as policies implemented in the early to mid-1920s apparently did not conform to religiously-bound principles.

During the early 1930s, young women and girls ultimately became political targets who lost all confidence in receiving mentorship opportunities to study abroad. In many ways, scapegoating young women and girls in Afghanistan reflected beliefs that Western educational values would corrupt their purity (Johns, Grossman, & McDonald, 2014; Lindsay & Williams, 2014). Young women and girls in Afghanistan who one had constitutionally afforded rights to an education were thrust back into the private domestic sphere after members of the British Parliament influence social and political life in the South Asian country. Moreover, young women and girls in Afghanistan were required to comply with strict interpretations of the Koran as they could have appeared in public with a male chaperone. In 1933, the assassination of the king resulted in 40 years of gradual improvements in Afghanistan as a newly formed government grew the national economy by securing financial and military aid from the Soviet Union (Travis, 2005). Here, the notion that Western ideas would corrupt young women and girls maintained its popularity even while a major political crisis in the late 1950s emerged when young women and girls suddenly appeared unveiled for the first time since the first constitution was official law. In

this context, the official position of fundamentalist Muslim clerics who held official government positions was that young women and girls who appeared unveiled in public would corrupt young men and boys into normalizing sexual depravity.

In the mid-1960s, Afghanistan officially transformed from a constitutional monarchy into a communist dictatorship despite early declarations by fundamentalist Muslim clerics that encouraging young women and girls into receiving an education would corrupt their religiously-bound purity. Prior to this transformation, many communists in Afghanistan were the subjects of political persecution and were subsequently exiled from the country after professing radical ideas concerning the integration of Western ideas into education (Travis, 2005). Many of these same communists lived and studied in the United States, a nation that is currently, in 2019, an object of ridicule for many Muslims who espouse fundamentalist beliefs. Yet, many radical communist political beliefs influenced elections in the capital city of Kabul. Subsequently, these elections encouraged women to appear unveiled in public and run for political office. However, the staunchly conservative political beliefs of rural landowners held a considerable influence on social life throughout all of Afghanistan. Consequently, Afghanistan was communist in name alone and did not evidently restore the earlier rights to education that young women and girls once had in the early to mid-1920s. Half of the officials who occupied government leadership positions in Afghanistan identified as communist despite how religious threats made by fundamentalist clerics prompted nearly two decades of debates over the supposed benefits of a constitutional monarchy. In effect, communism in Afghanistan led to revolts against the rights of young women and girls led to acid attacks on anyone who appeared unveiled in public (Travis, 2005). Still, the political backlash against the communist dictatorship in Afghanistan is

leading the national government to join forces with Saudi Arabia and the Soviet Union to use oil as a source of economic growth. Despite all efforts to stimulate economic growth, Afghanistan remained one of the poorest countries in the world.

Since the late 1970s, many young women and girls in Afghanistan did not live until the age of five while approximately 75% of the entire population received no education at all (Travis, 2005). Per capita income in Afghanistan was so low that hardly any opportunities for young women and girls to participate in the global economy existed. Ever since Afghanistan functioned as a communist dictatorship, the South Asian country had begun to transform into a theocratic that bore no resemblance to anything prescribed in the first national constitution. Muslim clerics who hold official government positions applied strict literal interpretations of the Koran into law to normalize gender segregation in the harshest possible terms (Travis, 2005). Organizations such as the Muslim Brotherhood led a holy war, or *jihad*, against the acting Prime Minister of Afghanistan as Muslim clerics defined themselves as intellectual elites who influenced historical processes in the South Asian country. Specifically, the Hanafi school of thought that helped shape the Muslim Brotherhood inspired what would eventually become known as the Taliban movement. The Hanafi school advanced fundamentalist arguments for barring young women and girls from appearing unveiled in public. Furthermore, the Hanafi school helped reinstate child marriages and the dowry system that were effectively banned when the Amir of Afghanistan first ratified a national constitution in 1923 (Travis, 2005). When the Hanafi school transformed into what would become known as the Taliban, the first and second constitutions were null and void while fundamentalist Muslim clerics instituted an isolationist-

style theocratic order. Most members of the Hanafi school believed that Western society was inherently corrupt in encouraging young women and girls to defy religious doctrine.

In 1994, the Taliban became the official governing body of Afghanistan as members of this fundamentalist organization instituted a strict law-and-order society. In targeting education for young women and girls, members of the Taliban observed that many young women and girls attending university in Kabul were corrupted by Western cultural views. Accordingly, the Taliban exerted its political authority by targeting educators considered responsible for corrupting an anti-intellectual stance. For many members of the Taliban, educators who taught young women and girls violated human rights. By this logic, members of the Taliban who occupied official government positions argued that Western countries such as the United States were the source of all corruption. Consequently, the Taliban government led Afghanistan to remain isolated in social, cultural, political, and economic terms. In effect, the Taliban relinquished all opportunities for young women and girls in Afghanistan to receive an education. Extremist patriarchal views held by members of the Taliban who occupied top government positions resulted in women losing their ability to teach (Centner, 2012). However, the overthrowing of the Taliban government in 2001 inspired ideas for change that have still yet to come to fruition.

Less than one million children total in Afghanistan were able to receive formal education when the Taliban became the official governing body of the South Asian country. However, the overthrowing of the Taliban government in 2001 led nearly 2.5 million young women and girls to enroll in school (Centner, 2012). Although the Taliban lost power, its re-emergence in recent years helped establish claims that the future of Afghanistan remains dependent on a strict

theocratic rule. Residents of rural villages were more susceptible to claims that Western ideas were inherently corrupt as limited opportunities for receiving a formal education directly followed the tenets of fundamentalist religious doctrine. Based on the fact that rural villages in Afghanistan lacked the institutional power necessary to provide residents with a formal education, only a small percentage who lived outside of urban centers acquired the literacy skills necessary to compete successfully in a global economy (Centner, 2012; Cherkesova, Belikova, Popova, Sukhova, &Demidova, 2015; Kabeer & Khan, 2014). Similarly, teachers in Afghanistan lack the university-level education necessary to ensure that students including young women and girls develop critical thinking skills across a wide range of academic subjects (Centner, 2012; Lindsay & Williams, 2014). In this context, culture plays an extraordinary role as the contemporary history of Afghanistan remains corrupted by the political machinations deployed by religious fundamentalists who adhere to claims that education will foster chaos as young women and girls rebel against patriarchal norms reinforcing how the current national government functions.

More currently, nations like Afghanistan continue to operate under strict theocratic norms rooted in patriarchal ideas mandating that young women and girls should remain in subaltern positions. However, the official government position held today is that proposed initiatives to introduce Western ideas will cause major social and political upheavals, and one source states that these upheavals are largely precipitated by humanitarian issues (De Lauri, 2019). Another source states that these Western ideas are a small part of a larger power struggle permeated Afghanistan (Naz & Jaspal, 2018). There was also an element of socio-economic as well as a political meltdown that permeated the area during this time (Hyun, 2018). Recently, though,

Afghanistan has begun to become more international, leading to clashes between more traditional groups in Afghanistan as foreign interventions become more salient (Jahangir & Javaid, 2018). Lastly, another of these articles states that there has been something of a snowball effect since the Cold War, leading to increased amounts of extremism and, in some cases, isolation from Western culture in Afghanistan and other Middle Eastern countries (Siddiqi, 2018).

A serious irony of how Afghanistan currently functions concerned military investments by the United States. Here, the introduction of Western ideas suggested that militarization promoted economic development even as most citizens of Afghanistan continued to live in extreme poverty (Christen & Jakobsen, 2015; Herrera, 2004). Arguments held by members of the current political administration in Afghanistan implied that militarization could have improved a national governmental infrastructure as government officials insisted on resisting Western ideals not limited to egalitarianism and democracy. Yet, granting young women and girls in Afghanistan equaled access to formal educational opportunities was at the heart of the achievement of political progress (Herrera, 2004).

Ensuring that young women and girls in Afghanistan receive a formal education, however, depends on how government officials align a political vision with events occurring in the immediate social environment. Accordingly, a government that did not grant young women and girls with opportunities to receive an education violated international human rights doctrine despite how all individuals had an option of using religious doctrine as a tool for the promotion of freedom, as one source mentions the ways that governments stifled their opportunities repeatedly during this time (Ransanyagam, 2005). Another showed that these human rights

issues became worse over time as well (Ventevogel, 2005). This time period saw the overthrowing of the Taliban and movements toward stability but also injected an anti-establishment and anti-Western culture in much of Afghanistan (Rubin, Hamidzada & Stoddard, 2005). Media, at this time, contributed greatly to this exposure of Western culture that was able to be observed here (Hartenberger, 2005). Furthermore, the individual socialization variables heavily impacted public opinion in Afghanistan and the United States both in terms of their respective foreign policies (Goldsmith, Horiuchi & Inoguchi, 2005).

The intersection of culture and politics influences how the educational system in Afghanistan system functions. For example, most schools in Afghanistan must operate in mosques led by religious clerics who act as teachers (Arnove & Bull, 2015). However, members of the Taliban who insist that their political authority never ended target religious schools regarding an alleged failure to comply with *Shari'a* principles. To reiterate, members of the Taliban continue to target schools that have teachers who insist on educating young women and girls considered fully capable of succeeding in a global economy (De Lauri, 2019). Members of the Taliban are undoubtedly aware of impending paradigm shifts and are, therefore, frightened by the idea that social change will produce major economic for a war-torn, impoverished country in the Global South. Even while members of the Taliban clearly demonstrate an awareness of an impending paradigm shift, a lack of generosity towards young women and girls remains evident as young women and girls in Afghanistan remain subject to political violence (De Lauri, 2019). As the government of Afghanistan insisted that militarization would promote economic development, religious fundamentalists believed that globalization represented a major threat as theocratic and patriarchal norms influenced how most citizens would actively demonstrate a

sense of agency (Centner, 2012; Thorpe & Ahmad, 2013). Young women and girls in Afghanistan continued to lack the agency required for succeeding in a global economy while an all-male government quoted directly from the Koran to insist that fundamentalist principles were analogous to universal human rights. Ultimately, more complex policy solutions are needed.

1.1.2 Research Scope, Concern, and Problem Statement

The research scope will encapsulate each of the categories of phrases here. The first structure, or dimension, is that of the educational, cultural and human rights for females, intending the research to examine the concept of Western cultural influences as they relate to education of young women in Afghanistan. The scope will also include the second dimension: that of cultural changes as well as training of women in the government. This will allow the layman to understand the development of the Afghan government in terms of how they train women, particularly based on Western influences. Third, there will be a focus on receiving an education from male teachers, especially in regard to fundamentalist religious clerics and how they opposed male educators. Fourth, moral crimes of women as it relates to human rights with education and training will be included in the scope. This allows for an in-depth look at how governmental policies change in order to allow young women to receive an education and be safe from political violence.

The research concern will focus on, among other things, mandating change to improve the livelihood of these women. To be able to excel, not just within an educational purview, but in general, within this oftentimes oppressive society in which they are located. This will also include a discussion of the ways that steps such as leadership skills development can be

leveraged to improve the chances of success of these young women and girls trying to attain an education and career in Afghanistan.

1.1.3 Problem Statement

The problem statement here is simple: there are intrinsic cultural and globalization issues that inhibit young women and girls in Afghanistan from being able to achieve their goals and dreams. These take a number of different forms, as has already been explained, but fundamentally, a rejection of contemporary Western values and influences is to blame above all else here.

1.2 Personal and Professional Background

The professional experience of having met with diplomatic officials took place after the overthrowing of the Taliban government in 2001. Although the Taliban remained active as a political organization, the attempts to prevent young women and girls from obtaining equal learning opportunities remained a persistent social, political, and cultural threat. In another example, the personal and professional experience of having met the Deputy Minister of Defense for Personnel in 2004 informed this study. At the same time, cultural misunderstandings between government representatives of countries in the Global North and Global South reinforced political differences by which young women and girls in Afghanistan were victims of political violence. More generally, the personal and professional experience of having lived in Afghanistan for more than eight years informs this study. Personal and professional experience informs the decision to apply autoethnographic and grounded theory is implemented here to inform the methods and describe which strategies will have positive consequences for young

women and girls in Afghanistan who need a high-quality education influenced by Western ideas to compete successfully in global markets.

Identifying as a Hispanic male with 26 years of active military service in the United States Air Force provides a foundation for this study as cultural training acquired at an institutional level guided my future professional endeavors. Retiring from the military after 26 years of service resulted in teaching students considered at-risk at a middle school in South Texas. After the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, however, a team of nation builders encouraged me to venture back into a combat zone to help with reconstruction the national infrastructure of Afghanistan. Arriving in Kabul in 2004, a human resources (HR) position with the Ministry of Defense resulted in a complete reconstruction of the personnel department. With this reconstruction of an internal organizational framework, the Minister of Defense and the Chief of the US coalition forces in Afghanistan selected a small group of individuals with sufficient qualifications to occupy leadership positions. Having a darker skin complexion meant that most citizens of Afghanistan living in the capital city of Kabul may lead residents to hold reservations. Upon my first meeting with Afghan officials, they commented on how much we looked like each other. Therefore, our meetings were more relaxed. I felt more at ease working with the Afghans because of how readily I could blend into the Afghan organization. We immediately developed close relationships with Afghan leadership. According to the Deputy Minister of Defense for Personnel commented that my personality was not abrasive-like most Americans whom he had previously encountered. However, the inability to speak Dari or Pashtun, the two major languages in Afghanistan, required the use of an interpreter to translate what military personnel and diplomatic officials communicated during meetings. Professional relationships with

diplomatic officials who included the Deputy Minister of Defense for Personnel were characterized by a relaxed atmosphere, as behavioral expectations were precisely followed to the letter.

A personal experience that happened on Thanksgiving Day in the year 2004 involved a meeting with the Deputy Minister of Defense for Personnel. We were reviewing applicants for senior-level positions within the Afghan military. Mentioning that it was Thanksgiving Day in the United States prompted the Deputy Minister to send a responsible individual for some food in celebration of the traditional American holiday. Luckily, the Deputy Minister understood English and ensured that his interpreter understood what was required. Meanwhile, the Deputy Minister wanted to share the meal that consisted of lamb, French fries, salad, and bread wrapped in newspaper. While this meal was not exactly American—in fact, it was mostly a Middle Eastern dish partly influenced by Western cultural ideal due to the French fries—it was made known that newspaper was used due to the scarcity of butcher paper. The use of newspaper in place of butcher paper may encourage researchers to consider how Afghanistan has scarce resources other than minerals and poppies.

The extraction of minerals may contribute to economic growth in Afghanistan. Most of the minerals extracted include gold, lead, copper, iron, and zinc. However, resource development from mining extraction in Afghanistan requires significant improvements to the political infrastructure. Despite how Afghanistan has rich deposits of minerals throughout the South Asian country, privatization remains a warranted concern as investors from neighboring countries like China and India aim to continue stimulating economic growth in their respective nations. Of course, China and India have much stronger political infrastructures than

Afghanistan does even while both countries have millions of citizens living in poverty. Moreover, China and India have governing bodies that allow young women and girls to receive a formal education. Yet, the rural areas of China and India remain intellectually and economically impoverished. For Afghanistan, the privatization of mineral resources may seem necessary to stimulate economic growth.

However, privatization does not benefit the interests of young women and girls who need a formal education to succeed in a global economy. Rather, young women and girls in Afghanistan need a government that does not consider Western ideals threatening to a standard of living despite the poverty that millions in this country experience on a daily basis. With regard to the scarcity of butcher paper, perhaps the government believes that using newspaper to wrap the Thanksgiving meal is of equal quality. Even so, many Americans would find such an experience shocking yet not terribly surprising due to personal biases about Afghanistan as seen in mainstream media.

Drawing from another personal experience of having lived in Afghanistan, a meeting with the Chief of Staff of the Afghan Army involved discussions of how the ethnic composition of Afghanistan also constituted resource scarcity. Accordingly, the Chief of Staff believed that only members of the Tajiks ethnic group should serve on his immediate staff. The irony of this meeting is that the Chief of Staff, a Tajik, believed that any soldier who served in his Army staff should serve strictly follow cultural orders. No soldier should fall out of line unless he risked committing a grave infraction. Likewise, very few Tajiks were allowed to serve in the Afghan Army and the Chief of Staff already exceeded what was considered an acceptable mix. Nevertheless, the meeting with the Chief of Staff involved an officer with the Afghan Army

tasting food intended for the Chief of Staff to eat. When the interpreter was asked why the officer first tasted the food meant for the Chief of Staff, the response received suggested that some political enemies from within the Afghan Army may want to poison him.

Meanwhile, I had asked my interpreter why he did not taste my food…a momentary pause and he responded that his job description did not require it. Most intriguing about this situation was how cultural differences between Afghanistan and most Western countries were apparent. Researchers like Street (2003) noted that a small handful of socially situated practices that establish cultural differences have documented roots in the Old Testament. Drawing from the above-mentioned example, the officer who first tasted the food symbolized a cup-bearer. If the cup-bearer became ill, the food was obviously poisoned. Yet, as Street (2003) further suggested, the required actions of the cup-bearer reflected a hierarchical ranking system in which some individuals would maintain powerful positions while others were easily disposable. Accordingly, the individuals who ranked higher belonged to a wealthier caste while the cup-bearers belong to a lower caste but were allowed to serve an auxiliary role for a governing official.

The third example from personal and professional experience involved the receipt of "night letters" written by members of the Taliban who insisted that allowing young women and girls to receive a formal education was inherently corrupt. Many of the night letters described how supposed "infidels" influenced by Western cultural ideals were intent on corrupting the people of Afghanistan. Interestingly, and perhaps not surprisingly, the Taliban sent night letters to many Afghani citizens living in rural areas of the country. Citizens living in urban centers including Kabul also received night letters. However, the receipt of night letters in rural areas of

Afghanistan was more common as the town and village dwellers were more easily swayed by fundamentalist religious teachings. Nearly all of the night letters contained threats of violence and death if citizens did not meet the demands articulated by members of the Taliban. The intent of night letters is to spread fear and maintain a social order of compliance with the Taliban despite how this fundamentalist religious organization no longer has official political power.

For the Taliban, schools built for young women and girls to attend threaten the established social order as the fundamental teachings of Islam require subservience. Accordingly, the Taliban believe that education for young women and girls is an abomination that must be stopped immediately. Primarily because members of the Taliban have such beliefs, their insistence on compliance indicates that education in Afghanistan must have no Western influence. If education in Afghanistan had any Western influence, the Taliban would act on claims that social and political violence was necessary to reinstate a traditional order. Western cultural influences, therefore, produce an unstable and unsafe political climate for all citizens of Afghanistan regardless of how likely teachers who educate young girls and women constitute targets. An example of a night letter distributed by the Taliban to the residents of Parwan and Kapisa provinces in Afghanistan appears as follows:

Date: (Redacted) *Number: (Redacted)*

1) This is a warning to all those dishonorable people, including ulema and teachers, not to teach girls. Based on the information given to us, we strongly ask those people whose names been particularly reported to us, not to commit this act of evil. Otherwise, it is they who bear all the responsibilities. They have no right to claim that they have not been informed.

2) This is to inform all those who have enrolled at boys' schools to stop going to schools. An explosion might occur inside the school compounds. In case of getting hurt, it is they who bear all the responsibilities. They have no right to claim that they have not been informed.

The preceding night letter represents only one example of how members of the Taliban demand that all citizens of Afghanistan, particularly those living in rural areas, comply or risk punishment by death. As explained in the Findings chapter, this particular night letter indicates how threats of violence have contingent effects on personal and professional experiences. One may choose to ignore threats of violence and simply carry on with plans to educate young women and girls. Alternatively, one may pretend to comply with the demands made by members of the Taliban but may still carry onward with educating young women and girls.

In another night letter, the Taliban was intent on threatening residents living in Ghazni province concerning the construction of a school designed to educate young women and girls. The threats contained in the following night letter reflect how strongly members of the Taliban attempt to maintain an overthrown political legacy despite how Western influences are not as pronounced as some researchers may assume despite how women and young girls are not beginning to receive a more comprehensive education. The night letter appears as follows:

Greetings toward the respected director [of education] of Ghazni province, Fatima Moshtaq. I have one request, that you step aside from your duties. Otherwise, if you don't resign your position and continue your work, something will happen that will transform your family and you to grief. I am telling you this as a brother, that I consider you a godless person. I am telling you to leave your post and if you continue your work, I will do something that doesn't have a good ending. It should not be left unsaid that one day in the Jan Malika school I heard Wali Sahib

praise Ahmad Shah Masood, I wanted [to] transform your life to death and with much regret Wali Assadullah was present there and I didn't do anything to cause your death. But if you don't resign your work, I will attack you and take you to death.

