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JOURNAL ON EDUCATION IN EMERGENCIES

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Education and Empowered Citizenship in Mali by Jaimie Bleck

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EDITORIAL NOTE

EDITORIAL BOARD

We are pleased to announce the second issue of the *Journal on Education in Emergencies (JEiE)*. This issue features articles that analyze educational programs for marginalized and vulnerable populations living in a wide range of circumstances of crisis or conflict, and that examine resilience as a response to these emergency settings. Given the recent increase in hate crimes in the U.S. and much of Europe, the rise of misogyny and racism around the globe, and growing fears of refugees, “outsiders,” and those who appear different from the mainstream, the importance of research focused on marginalization and on efforts to bridge social divides takes on a heightened sense of urgency. Although all of the articles in this issue were written before the recent voter upheavals in the U.K. and the U.S., many of the ideas they address speak to these divides—as the field of education in emergencies has always attempted to do.

Paradoxically for educators working and writing in the field of education in emergencies, despite the surge of hostility toward immigrants and refugees in the past several years, we also have seen an exponential increase in attention to education in countries affected by conflict. This has brought new actors to focus on these issues (e.g., Gordon Brown, Erna Solberg, Malala Yousefzai) and new efforts to promote education in these contexts. Although this attention provides an important opening for *JEiE*, it simultaneously underscores the tension between internationalizing initiatives like the journal on the one hand, and the national, inward-looking responses from those who feel left out of the global economy and citizenry on the other. Most of the populations described in the articles in this issue live on the edge of the globalized world, where they face inequity, social marginalization, and violence, in both conflict-affected rural villages in Afghanistan and the urban metropolis of Delhi, India.

Although *JEiE* sits squarely on the side of international cooperation and collective action, it also speaks to the concerns and challenges faced by marginalized populations who may be left out of unequal economic arrangements or be left on the sidelines by intensifying global communications and interconnectedness. We hope the articles in this issue will help us move forward collectively to increase support for the marginalized populations living in conflict or crisis anywhere,

and to understand factors that may promote their participation and sense of belonging in society. In the following, we provide a brief overview of the fall 2016 issue of *JEiE* and a short comment on what we hope this work will achieve.

FALL 2016 ISSUE OVERVIEW

JEiE features theoretical or empirical research articles that address key questions that have been raised by emergency education programs or are related to populations living in crisis, and they contribute to the evidence and the advancement of knowledge on EiE. The field notes are often written by practitioners or hybrid practitioner-researcher teams who are working with or studying the work of an implementing partner. They address innovative or unusual approaches, progress, and challenges in designing, implementing, and evaluating EiE programs or initiatives, and may include critical reflections about questions that these initiatives raise.

This issue of *JEiE* contains five articles (three research articles and two field notes) and three book reviews that cover a range of regions, scholarly and policy topics, and types of research design. The first research article, “Finding a Way Forward: Conceptualizing Sustainability in Afghanistan’s Community-Based Schools,” explores issues critical to the sustainability of community-based education (CBE) in Afghanistan. As authors Michelle Bellino, Zuhra Faizi, and Nirali Mehta note, CBE models “have gained recognition across diverse contexts for closing access gaps, leveraging local assets, and shaping cost-effective and culturally relevant educational opportunities in marginalized communities” (p. 11). One key reason to promote CBE is to ensure that marginalized rural communities, and especially the girls who live in them, are able to access the kind of educational opportunities that are more readily available to economically advantaged urban populations. However, remaining questions about the sustainability of CBE threaten to undermine its purpose and long-term prospects. The authors conducted interviews and observations with parents, teachers, students, educational officers, and school *shuras* (management committees) across eight communities in two of Afghanistan’s 34 provinces, which enabled them to hear directly from local community members about their experiences with and perceptions of CBE. The authors argue that “the success of CBE models depends on how various actors define sustainability and what it is the model is seeking to sustain . . . [I]ncreased community interest and capacity to sustain CBE is at odds with the current policy approach, which anticipates the eventual handover of all community-based schools to the government” (p. 11). This article speaks to the

importance of providing continuous, quality education to marginalized rural communities—not only in Afghanistan but around the world.

In the next research article, “*Will you send your daughter to school? Norms, Violence, and Girls’ Education in Uruzgan, Afghanistan*,” authors Dana Burde and Jehanzaib Khan continue the focus on Afghanistan in this issue. They use survey data and complementary qualitative interview data to explore why parents choose to send their boys and girls to school in Uruzgan, Afghanistan; what prevents them from doing so; and what kinds of normative tensions emerge as they face these decisions. The authors share three significant findings: First, that parents who send both sons and daughters to school are more likely to prioritize the value of education. Second, that parents who report experiencing or having personal knowledge of a higher number of attacks against education are less likely to send their children to school. Finally, the authors note that “normative struggles over girls’ education take place primarily within the local community and society rather than between foreign organizations and the local population” (p. 42). Regardless of their own level of education and, in some cases, whether or not their children attend school, both men and women in these Afghan villages cite tenets of Islam as a key motivation for educating girls as well as boys. The authors conclude that the greater challenge for aid workers is therefore pragmatic (ensuring security) rather than normative (diffusing beliefs about the appropriateness of education).

The last research article in this issue, “Resilience of LGBTQIA Students on Delhi Campuses” by Anjali Krishan, Apurva Rastogi, and Suneeta Singh, assesses the impact of a recent law that re-criminalized homosexuality in India. The article describes how this law has affected lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans*, queer, intersex, and asexual/ally (LGBTQIA) communities on college campuses in Delhi and explores students’ resilience—a common framework used to understand coping mechanisms during crisis. As the authors note, the Indian LGBTQIA community “moved overnight from an era of cautious optimism into one in which homophobia is legally sanctioned” (p. 83), thus propelling them into a state of crisis. The law renewed LGBTQIA community members’ vulnerability to discrimination, exclusion, and threats of physical violence. The authors examine how the law has affected university students on Delhi campuses as they face legal and social persecution. They show how, although “protective and promotive resilience strategies” (p. 81) help them cope, these students still struggle to gain acceptance of their LGBTQIA identity within a context of fear of persecution and abuse. Through qualitative interviews, focus groups, and survey research, the authors identify strategies that can lead to positive, lasting social change.

The first field note in this issue of *JEiE* is taken from ethnographic observations conducted during what seems to some an unfortunate moment in U.S. history—the military occupation of Iraq. The article, “A School Under Fire: The Fog of Educational Practice in War” by Kathe Jervis, presents her account of studying an unusual school and her observations of this little-known footnote in the history of the U.S. military occupation in Iraq. In mid-2007, when the war in Iraq was at its height, the author accepted a job documenting the beginnings of a school designed and operated by the U.S. military in Iraq for Iraqi juveniles captured in war. The author was tasked with (1) documenting the situation of the approximately 900 teenage Iraqi detainees in this school run by the U.S. military, and (2) describing their educational program and leisure-time activities. Data collection included both semi-structured and informal conversations with the detainees, their teachers and guards, other soldiers with whom they came in contact, and those in the military hierarchy who made decisions about the curriculum, as well as extended observations of the students’ daily life in school. The author’s aim was to note elements missing from the program, raise questions about texts and materials, and offer ideas to decision-makers as the school developed. The article is adapted from the field notes and interview data the author maintained as part of this assignment. In addition to raising “questions about the role of the U.S. military in providing education to detained Iraqi juveniles,” the article offers a detailed description of daily life in the school (p. 115).

In the second field note, “School-Based Intervention in Ongoing Crisis: Lessons Learned from Implementing a Combined Psychosocial and Trauma-Focused Approach in Gaza Schools,” authors Jon-Hakon Schultz, Laura Marshall, Helen Norheim, and Karam Al-Shanti describe an effort to address the multiple priorities that most educators working in countries affected by conflict must consider as they design education in emergencies programs: local needs, local culture, international guidelines for best practice, and research-based methods. To illustrate these key points, the authors present lessons learned from the Better Learning Program—a school-based education in emergencies response in Gaza—that combined psychosocial and trauma-focused approaches while incorporating international guidelines. The intervention was designed as a “multi-level approach to help teachers, school counselors, and parents empower schoolchildren with strategies for calming and self-regulation” (p. 142). The program was carried out with 35,000 students in 40 schools over 2.5 years, the aim being to “regain lost learning capacity and strengthen resilience in the school community” (p. 142). Initially, all pupils received the intervention, but the program later focused

only on those who reported having nightmares and sleep disturbances. The field note reflects on both the intervention process and the steps involved in documenting it.

To complement these excellent and informative articles and round out the fall issue, we present three book reviews. In the first, reviewer Susan Shepler discusses *The Outcast Majority: War, Development, and Youth in Africa* by Marc Sommers (2015), published by University of Georgia Press. The book details the large gap between outcast youth in war-affected Africa and the international development enterprise, arguing that supporting these youth requires “an understanding of the marginalization, exclusion, and sense of alienation that so many experience” (p. 157). The second book, reviewed by Elizabeth Buckner, is *Arab Dawn: Arab Youth and the Demographic Dividend They Will Bring* by Bessma Momani (2015), published by University of Toronto Press. As Buckner notes, Momani describes macro-level changes that are affecting youth in the Arab world, “including globalization, rising education levels, communications technology, urbanization, and neoliberalism” (p. 161). She says the book would be an excellent choice for “an undergraduate class on globalization, youth cultures, or the Middle East,” or would “serve well as a short introduction to those unfamiliar with the region” (p. 161). The third reviewer, Yoby Guindo, examines *Education and Empowered Citizenship in Mali* by Jaimie Bleck (2015), published by Johns Hopkins University Press. Guindo notes that this book demonstrates that “increased education is correlated with more engaged forms of political participation, such as campaigning for government officials and considering a run for office” (p. 163). Guindo considers Bleck’s arguments well structured, well written, and believes they will likely find a strong audience among academics, as well as those interested in learning more about Mali’s political culture.

We are pleased to showcase such a wealth of scholarly work on issues critical to our field, and we hope that each article will stimulate debate and insights into issues facing vulnerable and marginalized populations around the world.

LOOKING TOWARD THE NEXT ISSUE

We are excited to continue to support and work with the INEE community and the group of scholars, policy-makers, and practitioners who focus on education in emergencies in their work. While *JEiE* strives to cover an inclusive array of theories, topics, and regions, we also will occasionally publish an issue that focuses primarily on one region or continent, or on one subject area. For example, our spring 2017 issue will be a special issue on education and peacebuilding. We will likely feature another special issue (topic to be announced) in fall 2017.

We are fortunate to have an expansive audience via the INEE and our other academic and professional networks, which ensures the extensive dissemination of these critical articles. We invite you to join us in this collective endeavor and urge you to consider submitting your EiE-related studies to *JEiE*, which we believe will deepen and broaden the power of EiE as a social movement.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank you very much to Heddy Lahmann, our tireless managing editor, without whom this issue of *JEiE* would not have been possible, and to our terrific *JEiE* interns and technical editors Kylie Garner, Sarah Haroun Sualehi, and Pamela Montalbano. Thanks to New York University for housing the journal and providing a small grant from the International Education program director's research budget to cover student staff stipends. Thank you, too, to Dean Brooks, Lindsey Fraser, and Peter Transburg at INEE, to our copy editor, Dody Riggs, and to our *JEiE* designer, Erik Ramirez, and to our many anonymous reviewers who will be acknowledged by name in our subsequent issues. Finally, we wish to note that, as with most journals, *JEiE* board members and reviewers volunteer their time to read, review, and offer feedback on all articles. Thank you, too, to these colleagues.

FINDING A WAY FORWARD: CONCEPTUALIZING SUSTAINABILITY IN AFGHANISTAN'S COMMUNITY-BASED SCHOOLS

MICHELLE J. BELLINO, BIBI-ZUHRA FAIZI, AND NIRALI MEHTA

Community-based educational (CBE) models have gained recognition across diverse contexts for closing access gaps, leveraging local assets, and shaping cost-effective and culturally relevant educational opportunities in marginalized communities. In protracted conflict contexts such as Afghanistan, CBE compensates for weak state capacity by cultivating community engagement and support. This article considers the impact of CBE in the voices of Afghanistan's educational and community stakeholders, gained through interviews and observations with parents, teachers, students, educational officers, and school shuras (councils) across eight communities in two provinces. Against a backdrop of continued insecurity, resource shortages, and uncertain projections for future government and NGO support, conceptions of sustainability emerge as salient but poorly defined, and as lacking common understanding among stakeholders about the purposes and long-term prospects of CBE. We argue that the success of CBE models depends on how various actors define sustainability and what it is the model is seeking to sustain. The study underscores three dimensions of sustainability: (1) self-reported changed attitudes toward education, (2) decisions about student transitions from community to government schools, and (3) emergent indicators of community ownership over CBE. Across these measures of sustainable attitudes, actions, and community arrangements, quality education is positioned as a mechanism for long-term community commitment. However, increased community interest and capacity to sustain CBE is at odds with the current policy approach, which anticipates the eventual handover of all community-based schools to the government.

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INTRODUCTION: “OUR CONCERNS HAVE RISEN AGAIN”

In January 2015, in the mountainous Afghan village of Chilkapa Payeen, several parents gathered to discuss the future of their children’s education. As their children completed year three of primary school, the final grade offered at the nearby community-based school (CBS), parents were now confronted with a decision: should they send their children to the government school or discontinue their studies? Early in the conversation, one mother explained that the challenges of negotiating her daughter’s educational access went hand-in-hand with questions about the future of community-based education (CBE) in Afghanistan, an arrangement intended to mitigate the effects of armed conflict during the country’s civil war and the Taliban insurgency.¹ The woman’s daughter Layla initially attended the government school, a 30-minute walk from the village through difficult terrain. As she grew older, Layla’s parents withdrew her from school due to concerns about her safety during transit and the appropriateness of coeducational settings. A community-based school was established in their village several years later, and Layla was able to resume her studies. As she was now completing year three, Layla’s parents were uncertain whether to continue their daughter’s education, which would require that she return to the government school she had previously attended. Layla’s mother explained:

Before establishing CBS my girl was not studying, because her father had stopped her from going to school. When the CBS was established, our concerns were addressed. My daughter continued her lessons here. But now, [in the face of] handing over of this CBS, our concerns have risen again, and I know her father will never allow her to go to school.

Later in the conversation, Layla’s mother raised concerns about the quality of education at the government school. She said, “We trust them [government school teachers] . . . but we do not believe that they will teach them well.” Other parents in the room agreed with her assessment that the CBS teachers, most of whom had not graduated high school but were given professional training and ongoing mentorship through NGOs, were superior to the educators at the government school, even though they had formal credentials.

¹ CBE has a long history in Afghanistan, dating back to the 1940s. Below, we further describe this policy trajectory, and the ways that CBE became more widely implemented and more closely linked to conflict mitigation during these two periods of increased armed conflict.

This family's experience sheds light on several important tensions in this fragile setting: the interruptions in children's education due to structural challenges, such as access and impressions of quality; the gender dynamics operating within families that influence educational decision-making; ongoing security concerns; and lingering questions about educational interventions that community members view as temporary. Although Layla's mother recognized that the availability of a CBS had influenced her husband's support for their daughter's education by providing a secure and culturally appropriate space for learning, the move to a government school posed the same dilemma they had faced three years earlier: long, risky walks to school and concerns about propriety. The decision was further complicated by concern that the instructional quality at the government school was inferior to that of the CBS.

Across the eight communities included in this study, parents, children, education officers, and school-based actors had the same questions on their mind: could "the organizations" [operating the CBSs] stay? And what would happen if and when they pulled out? Layla's mother and others articulated their worries clearly, projecting that the positive changes nurtured by CBS would leave with the organizations. Her uncertainty about whether the community's attitudes toward girls' education, and the national education system more broadly, had authentically changed generates questions about the embedded assumptions and visions for sustainability that underlie CBE models. It also reveals the different ways sustainability is conceived by different stakeholders: "One of the challenges in assessing sustainability is the diversity of views about *what* should be sustained" (Nkansa and Chapman 2006, 511, emphasis added). Within this context, Afghanistan's ministry of education (MoE) envisioned CBE as a time-bound strategy to increase school access during a period of conflict and weak institutional capacity; NGOs and donors understood it as a way to enhance state-provided education and offer additional technical inputs to improve quality; and, finally, communities and their children considered it a safe alternative to government schools, especially for girls. Efforts toward long-term improvements in educational attainment require that these stakeholders come to a common understanding about sustainable mechanisms and sustainable goals.

Based on interviews, focus group discussions, and observations carried out with various stakeholders in communities across two provinces in Afghanistan, this article considers the impact CBE has had in the region, as expressed through the voices of community actors. Inquiry into CBE in Afghanistan is vital to our understanding of community-based interventions, educational outreach, and public-private partnerships in conflict-affected contexts. CBE is

a much-lauded intervention in Afghanistan, which has led organizations and governments of other weak, under-resourced, and conflict-affected states to examine whether the joint benefits of policy integration and local involvement might bring similar benefits to isolated and marginalized communities that have been historically excluded from public education. It is well documented that CBE models in Afghanistan have dramatically increased the enrollment of both male and female children, improved learning outcomes, and reduced attacks on schools (Burde 2014; Burde and Linden 2013; Kavazanjian 2010; Kirk and Winthrop 2006b, 2008)—outcomes all stakeholders would consider worth sustaining. Documenting these gains has been influential in maintaining NGO and government support for CBE, but greater understanding is needed about how this intervention has (re)shaped community attitudes and cultural practices toward education, and the extent to which communities have taken ownership of the CBE model, particularly in the face of uncertain projections for future government and NGO support.

Burde (2004) warns that short-term community mobilization might result in long-term disempowerment if community involvement is viewed as an alternative rather than a complement to state accountability in providing for its citizens. We take up this issue here from the perspective of community members and through the lens of sustainability, asking how communities understand and enact their role in contributing to sustainable CBE structures and outcomes related to educational access, inclusivity, and quality. Sustainability is a significant dimension of educational planning in conflict-affected contexts and the cornerstone of the UN Sustainable Development Goals. This framework befits the Afghanistan context, as the transition from emergency relief to (presumed) post-crisis development shifts the stakes for and the involvement of international organizations, despite the fact that state capacity remains weak and insecurity remains high.

We begin this paper by examining the prevalence of CBE models in developing countries and considering their short- and long-term successes in Afghanistan and elsewhere. Drawing from studies of education reform and development, we theorize that achieving sustainability in institutionally fragile contexts requires continuous improvement and input from all stakeholders as the dynamics of conflict expand and constrain intervention goals. Within this framework, we pose relevant questions about the future of CBE in Afghanistan, oriented in particular around what it is we seek to sustain in a context experiencing protracted conflict. We then highlight the salient perspectives that emerged from our discussions with community members, which illuminate three sites for sustaining the

gains made through CBE: (1) changed attitudes toward education; (2) support for educational transitions from community to government schools; and (3) indicators of community mobilization to advocate for their children's educational rights. We argue that increased community interest and capacity to sustain CBE is at odds with the current policy approach, which calls for the eventual handover of all CBSs to the government.

COMMUNITY-BASED EDUCATION MODELS: ORIGINS, BENEFITS, AND UNCERTAIN FUTURES

Once at the center of education in developing countries, communities took on a secondary role with the growth of centralized education systems (Bray 2000). Due to a lack of resources and limited state capacity, national governments and international partners are once again leveraging community assets to meet the increasing demand for education. These collaborations are particularly relevant in conflict-affected contexts, where community engagement is needed to maintain and protect schools in hard-to-reach areas where states lack presence and oversight (Reyes 2013).

“Community-based education” is a broad term that encompasses some form of community participation, though the level of community engagement and collaboration varies greatly. Some community-based interventions are classified as alternative education programs (AEPs), in that they employ “alternative” means to reach hard-to-access learners (Farrell and Mfum-Mensah 2002). *Educados* in Honduras, for example, is an AEP developed by the country's education ministry in collaboration with USAID. It offers culturally relevant curricula and a flexible schedule to accommodate out-of-school youth and adults (Kraft 2009). It can be difficult to identify community-based models, as some local innovations have been formally integrated or mainstreamed into national systems. For instance, *Escuela Nueva*, which began as an NGO-led initiative in rural Colombia with a focus on training local teachers and using a flexible learner-centered curriculum, had such a high level of success that the government formally adopted the approach into its national education policy (McEwan 1998). Importantly, many of these innovations have taken root during periods of conflict and their aftermath, when state capacity to deliver social services was weakened or absent entirely. In other cases, these innovations have proven particularly successful at reaching learners who were denied access to education due to armed conflict.

The 1990 Jomtien Declaration and subsequent international declarations recognized the critical role NGOs play in providing education, particularly in weak and under-resourced settings (Bray 2000).² Rather than operating in parallel with government schools, most community-based schools begin as complementary systems that support children's transition into the public system, although some models are more independent from national structures than others. The Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC) is a well-established model of CBE that offers primary-level classes for more than one million children and adolescents (Chabbott 2006; Farrell 2008). BRAC has scaled-up its programming and now has a presence in Pakistan, Afghanistan, Tanzania, Uganda, Philippines, and South Sudan. NGO collaboration with national actors in these contexts has ensured that community-based schools are recognized as a legitimate form of education that helps to close access gaps and gives children a way to continue their education beyond primary grades.

Although questions of quality remain, there are a number of well-documented benefits to community involvement in schooling. Studies across diverse country contexts have shown that CBS students meet or outperform their counterparts in public schools on measures of reading, writing, and numeracy (Burde and Linden 2013; McEwan 1998; Nath, Sylva, and Grimes 1999). Some studies have shown that CBE has increased community interest in and commitment to education, while expanding inclusive and equitable access for marginalized populations (Bray 2000). Colley (2005) has reported fewer disciplinary cases in the schools since PTAs were established in rural Gambia. Community participation in Ethiopia has led to the development of culturally relevant curricula for historically marginalized groups, as well as improved school access for women and people with disabilities (Edo, Ali, and Perez 2002). Cost-sharing between multiple constituents—governments, organizations, and communities—is frequently cited as an additional advantage in under-resourced contexts (Miller-Grandvaux and Yoder 2002). Finally, Reyes (2013) argues that community engagement in school management plays a critical role in reinforcing community, school, and student resilience in the face of adversity, particularly in conflict-affected contexts.

Program coordinators and researchers who have studied the efficacy of these models have identified several mechanisms that underlie the success of CBE, including school size and location, language of instruction, the curriculum's

2 In Jomtien, Thailand, delegates from 155 countries, including Afghanistan, adopted a World Declaration on Education for All, striving to make primary education accessible to all children and immensely reduce illiteracy by the year 2000. The declaration reaffirmed the notion of education as a basic human right, and urged countries to meet the basic learning needs of all through flexible and context-sensitive methods.

relevance to local identities and practices, the level of material and professional support offered, and the extent of community members' agency in decision-making (DeStefano, Moore, Balwanz, and Hartwell 2007; Farrell and Mfum-Mensah 2002; Kirk and Winthrop 2006a, 2008). Despite celebrated successes in reaching and partnering with marginalized communities, the sustainability of these alternative community-based models is an area of study that is often neglected. Sustainability presumably depends on a government takeover of the schools and adequate allocation of resources, the community's continued involvement, or both. Yet in practice, these multiple roles, as well as the nature and timing of transitions, are rarely well defined.

WHAT WE SEEK TO SUSTAIN IN COMMUNITY-BASED INTERVENTIONS

Discussions of educational sustainability often center on the importance of material resources and technical capacity (Healey and DeStefano 1997; Zehetmeier 2015), with remarkably little consideration of the mechanisms that can sustain educational programming in the absence or reduction of external funding, particularly in fragile states that rely heavily on external donors. As Nkansa and Chapman (2006) have asked, "What remains [of community participation] after the money ends?" These authors point to four frameworks through which sustainability is traditionally conceived in international development work: economic models that continue service provision while maximizing economic benefits; sociopolitical models that transmit knowledge, skills, and capacity across generations; ecological models that emphasize the preservation of resources and attention to human interaction with the environment; and innovation-diffusion models that center on aligning interventions and local values in order to foster a sense of ownership (511–13). They then propose a synthesis model that draws from each of these frameworks while recognizing the importance of capacity and resources at both the community and "management" levels. Mendenhall (2014, 68) finds that this synthesis model, theorized in the context of a stable society, has "[limited] applicability to post-conflict environments," arguing that we need to think differently about sustainability in contexts undergoing the "relief-development transition." We particularly need to consider how the goals and the strategies employed to reach them shift, as the possibility of making sustainable gains is broadened and constrained by conflict and its long-term effects.

