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Interpretations of Educational Experiences of Women in Chitral, Pakistan

by

Rakshinda Shah

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts
in Women's and Gender Studies
Department of Women's and Gender Studies
College of Arts and Sciences
University of South Florida

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Dedication

To my brother Zahid Ali.

Acknowledgments

This project would not have been possible without the support of many people. Many thanks to my thesis chair, Dr. Kim Golombisky, you helped me through numerous revisions and made this thesis possible. Also thanks to my committee members, Dr. Michelle Hughes Miller and Dr. David Rubin, for your guidance and support. And special thanks to the narrators; without your narratives, this thesis would not have been possible. Your voices and stories are the heart of this project. Thank you.

And finally, thanks to my husband for helping me every step of the way, my mother for being the inspiration of this project, my father for all the support at home, and my beloved brothers who endured this long process with me, always offering support, love, and inspiration.

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Abstract

This feminist oral history project records, interprets, and analyzes the educational experiences of seven Ismaili college women in Chitral, Pakistan. Chitral is a part of the world where educating girls and women is not a priority. Yet in the scarce literature available one can observe an increase in the literacy rates, especially amongst the Ismaili Muslims in the North of Chitral District. This thesis introduces students' accounts of their personal educational journeys. I argue that the students' accounts exemplify third space feminism. They negotiate contradictions and social invisibility in their daily lives in quiet activism that shadows but changes the status quo of the society. Through their narratives the narrators see themselves as devout Muslim women who are receiving Western-style education through which they have learned to be women's rights advocates. The narrators now wish to pay forward their knowledge and help their families financially. Analysis of the oral histories revealed six themes: (1) distance from educational institutions, (2) sacrifices by the family, (3) support from family, (4) narrators as the first generation of women to attend school, (5) early memories of school including severe winters and corporal punishment, and (6) feminist touchstones. While honoring their families and communities, the narrators plan to become educators and advocates to empower girls and women in their own villages. In response to these oral histories, I recommend that the government of Pakistan, non-government organizations working in Pakistan, men and women, and teachers in schools work together to improve the educational journeys of future Chitrali women. Education for women needs to be introduced as a universal human right in Chitral so

women, too, can get financial and psychosocial support from their families as well as communities to achieve their educational goals.

Chapter 1. Introduction: Girl Child Education in Chitral, Pakistan

1.1 Evolution of the project

As a Chitrali woman who was amongst the first to get an education, my mother always concentrated on providing her children the best education possible. She ensured that I and my siblings received the highest standard of education that she could afford. Her passion for education went beyond the education of my siblings and me; she has been dedicated to Chitrali women's education for over 20 years. Holding a master's degree in education, she worked with the Aga Khan Education Services in Chitral in different capacities with the aim to enhance women's education. In addition, she was a pioneer member of the Pamir Educational Society, which provides equal educational opportunity for both young girls and boys in two different remote villages in Chitral. My mother is my inspiration for this project.

I view my master's program as an opportunity for me to study the change in women's education in my hometown of Chitral, Pakistan. For a class paper during my first semester of my program, I conducted a three-generational family oral history of girl-child education in Chitral, Pakistan, focusing on the time period between 1962 and 2012. This pilot project revealed that, across the generations, women in my family saw positive change within their educational experience. From 1962, when the first generation attended school, to 2012, when the current generation attended school, it is possible to see that women's access to education has become easier, the level of corporal punishment has diminished, and the value of women's education within the larger Chitrali community has increased. This history sparked the inspiration for my current project to document educational experiences of women in Chitral, where the literacy

rates for women have increased compared to women in the rest of Pakistan. For example, the 1998 Pakistani census showed the school enrollment rate for girls in Chitral was 33.3%, while it was 8.8% and 12.01% respectively for Upper and Lower Dir districts, the districts adjacent to Chitral within the same province (Khan, 2008). Thus, I undertake Third World feminist oral history to document the educational experiences of college-level Chitrali women residing in Chitral to pursue their educations. I find it important to begin my research from a place of recognition of my positionality as a well-educated middle-class Third World feminist Chitrali woman. My personal experiences help to shape the content and method of this research that aims to explore the educational experiences of college-level Chitrali women.

I interviewed 15 Ismaili women who volunteered to share their oral histories with me. Of the 15 interactive oral histories I recorded, seven resulted in viable narratives for the present project. The remaining eight narrators, however, construed their participation as an opportunity to exercise their English with me, and they collaborated to practice the same rehearsed verbatim narrative over and over with me. Thus, their participation did not result in oral history narratives in the strict sense of *history*, and, as I explain in the methodology chapter, were not included in the present study's thematic analysis. Transcripts from interviews with the remaining seven narrators, however, were rich and unique while also sharing remarkably similar interpretations of their individual educational journeys. I have summarized these seven women's stories into the following themes: (1) Narrators traveled extraordinary distances in order to attend school. (2) The narrators' families sacrificed much both financially and socially in order for their daughters to attend school. (3) Thus, the narrators credit their educational success to committed support from their families. (4) Such support was not just welcome but perhaps necessary because narrators' early memories of attending school included much personal hardship from suffering

long and sometimes dangerous walks to school during bitterly cold winters to excessive corporal punishment once they arrived at school. (5) Nonetheless, narrators echoed feminist sentiments in expressing their desire not only to improve the lives of women in their families and villages but also to advance women's legal rights in Chitral and Pakistan. I argue that these women inhabit Pérez's (1999) decolonial third space where the invisible and voiceless nonetheless enact social change right under the noses of the dominant, privileged, and/or oppressive group(s) in power. The third space can be thought of as quiet revolution and ingenious practice for not just surviving overtly hostile circumstances but for negotiating the tensions and contradictions of interstitial social locations (Anzaldúa, 1987; Bañuelos, 2006; Bhabha, 1990; Khan, 1998; Licona, 2005; Pérez, 1999; Sandoval, 1991, 2000; Villenas, 2006). In the case of the seven narrators, they embody and embrace what we ordinarily might interpret as obvious contradictions. These devout Muslim women honor their families, cultures, and ethnicities while attending university away from the traditional Muslim women's boundary of home. These women as college students live in a formerly colonized country that is being increasingly radicalized; yet the women embrace Western-style university education as the means of both helping their villages and politicizing other young women. In their desire to help others, the narrators are self-effacing. They also articulate a consciousness of gender issues compatible with feminist thought. The fact that there is little in the literature that records and attempts to understand the perspectives of Pakistani women on the subject of education further illustrates these women as occupying a third space "like a shadow in the dark" (Pérez, 1999, p. 6).

1.2 Brief introduction

The positive shift in women's education in the valley of Chitral, Pakistan, over the past 40 years has been significant. In a culture where educating women has been seen as going against societal norms, much has changed since women have begun to attend school and work in public spaces alongside men. In this oral history project, I gathered college-level Chitrali women's thoughts and perspectives about their educational journeys. This first chapter of my thesis provides a brief overview of the geographic, cultural, religious, and educational backgrounds of people of Chitral, Pakistan. In the second chapter, I summarize the literature on the changing educational paradigm in South Asia, Pakistan, including the Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa Province, and especially the Chitral District in the north of the Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa Province. In the third chapter, I outline my positionality as a Third World feminist in relation to third space feminism, which comprises the theoretical framework by which I interpret and represent the stories of the narrators. In the fourth chapter, I describe the oral history method. Next, in the fifth chapter, I report the themes that emerged from the oral history narratives about what it has been like for them to be a part of the educational system in Chitral, including family sacrifices and support, enduring physical hardships from long walks to school during harsh winters to corporal punishment once they arrived, and a desire to use their educational privilege to advocate on behalf of women's rights, including education. In the sixth chapter, I interpret the narratives as examples of third space feminism. Finally, in the last chapter, I offer some concluding remarks about the strengths and limits of this work.

1.3 Background

The Chitral District of Pakistan is in the northernmost district in the Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa Province lying between the Hindu Kush and Himalaya Mountains. It borders Afghanistan to the North and Northwest. (See Appendix A: Map of Chitral, Pakistan.) The terrain of Chitral District consists primarily of rugged, barren mountains. The area experiences extended cold winters and is isolated from the rest of Pakistan during cold-weather months as it becomes literally impossible to get into the district or out of it due to blocked roads caused by heavy snow falls. The harsh conditions in Chitral make life difficult for its people. This especially affects women, who spend 16 to 18 hours a day collecting fodder, cooking, cleaning, and caring for their families and the cattle (Pardhan, 2005).

The Chitrali people are all Muslim with the exception of the approximately 3,000 Kalash, who make up the non-Muslim population of Chitral (Hilton, 2009). The majority Muslim population is Sunni, and roughly the remaining 30% are Ismaili Muslims. Generally, the people living in southern Chitral and Chitral Town are Sunni Muslims. In northern Chitral, the Ismailis represent the majority as compared to other cities or rural areas in Pakistan. These northern Chitrali Ismaili Muslims are followers of Aga Khan, and they highly value both women's and men's education; they educate both genders as long as it is financially possible for them to do so (Liljegren, 2002).

Aga Khan the 4th is the 49th spiritual leader of the Ismailis; he became the Imam in 1957. He established the Aga Khan Development Network to support marginalized communities throughout the world, especially in areas where the nation's government alone cannot fulfill to the needs of its people. Settle (2012) writes, "Ismailis speak affectionately of the Aga Khan as their savior in historic times of famine and follow his guidance, which advocates capacity

building through education and enterprise” (p. 390). The Aga Khan Development Network started working in the Chitral region in the early 1980s (Settle, 2012). With the aid of the Aga Khan Development Network, over the past three decades, there has been a significant change in the female literacy rate in Chitral, especially in northern Chitral. At the same time, and despite this positive change, there is an obvious critique to be made of the neoliberal and neocolonial ideologies at work here. The tensions and contradictions of Muslim women attending Western-style universities in postcolonial Pakistan are not lost on me. Indeed, this is in part why a third space feminist lens is helpful in teasing out some of these apparent tensions.

Nonetheless, if we can agree that educating girls is desirable, then it behooves us to examine literacy rates. The literacy rate among children age 6-10 is 98% in Chitral. The promising part of the situation is that the rate of girls’ enrollment within educational institutions is fairly equal to that of the boys’, despite high poverty and a conservative social approach by locals in the case of the women (“The district has 98 percent literacy rate,” 2003). The literacy rate among women in Chitral was as low as 2.3% in 1981; it had risen to 40% by 2007 (Nadeem, Elahi, Hadi, & Uddin, 2009). In terms of attendance rather than literacy, Khan (2008) estimated school attendance for girls under age 20 at almost 100%.

Chapter 2. Literature Review: Universal Education and Women's Education in South Asia

2.1 Women's education in South Asia

According to the U.N. Human Rights Declaration of 1948, education is a basic human right. Article 26 states, "Everyone has the right to education." Current development policy emphasizes human resource development, in general, and education for girls, in particular; this argument is based on economic efficiency and social welfare arguments. It proposes that with the increase in women's education, the economic efficiency and the social welfare of a country increases. Investment in education is rationalized on economic grounds, i.e. on rates of return and efficient allocation of resources (Mujahid-Mukhtar, 2008). Studies find that increasing women's education boosts women's wages, which frequently results in women having a larger return on education than men (Schultz, 2002; World Bank, 2001). Empirical evidence also shows that an increase in women's education improves human development outcomes such as child survival, health, and schooling (Morssion, Raju, & Sinha, 2007). Arguably, education is the most important instrument for human resource development (Chaudhry, 2009). It has become a universal human right and an important feature of opportunities and empowerment for women. The United Nations *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (1948) and the United Nations *Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women* (1979) both assume a universal right to education. These arguments do not preclude being mindful of transnational feminist critiques that ask questions about not only conflating capitalism with democracy and freedom but also taken-for-granted definitions and ideals about such things as "rights" and "education"—all of which are legacies of European imperialism.

Meanwhile, male-dominated societies, such as the Pakistani society, do not readily accept education for girls and women. Thus, international agencies such as USAID, UNICEF, Plan International, and the governments of developing countries put more emphasis on the positive economic, social, and political outcomes of investing in women's education. International agencies are not only encouraging but also supporting governments of developing countries to invest in women's education in developing regions of the world, such as South Asia. In the year 2009, USAID started building 115 schools in the Swat District of Pakistan, where it was mostly girls' schools that were destroyed by Taliban in 2008-2009 (Perlez, 2011).

South Asia¹ has seen an impressive economic growth in the last 20 years, a period of 6% growth a year (Devarajan & Nabi, 2006). The strong growth has led to declining poverty and improvements in human development. The percentage of people living on less than \$1.25 a day fell in South Asia from 61% to 36% between 1981 and 2008 (World Bank, 2013). In 2003-04, shortly before a devastating tsunami hit the region, all countries other than Nepal averaged above 5% GDP growth (Devarajan & Nabi, 2006; World Bank, 2013). India, Maldives, and Pakistan performed especially well, averaging real GDP growth of nearly 7%, even better than some of the developed countries; the United States had a GDP growth of 2.8%, and Canada had 2.1% growth in its GDP for year 2003-04 (Devarajan & Nabi, 2006; Pakistan Economic Survey, 2007; World Bank, 2013). Despite the emphasis by international agencies on education for all and economic growth in the past decades, less has been invested in education in South Asia. For example, of the 115 million primary-school-aged children who are not in school worldwide, 42 million reside in South Asia (UNESCO, 2013). The lack of investment in education in South and West Asia is reflected in the low literacy rates. Fifty-three percent of the global illiterate

¹ Afghanistan, Bhutan, Bangladesh, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka.

population resides in this region (UNESCO, 2013). In addition, South Asia faces significant challenges in providing schooling.