With respects,

(Name redacted)

As explained further in the Findings chapter, the preceding night letter sent to Ghazni province suggested that a Taliban Operative was nearby. Teachers who educated young women and girls could not ignore the threat and, thus, felt compelled to comply with demands made by members of the Taliban.

The two night letters delivered by members of the Taliban, as well as the experiences of meeting the Deputy Minister of Defense for Personnel and the Chief of Staff of the Afghan Army, indicated that Western culture has a contingent influence on education in the South Asian country. On the one hand, Western culture has a positive influence on which government officials allow visitors to gain entrance. However, government officials require that visitors comply with an established social order so as not to insult the integrity of fundamentalist religious doctrine. On the other hand, Western culture has a negative influence on members of the Taliban as these fundamentalist organizations continue to appropriate cultural elements towards committing political violence. In some case, the Taliban act as infiltrators who convey a sincere intent of learning about how teachers educate young women and girls. However, the night letters tend to follow almost immediately after an infiltrator collects observations much like a qualitative researcher who adopts a participant observation approach would. As explained later in this chapter, the use of autoethnography and a constant-comparative approach encourages

qualitative researchers to reflect on direct experiences to examine personal biases towards established social conventions that influence personal identity development.

1.3 Methodology Selected for This Study

As the Methodology chapter explains, the narrative inquiry approach to inform this study as eight years of personal and professional experience of having lived in Afghanistan provides direct insights into how Western cultural ideas conflict with norms established by religious fundamentalists. The narrative inquiry approach indicates that a qualitative inquiry is necessary to conceptualize direct experience on multiple levels (Clandinin & Connelly, 1995, 2000). Furthermore, grounded theory was implemented as well in order to code the data on a structural level, meaning that grounded theory formulates the foundation for the study. The narrative inquiry provides researchers with opportunities to conceptualize personal vignettes, reflect on direct experiences, draw inspiration from a wide range of participants, and contemplate which strategies are the most suitable for recruiting participants in series of future investigations (Hughes & Pennington, 2017). Furthermore, narrative inquiry enables qualitative researchers to remain cognizant of how direct experiences inform the development of objective theories that provide significant contributions towards conducting future investigations.

1.3.1 Narrative Inquiry

Considering the nature of this study, narrative inquiry entails that qualitative researchers must utilize direct experience to overcome subjective biases that do not lend credibility to objective findings. The use of narrative inquiry for this qualitative study also draws from the information presented in the Literature Review chapter to aid the principal investigator with confirming findings and discussing results in alignment with the research questions. Narrative

inquiry, thus, informs how qualitative researchers provide recommendations for strategies that policymakers may consider implementing to ensure that Western cultural ideals will not corrupt Afghan society, guarantee that young women and girls in Afghanistan may compete successfully in the global economy, and protect teachers of young women and girls in Afghanistan from threats of political violence (Marlin, 2013; McLaren, 2009). Of importance is the critical observation that facts themselves do not speak for themselves in containing objective meaning (Holman-Jones, Adams, Ellis, 2013). Rather, qualitative researchers who utilize the ethnographic approach to developing a narrative inquiry draw from memory and experience to describe events as they occurred in the external environment.

Narrative inquiry is a methodological framework that allows qualitative researchers to discuss the effects of social, cultural, and political contexts on the participants studied. In drawing from more than eight years of having lived in Afghanistan, the narrative inquiry approach has significance based on the personal identity of the principal investigator. For this study, the principal investigator is a Hispanic male raised in the deep southern part of Texas. The principal investigator was raised in a bicultural and bilingual community. Based on this information, the principal investigator draws from the personal experience of having marginalized cultural identity that influences perceptions of research outcomes. In using narrative inquiry as a qualitative methodological framework, representing the research findings as objectively as possible necessarily involves a process of triangulating data source to account for validity and credibility. External data can be used here to understand how paradigm shifts have affected these responses to Western influence.

There are numerous data sources that will be implemented here, including personal and professional recollections as well as more concrete pieces of evidence gathered from Taliban and other sources, in order to answer both primary and secondary research questions. Furthermore, data analysis of these pieces of evidence, using grounded theory, will be implemented in order to improve the level of understanding and awareness of how these elements combine.

Narrative inquiry and grounded theory are powerful methodological frameworks that are considered useful for determining whether young women and girls in Afghanistan may actually benefit from having Western cultural ideals integrated into established learning constructs rooted in *Shari'a* principles. Especially, narrative inquiry provided qualitative researchers with the space to develop a systematic analysis of cultural experiences as well as prescribe recommendations intent on producing long-term benefits for marginalized groups (Allen, 2015; Ellis, Adams, & Bochner, 2010; Wall, 2008). However, narrative inquiry and grounded theory are relatively new methodological frameworks as many scholars continue to insist that only quantitative statistics-based models provide objective data with implications for accurately assessing empirical data (Allen, 2015). Despite the relative newness of narrative inquiry, their implications for practice reflect how the overarching aim of this study is to outline recommendations that government officials in Afghanistan should consider implementing as young women and girls throughout the South Asian country remain subject to draconian patriarchal norms. In addition, the application of grounded theory and external data triangling increase the objectivity of the data analysis and further the results of the analysis.

1.4 Summary and Transition of Chapter I

This chapter introduced the main research problem provided a historical overview of how education for young women and girls in Afghanistan was once popular but succumbed to the political machinations of fundamentalist religious clerics. Following the historical overview, this chapter presented five research questions—three primary, two secondary—that focused on the topic at hand to inform how the principal investigator should conduct the study. From the information presented in this chapter, one may speculate that the methodology proposed for use will have a valuable implication as personal and professional experience influence the direction of research. Yet, the narrative inquiry methodology presented in this chapter has significance for developing a theoretical and empirical basis for developing effective strategies and recommending effective policy mechanisms that inform how researchers collect and triangulate information obtained from multiple sources to ensure their validity and trustworthiness. Yet, as the following Literature Review chapter explains, the issues significantly impacting education for young women and girls in Afghanistan are indications of how large research gaps exist with regard to cultural differences between Global South and Global North countries.

The following Literature Review chapter draws from the personal and professional experience of having lived in Afghanistan for more than eight years and having met with diplomatic authorities responsible for creating positive social change in the South Asian country after the Taliban government lost power in 2001. One implication to draw from the Literature Review chapter is that leading members of the Taliban believe in maintaining a *jihad* against Western cultural ideals that arguably corrupt young women and girls. Personal and professional experience notwithstanding, the Literature Review chapter highlights how cultural and political

issues in Afghanistan influence which strategies governmental officials who espouse fundamentalist beliefs can positively affect the livelihood of young women and girls. On that note, a second implication is that teachers responsible for educating young women and girls in Afghanistan remain trapped within an unbalanced infrastructure. More generally, however, the personal and professional experiences that inform the Literature Review chapter point to how Western cultural ideals will promote successful competition in global markets as well as buffer the effects of political and economic isolationism.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

Access to education is one of many contentious social issues that involve discussions of racial, gender, and economic inequality. Location is also another present factor that contributes to discussions of how education systems in Global North and Global South countries are inherently unequal but to varying degrees. As a whole, the education system reinforces divisions and polarizes privileged from non-privileged students while governments play a complicit role in allowing an education system to remain unequal. In countries like Afghanistan, the unequal education system reflects laws steeped in Muslim religious doctrine (Lewis & Clark College, 2012). The collaborative decisions of policymakers in Afghanistan evidently influence the instructional curricula that educators may deliver and simultaneously reinforce disparities in learning outcomes. Yet, in spite of how Afghan governmental officials collaborate to influence educational policy, a lack of joint planning efforts indicates that the national economic infrastructure will remain weak if both educators and students continue to confront barriers that impose severe limitations in academic freedom. Consequently, many of the challenges confronted by educators and students who participate in the Afghan educational system reflect the lack of effective legal mechanisms that permit criticism without incurring a risk of harm.

The Afghan educational system is notoriously anti-intellectual as Muslim clerics held a significant influence on how educators deliver instructional curricula and how students acquire

knowledge in classroom settings. Accordingly, an anti-intellectual political ethos of the Afghan educational system constructs cultural obstacles for young women and girls who have a strong desire to learn but risk imprisonment or death for even attempting to acquire knowledge. Many Afghan young women and girls are, thus, indentured servants to the prevailing Islamic government that considers modern education a strictly Western idea designed to corrupt children of their innocence. Primarily because the Afghan educational system treats young women and girls so poorly, much larger infrastructural challenges reflect how policymakers govern accessibility and quality (New Security Learning, 2011). Despite all possible efforts to reform the Afghan educational system, Muslim clerics continue to emphasize cultural differences as a means for reinforcing inequality within the South Asian country. Furthermore, and as this review of the existing literature argues, the current educational system in Afghanistan has strong historical roots that researchers of future studies should address even as more young women and girls gain access to formal institutional knowledge.

Importantly, this literature draws from the personal experience of having lived in Afghanistan for more than eight years and having met with diplomatic authorities considered influential for creating positive social change in the South Asian country after the overthrowing of the Taliban government in 2001. Although the Taliban remains active as a political organization, the attempts to prevent young women and girls from obtaining equal learning opportunities remains a persistent threat throughout a country that is still a part of the Global South. Personal experience notwithstanding, this literature review highlights how issues related to culture, generosity, and politics influence the strategies used by governmental authorities in Afghanistan to provide young women and girls with an education. Personal experience of

meeting with the Deputy Minister of Defense for Personnel and Education in 2004 also informs this literature review as cultural misunderstandings between government representative of countries in the Global North and Global South reinforce political differences by which young women and girls in Afghanistan continue to bear the brunt of an unbalanced infrastructure. Generally, the personal experiences that inform this literature review subsequently influenced the decision of using narrative inquiry as a methodological approach for describing which strategies will have indelibly positive consequences for young women and girls in Afghanistan who need a high-quality education to compete successfully in global markets.

2.2 Historical Overview

The literature review begins with a historical overview of how the educational system in Afghanistan developed before government officials ratified a working constitution. After Afghanistan ratified its constitution, the South Asian country functioned as a constitutional monarchy before it transformed into a communist dictatorship. When the Soviet Union took control of the Afghan government, Islamic fundamentalists occupied top government positions and effectively had a detrimental influence on how young women and girls acquired formal institutional knowledge that lacked intellectual substance. Islamic fundamentalism went further as the Taliban advanced a religious nationalist ideology that mandated all citizens to follow Koranic doctrine as the rule of law. However, the recent overthrowing of the Taliban government indicates new and continuing possibilities for young women and girls in Afghanistan to challenge fundamentalist religious authority in demanding equality for all individuals (Centner, 2012). In many ways, the literature suggests that young women and girls in Afghanistan should draw from critical historical lessons to establish an improved social climate.

2.2.1 Pre-Constitutional Afghanistan

Prior to the twentieth century, and specifically before 1923, Afghanistan had no formally written constitution implemented into national law. Before Afghanistan ratified its constitution, land in the South Asian country was under the order of a province, a monarch, or local tribal leaders. However, on April 9, 1923, Amanullah Khan, the Amir of Afghanistan, helped modernize the country in granting equal rights to women and non-Muslims (Travis, 2005). Interestingly, Shari'a law influenced the ratification of Afghanistan's first constitution in granting women and non-Muslims equal rights. The Afghan constitution also abolished slavery and created a working government with officials who would meet on a regularly scheduled basis. More specific to this study, Amanullah Kahn made education compulsory for all children regardless of gender and religious background. However, the Afghan constitution required that all individuals have permanent citizenship status to receive an education.

The ironic element of Afghanistan's first constitution was how theocratic views informed the ratification process. Accordingly, the constitution of Afghanistan recommended as that all Muslim clerics who acted as government officials would carefully scrutinize religious texts and determine which statements would have the most positive influence on all citizens living in the South Asian country (Travis, 2005). Yet, Afghanistan during the early 1920s was not under fundamentalist rule and did not cite each verse of the Koran as a literal interpretation of reality. Despite how many contemporary scholars would describe Afghanistan's first official constitution as containing fundamentalist objectives, women's rights were of critical concern as Amanullah Khan acted on a promise of not treating them like second-class citizens under the law.

Two years before Afghanistan had its first constitution, Amanullah Kahn banned child marriages and the dowry after enacting the Family Code into law in 1921 (Travis, 2005). The Amir also opened the first schools for young women and girls after enacting the Family Code while he also encouraged women to study abroad and obtain a higher education. After the Amir ratified Afghanistan's first constitution, he abolished polygamy and allowed his wife to appear unveiled in public as well as actively participate in political demonstrations. However, religious fundamentalists dissatisfied with how the Amir held political power over Afghanistan denounced the first official constitution as part of a communist plot to undermine Koranic authority.

From the above, the research literature suggests that young women and girls in Afghanistan who lived during the early 1920s had numerous opportunities to earn an education by governmental decree even as the Muslim faith guided all political principles. Unfortunately, the dissatisfaction of religious fundamentalists reflects ideological tensions over how young women and girls should occupy social positions in contemporary society (Kabeer & Khan, 2014). Religious fundamentalists dissatisfied with the constitution resisted gender equality and repeatedly advanced arguments for conservatism to Muslim clerics responsible for implementing policy decisions. In fact, the historical literature noted that many religious fundamentalists attempted to overthrow Amanullah Kahn in demanding that he rescind his executive decision granting young women and girls equal rights (Travis, 2005). Yet, the Amir became King of Afghanistan in 1926 and maintained his belief that young women and girls should have equal access to education even if religious fundamentalists used strict literal interpretations to support their claims. Since the Amir allowed his wife to appear unveiled in public, he subsequently provided Afghan young women and girls with similar rights. More threatening to the claims of

religious fundamentalists was how Amanullah Kahn allowed young women and girls to adopt Western dress as a source of liberation from forced seclusion and child marriages. However, as Travis (2005) continued to note, many Western countries, particularly the United Kingdom, did not support Afghanistan even though the government in place during the mid-1920s was accepting of British values. Since the British Empire held a considerable influence on global politics and economics, Parliamentary figures played a tremendously powerful role as leaders gained control over neighboring India and colonized it to the fullest effect possible. The British empire also shaped how Afghanistan would eventually function as a constitutional monarchy that retained only some of the rights granted to young women and girls.

2.2.2 Constitutional Monarchy

When Afghanistan officially became a constitutional monarchy in 1930, Nadir Shah, the new king, ratified the second constitution one year later. Afghanistan's second constitution would have nearly 30 years of staying political power in embracing traditions and in granting religious authority to legislators who fully complied with Shari'a principles (Travis, 2005). The second constitution of Afghanistan mandated compulsory education as did the first constitution. Women received the right to vote in major political elections yet elected officials had limited decision-making powers for implementing policies that did not fully comply with Shari'a principles. Though women received the right to vote, religious law required them to wear the *burqa* and also prohibited them from participating in political campaigns.

Young women and girls in Afghanistan were direct targets as national government transformed from a theocratic human rights state to a constitutional monarchy. As Afghanistan began to function politically as a constitutional monarchy, young women and girls lost all

confidence in receiving mentorship opportunities to receive a higher education in a Western country (Johns, Grossman, & McDonald, 2014; Lindsay & Williams, 2014). Young women and girls who once had the legal and political right to earn an education were now confined to the domestic sphere as both religious fundamentalists and British colonizers held an indelible cultural influence on life there. More troublesome is how many religious elites received opportunities to acquire knowledge in formal institutions of higher learning as young women and girls were barred from having any contact with men without proper supervision as literally interpreted in the Koran. In 1933, the assassination of Nadir Shah led to 40 years of gradual improvements in Afghanistan as Zahir, the Nadir's 19-year-old son, attempted to bolster the national economy by securing financial and military aid from the neighboring Soviet Union (Travis, 2005). However, Afghanistan experienced a major political crisis in the late 1950s as many young women and girls appeared unveiled in public for the first time since Amir Amanullah Kahn led the South Asian country.

2.2.3 Afghanistan as a Communist Dictatorship

In 1964, Afghanistan became a communist dictatorship after religious fundamentalists misread Koranic doctrine and integrated radical political principles into a state apparatus. Travis (2005) noted how many self-avowed communists in Afghanistan during the early to mid-1960s received expulsions from public universities for broadcasting radical ideas that threatened an established political order. Many of these same communists lived and studies in the United States for educational purposes. In Afghanistan, some of the radical communist politics influenced elections in Kabul that allowed women and Leftists to represent local government;

however, rural landowners and religious conservatives predominated Afghan politics during the early to mid-1960s as the financial price run for political offices was quite steep.

Travis (2005) noted further that Afghanistan was communist in name only in the mid-1960s even as a growing number of university students and intellectuals in Kabul expressed a sincere interest in politics. Indeed, half of the officials who occupied leadership positions in the Afghan government identified as communist. However, the political threats posed by religious fundamentalists sparked almost 20 years of debates over how a constitutional monarchy was arguably better. The communist dictatorship in Afghanistan provoked widespread revolts against women led to riots and acid attacks on any woman who appeared unveiled (Travis, 2005). Until 1977, communist rule in Afghanistan triggered significant political backlash as Prime Minister Daoud allied Saudi Arabia and the former Soviet Union to purchase oil. Unfortunately, Afghanistan remained one of the most poorly educated countries in the world as political corruption ran amok. Despite how Prime Minister Daoud attempted to implement constitutional reforms that would promote young women and girls with more opportunities, more than half of the children died before reaching five years of age and more than three-fourths of Afghan children received no education at all (Travis, 2005). Meanwhile, the per capita in Afghanistan was so low in the late 1970s that extreme poverty was a logical consequence of a communist political dictatorship that discouraged participation in the global economy.

The communist dictatorship in Afghanistan prompted revolts from religious fundamentalists who insisted that young women and girls must know their proverbial place as dictated by the Koran. Organizations such as the Muslim Brotherhood had an indelible influence on how Afghanistan eventually transformed from a communist dictatorship to a theocratic state

that strictly enforced gender segregation (Travis, 2005). Accordingly, the Muslim Brotherhood led a *jihad* against Prime Minister Daoud as Muslim clerics who identified as eminent intellectuals determined the course of contemporary history in the South Asian country. In particular, the Hanafi school of thought inspired what would become known as the Taliban movement that forbade women and young girls from appearing unveiled while the antiquated era of arranged marriages and the dowry system were reinstated (Travis, 2005). Effectively, the rise of the Taliban defied the first and second constitutions of Afghanistan and instituted a theocratic state rooted in ideological claims that Western society was inherently corrupt and that only strict literal interpretations of the Koran would guarantee peace at any price.

2.2.4 Religious Fundamentalist Rule Under the Taliban

The Taliban held political power in Afghanistan from 1994 until 2001. While the aim of the Taliban was to institute a law-and-order society, this political authority relied on financial and military aid from the United States to enhance its political capacity (Travis, 2005). The Taliban then used financial aid to establish a corruption-filled political environment that advocated violence against young women and girls who attempted to acquire an education not aligned with fundamentalist religious principles. Severe criminal sanctions were, thus, not improbable consequences of deliberately flouting strict literal interpretations of Koranic doctrine in favor of Western secularism. The Taliban then targeted teachers who attempted to educated young women and girls who believed that learning would instill economic growth in the severely isolated and impoverished country (New Security Learning, n.d.). Yet, prior to Taliban rule, women were the majority of students attending university in Kabul and worked as public servants (Travis, 2005). Muslim clerics who espoused fundamentalist religious views,

nevertheless, found such practices impure and willfully violated international human rights provisions. In this context, the historical and legal research by Travis (2005) suggests that the drive to engage in political corruption was largely inspired by a need to procure resources from Western countries like the United States and fulfill a strictly insular purpose of indoctrinating citizens into intellectual and economic poverty.

The research conducted by Centner (2012) confirms how the Taliban eliminated all possibilities for young women and girls in Afghanistan to acquire an education. Moreover, the Taliban banned women from teaching as fundamentalist Muslim clerics held extreme patriarchal views. Before the overthrowing of the Taliban government in 2001, less than one million children attended school (Centner, 2012). After the Taliban lost power, nearly 2.5 million young women and girls are enrolled in school; however, the Taliban has reemerged in recent years to claim that the future of Afghanistan remains dependent on strict theocratic rule. Particularly in rural villages, the Taliban remains an influential political force that influences how students acquire literacy skills and develop cultural competency to compete in the global economy (Centner, 2012; Cherkesova, Belikova, Popova, Sukhova, & Demidova, 2015; Kabeer & Khan, 2014). Many teachers in Afghanistan today only have a high school education and lack the critical resources for ensuring that students acquire knowledge in a wide range of subjects (Centner, 2012). By implication, the research literature suggests that the role of culture in Afghan history remains tainted by political corruption as religious fundamentalists claim that education for young girls and women will foster chaos as dissidence becomes normalized.