Education reform scholars embrace a dynamic conceptualization of sustainability that aims for ongoing improvement across a broad range of goals (Fullan 2006; Hargreaves and Fink 2003). Rather than aiming at the stasis of existing activities and systems, as earlier conceptions presumed, dynamic paradigms recognize that

the goals and mechanisms of sustainability evolve in tandem with the shifting social and political environments in which they are embedded. Fullan (2006), for example, defines educational sustainability as “the capacity of a system to engage in the complexities of continuous improvement” (114). Writing about CBE in fragile and under-resourced contexts in Pakistan, Razzaq (2016) explains that sustainability requires attention to both the product and the process. She finds that sustainability entails “continued financial support,” “trust and acceptance of the community,” “uninterrupted services,” and “integration . . . into the long-term educational vision and educational budget,” along with flexibility and a readiness to adapt strategies to the specific contexts and needs of communities (760). Building on these definitions, we argue that sustainability in fragile contexts requires attention and responsiveness to the constellation of actors and structures present in the broader postconflict environment, and their interactions over time. In aiming for continuous improvement in a system that is changing simultaneously at multiple scales through global, national, and local interactions, we need to consider the perspectives of multiple stakeholders, as well as how community resources, capacities, and subjectivities shift in response to impressions of state legitimacy and capacity to provide services.

Relatedly, there is growing attention to the need for meaningful community engagement, communal partnerships, and a sense of community ownership at the outset of CBE arrangements, to help ensure that communities remain invested in the long-term (Razzaq 2015, 2016). For example, Nkansa and Chapman (2006) found that, following the withdrawal of external funding for a community-based school alliance in Ghana, effective community leadership and social cohesion emerged as critical elements in differentiating between high- and low-sustaining communities. A number of other studies (Fullan 2001; Hargreaves and Fink 2003; Rogers 1995) have also found that strong leadership and social connections are essential to sustaining long-term educational gains—in some cases even more than the acquisition of resources and technical skills. As international funding is diverted away from Afghanistan’s protracted conflict to relieve more acute humanitarian crises, the MoE, district, and provincial officers are preparing for student transitions and the handover of institutions in an educational system that remains weak and under-resourced. As families and children look to their educational futures, it is urgent to determine what it is we are “seeking to sustain” within and through community-based models.³ We turn now to the evolution

³ We borrow this phrasing from Paris and Alim (2014), who pose this question while arguing that culturally relevant or responsive pedagogy be recast as culturally sustaining pedagogy. Paris (2012) points out that “it is possible to be relevant to something or responsive to it without ensuring its continuing presence” (95). Although not a perfect metaphor for CBE, the shift from *responsiveness* to *sustainability* illustrates a critical distinction in the inclusion, longevity, and legitimacy granted to communities for their participation in their children’s educational futures.

of CBE policy in Afghanistan and the ways the goals and mechanisms for sustainability have shifted in the context of enduring security threats and weak state capacity.

CONFLICT, EDUCATION, AND INTERNATIONAL INVOLVEMENT IN AFGHANISTAN’S EDUCATION SECTOR

Decades of violence and political instability in Afghanistan have taken a toll on infrastructure throughout the country, and the education system is no exception. Public education, already met with popular skepticism due to its historical entanglement with communist propaganda (Burde 2014), suffered acutely during the Taliban years, particularly education for girls and women. By the time the Taliban fell in 2001, some Afghan citizens, particularly in rural areas, had grown distrustful of the value and relevance of the curriculum privileged in non-religious schools. Buoyed by international aid, the government of Afghanistan began reviving the education system, giving particular attention to the capacity of CBE to close access gaps in remote rural areas where Taliban influence was strong.

CBE has a long history in Afghanistan. Initially known as village schools, this community-based structure emerged in 1949 in the form of “feeder” schools, which offered classes for grades 1-3 in areas where the nearest school was five or more kilometers away (Samady 2001). Some of these village schools subsequently became government primary schools, and although they remained physically located within communities, government control provided greater access to resources. Decades later, this model of initial community involvement followed by a gradual increase in state accountability continues to influence the way NGOs and the MoE structure CBE. The MoE’s CBE policy is a “clustered” approach, wherein community-based schools are established as feeders to nearby government schools. Communities are expected to provide a safe physical space for the school, maintain the structure, and supply material resources; support education and allow girls to attend school; support teachers and collaborate with government school staff when necessary; and actively participate in the school *shura* (council) (Ministry of Education [MoE] 2012, 11–12). Meanwhile, the government schools serve as hubs that link clusters of nearby communities, so that students attending CBE classes in two to five communities will transition to the nearest government hub school after year three of primary school. Accordingly, all CBE students are registered directly with their respective hub school to ensure a seamless transition. As students make the transition from one school to the other, the community-based schools undergo a parallel shift at the institutional level, from NGO funding and support to government “handover.”

More recently, the formal nature of implementing partnerships has shifted, with international donors taking more responsibility for teacher training, community mobilization, and fostering community-government links. While the UN and small NGOs such as Afghans4Tomorrow have established and continue to support CBE in Afghanistan, one of the country's largest and most extensive consortiums for CBE programming was the USAID-funded Partnership for Advancing Community Education in Afghanistan (PACE-A). By 2008, the MoE reported that an estimated 20,000 community-based classes were in operation throughout Afghanistan. In 2011, when PACE-A's program ended, community demand to continue support for local schools led to the formation of Basic Education for Afghanistan Consortium (BEACON), a coalition of NGOs including CARE Canada, International Rescue Committee, Aga Khan Foundation, and Catholic Relief Services. BEACON has centered on consolidating and scaling-up the gains made under the PACE-A program.

While great strides have been made in recent years, significant challenges to access and quality remain, stemming from issues within and outside the education sector. Security interventions have failed to eliminate domestic and cross-border insurgent threats, so that targeted attacks on NGOs, government officials and facilities, including government schools, contribute to ongoing fragility. As of May 28, 2016, the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction reported that only 65.6 percent of the country's districts are under Afghan government control, a decrease from the 70 percent reported in January 2016. Against a backdrop of continued insecurity, including the presence of armed opposition groups, fear of renewed conflict, and severe resource challenges, a number of elements of CBE policy implementation remain weak, in particular institutional handover and student transitions—two key measures of sustainability. The integration process and decisions about whether a particular CBS will continue as a feeder school, undergo a government handover, or close indefinitely remain ambiguous and inconsistently implemented (Guyot 2007). Issues of partial and full integration (implying MoE financial responsibility) have been equally inconsistent, introducing the possibility that the government can “take over” more and more schools without accepting responsibility for them” (4). The MoE's resource and capacity constraints have delayed the handover process at the institutional level, and the transition from CBS classes to formal enrollment at hub schools remains a challenge for schools seeking to accommodate larger numbers of students and address the gender concerns of incoming girl students. Meanwhile, families like Layla's remain skeptical of government schools and confront the same insecurity and access barriers that gave rise to community-based schools as a viable alternative.

These challenges are further exacerbated by a lack of clear definitions and common understanding about the purposes and long-term prospects of CBE interventions among donors, the MoE, implementing agencies, local education officers, school actors, and communities. Envisioned as a temporary measure, Afghanistan's CBE model was designed to close access gaps in rural communities and provide secure educational opportunities to out-of-school children and adolescent girls close to home. While positioning communities as temporary service providers, the MoE planned to build its own capacity so it could later absorb these students into government schools. From the start, the aim of CBE was not to construct a parallel or shadow system but to foster "close and careful coordination with the Afghanistan MoE" (Burde 2014, 141), thus "strengthen[ing] the government system as opposed to competing against it" (Kirk and Winthrop 2006b, 2). This end goal suggests that the Afghan government recognized the need for CBE to address current challenges but did not anticipate the role communities would play in long-term educational planning and provision. According to the World Bank (2005, 36), "interim arrangements and transitional mechanisms" such as community-based schools should be leveraged during postconflict reconstruction. Characterizing CBE as a "transitional mechanism" might account for the continued attractiveness of community-based partnerships in conflict-affected contexts. Yet in Afghanistan there has been no clear transition from protracted conflict, crisis, and instability.

The MoE, in consultation with donors and NGOs, recently drafted Afghanistan's National Education Strategic Plan (NESP) III (MoE 2015–2020), which was expected to draw on lessons learned from CBE implementation while articulating strategic reforms. However, NESP III did not make substantial changes to CBE policy, nor did it outline a succession plan, budgetary needs, or a projected timeline for government handover. It also pointed to a number of ongoing resource shortages—such as that nearly half of MoE schools have no building. Meanwhile, a number of NGOs are poised to shift from their decades-long role in providing education to advisory positions. In the absence of strategic planning, CBE remains an exercise in community participation with unclear long-term dimensions.

How, then, are we to measure the sustainability of CBE when educational gains and the nature of the CBE structure remain in question? Is sustainability best conceptualized as the government's capacity and commitment to sustain an education system that serves rural communities and closes access gaps, or as the continuation of local involvement in the provision and governance of the schools? Is sustainability indexed by changed attitudes toward educational investments among community members and measured by their willingness to send their children to government schools, which was envisioned as the long-term goal for CBE? Or should we conceptualize sustainability as a measure of children's continuous access to quality learning environments irrespective of who provides the service, even if this risks contributing to a parallel system, which has been a persistent government concern?⁴ However we choose to measure sustainability in this context, long-term change cannot be examined without considering the complexity of sustainability for multiple actors, the interactions between their changed attitudes and changed structures, and their interactions with a protracted crisis environment.

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS

This study draws on data collected from three school clusters located in two provinces, which consist of three government hub schools and eight community schools (see Figure 1). While not representative of all community-based schools in Afghanistan, these clusters were selected through purposeful sampling techniques, in that the logic guiding their selection was aligned with the research inquiry. In addition to security and accessibility, the main factor guiding case selection was attention to "active" clusters, where actors from the cluster hub school, CBE teachers, NGO teacher trainers, community school shuras, as well as provincial and district educational officers, regularly and meaningfully interacted with one another and with community members, including parents and students.

Carrying out this research in active clusters allowed us to explore mechanisms that potentially contributed to efficient coordination, communication, and engagement in the implementation of CBE policy, particularly in preparation for students' transition from community to hub schools and the government handover process, while also recognizing that questions about sustainability

⁴ Anastacio and Stannard (2011) assert that, at the time PACE-A began implementing a large-scale CBE program, Education Minister Hanif Atmar was "fearful that CBE was becoming a parallel structure to the formal education system, and he was keen to unify the community-based students and teachers within the formal structure" (120). This continued concern undergirds the plan for CBE integration as the state's vision of sustaining educational access and quality.

would remain salient even when the cluster model is working well. We draw on a combination of structured interviews with CBE teachers (n=9) and hub school principals (n=3); observations of CBE instruction (n=3); and focus group discussions (FGDs) with parents (n=10), CBE students (n=9), and school shuras (n=7) across the three clusters sampled (see Table 1). We also interviewed provincial educational officers (n=2) and district educational officers (n=2) who worked across the clusters at the province and district levels, respectively.

Figure 1: Three School Clusters in Two Provinces

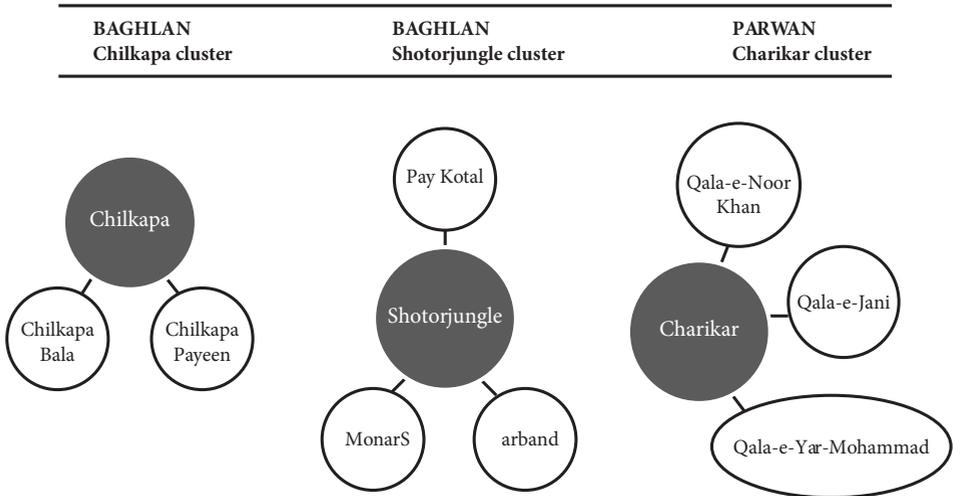


Table 1: Data Collected across Three School Clusters

	CLUSTER 1 Chilkapa, Baghlan	CLUSTER 2 Shotorjungle, Baghlan	CLUSTER 3 Charikar, Parwan
Focus groups with students	n=3 (16 female, 2 male)	n=3 (9 female, 9 male)	n=3 (7 female, 8 male)
Focus groups with parents	n=4 (18 female, 6 male)	n=3 (11 female, 7 male)	n=3 (8 female, 9 male)
CBE teacher interviews	n=3 (3 female)	n=3 (3 female)	n=3 (3 male)
Observations of TLC	n=1 (3 female)	n=1 (3 female)	n=1 (8 male)
Hub school principal interviews	n=1 (male)	n=1 (male)	n=1 (male)
Focus groups with school shura	n=2 (4 female, 4 male)	n=2 (5 female, 5 male)	n=3 (6 female, 9 male)

The research design and analysis were carried out through dialogue and collaboration among researchers located in Afghanistan and the U.S.⁵ All data were collected by BEACON field staff in an effort to accommodate security concerns and leverage the existing relationships between staff and communities. Our research team made an explicit effort to develop research instruments that would not require technology, such as digital audio recorders. The inability to record or transcribe full transcripts is a necessary limitation of the design, given persistent concerns over surveillance in an insecure context. We also made an effort to collect data in culturally sensitive ways by ensuring that researchers and participants were the same sex, and by convening separate discussion groups for men and women whenever possible. Focus group discussions among parents and students were likely influenced by cultural and gender norms that dictated socially acceptable viewpoints. Women tended to speak less frequently than men in mixed-sex focus group discussions, and participants often repeated one another's statements verbatim. However, different opinions were indeed conveyed, leading us to believe that participants were sufficiently comfortable expressing some divergent opinions in the company of male and female community members, as well as programming staff. An added challenge of this work was the multilingual nature of the data collection and the inherent challenges of translation and transcription; all direct quotes were translated into English by field staff.

Afghan researchers who collected data in schools and communities were invited to share their emergent analysis and reflections on the data-collection process. Their reflections provided an additional source of data and facilitated deeper collaboration on an otherwise remote data-collection process. All data sources were coded by two researchers, which involved a dual process of "open" and "closed" coding, informed by emergent, inductive and established, deductive themes, respectively. Throughout the data analysis process, we paid particular attention to pragmatic and evaluative codes that captured participants' experiences with programming over time, such as parents' changed attitudes toward their children's education. We also coded for strong and weak links within the cluster system, noting indicators of collaboration and coordination among stakeholders, as well as communication gaps, anticipating that these instances offered insight into attitudes toward, and efforts to establish, sustainability.

Linking the perspectives of various stakeholders to the CBE policy deepened our understanding of the ways national and local education policies are reproduced,

⁵ The authors conducted this research through short- and long-term contracts with the IRC. Findings from the original research were reported in Bellino and Faizi (2015). This paper is an independent endeavor to reexamine the prior study with new questions in mind.

resisted, and reconstituted by those who implement policies in classrooms and communities. Building on sociocultural studies of education policy (Levinson and Sutton 2001), this research connects the standardized visions authored by policymakers to the everyday attitudes and experiences of those in schools, classrooms, and communities. Within this framing, questions about CBE—whether pertaining to quality, access, sustainability, or the interaction of these dimensions—depend on the attitudes, resources, and capacity of state education officers and community members, including teachers, parents, shuras, and the students themselves. Bringing these voices together in the context of an educational model that positions communities as both the stakeholders and the beneficiaries allows an exploration of the ways sustainability is “constrained and enabled by existing structures” (Levinson and Sutton 2001, 3), including the attitudes and behaviors of community actors themselves.

FINDINGS: PERCEPTIONS OF QUALITY AND PERSISTENT CONCERNS

In this section, we consider three dimensions of sustainability of CBE, as conveyed by community members, which reveal tensions between community desires to contribute to sustainable gains and the lack of structural reform that supports those gains: (1) community members’ self-reported attitude change toward education, (2) decisions about educational transitions from community to government schools, and (3) emergent indicators of community ownership. First we describe how community members articulated their own and other community members’ changed attitudes and behaviors toward supporting formal education, specifically when it is of high quality. In some cases, parents pointed to a “cultural” shift that had taken place at the community level, with corresponding changes in their behavior, in an effort to support their children’s educational aspirations. We then explore parents’ uncertainty regarding their children’s pending transition to government schools, linking their tentative support to perceptions that hub schools are lower quality institutions than CBSs. To complement parents’ views, we explore concerns expressed by children in these communities as they considered the prospect of transitioning to government schools. Finally, we examine the extent of community ownership and emergent efforts within communities to mobilize collective action to continue CBE. Throughout we consider both the mechanisms associated with changed attitudes, decision-making, and community ownership, as well as community members’ concerns that the barriers that preceded NGO involvement and the innovation of CBE are reemerging.

CULTURAL CONTINUITY AND CHANGE

Parents across the communities expressed their impression of a significant cultural shift occurring in their villages, which they attributed to the innovation of CBE, particularly in terms of changing attitudes toward gender and education. In Qala-e-Yar-Mohammad, several fathers explained that seeing girls learn in a CBS had dramatically challenged their views on girls' education. They previously believed that education outside the home could only benefit boys, but now they also hoped to see girls in their community learn in schools. A father in Pay Kotal said similarly, "In the past, mothers did not allow their girls to visit even neighbors. Now they go to school. We are even considering sending them to hub school." Although this parent conveyed uncertainty about girls' continuing education, parents often expressed their changed attitudes in universal and absolutist terms, as one mother from Sarband shared: "Everyone in the village knows that they [girls] should also go to school. CBE has changed our people. Before they used to be worried about sending their daughters to school, but now they are not." A mother in Chilkapa Payeen noted that she would now feel "uncomfortable" if her daughters stayed at home rather than attending school. Another mother linked local attitudes to globalization and modernization: "The world has progressed, our boys and girls . . . should not stay behind." These parents' voices illustrate that formal education, alongside traditional religious education, has become a new cultural norm.

To support their claims that community-based schools shifted people's beliefs and everyday practices, parents described the ways domestic responsibilities now intersected with school routines. For example, parents' revised conceptions of their children's family roles now prioritized educational pursuits over traditional household duties, a cultural shift that is particularly influential in fostering support for girls' education (Lockheed 2010). One mother from Qala-e-Jani said, "One day I had to go somewhere and my other child, still a baby, was crying . . . My daughter wanted to help me in taking care of her brother. But I told her to put her brother in the cradle, your father will take care of him, but you should go to school." Another mother said similarly, "Even when I have a lot of things to do at home, I don't ask my daughter to skip school to help me at home." These statements suggest that parents have begun to support girls' education at home by readjusting practices around gendered chores and responsibilities. Although older daughters traditionally care for their younger siblings and help with the housework, these mothers encouraged their daughters to study and attend school, even when it meant less help at home. Another mother recalled that her daughter requested help taking care of her younger siblings so she could spend more time

studying, noting that, as her daughter conveyed the importance of school to her family, she came to realize how important education had become to her daughter over the course of her time at the CBS.

Other parents suggested that education contributed to cultural continuity and increased the commitment to embedded local practices. Despite initial concerns that the foreign aid enmeshed in CBE would impose on them a Western educational model based on Western beliefs and knowledge systems, parents, teachers, and students consistently described the education they received as reinforcing culturally relevant belief systems and the values of Islam. For example, parents in Qala-e-Yar-Mohammed proudly declared that their children's literacy skills had allowed them to learn their prayers, improved discipline, and led to more visible respect toward elders, all of which are traditional and culturally appropriate dimensions of village life. One parent explained how the school routine changed their use of time, in that before attending a CBS, "some children just wasted their time playing outside [the] whole day long. Now that has changed." Accessibility to school thus has increased the social and functional value of education. One father noted that school accessibility had engendered healthy competition among village parents about their children's success. Having a school in the village shifted education from a privilege for the few to an expectation that all children would have the same chances in life. The parents' conceptions of equitable opportunities align with Burde's (2014) argument that CBE decreases perceptions of "horizontal inequality" within and across communities.

WHAT WE MEAN BY "BETTER": PARENTS' IMPRESSIONS OF QUALITY

Across all villages, parents' hesitation to allow their children to make the transition to the hub school began with structural barriers to access, such as the distance and insecurity of their children's route to the school. However, access issues quickly gave way to concerns about the inferior quality of instruction, lack of teacher professionalism, and material resource shortages at the government schools, which parents compared to the visible advantages of community-based schools. Remarkably, this finding emerged in every focus group discussion with parents and students across the eight villages, which had differing CBE arrangements, and in reference to the three hub schools the local schools were clustered around. Parents and students in all locations considered the quality of instruction at the government schools inferior to that of the community-based schools.

Parents' concerns about the teachers' instructional capacity and professionalism stemmed from their impressions of the quality and legitimacy of the pre-service training provided government-certified teachers. One father in Chilkapa Bala said flatly that hub school teachers "are not expert and do not know how to teach well." Another took a softer approach, explaining that "they are good teachers and have good behaviors. But their qualifications and experience are low." Some parents pointed to specific teachers at the hub school who were working with false certificates, or who had significant knowledge and training but were nonetheless poor educators. Other parents worried that hub school teachers had poor attendance records and came to school to "only pass their time," implying that the teachers were not invested in their work and that there was little oversight to hold them accountable. Despite the hub school teachers' formal credentials, parents believed they were less likely to "engage students" than teachers at their CBS.

Student "involvement" and "engagement" were frequently referenced as instructional strengths at the community-based schools and a shortcoming of the instruction provided at the hub schools. When parents elaborated on what they meant by "engaging students," they pointed to "learning activities" and practices that incorporated elements of structured review, scaffolding, and differentiation. Although the parents did not use the terminology of inquiry-based, student-centered pedagogy, their comments indicated that they have grown fond of the more active approaches used in CBE classes, which are linked to BEACON's teacher training activities, despite the fact that most CBS teachers have incomplete formal schooling and little credentialed preparation. One mother explained that she could see the difference in educational quality when comparing her two children: "My son is studying in hub school but always [takes advice] from his sister, who attends CBS." Other parents referenced neighbors and nephews studying at the hub school who could not read or speak as well as CBS students. Parents' comments about quality were frequently informed by the juxtaposition of what they saw firsthand in the CBS classes, which they were able to visit, and what they inferred or heard second-hand about the hub schools, despite the fact that some parents had never stepped foot inside one.

Like many conversations with parents and students, the subject of transitioning to a hub school revealed a tension between implicit support for education in general and tentative support for the hub school in particular. Parents made an effort to convey that not sending their children to a hub school did not indicate a lack of support for education, and instead reflected their particular concerns about accessing hub schools and the quality of instruction offered there.

Sustained community support for the CBE model thus depends on impressions of both access and quality across educational institutions.