Education for everyone, especially for girls and women, has suffered due to widespread poverty and conservative social values and traditions. Chudgar and Shafiq (2010) argue that social and cultural beliefs are important in influencing family decisions to educate girls in South Asia. Families in South Asia are usually more hesitant to support girls' education, thus depriving families and communities of the benefits of educated women (Schultz, 2002). One of the main reasons for this hesitation is religious; the more conservative religious beliefs do not allow women to leave the boundaries of their homes. Women's education is opposed as it is believed that educated women would present a threat to deep-rooted tribal and religious traditions (Chudgar & Safiq, 2010). This is especially true for Pakistan and Afghanistan (Chudgar & Safiq, 2010; Sudduth, 2009).

2.2 Women's education in Pakistan

In South Asia, Pakistan also faces difficulties regarding education, in general, and women's education in particular. Sudduth (2009) writes about the failure of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in Pakistan to protect women's right to education. According to Sudduth (2009), education is essential for girls' and women's empowerment, but Pakistan is a society where women are deprived of equal rights and subjected to oppression and violence. Pakistani women are regarded as socially and intellectually inferior to men. Traditionalists, heavily influenced by Islamic fundamentalism, consider women to be the property of their fathers or husbands. Alavi (1972) described the patriarchal structure of the Pakistani society some 40 years ago:

Both in the rural as well as the urban society, Pakistan remains a strictly patriarchal society, in which women are treated as 'given' or 'acquired' through arranged marriages, to spend their lives in the service of a male dominated social system. By and large women are married within biraderis (lineages) and the biraderi organization provides a context within which women's lives are ordered. In the case of communal biraderis the power of the biraderi panchayat (council) derives largely from control over decisions about who a woman is to marry. It is not only a single patriarch, the head of a nuclear family, but the whole male dominated kinship organization which has a stake in the subordination of women. (para. 4)

Alvai's description of the Pakistani society in many respects remains the same today. As Khattak (2008) also writes, among the communities in the Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa Province of Pakistan, attitudes and behavior towards educating girls and women remain mostly negative. His study, based on 600 participants' interviews from all over the province, shows that the community has a negative attitude towards women's and girls' education. Communities did not want to see women educated or empowered because they were concerned with preserving traditional values, which do not include educating women.

Additionally, for decades, Pakistan underinvested in education and, in particular, girls' education; due to the strict patriarchal society, educational spending in Pakistan is roughly 1% of GDP, and in this environment of resource constraints, spending on girls' education tends to be short-changed (Mujahid-Mukhtar, 2008). According to the 2007 National Educational Policy of Pakistan, the educational status of women in Pakistan is unacceptably low, in fact, among the lowest in the world. Girls comprise 75% of out-of-school children in Pakistan (Strochlic, 2013).

The problem starts at the primary level (prekindergarten through 5th grade). Low participation and high dropout rates at this stage prevent girls from attaining higher education and equitable opportunities. According to the Pakistan Ministry of Women Development (2007), only 19% of females have completed education through Matric (10th grade); 8% completed Intermediate (12th grade); 5% completed a bachelor's degree; and 1.4% completed a master's degree. Sixty percent of the female adult population is illiterate (Aly, 2006). In terms of attendance across Pakistan, only 73.6% of primary age girls attend school compared with 92.1% of boys. In terms of literacy, the gender gap actually has widened over the past 25 years (Coleman, 2004). In 1975, the literacy gap between men and women in Pakistan was 25 points with 11% literacy for women versus 36% literacy for men. By 2001, that gap had increased 29 points with 29% literacy for women versus 58% for men (Coleman, 2004). Strong gender disparities exist in educational achievement between rural and urban areas and among the provinces. In 1996-1997, the literacy rate in urban areas was 58.3% while in rural areas it was 28.3%, and it was only 12% among rural women. Moreover, a significant majority of rural girls drop out of primary school (Daraz, Hussain, W. Khan, Q. Khan & Naz, 2011). There are also considerable inequalities in literacy rates among the five provinces (Baluchistan, Punjab, Sindh, Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa, and Gilgit-Baltistan), and especially in terms of disparities between men and women (Asian Development Bank, 2000).

Nevertheless, the literacy rate in Pakistan has increased in recent years. In 2009-10, the literacy rate increased to 57.7%, largely due to an increase in the literacy rate of women and girls in rural areas even with all the cultural, social, religious, and traditional barriers imposed on the women in these same regions. Even in the more conservative province of Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa, the literacy rate increased to 50.9% (Rana, 2011). Pakistan's rural literacy rate increased to

48.4% by 2011 (Rana, 2011). These sobering numbers contrast with Chitral's much higher rates of education and literacy for girls and boys.

2.3 Women's education in Chitral, Pakistan

Pardhan (2005) examined women's hopes and perceptions of school as well as barriers faced by women from the Booni valley in Chitral. The data, which were collected in 1994-1995, revealed that women in Booni conceived of their educational value in terms of language proficiency. Uneducated women (who had never attended school) in Booni recognized that their knowledge of only their native language, Khowar, represented a barrier limiting their interaction with anyone other than Khowar speakers. In contrast, educated women who have the ability to read and write in languages other than Khowar were more comfortable in their interactions with non-Khowar speakers. Participants also reported that the biggest barrier to gaining further education was not being able to leave their homes. Even with literacy skills, women still cannot go into public spaces, such as the market, a place that remains reserved for men only. Women stated they wanted to seek employment once their education was complete but reported that they were mostly unable to do so because they would have to leave their homes, which is culturally and socially unacceptable.

Recent research highlights improvement in the women's education sector in Chitral (Khan, 2008). For example, according to the most recent Pakistani census (1998), in Chitral the female literacy rate of 2.3% from 1981 shifted to 22.09% in 1998. Additionally, the female literacy rate increased to 40% by 2007 (Nadeem, Elahi, Hadi & Uddin, 2009). Liljegren (2002) writes about the change in attitude towards women's education in Chitral:

During my stay in Chitral I heard some positive opinions stating education could actually raise the amount of bride price, and this way make a woman's education economically worth pursuing. In some cases also the parents of the bride could ask the husband's household not to force the bride to do heavy agricultural work because of her education level. (p. 17)

This means that a woman's education level can benefit her and her family by giving the family a return on investing in her education. Even though this change in attitude can be considered for the better economic wellbeing of the family rather than the woman, economic arguments have proven to be rhetorically effective at persuading men in power to give women the chance for formal education.

Overall, then, education has not been a priority in Pakistan due to conservative tribal, social, and Muslim values, combined with harsh geographic and economic realities, and a changing political climate. Nonetheless, in Chitral, Pakistan, Ismaili Muslims with the support of their Imam Aga Khan and the Aga Khan Development Network have materialized their value for education into much higher literacy rates both for women and men. In the case of women, however, despite their hopes and dreams for using their educations, a conservative society keeps women bound to home and family. The value of girls' education is tied to bride price and traditional family honor. At the same time, development logics tie the value of women's education to monetizing health and home for the greater social GDP and to improving the health and welfare of the future citizens whom educated women produce as offspring.

Amid these competing arguments "on behalf of" women, Pakistan in recent years has witnessed an increasingly conservative Islamic climate enforcing even more restrictive social rules for women. This includes banning education for women and persecuting those who

advocate on behalf of education for women. Indeed this work has always been and remains dangerous. Moreover, we know very little about the educational experiences of women in this region as few have thought to include them in the conversation.

Chapter 3. Theoretical Framework: Third World and Third Space Feminisms

I begin this theoretical framework by establishing my standpoint as a Third World feminist influenced by postcolonial feminisms. Then I transition into third space feminism, which functions in my analysis as an interpretative lens for analyzing the narrators' interpretations of their own educational histories. The participants and I share the same native country, Pakistan, a nation formerly colonized by the British and by today's Western standards still underdeveloped. For my part, I embrace the labels Third World woman and Third World feminist because of and also despite my proud Pakistani heritage. Yet, if the purpose of oral history is to record the voices of people interpreting their own experiences, and if Third World feminism is a critique of Western feminisms' presumption to speak on behalf of so-called Third World women, then I am mindful of the ways in which my standpoint differs from the Pakistani narrators of this thesis. As a Third World feminist, I will argue that the narrators' stories navigate the third space, an in-between uncharted "borderland" (Anzaldúa, 1987) of identities and social positionalities that are often overlooked, even invisible. Moreover, I suggest that the narrators' descriptions of their own activism are compatible with contemporary third space feminism, a politics of embracing the third space to enact social change as evolution instead of revolution.

As to my self-conscious standpoint (Collins, 1986, 1997; Harding, 1986, 1993, 1997, 2012; Hartsock, 1983a, 1983b, 1997, 1998), I identify as a Third World feminist. My identities as an Ismaili Muslim woman from Chitral, Pakistan, and my current position as a woman of color feminist in the United States influence how I think about feminist research. I approach this thesis research as an *insider without* rather than Collins' (1986) "outsider within." I call myself the *insider without* because although I share nearly identical backgrounds with the narrators, I

have traveled away from the narrators geographically and academically, as I am a graduate student studying women's and gender studies in the United States. I identify with the narrators on a deeply personal level and to some extent can translate their experiences for a Western feminist reader, but I remind myself and the reader that I cannot speak for them or fully understand their positionalities.

As Third World feminism makes clear, women are not all united under the same banner of gender experience. Other factors such as race, class, ethnicity, sexuality, ability, age, religion, culture, and personal and social history influence experience. Postcolonial feminists such as Mohanty (1988, 2003) argue that Third World women's knowledge too often is colonized by Western feminist thought. Mohanty (2003) argues that Western feminists merely produce scholarship about Third World women as object. She writes that Western feminists "appropriate and colonize the constitutive complexities that characterize the lives of women in the Third World" (p. 19). Third World feminists point out that Western feminists have used Western women's experiences as the norm for the study of non-Western women's lives (Chilisa, 2011). This practice has led to the interpretation of non-Western women as oppressed, uneducated, and submissive (Chilisa, 2011). Most of the work by Western feminists about the Third World is descriptive and is informative. However, it is the overwhelming silence about the first-person experiences of Third World women—the absence of their voices—within the canon of Western feminist work that is criticized (Mohanty, 2003). Non-Western feminists aim to move gender-based research towards postcolonial and indigenous approaches to construct knowledge derived from the experiences of women in their specific locations and histories (Chilisa, 2011). Thus, I write as an *insider without* because I am a woman of color Third World feminist living in the West who is attempting to expand the literature with the voices of women who currently reside

in a Third World country. At the same time, this project necessitates that I mediate the voices of the narrators in order to represent them, and that obligates me to do so as responsibly as I can.

Like Third World feminism, third space feminism prioritizes marginalized positionalities (Pérez, 1999). Third space feminism has been described as the site of negotiation from which marginalized women speak and perform their agency to displace dominant ideas (Bañuelos, 2006; Khan, 1998; Licona, 2005; Pérez, 1999; Villenas, 2006). As practice, third space feminism implements the “decolonial imaginary,” a tool that allows us to uncover “interstitial” and “rupturing” spaces between, for example, the colonial and postcolonial that also can be spaces of oppositional agency for women otherwise hidden from public discourse (Bañuelos, 2006; Pérez, 1999).

The third space materializes interstitial positionalities obscured by not only overly limiting normative social categories (such as race, ethnicity, class, gender, sexuality, nationality, religion, and ability) but also typical and often binary and hierarchical social locations prescribed *within* such social categories (such as the limits of, for example, female/male, black/white, gay/straight, third world/first world, progressive/conservative, etc.). Described in terms of Anzaldúa’s (1987) “borderlands” and attributed to Sandoval’s (1991) U.S. Third World feminism, the third space emerges from both postcolonial cultural critiques (Bhabha, 1990) and Chicana feminisms (Anzaldúa, 1987; Bañuelos, 2006; Pérez, 1999; Sandoval, 1991, 2000; Villenas, 2006). The third space is not merely theoretical, however; the third space as a lived positionality reveals dilemmas, contradictions, and ambiguities that are embodied and ordinary. Khan (1998) writes that the third space “helps to explain how individuals negotiate the contradictions and polarities of their lives” (p. 464). Like Khan’s research, I, in the present study,

“explore how individual muslim (sic) women negotiate and translate the Orientalist and Islamic discourses that regulated their lives into a politics of everyday living” (p. 465).