2.3 The Cultural Role of Afghan History on Education

Three core concepts of culture, generosity, and politics anchor this review of the existing literature as government representatives of economically developed countries in the Global North consider education a fundamental human right for young women and girls. Even if countries like Afghanistan operate under a theocratic regime, the opportunities for young women and girls to receive a formal education from grade school to university should be widespread even as fundamental religious doctrine demonstrates. Particularly in the cultural context, Herrera (2004) noted in her earlier study that problems with "new" Western initiatives may threaten the livelihood of young women and girls in Afghanistan as governmental authorities must gradually implement policies that do not cause great social upheavals. Western countries like the United States also have unique military investments in Afghanistan as the occupation in the Middle East continues to prompt missions that compel religious fundamentalists to resist foreign cultural values (Christensen & Jakobsen, 2015). However, improving the cultural infrastructure of Afghanistan by encouraging government officials to grant young women and girls equal education access may require a compromise that involves an increase in military spending.

Quite interestingly, a meeting with the Assistant Minister for Religious and Cultural Affairs, cited the parable of a young man walking on a road to represent how not granting young women and girls equal rights is a cultural failure. If governments are slow to implement positive social change that provides young women and girls with equal access to education, the parable of the young man is applicable toward understanding how undeveloped ideas reinforce a fundamentalist social and political climate. Accordingly, the parable of the young man appears as follows:

> "A young man was walking down an old road, and he came upon an old man. The young man asked the old man, 'How much longer is it to the city?' The old man shrugged his shoulders and he stated that he did not know. The young man asked the old man how long he had lived here. The old man stated that he had lived here all of his life. The young man was upset that the old man did not know how much longer it would take to get to the city. The young man scurried off down the road and then the old man shouted '20 minutes!' The young man went back to the old man and asked, 'Why did you not say that when I had asked you?' The old man stated that he did know how fast the young man walked."

The core cultural lesson that this parable implies for granting young women and girls equal access to formal is that progress depends on how quickly one wants to have it achieved in reality. As the earlier research by Herrera (2004) suggests, achieving political progress is a matter of expressing a personal commitment to ensure that all individuals live in prosperity. Governments that do not grant young women and girls opportunities to prosper violate human rights ideas as all individuals should use religion as a medium of free expression and not of repression.

Generosity is the second concept that underscores this section of the literature review as institutions of learning that attempt to educate young women and girls are targets of terrorist attacks led by members of the Taliban (Arnove & Bull, 2015). Generosity entails that all citizens of a country respect the values that promote equality. However, the political leadership in Afghanistan has lacked generosity since the early 1990s when the Taliban declared itself an official governing body. All schools in Afghanistan must operate in mosques with *mullahs* as teachers. Yet, members of the Taliban deliberately target many religious schools in Afghanistan

out of fear that young women and girls will corrupt the soul of boys acquiring literacy skills. Perhaps, as some of the recent scholarly literature suggests, paradigm shifts in education demand liberation at the expense of religious traditions that guide moral behaviors in an otherwise dangerous society (Cherkesova et al., 2015). Education in the contemporary world is a matter of living in a generous social and political climate that guarantees all individuals opportunities to build human capital in global markets. Accordingly, generosity is a matter of petitioning governments to implement policy mechanisms that link the potential for human development with economic output. However, the social and political climate of Afghanistan remains heavily characterized by mistrust as members of the Taliban continue to have a significant influence on how young women and girls in the South Asian country acquire knowledge. For the Taliban, young women and girls may succeed only by internalizing extreme beliefs implying that all Western countries have a corrupt political system designed to dismantle traditional infrastructures in increasingly dramatic ways.

The third theme of politics that underscores this literature review directly relates to Afghanistan has attempted numerous times to implement anti-corruption policy measures that have not yet produce any long-term results with implications for how young women and girls in the South Asian country receive an education. Centner (2012) suggested in his legal research that corruption is endemic to Afghan politics as government officials steeped in religious fundamentalism waste money and lose credibility to a general public who legitimately deserves better. Similarly, Thorpe and Ahmad (2013) suggested that the globalization of youth culture represents a political threat to religious fundamentalists who still have a considerable influence on how Afghanistan functions as a theocratic society. Considering how many young men and

boys have had numerous opportunities to receive an education by governmental decree in countries like Afghanistan, young women and girls have any attempts at demonstrating agency dismissed as government officials who espouse a fundamentalist position emphasize the presumed abilities of one social group.

Here, political corruption in Afghanistan does not seem the least bit surprising to young women and girls who frequently confront religious resistance by Muslim clerics who directly quote from the Koran in determining which behaviors will promote the greatest social benefits (Centner, 2012; Thorpe & Ahmad, 2013). Largely due to the level of political corruption that Afghanistan experiences, few studies to date have considered how young women and girls. However, one recently published dissertation confirms that Afghanistan remains in a fragile political state that does not encourage young women and girls to protest the influence of religious fundamentalism as a corrupting force in politics (Marlin, 2013). As Marlin (2013) suggested in his dissertation, more complex policy solutions are necessary to end political corruption even as the overthrown Taliban government continues to influence decision-making processes by powerful groups who do not treat young women and girls as valuable citizens with human and economic potential.

2.4 The Impact of Western Education on Afghanistan

The earlier research by Chauhan (2008) cites wide-ranging impacts of Western educational constructs in South Asian countries that include India, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka. The impacts of Western education on Afghanistan appear limited as fundamentalist Muslim clerics have effectively barred young women and girls from thinking freely outside of a theocratic order. To recall, however, a theocratic state was in place when Afghanistan ratified its

first constitution in 1923. Particularly in the countries of India, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka, the core constructs of Western education drive economic growth and also improve the status of public health for all citizens. In Afghanistan, however, such affordances remain available only to men even as young women and girls make strides to improve their livelihood.

Earlier studies have also noted how the impacts of Western education on Afghanistan remain severely limited as roads and other aspects of the national transportation infrastructure are mostly fragmented. Street (2003) suggested that restrictions placed on the ability of young women and girls to acquire literacy skills reinforce political development issues reading and writing remain fundamental aspects of education in early grades. Similarly, Gee (2010) suggested that literacy is more than the acquisition of strong reading and writing skills. Literacy is, rather, the building of social and cultural competence in conjunction with reading and writing skills as the effective use of language is critical for inspiring positive social change. Particularly in Afghanistan, the use of religious texts to promote literacy skills goes against common Western notions of acquiring reading and writing skills to spur civic engagement.

Despite the overthrowing of the Taliban government in 2001, the political and ideological context of Afghanistan remains embedded in religious fundamentalism and defines literacy as strictly bound to the Koran. Accordingly, the educational system in Afghanistan does encourage the acquisition of cultural competency in conjunction with literacy skills despite how young men and boys have more opportunities to participate openly in social and political life. In a similar vein, one recent study highlighted how constructs of Western education have a limited impact on Afghanistan as young men and boys attend school regularly while young women and girls must remain confined to the domestic sphere (Beath, Christia, & Enikolopov, 2015). Despite how

Afghanistan has experienced significant changes to its political infrastructure since the Taliban lost power, education in the South Asian country remains unequal even as community-based approaches encourage educators to build bridges residents of rural villages and urban centers. As is commonly assumed, rural areas of Afghanistan remain loyal to fundamentalist religious principles as residents maintain the belief that urban life is a result of corrupt Western influences.

Beath, Christian, & Enikolopov (2015) noted in more detail that many young women and girls in Afghanistan do not have an education beyond the fourth grade. From this information, the argument that Western educational constructs have had limited impact on Afghanistan remains true as many young women and girls lack opportunities to achieve upward mobility. Considering how Afghanistan is one of many countries in the Global South, the lack of opportunities for young women and girls to achieve upward mobility through education confirms the links between religious fundamentalism and poverty. As Burtch (2013) suggested in his research, the impacts of Western education on Afghanistan remains severely constricted even as military interventions from countries like the United States and Canada aim to improve political and economic conditions. Some military interventions include liaisons who are partly responsible for introducing educational initiatives intent on improving the social and political climate of Afghanistan. However, most interventions fail as a result of resistance by representatives of the Afghan government who remain loyal to fundamentalist principles (Burtch, 2015; Christensen & Jakobsen, 2015; Hammes, 2015). Quite arguably, the suggestion that military interventions from the United States and Canada will improve the educational state of affairs for young women and girls in Afghanistan indicates that Western educational constructs may only reinforce a patriarchal ideology. By this logic, military interventions

reinforce patriarchal norms as governmental officials assume that young girls and women have a predisposition to resist patriotic ideals and believe that equality for all is a core belief held by everyone regardless of social background or political ideology.

Chowdhury (2016, p. 123) noted in her recently published study that the impacts of Western education on young women and girls in Afghanistan reinforce notions of "freedom" as rooted in capitalist assumptions of "choice." Yet, young women and girls in Afghanistan today lack the freedom and choice once enjoyed during the 1920s (Travis, 2005). In ideal terms, Western educational constructs encourage young women and girls to choose a particular manner of dress and criticize the government for not acting efficiently in providing all citizens with adequate resources (Chowdhury, 2016). Even while some of the military interventions led by the United States and Canada may constitute humanitarian aid to promote initiatives for building a stronger educational system in Afghanistan, patriarchal assumptions are widespread as fundamentalist clerics discourage young men and boys from adopting a pluralist view of global society (Burtch, 2013; Chowdhury, 2016; Christensen & Jakobsen, 2015). The ideological struggles experienced by young women and girls in Afghanistan indicate even further how patriarchal assumptions undergird any attempts to reform the current educational system as Muslim clerics who espouse fundamentalist religious views define interventions by Western countries as inherently destructive (Kabeer & Khan, 2014). Here, the limited impacts of Western education on Afghanistan reflect a seemingly widening divide between culture and rights.

Tlaiss and Dirani (2015) recently highlighted how young women and girls in Afghanistan have few opportunities to acquire professional knowledge that builds human capital. Muslim clerics in Afghanistan believe that human capital is a fundamentally Western construct rooted in

exploitative capitalist principles that arguably provide all individuals with too much freedom. Interestingly, the beliefs held by Muslim clerics have roots in communist political ideas mandating collectivism to protect the greater good (Travis, 2005). However, the type of collectivism enforced in Afghanistan does not reflect the utopian views of communism as the soundest ideological construct capable of promoting equality. Rather, the type of communism practiced in Afghan politics remains historically rooted in religious principles that benefit the few. In many ways, what Tlaiss and Dirani (2015) suggest is that the virtues of individual agency considered important to building human capital promote social divisions and foster inequality. Yet, the lack of opportunities for young women and girls in Afghanistan to acquire an education beyond the fourth grade indicates that policy reform in the South Asian country requires interventions that do not require defense teams and other institutions rooted in oppressive patriarchal systems.

2.5 Opportunities to Reform Current Educational Policy in Afghanistan

Reforming educational policy in Afghanistan entails that a significant amount of space between policymakers and decision makers is necessary to manage complexities as young women and girls in Afghanistan face significant barriers despite progressive attempts since the fall of the Taliban. Yet, the works of Paolo Freire (1970/2009) suggest that reforms to educational policy in countries led by a repressive government should work from the bottom up instead of from the top down. Reforms to the current educational policy in Afghanistan must, therefore, come from those who have directly experienced social and political oppression. Still, questions remain as to how young women and girls in Afghanistan who have experienced the brunt of social and political repression may directly challenge the powers that be in demanding

wholesale reform. The current educational policy in Afghanistan mandates that young women and girls remain docile. Nevertheless, Freire (1970/2009) suggested that all oppressed individuals should use personal experience a tool for initiating reforms at the institutional level.

The information provided by New Security Learning (n.d.) also suggests that all possibilities to reform the education system in Afghanistan cannot remain free from conflict as members of the Taliban who hold fundamentalist religious views advocate violence against young women and girls who demonstrate individual agency. Despite the conflict, humanitarian agencies are partly responsible for developing proposals that initiative change through policy reforms (Hammes, 2015; Marlin, 2013). Education for young women and girls in Afghanistan, thus, remains a practice in disrupting law and order to remove the shackles of oppression. Since conflict in Afghanistan appears to represent an unfortunate social and political reality, the opportunities to reform current educational policy in the South Asian country depend on how young women and girls acquire accurate knowledge of how corrupt political systems thrive on applying patriarchal ideas and maintain a strictly segregated environment.

Still, one example in which reforms to current educational policy in Afghanistan seems possible is the One Laptop per Child (OLPC) program designed to overcome challenges associated with implementing technological innovation in classroom environments (New Security Learning, n.d.). OLPC is a cost-effective pilot project initiated to encourage educators into utilizing innovative technologies that deliver relevant instructional content in schools throughout Afghanistan. Students enrolled in schools participating in OLPC receive a laptop computer despite how some rural areas lack critical access to broadband technologies that increase the efficiency at which all individuals receive information. Educators who participate in

the OLPC program deliver instructional curricula in daily shifts lasting 2.5 hours and blend formal classroom instructions with technologically-oriented learning tasks that students must complete on their own time. The OLPC program also provided students and educators in Afghanistan with access to a digital library database that encourages the development of research skills considered necessary for building human capital. Yet, while the OLPC program shows signs of promise, disparities continue to exist as young women and girls throughout Afghanistan still feel compelled to accept fundamentalist religious doctrine as part of a natural social and political order. Technological challenges indicate disparities between urban and rural areas of Afghanistan as cultural differences reinforce religious fundamentalism in many respects. Especially as fundamentalists Muslim clerics believe that technological innovation is representative of "evil" Western capitalism, the opportunities to reform current educational policy in Afghanistan depends on how results of OLPC provide empirically sound improvements in learning outcomes and human capital development.

Researchers affiliated with Lewis and Clark College (2012) in Portland, Oregon, argued that policy initiatives designed to improve the livelihood of young women and girls in Afghanistan must include considerations of effective governance structures that representatives of other non-Western countries have used. The current policy structure in Afghanistan leads to conditions indicative of "abuse, waste, corruption, delays, bottlenecks, misunderstanding, low morale, and obstruction of creativity and innovation" (Lewis and Clark College, 2012, p. 2). Since Afghanistan continues to experience significant disparities not only in education but also in political and social life, the literature suggests that effective governance structures lead to improvements in communication, transportation, and security. Moreover, effective governance

infrastructure in Afghanistan requires that young women and girls point out the severe flawed associated with an anti-intellectual discourse propounded by Muslim clerics who espouse fundamentalist religious views. Accordingly, anti-intellectualism breeds social and political corruption as religious oligarchs who occupy powerful leadership positions control the distribution of critical resources considered necessary for all Afghan citizens to compete successfully in the global economy (Centner, 2012; Lewis and Clark College, 2012). Afghanistan remains the second most politically corrupt country in the world as citizens continue to live in extreme poverty despite the fall of the Taliban government in 2001. As such, the social, economic, and political implications of mandating changes in educational policy entail that researchers must acknowledge significant challenges that afford young women and girls invaluable opportunities to build human capital.

2.6 Mandating Change to Improve the Livelihood of Young Women and Girls in Afghanistan

Drawing again from the works of Paolo Freire (1970/2009), mandating change to improve the livelihood of young women and girls in Afghanistan require that researchers acknowledge which policies reinforce social, economic, and political disparities. The current policy framework implies that young women and girls must internalize fundamentalist religious doctrine to comply with a static vision of reality. Young women and girls are, thus, subordinate to a theocratic state that denies human agency. Similarly, many Afghan citizens in rural areas of the South Asian country lack the resource capacity to mandate that the corrupt government implement change by removing economic barriers to trade. Changes in educational policy, thus, expand opportunities to participate in global society and exercise creativity to drive innovation.

The earlier research by Street (2003) suggested that literacy skills development provides young women and girls in Afghanistan with keys to liberation as educators may draw from personal experience to inform practice. Literacy skills are imperative for an entire society to function as reading and writing are integral parts of a culture. Unfortunately, the current Afghan government appears reticent at distributing financial resources to ensure that young women and girls build human capital. Surely, some educators may encourage young women to engage in alternative banking practices such as micro-credit that support literacy initiatives at the local level (Street, 2003). Along the lines of Freire (1970/2009), local initiatives are critical for establishing the groundwork to develop paths towards liberation. Even while the ideas espoused by Freire have religious roots in Catholicism, mandates for change must work from a core belief that faith builds culture and promotes agency at all levels.

Secondly, mandating change to improve the livelihood of young women and girls in Afghanistan implies that researchers in education should adopt a dialectical approach that entails a recognition of historically rooted problems and their links with the current political context. McLaren (2009), in having drawn inspiration from Freire (1970/2009), highlighted how a dialectical approach may effectively encourage educators to identify the fundamental contradictions between belief and practice. Not only are political institutions in Afghanistan sources of indoctrination, an entire educational system has religious and social obligations to ensure that only group of individuals—young men and boys—can participate in social and political life. Considering how a dialectical approach goes against mainstream educational theory as practice in countries of the Global North, the suggestions made by Freire (1970/2009)

and McLaren (2009) indicate that all institutions of learning must provide students with a sense of responsibility to improve social, political, and economic conditions.

Despite how the recent strides made by young women and girls in Afghanistan send signals that equal education is possible in a politically corrupt and severely impoverished country, a dialectical approach remains necessary to achieve objectives contained in all formal initiatives for implementing grassroots change. Furthermore, a dialectical approach may assist with implementing policy changes as grassroots efforts led by educators promote discussions of how young women and girls in Afghanistan learn best (McLaren, 2009; Thorpe & Ahmad, 2013). The ways in which young women and girls in Afghanistan learn have significant implications improving the social and political climate of the country as a dialectical approach moves beyond the banking model commonly found throughout most educational systems. By adopting a dialectical approach, educators in Afghanistan have opportunities to mandate changes to educational policy by initiating collaborative projects that function as advocacy platforms.

Thirdly, mandating change to improve the livelihood of young women and girls in Afghanistan entails that policy initiatives improve how educators act as mentors. The research by Lindsay and Williams (2014) highlighted how mentorships between educators and students have numerous implications for generating improvements. These implications include the construction of a simple program design, an emphasis on leadership skills development, the drive for technological innovation, an increase in interpersonal interactions, and an acknowledgment of establishing transparent relationships on virtual platforms (Gee, 2010; Lindsay & Williams, 2014). Despite how the OLPC program has some potential to improve the livelihood of young women and girls in Afghanistan through educational means (New Security Learning, 2011), the

long-term implications of mentorships between educators and students indicate that governmental officials who espouse fundamentalist religious views would prefer to define learning as an assimilation process (Johns, Grossman, & McDonald, 2014; Lindsay & Williams, 2014). However, mentorships between educators and students after the adoption of a dialectical approach point to the future of technological innovation as prerequisite for economic growth.

Overall, mandating change to improve the livelihood of young women and girls in Afghanistan requires that educators resist allowing fundamentalist religious doctrine to foster an oppressive social and political climate. Despite how members of the Taliban continue to have some influence on social and political life in the South Asian country, the research literature suggests that initiatives for change can only emerge from grassroots organizing (Cherkesova et al., 2015; Freire, 1970/2009; Lewis and Clark College, 2012; McLaren, 2009). Moreover, resisting patriarchal norms is necessary to ensure that policy initiatives for change will provide young women and girls with agency (Chowdhury, 2016; Herrera, 2004). Based on the information provided in this literature review, personal experience of having lived in Afghanistan and having met with diplomatic authorities informs an autoethnographic approach selected for this study.

2.7 Summary of Chapter II

The preceding review of the scholarly literature began with a historical overview of how the educational system in Afghanistan developed before government officials ratified a working constitution. To the surprise of many contemporary scholars, Afghanistan was a theocratic state that initially provided all individuals with the freedoms to participate actively in social and political life through formal education. However, as Travis (2005) noted, resistance from

Muslim clerics who held fundamentalist religious views and British colonization in India shaped what would lead Afghanistan to function as a constitutional monarchy. When the South Asian country transformed into a communist dictatorship, the rights that young women and girls previously enjoyed in the mid-1920s were effectively eliminated. Despite how, in 1994, the Taliban rose to power, its fall seven years later continues to strike fear in young women and girls who want an education but allow fundamentalist religious doctrine to dictate differently.