“HOW DOES YOUR TEACHER TEACH?”: STUDENT CONCERNS ABOUT QUALITY

Students echoed many of their parents’ concerns about resource shortages and inferior instructional quality at the hub school. Like their parents, students used their own vernacular to describe elements of active pedagogy as a positive attribute of their current learning environment and one they anticipated losing at the hub school. Students from Chilkapa Bala explained that at the hub school “teachers are not working the activities with us.” Others referenced specific activities and interactive thinking routines they used in their CBS classes. Another student pointed out that “hub school teachers do not . . . ask the previous lessons from all students. They do not work with students in groups.” A student from Chilkapa Payeen had a similar impression: “The government school teachers are not asking [about] the previous lessons. They beat the students and are not kind.” One of the female students who had studied at the hub school for a brief period shared the following:

When I went to government school . . . our class was in a tent. They did not have classrooms. The teacher was just reading the lessons and was not asking questions from the students. Students kept on going outside without asking the teacher. They used to fight a lot.

Students’ comments about poor resources and instruction reflect a preference for the student-centered pedagogy and individualized attention they received in their CBS classes. Meanwhile, students frequently mentioned that hub school teachers were “not kind” and used corporal punishment, suggesting that disciplinary norms and expectations had also shifted for both students and teachers due to their experiences in CBE classes.

When asked to compare their CBS with the hub school—a question we anticipated would reveal concern about transitioning to larger classes with more diverse demographics—students instead reiterated the distinction between a CBS as a high-quality institution and government schools as low quality. Students reasoned that hub school teachers “pay less attention to students” and “do not explain lessons well.” Similar concerns over quality emerged when we asked students what they would want to know if they were talking with a hub school student. These CBE students, on the cusp of transitioning to a hub school,

posed questions that revealed significant concerns about teacher quality, student behavior, and teacher-student relationships at the government school. Distance from home, threats to their security, and persistent access barriers were challenges the children realized they would need to negotiate with their parents. However, the quality of the educational opportunities available at the hub school mattered to them and was a central theme in student-generated questions. One student summarized the importance of instructional quality by saying, “I will ask [hub school students] about the teachers and how they teach. If they are not teaching well, we should be careful and should not go there.” A girl from a different cluster echoed this concern: “I will ask, does the teacher teach you well? If it is so, I will also go with you.” Students’ interest in transitioning to government schools was tempered by their skepticism that educational quality would be sustained outside the CBE model.

FINDING “ANOTHER WAY”: COMMUNITY OWNERSHIP AND MOBILIZATION

Preference for CBE was further emphasized in discussions centering on the future of the schools, and the extent to which the community had autonomy to participate in these futures. In one meeting, mothers openly shared their worries that, once CBE activities come to a close in their village, the project effects would diminish over time. They pointed to enduring access barriers, such as distance, ongoing political instability, and security concerns, along with the lack of gender sensitivity at the hub school. Admittedly, CBE had brought about changes in community attitudes and practices, but a number of parents argued that these changes would lose its their potency as the community schools were closed and children, especially girls, once again were faced with enormous structural challenges in accessing educational opportunities. As parents decided whether to support their children’s transitions, they faced anew the same tensions that gave rise to the innovation of CBE, although now with deeper awareness of the possibilities for instructional quality and gender equity that were possible in schools. One mother expressed her frustration: “I would not recommend any other community member to send their daughter to the hub school . . . How can we send our daughters, if the same issue persists?” Like Layla’s mother, parents worried that changed attitudes would not be sustainable without changed structures in place to support them.

Gender sensitivity emerged as another prominent concern among parents, one that had no clear prospects for immediate or eventual reforms. For example, parents in the Charikar cluster did not view hub schools as an option for their daughters, since no public effort was made to accommodate female students’

transition. The hub school continued to be perceived as an all boys' school, not only by the community members facing decisions about their children's education but also by the school actors themselves. As parents waited for signals of institutional readiness before making decisions about their girls' pending move, hub school leaders remained uncertain of the timing and likelihood of student transitions. Restructuring school spaces to be more gender sensitive (e.g., hiring female teachers, constructing separate bathrooms for boys and girls) remained in limbo, upheld by the logic that female student enrollment and the social demand for girls' education would need to precede costly institutional reforms. These uncertainties about local "supply and demand" intersected with larger concerns about the extent to which the government would support necessary reforms, and at times directly implicated NGOs. In one case, a hub school principal explained that most CBE students are girls and the hub school lacked sufficient space for them. He explained, "If the organization builds [another] school for the girls, then we are ready to take them, otherwise we cannot." Unanswered questions about the likelihood and nature of sustaining the CBE model were frequently posed in the form of requests to NGOs that "the organization . . . stay," rather than as demands on the state, whose lack of support and oversight in hub schools had presumably reduced them to inferior institutions.

As the actors and structures involved in community-based schools enter a time of transition, it is unclear how much autonomy community members will have over the maintenance of the CBS classrooms, their potential government handover, and the need to transition students to hub schools for their education beyond year three. Parents routinely expressed plans to support their child's transition to a hub school even while insisting that this transition would be impossible for them. A mother from Chilkapa Payeen explained that she would allow her daughter to transition to the hub school "by trusting in God. But I am afraid that something might happen to my girl . . . I am not happy to send my girl to hub school. But if this [community] school completely finishes, then I have no other option." Other parents echoed this determination to support education and find ways to address access challenges. One explained, "If this CBS school is not anymore, then we have to accept to send our children to hub school because of their education." One mother explained: "I told [my daughter] if there is no alternative, I will find a solution." Another said that "if the organization cannot help us, then we have to find another way." Many parents in these communities expressed determination that they would find "another way" to support their children's education, including girls, even if they had not yet resolved their concerns about access and expressed some degree of resignation about hub school quality.

Amid these shared worries, parents voiced a resolve to leverage their options by drawing on community resources, including their organizational capacity as structured through the CBE model. Through CBE involvement, some community members had developed relationships with hub school teachers and leaders, as well as district and provincial education officers. According to parents in the Shotorjungle cluster, Pay Kotal, Sarband, and Monar were in the midst of community dialogues over the future of CBE, which involved the traditional local leadership of mullahs, as well as the shuras that had served as CBE school-community liaisons. Other CBE actors also planned to become involved, such as teachers who were managing their own sustainability challenge over job security. One father explained, “We all agreed that we will raise the possibility of continuation of class in our village.” What is unclear is to whom these community members will raise these concerns, especially given widespread doubts about the government’s interest and capacity to support CBE beyond the primary level.

One possibility is that collective action might take the form of resistance. Parents in Pay Kotal explained that community decisions about school were linked in important ways, so that the decision of one parent could easily impact the decisions of others. Speaking to a hypothetical community member, he said, “If you don’t send your children to school, the other community people will also not send their children to school.” Another parent echoed this, saying, “if your children don’t go to school, my children also will not go to school.” These comments suggest that communities might respond to educational decisions as collectives, so that support for a handover and transition to government schools will need to go beyond that of individual families.

DISCUSSION: QUALITY, PROTECTION, AND SUSTAINABLE DEMANDS

In the previous section, we described three dimensions of change that were raised by community members, which serve as measures of sustainable attitudes, actions, and community arrangements. Importantly, these voices remind us that how we measure the sustainability of CBE depends on how we define sustainability and what we seek to sustain. If we are seeking to sustain community attitudes toward education, in particular long-term support for girls’ education and government schools, this attitudinal shift comes up against persistent structural barriers, such as the distance to and security concerns at the hub schools, as well as institutional barriers such as a lack of gender sensitivity. Parents explained that these barriers were mitigated by CBE. However, if left unchanged, communities will not be able to sustain this cultural shift, which in their view was facilitated by an

enabling structure that brought schools to the communities, rather than obliging communities to go to the schools. If the educational transition of children from primary CBS classes to the hub school and their continued learning trajectories are what we seek to sustain, then we must grapple with the prevalent impressions of quality that currently hinder parents' support for government schools. In this sense, CBE might have generated sustainable attitudes toward the value of formal education for boys and girls, along with increased skepticism about the government as a service provider. If, however, community participation and ownership over the local education structures are what we seek to sustain, then communities could face resistance from governments that have long envisioned a CBE system undergirded by assimilation into the national system. In this scenario, the changes CBE has generated regarding community ownership are in tension with the long-term plan that community schools would eventually be handed over to the state—an approach that current policies support.

As the vision for sustainability remains unclear in this context, questions about how and why change occurs come into relief. Afghanistan's CBE policy was designed as an "alternative [way] of delivering education to meet . . . demand in the short to medium term" (MoE 2012, 9). Envisioned as temporary, one of the underlying assumptions was that communities would come to support government schools because CBE provided a positive educational experience. This theory of change is embedded in the MoE's plans for student transitions and the eventual handover process. It is also evident in the rationales offered by school leaders and education officers who presumed that community support for CBE would translate into support for students' commitment to further schooling, regardless of instructional quality. However, this study suggests that the long-term prospects for community support are more complex, with community members critically inquiring about the educational opportunities available for students who transition and the level of local involvement in community-based schools once they are handed over to the ministry. In some ways, the positive experiences communities have had with CBE are serving as a hindrance rather than an enticement to sending children to government schools. This is not to be mistaken for skepticism about education but as increased awareness of communities' right to an education that is accessible, protective, and high quality. This finding points to communities' growing interest in and capacity for advocating for their educational rights. It also speaks to their efforts to forge sustainable goals in the context of a weak state, where communities' increased demand for education is met with poor quality, under-resourced schools and no clear vision for the long-term absorption of CBE students. To sustain the gains they have made, community members see their role as advocates for structural reforms that align with their increased commitment to formal education.

Community impressions of CBE quality are linked to their knowledge of NGO involvement and contrast with perceptions of lower quality government schools, and families thus make decisions about educational support with the service providers in mind. Burde's (2014) long-term research in Afghanistan revealed that "most inhabitants of the villages were not aware that an international NGO supported the community-based school and believed, instead, that it was supported by the government" (148). Perhaps due to the passage of time or to the communities included in this study having had more direct experience with NGOs, a large majority of parents, teachers, and even students we met with spoke with clarity, and often concern, about the distinctions between community-based schools supported by "the organization" and those operated and maintained by "the government." This community attentiveness to educational actors falls in line with Glad's (2009) finding that there was an "extremely high level of awareness amongst communities on where the funding for their school comes from" (52).

However, these impressions of educational actors and quality are likely entangled with understanding of conflict and risk. For example, is the shared perception of NGO involvement in education—and a subsequent distancing from government provision—serving as an intentionally protective display aimed at preventing attacks on local schools? Because community-based schools are often set in private homes, mosques, or community spaces, the structures are less identifiable, and therefore less targetable, than regular school structures. However, it seems it is the national schools' "connection to government, not the physical infrastructure per se, [that] contributes to the increased risk of attack" (Burde 2014, 147). Alternatively, is the disparate school quality community members perceive linked to a broader distrust of government? Additional research is needed to untangle the level of community awareness of educational funding from perceptions of security and the level of trust in government.

This study demonstrates that, when schools come to communities, access is the draw and quality is the mechanism for sustainability. When communities have to go to the schools, however, such as the hub school linking each CBS cluster, quality is the draw but access remains a challenge to sustainability. These parents and community members described how quality education in community-based schools has shifted their conceptions of formal education, particularly around gender. However, whether impressions of quality are sufficient to overcome access barriers is not yet clear, as the hub schools offer these parents neither access nor perceptions of quality. Nevertheless, the possibility that the desire for quality education could mobilize communities to both sustain CBE models in their communities and collectively organize to overcome physical and security access

barriers is an insight worth exploring, in Afghanistan and in other contexts. It also calls for alternative policy approaches to CBE, so that sustainability concerns are developed over time in concert with the capacity and commitment of the communities involved.

Afghanistan's CBE policy outlines a third and often unacknowledged option that falls between government takeover of the schools and community autonomy. Schools embedded in communities can become semi-autonomous "satellite" extensions of the hub school, which entails shared oversight by the MoE and community members. Such schools would be subject to state standards, including the required credentials for teachers. Remaining a community-based school located in a village would allow for continued secure access and local involvement, and likely protect against attacks that target government schools. This arrangement also would allow for local autonomy, flexibility, and innovation that adapt to specific local needs. Given the findings of this study, the satellite model is most likely to achieve sustainable access to quality education in the context of increased community investment and weak state capacity. However, owing to resource constraints and the challenge of operating additional schools, this model has not been adequately considered as a way to move forward.

An alternative way of interpreting these data might be to examine how CBE has helped to reduce barriers to educational access and quality, thus treating community attitudes toward education, assessments of school quality, perceptions of insecurity, and community advocacy efforts as potential barriers to the state's vision for sustaining CBE gains through the handover process. Yet this classification risks simplifying and framing community views through a deficit lens—that is, as a barrier to be overcome by a structure within which communities are expected to participate as clients rather than active agents. Honoring community members' views allows us to query not only conceptions and visions of sustainability but also how these conceptions intersect with impressions of access, quality, security, and inclusiveness, as well as the systems that have historically shaped the opportunity structure within and outside of schools. Asking community members what they are seeking to sustain foregrounds their visions for sustainability as stakeholders and beneficiaries of these interventions.

CONCLUSION: SUSTAINABLE SUCCESS

An urgent question comes into focus at the center of this analysis: are community-

based models more successful when they are integrated into the public system, or when they remain rooted in communities, function in parallel to the government system, and offer the potential for innovation and adaptation that eludes fixed systems, particularly in times of reduced state capacity and resources? On the one hand, if community-based models are to retain elements of local autonomy, they need to be separate from the constraints of mainstream government systems. On the other hand, government support and credentialing are essential to the long-term educational prospects of community members, realities that are recognized by parents in particular. If communities exert ownership over their community-based schools as NGOs step into different educational roles, they might retain control over the curriculum, pedagogy, and selection of educators, but at the expense of government support, trained teachers, and national credentials (albeit of questionable quality).

In a study of community-based models in Pakistan, Razzaq (2015) suggests that “the adaptability and flexibility of these models is essential for accommodating the needs of communities, yet at the same time these aspects make these models hard to fit into existing government structures” (5). Rogers (2005) similarly argues that attention to context differentiates these forms of schooling from formal education systems, while scaling-up moves them toward standardization at the expense of context-specific approaches. In Afghanistan, community ownership and adaptation to meet local needs are at odds with policies aimed at assimilating community-based schools into the government system. One question no one seems to be asking is whether integration is the ultimate form of legitimizing knowledge, with community voices folded into the national system, or another form of local subjugation and homogenization. In other words, is a CBS only “community based” when it remains outside the national system? Relatedly, if communities opt to take full ownership of these schools, is the state absolved of its responsibility for the provision and quality of education, particularly a state with limited resources? These questions reveal tensions about sustainability in terms of what we are seeking to sustain, according to whom, and how best to accomplish it.

Despite the wealth of research and documentation on community-based practices, there appears to be little consensus around what constitutes a successful and sustainable model for community-based education, which often is conceived as a provisional structure to cope with conflict, instability, and weak capacity. Answering this question fundamentally depends on the way sustainability is defined within a system. We do not suggest that there is a single model for sustainability in CBE but, rather, that sustainability must be considered

in context and in dialogue with all stakeholders, including children, in pursuit of both “continuous improvement” (Fullan 2006, 114) and what Razzaq (2015, 6) calls “inclusive sustainability frameworks” that resonate with local values and practices. Whether educational opportunities are sustainable is relevant to all actors—not solely those with the power to author policy but also those whose everyday actions shape and reshape policy.

As CBE student cohorts prepare to transition to hub schools, it will be important to document their experiences and challenges. The sheer number of boys and girls who travel outside their communities to continue their education will be an important indicator of long-term commitments under challenging conditions, yet these numbers will not tell the full story. Despite parents’ and students’ expressed enthusiasm for continued learning opportunities, this study suggests that, if additional measures are not taken, there will be a severe drop in enrollment, particularly among girls. If CBE schools are eventually absorbed into the hub school, as educational officers intend, this drop in enrollment and gender disparities stand to become starker during the handover process. In analyzing what happens next, we might be tempted to question the sustainable gains of CBE and ask whether this community-based intervention allowed for continuous access to, and support for, education among community members. And yet these enrollments should not stand in for a full understanding of the changes that have taken root in communities, including greater discernibility of educational quality. For every child who, like Layla, does not transition to the hub school there is a family and a community opposing schools that remain insensitive to gender and low quality, and to the unchanged structural arrangements of inaccessible and insecure schools. Sustaining a commitment to quality education therefore stands to conflict with persistent barriers.

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WILL YOU SEND YOUR DAUGHTER TO SCHOOL? NORMS, VIOLENCE, AND GIRLS' EDUCATION IN URUZGAN, AFGHANISTAN¹

DANA BURDE AND JEHANZAIB KHAN

Access to education for all children around the world is supported by international human rights conventions. Despite this broad endorsement, some international actors wonder whether promoting access to education for girls may conflict with dominant local attitudes, values, or customs. Using stratified survey data and complementary qualitative interview data, this study explores why parents in Uruzgan, Afghanistan, choose to send their boys and girls to school, what prevents them from doing so, and what kinds of normative tensions emerge during this process. First, our data show that placing value on their boys' education is not enough to prompt parents to enroll them in school; parents also must perceive that educating their boys will have future returns, thus prioritizing pragmatic assessments over normative value. However, those who send both boys and girls to school are more likely to prioritize the value of education. Second, our data show that parents who report experiencing or having personal knowledge of a higher number of attacks against education are less likely to send their children to school. Finally, our data show that normative struggles over girls' education take place primarily within the local community and society, rather than between foreign organizations and the local population. Regardless of education level, both men and women cite tenets of Islam as a key motivation for educating both girls and

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boys. Although some describe education as a human right, they say that Islam is the source of these rights, not Western organizations or institutions. The greater challenge for aid workers, therefore, is pragmatic (to ensure security) rather than normative (to promote beliefs about the appropriateness of education).

INTRODUCTION

International human rights conventions support access to education for all children around the world, including those in conflict-affected countries and those who have been displaced. Accordingly, international organizations that promote development and provide humanitarian aid in countries affected by conflict often include support for education in their work. These initiatives are further defined by conflict-sensitive approaches to aid. Indeed, in April 2013, the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) adopted the Interagency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE) Conflict Sensitive Approach to education as one of its guiding principles.² Other organizations have followed suit, and many international nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) now include these principles in their work on education in conflict-affected countries. Despite this broad endorsement, promoting universal rights may conflict with dominant local attitudes, values, or customs. For example, international initiatives to defend and promote women's rights—including access to education—have encountered resistance in many parts of the world, often from local community leaders (see, e.g., Human Rights Watch 2015, 2016; Right to Education Project n.d.).

These tensions raise particularly challenging choices for international organizations working in conflict-affected environments. An NGO's mission requires them to base their program plans and designs on the expressed desires of potential beneficiaries, particularly those who are the most marginalized in their communities. This often means helping women and girls to access education, including in Afghanistan. However, leaders in these communities, typically men, may resist outsider interventions. Male community leaders may object to initiatives that they perceive as violating local traditions or cultural codes, such as those that help women and girls increase their independence or travel outside

² INEE is an international network of members from NGOs, UN agencies, funding agencies, governments, and educational institutions that focuses on advocating for and supporting education for people living in countries and regions affected by crisis and conflict. See <http://www.ineesite.org/en/>. A "Conflict Sensitive Approach" to education calls for understanding conflict dynamics among communities that receive foreign/outsider support for education so that this support does not interact negatively with conflict dynamics. See <http://www.ineesite.org/en/conflict-sensitive-education#What>. Specific strategies include encouraging coordination and participation from diverse groups, including those with opposing positions or viewpoints.

their homes or villages. Because these male leaders are often the same people who either incite or defuse a communal conflict, international humanitarian organizations have an interest in avoiding a direct confrontation with them.

Thus, international organizations face an apparent dilemma: if they honor the local norms often held by male community leaders, they may be complicit in denying rights to the very people they intend to serve. At the same time, many aid workers wonder if working to increase access to education and other services for women and girls may aggravate the underlying conditions of conflict that these programs, at a minimum, do not want to aggravate (i.e., following the “do no harm” approach to humanitarian aid; Save the Children International 2013). Do these principles in fact conflict?

This study explores questions of educational access in the midst of violence in order to increase understanding of the normative tensions outside actors may encounter in a conflict-affected society. Our research seeks first to understand communities’ attitudes toward education: What prevents parents from sending their children to school? If parents do send their children to school, why do they do so? Under what circumstances do men and women in conflict settings support their children having access to education? We are specifically interested in understanding the tensions surrounding girls’ education in Uruzgan, Afghanistan, one of the most challenging places to promote girls’ education. We next examine how the local context informs parents’ decisions: What are the perceived security risks in this province? How is education related to these risks? Finally, we explore how international organizations’ efforts to support education can enhance girls’ access to education while also being sensitive to conflict triggers: What normative tensions emerge in this process? What does this reveal about current assumptions of global norm diffusion (i.e., shaping an increasingly globalized culture by taking up and institutionalizing new norms; see below).

Our findings challenge important assumptions about the value Afghan parents place on education and norm diffusion, and reveal the weakness in attributing normative change to outside actors, as is often assumed in the literature on norm diffusion (e.g., Carpenter 2007; Keck and Sikkink 1998). One finding is that, while parents’ education and income level are significantly associated with whether they send their children to school, parents who value girls’ education are significantly more likely to enroll both boys and girls in school. Interestingly, however, valuing education does not fully explain why parents send only boys to school, although parents’ perception of future returns from education is significantly associated with sending boys to school. Our findings also revealed a statistically

significant relationship between violence against education and enrollment, in that parents who report having witnessed more education-related violence are significantly less likely to send their children to school. Finally, although conventional wisdom says local norms in Afghanistan resist educating girls and by extension are contrary to international norms (personal communication with Afghan government and NGO officials 2014, 2016), we found that local norms in Afghanistan are often supportive of girls' education—just not always for reasons common in the West. In Uruzgan Province, women and many men support girls' education for both pragmatic and moral (in this case, religious) reasons. Tensions surrounding education are caught up in much larger struggles within Islam, between Islam and Pashtunwali (the Pashtun social code), and between the Taliban and the Afghan government. Moreover, “universal” norms are not always rooted in Western concepts (e.g., Sen 1998; Wahl 2014); what outsiders perceive as local norms are much more complex, and in fact may not be shared by the majority of local actors.

Thus, although some local norms compete with girls' right to education, the largest challenge arises for pragmatic rather than normative reasons. In other words, the decision to keep girls home from school to protect them from danger is typically a pragmatic choice made in the face of serious security concerns, rather than a normative decision. Because girls are generally more vulnerable than boys to kidnapping and sex crimes, their mobility is typically more sensitive to social unrest (Burde et al. 2016). The challenge for aid workers, therefore, is pragmatic (ensuring security) rather than normative (diffusing beliefs about the appropriateness of education). Given both the demand for and local challenges to education, particularly for girls, foreign NGOs that support education services are unlikely to aggravate the existing conflict, provided their support is sensitive to local dynamics and evenly distributed among those who request it.

This article proceeds as follows. The next section discusses normative issues that frame our investigation. The third presents our methods—sampling, measures, and limitations. The fourth describes our findings and presents two sets of analysis: the first reviews what characteristics predict parents' decisions to enroll their children in school in general; the second analysis refines the first by separating parents' decisions to enroll only their boys, both boys and girls, or neither. The fifth section presents the qualitative interview data that complements and deepens our understanding of the quantitative results, and the final section highlights our key conclusions.

NORM DIFFUSION, NORMATIVE TENSION, AND THE ROLE OF INTERNATIONAL AND LOCAL ACTORS

Whether promoted by international or local actors, norms create standards that determine appropriate goals and behavior, and that elicit social sanctioning of rule-breakers (Finnemore and Sikkink 1998; Katzenstein 1996; Ruggie 1998; Wendt 1995). A social norm may be perceived as good because “a shared moral assessment is attached to its observance or nonobservance” (Fearon 1997, 25, fn 18, cited in Finnemore and Sikkink 1998, 892).