One can think of the third space in concrete terms, first, as the embodied performative improvisation required to live in “borderland” circumstances, and, second, as a kind of interpretive sense-making that navigates “borderland” existence (Anzaldúa, 1987; Bañuelos, 2006; Khan, 1998; Licona, 2005; Pérez, 1999; Sandoval, 1991, 2000; Villenas, 2006). Villenas (2006) describes the third space as “where political, social, and cultural dilemmas are always in the process of being worked out even as the lessons of the body, of everyday ritual, and of the spoken voice both clash and conspire” (p. 152). In the present case, the women who narrated their oral histories live in a remote rural religiously and tribally patriarchal and conservative society where many rely on subsistence farming, yet these women also attend Western-style universities in the tradition of their country’s colonizers. As their transcripts show, they see nothing extraordinary about being both devout Muslims and activists for progressive social change, particularly on behalf of women. There are no social scripts or cultural narratives for living with these apparent tensions, yet the narrators do live with them quite successfully. Khan (1998), citing Bhabha (1990), writes, “In Bhabha’s terms, the third space becomes a space of contradiction, repetition, ambiguity, and disavowal of the colonial authority” (p. 464).

People who live in third spaces of necessity develop tactics for maneuvering and even thriving in such circumstances, and these tactics “rupture” and “displace” former social practices and structures (Bhabha, 1990; Pérez, 1999). The results of such tactics lead to “cultural hybridity,” which “gives rise to something different, something new and unrecognizable” (Bhabha, 1990, p. 211). Bhabha writes that hybridity “is the ‘third space’ which enables other positions to emerge” (p. 211).

Building on the third space as lived experience and political action, Pérez (1999) notes that “women as agents have always constructed their own spaces interstitially, within nationalisms, nationalisms that often miss women’s subtle interventions” (p. 33), and this kind of intervention is what she defines as third space feminism. Third space feminism, according to Pérez, requires a “decolonial imaginary” to get at the intangible places between the colonial and postcolonial where women have always been more than mere victims, but instead “survive and persist” (pp. 6-7). The decolonial imaginary provides “a tool that allows us to uncover ‘interstitial’ and ‘rupturing’ space between the colonial and the postcolonial that is also the space of oppositional agency for women who have been erased from history” (Bañuelos, 2006, p. 96). Khan (1998), studying the stories of Muslim women living in Canada, describes third space feminism as “a process of intellectual and political intervention to resolve the ambivalence that muslim (sic) women face” in both being recognized as Muslim and contesting Islamic regulation of their lives (p. 489).

I argue that the narrators in the present oral history do occupy the third space. In their narratives, they are writing themselves into the literature, and we can witness them interpreting the lived dilemmas and contradictions of their everyday experiences into something “new and unrecognizable,” as Bhabha (1990, p. 211) puts it. Indeed, if third space feminism displaces old ways of thinking, then the narrators are third space feminists deploying ingenious strategies that change attitudes about women and women’s education. In this thesis, the narrators’ stories of their educational journeys illustrate Pérez’s (1999) decolonial imaginary where the voiceless do social change “like a shadow in the dark” (p. 6). The third space becomes a place of quiet social revolution and inventive practice for surviving hostile circumstances and negotiating the tensions

of interstitial positionalities (Anzaldúa, 1987; Bañuelos, 2006; Bhabha, 1990; Khan, 1998; Licona, 2005; Pérez, 1999; Sandoval, 1991, 2000; Villenas, 2006).

Chapter 4. Method: Feminist Oral History

4.1 Oral History

In order to explore the experiences of women in college, I gathered 15 students' oral histories of their educational experiences since they first started schooling. In this thesis I analyze seven of the students' narratives because the other eight students were more interested in practicing their English than sharing stories. This study thematically analyzes the narratives of women in Chitral regarding their educational experiences before sharing a reflexive account of my similar experiences and interpreting all the stories through a third space feminist lens. Personal accounts of women who have been a part of the educational system are important because they provide credible narratives of the lived experiences of the women participating in this specific institution. I used oral history because I wished to record the thoughts of women from a part of the world where women may share their thoughts among themselves but rarely ever get the chance to express their thoughts into a form that will be read or heard by others. As Golombisky (2010b) writes:

Feminist researchers find oral history a particularly useful method because it records women's own interpretations of their lives in their own voices. Such views can be dramatically different from common knowledge. Thus, like bottom up oral history, women's oral history improves our understanding of the past. (p. 116)

Oral history becomes an especially valuable method for researching the lives of people who have not been famous enough to become prominent figures in the media (Lynd, 1993). I

chose to collect oral histories because oral history is unique among other qualitative research methods. It gives the participant an opportunity to co-direct the conversation. Since my research goal was to gather and analyze students' perspectives, memories, experiential accounts, attitudes, and reflections about their educational journeys, I collected oral histories by conducting individual open-ended in-depth conversational interviews in which the narrators told their own stories and related the experiences that they felt comfortable sharing with me. The following interrelated questions guided all the interviews in the form of conversation:

Question 1: Tell me the story about your educational journey?

Question 2: What is your earliest memory of school?

Question 3: Tell me about how your family valued or did not value education?

Question 4: What was your community's reaction when you joined school?

Question 5: What has been the impact of education on your life?

4.2 Recruiting and process

The participants were selected as a snowball sample recruited from a women's student hostel in Chitral, Pakistan; the hostel is the equivalent of independent student housing associated with several local colleges. The hostel is not associated with any particular educational institution. Volunteers participated on the basis of their availability and willingness to be interviewed as oral history narrators. I set up a telephone conversation with the matron of the hostel to introduce my research project. The matron of the hostel granted me a consent letter, which gave me permission to conduct interviews at the hostel. Next, I sent a recruitment email to the matron to distribute among the residents of the hostel. The email contained a summary of my

research as well as all my contact information. Once the interested potential narrators contacted me via email or telephone, I provided a short description and purpose of my research. I am fluent in Urdu and English, which enabled the narrators to speak to me in the language in which they were most comfortable. I asked each narrator which language, English or Urdu, she preferred using during informed consent as well as through the interview. I then via email sent out the IRB-approved informed consent forms in each narrator's preferred language. I also sent the potential narrators detailed descriptions of the oral history interview process. I made sure that all participants understood that nothing that we talked about would be associated with their names or any other identifiable aspect of them. I explained that I would not use their names at all in my final thesis project. Instead, pseudonyms were chosen by the participants.

I planned that if the number of potential participants who responded to my recruitment email was larger than my target of 12 participants then I would select narrators on a first-come first-serve basis. This decision was intentional so that I had the opportunity to interview more than 12 narrators if some interviews were not as rich or useful for this study. While I planned to interview 12 students, I interviewed 15; I continued interviewing more participants than I had initially planned because eight participants' narratives sounded too rehearsed and, in fact, too similar to one another. These narrators were more concerned to practice "correct" English than to share their educational histories. Of the total of the 15 narratives I collected, I analyzed seven for this project because the other eight narratives were too similar to be analyzed as the separate narratives of eight different people.

Before each interview, I explained to the narrator how the audio-recording process works. If the interview was conducted via Skype, I showed the device I used: a small digital Sony voice recorder. In addition, I told narrators that if they were uncomfortable, we could stop the

interview and reschedule for another day or end the process altogether. Each narrator met with me one time for one interview. The length of each interview depended on how much the individual participant chose to share her experiences. The 15 interviews lasted between 0.5 to 1.5 hours. After interviews ended, I let the narrators know that they should contact me at any time if they had questions. I let them know that I was willing to set up follow-up interviews if they should so desire. None of the participants contacted me for a follow-up interview. I also told the narrators that I was willing to give them a copy of the transcription of our conversation and share my formal thesis once it was finalized.

4.3 Description of participants

In Table 1, I introduce the 15 narrators (in the order of their college year), whose narratives I gathered. Of these 15 narrators, I analyzed the narratives of seven. I identify them with the pseudonyms they chose. All identifiable pieces of information including the actual names of people and places have been disguised for privacy and confidentiality purposes. The names of the participants and the exact location of the hostel are not mentioned in this thesis due to growing security concerns. In the table below I have bolded the pseudonyms of the seven students whose narratives I have analyzed.

4.4 Interpretation, Translation and analysis

Although each oral history narrative is its own primary documentation, no voice is unmediated by the research process, including the researcher's research agenda and the co-constructed relationship between researcher and participant that emerges during the research process (Golombisky, 2006, 2010a, 2010b; Golombisky & Holtzhausen, 2005). Additionally, in

Table 1. Descriptions of Participants				
Pseudonym chosen by the participant	Current year in college	Comes from Urban/rural Chitral	Age	Who is funding education
Samina	Sophomore	Rural	21	Charity organization
Rabiya	Sophomore	Urban(Town)	19	Charity organization
Mehk	Junior	Rural	20	Charity organization
Falak	Junior	Rural	20	Charity organization
Khirad	Junior	Urban (Town)	21	Charity organization and family
Zoya	Senior	Rural	23	Charity organization
Alyla	Senior	Urban(Town)	22	Charity organization
Haseena	Senior	Urban(Town)	22	Family support
Bibi	Senior	Rural	23	Charity organization and family
Afeefa	Senior	Rural	25	Charity organization
Haniya	Senior	Rural	22	Charity organization
Nabiha	Senior	Rural	22	Charity organization
Musarat	Senior	Rural	22	Government scholarship
Huma	Senior	Rural	22	Family support
Shabana	Senior	Rural	23	Charity organization

the present case, given the dangers of making the narrators' identities public, these oral histories are further mediated by pseudonyms, translation, and transcription. Some of the narrators switched between Urdu and English through the oral history interviews. During transcription I translated the Urdu sections into English. Finally, because this work is part of my master's thesis, I am offering my own interpretation and analysis of their educational stories as separate layer of the project. This layer required a reflexive analysis of my own standpoint. During analysis, I looked for emerging themes across all the narrators' interviews and then explicated my interpretation of these themes using a postcolonial Third Space feminist lens.

Generally, like all other relationships, the participant-researcher relationship is subject to reworking and continuous negotiating until there is a level of trust developed between the participant and the researcher (Darlington & Scott, 2002). I did not know any of the narrators, but once we got to know each other through several preliminary phone calls, a relationship developed in which they called me "Kai," which means older sister in the native language of Chitral. Analyzing the narratives allowed me to try to enter the women's lives through their words, as I attempted to put on hold my own views of their lives. As a Chitrali woman, I attained my primary education in Chitral. I know the difficulties faced by Chitrali women trying to get education in Chitral. But I left Chitral when I was 13 so I am not fully aware of the educational experiences of Chitrali women who attend college there. My analyses of the narrators' experiences are further based on my knowledge of the narrators' geographic location, the history of the area as a former British colony, and the mores of a conservative tribal Muslim society.

Chapter 5. Narrative Themes: Painful Memories and Empowerment

Oral history gives the participant an opportunity to co-direct the conversation. Since my research goal was to gather and analyze students' perspectives, I collected oral histories by conducting individual open-ended in-depth conversational interviews in which the narrators told their own stories and shared the experiences that they felt comfortable sharing with me. Oral history also gives me an opportunity to write these women into Chitrali history where they are often missing.

The students with whom I spoke had story after story to tell. These were the experiences and opinions that they had never shared with anyone. Some of the narrators said no one had ever asked before; they had never before reminisced except with their childhood school friends. I probed the narrators for experiences that they had never put into words. For most, it was the first time they had been prompted to reflect on their memories in any detail. The narratives took on lives of their own and turned into accounts of how attaining an education had been a struggle. The narratives revealed how complexities of class, family background (matriarchal vs. patriarchal), and location (rural vs. urban) shaped their interpretations of their educational journeys. Women's discussions of their lives may combine two separate sometimes conflicting perspectives: one reflecting masculine and male-dominated worldviews and another reflecting the more immediate realities of a woman's lived experiences (Anderson & Jack, 1991). During interviews, narrators also may struggle to narrate aspects of their lives if they have never before been asked the questions about or reflected on the topic (Golombisky, 2006, 2010b; Golombisky & Holtzhausen, 2005). As an Ismaili-Muslim Pakistani woman, I am sharing just one way of looking at the narrators' journeys. My knowledge of women's education in Chitral is

built on my own experiences growing up in Chitral as well as the oral histories that I have collected for two generations of women in my own family.

In this chapter I report the participants' narratives grouped by six themes that emerged from my analysis of the transcripts:

- Distance from the educational institutions
- Sacrifice
- Familial support
- First generation of women in their families to attend school
- Early memories of school
- Feminist touchstones

Participants described hardship due to the geographic distance between their homes and their schools. They also talked about the financial, social, and emotional sacrifices that they and their families made in order to attend school. Participants also shed light on the familial support that they received from mothers, sisters, fathers, and brothers. Participants also described their early memories of school in terms of severe winters and their resentment towards corporal punishment. Last, when talking about the impact of education on their lives, the participants shared that through education, they have become aware of their human rights and, more important, their rights as women. Thus, the last section of this chapter talks about the participants' feminist touchstones. First, however, I explain why I did not use the narratives of eight out of 15 of the participants whose oral history narratives I collected.

5.1 The group of eight

My initial plan was to collect narratives of 12 women attending college and living in a town in Chitral Valley. I was contacted by 15 students who expressed interest in my research project and wanted to participate. The first 12 participants who contacted me became the initial participants in my project. I let the remaining three participants know that I had the participants that I needed for my research, but if I needed their help, I would contact them in the future.