Secondly, the literature review was anchored by concepts of culture, generosity, and politics as countries in the Global North have government representatives who define education as a fundamental right for all. Cultural lessons for granting young women and girls in Afghanistan with equal rights to receive an education depend on how steadfastly educators desire grassroots changes in social and political reality (Herrera, 2004). Alternatively, generosity suggested that all citizens should respect the core values for promoting equality as political leaders are partly responsible for ensuring that young women and girls receive a fair share of resources designed to build human capital (Cherkesova et al., 2015). Concerning politics, the attempts to implement anti-corruption policies in Afghanistan imply that Muslim clerics who espouse fundamentalist religious views view Western ideas of technological innovation as a threat to theocratic traditions.

Next, the literature review highlighted how researchers illustrated the impact of Western education in Afghanistan and opportunities to reform current educational policy in the South Asian country. From both sections, the research literature suggests that resistance to patriarchal norms should inform the adoption of a dialectical approach as necessary for ensuring that young women and girls believe that equal rights are realistically achievable goals (Chowdhury, 2016;

Freire, 1970/2009; McLaren, 2009). Significantly, the dialectical approach is useful for educators with the motivation to mandate grassroots policy change in pointing out the wide range of contradictions embedded in the current political system of Afghanistan. The literature review then illustrated how mandating change to improve the livelihood of young women and girls in Afghanistan requires that educators emphasize literacy skills development as critical for building human capital and stimulating economic potential in the severely impoverished South Asian country (New Security Learning, 2011; Street, 2003; Thorpe & Ahmad, 2013). Here, the drive towards innovation should remain at the forefront of mandating educational policy changes. Mandating changes in Afghanistan also require that researchers draw critical attention to how mentorship opportunities will inspire grassroots change as members of the Taliban continue to influence social and political life (Johns, Grossman, & McDonald, 2014; Lindsay & Williams, 2014; Marlin, 2013). Yet, as previously explained, personal experience of having lived in Afghanistan will produce direct evidence that guides the direction of future studies in which researchers may attempt to develop more effective policy solutions that improve the livelihood of young women and girls.

2.8 Methodological Implications

The next chapter discusses the appropriateness of adopting a narrative inquiry approach to evaluate how cultural obstacles determine whether young women and girls in Afghanistan may benefit from integrating Western ideas into established learning constructs. As a qualitative research method, narrative inquiry provides the space for self-examination and reflection on how the behaviors of individual actors shape society (Allen, 2015; Ellis, Adams, & Bochner, 2010; Wall, 2008). Narrative inquiry also provides qualitative researchers with opportunities to

develop a systematic analysis of cultural experience and prescribe recommendations intent on benefiting marginalized groups. Yet, narrative inquiry is a relatively new methodological approach as a large number of scholars continue to insist that only quantitative models will provide objective data and inform empirical research developments (Allen, 2015). Despite the relative newness of narrative inquiry, its implications for practice are wide-ranging as the subject matter of this study reflects how young women and girls in Afghanistan remain subject to religious fundamentalism despite all efforts towards mandating educational policy changes.

Personal experience of having lived in Afghanistan and having met with diplomatic authorities informs the narrative inquiry approach as the results of this study simultaneously represent a process and a product (Ellis, Adams, Bochner, 2010). Yet, narrative inquiry encourages researchers to confront personal biases about culturally significant issues as experiences strengthen the foundation of an investigative approach (Wall, 2008). While personal experiences alone may not necessarily constitute objective data, the sociological understandings of culturally relevant issues identified after applying an narrative inquiry approach indicate that personal narratives establish clear links between micro- and macro-level shifts in perspective.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODS

3.1 Research Design and Methodological Rationale

In this study, the research methods utilized were a combination of grounded theory (Charmaz, 2014; Cresswell, 2013; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Urquhart, 2013; Wertz et al., 2011) and narrative analysis (Cresswell, 2013; Wertz et al., 2011). The research design was developed on the basis of these methods. Grounded theory is a strategy of formulating theoretical insights on the basis of an imminent analysis of the data itself, as opposed to trying to impose preconceived constructs and schemas onto the data. The idea is that utilizing such an approach, it should become possible to allow the data to speak for itself and to develop new insights that may not have become apparent if attempts had been made to fit the data to a pre-existing theory. This was considered appropriate for the present project due to the fact that there is not a great deal of extant theoretical insight that sheds light on the specific research questions of the project, which means that it will be productive to work toward developing a new base of knowledge.

Likewise, narrative inquiry entails conducting research through a process of storytelling or weaving experiences together into a coherent and meaningful whole. This is also appropriate for this project because one of the key sources of data will consist of my own personal experiences in Afghanistan, reported in the form of narrative stories told from the first-person perspective. Narrative inquiry thus provides a major dataset for the present project, and grounded

theory offers a strategy for developing theoretical insights out of both this dataset and others that will be generated for the study.

3.1.1 Grounded Theory and Applied Research Design

When utilizing grounded theory, a central process consists of coding. Coding refers to the process through which the raw data generated by a study is integrated into the form of a conceptually coherent theory. The two main types of coding are substantive coding and axial coding. The purpose of substantive coding is to analyze the data in such a way that core categories emerge out of the data. These categories will be the building blocks of the emergent grounded theory, and they are generated through a sub-process within substantive coding that is called open coding. From this point, the researcher engages in the sub-process selective coding in order to identify different parts of the data with the core categories that emerged in the open coding process (Holton, 2010). Once theoretical saturation is achieved through the use of constant comparison (or iterative readings of the data), the core concepts and categories of the new grounded theory will be firmly in place. Axial coding would then consist of bringing the different categories together into a coherent structure in order to actually produce the new theory.

3.1.1.1 Open coding. In open coding, the researcher goes through all of the qualitative data, line by line, and attempts to mark up the data in terms of a major category or idea that is indicated by the data. The researcher should try to read the data in terms of the key research questions of the study and the main ideas being conveyed by the participants of the study. The main purpose of this process is to begin to see meaningful patterns in the data or key ideas that recur over the course of the data and from several participants. These ideas can then be coded as core categories of the grounded theory. The researcher must take care to not merely see what he

wants to see in the data, which is why it is important that the open coding process proceeds in a line-by-line manner (Holton, 2010). This will enable the researcher to ensure a maximum of fidelity and substantive fit between the core categories on the one hand and the actual qualitative data on the other.

3.1.1.2 Axial coding. When the researcher engages in axial coding, the point is to discern relations between the various categories that have been identified through the substantive coding process. This requires the utilization of the standard logic of deductive thought as well as the more open-ended creativity of inductive thought. The researcher should examine the relationships among categories in terms of the study's research questions and try to arrange the categories in such a way that the resultant theory would be able to produce meaningful answers and insights (Cresswell, 2013). In Figure 1, this usually entails identifying causal connections between the categories, or relations in which one category can be considered the precursor or the effect of another category.

Element	Description
Phenomenon	This is what in schema theory might be called the name of the schema or frame. It is the concept that holds the bits together. In grounded theory it is sometimes the outcome of interest, or it can be the subject.
Causal conditions	These are the events or variables that lead to the occurrence or development of the phenomenon. It is a set of causes and their properties.
Context	Hard to distinguish from the causal conditions. It is the specific locations (values) of background variables. A set of conditions influencing the action/strategy. Researchers often make a quaint distinction between active variables (causes) and background variables (context). It has more to do with what the researcher finds interesting (causes) and less interesting (context) than with distinctions out in nature.
Intervening conditions	Similar to context. If we like, we can identify context with *moderating* variables and intervening conditions with *mediating* variables. But it is not clear that grounded theorists cleanly distinguish between these two.
Action strategies	The purposeful, goal-oriented activities that agents perform in response to the phenomenon and intervening conditions.
Consequences	These are the consequences of the action strategies, intended and unintended.

Figure 1: Axial Coding Basic Frame of Generic Relationships

3.1.1.3 Emergence of core categories. The core categories emerge during the open coding sub-process of the substantive coding process (Holton, 2010). This is when the research uses constant comparison in order to detect patterns in the qualitative data. For example, if there is one passage in the data that refers to Islamic law and then there is another passage pages later that also refers to Islamic law, then both of those passages could be assigned the code of Islamic law; and from that point, Islamic law could be treated as a core category, such that the researcher (during the selective coding sub-process) could then read the data with an eye specifically toward identifying passages that would fit within the category of Islamic law.

According to Holton (2010), "the core category is discovered as it emerges through iterative coding, conceptual memoing, and theoretical sampling for further data to pursue and develop conceptual leads, ensuring that all concepts earn their way into the emerging theory" (para. 15). This is what produces rigor in the grounded theory method. Initially, it may seem as though grounded theory is rather arbitrary and that it is really just an open invitation for the researcher to see in the data whatever he wants to see in the data. However, the truth is very different. Grounded theory requires the researcher to follow a rigorous coding protocol that proceeds from open coding to selective coding (which together compose substantive coding) to axial coding. In the open coding process, the researcher reads the data line by line in order to come up with main ideas or categories that are reflected in each and every piece of data. Then, in the selective coding process, the researcher reads the data again, but this time with core categories developed, such that the researcher can try to assign the data to core categories. This iterative reading of the data is generally what is called the constant comparative method (Merriam, 2009). Finally, in the axial coding process, the researcher arranges the categories

themselves into a larger theoretical structure through an analysis of the relationships between the categories. These levels of coding thus together establish a rigorous methodology for constructing new theory out of an immanent analysis of the qualitative data generated by the study.

3.1.2 Narrative Inquiry applied in Research Design

As its name suggests, narrative inquiry is essentially a matter of storytelling. According to Wertz et al. (2011), "Narrative inquiry borders and draws on scholarship and methodology from anthropology, history, and literary theory," and practitioners of the method tend to "resist the idea that that there is a definable 'method' through which narratives can be elicited or analyzed" (p. 63). This is because the main purpose of narrative inquiry is to give the subject a voice, and strict methodological considerations are generally subordinated to the achievement of that purpose. Within the context of the present study, the subject of narrative inquiry will actually be my own self, the researcher, and one of the primary sources of data for the study will consist of my own experiences in Afghanistan, entitled My Stories. This data essentially takes the form of a memoir, which is appropriate for a narrative inquiry conducted in the first person.

3.1.2.1 Introduction to narrative inquiry. Again, narrative inquiry is first and foremost about giving subjects a voice. Researchers who practice narrative inquiry often focus on marginalized groups or people with uncommon stories and perspectives (Wertz et al., 2011). A main premise is that the subject may know something that the researcher or the broader intellectual community does not and that it is thus of central importance to allow the subject to speak in his own voice and tell his own story from his perspective. Narrative inquiry is thus often

a method for theoretically and methodologically deferring to the storyteller. The point is for the researcher to solicit the subject's narrative on his own terms.

Bilasco, Gensel and Villanova-Oliver (2005) proposed model-based narrative concept. Tuffield, Millard and Shadbolt (2006) also stated that user modeling-based narrative is the method of narrative variation, which is a knowledge based one.

> "The difference being in the knowledge that is modeled. In the plot based approach the explicit conceptualization is of the narrative structure, whereas in this case the specialized knowledge is to do with the end-users perception of the unfolding narrative, or "user-profile". These systems usually incorporate an explicit narrative model and utilize it along side any available knowledge from a "user-model" to set the context and drive the outcome towards a targeted narrative. (Tuffield, Millard, & Shadbolt, 2006p. 95-104)

Thus, model-based narrative methods is used in the data analysis combining with grounded theory methods. Three levels of coding suggest a potential model with several structures. Further the model, as a theoretical structure, examine the relationships between each structure and relevant sentences and expressions narratively. The top-down analysis will confirm the relations between each structure and the sentences and expressions, which support it.

3.1.2.2 Steps of narrative data collection in the study. In broad terms, it is possible to delineate seven main steps that should be followed when conducting a narrative inquiry (Colorado State University, n.d.). These are only guidelines, but they provide a general structure through which the researcher can validate the quality of the narrative data.

Step	principle	application
1	Identify the problem.	The problem in the application in Human Rights.
2	Recruit a subject.	I served as the witness.
3	Solicit the narrative.	Since I am the subject, the narrative data consists of my own memoirs.
4	The researcher tells the narrative again in his own words.	This is redundant for present purposes since I am both researcher and subject.

Figure 2: Emergence of Core Categories

As can be seen from the Figure 2 above, several of the traditional steps of narrative inquiry are redundant for present purposes because, in the present study, the researcher and the subject will be one and the same person: that is, the narrative will consist of my own report of my own experiences. Several of the steps delineated above have to do with the researcher constantly checking with and collaborating with the subject in order to ensure the fidelity and validity of the narrative data. But in the present study, since I am both the subject and the researcher, all of those steps would be redundant, although of course, I should take care to examine my experiences and ensure that I have represented them as accurately as possible.

3.1.2.3 Evaluating narrative research. Some of the main criteria for evaluating the effectiveness of narrative research are the following (Cresswell, 2012; Colorado State University. n.d.):

1. There are only one or two subjects involved in the study.
2. The study focuses on the direct experiences of the subjects as narrated by them.

3. The researcher synthesizes finding into a standard narrative arc that includes a beginning and an end.
4. There is a great deal of narrative detail included.
5. The researcher analyzes the main themes of the narrative.
6. There is a continual collaboration between the researcher and the subject when crafting and approving the narrative.

These are the main parameters for evaluating the quality of a narrative study.

3.2 Data Resources

The entire dataset for the present study will consist of the following three elements: a) My Stories, b) external data, and c) other relevant documents.

3.2.1 My Stories

My Stories are a set of memoirs composed by me on the basis of my personal experiences in Afghanistan. The data consists of 51 pages of narrative that are divided into several main vignettes: a) arrival in the country, b) meeting our mentees, c) my first Thanksgiving, d) my first bombing in Afghanistan, e) meeting the chief of staff of the Afghan army, f) hiring of cooks, g) meeting the representative from the UN, h) riots in the streets, i) a death of one of our own, j) establishing a women's training center, k) green on blue attacks, l) my abrupt departure from Afghanistan, m) placing a Hazara in a Pashtun province, n) general skilling town, o) hiring family members, p) baksheesh, q) donors for schools, r) prison for moral crimes, s) my interpreter's wife education, t) my interpreters marriage arrangements, u) what is nation building, v) my interpreters achieving the American dream, and, w) my final overview of

being a mentor in Afghanistan. Again, I have written all of these stories from memory, and I can verify that all the stories did in fact really happen.

3.2.2 External Data

External data for the present study consists of 60 pages that were composed of news articles, and similar documents that addressed the same themes that were addressed in *My Stories*. If *My Stories* are about expressing experiences from a narrative, first-person perspective, then external data is about considering the same themes from a third-person perspective. For example, Moradi (2016) has a piece of writing called "A Letter to My Fellow Afghan Woman" that addresses the key issue of women's rights in Afghanistan. This is external data that could be used to reinforce themes related to women's rights that emerged within my recollections in *My Stories*. External data was generally collected on the basis of this logic: once *My Stories* were compiled, efforts were taken to seek external data that covers the same general thematic ground covered by My Stories.

3.2.3 Other Relevant Documents

Other relevant documents include e-mails and personal communications. The role of this dataset will be relatively minimal in the present study compared to *My Stories* and external data, such documents will nevertheless be used in order to support arguments and conclusions whenever this proves to be appropriate.

3.3 Cross-Validation between My Stories and External Data

The My Stories dataset and the external data dataset will serve the purpose of cross-validating each other. My Stories are a report of my personal experiences, whereas the external data consists of reports and documents presented by others, which means that the external data

can confirm the credibility of My Stories. It can confirm that My Stories are not just the result of personal idiosyncrasy but are rather truly reflective of the broader dynamic that is happening in the world. Likewise, My Stories can also add credibility to external data by verifying that data with my own experiences. Structurally, though, the present study begins with My Stories and then seeks external data that correlates with My Stories. This means that the primary intention of the cross-validation is to verify My Stories and not the external data (under the assumption that the external data is already verified). If no cross-validation is possible in some cases, then this could mean either that the relevant section of My Stories should be re-evaluated or that I have in fact produced new knowledge that has not been discussed before.

3.4 Evidence-Based Initiative Coding with JMP

Coding for the present study will utilize JMP (pronounced "jump") text explorer. According to SAS Institute Inc. (2019), "JMP is a business unit of SAS that produces interactive software for desktop statistical discovery" (para. 2). JMP text explored was deemed appropriate for present purposes because it has a utility that enables the researcher to identify the number of times that a given word or phrase appears within a written document. This is crucial for objectively identifying key themes within the data, since if words or phrases recur within the data, then this is a good indication that they point toward a broader theme. The utilization of JMP helped ensure that the coding process was not just arbitrary and that I was not merely seeing what I wanted to see in my own stories.

3.5 Evidence-Based Steps and Hermeneutic Analysis

Again, there are three main steps in the coding process:

- Open coding, which involves identifying keywords and phrases within the data by reading over the data and using the assistance of software such as JMP.
- Selective coding, which involves reading the data again in an iterative manner through the lens of the main categories that emerged in the open coding process.
- Axial coding, which involves bringing together the categories into a coherent framework, thus producing a new theory (Holton, 2010).

Hermeneutic analysis begins with the identification of categories, proceeds by fleshing out those categories and achieving data saturation and culminates in arranging the categories into a coherent whole that reveals the underlying structure and meaning of the narrative data. Some aspects of this process are necessarily more subjective and inductive than others, but evidence-based analysis begins with the accurate and objective coding of the data on a line-by-line basis. From that foundation, it becomes possible to produce qualitative findings that have true validity and credibility.

3.6 Summary of Chapter III

This chapter has consisted of an explication of the methodology for the present study. The chapter has identified grounded theory and narrative inquiry as the main research approaches for the study. Grounded theory consists of developing theoretical insights out of an immanent analysis of the data itself, and narrative inquiry consists of focusing on the structures inherent in the stories about an experience told by a subject. The chapter has also discussed the coding process in some depth. This is important because, in qualitative research of the kind conducted here, rigorous coding is essential for ensuring that the findings that are ultimately

produced are meaningful and not just arbitrary (Holton, 2010). The chapter has discussed open coding, axial coding, and the emergence of core categories out of the data. Again, this is how rigor will be ensured within the study.

This chapter also delved into the main data sources for the present study: My Stories, external data, and other relevant documents. The coding process will be applied to the My Stories data in order to produce the main findings, and then external data and other relevant documents will be used to validate the My Stories findings through a process of triangulation. My Stories are my own personal journals, and the other data sources are third-person accounts and information from during the same time that I was in Afghanistan, Finally, the essay described the software that will be used for the coding process, the method of cross-validation that will be used in order to correlate data sources with each other, and the evidence-based steps of hermeneutic analysis. In short, this chapter has thoroughly delineated the methodology that will be used in order to proceed with the present study. Now it is time to actually apply the methodology in order to produce the relevant findings. The next chapter of this study will thus consist of data analyses and findings.

CHAPTER IV

DATA ANALYSES AND FINDINGS

4.1 Overview of the Study

This study was intended to explore the educational system in Afghanistan, in particular with an eye toward the situation of women and girls relative to that system and what could be done in order to provide women and girls with greater educational opportunity. The study was rooted in two main datasets: the first was My Stories, and the second was external data. My Stories is the primary dataset, and it is composed of my own reflections on my experiences in Afghanistan. Analysis of this dataset is intensive, and this is the main basis for findings and conclusions in the present study. The external data served the secondary purpose of triangulation or adding validity and credibility to the primary data by confirming that data from a different standpoint. In other words, if the external data can confirm findings produced by My Stories, then this increases the likelihood that the My Stories findings are valid. Analysis of the external data will thus follow the key themes identified through the analysis of the My Stories data since the purpose of the external data was to validate the My Stories data.