In the context of international humanitarian aid and human rights work, norms considered appropriate (e.g., eliminating torture, promoting universal access to education) are thought to emerge via moral or norm entrepreneurs—social activists and visionaries who operate from an organizational base.³ These entrepreneurs, who often work within international organizations, may identify a social issue and call attention to it through the use of “framing” or “grafting” (see Carpenter 2007 for a discussion of issue emergence; on framing, see, for example, Finnemore and Sikkink 1998, 897; Keck 1995; Keck and Sikkink 1998; Price 1998; Snow et al. 1986). Framing recasts an issue in a new light, either to underscore the way it violates acceptable behavior (the current norm) or to create a new norm that defines appropriate behavior and challenges the existing norm. When a new frame resonates with the broader public, committed actors respond by drawing attention to norm violations and pressing for behavioral change (Keck and Sikkink 1998). Some argue that, as new norms are taken up and institutionalized, they shape an increasingly globalized culture (Meyer et al. 1992). This process is typically referred to as norm diffusion.

Critiques of studies of norm diffusion focus on their overemphasis on the role moral values play as compared to pragmatic goals, and on their juxtaposing international values with local or regional notions of appropriate behavior. Scholars question these moral arguments’ description of norms as “universal,” as they are promoted by “transnational actors” who are more concerned with convergence than contestation (Acharya 2004, 242–43; Nadelmann 1990, 481). Moreover, privileging international actors as promoters of change fails to account for normative shifts that originate with local actors. By “assigning causal primacy to ‘international prescriptions’” (Acharya 2004, 242), the moral argument ignores crucial norms rooted in other social entities—that is, local, regional, and national groups (Legro 1997, 32).

³ The idea of particular individuals or organizations functioning as social catalysts to alter behavior around them is a common notion across norm analysis (Burgerman 2001; Finnemore and Sikkink 1998, 898; Sunstein 1996, 909).

This critique stresses the importance of “congruence” between international norms and domestic norms, and among the local actors who are instrumental in guiding and promoting this process. Congruence refers to the ways international and local norms are similar in meaning and function, which differs from convergence, which implies that entities come together from different positions. Local political, organizational, and cultural issues and actors play important roles in identifying key similarities and in creating the congruent new norm through “localization” (Acharya 2004, 243). Localization is the active process through which local actors adopt, revise, and modify foreign ideas to make them congruent with local beliefs and practices (245).

Scholars of comparative and international education have devoted significant attention to the similar ways local communities adapt, appropriate, or resist global norms that relate to teachers, schools, classrooms, and non-formal education programs (e.g., Anderson-Levitt 2004; Monkman 2011; Pizmony-Levy 2011; Steiner-Khamsi 2014; Wahl 2016). This literature has typically focused on the introduction of outsider ideas to local communities, to some degree assuming a hegemonic Western presence that contributes to convergence. Some argue that the very act of focusing so many organizational and national resources on promoting girls’ schooling privileges the pursuit of simple outcomes (increased enrollments, improved quality) over fully understanding the complex local conditions and attitudes that keep girls out of school in the first place (Oppenheim and Stambach 2014). In this study, we question the outsider’s role in this process and emphasize the greater possibilities generated by norm congruence.

Thus, we address the complex local conditions and attitudes that effect normative change and interact with outside actors who support a goal over which there has been significant contention: girls’ education—or, more specifically, sending girls to school. The importance of educating girls has been an article of faith among international organizations for many years, based on robust evidence showing the broad and deep effects of doing so. For example, educated women delay childbirth and have fewer children, and those they have are healthier and better nourished (Pradhan 2015). Similarly, in the service of promoting girls’ education and diffusing the right to education for all, international organizations have identified local norms or traditions that oppose it. As they work to promote girls’ education, the professionals who guide transnational service delivery organizations (e.g., NGOs like Save the Children) use congruence to effect normative change and proliferation. By matching their goals to existing local norms and maintaining a low profile, and by backing community members who support education in general and girls’ education in particular, they attempt to

bolster congruent norms without directly challenging underlying attitudes that keep girls out of school.

Our study examines both conventional assumptions regarding normative diffusion and local responses to these initiatives. This includes assessing attitudes among parents who choose to send their children to school and among those who do not. We show that tensions are mainly rooted in local normative or pragmatic struggles, and thus unrelated to outsiders. Having a better understanding of the local norms that either support or challenge access to education can help international humanitarian actors learn how to improve educational outcomes through norm congruence, and at the same time illuminate the local conditions and pragmatic responses that inhibit access to education.

BACKGROUND AND METHODS

Save the Children International (SCI), a major international NGO, launched a health and education program in Uruzgan in May 2011.⁴ The program's primary objective was to enhance the access, quality, and use of basic health and education services for children and their families living in the province. The program provided services to an estimated 300,000 beneficiaries, with a particular focus on women and girls, ethnic minorities, and those in remote and under-served communities. This study focuses on the program's education work.

Uruzgan is an ideal province in which to explore possible tensions between "local values" and international norms by assessing whether and how Afghan parents value education, and the ways the conservative local society and conflict-affected context influence their perception of education for girls and boys. Although large gains have been made in education enrollment across the country, increasing from just under one million under Taliban rule to roughly eight million in 2011 (FHI360 2011), children's school enrollment remains low in rural areas, and particularly so in conflict-affected provinces (Samuel Hall Consulting 2013). Cycles of violence regularly affect Uruzgan Province.

Uruzgan's population is 92 percent Pashtun and has some of the lowest education indicators in the country.⁵ Only 7 percent of men and .5 percent of women in the province are considered literate, and although 39 percent of school-age children

⁴ The program lasted approximately five years and was funded by the Australian government aid agency, AusAID.

⁵ Pashtuns are typically considered the most conservative of the three largest ethnic groups in Afghanistan (Pashtun, Tajik, Hazara), particularly with regard to social norms that affect women and girls.

are in school, only 7 percent of school-age girls attend—an enrollment rate for girls that is well below the national average of 44 percent (Central Statistics Organization 2014). Anecdotal reports state that parents from these regions do not value education, as evidenced by low enrollment and parents' expressed concerns. These reports argue that many Afghan parents choose not to send their children to school, especially girls, because of the power of a particular interpretation of cultural codes or because they simply do not see the importance of literacy (Burde 2014; personal communication with government officials 2014; 2016).

To assess our key outcome indicators—what predicts parents' decisions about enrolling girls and boys in school—we collected quantitative survey data and qualitative interview data simultaneously. We use the interview data to deepen our understanding of the quantitative findings and to help illuminate mechanisms for further research.

SAMPLE

This mixed-methods design includes surveys, semi-structured interviews, and secondary data analysis (e.g., reports). For the surveys, the study used stratified random sampling to select 480 parents from 24 schools (12 CBE schools and 12 government schools),⁶ and their catchment areas in five districts of Uruzgan Province: Charchino, Chora, Dehrawod, Gizab, and Tarin Kot. The parents were identified through their in-school and out-of-school children. Each of the women (41 percent of respondents) and men (59 percent of respondents) in the survey sample represents a different household. We describe the sample and sampling procedures in detail below.⁷ Access to districts beyond Tarin Kot, the provincial capital, is possible only by land, and travel to districts such as Chora, Gizab, and Charchino is challenging, due to poor road conditions and a lack of security. Our sample was based on these districts and communities.

SUBSAMPLE 1: PARENTS OF IN-SCHOOL CHILDREN AND SCHOOL SELECTION

SCI managed 100 community-based education (CBE) schools, in addition to working with 30 government schools, 12 of which were primary schools. For the

6 Instead of constructing a building for CBE schools or classes, education providers (often NGOs) recruit and train a teacher who leads a class of students in a space donated by the community. The community, in cooperation with the education provider, monitors and oversees that class. An NGO provides government textbooks and additional monitoring.

7 Surveys and interview protocol forms are available on request.

purpose of the study, 120 parents were selected from 12 randomly selected CBE schools, and 120 parents were selected from the 12 government primary schools.

To select the sample of CBE schools, we created two strata: one for schools that had more boys enrolled and one for schools that had more girls enrolled. The average number of students per CBE school was 28. Six schools were randomly selected from each stratum, yielding 12 CBE schools.

Since only 12 of the 30 government schools SCI worked with were primary schools, all 12 were included in the study. Like the CBE schools, the 12 government primary schools were divided into two strata—one with low enrollment of girls (seven schools) and the other with high enrollment of girls (five schools)—so this characteristic could be used in the subsequent data analysis. While all CBE schools offered co-education, girls attended only four of the 12 government primary schools, one of which was exclusively for girls.⁸

Ten students were randomly selected from each of the 24 CBE and government schools, 50 percent of which were girls where possible. In schools where fewer than five girls were present on the day of selection, all girls present were selected. The parents of each student were contacted about participating in the surveys, and one parent was selected from each household; we did our best to ensure that half of these parents were mothers, who ultimately represented 41 percent of the total parents surveyed. From the 24 schools, 240 parents were randomly selected through their children who attend school. Selecting schools with low enrollment of girls ensured the representation of communities where schools are available but parents choose not to enroll their daughters.⁹

SUBSAMPLE 2: PARENTS OF OUT-OF-SCHOOL CHILDREN

From each catchment area of the 24 schools, 10 parents whose children did not attend school (including girls) were randomly selected for the survey through random identification of their households. The enumerators first identified households that did not send children to school. Thereafter, from the point of entry to the village, enumerators selected every second household that was identified as having out-of-school children, until they reached 10 respondents. This yielded 240 parents whose children did not attend school. For parents' distribution by school type and by whether they send their children to school, see Table 1.

⁸ The girls-only school was categorized as high enrollment.

⁹ The survey response rate was approximately 95 percent.

Table 1: Survey Sample

Sample Schools and Parents	Stratum I	Stratum II	Total
	High Girls Enrollment	Low Girls Enrollment	
CBE Schools	6	6	12
CBE Parents	60	60	120
Parents in CBE Catchment Area (Unenrolled Children)	60	60	120
Government Schools	5	7	12
Government School Parents	50	70	120
Parents in Government School Catchment Area (Unenrolled Children)	50	70	120
Total Number of Schools			24
Total Number of Parents of Enrolled Children			240
Total Number Parents of Unenrolled Children			240
Total Survey Sample			480

SAMPLING FOR QUALITATIVE INTERVIEWS

To complement these data and provide detailed and nuanced information about why parents choose to send their children to school, or do not, we conducted in-depth qualitative interviews with 24 parents, of whom half were men and half women. The sample included four types of parents: those living in areas with a high enrollment of girls (1) who send their children to school and (2) who do not; and those living in areas with a low enrollment of girls (3) who send their children to school and (4) who do not. For the majority (20 parents), both parents from one household were selected, but the men and women were interviewed separately. We further subdivided this qualitative sample into parents who send their boys and their girls (seven parents) to school; those who send only their boys (five parents); and those who send neither their boys nor their girls (12 parents).

MEASURES

The following section describes the data-collection instruments.¹⁰

SECONDARY DATA

We collected and reviewed secondary data from government and online resources, NGO program documents, and reports, and met with education program staff to discuss the educational context; to assess girls' participation, particularly in primary schooling; and to assess social, structural, and security-related challenges to education in Uruzgan.

Parent Survey

The parent survey was designed to measure parents' perceptions of key factors (e.g., social values such as social and economic well-being, personal growth, financial benefits, and the collective good) that they may or may not associate with education. This included examining parents' reasons for not sending their children to school, even when school is accessible (e.g., placing low value on education, fear/risk). The survey also explored the role of parents' socioeconomic status, parents' and children's gender, the kind of value (social, economic) parents place on education for their girls and boys, and the kind of returns (economic status, social status) parents associate with girls' and boys' education.

Semi-Structured Interviews

Because of the varied and serious security risks to the interviewers in this volatile region, we kept our qualitative protocol brief. We asked about the interviewee's educational background and their own experiences with education, problems facing education in Afghanistan and locally in Uruzgan, and reasons people do or do not send their boys and girls to school. If the interviewer felt comfortable, we encouraged her/him to ask about attacks on education.¹¹ All interviews were recorded and translated into English.

¹⁰ The survey and interview protocols were translated into Pashto. Survey and interview questions were pre-tested for reliability and validity in advance of the full-scale implementation. Data collection started in mid-February 2014 and finished in early April 2014.

¹¹ Approximately 70 percent of the women who were approached for qualitative interviews declined to participate. Only about 10 percent of the men who were approached declined.

VARIABLES

Dependent Variables

In this paper we present two sets of analysis: the dependent variable in the first analysis is enrollment-1, a dichotomous variable coded as 1=parents whose children attend school; 0=parents whose children do not attend school. In the second analysis, the outcome variable enrollment-2 has three categories: 0=none (parents who do not send children to school); 1=only boys (parents who send only boys to school); 2=both (parents who send both girls and boys to school).

Independent Variables

The explanatory variables of interest in both sets of analysis are parents' education, employment, income, value of girls' and boys' education, children's future with an education, and violence against education. Other variables include ethnicity (Pashtun), age, and number of children. We measure parents' education in years, and we account for employment by simply noting whether or not parents are employed (1=employed; 0=unemployed). Parents who reported being government or private employees or self-employed are considered employed. The ordinal variable "income" measures the household income range, from earning less than AFN 6,000 to a range of AFN 18,500-22,000.¹² To make the data intuitively interpretable, we code each range at its mid-point: 4.25 for the range 2,500-6,000 (or less than 6,000), 8.25 for earning between 6,500 to 10,000, and so on. Table 2 presents the distribution of variables used in our analysis

We constructed a six-item scale to measure how much value parents place on education for their daughters. These items include the civic, religious, and social dimensions of the value parents put on girls' education, as well as parents' perceptions of how educated women fare as wives and mothers. Each item is assessed on a four-point ordinal measure, with responses ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree." Higher scores indicate a greater value on education, which is consistent with norms advocated by international aid workers. Similarly, the second scale, value of boys' education, is a six-item scale measuring exactly the same dimensions as those in the scale measuring the value for girls' education. All six items were standardized before testing to ensure internal consistency. The internal consistency estimate of reliability (Cronbach's alpha) for the value of girls' education scale is .80, and .81 for the value of boys' education. Once a scale was constructed, it was standardized again, yielding a mean of 0 and a standard deviation of 1.

¹² The Afghani: at the time of the study, the conversion rate of AFN to U.S. dollar was US\$ 1 to AFN 56.9.

We included two additional scales to assess how parents perceive the future of boys and girls who have an education, as compared to the future of boys and girls without an education. Each scale contains six items that measure whether parents perceive that, as compared to boys and girls without an education, boys and girls with an education have better jobs in the future, marry better, are better socialized, are better Muslims, are better citizens, and contribute more to their households. All items are three-point ordinal measures coded 0=no, .5=maybe, 1=yes.

Finally, to explore the relationship between violence against education and enrollment, we add a four-item scale, attack on education. The items measure whether a school was ever attacked in respondents' village/neighborhood, whether parents were harmed because their daughters or sons attended school, and whether children in their village were harmed because they attended school. The scale is a three-point ordinal measure coded 0=no, .5=maybe, and 1=yes, where 1 is an emphatic yes, 0 is an emphatic no, and .5 covers responses from parents who thought that a school had been attacked but were not sure, or were not sure which school was affected. The items (of all scales) were standardized before testing for internal consistency. All scales created are statistically reliable. See Table 2 for reliability estimates of each scale.

LIMITATIONS

Security restrictions were so tight that all non-local SCI and research staff, including the Pashto speakers from other provinces in Afghanistan, were restricted to the compound 24 hours a day. In part because of these logistical challenges to conducting research in Uruzgan, we implemented a research design that deliberately selected parents who send their children (boys only or both boys and girls) to school, as well as those who do not. Therefore, although we can describe differences among these groups, we cannot generalize because this sample is not statistically representative of parents in Uruzgan.

Finally, selection effects or social desirability bias may influence our findings. First, it is possible that families that are more likely to send children to school are also more likely to allow enumerators to survey the women in the household, thereby biasing our sample toward women who are more likely to show support for education. Second, with regard to social desirability bias, although it could be present, it is unclear in which direction this would influence respondents. Given that some strong men in these communities oppose girls' education, respondents may feel more comfortable espousing the men's views. Yet given

that the enumerators may be assumed to support education, it is possible that respondents want to please the interviewer.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

In this study, we use two sets of analysis to compare parents' perceptions of education and examine normative factors that influence parents' decisions to send their children, particularly girls, to school. First, we use our survey data to review what characteristics predict parents' general decision to send their children to school, both boys and girls. This important analysis helps us understand the overall differences between parents who send their children to school regardless of gender and those who do not. Our second analysis refines the first by separating out parents' decisions to enroll only their boys, both boys and girls, or neither. We strengthen and deepen this analysis with parents' detailed responses to questions posed during in-depth interviews. Our findings suggest greater normative compatibility between international humanitarian workers and locals than is commonly assumed, thus challenging conventional wisdom.

SUMMARY OF SAMPLE CHARACTERISTICS FOR FIRST SET OF ANALYSES

Table 2 presents the combined summary statistics for the variables used in our two analyses. This analysis is based on 474 respondents—six cases were removed due to missing data, and/or because they did not fit within the parent categories. Of the total respondents, 251 (53 percent) are parents whose children (at least one child) attend school. Mothers constitute 41 percent of the total parents across the sample. For the first analysis, parents who send their children to school have significantly more children than parents whose children are not enrolled. On average, parents who do not send their children to school are significantly less educated than parents who do. With regard to employment and income, the number of employed parents whose children attend school tends to be significantly higher, and they earn significantly more than the parents whose children do not attend school. It is important to note that a total of 179 parents report being unemployed, of whom 80 percent are women (not shown here). It is not surprising that the majority of the unemployed are women; in many parts of Afghanistan, men are expected to provide for the household while women are expected to stay home to manage domestic affairs.

Similarly, the proportions of respondents valuing both girls' and boys' education, and expecting a better future for boys and girls with an education, is greater for

parents whose children attend school than for parents whose children do not. Finally, the proportion of parents with no children in school reporting violence against education is greater than for those whose children attend school.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics: Variables from Parents Survey Used in the Analyses

Variables	Description	Mean/ Proportion	SD	Analysis One		Analysis Two		
				Do Not Attend	Attend	None	Boys Only	Both
Enrollment-1 (Analysis One)	Whether respondent's children attend school (1=attend; 0=do not attend)	.53	.500					
	Proportion of parents with no children enrolled	.47	.500					
Enrollment-2 (Analysis Two)	Proportion of parents who send only boys to school	.27	.447					
	Proportion of parents who send both boys and girls to school	.26	.436					
Male	Respondent's gender (1=male; 0=female)	.59	.492	.57	.61	.57	.62	.60
Pashtun	Respondent's ethnicity (1=Pashtun; 0=Hazara)	.98	.156	.99	.96	.99	.99	.96
Age	Respondent's age in years	41.00	11.600	40.00	42.00	40.00	41.00	43.00
Number of Children	Number of children he/she has	6.50	2.718	6.14	6.81	6.07	6.10	6.97
Years of Schooling	Respondent's years of education	2.50	4.212	1.00	4.00	1.00	4.00	4.00
Employed	Whether the respondent is employed—govt., Pvt., or self (1=employed; 0=else)	.64	.481	.57	.70	.57	.72	.69
	Respondent's household monthly income (4.25= 2.5k-6k; 8.25=6.5k-10k; 12.25=10.5k-14k; 16.25=14.5k-18k; 20.25=18.5k-22k or more)	8.73	4.975	7.98	9.41	7.65	8.90	10.00
District								
Tarin Kot	Proportion of parents from Tarin Kot	.42	.493	.42	.41			
Chora	Proportion of parents from Chora	.12	.331	.13	.12			
Charchino	Proportion of parents from Charchino	.12	.331	.13	.12			
Dehrawod	Proportion of parents from Dehrawod	.17	.373	.20	.14			
Gizab	Proportion of parents from Gizab	.17	.373	.12	.21			

WILL YOU SEND YOUR DAUGHTER TO SCHOOL?

(Table 2 cont.)

Variables	Description	Mean/ Proportion	SD	Analysis One		Analysis Two		
				Do Not Attend	Attend	None	Boys Only	Both
Value of Education								
Girls	Six-item standardized scale measuring how much parents value girls' education. Alpha .81	.000	1.000	-.40	.40	-.40	.12	.60
Boys	Six-item standardized scale measuring how much parents value boys' education. Alpha .80	.000	1.000	-.40	.30	-.40	.30	.40
Future with an Education								
Girls	Six-item standardized scale of girls' future with an education (as compared to girls without an education). Alpha .86	.000	1.000	-.40	.30	-.50	.40	.50
Boys	Six-item standardized scale of boys' future with an education (as compared to boys without an education). Alpha .86	.000	1.000	-.50	.40	-.40	.13	.60
Violence Against Education								
Attack on Education	Four-item standardized scale of violence against school, parents, and children. Alpha .80	.000	1.000	.14	-.12	.14	-.26	.02
N		474		223	251	223	130	121

WHAT PREDICTS PARENTS' DECISIONS TO ENROLL THEIR CHILDREN IN SCHOOL?

The first set of analyses uses logistic regression to explore the role of our explanatory variables (see definition above) in examining the odds of parents' deciding to enroll or not enroll their children. The first model includes only socio-demographic variables and geographic indicators. The ethnicity variable (Pashtun) is excluded from the analyses due to a lack of variation, as 98 percent of the respondents are Pashtun. The second model adds to the first by including a measure of the value parents put on boys' and girls' education. We use these data to discuss whether promoting access to education for boys and girls is a locally held norm. The third model adds the measures about the future of girls and boys who have an education. These data enable us to show the extent to

which pragmatic socioeconomic interests are associated with parents' decisions about sending their children to school. The fourth model explores the additional contribution of the violence against education measure, which enables us to characterize how pragmatic considerations relate to decisions about education. See the results in Table 3.

In Model 1, the gender coefficients present different intercepts for women and men, and should not necessarily be interpreted as differences in support for enrolling children. Marginally, we see no association because we measure enrollment objectively—i.e., actual enrollment. In addition, the difference is likely due to the fact that men are overrepresented as compared to women who do not send their children to school in our sample. We also ran separate models (not shown here) for men and women to examine whether results differ by gender of respondent; we find the results do not appear substantively different.

Model 1 indicates that there is a strong positive relationship between having a large number of children and enrollment.¹³ After holding other variables constant, educated parents are significantly more likely to send their children to school than those who are uneducated. Employment is also positively and significantly associated with enrollment, net of background variables in the model; parents who are employed are more likely to send their children to school than parents who are not employed. Similarly, parents who earn more are significantly more likely to enroll their children in school than their peers whose children do not attend school.

In Model 2, we highlight the relationship between how much parents value girls' and boys' education and the chances they will enroll their children in school. The model indicates that the odds of children being enrolled significantly increases when their parents have a normative preference for inherently valuing girls' and boys' education. The predictive power of the other variables in the analysis remain roughly the same, except that parents in Chora district are significantly less likely to enroll their children than parents in Tarin Kot district.