Most of the narrators expressed a desire to talk to me in Urdu; the narrators said they were more comfortable with Urdu as compared to English. As the narratives progressed, more narrators showed interest in conducting the oral histories in English. As I was collecting and transcribing the oral histories, I began to notice that the narratives seemed rehearsed. The participants who had opted to interview in English concentrated excessively on their use of “correct” English. These narratives started to blur into one another; they all began to sound the same. The personal stories that the narrators were sharing with me all had the same story—down to the composition of their families and family members. As a feminist researcher, I used the method of reciprocity and shared events from my own educational journey with the intention that the narrators would share with me their own histories, but the eight participants kept sharing similar rehearsed stories. I also had a feeling that the prompts were being discussed amongst the participants. The participants chose to speak with me with “correct” English and with “correct” answers in their stories. Thus, while the seven viable narratives offered unique stories around similar emergent themes, the eight rejected narratives were essentially one story repeated by eight different narrators, which meant this one story was not true for at least seven of the eight narrators. Hence, I chose to focus only on the “unique” stories offered by the seven viable

narrators, and I chose not to confront the eight with questions about the “authenticity” of their stories.

I hoped that the participants would look at me as one of them, albeit with the exception that I attended college in a different country. But the eight participants were trying to practice their English, which holds importance in the context of Pakistan. The ability to speak “correct” English is seen as a privilege (Kazi & Iqbal, 2011). In Pakistan, English is viewed mainly as the language for development at both the individual and national levels. The struggle for individual success and economic development at the national level has surpassed issues of class, identity, and fear of cultural invasion from an erstwhile colonial language. Pakistan is a multilingual and multicultural society. Each of the five provinces has more than one dominant language along with a number of minority languages (Shamim, 2011). The important status of English is due to its historical association with the elite and proto-elite (Haque 1983; Rahman 1999, 2002). English is the language of power as compared to Urdu, the national language, and other regional languages of Pakistan (Rassool & Mansoor, 2009). In my opinion, English is the language of the British, the colonizer of the Indian sub-continent of which Pakistan was a part. Mastering the language of the colonizer gives the colonized a sense of accomplishment; it is a feeling of being on equal footing with the colonizer or the ruler. I believe the narrators who concentrated on their use of English were trying to impress who they perceived me to be, a Western-educated woman who lives in the United States. Thus, I did not analyze or include the eight similarly rehearsed oral histories, but I explain why here. I don’t judge the narrators’ desire to practice English or impress me. I mean only to explain how their stories did not serve the purpose of this thesis to record narrators’ personal stories about getting an education in a part of the world where doing so is not a foregone conclusion.

5.2 Suffering, Sacrifice, and Support

In the following section I offer examples taken from the seven remaining viable narratives that illustrate the impact on the lives of the narrators as a result of their distance from their educational institutions. This section also exemplifies the sacrifices that these women as well as their families had to make in order for them to be able to attend school. I aim to illustrate through these narratives how students who live far away from the educational institutions struggle every day not only to make it to school but also face the stigma associated with young women daily making long treks without a male chaperone. The narratives also point to family financial and emotional sacrifices in order to educate their children, especially girl children. I use the narratives of the students to exemplify the emotional as well as financial support they received from immediate family members, including mothers, fathers, and brothers. All typologies are constructed, and I set up these categories as a means of separating and talking about all these issues, but they are all interrelated.

5.2.1 Distance from the educational institutions

One of the barriers that girls and women as students in the developing world face is the distance between their homes and the educational institutions they can attend. In South Asia one of the main reasons for a low rate of girls enrolled in school can be credited to the distance from educational institutions (Chudgar & Shafiq, 2010). While analyzing the oral history narratives, one of the recurring themes was the distance to school. The distance is a problem not only in terms of walking for long periods of time, but also other “social evils” associated with the distance from school. Samina, a 21-year-old sophomore from a rural area of Chitral, said:

Being at a long distance from the school creates different issues for different people. For me, it was losing two years of my school life... when I was in 8th grade a girl who was also in 8th grade, who used to walk with us to school... she was not my friend though... eloped with her boyfriend... we did not know she had a boyfriend and that they were exchanging love letters on our way to and from school. After that incident, I was not allowed to attend school anymore... my family thought I might elope with someone as well on the way to school and will bring shame to my family's honor.

Samina further explained that she had to convince her family to let her return to school; her mother understood her position but could not help her. Over the course of two years, Samina's main task was to persuade her father and her uncle that she would not elope if she returned to school. She was allowed to go back to school on the condition that if she was ever seen talking to a man she would not only never be allowed to return to school, but she would be "married off." Distance from school created a rift between Samina and her family. It was a difficult time for her because she had to prove to her family she would not dishonor them by eloping with a man. In Chitrali society a family's honor is connected with women of the family. A Chitrali woman eloping would bring shame to the family's honor.

Like Samina, Alyla, a 22-year-old senior who was brought up in a small town in Chitral, shared her discomfort with the distance from school. She recalled:

On my way to school I had to walk through the main *bazaar*² of the town... when I was small it was fun. I used to look at all the toys and candies in the stores, but by the time I was in middle school, it became very hard for me and my friends to

² Market place

walk through the *bazaar* as we would be harassed with very sexual comments from some of the shopkeepers as well as other men in the bazaar.

Alyla remembers resenting going to school once she began to be harassed. She first told her mother she did not want to go to school anymore because she felt uncomfortable. Alyla says if it had not been for her uncle she would have never returned to school. She said that her uncle lived in another village near her school, and there was no bazaar to be crossed in order to get to the school. Thus, at age 13, she moved to her uncle's house far away from her own home in order to attend school. The distance from school means taking the best route possible to get to school, and if there are hurdles along the route, it becomes difficult for students such as Alyla to continue attending. Alyla was lucky to have a close family member who supported her. However, her education came at the expense of living away from her parents and siblings.

Falak, a 20-year-old junior, said that she comes from a village where there are no schools for girls after fifth grade. She had to walk one hour and forty-five minutes every day to attend a boy's school in a neighboring village. It was not only the distance that took a toll on her physical and mental health but also the reactions from the people of her village. She said that they used to give her dirty stares on her way to and from school. Falak said:

I felt as if... I was committing a crime, like a theft or robbery or something.

People used to stare as if I was going to school not to be educated but to learn how to be an ummm... a bad person. The worst stares were from male members of my own family, like my uncles... My uncles even came to my house to stop me from going to the school. They did not care about the distance; they cared about the fact that I would be exposed to boys and might end up having an affair and bring shame to the family... I used to cry every day as to why this was

happening to me... all I wanted to do was get educated and get a job so I could support my family.

Falak comes from a family of six siblings. Her father, the only breadwinner, had a low paying job in the city. She lost her father when she was in 9th grade, which made things even more difficult. Her uncles started pressuring her mother even more to stop Falak from going to school. The year her father passed away her older sister was taken out of school and “married off.” When Falak’s father passed away, Falak, with her mother and her siblings, instantly became the property of her uncles. Falak’s future was at the mercy of her uncles, who did not approve of her traveling long distances to attend school, and they pressured her to drop out. Her uncles reasoned that the long distance to school threatened to expose Falak to men, a risk that could bring shame to the family’s honor.

So the distance from school also opened up battlegrounds at home. Narrators had to fight for their educations with their family members who did not accept the idea of women stepping outside of the set boundaries of their homes. The question then arises: Who has set the boundaries? Falak explained the boundaries or limits for women are set by the society, and the society is guided mostly by men in Chitral. It is a strong patriarchal family structure where men are the powerful ones. Distance from educational institutions is a systemic barrier to women’s education. Once a woman starts traveling far to go to school, she is stepping outside her socially prescribed and protected boundary. Stepping outside the boundary creates tension between the woman and the men in her extended family. The distances from the institutions where these women go to attain knowledge tests relationships among kin.

5.2.2 Sacrifice

Studies from industrialized and developing countries have found socioeconomic status of a family to be a key factor determining educational outcomes (Buchmann & Hannum, 2001, 2004). Family income facilitates household ability to pay for food, water, shelter, clothing, transportation, health care, and the direct costs of education, such as tuition, fees, supplies, transportation, and private tutoring. A family's low socioeconomic status typically affects girls more negatively than boys (Chudgar & Shafiq, 2010). In Pakistani culture, sons are the ones who take care of their parents in old age. Daughters are "married off" and are not expected to look after their parents. Thus the investment in a son's education is more important as sons can get good-paying jobs based on the level of their education and in return will be able to take better care of their aging parents (Mujahid-Mukhtar, 2008).

Before I started collecting the narratives, I was under the impression that all the narrators in this project must have strong financial family background. This assumption was based on the fact that these women were living in a privately run hostel, which comes at a cost. But that was not the case. As Table 1 shows, 13 of the 15 narrators were either fully or partially supported by charity organizations.

Musarat, a 22-year-old senior from rural Chitral, shared her story with me about getting a government need-based scholarship:

Last year my father, who was the sole breadwinner in my family, had an accident... He lost one of his legs. He could not go back to work. My father was partially supporting my education ... My family's financial condition was already very bad and with his accident, it became worse. I knew I would have to return back home with my education incomplete, and that hurt me.

Musarat shared with me that as a result of being a very good student throughout her college years, some of her teachers helped her look for scholarships. When a government need-based scholarship was announced, her teachers recommended Musarat. She was awarded the scholarship, which enabled her to continue her education. Musarat's narrative is an example of how her family even with limited finances supported her initial college education.

After high school, Afeefa, a 25-year-old senior from Chitral, could not continue with her education as a regular student. She did not have the financial support from her family, especially her father, or any other charitable organization to allow her to continue her education. Afeefa's parents separated when her mother could not produce any sons, and her father married again. Her mother moved to Afeefa's maternal grandfather's home along with Afeefa and her four sisters. However, Afeefa's mother was determined to educate all her daughters. Afeefa, being the oldest, was the first sibling to graduate from high school. Due to the lack of financial support, Afeefa decided to start her college education privately. For those who cannot attend regular college, in Pakistan there is a system of home-based college education similar to online undergraduate programs in the United States. Through the private college education system in Pakistan, the students are required to submit written assignments throughout the year and are expected to take a final exam once a year. Her mother was not happy that Afeefa could not attend regular college. Afeefa described how she eventually was able to attend "regular" college:

My mother was very upset that I could not attend regular college; it was my mother's dream for all us five sisters to get college-level education. After continuing my college education privately from home for almost a year, one day Mother told me she had arranged for money for me to attend regular college....

She had sold her most prized possession, her cow, so I could at least move to the town and get enrolled in college.

Afeefa knew her mother's cow was all her mother had as financial security, and now that, too, was gone. Once in college, Afeefa contacted many charity organizations, thus she found funding for herself and two younger sisters as well. Her younger sisters have now joined Afeefa in college and live in the same hostel. Afeefa credits all her successes to her mother.

The job market in Chitral in particular and Pakistan as a whole follows a system of hierarchy. Individuals with college degrees are preferred over individuals with high school diplomas. Among the college degree holders, those who have attended regular college are preferred over those who earn their college degrees privately at home. Afeefa's mother gave up her financial security so that Afeefa could get a better college education. She made the sacrifice so that when Afeefa is in the job market Afeefa stands a better chance of getting a job. Although Afeefa's parents are not divorced, Afeefa's mother reared her children as a single parent. Afeefa and her siblings did not receive any support from their father. Afeefa said her mother did not spend money on her own needs, such as buying new clothes or shoes, but put her children's educational needs first.

It was not just the financial sacrifices that families made in order for the narrators to attend school. After Falak's father died, Falak's older sister was taken out of school to be "married off," but Falak's sister refused. Falak's sister set a condition on her own marriage contingent on Falak being allowed to continue school. With pride, Falak shares her sister's contribution towards Falak's educational goals:

My older sister refused to get married until my uncles assured her I will be allowed to continue with my education. She also kept on refusing to marry anyone

who was from remote villages [laughs]. She accepted my brother-in-law's proposal only because he was from the town area. She told me she did this so she might be able to continue with her education after marriage and in the future I could live with her and continue my school. That is what I did; I lived with my sister and her family for my 11th and 12th grades. She supported me.

Falak expressed her sadness over the fact that her sister had to sacrifice for her. She says: "I wish my sister and I could both continue our schooling together. We would have been in college together. I envy other girls who have their older sisters to help them and guide them through college issues." Falak's sister not only sacrificed her own education on behalf for her sister but also gambled on her marriage.

Most of the girls through their narratives said that when they first moved away from their families, they were homesick and missed their families. Some of them could not see their families for over a year and half. They could not afford to do so or had no male member of the family available to chaperone them to make trips home to see their families. Samina said:

I have not seen my family in over one and half years. I miss them, but it is expensive for someone to come from my home and take me home for some time. I stay in the hostel during semester breaks. I tutor school-level students who live around the hostel and save some money for my college expenses and future trips home. I miss my family a lot, but I understand it is financially not possible to see my family frequently.

To attend school, Samina made the sacrifice of being away from her family for longer periods of time. To travel, women need both money and a male family member as chaperone.