4.1.1 Analysis of My Stories

Using JMP, My Stories analyzed in light of the primary research questions of the present study:

1. To what extent do Western cultural influences shape the education of young women and girls in Afghanistan?

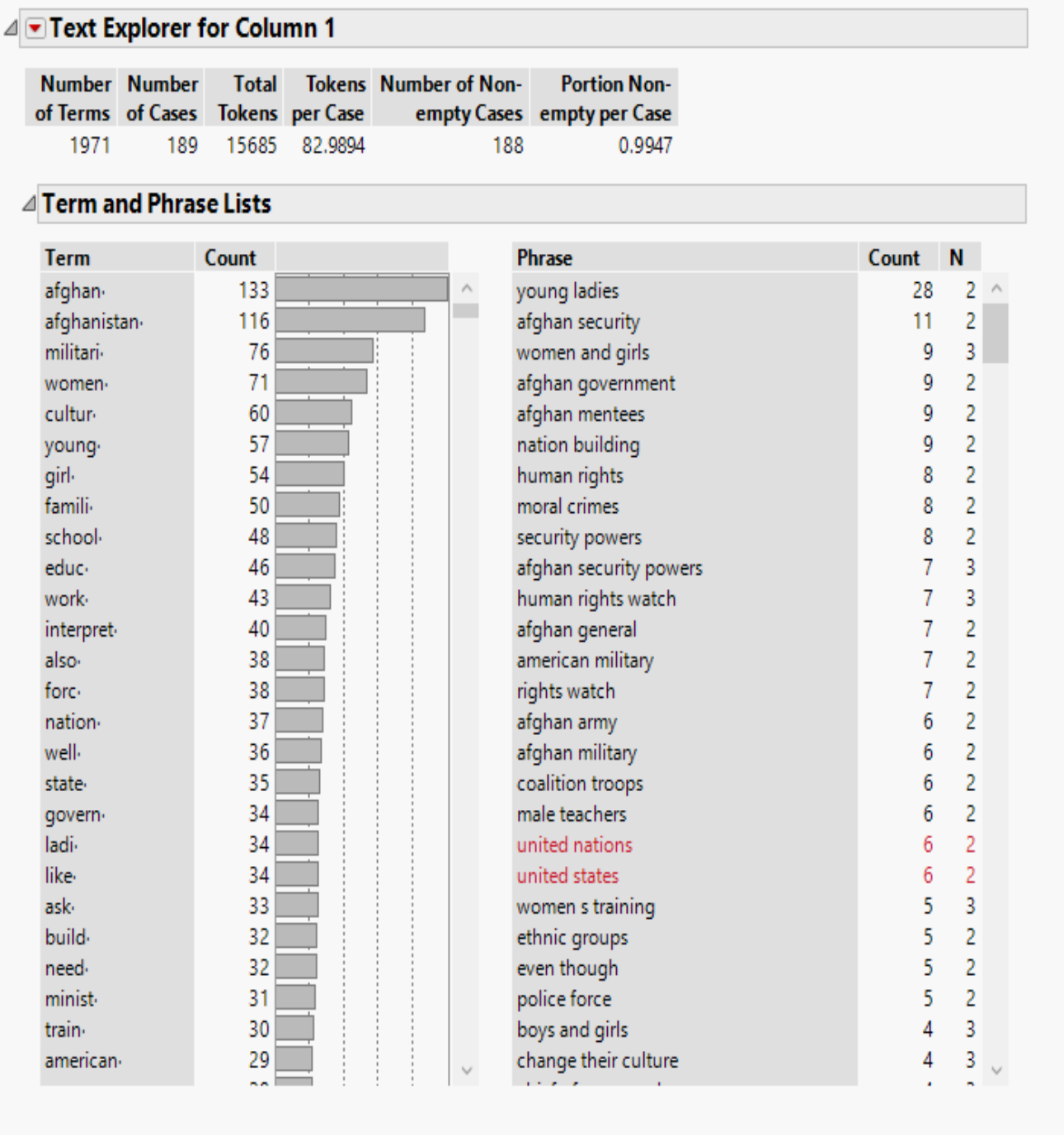
2. To what extent does the current government of Afghanistan develop cultural policies that determine how much young women and girls may draw from Western influences to receive an education in their country?

3. What precisely about Afghan culture should researchers attempt to understand in the future?

I had narratives in the form of My Stories that described what had taken place in Afghanistan. So, from that point, I could proceed to analyze the text. In Table 1 below provides basic summary statistics regarding the number of key terms and phrases that were identified and the number of times they appeared in the text (for example, "Afghanistan" is very common, as is "women," "culture," and "military"). Each of the documents for analysis consisted of words that are sequences of characters without blank spaces between them. We take the words, and multiple sets of words form phrases: or example, "women and girls," "moral crimes," and so on.

After the initial process called feature, the next process, creation, consists of identifying the terms and phrases that ought to be used. Some of the original words will be thrown overboard because they are not meaningful or useful in light of the analytical purposes at hand. And some phrases will be designated as "terms"—a "term" is a column in this design matrix—for that phrase. "Change their culture" sounds important, so it would likely be valuable to keep track of that as a unique identity independent of the separate words "change," "need," and "many." In the table below, it can be seen that there are 1971 unique terms in 189 documents. In all, there are 15,685 tokenized terms. The most common term is "Afghan/Afghanistan," and it occurs 249 times.

Table 1: Analysis of My Stories



Text Explorer for Column 1

Number of Terms	Number of Cases	Total Tokens	Tokens per Case	Number of Non-empty Cases	Portion Non-empty per Case
1971	189	15685	82.9894	188	0.9947

Term and Phrase Lists

Term	Count
afghan·	133
afghanistan·	116
militari·	76
women·	71
cultur·	60
young·	57
girl·	54
famili·	50
school·	48
educ·	46
work·	43
interpret·	40
also·	38
forc·	38
nation·	37
well·	36
state·	35
govern·	34
ladi·	34
like·	34
ask·	33
build·	32
need·	32
minist·	31
train·	30
american·	29

Phrase	Count	N
young ladies	28	2
afghan security	11	2
women and girls	9	3
afghan government	9	2
afghan mentees	9	2
nation building	9	2
human rights	8	2
moral crimes	8	2
security powers	8	2
afghan security powers	7	3
human rights watch	7	3
afghan general	7	2
american military	7	2
rights watch	7	2
afghan army	6	2
afghan military	6	2
coalition troops	6	2
male teachers	6	2
united nations	6	2
united states	6	2
women s training	5	3
ethnic groups	5	2
even though	5	2
police force	5	2
boys and girls	4	3
change their culture	4	3

Table 2 – Word Frequency

Word	Frequency	Comments
Afghan/Afghanistan	249	This word was related to the theme because of it is the basis of my dissertation
Militari	76	This word is related to Nation Building/Mentoring that was conducted while I was in Afghanistan
women	71	This word is related to the theme since it was based on the misunderstanding Westerns and Islamic beliefs
culture	60	This word is related to the theme since it was based on the misunderstanding of our two cultures
young	57	This word is related to theme based on their education beginnings
girl	54	This word is related to theme based on the obstacles the girls have in education
family	50	This word is related to theme on how the families role in education and restrictions
School	48	This word is related to the theme on how schools are established

education	46	This word is related to the theme on how education is administered in Afghanistan

4.1.1.1 The phrases from the words selected. JMP not only suggested word groups, but also suggested phrases, in which the words ranked from 28 to 4. The phrases reflected an advanced stage in the analysis, which within the grounded theory framework would correlate to axial coding. Axial coding is about building linkages between information. This has an authentic association with grounded theory, which is a qualitative methodological structure that includes continually looking at developing topics inside one's informational collection in order to draw out richer and more accurate themes and categories from the data. Axial coding, or the procedure of inductively finding linkages between information such practices, occasions, exercises, techniques, states, implications, cooperation, connections, conditions, outcomes, and settings, are just a few examples.

Thus, there are over 182 phrases, however, I combined several of the like phrases (e.g., young ladies, women and girls) and for space limitations, I selected six other phrases. (see Table Three)

Table 3 – Phrase Frequency

Phrase	Frequency	Comments
	40	**People often refer to (1) young ladies'** education as a key example of a success story in the liberalization of the Afghan government. Several million **(2) young ladies** have access to education in Afghanistan today than did when the Taliban were in charge of things. Nevertheless, there are still some very serious problems when it comes to getting **(3) young ladies** in Afghanistan into school,

Young ladies, **women and girls**		and the number of **(4)** young ladies currently in school within the country is quite low. The administration has indicated that 85 percent of all the young people who are not in school are **(5) young ladies.** Almost two-thirds of young men are educated, whereas only a little over one-third of **(6) young ladies** are educated. The Afghan legislature plays an important role in maintaining this disparity: at both the elementary and secondary levels, fewer schools have been created for **(7) young ladies** than for young men. Afghanistan has 34 provinces, and less than one in five of the instructions across those provinces are female. This is important because, within Afghan culture, it is taboo in many families for **(8) young ladies** to be educated by men, which means that if there are not enough female teachers, then they cannot get an education. Many young people in Afghanistan live far away from home, and this can become problematic within the culture for **(9) young ladies,** who are often kept at home by their families. About two in five schools in Afghanistan lack adequate infrastructure, and this is a problem that disproportionately affects **(10) young ladies.** One-third of **(11) young ladies** get married before the age of 18, and within the context of Afghan culture, once **(12) young ladies** are married, it becomes unfeasible for many of them to continue pursuing their educations. Many families move all over cities and even the country as a whole in order to get their **(13) little girls** into a school, due to the fact that educational opportunities for **(14) young ladies** really are still that isolated. About one in four Afghan children must work in order to help their impoverished families survive, and many **(15) young ladies** have no choice but to engage in work such as weaving or picking up trash. Parts of Afghanistan are still controlled by the Taliban, and the Taliban prevents **(16) young ladies** from almost all access to education altogether. **(17) Young ladies** within such regions face serious threats to their security if they try to go to school. There are actual rebellious groups, including provincial armies and assorted thugs, threaten **(18) young ladies** with physical and emotional assaults, just as such behavior is aimed against **(19) young ladies** who are training for the government. This culture negatively affects Afghan education in general and the education of **(20) young ladies** in particular. Western

		nations have tried to help the Afghan government develop educational models that are well-suited for **(21) young ladies.** Network-based instruction has emerged in order to help **(22) young ladies** get an education from the home and away from formal schools. The Afghan government should work toward encouraging **(23) young ladies'** training in government and developing models that are congruent with the effective education of **(24) young ladies.** I asked two colleagues if they had met any **(25) young ladies.** The **(26) young ladies** applied henna on the hands of the bride at the ceremony. I saw seven **(27) young ladies** who are expected to get married soon. Since that time, my two colleagues both got married to beautiful Afghan **(28) young ladies.** Many **(29) women and girls** have entered into the Afghan workforce and other public and educational institutions, and they have systematically been targeted with harassment, attacks, and even death for daring to challenge the traditionalist culture in this manner. The president of Afghanistan, though, has promised that the government will no longer legally punish **(30) women and girls** for getting away from abusive relationships, which was in fact traditionally prohibited. **(31) Women and girls** have often been treated like criminals simply for wanting to get away from abuse and violence. Many **(32) women and girls** today are in jail for what are called moral crimes. These include **(33) women and girls** who ran away from forced marriages or situations of domestic violence. **(34) Women and girls** who have been raped are often held guilty for their own rape. **(35) Women and girls** who are accused of "moral crimes" have their vaginas and other private parts examined in order to determine sexual purity or lack thereof. The apparent point is to figure out whether the **(36) woman or girl** is a virgin. When **(37) women and girls** are found guilty of moral crimes, this can lead to actual legal prosecution. Among other things, Afghan culture is still marked by the false belief that a **(38) woman or girl's** virginity can be determined by the state of her hymen. **(39) Women and girls** are prosecuted for moral crimes on the basis of penal codes rooted in the Koran. A common belief in Afghan culture is that **(40) women/girls** are the property of their fathers.

Human Rights	7	**(1) Human Rights** Watch has discussed the highly misogynistic nature of the moral crimes designation in Afghanistan. According to **(2) Human Rights** Watch, about 95 percent of all women who are in Afghan jails are there for moral crimes. **(3) Human Rights** Watch research found that in most cases, the women and girls accused of these "crimes" were fleeing forced child marriage or domestic violence. The President of Afghanistan sent a letter to the **(4) Human Rights** Watch group and outlined steps the government is taking to fully implement an end to the imprisonment of women who run away from their families. **(5) Human Rights** Watch is concerned about the extent to which various forms of consensual sexual relation between adults is still criminalized within Afghanistan. **(6) Human Rights** Watch also called on the government to ban all use of "virginity examinations." **(7) Human Rights** Watch is concerned about how difficult it is for Afghan families to find educational opportunities for their daughters.
Moral Crimes	8	Afghan culture allows prison for **(1) moral crimes** and engages in virginity testing. I mentioned that in Afghanistan they had prison for women who committed (2) **"moral crimes"** against their fathers and husbands. hundreds of women and girls are imprisoned on charges of (**3) "moral crimes."** According to Human Rights Watch, about 95 percent of all women who are in Afghan jails are there for **(4) moral crimes.** Also, they are also reforming the law so that **(5) "moral crimes"** are no longer grounds for arrest. Women and girls who are accused of **(6) "moral crimes"** have their vaginas and other private parts examined in order to determine sexual purity or lack thereof. When women and girls are found guilty of **(7) moral crimes**, this can lead to actual legal prosecution. Women and girls are prosecuted for **(8) moral crimes** on the basis of penal codes rooted in the Koran.
		There are many religious and traditional families in Afghanistan who do not allow their daughters to be taught by (1) **male teachers**. In Afghanistan, many families are not willing to accept (2) **male teachers** for their daughters. the government inevitably appointed (3)

Male teachers	6	**male teachers** to teach at girl schools, and this is still a problem for girl's education in Afghanistan. In Afghanistan, in the remote areas still, families disagree with the presence of (4) **male teachers** in girl schools. Despite this traditional belief, in many regions of Afghanistan, (5) **male teachers** teach at girl schools. Afghanistan don't let their daughters continue their education in presence of (6) **male teachers.**
Women's training	4	When you start asking about sitting up (1) **women's training** centers to bring in lower ranking members; I was sent to one Province to start the negotiations to establish a (2) **Women's Training** Center; When I was speaking to the Afghan Commanding General about establishing a (3) **Women's Training** Center at his headquarters, his Deputy piped in and stated great…that "all the women can stay with me in my home." when you start expanding and desiring to bring the (4) **Women's Training** Centers out to the outer Provinces we run the risk of antagonizing the strict religious fundamentalist.
Change their culture	4	Even though the new Afghan constitution gives women's rights…it does not automatically (1) **change their culture.** However, we feel that it would still take at least two generations…to (2) **change their culture.** A Westerner will never (3) **change their culture**…they are the only ones that can (4) **change their culture.** It will take time…we can not do this overnight. Afghanistan is still struggling with strict Islamic fundamentalism and the 21st Century of the Western World.

4.1.1.2 Clustering categories of the phrases—A theory-driven analysis. At this stage the analysis is theory-driven and in other words the conceptual structure is hermeneutic and exploratory. It seems it is plausible that 5 sub-structures were extracted which received the supports from the phrase analysis (see Table 4).

Table 4 – Clustering Categories of the Phrases

Clustering Structure	Association between the structure and theoretical theme	Comments
Structure 1	Females' Education, Culture and Human Rights	This Structure presents the theme about the Western cultural influences on the education of young women and girls in Afghanistan.
Structure 2	Cultural Changes and training of women in government	This Structure presents the theme about the current government of Afghanistan development of cultural policies on how much young women and girls receive training and education based on Western influences.
Structure 3	Education of women/girls from male teachers	This Structure presents the theme that male teachers educate young women and girls in Afghanistan when fundamentalist religious clerics and members of the Taliban remain strongly opposed to having male educators.
Structure 4	Moral Crimes of women and human rights with education and training	This Structure presents the theme that governmental policies changes to ensure that young women and girls in Afghanistan receive an education without risking subjection to political violence.
Structure 5	Mandating change to improve the livelihood of young women and girls.	This Structure presents the theme that the construction of a simple program design with an emphasis on leadership skills development, the drive for

		technological innovation, an increase in interpersonal interactions, and an acknowledgment of establishing transparent relationships on virtual platforms.

4.1.2 External Analysis

Using JMP, I analyzed the external data to add validity to My Stories. The analysis of the external data corresponds with My Stories. As I stated, the primary research questions of the study:

1. To what extent do Western cultural influences shape the education of young women and girls in Afghanistan?

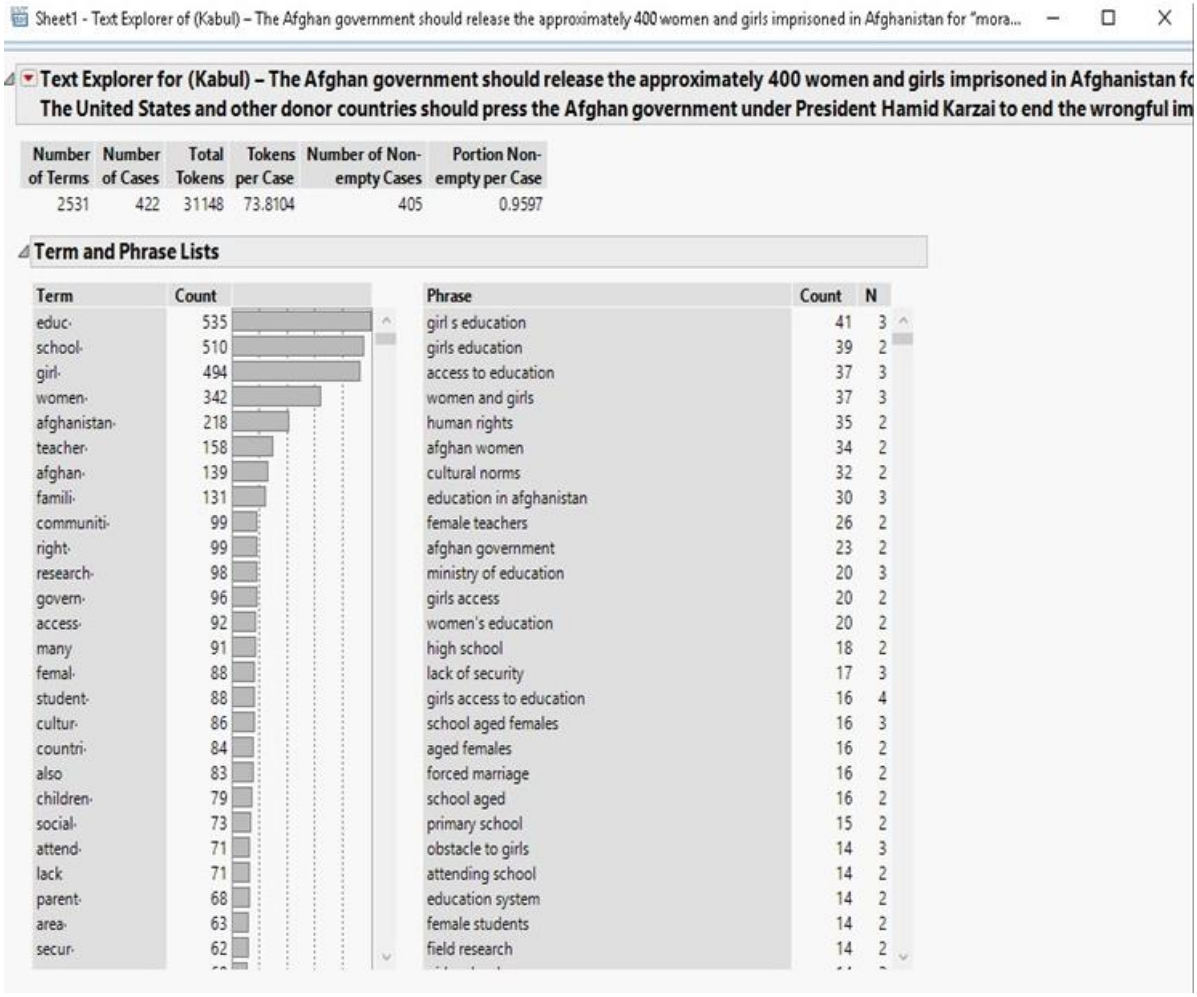
2. To what extent does the current government of Afghanistan develop cultural policies that determine how much young women and girls may draw from Western influences to receive an education in their country?

3. What precisely about Afghan culture should researchers attempt to understand in the future?

Table 5 below provides basic summary statistics regarding the number of key terms and phrases that were also identified on my analysis of the external data. The table reflects the number of times they appeared in the text (for example, "Afghanistan" is very common, as is "women," "culture," and "family"). Each of the documents for analysis consisted of words that are sequences of characters without blank spaces between them. We take the words, and multiple sets of words form phrases: or example, "women and girls," "cultural norms," and so on.

After the initial process called feature, the next process, creation, consists of identifying the terms and phrases that ought to be used. Some of the original words will be thrown overboard because they are not meaningful or useful in light of the analytical purposes at hand. And some phrases will be designated as "terms"—a "term" is a column in this design matrix—for that phrase. "Change their culture" sounds important, so it would likely be valuable to keep track of that as a unique identity independent of the separate words "change," "need," and "many." In the table below, it can be seen that there are 2531 unique terms in 422 documents. In all, there are 31,148 tokenized terms. The most common term is "education," and it occurs 535 times.