13 We cannot say whether they are likely to enroll all of their children or just some.

Table 3: Odds Ratios from Binary Logistic Regression Models Predicting Parents Will Enroll Their Children in School (Analysis One)

	Enrolling Children Relative to Not Enrolling Them			
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Male	0.526** (0.146)	0.327*** (0.102)	0.232*** (0.0807)	0.166*** (0.0635)
Age	0.996 (0.0106)	0.990 (0.0116)	0.988 (0.0118)	0.990 (0.0120)
Number of Children	1.125*** (0.0505)	1.215*** (0.0629)	1.252*** (0.0697)	1.251*** (0.0706)
Years of Schooling	1.196*** (0.0388)	1.184*** (0.0415)	1.150*** (0.0419)	1.164*** (0.0433)
Employed	2.021*** (0.527)	1.856** (0.530)	2.182** (0.679)	2.488*** (0.797)
Income (2.5k–22k or more)	1.062*** (0.0226)	1.091*** (0.0268)	1.118*** (0.0304)	1.128*** (0.0314)
District (Ref. category=Tarin Kot)				
Chora	1.024 (0.332)	0.480* (0.181)	0.287*** (0.115)	0.270*** (0.110)
Charchino	0.849 (0.281)	0.531* (0.197)	0.457** (0.182)	0.544 (0.221)
Dehrawod	0.726 (0.211)	0.591 (0.190)	0.341*** (0.119)	0.330*** (0.116)
Gizab	2.196*** (0.669)	2.031** (0.687)	2.079* (0.782)	1.706 (0.661)
Value of Education				
Girls		2.194*** (0.323)	1.594*** (0.279)	1.601*** (0.282)
Boys		1.697*** (0.262)	1.027 (0.189)	1.015 (0.185)
Future with an Education				
Girls			1.196 (0.207)	1.218 (0.214)
Boys			3.731*** (0.853)	3.612*** (0.826)
Violence Against Education				
Attack on Education				0.805** (0.0723)
Constant	0.218*** (0.101)	0.235*** (0.122)	0.214*** (0.118)	0.201*** (0.112)
N	474	474	474	474
Pseudo R ²	.21	.40	.48	.51

*** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$

Model 3 includes two additional scales in our analyses to explore the factors that reflect parents' perceptions of the social and economic returns to education for boys and for girls. Model 3 indicates that, for the parents in our sample, the perception that girls have a better future if they have an education than those without an education is not significantly associated with sending children to school. However, the perception that boys have a better future if they are educated strongly and significantly increases the odds of enrollment, net of other factors.

In addition, after controlling for parents' expectations of future returns for boys with an education, the association between enrolling a child in school and putting value on boys' education loses significance. This suggests that it is not the value parents place on boys' education that is important, but that parents' expectation of better future returns associated with an education for boys significantly increases the chances of sending children to school. The associations with other variables—number of children, employment, and income—remain significant.

Model 4 includes another scale—attack on education—to assess the relationship between violence against education and enrollment. We include this scale to explore if either enrollment choice parents make is a function of factors related to their children's safety. The model shows that there is a statistically significant relationship between violence against education and enrollment. In other words, parents who report more education-related violence are significantly less likely to send their children to school. The value of girls' education and parents' expectations of a better future for boys with an education stay significant in Model 4. As in the other steps above, the associations with the number of children, education, employment, and income also remain significant.

Thus, the demographic factors associated with higher odds that children in general will be enrolled (both boys and girls) include parents having more education, employment, a greater number of children, and higher income. Meanwhile, attitudinal factors associated with higher odds of enrollment include putting greater value on girls' education and expecting better future returns for boys with an education. These findings are echoed in our qualitative interviews, described below. (For marginal effects for Analysis One, please see Annex A.)

SUMMARY OF SAMPLE CHARACTERISTICS FOR SECOND SET OF ANALYSES

Table 2 also displays the summary statistics for all the independent variables used in the second analysis, and the total number of respondents in each category of the dependent variable: none (n=223), boys only (n=130), and both (n=121).

The table indicates that the average number of children, years of education, and income are significantly higher for parents who send their boys or both their boys and girls to school than for those who do not send their children to school at all. Of the 130 parents who send only boys to school, 70 percent have at least one primary school-age daughter (5-12 years old). Similarly, 57 percent of those who do not send their children to school at all have at least one school-age daughter (5-12 years old; not shown here). Continuing to confirm findings from the first set of analyses, Table 2 also shows that the proportion of employed parents with no children in school is significantly lower than those whose boys or both boys and girls attend school. Similarly, the proportion of parents who report violence against education is greater for those with no children in school and whose boys and girls both attend school than for those who only send their boys to school.

WHAT PREDICTS PARENTS' DECISIONS TO EDUCATE ONLY THEIR BOYS, BOTH BOYS AND GIRLS, OR NEITHER?

In our second set of analyses, we break down our main outcome of interest (enrollment) into three categories: parents who send only their boys to school (only boys), parents who send both their boys and their girls to school (both), and parents who send neither (none). These three categories are mutually exclusive. This analysis enables us to disentangle the local norm of valuing girls' education from other factors, and also shows the extent to which local norms clash with international efforts to promote girls' education. The explanatory variables of interest and control variables are the same as those in the first analysis.¹⁴

To examine what predicts the enrollment of boys in school and of both boys and girls relative to not enrolling children in school at all, we employ multinomial logistic regression, which is appropriate to use with polytomous dependent variables (Tabachnick and Fidell 2007). Table 4 presents the results. The first model explores the relationship of background variables—including education, employment, and income—to enrollment. As in the first set of analyses above, Model 1 in Table 4 indicates that education has a positive association with the enrollment of boys only and of both girls and boys after holding other variables constant. Parents who are employed are significantly more likely to enroll their boys ($p < .05$) or both boys and girls ($p < .10$) than their unemployed peers. As in the first analysis above, income has a strong positive relationship with the enrollment of boys only and of both boys and girls, indicating that parents who

¹⁴ We omitted parents' location from the background variables in the second set of analyses, since we were left with a small number of cases in some districts after dividing the main variable into these three categories. However, the removal of the district does not significantly influence the effects of other variables on enrollment.

earn more are significantly more likely to educate only their boys, and their boys and girls. Having a higher number of children increases the odds that parents will send both boys and girls to school relative to not sending any.

Model 2 in Table 4 examines the relationship between the value parents place on boys' and girls' education and their enrollment. Here, the additional scales value of girls' education and value of boys' education have a positive and statistically significant relationship with enrollment. This indicates that, after keeping other variables constant, parents who value educating boys and girls are significantly more likely to enroll boys and both boys and girls than are parents who do not value educating children

Table 4: Odds Ratio from Multinomial Logistic Regression Models Predicting Parents Will Enroll Their Male Children Only or Both Male and Female Children in School, Relative to Not Enrolling them at All (Analysis Two)

	Sending Only Boys or Both Boys and Girls to School, Relative to Not Enrolling Them							
	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3		Model 4	
	Boys Only	Both	Boys Only	Both	Boys Only	Both	Boys Only	Both
Male	0.535** (0.169)	0.464** (0.157)	0.404*** (0.135)	0.250*** (0.0953)	0.336*** (0.120)	0.209*** (0.0844)	0.211*** (0.0821)	0.164*** (0.0714)
Age	0.997 (0.0119)	1.000 (0.0123)	0.993 (0.0125)	0.993 (0.0135)	0.992 (0.0125)	0.991 (0.0137)	0.994 (0.0128)	0.993 (0.0138)
Number of Children	1.045 (0.0531)	1.186*** (0.0603)	1.116** (0.0614)	1.326*** (0.0803)	1.133** (0.0651)	1.349*** (0.0856)	1.134** (0.0665)	1.353*** (0.0867)
Years of Schooling	1.187*** (0.0417)	1.214*** (0.0442)	1.179*** (0.0429)	1.203*** (0.0475)	1.152*** (0.0431)	1.174*** (0.0472)	1.173*** (0.0449)	1.185*** (0.0481)
Employed	2.085** (0.626)	1.869* (0.597)	1.814* (0.564)	1.524 (0.541)	1.929** (0.637)	1.770 (0.670)	2.308** (0.794)	1.925* (0.747)
Income (2.5k–22k or more)	1.042* (0.0249)	1.065*** (0.0257)	1.061** (0.0271)	1.095*** (0.0308)	1.083*** (0.0296)	1.122*** (0.0337)	1.102*** (0.0313)	1.135*** (0.0350)

WILL YOU SEND YOUR DAUGHTER TO SCHOOL?

(Table 4 cont.)	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3		Model 4	
	Boys Only	Both						
Value of Education								
Girls			1.426**	4.138***	1.210	2.661***	1.241	2.690***
			(0.218)	(0.912)	(0.215)	(0.637)	(0.223)	(0.643)
Boys			1.667***	1.489*	1.019	0.996	0.997	0.988
			(0.272)	(0.318)	(0.196)	(0.235)	(0.194)	(0.230)
Future with an Education								
Girls					0.933	1.843**	0.952	1.876**
					(0.164)	(0.455)	(0.170)	(0.466)
Boys					3.002***	2.640***	2.857***	2.612***
					(0.683)	(0.877)	(0.655)	(0.869)
Violence Against Education								
Attack on Education							0.685***	0.856*
							(0.0700)	(0.0808)
Constant	0.223***	0.0688***	0.207***	0.0413***	0.173***	0.0279***	0.145***	0.0257***
	(0.111)	(0.0364)	(0.109)	(0.0249)	(0.0942)	(0.0180)	(0.0807)	(0.0167)
N	474	474	474	474	474	474	474	474
Pseudo R ²	.18	.18	.38	.38	.46	.46	.49	.49

*** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$

The associations between enrollment and number of children, years of education, and income remain positive and significant in Model 2. Once the value of girls' and boys' education is accounted for here, the association with employment loses significance. However, disaggregating the outcome variable in three categories shows that the value of girls' education measure is far more strongly associated with enrolling both boys and girls than with enrolling boys only.

Model 3 includes an examination of the relationship between enrollment and parents' expectations of future returns from education. Parents' expectations of better future returns for boys with education is important for predicting enrollment across the board. However, expectations of better future returns for girls with education is only a statistically significant predictor for enrolling both boys and girls (not boys alone). Interestingly, and as in the first analysis above, the effect of the value parents place on boys' education loses significance after controlling for expectations of boys' and girls' future returns with an education. This again suggests that placing value on boys' education is not enough to prompt parents to enroll their boys in school, and that it is critical that parents also perceive better future returns for boys with education. Once again, however, placing value on girls' education remains important when parents are deciding to enroll children of both genders. The associations with other variables—number of children, employment, and income—remain significant. Thus, those who normatively value education are more likely to send both boys and girls to school; those who prioritize the pragmatic assessment of future returns from education are more likely to send only their boys.

The final model in Table 5 explores the extent to which violence against education may be associated with boys' and girls' enrollment. Importantly, the association between reporting violence against education—attacks on schools and/or parents, and children being harmed for attending school—and enrollment is significant in the multinomial analysis. Estimates suggest that parents who report more education-related violence are less likely to send their children to school. (For marginal effects, please see Annex A.) Interestingly, the net effects on enrollment of placing value on girls' education and an expectation of better future returns for girls with education remain significant when the violence-related scale is added to the model. In our qualitative analysis, we examine some cases in which normative attitudes toward education trump the fear of attacks on students, schools, or parents. As was the case in the first analysis, having more children, a higher level of education, and greater earnings are associated with an increased likelihood of sending children to school.¹⁵

15 We conducted a separate analysis (not shown here) to assess differences between the coefficients of the categories of boys only and both for all four models. Their differences are not significant, except for income.

This second set of analyses provides critical insights into our research questions. In sum, these findings indicate that education, family size, and income are strong predictors of boys' and girls' school enrollment. They further suggest that parents' perception of the value of education for girls and associating better future social and economic returns with girls' education significantly increase the likelihood that parents will send girls to school. In short, both valuing education and expecting better future returns matter for girls' education in this set of analyses. Unlike girls' enrollment, the normative value of boys' education is not associated with an increased likelihood of sending boys to school, once parents' perception of future returns are included in the model. What is critical for boys' enrollment is parents' perception of the link between education and better future outcomes. This could indicate that parents perceive an economic sacrifice in sending boys to school that some are willing and able to give up only when they believe the later rewards will mitigate the current sacrifice. This is consistent with our qualitative findings, below, that also highlight the relationship between violence against education and enrollment.

QUALITATIVE INTERVIEWS

Our qualitative interviews support many of the findings described above, adding nuance that helps us understand them better. Indeed, in these interviews, the most common reasons parents offer to explain why they or others do not send their children to school include a lack of security (attacks on schools and students), illiteracy, poverty, the lack of facilities (school buildings and teachers), and negative social perceptions, particularly in relation to educating girls, which will be addressed in more detail in the next section.¹⁶ Here we present the key findings from the qualitative interviews.

WHAT URUZGAN PARENTS SAY ABOUT EDUCATION

Our quantitative data show that security is a serious issue for many parents, particularly as relates to attacks on schools and the children who attend. The qualitative data further support this notion. Poor security, specifically attacks on schools and children being harmed on the way to school, is a common response across all of the qualitative interviews to questions of why parents do not send their children to school. Interviewees describe how conflict ricochets through the education system, noting that that the Taliban and "anti-government elements"

¹⁶ It is important to keep in mind that, although these interviews add depth to our quantitative results, we cannot generalize from such a small sample of parents.

attack schools, teachers, and children on their way to school. One father, who is not literate himself but sends both his sons and daughters to school, sums up the tension in this way: “Well, the main problem is that there are two powers in the country, one builds schools, the other destroys and burns them. That is why most people are out of school in Afghanistan” (PMB4, p. 2).¹⁷

Interviewees note repeatedly that the Taliban prohibit children from attending school. Another father, who is not literate and does not send his children to school, is also concerned about direct attacks, noting, “We fear the Taliban. We fear that they might kill our children if they know that they are going to school” (MN2, p. 2). Many in these communities have experienced or witnessed violence against education, which solidifies the connection they make between danger and school attendance. They list the dangers: children may step on a landmine on their way to school; they may be wounded in a suicide attack; they may be kidnapped or killed. One mother describes seeing “explosions and suicide attacks” carried out in front of a school and nearby madrassa, in which a child lost both his legs and hands, but she and her husband continue to send their sons to school (FOB3, p. 8). Interviewees describe the chilling effect that attacking schools has on education—when schools are bombed, children are reluctant to return and parents are reluctant to send them back.

Yet, as noted in the survey data, even in the face of profound violence, many parents express a deep desire for their children to receive an education and the benefits they perceive it will bring, and some continue to send their sons to school, if not their daughters, despite these obstacles. For example, a mother who sends both her boys and girls to school notes:

A few days ago there was an attack carried out on the school in our area. After the attack my husband asked our children not to go to school because of the danger to their lives. But a few days later, I requested him to please let them go to school so that they can learn something and he let them go. They are scared while going to school but I encourage them a lot to go and learn something. I tell them, “Look at me, I could not go to school and study so now I am an illiterate person, that’s why you have to study to have a bright future.” (FB1, p. 2)

Thus, some families are resilient and continue to send their children to school because they believe in the value of education, even when the dangers are great.

¹⁷ Interviewees are coded according to whether they are: (1) male or female (M/F) and (2) send neither (N), only boys (OB), or both (B) to school.

Interestingly, this particular mother reports that she motivates change in her household. Her comment also illustrates the acute sense of loss and frustration that many parents feel about their own lack of literacy, which in turn drives them to educate their children. Many parents in our interviews describe the importance of education for their children, particularly in contrast to their own illiteracy. One father says, “Everyone knows illiteracy is the biggest problem in the world. And we know it better because we are illiterate and we realize how many problems we have because of it . . . People don’t want this for their children. They want them to get education and become literate” (MB4, p. 3).

Although many parents report that their own illiteracy is a driving force behind their desire to send their children to school, illiteracy also emerges as a characteristic, along with poverty, that parents believe prevents people from sending their children to school and undermines progress in the country as a whole. For example, one mother whose children do not go to school says that parents who know the “value of knowledge” and the “benefits of education” are able and willing to send their children to school. But she also says, “My parents were illiterates and so am I. None of my ancestors went to school and I did not go to school, and my children won’t go to school either. This is what my husband says. People just follow what the previous generations did” (FN1, p. 3). Nevertheless, many believe that illiteracy is the source of many problems for individuals and that it contributes to larger social ills, including conflict.

While security barriers affect all families, the poor and illiterate may be less likely to overcome them in order to send their children to school. All of the fathers and most of the mothers we interviewed who do not send their children to school identify poverty as one of the main reasons, and they say that only the wealthy and socially well-positioned are able to send their children. Farmers describe their difficulty in making ends meet and the need to rely on their children—especially their sons—to work with them in the fields. One notes, “People who have lands, wealth, and other kinds of businesses can send their children to school, but those facing hardship cannot.” Later he adds, “When a person learns in school how to read and write and get educated, and when they get a job they are comfortable and work in their offices, and a person like me will have to run errands for them” (MN3, p. 5). Mothers echo these sentiments, noting that poor people need their sons to work in the fields and their daughters to work at home, sewing/doing needlework or weaving carpets. One says, “Those who are literate, of course, they earn more money and work comfortably, but those who are illiterate are just suffering a worse life and earning with lots of difficulty” (FN1, p. 3). These interviewees show parents’ awareness of the importance of returns to

education, as well as the tradeoffs involved in choosing whether to send a son to school or to the fields.

Finally, although some interviewees are satisfied with the quality of education their children receive, many parents across all interviews note problems with the schools and the education system that deter them from sending their children to school. They describe schools that lack books, desks, and other materials, as well as the faculty's poor teaching practices, arrogant teachers, and teachers who are absent or who show up late. For example, a mother who sends her sons to school but is illiterate says that the fact that "there are no teachers at schools" compounds the problems of security and negative attitudes toward education (FOB3, p. 2), which prevents some people from sending their children to school. One parent who sends both his daughters and sons to school and has an eighth-grade education himself describes the contrast between the education he received and the quality of education currently offered in schools: "The teaching quality was really good then, unlike now when a student of grade eight becomes a teacher of grade 12 and a student of grade two is the teacher of class four . . . The teaching staff is not qualified enough . . . Books are not distributed on time" (MB2, p. 6). Another father who sends all of his children to school but is not educated himself expresses a similar level of dissatisfaction, adding that most teachers have not been paid for the past seven months (MB4, p. 2).

Assumptions about the poor quality of education could be another reason why poorer, less educated parents choose not to send their children to school, given the future returns they would expect from a poor quality education. However, it is not possible to generalize from these qualitative data, and our surveys did not ask explicitly about teaching practices or material conditions in schools. These interviews suggest nonetheless that some of the material issues facing schools in Uruzgan warrant further exploration.

As our surveys reflect, our interviews also revealed that, far from being normatively opposed to education, many parents in Afghanistan strongly want their children to have an education. They recognize that education provides important opportunities they wish they had had for themselves. However, some parents remain reluctant to enroll their children because they fear for their physical safety, or because the poor quality of the available education negates the perceived future returns to education.

WHY PARENTS CAN'T OR WON'T SEND THEIR DAUGHTERS TO SCHOOL

Although the fathers we interviewed generally support sending their children to school, our qualitative data suggest that they may be more resigned than mothers to keeping children out of school to work, to ensure their safety, or to protect the family's reputation. There have been many attacks on schools in the areas where our participants live and, as noted in the survey data, these attacks affect both boys' and girls' enrollment and attendance, although girls appear more likely to be taken out of school permanently. For example, an illiterate mother who sends her sons to school but can no longer send her daughter describes the problem: "You might have heard that the schools were targeted several times. Schools were burned down and turned into ashes. My girl was attending school before when a bomb exploded near their school, so her father stopped her. He said that our girl should no longer attend any school" (FOB1, p. 2). In our interviews, mothers describe their efforts to get their girls back into school and their anguish when they are unable to do so. These anecdotal examples offer plausible mechanisms for supporting girls' education and are worth exploring more systematically.

Insecurity, distance to school, an insufficient number of schools, and a lack of female teachers affect girls more severely than boys. The same mother speaks about distance to school and insecurity since the explosion:

My husband told me that I could only send my sons to school and my girl is not allowed. If a school is built near our house or the village, I would manage this problem and I would take her every day to and from school . . . My daughter tells me that she loved to go to school. She cries and asks me why her father doesn't let her go to school. (FOB1, p. 3)

In addition to violence, many parents cite not just the lack of teachers but the specific lack of female teachers as a barrier to sending their daughters to school. A father who sends both his sons and daughters to school says, "In Uruzgan, people cannot send their girls to school because there are no female teachers and [so] male teachers teach them, and the teaching staff are not qualified enough" (MB2, p. 6). This father notes that, although he is willing to send his daughters to school to study with the male teachers currently available, he will not be able to send the girls to school after they reach puberty if there are no female teachers.

Beyond these material conditions, girls' education is affected by normative tensions in the community. As one woman quoted above notes, some families

describe violence and threats as the biggest reasons for keeping their girls out of school. Others talk at length about the social tensions that surround the decision to send girls to school. These tensions manifest themselves, first, in “people saying bad things” about both the girls who go to school and the families who send them. Turbawali, a subcategory of Pashtunwali, refers to the required conformity in relatives’ behavior. Our data show that some parents are deeply concerned about what people say, and some say social pressure from relatives makes it difficult for them to send their children—especially their girls—to school.

A subgroup of our interviewees attribute the local prohibition on sending children to school, particularly girls, to Islam, or express these views themselves.¹⁸ When an interviewer asks why people talk badly about girls going to school, the mother quoted above notes:

Our people are illiterate and uneducated, and often repeat what others tell them . . . Females are marginalized and do not enjoy equal rights compared to their male partners. If you tell someone to send your daughter or sister to school, they become nervous. They don’t know that God has created women and He has given certain rights for them. Women are humans and must be treated as human beings. They have the right as parents to send girls to school. (FOB1, p. 4)

This interviewee believes that illiteracy and a lack of education make people more susceptible to pressure not to send their girls to school. She describes their ignorance, specifically noting that these people are unaware that women’s rights—the source of this norm—come from God, and that as a result parents have the right to send their girls to school. The interviewee locates the source of local women’s rights with God, rather than with international organizations, foreign norms, or treaties. Her description calls into question the assumption, common among foreigners and foreign organizations, that Afghans often perceive rights to have emerged from outside their communities and to be a foreign imposition, rather than a norm that is integral to their local beliefs and values, as indicated here. It is important to note, however, that the data presented here do not allow us to judge whether these local norms are affected more by evolving local interpretations of Islam or by the subtle influence of increasing access to outside culture (e.g., national and international television programs, and phones, even in rural districts). Future research should examine this question. Nonetheless,

¹⁸ It is important to note that a large majority scholars of Islam describe the Qur’an and hadiths as supporting education for all, including girls and women.

there are important implications of locals representing rights in this way, which we discuss further below.

As both locals and outsiders note, there are some who argue that Islam does not support sending girls to school, particularly in remote, conflict-affected areas of Afghanistan, and some who believe that Westerners are using schools to promote anti-Islamic ideology. As one interviewee notes, “Yes, some people say, why you are sending your girls to school, this school belongs to infidels [*kafirs*]. We did not learn and they are learning ABCs now. People in the village talk like this” (MB1, pp. 11-12). A mother who does not send either her boys or her girls to school argues that

Islam orders us to learn religious lessons and Holy Qur’an. There is nothing in Islam to send your girls to school where Americans are waiting to teach you, supervise you, and touch you. This is not what we want. It must be in the Qur’an to send children to madrassa. Some of our husbands know Qur’an, and if it’s said in Qur’an to send your children to school, they would have sent them to school. The school is not mentioned in Qur’an so they don’t send them. Please don’t ask me about Islamic issues. I don’t have enough information about Islam. I’m an illiterate woman, and I haven’t studied any part of the Qur’an. I can’t read or recite the Holy Qur’an. (FN3, pp. 4-5)

Nevertheless, many respondents provide vivid reasons for educating their daughters, and a number of them use Islam to justify sending their girls to school, rather than for keeping them out of school. We discuss these explanations below.

WHY PARENTS SEND THEIR DAUGHTERS TO SCHOOL

Parents cite three primary reasons for sending their daughters to school: Islam requires it, the girls learn proper behavior, and the community must have female teachers and doctors. First, Islam does, in fact, urge its adherents to “seek knowledge,” and as many of our interviewees note, this is a requirement for all Muslims—men and women. One woman notes, “Based on the saying of the prophet Mohammad, learning/education is the duty of every Muslim man and woman. So both men and women are responsible to learn something.” She describes the importance of girls learning proper behavior, Islamic principles, others’ rights, and “how to treat everyone” (FOB2, p. 4). Locating women’s rights and girls’ right to education with God and Islamic teachings indicates that

existing local norms support girls' education. When outside organizations do so, too, they do not clash with the values held by many in the community.