The sacrifices that the narrators made came with costs. All the narrators said they feel guilty putting their families through difficult situations. But the narrators are hopeful that one day they will be able to repay their families or return the favor. Afeefa said it is her dream to get a well-paid job so she can support her family financially. Afeefa said the first thing that she wants to buy for her mother is a cow.

5.2.3 Familial support

Social and cultural considerations are important in influencing family decisions to educate girls. Another important factor influencing a family's decision to educate girls is family characteristics, including income, parents' level of education, family structure, religion, ethnicity, caste, and parental engagement; each directly influences the time and resources dedicated to children's educational outcomes (Coleman, 1988). The educational advantage that children enjoy from the relationships with their families is sometimes considered family-level social capital (Coleman, 1988). Worldwide, the literature on educational social capital within the family indicates that family commitment towards children's educational endeavors is one of the main determinants of educational attainment (Coleman, 1988). In the following section I include the narrators' stories regarding the support they received from their mothers, sisters, fathers, and brothers.

5.2.3.1 Mothers

All of the narrators shared stories of how their mothers had supported their educational journeys from financial to emotional sustenance. This included such things as selling prized belongings in order to pay for school expenses or performing all the household chores themselves so their daughters could study.

Talking about her early memories of school, Nabiha, a 22-year-old senior from rural Chitral, remembers that her teachers were shocked when Nabiha went to school looking clean the summer after her father remarried. Nabiha said:

My mother passed away when I was eight years old. My father married my mother, I mean, as people would say, my stepmother... people say step-mother. I do not like the term so I call her my mother. So going back to when my father married my mother... When I went to school after my father's marriage my teachers were shocked to see me in school on time and all nice and clean. I think they were expecting my siblings and me to show up late and dirty, as the stereotype associated with a stepmother is she is expected to mistreat her stepchildren. To be honest, I am where I am mostly because of my mother... unlike my friend's mother, she never asked me to help her with the household chores. She always asked me to study, do my homework, and excel at school.

The way Nabiha explains what her mother has done for her shows how grateful she is for her mother's support. Nabiha remembers a lot of stories about her mother's sacrifices. For example, she distinctly recalls multiple times when her paternal aunt and a few other women from the neighborhood would tell her mother to make Nabiha do the household work. Her mother would reply saying, "No, I want her to make something out of herself, not end up like me, illiterate and doing household chores all the time." Nabiha said that her mother had wanted to become a teacher but never got a chance to attend school, and now Nabiha wants to become a teacher and fulfill her mother's dream.

Similar to Nabiha, Afeefa attributes all her successes to her mother and remembers the sacrifices that her mother made so she could educate her daughters. Afeefa shares that one of the

main reasons her mother puts so much emphasis on education is because Afeefa's mother never went to school. Afeefa's mother went through many financial troubles because she was not educated and, thus, was unable to get a proper job.³ Afeefa's mother used her skills of crafts and farming to support herself and her five daughters. But, as Afeefa recalls, it was challenging. She remembers her mother abstaining from buying clothes and shoes for years so she could pay for her daughters' education. Afeefa said:

When my maternal grandparents were alive, life was not that bad. My maternal uncles and grandparents helped us financially with our education. When my grandparents passed away, there was no one to help us financially, not even my uncles. Thankfully, my mother inherited my grandparent's house. Otherwise we would have been homeless. When I was doing my college work from home, I had to send written assignments to the college, which was in the town an 8-hour drive from my home. The only way to get my assignments to the college was through the taxi drivers from our village who make the trip to the town two to three times a week. They used to leave early in the morning, and my mother used to wake up with the morning *azzan*⁴ and stand on the main road so she could give my assignments to the drivers. Sometimes she would stand on the road for hours in the freezing winters just to make sure she did not miss the taxi.

Lack of financial support led Afeefa to stay at home to continue her college education. Even at the time when she had no financial support, Afeefa had her mother's enduring support. When

³ In Chitral women can only get skilled employment, which pays well, (e.g. teaching or working for non-government organizations) when they are educated. Otherwise, they can generate income using their subsistence farming skills, which often times do not have a good return on investment.

⁴ Muslim call to prayer

Afeefa's mother was not able to send her to regular school she made sure she supported Afeefa in every way possible even if that meant standing outside in the winter waiting for taxis.

5.2.3.2 Fathers

Parental attitude and support has a great deal of influence on girls' participation and level of success attained in education. Parents and community attitudes are mainly influenced by traditional beliefs regarding the ideal roles of women and girls in society. These traditional beliefs have been found to encourage negative attitudes, which limit family and community support for girls' education (Khattak, 2008). It was a breath of fresh air when the narrators talked about the positive attitudes of male family members towards their education. It surprised me since Chitral, Pakistan, is a patriarchal society deeply rooted in traditions that put women in strict gender roles as the homemakers and child bearers.

Shabana, a 23-year-old from Chitral, shared that she comes from a community where a majority of the girls either never go to school or leave school after fifth grade. She laughs that she is the old maid amongst all her childhood best friends who now are all married mothers. The attitude towards girls' education in her village is not very positive. Shabana said that women have always been seen as only homemakers, so people in her village do not think formal education is very important. Shabana was tearful while talking about her father's support for her educational endeavors. Shabana said:

My father is my hero... that probably sounds like a cliché but he really is... I know that he faced a lot of criticism from men in my village about sending me to school. Now that I am in college, I do not know what he goes through. He never tells me what other people in the village say. He has never been to school, but he goes to the town for bank work, and he always told me he really wishes me to be

like the lady at the bank—well respected by everyone, mostly men. Everyone called her “Madam” out of respect. He is looking forward to the day when people will call me “Madam.” He is a poor man, but he made sure I got the best education available. He sent me to a private school because he knew government schools are good for nothing. And private schools do not come cheap, especially for a farmer in Chitral.

Shabana said that her education brings joy to her father when she reads and translates newspapers to him. Shabana said her father had tears of joy in his eyes when his neighbor friend asked Shabana to read and explain his medication prescription for him. Shabana believes she is gaining respect in her village, but it will still take time for the people to express it out loud.

Shabana’s father’s sacrifice was to face the everyday criticism from the men in his community. In contrast, Musarat recalls her father’s financial sacrifices for her. He always thought about supporting Musarat’s education, even when he lost his leg after an accident. Musarat cannot forget what her father said to her the day after her father’s accident:

When I went to meet my father after his accident he was not in very good shape. He had lost his leg, and that is not a joke. But he was not as unhappy about the fact that he had lost his leg as much as he was about not being able to support my educational expenses. He said he was sorry that he could not fulfill his promise of supporting my education until I had my college degree. That broke my heart and made me even more determined to complete my degree and start work so I could support my father financially as he has always supported me.

Musarat adds that her father always calls her to check on how she is doing in college. She says, “He does not understand much about my course work, but still he wants to know about each and

every course that I am taking.” It is the financial as well as the emotional support from Musarat’s father that keeps her determined to work towards her goal. She said, “Every time my father calls, I am more ambitious. I am reenergized, and I work harder.”

5.2.3.3 Siblings

Not only mothers and fathers but also siblings, including sisters and brothers encouraged and inspired the narrators to be good students. As noted earlier, Falak’s sister stood up for Falak by sacrificing her own education, by refusing to marry until Falak was allowed to return to school, and by insisting on marrying a local man so that Falak could live with her sister while she continued school. I also listened to stories about the positive attitudes of narrators’ brothers who supported education for the girls in the family. While talking about support from her family, Nabiha shared that it was because of her brother’s sacrifice that she was able to come to the town to get higher education. Nabiha said her brother, Azam, is one year older than she, and he always helped Nabiha with schoolwork.

Nabiha said:

After high school my father wanted to send my brother to Peshawar for higher education.⁵ Azam did not have very good grades in high school, thus was not eligible for any scholarship. We come from a lower middleclass family. Sending my brother to Peshawar meant a huge burden on our family’s finances. We knew it would be impossible for my father to afford to send any other child to college. Azam convinced my father that he would continue his studies at a college in Chitral, which would cost less, so I could attend college as well.

⁵ Peshawar is the capital city of Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa Province in Pakistan

Nabiha is not happy that her brother did not get an education in the city, but she is grateful that Azam was considerate of her. Nabiha remembers her brother telling Nabiha that he wanted Nabiha to go to college because she was harder working and smarter than her brother. Even though Nabiha received a scholarship from a charity organization in her second year of college, she needed financial support from her family for the first year. Given Nabiha's family's financial situation, if it were not for her brother's decision not to attend college in the city, she might never have been able to attend college at all. Nabiha is grateful to her brother for not being selfish and for thinking about her as well, even though she wishes her brother also could be called a city-educated man like other young men from her village. As she says people who get higher education from the city are more respected.

Like Nabiha, Samina is grateful to her brother for supporting her educational journey in the worst of times. Samina's brother is five years older than Samina. When Samina was not allowed to attend school anymore after one of the girls in her school eloped, her brother was the only male family member who still supported the idea of Samina continuing school. Samina said:

My brother stood up for me and tried convincing my family to send me back to school. He always said, "Samina, do not worry I will help you. I cannot let you stay illiterate and not make something out of yourself." If it was not for my brother, I do not think my family would have ever let me rejoin school. Even now, he was the one who bought me a small⁶ cell phone so we could keep connected and know what is going on in each other lives, as we get to see each other only

⁶ I believe by small Samina meant inexpensive

once in two or more years. I am very lucky to have a supportive brother. I have friends whose brothers are against them getting higher education.

I have never heard of support from a brother in a situation like Samina's. It is rare for Chitrali men to support the women in the family, especially when the men are aware of the fact that there is a potential threat to the family's honor. It is a sign of trust that Samina's brother bought her a cell phone. Samina's best friend's father and brother think that if she gets a cell phone, she will be tempted to have an affair because she would have access to boys.

The support that the narrators received from every family member that they mentioned came at a cost. However, the narrators acknowledged the support from the male family members more. Having support from the male members of the family means being acknowledged by the society since it is the men who have the power to control the family and society, as well as the women's choices. It is the men who make the society or the public environment in the Chitral.

Women still need approval of the men in their families as well as society. The women are dominated by traditions; they are dominated by the men who make use of the traditions. For example, Musarat's father is going against the traditions of his village where it is against the norm to educate girls, especially up to the college level. Musarat's father faces criticism from men in the village. Musarat said the general opinion of men in her village is that girls should be married off early and sent to their homes.⁷ For this reason there is no need to invest in girls' education, especially if the education requires travelling long distances, perhaps even going away from her family.

Alyla has strong opinions about women bearing the honor of the family and society. She says the society supports double standards. On one hand people are ready to punish girls to the

⁷ The home of a woman's husband is considered the woman's home

greatest extent possible (in some cases unto death) if they dishonor their family by even talking to a man, let alone eloping. On the other hand, little girls are sexually harassed by adult men—someone’s fathers, uncles, brothers—as the little girls walk to school. Musarat also described how the men in her village opposed her achieving higher education, yet when those same men needed help with reading, it was she they approached for assistance.

Given the narrators’ experiences, they said they are now inspired to help other young women in their communities not only to go to school but also to support better schools for girls. The narrators also said they are eager to improve their families’ economic circumstances, and the narrators are keen to raise their communities’ consciousness regarding women’s issues, including education.

5.3 First generation women in the family to go to college

All the narrators except Huma are the first in their families to attend college. Huma, a 22-year-old senior from rural Chitral, said her mother is among the first Chitrali women to attain a college-level education. Huma’s mother is a schoolteacher but has never attended regular college and did all her college work privately at home.

The other narrators are proud of the fact that they are the first generation of women in their families to attain a college education. Shabana said she also is the first woman in her neighborhood to go to college:

I am the only girl to get college level-education in my entire neighborhood. It is so sad that amongst my ten friends who are all my age in my neighborhood, I am the only one in college now. If I go on to get my master’s degree... which I want

to and will get, *inshAllah*⁸, then I will be the first girl to hold a master's degree in my entire village. I am very happy, and my family is proud of me, but at the same time, I am sad that none of my childhood friends got college-level education.

Despite her father's wish for her to work in a bank, Shabana wishes to work with an educational institution to educate girls in her village.

Like Shabana, Musarat talked about her community's reactions towards her attending school. Musarat shared her sense of accomplishment at being the first woman in the family to get a college education:

I love going home to visit my family. I am the most educated woman in my family. My mother is very proud of me and shows off my education like a trophy [laughs]. I am very well respected not only in my family but in my community as well. My thoughts about any matter in my extended family are respected. My younger sisters and cousins look up to me and seek advice from me regarding life issues, especially education-related issues like what subjects to choose, what field of study will best suit their interests in college, etc. I am very happy with what I have achieved so far, but I do not want this to stop here. I hope one day I will get a chance to go to the university in the city to get higher education. In my opinion, there is no end to learning.

Musarat hopes to start teaching right after college as that is what she has always pictured herself doing. She ultimately wants to go for her M.Phil degree⁹ in education from Peshawar University.