Table 5- External Analysis



4.1.2.1 JMP coding. JMP not only suggested word group, but also suggested phrase, in which the words ranked from 41 to 14. The phrases reflected an advanced stage in the analysis, which was suggested in the Grounded Theory, as axial coding. The axial coding is about to build linkages between information. Pivotal coding has an authentic association with grounded theory, which is a subjective methodological structure that includes continually looking at developing topics inside one's informational collection to make hypothetical cases in regard to one's open direct.

4.2. Discussion on Cross-Validation: The External Data Analysis

A review of My Stories with the external data reveals the similarities between my recollection of events to other data from an outside source. This is confirming My Stories are in-line with the actual events that occurred during the timeframe that I was working and living in Afghanistan. This will be discussed further in the next chapter of this study. When using underlying concepts, constructs, and relationships based on grounded theory, the researcher can investigate multiple sources to validate the research. For example, My Stories are my recollection of my experiences while working and living in Afghanistan for eight-plus years. The validation process is enacted when I use external data to substantiate My Stories.

4.3 Summary of Chapter IV

In summary, the present chapter of this study has presented the data analyses and findings of the study. JMP proved to be an extremely useful tool for analyzing the My Stories data. Through this analysis, key words and phrases from the data were identified and sorted by their frequency within the data. This produced an objective basis for the development of the key themes, or structures, of the study. Through this analysis, five main structures emerged: 1)

females education and cultural and human rights, 2) cultural changes and training of women in government, 3) education of women/girls from male teachers, 4) moral crimes of women and human rights with education and training, and 5) mandating change to improve the livelihood of young women and girls. Again, all of these themes emerged from the My Stories data, which consists of first-person journals of my own time in Afghanistan.

Moreover, JMP coding was also applied to the external data, and several of the same key words and phrases that appeared in My Stories (or words and phrases similar to them in meaning or implication) appeared within the external data as well. This qualifies as a form of cross-validation of the My Stories findings. In other words, the JMP coding of the My Stories data provided an objective basis for the extraction of themes, but the fact that my first-person data also matches up with third-person data from about the same time means that it is even more likely that the My Stories findings are reflecting of an objective phenomenon happening in Afghanistan (as opposed to being reflective merely of my own subjective experiences. The next and final chapter of the present study will delve further into each of the five main structures that were identified through the data analysis, and it will also proceed to draw out key conclusions from that discussion.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

5.1 Introduction to the Discussion and Conclusion

This is the final chapter of the present study, and it will discuss the main findings that were produced through the analysis of the My Stories data and the cross-validation using the external data. Briefly, these five structures can be identified by the following titles: 1) women's human rights, 2) training of women in government, 3) education from male teachers, 4) women's moral crimes, and 5) mandating change for women. The present chapter will delve into each of these structures in turn, drawing out their key meanings and implications and supporting the assertions with reference to the relevant data and literature. Then, the chapter will proceed to reflect on the other relevant documents: no formal JMP analysis was conducted on these documents, but it would nevertheless be worth addressing them again before concluding this study. Finally, this chapter will summarize the study, identify limitations of the study, and point toward directions for future research on the topic of this study.

5.2 The Discussion based on The Structures

5.2.1 Structure 1: Women's Human Rights

The primary topic of the present study consisted of women's education in Afghanistan, and this was an important theme that emerged through the analysis of the My Stories data. For example, key phrases that were found in the data regarding this structure were that the Taliban

prevents **(16) young ladies** from almost all access to education altogether," and that **"young ladies** within such regions face serious threats to their security if they try to go to school.." A fundamental point that emerges from the present study is that women and girls face serious challenges when it comes to accessing education within Afghanistan, in particular in places of Afghanistan were the traditionalist culture (as represented by the Taliban) maintains the greatest level of influence. The My Stories data indicates that there are substantial barriers in the way of women and girls accessing education and that these barriers tend to be actively reinforced by the male rulers and the patriarchal culture of Afghanistan. Something would almost certainly need to be done about these forces before women have more equitable opportunity to access education.

Again, this was the structure within the findings that was reinforced with the greatest number of references, with the JMP analysis revealing 40 distinct references to the struggles of "women and girls". It is thus an issue of central importance when considering the situation of women trying to access education in Afghanistan. Moreover, this structure has to do not just with education but also with the broader cultural subordination of women under a patriarchal culture. In this context, the Western influence on Afghanistan since the presence of the United States there over the past several years has generally been good for women insofar as that influence has produced a liberalization of the culture. For example, the My Stories data indicates that "the president of Afghanistan, though, has promised that the government will no longer legally punish **(30) women and girls** for getting away from abusive relationships." Of course, it is grotesque that this should have ever been in the first place, but the sad fact is that this is exactly how subordinated women and girls have been within the context of Afghanistan's traditionalist culture. Therefore, women's lack of access to education within Afghanistan must not be

considered as a standalone issue. Rather, the fact is that this issue is part of a broader matrix of issues that have to do with the cultural subjugation of women. In other words, there is a relationship between the fact that a woman could be punished for leaving an abusive relationship and the fact that a woman may have a hard time finding access to education.

The My Stories data on the code "human rights" also brought out the theme of the difficulties that women and girls experienced in accessing education. For example, one of the references in JMP data indicates that "**(7) Human Rights** Watch is concerned about how difficult it is for Afghan families to find educational opportunities for their daughters." This difficulty was largely due to the threats and intimidation faced by girls and their families when pursuing access to education, as well as the fact that in many areas of Afghanistan, there may quite simply not be any such opportunity on offer. However, the data also made it clear that access to education was only part of the story: women and girls in Afghanistan were also subjected to practices such as virginity examinations, and they were often imprisoned for what were called "moral crimes" (more about this on Structure 4 below). A broader narrative thus emerges regarding a lack of human rights for women, with access to education being one component of that problem.

This My Stories structure is also confirmed by the external data. For example, it's worth referring to Moradi's (2016) document here, which is a letter by an Afghan woman written to her fellow Afghan women. Among other things, Moradi declares the following: "women, whether educated or illiterate, are not seen as whole human beings by our society steeped in prejudice and ignorance. Women are *Siasar* (literally meaning black-headed, a word used to describe women as deserving of dark fates), belonging to the most wretched time of all time" (para. 6). Again, this

is how an Afghan woman feels about her own culture. This strongly validates the My Stories structure of women's human rights because it confirms that the structure was not just the result of my own bias or misperception as an outsider to the culture. Given that I am Western, it could have been possible that the My Stories data reflected my own values and possibly my misunderstanding of Afghan culture. The external data, however, suggests that this is not the case and that women are in fact objectively subjugated within Afghanistan.

Aside from this specific example, the JMP analysis of the external also confirmed the validity of the structure of women's human rights, both pertaining to education and more broadly. As Table 5 in the previous chapter of the present study has shown, some of the key phrases produced by the JMP analysis in this regard included "girl's education," "access to education," "women and girls," and "human rights." This means that the main phrases that emerged from the analysis of the My Stories data were corroborated by other third-person documents from about the same time as well. This is how cross-validation works, and there is thus strong reason to believe that the My Stories findings regarding Structure 1 are valid. It is can be asserted as a fact that women in Afghanistan do not have their human rights respected, and that this is a broad cultural problem, with lack of access to education being one of the important manifestations of that problem.

In general, the coding of the term "women and girls" or the related term "young ladies" was consistently related to issues of human rights and access to education. This suggests that the experience of women in Afghanistan is such that a lack of human rights or access to education *is central* to their lived experience and that it is also a conspicuous feature of Afghan culture to the external observer (in this case, me). There is no other logical reason why the phrase "women and

girls" should itself be so strongly related to the issue of women's subjugation. This is a good example of how the coding process enhances the rigor of the findings produced by qualitative research. The JMP data, as well as the cross-validation of the My Stories data by the external data, suggests that this is a core theme regarding the experience of women in Afghanistan and a core challenge that must be addressed in the struggle for human rights.

5.2.2 Structure 2: Training Women in Government

The good news, from the standpoint of human rights, is that there has been at least some liberalization in the Afghan government, which could potentially lead to a liberalization of the culture as well. This can be seen to some extent a key structure regarding the training of women in government, the negotiating of which was one of my primary duties when I was in Afghanistan. However, there is still clearly a great deal of sexism present in this regard, with women often not being taken seriously as candidates. For example, one My Stories reference states: "When I was speaking to the Afghan Commanding General about establishing a **(3) Women's Training** Center at his headquarters, his Deputy piped in and state great . . . that 'all the women can stay with me in my home.'" Within the cultural context, this was an obviously inappropriate remark that was meant to sound demeaning toward the idea of women actually training to serve in the government.

Likewise, another key piece of the My Stories data regarding this structure consisted of the following: that by "desiring to bring the (4) **Women's Training** *Centers* out to the outer Provinces we run the risk of antagonizing the strict religious fundamentalist." This is an explicit acknowledgment of the fact that according to fundamentalist Islam, women are to have no role within the public sphere or the government, and that the very notion of a woman having such a

role would, in fact, be infuriating to the Islamic fundamentalist. This strongly implies that women can only train to be in the government within areas of Afghanistan where liberalization of the culture has taken place, and that in more rural or traditionalist areas of the country, it may prove difficult to ensure the security of women or training facilities due to strong popular hostility against the very concept of women's empowerment. This is a sobering thought, but it would appear to be reflective of the reality of Afghan culture.

The main implication of this evidence is that cultural change within Afghanistan is absolutely necessary if women are to ever be empowered within that country. This could be difficult, due to the fact that Islamic fundamentalists within the country (including the Taliban) have an explicit ideology that subjugates women. This point is confirmed by research and commentary that points out that misogyny is, in fact, an important part of the mainstream culture within the Islamic world, including Afghanistan (Sheffield, 2016). This is inconvenient and uncomfortable for Westerners to accept due to the pluralistic nature of the liberal worldview, according to which all religions and cultures are believed to have equal value. However, the basic fact is insofar as the brand of Islamic fundamentalism that has long gripped Afghanistan and finds clear expression in the Taliban maintains cultural hegemony, it will be impossible for Afghan society to defend the presence of women within the public sphere. The traditionalist culture is radically opposed to such a change, and Afghan society itself considers that opposition to be deeply rooted in Islam. In short, this is a serious problem that will not go away simply because it may make Western liberals uncomfortable.

This My Stories structure can be assessed to have a great deal of credibility due to the fact that I was specifically part of the project to establish Women's Training Centers within

Afghanistan. This means that I have direct insight into this subject that could not have been obtained by others who were not in my position to actually see the project and listen to the comments of Afghan leaders and commanders who were part of the project. In other words, this My Stories structure does not quite need to be corroborated by external data, given that the credibility of my experience would likely be stronger than the corroborating external data. For example, external data may refer to secondhand news about what went on at discussions about Women's Training Centers in Afghanistan, whereas the My Stories account is firsthand since I was actually there for the discussions. The main purpose of the external data in the present study is to corroborate My Stories, but this may be a case in which the external data might need to be corroborated *by* My Stories.

As a matter of fact, there was limited information in the gathered external data about the specific structure of women's training in government. Most of the external data in this regard pertains to women's access to education, which could be used as a proxy for women's training in government, insofar a culture that prevents women from accessing education would also prevent women from training in government. Again, though, the lack of specific references to this structure in the external data is to be expected, given that I was participating in a project that was relatively novel and still largely at the level of concept rather than a full implementation. The My Stories data reflect my personal experiences in this regard, which is why the structure emerged within that data. However, it is understandable that this specific structure may not show itself from a third-person perspective since it was particular to my own personal responsibilities within Afghanistan.

5.2.3 Structure 3: Education from Male Teachers

The third structure in the My Stories data has to do with male teachers, more specifically the fact that: "There are many religious and traditional families in Afghanistan who do not allow their daughters to be taught by **(1) male teachers**." This is for cultural and religious reasons, and it is especially the case after the daughters hit puberty and are thus sexually mature. The logic behind this position should be obvious even to a liberal Westerner: the main idea is that families feel that they must protect their daughters from exposure to the male teachers, due to the possibility that the teachers may take a sexual interest in the daughters. Within Afghan culture, there is a strong emphasis on protecting the sexual purity of women and girls until the point of marriage. Therefore, there is a strong taboo against exposing daughters to male teachers. This is over and above the bias that already exists against education for women and girls. Even if a family is liberal enough to pursue such education, it is still very much possible that they would oppose their daughters being taught by male teachers.

Within contemporary Afghanistan, this presents a logistical problem, due to the simple fact that there are not enough female teachers within the country to actually fill the demand at girls' schools. After all, one needs to be educated to be a teacher, and given that Afghanistan has traditionally denied women access to education, it is logical that most teachers in Afghanistan today are male, and that there would not be female teachers available to teach women and girls who are now pursuing an education. If families are averse to sending their daughters to male teachers, and there are only male teachers available, then this amounts to denying the daughters access to education (not directly in terms of forbidding education altogether, but rather indirectly in terms of forbidding the only available pathway to education). The belief against male teachers

for daughters is correlated with traditionalist cultural beliefs, but it is quite widespread across all of Afghanistan.

This problem is confirmed by Human Rights Watch (2017), which has indicated the following about Afghanistan: "In half the country's provinces, fewer than 20 percent of teachers are female—a major barrier for the many girls whose families will not accept their being taught by a man, especially as they become adolescents" (para. 5). My experience regarding comments about how daughters should not be taught by male teachers is thus confirmed by external data in the relevant literature. That is, my experiences were not idiosyncratic but were rather reflective of a broader trend within Afghan culture and society as a whole. The fact is that there are not enough female teachers in Afghanistan and that this is specifically a problem because many Afghan families are opposed to their daughters being taught by male teachers, in particular as those daughters become sexually mature.

Conceptually, there would seem to be two main ways to address this issue. The first way would be to work toward changing Afghan culture toward acceptance of daughters being taught by male teachers. However, this may not be the best way forward. For one thing, it may actually be a *good* idea for daughters to be segregated from male teachers, given the extremely patriarchal nature of Afghan culture. That is, families may have a legitimate concern for the safety of their daughters, such that their belief should perhaps be considered realistic rather than regressive. Moreover, there is nothing particularly wrong with a culture wanting education women and girls to occur within a female-only space. After all, there are schools even within the United States that are segregated by gender. (This often may not may not apply to teachers, but the general principle is similar: one could still wonder, for example, whether it feels odd for an American

male teacher to teach at an all-girls American school.) In other words, it would not be prudent to assume that this is an aspect of Afghan culture that must be changed. Rather, it could be legitimate, and it does not necessarily stand in the way of the human rights or educational opportunities of women.

However, if that is the case, then it would be necessary to pursue the second main way of addressing the issue, which would be to have foreign teachers train a cadre of female teachers, who would then be able to meet the demand for women and girls' education within the country. If there are not enough female teachers within Afghanistan right now, and one can only become a female teacher by being trained by a female teacher, then this presents a deadlock that must be broken by some outside force. So, rather than having Afghan women and girls be taught by male teachers (which is culturally unacceptable), perhaps they should be taught by foreign female teachers instead. This may only be necessary for the first generation. That is after foreign female teachers have taught a generation of Afghan women and girls, then those women and girls can themselves go on to teach the next generation of women and girls. The government should thus work toward setting up a program or partnership with other nations that specifically invites women from abroad to come to teach Afghan women and girls.

Again, an important point in this interpretation of the structure of male teachers is that Afghan families may not necessarily be wrong or regressive in wanting to keep their daughters away from male teachers. Rather, this could spring from a legitimate desire to protect their daughters, especially within a broader culture in which women are often seen in terms of their sexual value at all. The fear that male teachers would take advantage of their power over women

and girls is thus, unfortunately, not unreasonable. This being the case, it may be necessary to address the problem while still respecting the cultural belief.

5.2.4 Structure 4: Women's Moral Crimes

The fourth structure in the My Stories data consists of moral crimes. This has to do with the way that women and girls in Afghanistan are charged with and punished for what is deemed "moral crime," which are generally sexual in nature. As the My Stories data indicates: "Afghan culture allows prison for **(1) moral crimes** and engages in virginity testing. Moreover, the data has indicated that "about 95 percent of all women who are in Afghan jails are there for **(4) moral crimes**." The concept of moral crime also seems to be deeply rooted in the traditionalist religion that continues to maintain hegemony within Afghanistan: "Women and girls are prosecuted for **(8) moral crimes** on the basis of penal codes rooted in the Koran." In other words, the concept of moral crimes has been deeply embedded within the broader Afghan legal regime, and this concept is one of the primary mechanisms of the subjugation of women within the broader patriarchal culture of Afghanistan.

The structure of moral crimes in the My Stories data was, admittedly, influenced to a significant effect by external data, in that I developed my personal understanding of the concept through research that was conducted at the time in order to better understand the effects of patriarchal culture on Afghan women and girls. Then, as I learned about the concept of moral crimes, I found it very disturbing and journaled about it in order to enable myself to more effectively process the information. These are the journals that eventually became the My Stories data. In other words, the external data in this regard may not be able to fully serve a triangulating or cross-validating purpose, since my personal experience in this regard was in fact influenced

by the external data itself. The data sets were not kept separate enough for one set to serve the purpose of confirming the other set.

For example, my thoughts about moral crimes were strongly influenced by a report on the subject published by Human Rights Watch (2016), which includes passages such as the following: "Afghanistan's government should urgently act to end wrongful imprisonment and humiliating, scientifically invalid 'virginity exams' of women and girls" (para. 1). This would be external data, but it also showed up within the My Stories data, due to the fact that I was strongly affected by the topic at an intellectual level, such that reflections on the topic actually became a direct part of my own first-person experiences in Afghanistan. However, I did not have the opportunity to directly confront cases where women and girls were accused of moral crimes, due to the fact that this was not the nature of my position or station during my time in Afghanistan. I did hear some rumors and the like, some of which have been documented in the My Stories data. The fact, though, is that when it came to the structure of moral crimes, I did an inadequate job of keeping the My Stories data separate from the external data, and this may one of the key limitations of the data of the present study.

This is not to say, however, that moral crimes are not an important structure. Although I did directly encounter cases of moral crimes, the concept helped make sense of a lot of other experiences I had in Afghanistan, including the other structures that have been discussed above such as the human rights of women or the taboo against daughters being taught by male teachers. The concept of moral crimes helped clarify the underlying logic, which had to do with the sexual purity of women and girls. For example, women and girls were considered the property of their fathers or husbands, and an important part of the property value had to do with sexual purity; and

likewise, daughters were not to be exposed to male teachers primarily because this was culturally understood to be a situation of sexual temptation. The fact that moral crimes were an actual part of the Afghan legal regime and that women were actually prosecuted and jailed on that basis makes it clear exactly how important the concept of sexual purity of women is within traditionalist Afghan culture.

Again, it is unfortunate that I was unable to directly confront or experience this issue to a greater extent during my time in Afghanistan. This is why my reflections on this structure leaned rather heavily on external data, and this is also why when it comes to this structure, it is difficult to effectively parse out the My Stories data on the one hand from the external data on the other. Regarding women's moral crimes, I primarily educated myself using external data and then looked around my environment, making sense of the dynamics around me in terms of what I had just learned about traditionalist Afghan culture. This somewhat goes against the grain of the methodology of the present study, where My Stories data is supposed to come first. However, nothing could have been done about this issue at the time.

5.2.5 Structure 5: Mandating Change for Women

The final structure that emerged from the My Stories data consisted of mandating change for women. This had to do with the general sentiment that the current status quo within Afghan culture was not acceptable and that more needed to be done for women and girls. This structure emerged in relation to the codes of women and girls and human rights. This can be seen, for example, in the My Stories statement that "Western nations have tried to help the Afghan government develop educational models that are well-suited for **(21) young ladies**." It is likewise made clear in the following line of data: The president of Afghanistan, though, has

promised that the government will no longer legally punish **(30) women and girls** for getting away from abusive relationships." These should be taken as signs of a rising awareness that the status quo is unacceptable.

The fact, however, is that the oppression of women is built into the basic structure of traditionalist Afghan culture, which itself is rooted in fundamentalist interpretations of Islam. For example, it has been noted above that the lack of opportunities for women and girls, along with the conceptualization of women and girls as the property of husbands and fathers, is understood within traditionalist Afghan culture as rooted in sharia law, which is the Islamic legal code prescribed by the Koran. This means that the oppression of women is not an incidental feature of Afghan culture but is rather a value that is quite close to the very heart of that culture. This raises some sensitive questions about what could and should be done in order to address the basic problem. A key theme in the My Stories data is that Afghan culture must change, but this judgment itself is being made from an outsider's perspective on the basis of values that are foreign to the traditions of Afghan culture. There is thus a delicate conflict here between universalism on the one hand and cultural relativism on the other.