Adding to these reasons, many interviewees recognize the severe consequences caused by the lack of female doctors in their communities, and they offer this as one of the most important reasons to send girls to school. They note that women sometimes die because they cannot go to a male doctor, and they realize that enrolling girls in primary school is the first step toward addressing these issues. One father notes, "We do not have any lady doctors here and cannot take our women to male doctors—this is all because we lack female and qualified teachers" (MB2, p. 6). Women also describe suffering because of illiteracy, even if they are able to seek medical care. One describes getting lost and confused in a hospital because she was not able to read signs. These reasons could explain why future returns to girls' education matter for some parents, as our survey data above indicate.

These interviews also provide insights into generational change in Afghanistan, which indicates local normative change over time. While our survey collected the years of education each parent respondent has, our interviews collected parents' stories of their own education. Interviewees describe their own experiences with teachers and schools, if any, and express their attitudes toward education that were, in part, shaped by their own early experiences. Both mothers and fathers express a longing for literacy, and most transfer this longing to their children:

Illiteracy is a great problem for everyone. Though an illiterate person appears to be physically sound, he feels he/she is blind. I share my bad experience with you. When someone rings me, I don't know who called me; though the numbers are saved in my phone I'm not able to read them. I know my relatives from their voice. When I receive a call, I press the OK button on the phone and listen to the caller's voice, and if it matches the voice of one of my relatives I answer the call; otherwise, I cancel the call. I can't add credit balance to my phone/SIM and must seek the help of others to enter the scratch card number to my phone. All our problems are due to the fact that we are uneducated. Everyone cheats us, misuses us, and make us become enemies of one another. If we were educated, we would have never destroyed our country. Now, if we don't let our children go to school, their future will be the same as ours. (FOB1, p. 5)

Despite extreme volatility in the community and social pressure from powerful men and their female relatives in Uruzgan province, mothers show bravery and steadfastness in sending their girls to school. We conclude with a quote below from an illiterate mother that encapsulates this courage:

My neighbor was criticizing me for sending my daughter to school. I asked, "Have you seen my daughter not saying 'salaam' to you? Not treating you with respect? Does she curse or steal? Please tell me." My neighbor replied, "No, she doesn't do those things." I said, "I will move to another place, but I will not stop sending my daughter to school." (FB2 p. 3)

In short, according to our survey data and supported by our qualitative interviews, the most important factors determining whether parents send their girls to school include the importance of future returns and the (religious) value placed on education. Parents who send their girls to school are more aware of the local demand for female doctors, teachers, and other community leaders. Similarly, while some parents who do not send their girls to school cite the detrimental influence of the West, they are more likely to reference their own or their male relatives' interpretation of Islam. Although they may not have an active desire to emulate Western normative ideals now, this does not rule out the possibility that Western norms helped achieve normative acceptance in the past. Ultimately, parents make the decision to enroll girls in school based on their understanding of local customs and conditions, which are congruent with Western or international norms that support access to education.

CONCLUSION

As we have shown throughout our discussion, the most significant barriers parents face in sending their children to school are poverty, violence against education, and their own lack of education. Our qualitative interviews provide a more detailed picture of the strife that afflicts these communities, and of parents' efforts to support their children in the face of opposing normative pressures from stronger, more vocal members of the community and in the context of limited resources. Female respondents offer perhaps the most vivid and poignant insights into these challenges, detailing their efforts to negotiate with their husbands and neighbors to be able to send their children, including their girls, to school.

These findings reveal a society torn by conflict and social divisions, but not necessarily in the ways that international organizations suspect when they provide outside support for education. Violent conflict dictates that families respond pragmatically, and fathers are expected to protect their families, especially their daughters. The important point here is that this competing pragmatic decision does not oppose the right to education. It is, rather, determined by a highly specific context: because there is no security, a father cannot be sure that his children, particularly his daughters, will be safe on their way to school, giving rise to fears of both physical and reputational harm.

Furthermore, ideas attributed to foreigners serve as a backdrop to the more prevalent and prominent local normative struggles, which are characterized by tensions between Islam and Pashtunwali and competing interpretations of Islam. The normative reference here is broader Islam, which promotes women's rights and girls' education. Some who manage to break out of conformity seem able to do so in part because they point to the fact that Islam mandates education for all. According to the parents who brave violence and "bad words" from their neighbors to send their girls to school, these rights originate within Islam and are not messages from an international NGO, the United Nations, or from the U.S. government. Therefore, international actors should feel confident providing support to local actors who are committed to education, provided their support is not perceived as taking sides in the conflict.

The presence of the West, however, is evident in the fears some parents expressed that government schools are there to indoctrinate children, to teach them un-Islamic ideas, and to make them secular. These fears have existed in sections of Afghan society for most of the last 100 years, when educated Afghans returned home from modernizing countries like Turkey and Egypt and challenged local Islamic ideas, and local mullahs held a monopoly on education (Burde 2014). The Soviets' invasion of Afghanistan and their efforts to reduce the emphasis on religion in school prompted a recent iteration of these fears, and the foreign interventions of the 2000s have prolonged them.

The media today touches the lives of even the poorest and most marginalized, as demonstrated by the mother who describes the effect illiteracy has on her daily life by preventing her from adding credit to her phone without assistance. Mothers from our sample of parents who send only their boys or neither their boys nor girls to school overwhelmingly support girls' education. They do so for the most practical reasons—basic literacy, availability of doctors—as well as for divine reasons—being a good Muslim, having a happy afterlife. In calling

for girls' education, these women reference their own hardships, as well as the norms promoted by Islam. In other words, they root their call for girls' right to education in the value of education, which they see as having a better life and following the correct path of Islam. Although international norms do not feature in their arguments, it is plausible that their increased exposure to the outside world complements and strengthens their frame of reference, thus enabling them to subtly but inexorably request these rights.

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ANNEX A

Table 5: Marginal Effects (Analysis One)

	Enrolling Children Relative to Not Enrolling Them			
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Male	-0.135** (0.0571)	-0.192*** (0.0508)	-0.218*** (0.0483)	-0.263*** (0.0513)
Age	-0.000836 (0.00223)	-0.00178 (0.00199)	-0.00184 (0.00178)	-0.00143 (0.00177)
Number of Children	0.0248*** (0.00918)	0.0333*** (0.00839)	0.0334*** (0.00776)	0.0328*** (0.00777)
Years of Schooling	0.0376*** (0.00604)	0.0289*** (0.00550)	0.0208*** (0.00511)	0.0223*** (0.00510)
Employed	0.148*** (0.0532)	0.106** (0.0481)	0.116** (0.0452)	0.134*** (0.0454)
Income (2.5k–22k or more)	0.0127*** (0.00433)	0.0148*** (0.00402)	0.0166*** (0.00378)	0.0176*** (0.00379)
District (Ref. category=Tarin Kot)				
Chora	0.00503 (0.0696)	-0.127** (0.0639)	-0.190*** (0.0590)	-0.197*** (0.0588)
Charchino	-0.0351 (0.0708)	-0.110* (0.0632)	-0.117** (0.0595)	-0.0892 (0.0599)
Dehrawod	-0.0682 (0.0614)	-0.0913* (0.0554)	-0.163*** (0.0518)	-0.165*** (0.0513)
Gizab	0.163*** (0.0606)	0.117** (0.0543)	0.0961** (0.0478)	0.0707 (0.0502)
Value of Education				
Girls		0.135*** (0.0224)	0.0694*** (0.0254)	0.0690*** (0.0251)
Boys		0.0905*** (0.0253)	0.00396 (0.0274)	0.00211 (0.0267)
Future with an Education				
Girls			0.0266 (0.0256)	0.0289 (0.0256)
Boys			0.196*** (0.0296)	0.188*** (0.0294)
Violence Against Education				
Attack on Education				-0.0318** (0.0129)
N	474	474	474	474

*** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$

Table 6: Marginal Effects (Analysis Two)

Sending Only Boys or Both Boys and Girls to School, Relative to Not Enrolling Them								
	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3		Model 4	
	Boys Only	Both	Boys Only	Both	Boys Only	Both	Boys Only	Both
Male	-0.0624 (0.0552)	-0.0870 (0.0541)	-0.0627 (0.0537)	-0.133*** (0.0476)	-0.0719 (0.0534)	-0.132*** (0.0469)	-0.128** (0.0548)	-0.130*** (0.0494)
Age	-0.000557 (0.00205)	0.000157 (0.00192)	-0.000891 (0.00200)	-0.000383 (0.00168)	-0.000822 (0.00190)	-0.000539 (0.00163)	-0.000467 (0.00189)	-0.000564 (0.00164)
Number of Children	-0.00433 (0.00842)	0.0265*** (0.00753)	-0.00103 (0.00827)	0.0326*** (0.00683)	-0.00108 (0.00802)	0.0318*** (0.00661)	-0.00153 (0.00790)	0.0321*** (0.00661)
Years of Schooling	0.0183*** (0.00494)	0.0210*** (0.00466)	0.0164*** (0.00489)	0.0143*** (0.00415)	0.0125*** (0.00482)	0.0113*** (0.00401)	0.0143*** (0.00475)	0.0112*** (0.00402)
Employed	0.0939* (0.0531)	0.0539 (0.0515)	0.0784 (0.0521)	0.0160 (0.0468)	0.0719 (0.0520)	0.0283 (0.0469)	0.0932* (0.0521)	0.0264 (0.0476)
Income (2.5k–22k or more)	0.00304 (0.00402)	0.00798** (0.00367)	0.00416 (0.00391)	0.00868*** (0.00333)	0.00519 (0.00383)	0.0098*** (0.00325)	0.00697* (0.00376)	0.0100*** (0.00326)
Value of Education								
Girls			-0.0419* (0.0245)	0.179*** (0.0261)	-0.0419 (0.0277)	0.121*** (0.0281)	-0.0387 (0.0273)	0.120*** (0.0280)
Boys			0.0645** (0.0295)	0.0190 (0.0297)	0.00357 (0.0309)	-0.00200 (0.0296)	0.000362 (0.0311)	-0.00142 (0.0296)
Future with an Education								
Girls					-0.0594** (0.0282)	0.0900*** (0.0303)	-0.0566** (0.0278)	0.0906*** (0.0303)
Boys					0.119*** (0.0393)	0.0496 (0.0435)	0.106*** (0.0389)	0.0522 (0.0435)
Violence against Education								
Attack on Education							-0.0530*** (0.0150)	0.00750 (0.0114)
N	474	474	474	474	474	474	474	474

*** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$

RESILIENCE OF LGBTQIA STUDENTS ON DELHI CAMPUSES

ANJALI KRISHAN, APURVA RASTOGI, AND SUNEETA SINGH

In this paper, we document how LGBTQIA students on college campuses in Delhi, India, are handling discrimination in the aftermath of the Supreme Court of India's ruling on December 11, 2013, that recriminalized homosexuality in India. Applying a resilience research approach, our study revealed that LGBTQIA students are mired in a context of adversity and discrimination that leaves them struggling to achieve their desired outcome: acceptance of their LGBTQIA identity. Students employ both protective and promotive resilience strategies to reach the desired outcome, but these efforts come with a high cost that is borne by both individual students and the LGBTQIA community. Resilience strategies, therefore, have not necessarily improved the adverse environment in Delhi's extremely homophobic higher education establishments. In this paper, we identify which strategies are most likely to lead to positive, long-lasting change.

INTRODUCTION

Resilience is commonly defined as “the ability of the individual or group to face adversity positively, even when their environment is unfavorable” (Labronici 2012, 626). The concept has been refined over the years, and has shifted from an individual approach to an ecological one. An ecological approach, which views “the social and physical environment as the locus of resources for personal growth” (Ungar 2012, 13, 15), focuses specifically on how individuals and groups use protective and promotive processes to transform an adverse context to achieve their desired outcome. Resilience thus embodies the individual's capacity

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to navigate their way to the resources that support well-being, and to negotiate the opportunity to experience these resources fully (Ungar 2012, 17). Families, communities, and governments are expected to play a role in providing resources in ways that are both culturally appropriate and responsive to the preferences of those who need them (Ungar 2013, 255). In this paper, we analyze the state of adversity facing lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans*, queer, intersex, and asexual/ally (LGBTQIA) individuals within the discriminatory higher education environment of Delhi, India.¹ We specifically examine how LGBTQIA students are managing their identities in this environment since the 2013 ruling by the Supreme Court of India that recriminalized homosexuality.

While LGBTQIA college students in Delhi have historically faced homophobia on campus, their situation has deteriorated dramatically in the wake of the Supreme Court ruling on December 11, 2013. The judgment reinstated Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code (1860), which effectively criminalizes homosexuality by banning “unnatural sex,” traditionally interpreted by the legal establishment as referring to sodomy. This law has far-reaching consequences for the LGBTQIA community:

The criminalisation of homosexuality condemns in perpetuity a sizable section of society and forces them to live their lives in the shadow of harassment, exploitation, humiliation, cruel and degrading treatment at the hands of the law enforcement machinery. (NAZ Foundation v. Government of NCT of Delhi 2009)

In 2009, the Delhi High Court struck down Section 377 as unconstitutional. It was widely expected that the 2013 judgment would extend this decriminalization to the rest of the nation, but the opposite occurred. In reaction to the later judgment, former High Court Judge Leela Seth (2014) commented:

The interpretation of law is untempered by any sympathy for the suffering of others.

The voluminous accounts of rape, torture, extortion and harassment suffered by gay and transgender people as a result of this law do not appear to have moved the court. Nor does

¹ We use the initialism LGBTQIA (lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans*, queer, intersex and asexual), as it was the term most widely used by respondents when asked to describe themselves or their community. Similarly, we use the term “trans*” because our respondents considered it the most appropriate and politically correct term. The term was used as an umbrella term to describe multiple trans-identities that extend beyond transgender or transsexual.

the court appear concerned about the parents of such people, who stated before the court that the law induced in their children deep fear, profound self-doubt and the inability to peacefully enjoy family life . . . The judgment fails to appreciate the stigma that is attached to persons and families because of this criminalization.²

The Indian LGBTQIA community moved overnight from an era of cautious optimism into one in which homophobia is legally sanctioned, and thus was propelled into a renewed state of emergency. LGBTQIA community members are more vulnerable than ever before to discrimination and exclusion in all areas of life, including education.

In the education in emergencies field, “emergency” refers to “situations in which man-made or natural disasters destroy, within a short period of time, the usual conditions of life, care and education facilities for children and therefore disrupt, deny, hinder progress or delay the realization of the right to education” (Committee on the Rights of the Child 2008, 1). In this paper, we examine the case of LGBTQIA students on Delhi campuses who find themselves in a situation of emergency as the minority group they belong to is being legally and socially persecuted.

No robust studies exist that indicate the number of LGBTQIA students in Delhi whose education has been disrupted or denied due to their sexual or gender identity. However, a recent report found that, of the 132,435 students admitted in 2015 to Delhi University, the city’s largest campus, not one identified as transgender on their application form (Saxena 2016). There also is no data on the experience and resilience of LGBTQIA students after the recriminalization of homosexuality. Our study addressed this gap, and found that the risks attached to identifying as LGBTQIA, participating in same-sex relationships, or taking part in LGBTQIA community activities have multiplied since the 2013 judgment, which is affecting these students in the most personal and intimate spheres of their lives.

We begin this paper by examining the literature and the research on the resilience of LGBTQIA students in India. We draw from our findings to describe the context of adversity these students inhabit and the risks they face. We then explore resilience strategies the students employ in an effort to achieve acceptance. We

² Quoted in the *Times of India*, January 26, 2014. See <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/home/sunday-times/deep-focus/A-mother-and-a-judge-speaks-out-on-section-377/articleshow/29383723.cms>.

demonstrate that the Delhi higher education establishment does not nurture or accept LGBTQIA students, and thus fails to provide them with an empowering and safe environment. As a result, LGBTQIA students must employ multiple resilience strategies to carve out a space in which they belong and find acceptance. These strategies come with high costs, to both LGBTQIA individuals and their community, that severely limit these students' ability to make positive changes in the context of adversity they face on campus.

THE RESILIENCE FRAMEWORK

The concept of resilience, which emerged in the field of ecology during the 1970s, has gained traction in a variety of subfields that range from disaster relief, to gender relations, to homeland security (Holling 1996). The resilience framework described in this paper originated in psychology and has been adapted to education in international development. This framework is helpful in understanding the questions we raise here because it considers the respondents' specific sociocultural context, as well as issues of social justice and transformative change (Mertens 2009; Ungar 2005).

Resilience research consists of several building blocks: It describes the context of adversity and identifies the negative stressors, risks, and assets (Reyes 2013). It documents how respondents use resilience strategies to navigate and negotiate a context of adversity to reach their desired outcomes. These strategies may protect respondents from risks or promote their ability to leverage assets, such as safe spaces, friendships, and economic independence, to reach their desired outcomes (Reyes 2013). Definitions of these building blocks are context specific and may change over time, as resilience processes are constantly shifting in response to changes in a context of adversity. The respondents in this study had dual roles—as both individuals and as members of the LGBTQIA community on Delhi's college campuses. We thus analyze their resilience on two levels, individual and community, and discuss how it operates in the setting of Delhi's higher education institutions.

This approach expands on individual resilience by examining how formal and informal social networks facilitate resilience among the larger LGBTQIA community (Ungar 2011, 2012, 2013). To understand resilient individuals, previous research has examined their personal traits, such as motivation, positive outlook, and ego (Luther, Cicchetti, and Becker 2000). However, critics observe that such an approach risks “blaming [individuals] for not flourishing when there

are few opportunities” (Ungar 2013, 256) within their adverse environment. Scholars increasingly view resilience as ecological, and maintain that personal resilience is triggered and sustained by macro-level ecological forces, such as family, friends, community, and institutions (DuMont, Widom, and Czaja 2007; Masten and Garmezy 1985; Masten et al. 1988). Thus, the impetus for an individual to adapt to a context of adversity is shifted to the forces that define that context. The ecological approach focuses, therefore, not on individual adaptation but on how resilience strategies can be harnessed to transform a given context. This approach also lends itself to social justice aims, such as advocating for LGBT rights and upholding them in the higher education system.

RESILIENCE AND LGBTQIA

The literature on LGBTQIA college students in India is limited, and research on their resilience strategies is practically nonexistent. However, studies in other countries shed light on how LGBTQIA students negotiate contexts of adversity.

Common risks LGBTQIA students encounter in such contexts include being stigmatized due to sexual orientation; being alienated from peers, society, and family; suffering verbal or physical harassment; and experiencing discrimination at academic institutions (Craig et al. 2015; Fairtlough et al. 2013; Kosciw et al. 2009; Pizmony-Levy et al. 2008; Rankin 2005). These risks are linked to mental health problems, such as depression, substance abuse, or increased risk of suicide (Shilo, Antebi, and Mor 2015), and are particularly great for LGBTQIA college students as they struggle through the difficult developmental period of emerging adulthood. In their review of the literature on LGBTQIA youth, Shilo, Antebi, and Mor (2015) find that “the deleterious effects of coming out and of experiences of anti-LGBQ victimization are risk factors even more relevant to LGBQ youth than to adults and . . . LGBQ youth are at a higher risk and possess fewer resilience factors compared to adults” (217).

And yet, coming out or revealing one’s LGBTQIA identity can also reduce internal risks, such as anxiety, depression, internalized homophobia, and suicidal tendencies, and is associated with positive outcomes such as higher self-esteem (Kosciw et al. 2009; Kwon 2013, 372; Shilo et al. 2015). In some contexts, therefore, coming out is a resilience strategy, although its effectiveness is context dependent.

Another pivotal resilience strategy is having a social support system; while some individuals may already have this asset in their context of adversity, there also are strategies to create it. A strong system consisting of both family and peers can lower an individual's reactivity to prejudice (Kwon 2013, 372), and "support systems, especially at the community level, [can] promote well-being and [act] as a buffer against mental distress in both LGBTQ youth and adults" (Shilo et al. 2015, 223). Supportive family members are particularly important for LGBTQIA youth; they often are economically and socially dependent on their families, so coming out to a homophobic family can cause extreme distress. Shilo, Antebi, and Mor (2015) find that many older individuals who are LGBTQIA resolve this problem by "shifting the focus from familial to other sources of support" (225). These "families of choice" can provide "long-term support, intimacy, and a safe space in which to discuss and share one's emotional, social, and sexual experiences" and improve an individual's "connectedness to the broader LGBTQ community" (225).³

Craig et al. (2015) have identified other resilience strategies, which include leveraging both social and traditional media to create families of choice, finding safe spaces and allies, and accessing positive and empowering storylines and characters that provide an escape into a less homophobic environment. For LGBTQIA youth, mainstream and social media can positively influence identity formation, foster self-esteem, and facilitate greater engagement within the LGBTQ community (257). Processing emotions through expressive writing is linked to increased emotional openness, which in turn can improve an individual's resilience (Kwon 2013). Hope and optimism are also linked to improved resilience, yet it is not clear if these characteristics are triggered by external stimuli, such as supportive families and friends (Kwon 2013). Substance abuse is also a way of coping as it provides an escape, but it obviously has negative consequences and cannot be considered a form of resilience (Craig et al. 2015).

Several sources suggest that homophobia at the institutional level is rarely addressed directly or thoroughly in the school or college environment, where a culture of silence often isolates those who are LGBTQIA (Pizmony-Levy et al. 2008; Rankin 2005; UNESCO 2012). Authority figures such as teachers and staff are sometimes not just silent witnesses but those who actively harass and blackmail LGBT students and deprive them of their educational opportunities (UNESCO 2012). Even where institutions have implemented initiatives to address the needs of LGBTQIA students, such as creating resource centers, safe spaces,

³ "Families of choice," as opposed to "families of origin," refers to an alternative family structure that consists of relationships chosen by the individual, rather than the ties the individual was born with.

and recognizing LGBT groups, the efforts often do not dramatically improve acceptance of LGBTQIA individuals (Rankin 2005). Rankin (2005) finds that, despite such initiatives, LGBT individuals continue to be harassed, isolated, and fear for their safety, which leads her to conclude that “a shift of basic assumptions, premises, and beliefs must take place in all areas of the institution” (41) if the needs of LGBT students are to be adequately met.

LGBTQIA STUDENTS IN INDIAN HIGHER EDUCATION

According to survey data, Indian society is highly homophobic. The 2006 World Value Survey shows that 64 percent of Indians believe homosexuality is “never justified,” and 41 percent say they “would not want a homosexual neighbor.” A popular TV news channel, IBNLive, conducted a “state of the nation” survey in 16 Indian cities in 2009; 70 percent of respondents said that homosexuality should be illegal, and 83 percent said being gay or lesbian is “against Indian culture.”⁴

Scholarly research shows that college students who choose to “express their sexual orientation in their public posture or behavior” face intense homophobia (Singh et al. 2013, 18). A study of “men who have sex with men” (MSM), a term widely used in India to describe men who may not identify as gay but do have sexual encounters with other men, shows that male students whose appearance is “feminized” are harassed by both students and teachers (Khan, Bondyopadhyay, and Mulji 2005, 19). The study finds that higher education students are especially vulnerable, as they “experience more harassment than those in [lower levels of] school” (19). Research also shows that discrimination against male-to-female trans* individuals is prevalent, and that groups termed “hijras” are actively excluded from higher education (Singh et al. 2013; Singh et al. 2012).⁵ These various studies focus mostly on individuals who are MSM and male-to-female trans*; the experiences of lesbians, female bisexuals, and other trans* individuals are largely absent from the scholarly literature.