⁸ God willing

⁹ Masters of Philosophy

A college education also has made the narrators determined to spread the message of education for girls. For example, Shabana wishes to help raise awareness about educating girls in her village. Shabana said:

When I go to my village, I try not to show off my education. That is not going to gain me any good. I try to be like all other girls in my village... like, you know, by wearing the same kinds of clothes as them and trying to talk in pure Khowar with no mix of English or Urdu so that I am not seen as an outsider. But I always try to educate the women and men around me about educating their daughters, as they are the ones who will up bring our future generations. I am one of them; my education does not change that, but what I can try to change is the attitude towards girls' education.

When Shabana visits her village, she does not present herself as the most educated woman in the village. Rather she mingles with the women and men in her village in the way that the people would like her to. When she spends more time with them she builds coalitions with the women and men in her village. Even though people in her village say negative things about educating women, she disregards them. Instead she focuses on how she can use her knowledge to educate people about women's education.

Like Shabana, Nabiha also said that when she is in her village she tries to visit many people. Nabiha also does not impose her education on others but always she talks about how women benefit from education. Narrators described switching from being simply college students to being women's education activists when they visit their villages. But the narrators said they bear in mind their identities as women from remote villages where they still have to honor their families and communities.

5.4 Early memories of school

The narrators' most common early memory of school was loathing for going to school in winters. In addition to the distances required to travel to school without busses or public transportation, early memories of school featured two kinds of hardships: punishingly long cold winters and corporal punishment.

5.4.1 Severe winters

Narrators' revisiting early memories of school included many happy stories about joyous times spent with friends. Then there were heartbreaking stories, such as falling on frozen ground and breaking bones during winter. In the mist of all the stories, the hardships associated with severe winters took the prize; struggling to attend school during winters was the most prominent memory repeated by all the narrators. Alyla said:

Winters were always the worst time of the year... I hated walking to the school in the morning. I always waited and prayed for the sun to come out on my way to school [laughs]. By the time I would reach school, my fingers would get painfully cold, and I would even stop feeling them. And it was very hard or almost impossible to write, especially during the first three morning classes. I was always punished for not being able to write. Even though the teachers knew I could not write because my hands were too cold.

Alyla was punished for not being able to write during the wintertime, even though the teachers experienced the same cold and understood that it is hard for students to write with no substantial way to warm their hands before starting to write. The only way to get warm in the classroom was the small classroom fireplace, shared by all the students and the teacher.

Similar negative stories associated with winters emerged in other participants' narratives as well. As Afeefa said:

I admit it, I am short or maybe too short [laugh] and my small frame did not help in winters. To keep warm, I had to wear too many layers of clothes. Because of being short and with the layers of clothes getting heavy, it was very difficult for me to walk properly, and the frozen ground did not help. I used to take at least two to three falls by the time I got to school. By the end of winter, almost every year that I can recall, I ended up with an arm or leg fracture [laugh]. It was not fun. In short I hated going to school in winters.

Afeefa added that whenever she wants to revisit early memories of school, all the positive memories are subdued by the negative memories of cold unbearable winters.

Once at school the teachers are not considerate of the fact that some of the students walk for miles in the severe weather and need some time to warm up before starting the daily schoolwork.

5.4.2 Corporal punishment

According to Society for the Protection of the Rights of the Child (SPARC), a local non-governmental organization (NGO) that advocates the rights of children, 35,000 high school pupils in Pakistan drop out of the education system each year due to corporal punishment ("Pakistan: Corporal punishment key reason for school dropouts," 2008). Sadly, another one of the earliest memories of the narrators is that of severe physical punishment. In the following narrative, Falak shared her story of corporal punishment, which scarred her body:

One thing that has always bothered me when I think about early memories of school is the corporal punishment. We were beaten with sticks... The memory to

this day sickens me to my stomach. We were beaten as if we were livestock. Even my mother did not use as many sticks on our cow to keep her within the boundaries of house as much as our teachers used on us to “discipline us.” To this day I still do not understand why they could not just talk to us, why we were treated like untamed animals... I think even animals do not appreciate beating, and you can talk to them as well.

Falak has a scar on her hand and a scar near her right eye as a result of beatings from her teachers. She is thankful that, when she was beaten with a stick in 5th grade, the stick missed her eye or she might be blind today. Falak’s analogy of animal and human beatings is evidence that Falak feels that the practice of corporal punishment dehumanizes students. By using words such as, “We were treated like untamed animals,” and “The memory sickens me to my stomach,” Falak shows how the punishments overshadowed cheerful childhood memories.

It is common in Chitral schools to ask students to “donate” one log of wood every day for the entire winter. These logs are used to fuel fireplaces in the classroom and the staff room. Although government schools receive special funding for firewood, students are forced to donate wood fuel. Samina’s story of punishment involves firewood:

There was clearly favoritism in class. Some of the students were beaten less and some of us more... The strangest thing was when one of the students in the class would misbehave, and we would all get a beating, so that we would never even try thinking of misbehaving. We were punished for the smallest and strangest things. I remember one time during winter, when I was unable to take a log of wood for the classroom fireplace, I was beaten with a stick five times on each

hand... And to add to the humiliation, I was not allowed to be near the fire the entire day.

In Chitral during winter, temperatures can drop as low as -6 degrees Celsius or 30 degrees Fahrenheit. Not allowing Samina to get warm for the entire day may have hindered her learning for the day. Corporal punishment in school is a serious issue; it is one of the reasons that students to drop out of school, and recent reports suggest it has even been a cause of suicide among students (“Corporal punishment forcing students to commit suicide,” 2012).

5.5 Feminist touchstones

For women in Chitral, there remains a need to work towards economic, social, as well as cultural wellbeing. Third World women still struggle for economic, social, and cultural rights (Basu, 2000). I was pleasantly surprised to hear feminist themes when I asked about the impact of education on the narrators’ lives. All the narrators echoed what I recognized as feminist sentiments in their responses. Instead of using their education only for economic advancement and personal gain, the narrators want to fight for women’s rights. Once I knew about the narrators’ financial backgrounds, I expected the narrators to say they would like to start working and earning money. However, the narrators expressed that they would like to work for women’s rights and awareness for women’s education, in addition to their desire to have careers that afford comfortable economic security. Economic security can allow the narrators to take care of their parents, representing a gender role reversal from a son’s social role of supporting his parents. In the following section narrators share how they see themselves as empowered because of their education. As Nabiha said:

Education has given me the ability to think critically about many things in life. It is through education that today I can read and write about women’s issues in our

area. Along with being a teacher, I want to be a part of the community organization in my village. I would like to be a part of the community-based organization that supports the girl's school in our neighboring village. There is a dire need to motivate the families in our area about educating girls beyond high school. I want to do it because all the women need to be aware of their basic rights. I did not know until I was in college that according to Islamic Law, daughters should get 25% of her father's property. Knowing about our rights will make the women in our community stronger economically as well as socially.

Education has become a tool for Nabiha to be aware of her rights, including inheritance rights. It is mentioned in the *Quran* as well as the *Ahadith* that a daughter needs to be given half of the son's share (Jawad, 1998). Furthermore, Nabiha wishes to help more girls in her village as well as surrounding villages to get college-level educations that will help them be more aware of their rights and improve their social as well as economic status. There are community-based organizations throughout Chitral that work for the social, cultural, and economic wellbeing of the area. Nabiha wishes to be a part of the education-based community organizations that work to uplift women's status in the community.

Alyla also wants to be a women's rights advocate and fight against discrimination against women. Alyla said:

There is not a single day in my life that I do not think about contributing to change the double standards of our society. In our society woman is the symbol of honor... yet, on our way to school we were harassed. What happened to women the honor of the family and honor of the community? Because of my education, I have access to all the knowledge in the world. I can read, write, and comprehend

in English, which is an international language. English gives me more of an advantage. The more I attain knowledge about women's rights from different parts of the world, the more I am aware of the lies and double standards of our society. Men never tell us about our rights but will drum into our heads that the family's honor is dependent on us. I am most disappointed when I see educated men talking against women's rights. I have heard some of my male teachers lecturing our male class fellows about not letting women outside of her *Chardar*¹⁰ and *Chardiwar*¹¹, and it disgusts me.

Alyla has become a women's rights activist and wishes to continue to fight discrimination against women. Alyla's desire to fight for women's rights is aided by her education, which she sees as a privilege that has enabled her to have access to knowledge from different parts of the world. Her education provides a framework for her to fight for her and her fellow women's rights in Chitral. The concept of Chadar and Chardiwari literally means the veil and the four walls of one's house. It is a concept reinforced under the Islamization program during the regime of the Pakistani military dictator Zia-ul-Haq (Kothari, 2005). Since the introduction of the program during his regime 1979-1988, there are people, such as Alyla's teachers, who are enforcing women's confinement within the four walls of their house or under a veil, and this thinking is still supported by the Sharia laws in Pakistani Sharia courts. The Sharia legal system in Pakistan operates parallel to Pakistan's federal and provincial judicial systems.

The narrators through their stories indicate that they are still at times bound by the traditions and customs of their villages, but they are proud when men in the family support their education. Approval from those who hold the power is important. At the same time these

¹⁰ Cloak to cover the entire body and part of the face (Veil)

¹¹ The four walls of the house

women, because of their educations, find themselves in a borderland where they do not perfectly fit into the cultural and tradition-bound roles prescribed for women. Yet they can't fully express their thoughts, either. They are still finding, negotiating their own new place as something of social oddities in conservative social contexts. In a sense, they occupy a borderland. Here I refer to Anzaldúa's (1987) definition of a borderland as a "vague and undetermined place created by the emotional residue of an unnatural boundary ... in a constant state of transition" (p. 25). This ill-fitting social location I identify as a "third space" where normative categories and binaries fail to account for particular experiences. These college-age women are not disregarding their traditions and customs, nor are they opposing the new knowledge that they have acquired through their education. They don't reject their ethnic traditions and religion, yet they see no reason not to question their rights as Muslim women or to advocate for women's rights. When they visit their villages, they are just college-educated women; they also embody the role of loving community daughter while also advocating for their community little sisters.

Chapter 6. Analysis: Interpreting the Third Space

To analyze the narratives of these college-level Chitrali women, I must acknowledge my interpretive standpoint as an *insider without*, as a Third World feminist. While sharing nearly identical backgrounds with the narrators, I have moved away both geographically and academically from these women. Thus, as a Third World woman of color feminist, I have focused on how the narrators make meaning of their educational journeys as I have made meaning from my own educational journey. Here I argue that through their narratives, the narrators reveal how they navigate the third space, and the tactics the narrators employ as survival strategies represent an indigenous form of third space feminism.

However, I begin this analysis by examining the importance of education in Chitral, Pakistan. I, like the narrators, believe that Chitrali women must be educated in order for them to be aware of and fight for their rights. As a Western-educated, Third World feminist influenced by postcolonial feminism, I argue that the Pakistani formal educational system is a crucial aspect of the Chitrali social structure. I view education as critical for human resource development and essential for Pakistan's economic growth. I see educational programs not just as a matter of social justice but as an opportunity to promote economic growth, social well-being, and social stability (Goel, 2004). Even though the Pakistani educational system is an extension of the neoliberal form of education, I maintain that this education is still important for Pakistani women, who must be educated in order to continue fighting for their rights at local and international levels. As Nabiha, one of the narrators, says, education has equipped her with the knowledge of her rights in Islam, which women like her mother are unaware of since they cannot

read or write. In my opinion, the form of education followed in Pakistan today is a legacy of the colonizers. It is this neoliberal form of education that focuses on equipping the population with educational skills to fuel the capitalist economic system of the developing country of Pakistan. This form of education is a replica of the one followed in Britain, my country's colonizer. Thus, in Pakistan, as in Britain, this education does not come free. There are fees associated with the quality of this education, which become difficult for many to pay, such as the narrators in the present study. In this form of education, teaching is a form of delivery, and the students race to accumulate certifications to help them find jobs, instead of learning for the sake of creativity, dialogue, or social use. Nevertheless, despite the criticisms of this educational system, it is important for Pakistani women to be able to read and write in order to learn about their legal, political, religious, and cultural rights. Thus, this tension between a Western-style form of education, including the narrators' college curricula, and the narrators' positionalities as impoverished tribal Muslim women in a rural region of a so-called Third World country that is a former British colony becomes one way of understanding the narrators' stories as emerging from the third space—a between-ness of material and symbolic location—that is neither here nor there but always stitching together the most unlikely poles of binaries such as colonial/postcolonial, religious/sacred and educational/secular, and, yes, college-educated Chitrali woman.

I see these tensions to a large extent because of my own position as a Third World feminist studying in the United States. I also live in third spaces. I am outside my own Chitrali culture, society, and geography. Yet I believe my position as an *insider without* has enabled me to interpret and to some extent translate the narrators' experiences as not just emerging from the third space but as shattering both the narrators' own social order in Chitral *and* a Western interpretive impulse to see the narrators' stories "under Western eyes" (Mohanty, 1988).