In broad terms, relativism is "the view that truth and falsity, right and wrong, standards of reasoning, and procedures of justification are products of differing conventions and frameworks of assessment and that their authority is confined to the context giving rise to them" (Carter, 2015, para. 1). Within the context of the present discussion, this would mean that the very concept of human rights emerged within the West and thus has no applicability to the culture and civilization of Afghanistan. Likewise, it would suggest that patriarchal culture is reflective of Afghan values and must be evaluated within the Afghan context, as opposed to judged on the

basis of a Western context. This view, however, directly contradicts the My Stories data, which makes it clear that there is a mandate to produce change for women and girls in Afghanistan. In order to make this judgment, it becomes necessary to adopt the paradigm of universalism, according to which some values are universal to humans and beyond the bounds of the jurisdiction of any one culture. Human rights and educational opportunities for women could then be considered as part of that universalism.

This view is supported by the realization that "Afghan culture" is not a singular or monolithic entity. Rather, there are people within Afghanistan itself who resist and challenge the patriarchal culture. This is made very clear in Moradi's (2016) letter to Afghan women: Moradi herself is Afghan, which means that she is criticizing part of Afghan culture not from outside but rather from within. The real question, then, may consist of whether one wishes to stand in solidarity with people like Moradi or with people like the Taliban. Pursuing the mandate for change will involve taking sides and resisting oppressive parts of traditional Afghan culture, but it is important to note that such resistance is not a Western or imperialist imposition on Afghanistan. Rather, what is called "Afghan culture" is itself defined primarily by the powerful within Afghanistan, and there is reason to believe that it has to some extent always been resisted by subjugated people within Afghanistan, including women.

5.3 Reflection on Other Relevant Documents

There are two main documents in the other relevant documents data set of the present study, and it will be worth considering them in light of the five structures from the My Stories data that have been delineated above. The first of these documents consists of what is known as the "night letters" posted by the Taliban in certain areas of Afghanistan, while the second

consists of an interview I personally conducted with the Deputy Minister for Personnel. These two documents add color to the data reported above and confirm some of the main themes. For example, one of the night letters declared the following:

This is a warning to all those dishonorable people, including ulema and teachers, not to teach girls. Based on the information given to us, we strongly ask those people whose names been particularly reported to us, not to commit this act of evil. Otherwise, it is they who bear all the responsibilities. They have no right to claim that they have not been informed.

This clearly constitutes a material threat against anyone in the relevant regions of Afghanistan who dared to the contribute to the cause of education for women and girls, and it shows exactly how opposed the Taliban are to such a change ever taking place. Moreover, it must be assumed that the Taliban can and will enforce the threat whenever and wherever they have the power to do so. It is easy to see how this could have a chilling effect on education for women and girls. After all, even people who do not have an ideological bias against that project would be forced to consider the harm that could come to themselves and/or their loved ones in the event that they dare to defy the Taliban.

The second document consisted of the interview, and this source also highlighted the challenges facing Afghanistan when it comes to delivering equitable access to education for women and girls. In particular, the interviewee called attention to the deep cultural and religious traditions of Afghanistan and the role that they play in inhibiting the role of women within society. For example, he suggested that *"culturally, most families don't allow their daughters or wives to work outside the house"* and that *"a woman is not considered for work in the army, or police, since working in Army or Police is considered a man's job."* Interestingly, though, the

interviewee also suggested that it is not necessarily Islam per se that prohibits education for women and girls, but rather the cultural interpretation of Islam that has taken root among their leaders of Afghanistan, such as the Taliban. This would imply that there is possibly room to both respect Islam and deliver education to women and girls, although at the very least it would still be necessary to challenge the dominant interpretation of Islam that has held sway in Afghanistan.

This ultimately does lead to a conflict between Western values on the one hand and traditionalist Afghan values on the other, which was candidly noted by the interviewee, who linked this conflict to Afghan security: *"In order to train the Western concept, you have to set their mind to Western values. Again it's a matter of time, and if you can't provide them security, you may not be very successful in educating them, and teaching them Western values."* The challenge, then, would be helping to provide general security within Afghanistan so that the Afghan people are first of all able to worry about higher things such as education. In other words, if security is not ensured, then the Afghan people may not see why education would even matter. From that point, though, in order to ensure access to education for women and girls, in particular, it will ultimately be necessary to engage in a cultural conflict in which the Western universalism of human rights must work to overcome traditionalist Afghan patriarchy, under which women and girls by definition cannot get educated.

In short, the other relevant documents indicate that it may not really be possible to establish a bridge between Western culture on the one hand and traditionalist Afghan culture on the other when it comes to the issue of education for women and girls. The Taliban, as they have expressed in their night letters, will never stand for gender equity in access to education, and they will even actively threaten and kill anyone who works toward developing such equity. This

means that at the very least, the form of Islam promoted by the likes of the Taliban will need to go before gender equity in education access becomes possible, given that that ideology is quite simply altogether opposed to women being educated.

Proposed changes do not necessarily need to be framed in terms of the imposition of Western values on Afghan values. As the interview data indicated, it is possible to conceptualize or imagine Islam as having particular prohibitions against gender equity when it comes to education. However, the fact remains that the hegemonic interpretation of Islam that has reigned in Afghanistan does, in fact, prevent such equity from emerging. This essentially means that a fundamental change in Afghan culture would be required before it becomes possible for women to have equitable access to education and that this means challenging what traditionalist-minded people in Afghanistan (including the leaders) consider to be the proper interpretation of Islam. There is no way to avoid this basic antagonism, and this point has been made clear by the other relevant documents data of the present study.

5.4 Summary of Discussions and Conclusions

The present chapter of this study has delved into the five main structures that were identified through an analysis of the My Stories data. Again, these findings were: 1) females education and cultural and human rights, 2) cultural changes and training of women in government, 3) education of women/girls from male teachers, 4) moral crimes of women and human rights with education and training, and 5) mandating change to improve the livelihood of young women and girls. Each of these structures was discussed in turn. For each of the structures, My Stories data was cited, and then effort was taken to correlate the My Stories data with the external data. In most cases, this discussion showed that the structures were valid

reflections of realities within Afghanistan. Then the chapter also evaluated the other relevant documents that informed the present study.

The most important conclusion that has emerged here is that there are indeed significant cultural barriers against education for women and girls within Afghanistan, but that there are also forces of change at work within the country. The core of the problem is that traditionalist Afghan culture has simply been outright hostile toward education for women and girls. This can be seen in the denial of human rights for women and girls, the legal category of "moral crimes" that oppresses women and girls, and in the general subjugation of women and girls within the society at large. The night letters posted by the Taliban make it absolutely clear what is at stake: people who encourage education for women and girls could actually get killed. Likewise, the interview in the other relevant documents indicated that there is indeed a legitimate conflict in play between traditionalist Afghan values on the one hand and universalist Western values on the other. This dynamic is not the easiest thing to acknowledge, but it must be grasped in order to make progress on behalf of Afghan women and girls.

5.5 Limitations of the Study and Future Directions

One of the main limitations of the present study is that the link between the My Stories data and the external data was not always maintained as rigorously as prescribed by the methodology of the study. For example, regarding the structure of training women in government, within Afghanistan, there proved to be little external data available for the purposes of cross-validation, due to the fact that this was a unique experience that I had during my time in Afghanistan that was not readily reflected in public or scholarly opinion or commentary. Conversely, when it came to the structure of women's moral crimes, the My Stories data itself

was somewhat weak due to the fact that most of my experience in this regard consisted of exposure to external data during my time in Afghanistan. This qualified as My Stories data in that learning about this subject was part of my direct experience. However, it is also true that insofar as the external data influenced the My Stories data, it would not be possible to use the external data as corroboration for the My Stories data.

Another weakness of the study was the external data was not randomly selected, but was rather sought out by me on the basis of my own interests. This means that I could have had My Stories experiences during my time in Afghanistan and then sought out external data that confirmed my experiences while ignoring data that would have disconfirmed my experiences. In other words, the possibility existed that there has been a kind of selection bias involved when it came to selecting the relevant external data. This is similar to how if one wanted to find a story confirming almost *any* type of experience, then that story is probably out there somewhere on the Internet, although this would not mean that the story was representative of a broader truth. I tried to control for this bias, but given that I was both the My Stories researcher and the external data researcher, some bias may have been inevitable.

A future direction for research would consist of developing greater philosophical clarity regarding the nature of the problem in Afghanistan, in particular regarding the conflict between the universalism of the West and the moral relativism that would suggest that Afghanistan has a right to do things its own way. In the United States today, for example, liberals would seem to treat Islam almost as if it were a protected demographic category. The intentions behind this may sometimes be laudable, but it must also be clearly recognized that when it comes to women's rights, virtually no ideologies in the world today are more opposed to such rights than

fundamentalist interpretations of Islam. To say that Afghanistan has a right to maintain Islamic hegemony would thus mean abandoning the project of human rights for women around the world. This is an uncomfortable tension for liberals, and it is crucial for future research to cultivate greater clarity of thought in this regard.

Another future direction for research would consist of developing and evaluating specific programs that can help build a workforce of female teachers within Afghanistan. Again, one of the conclusions of the present study has been that it is contrary to Afghan culture for women and girls to study with male teachers and that this is not necessarily problematic in the short run. However, insofar as such a cultural norm exists, it is very important to work toward cultivating female teachers in Afghanistan, since without that, women and girls would not be able to go anywhere to get an education. Specific programs in this regard should be explored further, including partnerships with Western allies that could allow for Western women to train and teach an entire generation of Afghan women while also having the full security backing of those Western nations.

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APPENDIX A

APPENDIX A

SELECTED MY STORIES

The selected ***My Stories***, as a sample, only include the first five pages and the last five pages.

Arrival in Country

Since I am using a Narrative Inquiry method, I wanted to share my stories of my experiences in Afghanistan. I arrived in Kabul Afghanistan on 6 June 2004. However, I wanted to explain to you first that in May 2004, just a month prior to arriving in Afghanistan, I was teaching at a middle school in my hometown. But a former, Military colleague of mine called me up and they asked if I would like to be a "nation builder" to help build a Human Resource program for the Afghan Ministry of Defense and the Ministry of Interior. With the recent attacks on 9/11, I decided it might be something worthwhile to do. So, I accepted the position and spent over 8 years in both Afghanistan and Iraq. So, on June 6th, I am arriving in Kabul. However, since I am now a civilian no longer active duty military we needed to fly on a commercial airliner versus military airlines. Now we flew from Alexandria, Virginia to Dubai, United Arab Emirates. We stayed there in Dubai for 3 days to get acclimated to the area and to readjust our inner time clocks to the area. Then we flew from Dubai to Kabul Afghanistan on the Afghan airlines. The airline was an experience in itself so I like one of my colleagues said while we were in flight we are welcome to a Third World country. While flying how are the aircraft first started rattling some of the ceiling tiles fell off and made not just myself but all of us so little nervous whether or whether we will make it to Kabul or not. Once the plane landed in Kabul, I looked out the windows they were people working in the Fields that surrounded the airport. What I later

found out that they were actually checking and clearing the mines that were placed there by the Taliban prior to the US military arriving in country. When the plane had to stopped, they pulled up an old rickety stairway to the airplane and we had to walk out onto the runway and then I saw a whole bunch of young Afghan men running up to unload the suitcases from the airplane and then we started walking through the terminal building and it definitely looked like an abandoned building riddled with bullet holes and blown out windows; no electricity; and, no restroom facilities. Next, we needed to rummage through all of the piled-up suitcases trying to find ours. Once we got our suitcases, we met our representative and they escorted us to the vehicles. On the drive from the airport to our living quarters you could see buildings that were bombed out and as well as riddled with bullet holes. You could also see schools that that currently had students but, the school building did not have windows or doors. Now once we drove through the city, I saw first-hand the extensive bombing that the US have military had conducted the year prior. Once we arrived at our living quarters we noticed that we were not being housed with the US military; we were being housed in private housing they called them a "Villa" with about 20 rooms and it was located downtown Kabul. We were introduced to the security guards that were guarding the building and they were all Afghan security guards with AK-47s to protect us from any kind of insurgent attack on the building, which made us feel somewhat uneasy, but we knew that's the way it was when we arrived. After we got settled, we decided to go out in a group to a local eating establishment right out the gate of our living quarters and to try some exotic Afghan food and experience their culture. The food consisted of primarily lamb and French fries. Now since Afghanistan is a Muslim country there is no alcohol served at any of the restaurants, so you have to get used to drinking bottled water; hot tea (chi) or soft drinks. Also, we noticed that there were

very few women…their culture really does not lend to having females in public without their spouse or male relative. The one thing that I noticed initially when we arrive is that there were a lot of young kids begging for money who could speak English as well as our Afghan driver who seem to know some English. Well, I found out that a lot of the young Afghans fled Afghanistan to Pakistan during the Taliban years. In Pakistan, English is taught in schools and I later realized that in Pakistan, English is one of their official languages. As I stated earlier and when we were walking around in Kabul you could really see the devastation that the US warplanes inflicted on the city. The Afghans were rebuilding and repairing some of the buildings; however, they did not have any infrastructure (no electricity/running water, etc., unless you had a generator) or any other utilities. My view of Kabul reminded me of the stories and pictures of the aftermath of the bombing of Berlin, Germany after World War II.

Hiring of Interpreters/Translators

After our arrival to Kabul, Afghanistan, we were given a tour of our facilities and did a "meet and greet" with our US leadership. We now needed to hire our interpreters and translators in order to meet our Afghan leadership (mentees).

We had our senior Camp's interpreter assist in the interviewing of potential candidates…no female candidates…different culture. We first got a vetted list of potential candidates from the US Embassy and then our US Military needed to conduct another vetting of candidates. With both of these vettings, the intel investigators still found some of the candidates with questionable backgrounds.

We tried to stay within the "norms" of conducting a hiring interview…however, we needed to improvise the interview process with testing. First, we asked them to tell us about themselves (where they were from, where did they learn English and their ethnic background). Now, why would we need to ask them about their ethnic background. It may seem a little disconcerting in a normal Western style interview but, ethnicity plays directly to our capability of conducting business with the Afghans.

The Afghan leadership are very conscious about what Afghans are in the room with them…they like surrounding themselves with Afghans of their own ethnic tribe. Therefore, we were interviewing Pashtuns and Hazaras for Interpreters and Translators positions. Our rationale was that the Afghan Chief of Personnel was a Hazara and the Minister of Defense for Personnel and Education was a Pashtun. On a side note, Pashtuns are the biggest ethnic group in Afghanistan, and the Hazaras are the descendants of Mongol settlers and look like their ancestors.

During the interview process, we had our senior interpreter pretend to be our mentee and we spoke to the senior interpreter in English, while the interviewee would translate into Dari. Also, we had our senior interpreter provide a document written in Dari and had the interpreters translate into English. Finally, we had a document in English and had the interviewee translate into Dari. The process of interviewing usually took two days…grading and comparing notes from the senior interpreter. We finally hired two outstanding young men…one a Pashtun and the other a Hazara. One of the main reasons why we did not have women as translators/interpreters was that we were all men…their culture would not allow a women to accompany a male who was not their spouse/relative.

Meeting our Mentees

Our first meeting with our Afghan mentees was filled with excitement. As we were announced and then guided into their office, I noticed large sofas, coffee and end tables. This set-up was not a typical office we would normally see in a Western office.

I am grateful that my military training is paying off. I was trained not to discuss business at our first meeting. We were taught to first exchange pleasantries and wait for them to start the formal discussions. On another note, never ask them about their females (mother, wife or daughters)…again, my prior training taught me to understand their culture, to ask about a women/female family member is very rude. Most of our members were not fully trained on that aspect…and we could see that our Afghan mentees were not impressed with those Westerners not realizing that they were being rude. You should ask "how is your family."

Restroom facilities were limited…the Afghans always served tea (chi). It would be rude not to accept/drink chi with your Afghan mentee. Therefore, I got to experience the rudimentary restroom facilities. As I stated earlier, most of the buildings in Kabul were bombed by the US Air Force, so, their offices, as well as, their facilities were lacking (no running water) so, no flushing. Also, they did not have electricity, so our meetings were usually during the morning hours especially in the summer to ensure we were not in dark, hot stifling meetings.

In my first meeting, my Afghan mentee assembled his entire staff to meet me…I felt like I was being shown off to the other Afghans…it was a status symbol to have an American as your mentor. He asked if I was nervous about meeting all of his staff…I said no…I felt like I was back home in my hometown visiting a lot of my relatives. He laughed…I went on to say that we

look like each other…they could have passed for Hispanics in South Texas…again, he laughed and said if I did speak Dari, I too, could pass as a Pashtun in Afghanistan.

Last five pages of *My Stories.*

My Final Overview of Being a Mentor in Afghanistan

When I first arrived in 2004, our goal was to rebuild a Nation and help them develop a viable military and police force that the "new" Afghanistan could manage. However, through the years the target for the Afghan Security Force grew from 35 thousand to roughly 350,000. The U.S. portion of the expense to manufacture and support Afghan security powers has arrived at the midpoint of around $5 billion every year. That cost endlessly surpasses the Afghan government's financial limit, ensuring the requirement for broad remote help regardless of whether the Afghan security powers are diminished to a small amount of their present size.

What is most intriguing about this power is that it is to a great extent, organized in the picture of a Western military. Vigorously dependent on airpower, with an accentuation on particular preparing and dependent on a meritocratic advancement framework, the "it" we endorsed for Afghanistan looked much like a swoon duplicate of the American military. While we are correctly glad for our military, it is a legitimate inquiry to pose if such a military is fitting for Afghanistan.

This inquiry was made much increasingly notable in light of the statement that Trump made in 2017 that we were no longer in the matter of country building. That is fine all by itself. However, the United States is as yet involved in structure a military in Afghanistan that expect the presence of something taking after a Western country. All the more explicitly, the American military has

been building accept a reliable and authentic focal government, powerful administrations, an absence of evil, the nonappearance of partisan division, and a proficient and skillful populace of potential volunteers.

In this, Washington put things in the wrong order in structure a military for a country that did not exist. It is conceivable that by one way or another an expression that can control and bolster the Afghan security powers may some time or another naturally show up in Afghanistan, regardless of history, however, the chances are considerably more likely that American military endeavored to manufacture will fall without huge, and perpetual, remote help. Americans have been told for such a long time that our very own military is the best on earth, and is equipped for achieving the unthinkable, that it may be challenging to get a handle on the craziness of this exertion without removing it from the setting of Afghanistan.

Envision for a minute that the senior authority of the Marriott Hotel chain took a group building side trip to remote, western Mongolia. Also, having encountered the loftiness of the steps, the tents, and the roaming way of life, they chose toward the part of the bargain that the Mongolian field could genuinely utilize a cutting edge Marriott lodging. Few of the streets in Mongolia are cleared, it needs present-day foundation crosswise over a large portion of the nation, and no culture or economy would bolster current inns. However, Marriot works for us, so they should love it, as well!

This is a crazy thought, however, envision if the execution plan aggravated it. Envision that the Marriott official entrusted with completing this arrangement returned to the CEO and said that the ideal approach to execute this arrangement is send the director of one of the Washington, D.C. Marriotts to Mongolia to regulate the exertion. Marriott Hotels are well-run, proficient, and

for the most part, gainful, so for what reason wouldn't the supervisor of a residential Marriott have the option to go to an altogether outside nation and assemble one starting with no outside help?

The condition of security in Afghanistan stays questionable, best case scenario. In spite of more than 18 years of commitment, including nine years of noteworthy military preparing and money related help, the Afghan government can guarantee control of most real urban communities (though with continuous bombings), dubious control of focal regions, and a surrendering of critical swaths of the country domain to the Taliban.

The Marriott relationship is useful for understanding why the Afghan security powers keep on battling against a foe that gets just a small amount of the help. Undoubtedly, a significant part of the ridiculousness of Washington's arrangement can be found in the real home office and stations that the U.S. military worked for the Afghan security powers crosswise over Afghanistan. Much like the ambiguity of a Marriott in external Mongolia, these central commands stick out because they were intended for the U.S. Armed Force, not the Afghans. Loaded with propane kitchens, engine pools, energizing focuses, and other current courtesies, they are particularly strange in Afghanistan's provincial areas. Today an extraordinary number lay underutilized, deserted, or even never utilized by any stretch of the imagination.

While the American military at long last abandoned structure gigantic central station for the Afghans, it never shook the need to fabricate Afghan powers in its very own picture. By late 2018 the U.S. military saw the Afghan commandos as essential to verifying a military triumph. Prepared intently and accompanied on missions by American extraordinary tasks powers, the Afghan commandos were viewed as more capable than their customary Afghan military partners.