The intense discrimination LGBTQIA students face in higher education is an integral factor in their overall economic and social marginalization. A World

4 See <http://ibnlive.in.com/news/sotn--homosexuality-still-a-taboo-in-india/98909-19.html> for survey findings.

5 “Hijra” is a term used to describe a South Asian community with deep historical roots. The community consists of members who were born either male or intersex but identify as female, or as a third gender that is neither male nor female. The documentary *Bioscope: Non Binary Conversations on Gender and Education* (produced by Nirantar, Centre of Gender and Education, 2014) poignantly captures the type of sexual, physical, and mental abuse that trans* individuals can be subjected to in the Indian education system.

Bank report on Indian sexual minorities states that “the educational system is often the point at which many community members face their greatest initial challenge . . . The consequent high dropout [rate] from the school systems leads to poor educational outcomes and perpetuates poor social acceptance and achievement within mainstream society” (Singh et al. 2012, 12). The literature suggests that many LGBTQIA students are systematically excluded from higher education due to discrimination (Khan et al. 2005; Singh et al. 2013; Singh et al. 2012), which also inhibits and hinders the few who are able to access the college setting. Therefore, achieving the desired outcome of acceptance by both individuals and society is of the utmost importance for the LGBTQIA community.

RESEARCH METHODS

The research we present is part of a larger study undertaken for the Education Research Approach program, which was conducted by the World Bank in early 2014. The respondents are LGBTQIA students or graduates who studied on campuses in Delhi (see Table 1 for details).

Table 1: Demographic Mix of Survey Respondents

Gender and Sexual Identity	Number	Percentage
Gay	36	68
Bisexual	7	13
Lesbian	5	9
Queer	4	8
Trans*	1	2
No Label	1	2
Intersex	-	-
Asexual	-	-
Sex at Birth		
Male	45	85
Female	7	13
Intersex	1	2
No Answer	1	2
Number of Years at College		
1 year or less	6	11
2 years	2	4
3 years	19	35
More than 3 years	27	50

The study was conducted in three phases. The first phase was a four-hour focus group discussion with four LGBTQIA activists. The focus group findings were used to create a web survey for LGBTQIA students, which they responded to over a three-week period; this was the second phase of data collection. The survey was advertised on the Facebook pages of LGBTQIA campus clubs, and links to it were tweeted by LGBTQIA student activists. There were 54 respondents, but it is unclear how many different campuses the survey reached or how many eligible respondents saw the social media posts. It should be noted that LGBTQIA students who are closeted do not necessarily follow the designated Facebook and Twitter pages, as they are hesitant to be seen “liking” a LGBTQIA organization. Furthermore, not all who viewed these posts were eligible for the survey, which was open only to those who identify as LGBTQIA and were currently attending a Delhi higher education establishment or had attended one in the past five years. To protect respondents’ anonymity, the survey did not include questions about university affiliations. In the third and final phase of data collection, researchers read the web survey findings to four respondents to learn their reactions to them, and to gain more detailed personal information about their individual journeys through higher education.⁶ Respondents for these interviews were chosen using convenience sampling to capture a range of identities (gay, lesbian, trans*, and straight ally) and experiences (professor, former student, current student/activist).

It is important to note that the LGBTQIA community is highly marginalized, that individuals tend to be frightened and thus are unwilling to trust outsiders, especially in the wake of the 2013 Supreme Court ruling. Given this hesitation to participate in data collection that requires coming together in a semi-public setting, such as a focus group or interview, we altered our original methodology. The initial focus group was intended to be a large workshop for approximately 50 people. However, while we were recruiting participants, the feedback suggested that many were uncomfortable with the face-to-face, public nature of such a workshop. Furthermore, focus group respondents shared that, in the aftermath of the 2013 ruling, they were scared to participate in queer events. Thus we chose to conduct the web survey so respondents could remain anonymous and feel safe while participating. We spent considerable time building relationships with the LGBTQIA students who acted as gatekeepers between us and the respondents, and thereby were able to reach a final sample size of 62 across the three phases of data collection—a number that exceeded our expectations. However, these tactics also skewed our respondent mix: most respondents were gay men and tended to be in their third year of college education or above.

⁶ The four respondents were one gay former student of a Delhi University, who now works in that university as a professor, one lesbian student, one trans* student, and one straight ally who is also a student.

Given that the LGBTQIA student clubs that advertised the survey were affiliated with the top educational institutions in Delhi, we assume that most respondents were enrolled in these institutions. The fact that they accessed the web survey via the Internet also suggests a certain level of social privilege and wealth. This information indicates that the study likely missed a more vulnerable population of LGBTQIA students: that of female-born sexual minorities, trans* people, students attending less prestigious colleges, and students who are in their first or second year of college or are still coming to terms with their sexuality.

The findings from this survey are not generalizable, as respondents were not randomly selected. Nevertheless, they do offer insight into the context of adversity for a group of relatively empowered LGBTQIA students. It is highly probable that the stigma and discrimination they experience are even worse for the average LGBTQIA student on Delhi campuses. However, their use of resilience strategies provides valuable insight into how students can negotiate the campus environment at a time of emergency—in this case, the recriminalization of homosexuality.

FINDINGS

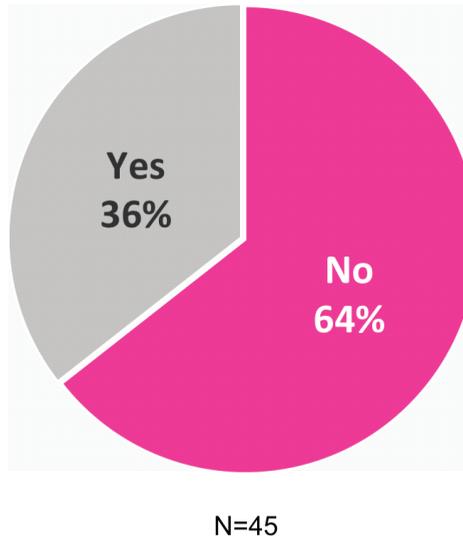
THE CONTEXT OF ADVERSITY

DISCRIMINATION BY CLASSMATES

Our survey revealed that almost two-thirds of our respondents do not feel safe expressing their LGBTQIA identity on campus (Figure 1). They fear that coming out will lead to betrayal, loss of friendships, and isolation. Many also fear being ostracized by their classmates, which results in a negative campus environment. Respondents revealed that coming out is especially problematic for those living in hostels, as roommates could ask them to leave. One described how, upon sharing his sexual identity with one person in his first year of college, that person revealed it to “practically everyone we knew,” and he was “ridiculed [and] to a large extent ostracized by [his] peer group” (KII_g, April 17, 2014).⁷

⁷ Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) are coded by date they were conducted and LGBTQIA identity of respondent: g indicates gay, l lesbian, t trans*, and a ally.

Figure 1: Can you safely express your LGBTQIA identity on campus?



Respondents reported facing physical and sexual harassment from their classmates; 60 percent experienced verbal abuse (see Figure 2), ranging from jokes on the virility and masculinity of gay men to outright bullying. Harassment sometimes became violent and/or led to sexual assault. A trans* respondent recounted the following:

This one time during first semester, a guy tried to touch my chest. I bind [my bosom] and he was like, “What is that?” And he was pointing towards my chest. He was moving slowly closer and closer and then I just grabbed his finger and twisted it. I cursed him, and gave him the finger—that sort of thing. It was all very dramatic. Also traumatic. (KII_t, April 24, 2014)

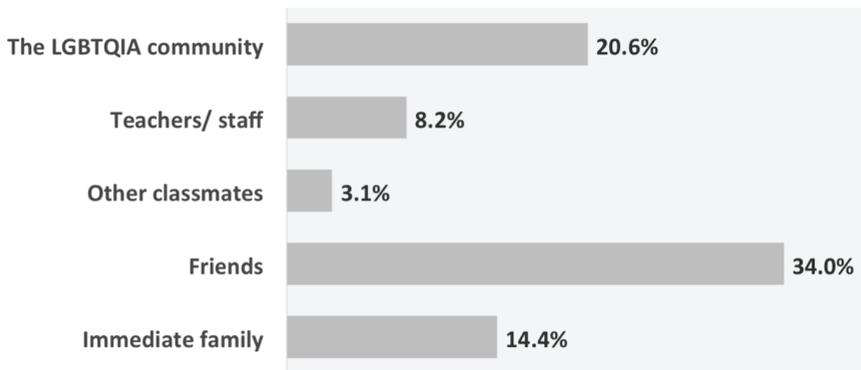
One focus group discussant said that being vulnerable to such overt discrimination “comes down to appearance.” On the other hand, LGBTQIA students who appear straight have to grapple with the fear of being outed in an extremely homophobic society. Trans* students and people who don’t fit gender norms are particularly vulnerable to explicit acts of violence and sexual assault, as described above.

Even when classmates are supportive, respondents worry that they are being caricatured as the gay friend. As a gay respondent observed, “It has now become ‘fashionable’ to be accepting of queer people” (KII_g, April 17, 2014). Another respondent—a lesbian—complained that

you come out [and] there are certain women who try to hit on you while they are drunk. It’s like an opportunity or a feather in their cap . . . So that’s why I don’t indulge in this [partying]. (KII_l, April 23, 2014)

Respondents thus even have to be cautious of those who appear to be allies.

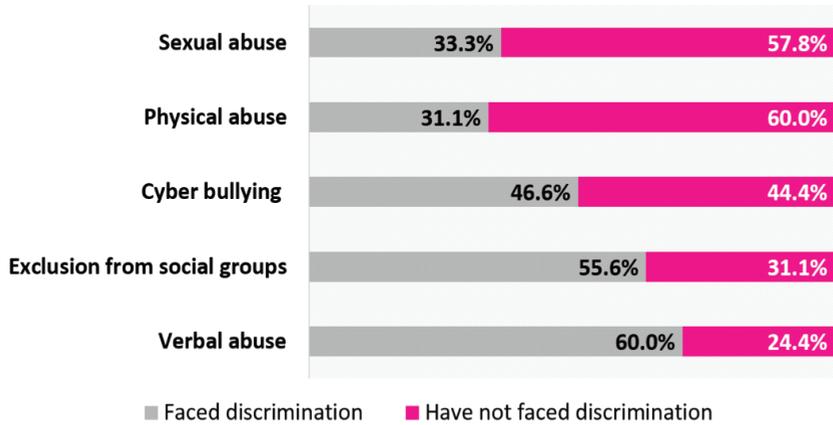
Figure 3: Whom would you talk to about an instance of discrimination?



N=54

DISCRIMINATION AND THE CAMPUS

Figure 2: What type of discrimination have you faced because of your LGBTQIA identity?



N=54

While the most immediate source of adversity and discrimination in the educational environment is classmates, LGBTQIA students also have to contend with an emotionally and socially distant faculty. Only 8 percent of survey respondents said that they would approach a faculty member about experiencing discrimination (see Figure 3). One respondent, a professor who is gay, explains that, “at that age, if you’re queer you really don’t want to talk to an adult” (KII_g, April 17, 2014). He continued, saying he feels pressure to “always maintain a professional distance so that they see me as an authority figure,” which prevents him from approaching students about their gender or sexual identity.

However, this kind of distance can create a negative education environment for students. For instance, a trans* respondent who suffers from dysphoria when referred to as “she,” spoke about his struggle to approach faculty:

Often times there has been a teacher whom I would not feel comfortable asking, “Please don’t use these pronouns for me” . . . I won’t go and talk to all my teachers. (KII_t, April 24, 2014)

Figure 5: Is your course supportive of your LGBTQIA identity?

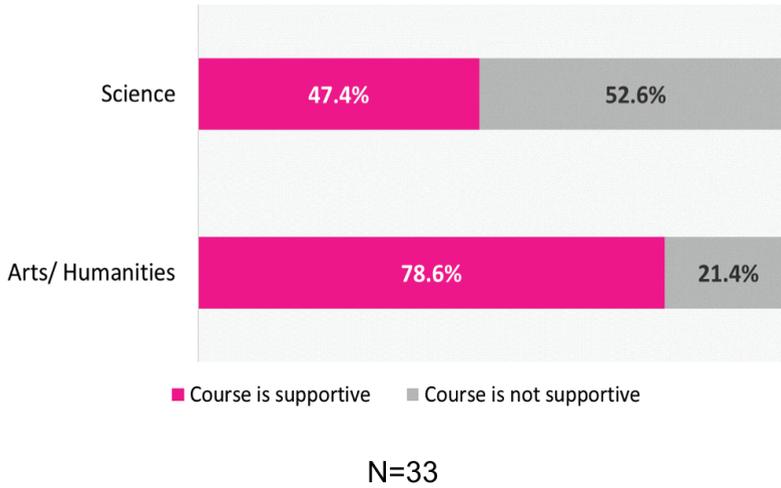
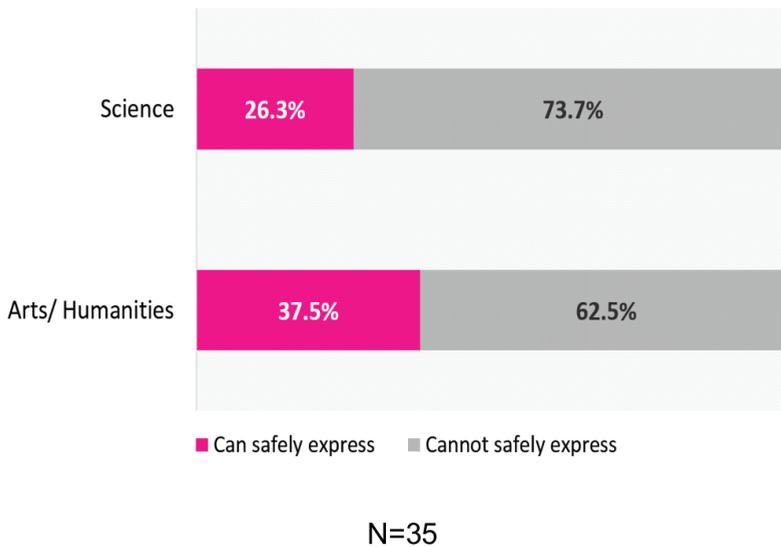
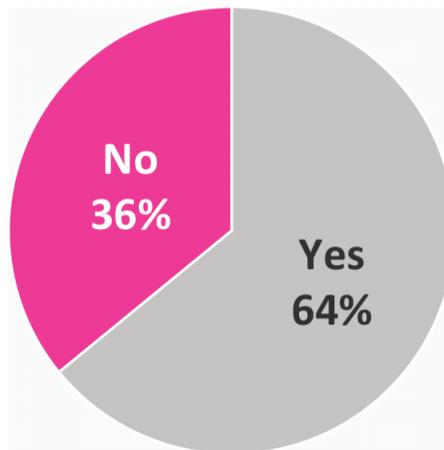


Figure 4: Can you safely express your LGBTQIA identity on campus?



This study suggests that the experience of adversity is linked to an LGBTQIA student's course of study; people in the humanities were found to be more receptive than those in the sciences. A respondent noted that, on her campus, "conservatism in general, unfortunately, so far [has] found a certain consonance with the pure science schools." She added that students in these fields face greater difficulty in joining LGBTQIA rights movements, as they "do not want to be alienated [from their] academic department" (KII_a, May 7, 2014). One respondent revealed that she prefers to socialize only with those studying the humanities and arts, as she anticipates that students from other courses will be less accepting of her (KII_l, April 23, 2014). The survey reveals that those in the humanities or arts not only feel that their courses offer an environment that is more supportive of their LGBTQIA identity than courses in the sciences, but also that they feel safer expressing their LGBTQIA identity in their field of study (see Figures 4 and 5).

Figure 6: Has life become harder after the December 11, 2013 judgment?



N=39

It is unclear why acceptance of LGBTQIA students is more common in the humanities. One possible explanation is that several humanities subjects, such as literature, philosophy, women's studies, and the fine arts, directly refer to gender, and in some cases LGBTQIA issues. Furthermore, science courses have historically been highly competitive in India, and any perceived weakness, such as identifying as LGBTQIA, might be exploited by peers. However, this does not mean that survey respondents specifically chose arts and humanities courses. In fact, although our sample is not statistically representative, the majority of our survey respondents are in science streams.

THE HIGHER EDUCATION ESTABLISHMENT AFTER DECEMBER 11, 2013

More than 60 percent of respondents say life has become harder since the 2013 judgment. One survey respondent wrote, "It's terrifying! I am very frightened. Do something please, quickly!"⁸ Another now advises students "to stop randomly coming out to people. If you are not sure how your parents will handle it, do not tell them right now, especially with the judgment having gone the other way" (KII_g, April 17, 2014). Gay men who came out after the 2009 judgment are particularly scared, as one woman explained: "After it was criminalized again, the people who had come out were a little hesitant to go back to work because they would perhaps face discrimination" (KII_l, April 23, 2014).

While not all respondents fear being arrested under Section 377, most are conscious that their life as LGBTQIA students will now become more difficult (see Figure 6):

The reality of the situation is this, before the High Court judgment, you had to pay 1000 rupees as a bribe to the police to not be arrested because of 377, it became 200 rupees after the High Court judgment and now, it has gone up to being 2000 [rupees]... You will find more harassment, you will find more bullying, but that's all. Because the whole thing is very difficult to prosecute under the law and what the police is usually looking for is a [bribe], it's just the size [of the bribe] has increased. (KII_g, April 17, 2014)

8 Translated from the Hindi.

Before the Delhi High Court judgment was passed, the police would often ask for a bribe in exchange for not arresting (mostly closeted) LGBTQIA persons under Section 377. Once the High Court ruled in 2009 and Section 377 was no longer valid, police nevertheless still demanded bribes in exchange for not harassing LGBTQIA individuals or revealing their identities to family members. Now that the Supreme Court judgment has reinstated Section 377, the police are on stronger ground and are demanding higher bribes in exchange for not arresting LGBTQIA individuals. This development disproportionately impacts the economically marginalized or students who have limited access to funds. LGBTQIA students are also more vulnerable after the 2013 judgement to other forms of abuse: "People [have] said that police had harassed them and let them go in return for sexual favors because they could not pay the price" (KII_g, April 17, 2014).

Several colleges have asked faculty and staff to sign anti-discrimination statements, which pledge that they will work to create an environment free of discrimination on the basis of sex or gender. Focus group discussants were bewildered by this development, as they found it difficult to believe that faculty and staff would understand the full implications of such a pledge or take it seriously. They were also stumped as to how such a pledge could be implemented or enforced.

However, others have been empowered by the groundswell of support for the LGBTQIA community that arose after the verdict. One respondent said that the judgment "jolted everybody into action . . . Post the verdict, people have actually made it a point to come out and actually say, 'This is not done'" (a, May 7, 2014). Another wrote that they found the judgment personally empowering: "It, in fact, became a little easier . . . Since the cat was out of bag, nobody can deny its existence anymore. If they are saying it's illegal, it means it exists. When so many like me are on the street, nobody can say I am not real." Thus, the response to the 2013 judgment appears to depend on a student's position: those who are gay, who have come out, whose parents disapprove, and who have limited financial means are particularly vulnerable.

DISCRIMINATION AND THE INDIVIDUAL

While discrimination and the potential consequences of coming out are external risks, students also face internal risks such as alienation and internalized stigma, which may cause depression and affect academic performance. The pressure of hiding their sexual orientation can also interfere with students' personal social

networks. Several respondents reported that they had to withdraw from campus social life to be safe and avoid discrimination. All the LGBTQIA interviewees in this study believed they had underperformed academically due to feeling alienated or internalizing stigma, as one explained:

My grades significantly declined once I started having same sex attractions. It was not just the fact that I was having attractions, but the fact that it was so taboo and nobody had talked about it. (KII_g, April 17, 2014)

Another respondent added how, after scoring “96 percent in Xth class . . . [he] failed math in XIIth class,” partially due to the stress of hiding his identity (KII_t, April 24, 2014).⁹ This prevented him from attending a top college and affected his self-confidence. Clearly, the fear of coming out may significantly impact a respondent’s self-esteem—and their future.

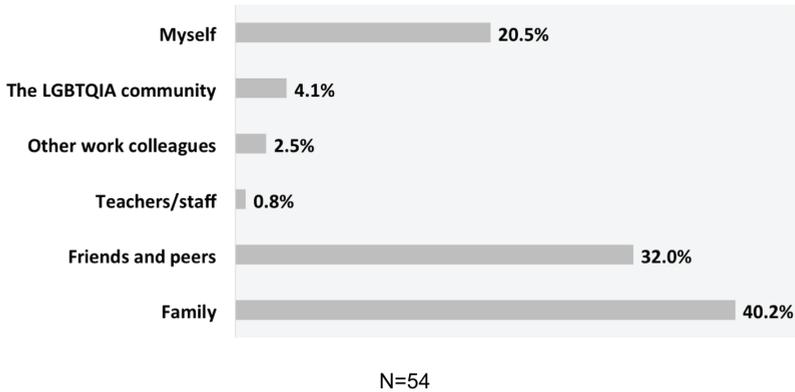
These risks emanate from a higher education setting where discrimination against LGBTQIA students is unchecked. The severity and systematic nature of this discrimination is undeniable, although individual experiences vary greatly.

ACCEPTANCE AS A DESIRED OUTCOME

Individual LGBTQIA students’ desired outcomes vary, but acceptance is a central pillar that links them all. Acceptance is necessary not only for its merit as an empowering state of being that promotes resilience, but also because it is crucial for those seeking protection from the risks within the context of adversity.

Many LGBTQIA individuals move from self-acceptance to acceptance from family and friends, then to general acceptance in the classroom and beyond. Our survey finds that those the respondents most want acceptance from are themselves, their peers, and their families (see Figure 7). Many respondents (44 percent) found it difficult to come to terms with their identity.

⁹ Classes X and XII are watershed years for Indian students. They mark when school board exams are held and subjects of study are chosen. These years are often trying, for students and parents alike.

Figure 7: Whom do you want acceptance from?

Navigating the context of discrimination, internalized stigma, and increasing alienation while negotiating an outward social identity is difficult for these students, and the pressure to conform can hinder the process of self-acceptance, as a lesbian respondent explains:

When I finally accepted [being a lesbian] I was in the first or second year of college. I think before that time there was always the pressure of being “normal” and not deviating, because . . . if you are lesbian, people will ostracize you . . . So I suppose in the mix of all that, I didn’t quite accept it. (KII_1, April 23, 2014)

ACCEPTANCE BY FAMILY AND FRIENDS

While respondents worry that coming out may dramatically and negatively affect their relationships with friends and family, they in fact prioritize acceptance from these groups. Acceptance from both groups is riddled with strife: friends may betray the student or pressure them to be “normal,” and families may react badly and even abuse or disown their child. However, the pressure to share their identity is often immense. Therefore LGBTQIA students may be strategic when coming out. For example, one respondent described how he chose to come out to “a friend, not somebody who I considered close, [as] he was leaving India” (KII_g, 17 April 2014).

Our study finds that, among those in our sample, acceptance by family and friends tends to be a long process, as a respondent who counsels LGBTQIA students said:

Here's what I tell people who plan to come out. "You must keep on talking. Your parents must see that nothing else has changed about you except this. You are still the same person who you are except in this one way." And for the parents to realize that, it's going to take time. You need to have patience. (KII_g, April 17, 2014)

The process of gaining acceptance from family can be devastating:

At that time it seemed that it had gone pretty well, excellently, unbelievably so . . . It was only one and a half years later that I realized that my dad had only gone along with it just for the heck of it . . . I was very upset. I asked him, if this is what you thought, why did you say all of those things? (KII_t, April 24, 2014)

Respondents' struggle for acceptance as LGBTQIA often is conflated with their struggle to be accepted as adults in the family. An interviewee shared how his mother responded to his coming out:

My mother's first reaction was that, as she had not raised me with traditional values, I had become gay. So for one year there was *arti* [a Hindu prayer ritual] every morning, every evening, there was no non-vegetarian food on Tuesdays, Thursdays in an effort to inculcate more Hindu values in me. (KII_g, April 17, 2014)

In this example, the mother's inability to see her son as an adult and her idea that she could raise him with what she believed to be the right values was at the root of her failure to accept his sexuality. The respondent goes on to share that it "took a year and the fact that I got acceptance into a master's-PhD program in the U.S. with full funding" (KII_g, April 17, 2014) for his parents to accept his sexuality and his identity as an adult. In general, respondents struggle with their families on issues that range from curfews to course choices. These challenges may be typical of other students their age, but it is impossible to separate them from issues surrounding being LGBTQIA.