Third space feminism, according to Pérez, requires a “decolonial imaginary” to get at the intangible places where women have always been more than mere victims, but instead “survive and persist” (Pérez, 1999, p. 6). The decolonial imaginary when focused on received knowledge reveals the invisible and silenced, who, it turns out, are nonetheless present and active, even subversive, such as the oral history narrators and their families. Bañuelos (2006) writes, “Emma Pérez’s (1999) third space feminism is the site of negotiation from which marginalized women speak and their ‘agency is enacted’” (p. 96). The decolonial imaginary as a method, then, pries apart interstitial spaces—third spaces—between normative symbolic and material categories, including, for example, college-educated Chitrali woman. Beyond the thinness of academic literature on women’s education in Pakistan, let alone Chitral, research and scholarship on gender issues in education tend to overlook the voices of girls and women. Moreover, the seven oral histories included stories, experiences, and feelings that the narrators had never thought about before or shared with anyone.

More than not privileged, but rather mostly ignored as irrelevant, existence in third spaces requires interpretive strategies for reconciling apparent contradictions such that little girls walking to school are sexually harassed in the bazaar by fathers, uncles, and brothers who locate their family honor in the chastity and obedience of daughters, nieces, and sisters, who must walk through the bazaar to attend school... and so on. Villenas (2006) describes the third space as “where political, social, and cultural dilemmas are always in the process of being worked out even as the lessons of the body, of everyday ritual, and of the spoken voice both clash and conspire” (p. 152).

Making sense of such dilemmas, as well as surviving their material consequences, is an achievement, which in turn becomes a kind of pedagogy passed on inter-generationally

(Villenas, 2006). Indeed, the fact of survival, while ordinary, is itself a form of resistance.

Afeefa's mother, abandoned by her husband, as a single-mother in Chitral Pakistan, reared and educated five daughters. Afeefa's recognition of her mother's strength is a sign that Afeefa has had another kind of education from her mother about what women can accomplish. Afeefa, combining these lessons with her college education, espouses an organic indigenous feminism addressing the specifics of the society in which she lives, including the need to educate women for the sake of girls and women and the society as a whole.

Third space tactics may not be in direct opposition to the status quo because such opposition can be dangerous; instead, third space tactics are more subtle and stealthy, surviving codependent with the dominant power structure and over time transforming it into something else. One tactic Bhabha (1990) describes is "translation," "a way of imitating, but in a mischievous, displacing sense" (p. 210). For example, Shabana performed the role of obedient daughter when her father's neighbor needed help deciphering the directions for his medicine. The irony was not lost on Shabana, but she did not eschew the opportunity to demonstrate the value of education to her community, while disguised as an obedient woman using her skill to serve men, per gender custom. Similarly, Pérez (1999) describes "doubling," which seems to mimic the social order's rules while changing them. Both Musarat and Nabiha, like Shabana, are strategic about how they present themselves when they interact with their extended families and village neighbors; the narrators do their best to fit in and avoid drawing attention to the fact of their differences due to education; they mirror or "double" tradition. However, these narrators also mentor their younger sisters, cousins, and nieces, and try to persuade people about the importance of education for girls. Shabana also described a doubling tactic when she said, "I am one of them; my education does not change that, but what I can try to change is the attitude

towards girls' education." She embraces the existing order ("I am one of them") as she changes it ("I can try to change...the attitude towards girls' education").

Over time, the results of such tactics give "rise to something different, something new and unrecognizable" (Bhabha, 1990, p. 211). The narrators' stories demonstrate a different kind of formerly undocumented third space activism and promise a hopeful future for women's justice in Northern Chitral. Bhabha writes, "This third space displaces the histories that constitute it, and sets up new structures of authority, new political initiatives, which are inadequately understood through received wisdom" (p. 211). Of course, it remains to be seen if the narrators, and their college peers, can find employment outside the home, whether as teachers and education advocates or, for example, bankers. Thus, it will be important to continue to research the educational experiences of women from this part of the world, not to mention support the causes they describe as important.

Third space feminism has been described as the site of negotiation from which marginalized women engage in practices that displace dominant ideas (Anzaldúa, 1987; Bañuelos, 2006; Khan, 1998; Licona, 2005; Pérez, 1999; Sandoval, 1991, 2000; Villenas, 2006). In the present case, the Chitrali women who narrated their oral histories live in a largely isolated rural religiously and tribally patriarchal and conservative society where many rely on subsistence farming. These women also attend Western-style colleges in the tradition of their country's colonizers. As their transcripts show, they see nothing extraordinary about being both practicing Muslims and activists for progressive social change on behalf of women. For example, as Alyla said:

The more I attain knowledge about women's rights from different parts of the world, the more I am aware of the lies and double standards of our society. Men

never tell us about our rights but will drum into our heads that the family's honor is dependent on us.

She combines what she learns from “different parts of the world” with “our society.” There are no social scripts or cultural narratives for living with these apparent tensions; nevertheless, the narrators do. Indeed, if third space feminism ruptures old ways of thinking, then the narrators are third space feminists deploying savvy strategies that change attitudes about women and women's education without drawing censure or worse in a country where education, especially Western-style education, is increasingly viewed with suspicion and where it is literally dangerous for girls to go to school.

Chapter 7. Conclusion

There has been a positive change in women's education in Chitral since the early 1980's (Khan, 2008; Nadeem, Elahi, Hadi, & Uddin, 2009). On the whole, the change in women's education in Pakistan, Chitral in particular, has been scarcely recorded, let alone studied, and existing literature on this topic is almost exclusively in quantitative form. Through this collection of oral histories of the educational experiences of college-going women in Chitral, I highlighted the problems these women face on a daily basis and how they have been able to overcome difficult situations to achieve their educational goals.

In researching Chitrali women's experiences, I came across only three studies. The first one, by Pardhan (2005), centered on women in Booni Valley, Chitral, and described the value of education in terms of language proficiency. Second, Liljegren (2002) observed that education increased bride price and could protect a woman from manual labor in the service of her husband's family.

The third more recent study that I came across was Ali's (2014) thesis on the predicaments of empowerment described in terms of women's experiences of change from Northern Pakistan. Her participants described profound personality and behavioral changes in their daily lives as a result of acquired skills and knowledge. However, Ali notes that due to their newfound knowledge and awareness, the women participants also encountered new challenges, conflicts, and roadblocks in their lives. Ali argues that the consciousness of one's disadvantaged position is key to initiating change, and this raised consciousness leads individual women to struggle for changes in relations of power at various levels in their lives.

My thesis joins this slim body of work. In their oral histories, the narrators in the present study highlighted the issues that they faced in order to continue their educational journeys. The women shared the sacrifices and supports their families made, as well as the tensions they negotiate from their families to their communities. The narrators also voiced their goals to be a part of community-based organizations in order to work alongside men in the community to make things better for women in the future. I argue that the narrators' stories illustrate the third space, a mostly invisible social positionality, and suggest that the narrators' descriptions of their own activism are compatible with third space feminism, a politics of materializing social change from the third space.

All the narrators' stories echoed the consequences of long distances between home and school. The narrators identified the distance from school as being a major challenge, not just in terms of physically punishing walks to school but also in terms of backlash from the men in the society, including their own male family members. Travelling long distances for girls is associated with the girls being exposed to men on their way to school, and this raises fears of girls' eloping. As Samina explained, when one of the girls from her school eloped, it took her two years to convince her father and uncle to let her continue with her schooling. Elopement represents more than the loss of a family's honor. Elopement represents loss of patriarchal control over daughters, along with controlling political and economic alliances within and across communities. Traveling long distances to school caused rifts within families; it created tension between the participants and their male family members. In addition to the social backlash, participants traveling long distances to their schools took a physical toll, especially in the wintertime, when frostbite might leave the girls unable to write once at school. This infraction, among others, led to corporal punishment.

I have interpreted the narrators' stories through third space feminism by using Pérez's (1999) decolonial imaginary that tries foreground those who are hidden in the background. Through that lens, I see the narrators as living in borderland and interstitial circumstances, such that the literature fails to account for their experiences. Moreover, the narrators' own accounts of their experiences describe in-between social positionalities, as well as intuitive tactics for navigating the contradictions and tensions of their lives. Bhabha (1990) describes similar tactics from the third space in terms of translation, which is to say the narrators seem to replicate the existing status quo while they also displace it with something different. The narrators do not conform to regular social categories of a Chitrali woman. These women belong to the remote rural ethnic Muslim patriarchal society of Chitral, but they are attending Western-style colleges in the tradition of Pakistan's British colonizers. At the same time, the narrators deploy their third space positions to canny advantage. From their third space positionality, the narrators improvise ways to survive and thrive, and, what is more, to take care of their families, and the narrators in respecting their religion and traditions, earn the respect of the men in their families and communities. In turn, this respect gives the narrators some agency to use their education to improve the lives of the girls and women in their families and communities.

In doing this thesis work, I also am negotiating some tensions and contradictions. While sharing a nearly identical background with the narrators, I have geographically and academically moved away from the narrators. I attempt to expand the literature with the voices of women like me except that they currently reside in a so-called Third World country. At the same time, this project necessitates that I mediate the voices of the narrators in order to represent them, and to do so as responsibly as I can. I shared with the participants my own educational experiences, a practice in line with the feminist principle of reciprocity in research (Ashraf, 2007). As I talked

about my experiences in my own educational journey of self-discovery, I developed emotional connections with the narrators. They called me “Kai”—older sister—during our conversations. Though I have not been able to keep in touch with the narrators, there is not a single day that I do not think about them. My bond with the narrators did not end with the collection of the oral histories. I hope in the future to reconnect with all the narrators via phone to let them know that I did not disappear after we shared the most personal experiences of our lives. When I reflect on my communication with the narrators, I realize that my connection with the narrators in part has depended on me revealing my own educational stories. For instance, like Alyla, I had to leave my family to go to school. When I was in 8th grade I could no longer study in Chitral, as my parents wanted me to get an international education unavailable in any school in Chitral. Thus, I enrolled in a school in Peshawar, which followed the British educational system. This meant I had to be away from my parents and live with my uncle’s family. The British system of education in the context of Pakistan is seen as a symbol of privilege as well as a gateway into prominent colleges and universities in Pakistan (Naeem & Rizvi, 2011). In the race to provide my siblings and me with the best education they could buy, my parents sacrificed our family life. I was away from my family and missed them a lot, but I had to be away from home like Samina, Alyla, and Falak. My educational institution, too, was far from my home.

Unlike the narrators, however, my parents are educated and had well-paying jobs when I was in school. Yet even with such employment, they sacrificed to send my siblings and me to the best but most expensive private schools. My parents did not concentrate on owning a house; they instead invested more than half of their monthly paychecks on our educational needs. Like Afeefa’s mother, my mother avoided spending money on new clothes as her work colleagues did. My mother preferred saving money for our college educations. Yet I am not like Nabiha,

whose mother is illiterate. My mother has a master's degree. She is an activist. I learned my educational activism from my mother in the same kind of third space mother-daughter pedagogy that Villenas (2006) described. I observed my mother's role-modeling through struggle in a patriarchal society that views intelligent women as a liability. I come from a family that advocates for gender equality, though I have relatives who were not comfortable with the idea of me attending a co-educational school. I remember one of my distant relatives saying it was absurd to spend so much money on educating a girl child (me) who was going to get married. He reasoned that there would be no return on investment. Like Falak's uncles who were against higher education, my uncle believed that my education was not a good investment.

Like Falak and Samina, while attending a small private community-based school in Chitral, I experienced corporal punishment at the hands of my teachers, and at times for unknown reasons. I saw my classmates beaten with sticks and their hands bleeding. I have cried for their pain, and, to this day, I remember the faces of the teachers who used to hit us. Although the beatings or physical punishments were cloaked under the banner of discipline, they were misuses of power and authority. Being a part of the same education system and the same community as the narrators, I had similar life experiences. This enabled me to empathize and understand the position and experiences of the narrators in their quest to get higher education. On the other hand, growing up in Chitral, I came from an upper middleclass family; I enjoyed a socio-economic status much higher than the narrators.

While attempting to expand the literature with the voices of the narrators in this thesis project, I observed the narrators occupying the third space by making sense of their everyday dilemmas, which is a form of resistance. The stories of the narrators show that they see nothing unusual about being activists for women's rights while at the same time being devout Muslims.

There are no set guidelines available for these women on how to live with these tensions, yet they are successfully doing just that. The narrators in the present oral history occupy the third space by using the tactics of the third space such as “doubling,” which Pérez (1999) describes as mirroring the social order’s rules while also changing them. Through the transcripts we can see the narrators interpreting the lived dilemmas and contradictions of their everyday experiences into something “new and unrecognizable” (Bhabha, 1990), a ground for them to install strategies that change attitudes about women and women’s education without drawing criticism from the men in the community. As Nabiha said, “As a part of community-based organizations, with the help of men and women in the area we can bring about change. It is the men who need more motivation as compared to women.” Nabiha suggests she thinks it is possible to enlist both women and men in social change.

This study adds a new way of looking at the lives of the Chitrali women who, in their everyday lives, are supplanting old ways of thinking without drawing negative attention to the social change that they are setting into motion to improve Chitrali women’s lives. The narrators occupy the third space by combining what they learn through their education with the social status quo.