Planned around American qualities, the strategies of the commandos were profoundly successful when bolstered by American airpower and guides.

Lamentably they additionally repeated American shortcomings. The emotional Taliban attack on Ghazni in August 2018 and the destruction of disconnected Afghan commando units revealed the points of confinement of the American arrangement for the Afghan military. Without direct U.S. support, the Afghan commandoes were encompassed by the Taliban and at last, compelled to escape into the adjacent mountains. Once there, most of the commandos were trapped and either slaughtered or kidnapped by the Taliban, who would be wise to the learning of the nearby territory and at any rate the implied help of the populace.

Past being in the safe place of American powers, organizing the development of strategic units that could succeed, though just with U.S. calculated help and airpower, was additionally the simplest method to show momentary advancement and gave U.S. powers pivoting through Afghanistan the capacity to state that they had "made space" for the Afghan security powers and government to create. Sadly, Afghan security forces are a long way from being autonomously successful, and there is neither the foundation nor viable administration to help them. In the meantime, the Taliban keep on making strides utilizing strategies and techniques that don't depend on Western arrangements and innovation. Put another way; the United States stuck the Afghans with the unthinkable assignment of supporting a cutting edge Marriott while the Taliban have been building tents.

Confidence in the predominance and transferability of American social and political standards is the same old thing. The issues that would torment America in Afghanistan is the propensity for pushing American arrangements on remote nations and inclination for activity makes an ideal

storm of fancy when matched with American military units pivoting into a counterinsurgency crusade on revolutions as short as 12, nine, or even seven months. Such turns enabled groups to proclaim advance paying little heed to whether their endeavors definitively added to long haul key objectives.

This idealism, and nearsightedness, of the American military, is the same old thing however is in reality part of the military's DNA. Positive thinking even with outlandish difficulties and enduring certainty can be, in military speech, a massive "power multiplier." However, without vital oversight, or authorities equipped for being intelligent and versatile without control, the military in Afghanistan defaulted to doing what it jumps at the chance to do. The tried and true way of thinking in America holds that the U.S. military is the ablest and viable battling power on the planet. This has been expressed so frequently in the course of recent long stretches of war that it is to a great extent taken as guaranteed, and the military remains the most regarded national foundation in America.

The discrepancy is that the military neglected to accomplish apparent triumphs, or even it's very own expressed destinations, through the span of America's longest war. For over ten years, the way to the American technique in Afghanistan was the production of freely skilled Afghan security powers. Be that as it may, as the pending drawdown of U.S. military from Afghanistan looms we manufactured a power so ailing in fundamental capability, thus unfamiliar to the nation it serves, that even President Ashraf Ghani feels that it would not endure more than a couple of months without American help.

Journalists visiting recently clarified some portion of the motivation behind why, in that they discovered barracks equipped with climate control systems, washers and dryers, and even

treadmills still in plastic. In entirety, everything the American military may need and would most likely keep up. Sadly, these military barracks were for the Afghans, who pondered who might keep the lights on and maintain the air and heat systems running. So is this a waste of U.S. dollars?

However, on the off chance that we will take in anything from America's longest war, it must start with probably some contemplation and responsibility. The initial phase in doing as such is understanding that even our most crucial national foundation, the military, does, in reality, have its points of confinement. Besides, we should recognize that clear commitment, and political oversight isn't just a fundamental component of a well-working popular government yet a necessity for viable international strategy.

APPENDIX B

APPENDIX B

EXTERNAL DATA

The selected ***External Data***, as a sample, only include the first five pages and the last five pages.

March 28, 2012 12:28AM EDT

Afghanistan: Hundreds of Women, Girls Jailed for 'Moral Crimes'

Government Should Target Abusers, Not Victims

A prisoner covers her face while sitting outside a room that she shares with 15 other women prisoners in March 2010. Women in Afghanistan face serious barriers to obtaining custody of their children in the event of a divorce. Several women told Human Rights Watch that when they left prison they would have to choose between returning to an abusive husband with custody of their children or never seeing their children again. Most planned to return to their husbands.
(Kabul) – The Afghan government should release the approximately 400 women and girls imprisoned in Afghanistan for "moral crimes," Human Rights Watch said in a new report released today. The United States and other donor countries should press the Afghan government under President Hamid Karzai to end the wrongful imprisonment of women and girls who are crime victims rather than criminals.

The 120-page report, *"'I Had to Run Away': Women and Girls Imprisoned for 'Moral Crimes' in Afghanistan,"* is based on 58 interviews conducted in three prisons and three juvenile detention facilities with women and girls accused of "moral crimes." Almost all girls in juvenile detention in Afghanistan had been arrested for "moral crimes," while about half of women in Afghan

prisons were arrested on these charges. These "crimes" usually involve flight from unlawful forced marriage or domestic violence. Some women and girls have been convicted of *zina,* sex outside of marriage, after being raped or forced into prostitution.

"It is shocking that 10 years after the overthrow of the Taliban, women and girls are still imprisoned for running away from domestic violence or forced marriage," said ***Kenneth Roth***, executive director of Human Rights Watch. "No one should be locked up for fleeing a dangerous situation even if it's at home. President Karzai and Afghanistan's allies should act decisively to end this abusive and discriminatory practice."

The fall of the Taliban government in 2001 promised a new era of women's rights. Significant improvements have occurred in education, maternal mortality, employment, and the role of women in public life and governance. Yet the imprisonment of women and girls for "moral crimes" is just one sign of the difficult present and worrying future faced by Afghan women and girls as the international community moves to decrease substantially its commitments in Afghanistan.

Human Rights Watch interviewed many girls who had been arrested after they fled a forced marriage and women who had fled abusive husbands and relatives. Some women interviewed by Human Rights Watch had gone to the police in dire need of help, only to be arrested instead.

"Running away," or fleeing home without permission, is not a crime under the Afghan criminal code, but the Afghan Supreme Court has instructed its judges to treat women and girls who flee as criminals. *Zina* is a crime under Afghan law, punishable by up to 15 years in prison.

Women and girls interviewed by Human Rights Watch described abuses including forced and underage marriage, beatings, stabbings, burnings, rapes, forced prostitution, kidnapping, and murder threats. Virtually none of the cases had led even to an investigation of the abuse, let alone prosecution or punishment.

One woman, Parwana S. (not her real name), 19, told Human Rights Watch how she was convicted of "running away" after fleeing a husband and mother-in-law who beat her: "I will try to become independent and divorce him. I hate the word 'husband.' My liver is totally black from my husband… If I knew about prison and everything [that would happen to me] I would have just jumped into the river and committed suicide."

Human Rights Watch said that women and girls accused of "moral crimes" face a justice system stacked against them at every stage. Police arrest them solely on a complaint of a husband or relative. Prosecutors ignore evidence that supports women's assertions of innocence. Judges often convict solely on the basis of "confessions" given in the absence of lawyers and "signed" without having been read to women who cannot read or write. After conviction, women routinely face long prison sentences, in some cases more than 10 years.

Afghanistan's 2009 Law on the Elimination of Violence Against Women makes violence against women a criminal offense. But the same police, prosecutors, and judges who work zealously to lock up women accused of "moral crimes" often ignore evidence of abuse against the accused women, Human Rights Watch said.

“Courts send women to prison for dubious ‘crimes’ while the real criminals – their abusers – walk free,” Roth said. “Even the most horrific abuses suffered by women seem to elicit nothing more than a shrug from prosecutors, despite laws criminalizing violence against women.”

Abusive prosecution of “moral crimes” is important to far more than the approximately 400 women and girls in prison or pretrial detention, Human Rights Watch said. Every time a woman or girl flees a forced marriage or domestic violence only to end up behind bars, it sends a clear message to others enduring abuse that seeking help from the government is likely to result in punishment, not rescue.

The plight of women facing domestic violence is made still worse by archaic divorce laws that permit a man simply to declare himself divorced, while making it extremely difficult for a woman to obtain a divorce, Human Rights Watch said. The Afghan government made a commitment to reform these laws in 2007 under its National Action Plan for Women in Afghanistan, and a committee of experts drafted a new Family Law that would improve the rights of women. This new law, however, has been on hold with the government since 2010, with no sign of movement toward passage.

“It is long past time for Afghanistan to act on its promises to overhaul laws that make Afghan women second-class citizens,” Roth said. “Laws that force women to endure abuse by denying them the right to divorce are not only outdated but cruel.”

By maintaining discriminatory laws on the books, and by failing to address due process and fair trial violations in “moral crimes” cases, Afghanistan is in violation of its obligations under

international human rights law. United Nations expert bodies and special rapporteurs have called for the repeal of Afghanistan's "moral crimes" laws. The UN special rapporteur on violence against women has called on Afghanistan to "abolish laws, including those related to *zina*, that discriminate against women and girls and lead to their imprisonment and cruel, inhuman, and degrading punishment." The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child has urged Afghanistan to "[r]emove so-called moral offences as a crime and release children detained on this basis."

"The Afghan government and its international partners should act urgently to protect women's rights and to ensure there is no backsliding," Roth said. "President Karzai, the United States, and others should finally make good on the bold promises they made to Afghan women a decade ago by ending imprisonment for 'moral crimes,' and actually implementing their stated commitment to support women's rights."

Last five pages of the External Data

THE STATE OF WOMEN'S EDUCATION IN AFGHANISTAN

Humaira Haqmal

■ EDUCATION AND SECURITY FOR WOMEN IN AFGHANISTAN

Education is one of the fundamental topics for discussion in today's societies, and especially in developing societies. The practical subjects of this research seem simple enough, and we can affirm the importance to women of learning science, and education in both dangerous and calm situations, irrespective of the kinds of threats or physical and psychological dangers or of there being the time, opportunities and significant facilities for learning.

Nevertheless, the subject of education is not so simple. It is, however, a right accorded to all persons under national and international law. In practice, research methods differ from one country to another depending on the political, social, economic and cultural circumstances of each. We shall endeavour to apply the rules of Afghanistan, but first of all it is important to distinguish the definitions used in the research.

■ Education

Education is unquestionably the fundamental basis of social work in the community. Education offers a bright future to us all. Access to education is a right of every human being, particularly women, irrespective of race, family, language, social standing, etc. Education represents a change to and an advance in the mental and social ability to investigate, think and practise. According to a famous scientist and doctor from the Islamic world, Abu Ali Sina Balkhi, education means planning the community's activity for the health of the family and the growth of the children in a society throughout life and after death.

We all know that the root of the fine green plant of modernisation is in the soil provided by education. The importance of education in modernising life is so clear that it does not require explanation.

■ The right to education under the rules of Afghanistan

In Afghanistan there are no legal obstacles to women studying. According to Afghanistan's Islamic laws, all persons may study and men and women have the same rights. Women, in fact, are actually granted certain privileges. According to the tenets of Islam, someone who has three daughters or sisters and brings them up well will go to heaven. According to Article 21 of

Afghanistan's new constitution, any type of discrimination towards men or women is forbidden; the right to education is the same for all citizens of Afghanistan. Articles 43 and 44 of the Afghan constitution state that all Afghan citizens have the right to education. Article 43 provides for free public education up to degree level. The government is responsible for providing all educational opportunities to the Afghan people, particularly in the field of teaching national languages. Article 44 of the Afghan constitution focuses on women's education. The government is responsible for promoting education for women, improving education programmes and applying appropriate measures for education and to combat illiteracy in Afghanistan.

It is clear that all Afghans have the right to study, and no-one can deprive them of this right. Regrettably, however, many problems remain, such as the lack of security - a major reason for not being able to exercise the right to study.

Impeding women's right to education is an offence under Article 35 of the constitution, subject to six months imprisonment.

However, in contravention of the Afghan constitution and Islamic law, women encounter many problems due to misguided customs, which prevent them from making proper use of these rights. In the Afghan community nearly 90% of the population is illiterate.

Regrettably, the majority of these are women, and this is the responsibility not only of the Afghan government or the international community, but also of educated women, who must co-operate with their community and help their sisters.

According to its M.D.G. (Millennium Development Goals), the government aims to have 100% of children attending school by 2015, 50% of them girls.

There are many problems in the way of attaining this objective. The ineffectiveness of schools in the country –especially girls' schools–, the lack of security and the lack of facilities are major reasons why girls drop out of school. The effectiveness of schoolteachers may be another reason. The right to education is established in international documents, particularly in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. The introduction to the Convention (of 18 December 1979) notes that the United Nations Charter establishes equal rights for all human beings and the principle of nondiscrimination.

To resolve these concerns, the countries signing the Convention decided: 1. To guarantee women's right to equality with men in professional education. 2. To grant the same rights as to men in the education sector, with the same resources. 3. To strive to promote training and review of curriculum contents in books and courses.

4. To enable women to acquire scholarships and educational benefits. 5. To plan for women's education and literacy in order to narrow the education gap between men and women. 6. To commit to reducing the school drop-out rate among girls. 7. To provide information for special education, including family planning.

Also, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, in Artic le 26 concerning the right to education, states that all persons have the right to education.

In the second paragraph we read that education must be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.

In conclusion, it can be said that the right to education is the same for both women and men. Nevertheless, for various reasons, Afghan women have been deprived of their rights. In 2000 many obligations relating to girls' and women's access to education were assumed at a worldwide level, in the Dakar World Forum on Education, which was attended by 180 countries. They undertook to ensure that by 2015 all children would be in school.

Since then, much attention has been given to education, but there are nine countries that still lag far behind. One of them is Afghanistan, where only 51% of boys and 44% of girls go to school. According to world reports on Afghanistan, in 2002 37% of boys and 18% of girls attended school, but in 2007 65% of boys and 35% of girls were in school. Regarding the current situation, according to a publication of the Ministry of Education, in 2012, 8.39 million children were in school, and 39% of them were girls.

■ Definition of security

Security, according to the constitution, is the absence of violence. John Mars says: "Security means being free of dangerous violence". Arnoldo Wolfar says: "Security is the absence of violence at work".

And in its psychological dimension: "Security is the absence of fear of attacks on the values of life".

Dominic David also defines it as: "creating a space in which someone is not in danger". This can be created with the help of the military. A country's national security is the wish of its peoples. And sincerity and rules are the only way to achieve security. We must not forget that security is

the only way to achieve a country's objectives. The results of the existence of rules and objectives are: honesty and progress on the economy and education.

■ Review of the situation regarding women's education to 1978

Afghanistan is an ancient country in which education has been imparted in accordance with tradition and with the prevailing situation at any given time. Girls were not educated at school but by educated persons, mainly family members. This education had no official standing; in other words they were taught in religious centres, at home, in the Royal Court, etc. In the second period of the government of Emir Shir Ali Khan, reforms were undertaken in several areas, and considerable attention was also given to education. Two military schools and a modern civilian school were established. During the reign of Emir Habibullah Khan, only one military school and the Habibia school were active, and they were attended only by boys, while adults studied at home. In some important families, women studied at home under a domestic tutor, father, brother, uncle, etc, learning subjects such as literature, geography, arithmetic, etc, and it was these women who, during the reign of King Amanullah from 1919 onward, were employed as teachers in girls' schools.

APPENDIX C

APPENDIX C

OTHER RELEVANT DOCUMENTS

Night Letters

An example of a night letter distributed by the Taliban to the residents of Parwan and Kapisa provinces in Afghanistan appears as follows:

Date: (Redacted) *Number: (Redacted)*

1) This is a warning to all those dishonorable people, including ulema and teachers, not to teach girls. Based on the information given to us, we strongly ask those people whose names been particularly reported to us, not to commit this act of evil. Otherwise, it is they who bear all the responsibilities. They have no right to claim that they have not been informed.

2) This is to inform all those who have enrolled at boys' schools to stop going to schools. An explosion might occur inside the school compounds. In case of getting hurt, it is they who bear all the responsibilities. They have no right to claim that they have not been informed.

The preceding night letter represents only one example of how members of the Taliban demand that all citizens of Afghanistan, particularly those living in rural areas, comply or risk punishment by death. As explained in the Findings chapter, this particular night letter indicates how threats of violence have contingent effects on personal and professional experiences. One may choose to ignore threats of violence and simply carry on with plans to educate young women and girls. Alternatively, one may pretend to comply with the demands made by members of the Taliban but may still carry onward with educating young women and girls. In

another night letter, the Taliban was intent on threatening residents living in Ghazni province concerning the construction of a school designed to educate young women and girls. The threats contained in the following night letter reflect how strongly members of the Taliban attempt to maintain an overthrown political legacy despite how Western influences are not as pronounced as some researchers may assume despite how women and young girls are not beginning to receive a more comprehensive education. The night letter appears as follows:

Greetings toward the respected director [of education] of Ghazni province, Fatima Moshtaq. I have one request, that you step aside from your duties. Otherwise, if you don't resign your position and continue your work, something will happen that will transform your family and you to grief. I am telling you this as a brother, that I consider you a godless person. I am telling you to leave your post and if you continue your work, I will do something that doesn't have a good ending. It should not be left unsaid that one day in the Jan Malika school I heard Wali Sahib praise Ahmad Shah Masood, I wanted [to] transform your life to death and with much regret Wali Assadullah was present there and I didn't do anything to cause your death. But if you don't resign your work, I will attack you and take you to death.

With respects,

(Name redacted)

As explained further in the Findings chapter, the preceding night letter sent to Ghazni province suggested that a Taliban Operative was nearby. Teachers who educated young women and girls could not ignore the threat and, thus, felt compelled to comply with demands made by members of the Taliban.

The following questions were asked to the Deputy Minister of Defense for Personnel in 2005.

My interpreter translated his responses to the questions.

1. What obstacles do you see with implementing new training for the Ministry?

Culture and religious are two of the prides that Afghans value the most. Afghanistan is a country that even system of government is build based on religious and culture. Some of the obstacles affecting the education and training of military and police are as follows:

- Culturally, most families don't let allow their daughters or wives to work outside the house.
- A woman is not considered for work in the army, or police, since working in Army or Police is considered a man's job.
- Even if a woman works in the army, or police, she should be following certain rules that may not apply to men. For example, wearing Hijab.
- Afghanistan has been in civil war for more than 4 decades, and most of the people are not literate enough to understand the value of education, or training.
- Some people think that religious is more important than their duty, so when it's praying time, they have to leave for pray break.
- During Ramadan, they work half day, and all the restaurants are closed.
- A certain percentage of ethnic groups should be hired to certain positions, even they are not qualified.

The list can go on and on, but these were some major cultural and religious barriers.

2. What do you suggest on educating and training of females?

- Most of religious leaders are not properly literate. Most of them even didn't go to school. They learn from another religious leader who learned from a religious leader a generation ago, and they all didn't go to proper school, so they don't have a deep understating of science, biology, chemistry, finance, and many other subjects, and they don't value them. For example, if half of the populations are women, and all these women don't work, the religious leaders don't understand it from economic point of view.
- Islam values the education of men and women, but these religious leaders don't. I guess it's more like a culture among these leaders being against woman education.
- Most Afghans are very religious, and they listen and follow whatever these religious leaders say. I think there should be school for people who go wants become Mullah, and the school's curriculum should be carefully crafted considering national interests, rather than following some superstitious thoughts.

3. What can the current Afghan leaders affect change to provide females an equal chance to education and training?

- Many people are losing trust on the Afghan government and its alliances. Afghan government is supported by superpowers, and has been struggling to maintain security and stability. People don't let their daughters out of the house not only because some religious leaders said so, but also for the safety of their daughters and wives. We need security first, everything else comes by itself, but it takes time. Even if we educate the men from this generation, we already set their mind to value women's education for the next generation.

4. What do you advise the US Mentors and Advisors to better understand the Afghan culture?

- In order to train the Western concept, you have to set their mind to Western values. Again it's a matter of time, and if you can't provide them security, you may not be very successful educating them, and teaching them Western values.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Dr. Joe A. Hinojosa, Jr., worked for nearly 10-years overseas with two different U.S. Department of State/Department of Defense contractors in Kabul, Afghanistan. He provided his expert strategic analysis, strategic policy building, assessing political and geopolitical risk, and planning and developing Human Capital programs within a United States inter-agency, Coalition forces, and International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) context.

Dr. Hinojosa served in the United States Air Force and retired in 1997 with 26 years of military service. He holds an Associates of Applied Science, Human Resources Management, from the Community College of the Air Force; Bachelor of Science, in Industrial Technology, from Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, Illinois; Master in Educational Leadership, from the University of Texas, Brownsville, Texas and a Doctor of Education in Curriculum and Instruction, from the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley, Brownsville, Texas.

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