As I began interviewing, I was confident that it would all be smooth sailing. I thought this because I am a Chitrali woman, and I know many people in Chitral who potentially could help me achieve my goals. Once I got in touch with the first potential hostel, through which I hoped to contact the students for oral history interviews, I was disappointed to discover that I would not be able to do so because of recent threats from the Taliban targeting Ismaili communities in Chitral, Pakistan. The matron of the hostel informed me that she did not want to put her students at risk. She was not persuaded even after I explained that no information printed in the

transcribed narratives or in the final thesis would identify her, the hostel, or student participants. Because of the roadblock I experienced with the first hostel, I had to contact another one. At times I have wondered if any narrators would have contacted me if the second hostel's matron had not been the one to circulate my call for volunteers email. Did the narrators contact me only because they were interested in participating in the study, or were they somehow impelled to contact me because of the matron's authority? Later, while talking to the narrators, we matched stories about our schooling experiences, and I wonder what different stories the narrators might have shared if I had not shared my own history. Yet I believe the students were forthright with me because of our similar pasts.

Being a Chitrali woman researcher benefitted me because it meant I was familiar with the culture, language, and religion of the narrators. For a non-Chitrali researcher, this research project would likely be more difficult as it would require that person to maneuver uncounted cultural and linguistic barriers. When I reflect upon my situation, I wonder if I would have collected all the narratives if I were not Chitrali. I do not think so. I took advantage of being a Chitrali woman to conduct these oral history narratives to serve the purpose of my thesis requirement. This by no means indicates that I am not interested in studying the educational experiences of women in Chitral. But I find myself acknowledging the one-sided nature of academic research, even when the researcher's intentions are sincere.

Through this oral history project I was able to collect only seven viable oral histories. It is a limitation of the study that seven life stories cannot represent all Chitrali college women, let alone all Chitrali women. Of these seven narrators, six of the narrators came from rural backgrounds, and all of the narrators were Ismaili Muslims. The study does not record the educational experiences of Chitrali women from the Sunni sect of Islam or the Kalash; nor does

it include voices of women from the more urban areas of Chitral. As an Ismaili feminist researcher, I looked forward to recording oral histories of non-Ismaili students. The hostel through which I had sent out my recruitment email caters to students from all religious groups, and so I was optimistic that some non-Ismaili students would volunteer. Unfortunately, only Ismaili students expressed interest in participating in this project, and I have to wonder now if that also is somehow a significant but undocumented finding that speaks to the communication and self-segregation patterns of religious subgroups living in the hostel, if not in Chitral in general. Considering how the perspectives about women's education are different for people of different religions, having more diversity in the religious backgrounds of the narrators would have enhanced the research, along with the representativeness of the oral histories. On the other hand, religious homogeneity among the narrators helped to achieve a certain degree of saturation thus repetitive validity among the narrative themes.

Postcolonial feminists such as Mohanty (1988, 2003) argue that Third World women's knowledge is often colonized by western feminists. Western feminists too often have depicted Third World women as hopeless, oppressed, uneducated, and submissive (Chilisa, 2011). In the present case, there remains a need for researchers, western and non-western, and feminist or otherwise, to concentrate on the qualitative aspects associated with women's education in Chitral. We have seen a change in the literacy rates for Chitrali women but have not accounted for their experiences.

From the narratives in the current project, we can witness hardships that the narrators faced in order to achieve an education and also the ways they made sense of those hardships. It will be important to continue to record the personal accounts of women who have been a part of the educational system because they provide credible narratives of the lived experiences of the

women participating in this specific institution. Furthermore, it is important to include the voices of Chitrali women in the greater canon of feminist scholarship. As I mentioned, one of the shortfalls of this project was that I was unable to collect the oral histories of any non-Ismaili women. I hope that in the future other scholars will be able to include the voices of non-Ismaili women.

Samina said that a new school in her village made life easier for her siblings. However, in some areas, the situation remains difficult. Falak explained that she feels sorry for her younger cousins who still travel up to an hour and half every day on foot to attend school. To tackle issues of school availability and quality, some communities in Pakistan encourage non-governmental organizations and religious organizations to set up schools (Chudgar, & Shafiq, 2010). In developing countries where government schools have not been established, non-government groups often have filled the gap by establishing low-cost private schools (Mcloughlin, 2013). According to Annual Status of Education Reports (ASERs), in Pakistan in 2012, 59% of children in urban areas and 23% in rural areas were enrolled in private schools (Mcloughlin, 2013). However, this does not come cheaply for the mostly subsistence farming families of Chitral, and still some families cannot afford even the low-cost private schools. In my opinion, it is the government's responsibility to establish more schools and more transportation systems and options for the students who travel long distances to attend school. One can argue the problems with western ideas about universal education, and one can critique the economic logics of universal education in which women's education is no more than a means to a nationalist end of healthy economy and citizenry. Yet, at the end of the day, intellectual debates do little to improve the lives of real women or the societies in which they live, and they mostly

do not ask real women what value they ascribe to education or what form of education they deem valuable.

Along with establishing schools that girls can access easily, I believe it is the government's responsibility to enlist Pakistani men to help change the culture that sees no value in educating girls and is insecure about educated women. Often, it is the mothers or other female family members who are more than willing to educate the girls. But they have no support from the men in the family, and so it becomes impossible to send daughters to school. The narrators in this project aim to achieve a better future for women by becoming involved in community-based organizations and by becoming future educators. But they understand that little change can proceed without the cooperation of men, who still have all the official formal power.

While sharing the stories of the sacrifices that their families made in order for them to attend school, all the narrators shared their goal of paying back. They all expressed a desire to work for women's rights and education, in addition to their desire to having careers. For example, some would like to get well-paying jobs so that they could help their families' financial situations. A very important interest that these young women shared was of working with their communities to make education more accessible for young women. Shabana wishes to earn a master's degree and work with an educational organization to educate girls in her village. Musarat hopes to teach after college and ultimately earn a graduate degree. Nabiha, for instance, wishes to be a part of the educational community organizations that work to uplift women's status in the community. These women want to work with their communities to increase awareness about women's universal human rights as well as their rights in Islam.

To improve the educational journeys of women in the future, the government, non-government organizations, men, and teachers in schools must work together. Communities must be motivated and educated about the rights of women and education as a universal human right. We can leave it to the communities to determine what comprises a complete education that is equal for girls and boys. Then girls and women need financial and psychosocial assistance to achieve their educational goals.

The oral histories that I have presented here are insights into what women in Chitral experience to attain an education. Every narrator in this project had different experiences based on her location and socio-economic background, yet they all shared similar experiences. They also all employed survival tactics that can be described as feminist—third space feminist—breaking down old ways of thinking to change attitudes about women and women’s education. In one way, the narrators who are a part of this project are the privileged ones to enjoy the opportunity to pursue a college education with the support of their families and educational charities. Pérez (1999) writes, “If the colonial imaginary hides something, then the decolonial imaginary teetering in the third space recognizes what is left out” (p. 55). As she notes, “Through the decolonial imaginary, the silent gain their agency” (p. 33). There remains a need for further studies recording the voices and experiences of Chitrali women, who are invisible in society but nonetheless are enacting social change.

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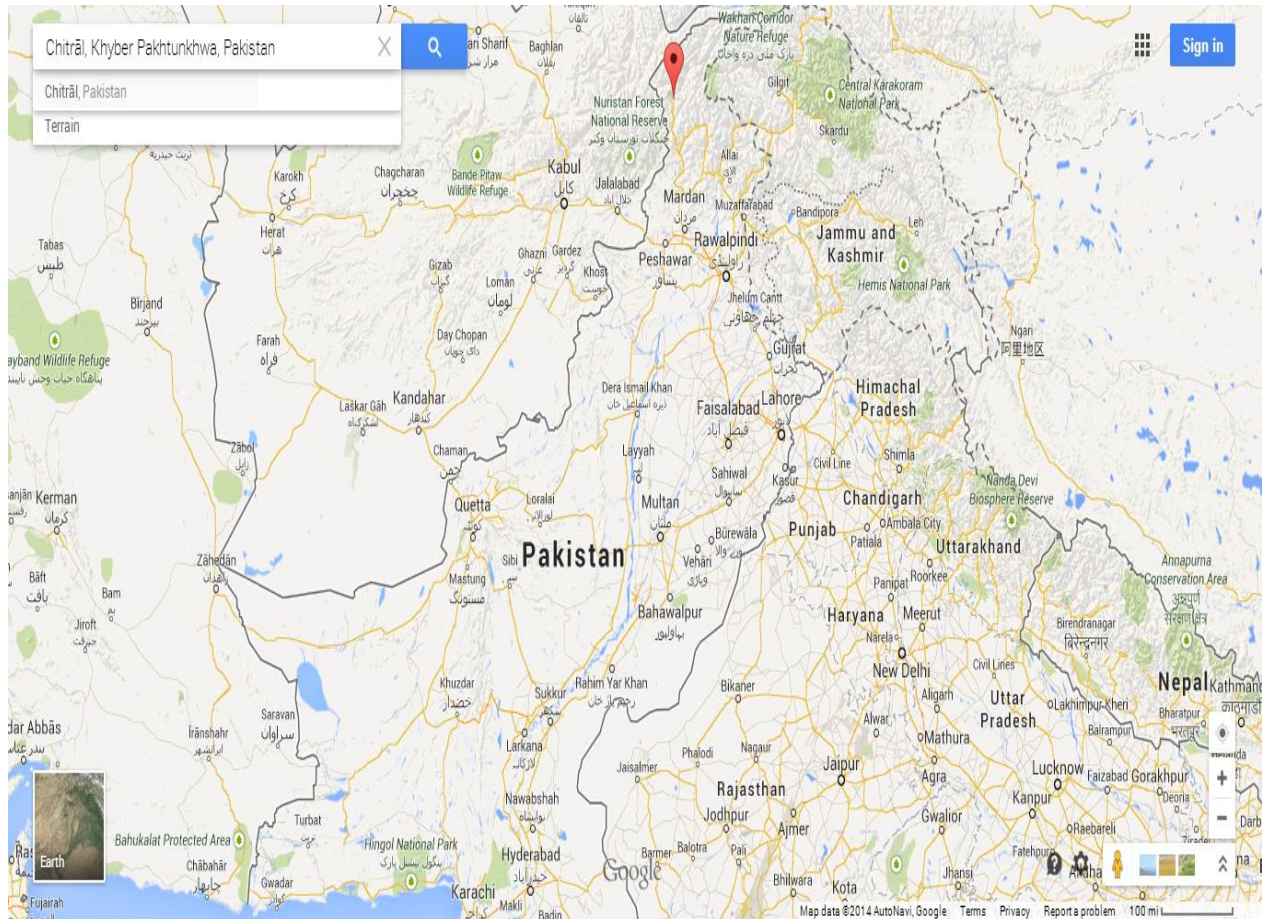
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Appendices

Appendix A: Map of Chitral, Pakistan



Appendix B. IRB study approval letter



RESEARCH INTEGRITY AND COMPLIANCE
Institutional Review Boards, FWA No. 00001669
12901 Bruce B. Downs Blvd., MDC035 • Tampa, FL 33612-4799
(813) 974-5638 • FAX (813) 974-7091

October 24, 2013

FNU Rakshinda

Women's & Gender Studies Tampa,
FL 33618

RE: **Expedited Approval for Initial Review**

IRB#: Pro00013285

Title: Interpretations of Educational Experiences by Women In Chitral, Paksitan.

Study Approval Period: 10/23/2013 to 10/23/2014

Dear Ms. Rakshinda:

On 10/23/2013, the Institutional Review Board (IRB) reviewed and **APPROVED** the above application and all documents outlined below.

Approved Item(s):

Protocol Document(s):

[Thesis protocol](#)

Consent/Assent Document(s)*:

[Adult IC.pdf](#)

[Translated Consent Form-Urdu.pdf.pdf](#)

*Please use only the official IRB stamped informed consent/assent document(s) found under the "Attachments" tab. Please note, these consent/assent document(s) are only valid during the approval period indicated at the top of the form(s).

It was the determination of the IRB that your study qualified for expedited review which includes activities that (1) present no more than minimal risk to human subjects, and (2) involve only procedures listed in one or more of the categories outlined below. The IRB may review research

through the expedited review procedure authorized by 45CFR46.110 and 21 CFR 56.110. The research proposed in this study is categorized under the following expedited review category:

- (6) Collection of data from voice, video, digital, or image recordings made for research purposes.
- (7) Research on individual or group characteristics or behavior (including, but not limited to, research on perception, cognition, motivation, identity, language, communication, cultural beliefs or practices, and social behavior) or research employing survey, interview, oral history, focus group, program evaluation, human factors evaluation, or quality assurance methodologies.

As the principal investigator of this study, it is your responsibility to conduct this study in accordance with IRB policies and procedures and as approved by the IRB. Any changes to the approved research must be submitted to the IRB for review and approval by an amendment.

We appreciate your dedication to the ethical conduct of human subject research at the University of South Florida and your continued commitment to human research protections. If you have any questions regarding this matter, please call 813-974-5638.

Sincerely,



Kristen Salomon, Ph.D., Vice Chairperson

USF Institutional Review Board