ACCEPTANCE ON CAMPUS AND BY SOCIETY

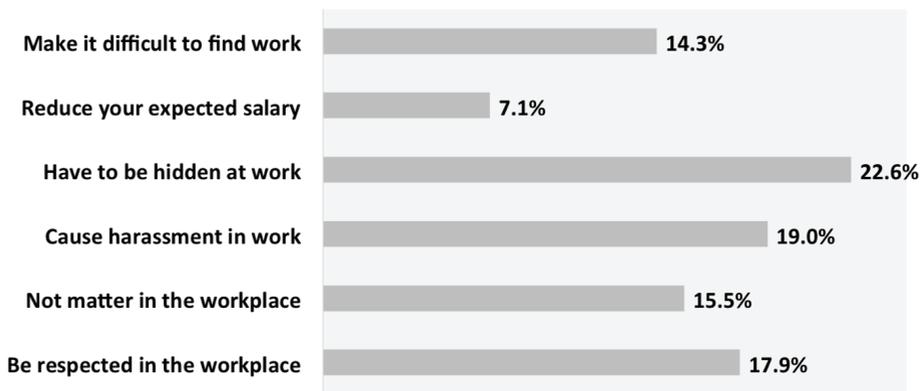
Many respondents were not concerned with acceptance outside their immediate circle of self, peers, and family. However, it is likely that acceptance, whether in the classroom or beyond, dramatically impacts these students' daily lives and future priorities.

Most respondents were more worried about finding acceptance beyond college, when they enter the workplace. The trans* interviewee shared the following:

The issues that I faced in college . . . more of those will pop up in the workplace. But the more daunting thing about the workplace is that I would need to be professional at all times. I cannot just tell people, don't talk to me if you can't talk to me properly. I need to deal with all of that. (KII_t, April 24, 2014)

Almost a quarter of survey respondents believe they will have to hide their gender and sexual identity at work, and approximately 20 percent believe their identity will lead to workplace harassment (see Figure 8).

Figure 8: Do you think your LGBTQIA identity will . . .



N=54

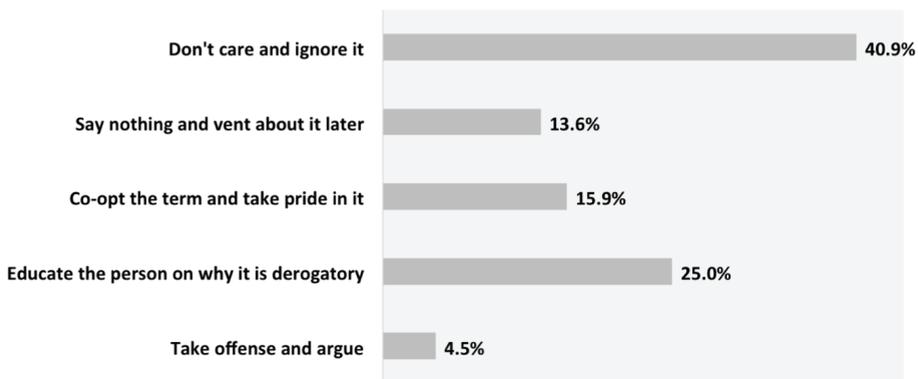
THE COSTS OF ACCEPTANCE

Seeking acceptance of all forms has corresponding costs. Respondents who struggle with individual acceptance are likely to have low self-esteem, feel there is something wrong with them, and suffer from depression, which can have a dramatic impact on their academics, relationships, and future priorities. Similarly, LGBTQIA students suffer overwhelming anxiety that seeking acceptance from their peers and family members may mean losing a supportive relationship. Seeking acceptance in the classroom and beyond is also risky, because it requires exposing oneself to the discrimination experienced by those who are openly out. Of course, there are also immense benefits to seeking acceptance, including being able to accept one's own identity, finding support from peers and family, and living in an environment where one's sexual or gender identity is accepted. Furthermore, the emotional and mental pressure of keeping silent, of hiding and trying to pass as straight can become overwhelming, and some respondents said in fact that seeking acceptance was not always a choice, that they felt forced to share their identity due to this pressure.

RESILIENCE STRATEGIES IN THE HIGHER EDUCATION CONTEXT

Being resilient is crucial to navigating and negotiating through the context of adversity to gain the desired outcome of acceptance. The same respondent can use multiple resilience strategies, depending on the situation. We are interested in two aspects of resilience—protection and promotion.

Figure 9: How do you deal with derogatory comments? Choose only one option



N=44

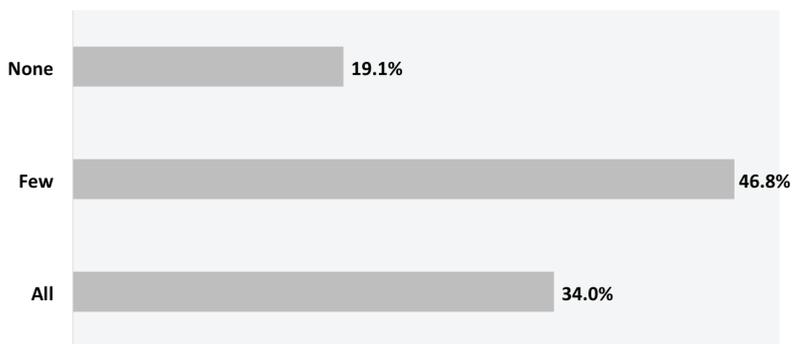
THE STRATEGY OF NOT CARING

Perhaps the most common situational resilience strategy among our sample is one of not caring. Almost 41 percent of respondents say they do not care and ignore derogatory comments (see Figure 9). This is a protective strategy, as it involves disassociating and thus not directly seeking acceptance as an LGBTQIA individual. Respondents may initially use this strategy when coming to terms with their sexual orientation. One interviewee shared that when he realized he was gay it was “more of a resignation than acceptance at first” (KII_g, April 17, 2014). This strategy can also be used in response to upsetting situations, such as when one respondent found that his father did not approve of his gender identity. He said, “By that time I had already become self-certain on some level . . . so it was more like I don’t care what you say, I don’t care. I was upset but not demotivated” (KII_t, April 24, 2014). In this case, caring about his father’s view would have impeded the respondent’s personal journey and have demotivated him. Thus, not caring is a strategic choice, as it allows the respondent to balance his individual journey without being confrontational in a potentially explosive situation.

In our sample, students in science courses were more likely to adopt a strategy of resignation. An interviewee explains that, for these respondents, resignation represents individual progress:

See, people in the sciences especially here in this country are so involved in their work, because it is tough . . . you are doing everything yourself and there is so much competition . . . So most of them tend to put all of these issues [of sexuality] in the back burner and deal with them later. (KII_g, April 17, 2014)

Figure 10: Who have you come out to?



N=47

THE STRATEGY OF HIDING

Another strategy is to hide one's gender and sexual orientation. Perhaps the most common use of this strategy among those in our sample is when they are with their families. All respondents hid their orientation from their family at some point, and almost 65 percent were not out or only out to a few of the people from whom they desired acceptance (Figure 10). Focus group discussants said that hiding their identity from their parents is part of a broader strategy: they wait to be economically independent before coming out so they have a backup plan if their parents do not accept them and stop supporting them financially.

Of course, hiding one's sexual orientation or gender identity may not be an option for those who do not conform to gender norms. Nevertheless, it appears that those respondents adapt the strategy of hiding to one of avoidance:

It's not very good, but I keep at a distance . . . Usually the kind of question I get is, "Are you a boy or a girl?" which is none of your business . . . More often they would ask, "Can I ask you a question?" And I knew what the question was going to be and I would say, "No," and then I would go away. That is the way I deal with it. (KII_t, April 24, 2014)

Using the protective strategy of hiding their identity and avoiding particular situations enables these respondents to navigate risks. They choose this strategy not to seek acceptance as LGBTQIA individuals but to conform to their families' and peers' heteronormative expectations.

THE STRATEGY OF USING SOCIAL AND MATERIAL ASSETS

The resilience strategies discussed above help respondents cope with a context of adversity but do not lead to acceptance, the desired outcome. Study respondents, like those discussed by Craig et al. (2015), use assets such as social media to find a safe space where they can escape a context of adversity. This asset is particularly useful for those who are still coming to terms with their sexuality, as one respondent shared:

I used to read a few people's blogs . . . I was away from home and I wanted to write random things about my life, so it started off like that and then it delved into more of the issues that I was dealing with, it became more serious after that . . . It was

an outlet. Sometimes [readers] would have advice for me; sometimes they would have got some encouragement. (KII_t, April 24, 2014)

This respondent's use of social media enabled him to find a safe space where he could reach out to new allies and practice expressive writing, which also has been shown to lead to greater emotional openness and resilience (Kwon 2013). Assets like social media not only provide a coping mechanism but can also transform an adverse situation. For example, a respondent who came out to his family said that he followed up by "printing out articles and links and sending them to my parents," thus using this asset to open a window of communication (KII_g, 17 April 2014). A focus group discussant used a similar strategy; before coming out to his mother, he placed LGBTQIA pamphlets around the house to introduce her to the idea. Such strategies help the LGBTQIA individual to negotiate acceptance from their family and in social media spaces.

THE STRATEGY OF BEING A MENTOR

Resilience strategies also take shape in the different roles LGBTQIA students adopt within a context of adversity. One of the most common roles respondents reported taking on was that of a mentor to other LGBTQIA individuals. One new mentor explained how he responded when asked about the "It gets better" campaign:

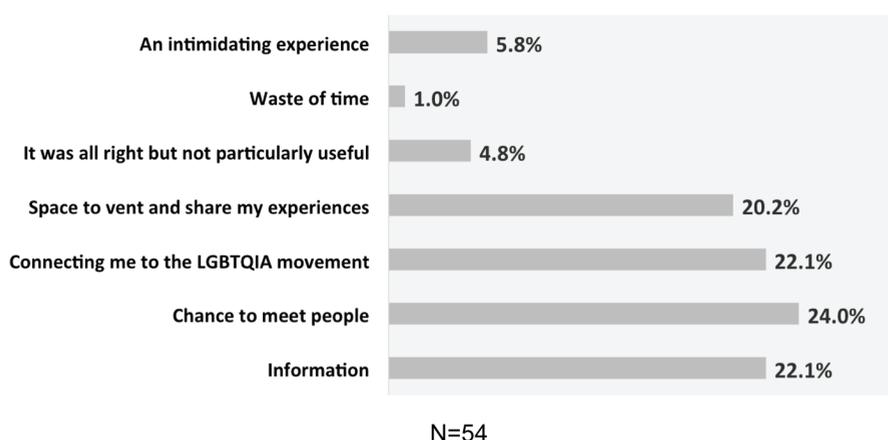
I said, "It doesn't get better. It gets different." . . . So, they had not heard that answer before and then things changed; then they realized they could actually talk to me because . . . I was treating them as equals, just with a little bit more experience, and they insisted that I come back. (KII_g, April 17, 2014)

This respondent went on to be an active member of the LGBTQIA community and to counsel and mentor LGBTQIA students through their coming out process. Other respondents reported that they benefit from being mentors. One described sharing "interesting articles" on LGBTQIA via Facebook: "It's good to know that there are people who . . . want to be informed about it, rather than thinking that, 'Oh, it's just an LGBT thing'" (KII_l, April 23, 2014). By sharing articles, she educates others and wins potential allies, and also feels connected to her friends. This counteracts the alienation she might otherwise feel. This strategy is also promotive at the individual level, as it enables respondents to enter spaces where they are accepted.

RESILIENCE STRATEGIES AND THE LGBTQIA CAMPUS COMMUNITY

The empowered activist embodies a resilience strategy in which respondents come together in collective protests to promote LGBTQIA rights. Examples of this form of resilience include protesting the criminalization of homosexuality through pride marches and campus sit-ins, as well as forming and expanding student organizations.

Figure 11: What do you think of LGBTQIA meetings?



Clearly, some resilience strategies, such as acting as a mentor or becoming an activist, feed directly into the formation of an LGBTQIA community on campus. On campuses in Delhi, however, this community is still emerging. While some individual campuses have their own queer groups, Queer Campus is an organization that spans a number of campuses. Unfortunately, most campus queer groups are concentrated at the most prestigious Delhi colleges, so that many students do not have access to them. Moreover, according to the survey, meetings and other resources are not viewed as major sources of support for LGBTQIA students, which comes instead from family and/or friends.

Nevertheless, more than 70 percent of respondents had attended LGBTQIA meetings and found them useful. They attended these meetings for a host of reasons, including gaining information, meeting and connecting with people, and finding a safe space to vent their feelings (Figure 11). Although some respondents

admitted to finding meetings intimidating at first, LGBTQIA groups have immense potential to have a positive impact on the overall context of adversity on the Delhi campus.

This is especially true in the aftermath of the Section 377 ruling, as public meetings and exhibitions of LGBTQIA experiences have helped to familiarize straight students with queer issues and gained allies for the LGBTQIA community. A major concern for LGBTQIA student organizations is creating a safe space within the context of adversity, especially for vulnerable young LGBTQIA students, where they can be accepted and empowered.

Respondents from student-run LGBTQIA organizations described the uphill battle they face, especially since the 2013 judgment. First reaching LGBTQIA students and then providing them with a safe space is needed more than ever, but it has become more difficult to do. Groups struggle with balancing membership growth, keeping meetings accessible, and finding places to meet. Some LGBTQIA groups keep their meetings small to make it easier for those who have recently come out or are still exploring their sexual orientation to participate without being intimidated, but this also limits their reach. These organizations frequently use social media to reach out to students and offer online platforms, but those who do not have access to social media tend to be left out. Some campus groups also partner with other LGBTQIA groups in Delhi that provide access to resources such as books and brochures that address LGBTQIA issues.

Despite the best efforts, the LGBTQIA community can be daunting for many individuals because of internal discrimination. The LGBTQIA community appears to be highly exclusionary toward people who do not come from an urban and/or privileged background: 61 percent of survey respondents reported that they had experienced this kind of discrimination, and an overwhelming 85 percent said they believe there are cracks within the LGBTQIA community:

The whole idiom of “the party” is something that has put off a lot of gay men¹⁰ . . . Boys who have come from small towns of North India who are completely uncomfortable with the idea to *start with and have* a lot of issues struggling with their own sexuality but also have this social diffidence about how do I deal with myself in these situations? Do I need to carry a gift?

10 Traditionally, “parties” in India refers to occasions where extended family members get together and are associated with particular social norms in terms of behavior, gift-giving, and dress. These norms do not hold for Delhi LGBTQIA parties, which are more “Westernized.” These parties primarily provide an opportunity for LGBTQIA people to meet and socialize in a safe space.

What kind of shoes do I wear? Am I dressed appropriately? So they say “*ki mai jaunga nahi*” [“I won’t go”].¹¹ (KII_a, May 7, 2014)

While LGBTQIA groups can change the context of adversity for LGBTQIA students in positive ways, multiple obstacles remain in terms of students’ gaining acceptance and their ability to access support. Those who are from marginalized backgrounds or are less privileged are not only the most vulnerable, they also are likely to have the most difficulty receiving support from LGBTQIA groups.

THE COSTS OF RESILIENCE STRATEGIES

While resilience strategies can be empowering, it would be naïve to discuss them without talking about the associated costs. For instance, hiding one’s identity from family or friends can be mentally stressful, alienating, and can impact one’s grades. Many respondents, for example, have two identities and two different social media profiles. By having to hide their LGBTQIA status, they are forced to betray both their own identity and their friendships. Moreover, it is difficult for the LGBTQIA community to reach students who are hiding. Therefore, the risk of being alienated and internalizing stigma is significant, yet many have no choice but to use these protective strategies. Resignation is a similarly passive way respondents deal with difficult situations, but it precludes their ability to change them, as they are effectively silenced.

Those who directly engage with discrimination, either by trying to educate those doing the discriminating or by mentoring other LGBTQIA students, also face problems. As mentioned above, such tactics require courage and can be emotionally draining. The respondent who acted as a mentor to students admitted that this role takes a toll on his personal life:

It is extremely difficult for me to find a person who is romantically interested in me because I have young people around me. The older people who are my age constantly keep asking, “Why are you hanging out with young queer people?” (KII_g, April 17, 2014)

Those who choose to become activists may be similarly frustrated by the politics within the LGBTQIA community and find it difficult to sustain their involvement

¹¹ Translated from the Hindi.

over a long period. The LGBTQIA community, which should encourage and promote resilience for many students, clearly has a fairly complex impact.

It is important to note that respondents' campus experiences change as they advance through college. Interviews and focus group discussions revealed that respondents found the first year of college life and a new social milieu particularly difficult. Finding a social group was a priority at that stage, and many felt compelled to use protective strategies such as hiding and resigning themselves to discrimination to shield themselves from harassment by their peers. However, the pressure to hide and conform seems to abate by the second or third year, and respondents said they later gained confidence, which enabled them to use promotive resilience strategies and actively seek individual acceptance. Having a group of supportive friends, which provides a sense of belonging, is crucial to the process of moving from being a wary first-year student to a confident third-year student.

IMPLICATIONS FOR HIGHER EDUCATION AND THE RESILIENCE APPROACH

Our research provides a micro-level view of the complex issues LGBTQIA students face on Delhi's college campuses. We acknowledge that this study is small and exploratory and has only begun to uncover these issues, and thus that our findings should be viewed with caution. Nevertheless, this study does provide a valuable first look at the resilience strategies LGBTQIA students employ as they navigate their personal and community lives in a context of adversity.

We found most respondents keenly aware of the discrimination and abuse they risk facing on campus, and of the need to protect themselves from it. Many do not feel safe expressing their LGBTQIA identity on campus, thus negotiating an accepting educational environment remains a challenge. Respondents had both experienced and feared discrimination; as a result, they often internalized stigma, and many felt alienated. To protect themselves from these risks, they leveraged several resilience strategies. The most successful appeared to be one that allowed them to achieve their desired outcome of acceptance temporarily while furthering the visibility of the LGBTQIA community on campus. Using this strategy enables individual and community resilience to reinforce each other. Other resilience strategies, such as hiding one's LGBTQIA identity, are protective at the individual level but do not seem to have a positive effect on community resilience.

This study suggests that respondents' hopes and fears will likely be transformed as they go through college. At the beginning of their college lives, they are primarily concerned with having a social group and are fearful that their LGBTQIA identity will prevent them from integrating with their peer group. At this point, they rely primarily on the protective strategy of hiding and try to overlook the discrimination they experience. However, our respondents said that, as they advance through college, their desire to come out and gain acceptance as LGBTQIA from friends and family increases, which prompts them to rely on the riskier promotive resilience strategies.

With the pervasive homophobia in Indian society that is reinforced by government mechanisms, such as the recriminalization of homosexuality, LGBTQIA students struggle to find and access formalized sources of support, assets, and resources in the higher education establishment. They are pretty much on their own as individuals and community members as they navigate and negotiate the context of adversity. Protective strategies are often the most feasible and practical options they can practice at an individual level. These choices do not challenge or change the context of adversity, but they do buy respondents time to accumulate important assets, such as safe spaces, friendships, and economic independence, which can buffer them against the risks they face in the context of adversity. Unfortunately, relying on such strategies also has psychological and social costs, as noted above.

Using promotive resilience strategies involves LGBTQIA students reaching out to others, either as empowered activists or by mentoring other LGBTQIA students who are just embarking on their college career. Born out of the general sense of unease and frustration they experience on campus, the activism these respondents engage in suggests that LGBTQIA students are unhappy with their campus environment and are actively trying to change it. Such strategies feed directly into the mobilization of the LGBTQIA campus community by heightening its visibility and building ties, and increasing their potential to bring about transformative change in the context of adversity.

It is clear that changing the context of adversity requires achieving two primary goals: (1) the LGBTQIA campus community needs to be strengthened, and (2) LGBTQIA issues must gain mainstream legitimacy. While the reinstatement of Section 377 is an overwhelmingly negative development, our findings suggest that the promotive resilience strategies LGBTQIA students use on Delhi college campuses may help them accomplish these two goals, which will change the context of adversity for the better. Indeed, the results of this study have

important implications for other institutions in India, and for other contexts that foster inclusive education and aim to make their campuses more welcoming of LGBTQIA individuals.

CONCLUSION

We have documented the stories of young LGBTQIA individuals who are doing their best to grow into adulthood in the context of adversity they and their community encounter on college campuses in Delhi, India. We have argued that, in terms of the existential threat to the well-being of LGBTQIA individuals, the persecution and fear they face in this context represent an emergency as real as armed conflict or a natural disaster. We have tried to capture not only the discrimination our respondents face, but also their resilience in navigating and negotiating this context of adversity, including their conscious efforts to transform it. While this study is small, our findings point to avenues that may be explored by both LGBTQIA students and their campus communities. These findings also suggest that, to achieve transformative change in this situation, promotive resilience strategies that involve the community are reasonably effective. It would be interesting to see if this holds true in other education in emergency contexts, or if there are other individual resilience processes that can challenge and change the context of adversity. By distinguishing between the types of resilience and how they impact the context of adversity, practitioners may be better equipped to inform the social justice aims of advocating for and upholding LGBTQIA rights. Understanding both protective and promotive resilience, as rooted in individual responses and a community context, provides a greater understanding of ways resilience can be cultivated.

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A SCHOOL UNDER FIRE: THE FOG OF EDUCATIONAL PRACTICE IN WAR

KATHE JERVIS

This article explores a little-known footnote in the history of the U.S. military occupation in Iraq. In mid-2007, when the war in Iraq was at its height, the author accepted a job to document the beginnings of a school designed and operated by the U.S. military in Iraq. Although this school was in many ways like any other, every aspect ultimately was conditioned by its singular context: it was a school for Iraqi juveniles captured in war. The author documented the situation of the teenage detainees attending this school run by the U.S. military, and described their educational program. Data collection included both semi-structured and informal conversations with the detainees, their teachers, their guards, and those in the military hierarchy who made decisions about the school and its curriculum; the author also conducted extended classroom observations. Document analysis included school schedules, students' written work and artwork, and assessments. The author gathered information to inform decision-makers about elements missing from the school program, to raise questions about texts and materials, and to offer ideas as the school developed. This article, which is adapted from the field notes the author maintained as part of her assignment, raises questions about the role of the U.S. military in providing education to detained Iraqi juveniles and describes daily life in school.

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INTRODUCTION

Although the optimistically named Dar al-Hikmah (House of Wisdom) was in many ways a school like any other, every aspect ultimately was conditioned by its singular context: it was a school for Iraqi juveniles captured in war. In mid-2007, when the war in Iraq was at its bloody height, I accepted a job to document the beginnings of this school designed and operated by the U.S. military. Before leaving, I set down on paper what role I could play. My initial thoughts became my contract:

I will be going to Camp Victory from August 19 to September 24 to document the situation of the approximately 900 teenage Iraqi detainees in their new school, started by the U.S. Military.¹ I will describe their educational program and leisure time activities. Data collection will include talking to the detainees, their teachers, their guards, other soldiers with whom they come into contact, and those in the military hierarchy who make decisions about curriculum. Some of this talk will be based on protocols and some on opportunities that present themselves. As part of this documentation process, I will be available as a sounding board and also to reflect back what I see, should this be helpful for decision-makers as the school develops. In addition, I will notice what provisions are missing and raise questions about texts, materials, and ideas. My notes will derive from first-hand observations of daily life in school. I will collect documents that include school schedules, written work, artwork, and assessments. I will have the luxury of an undistracted eye to do this work and not have responsibility for program implementation or teaching. Given the improvised nature of the task, anything more I might do when I actually see the situation is a bonus. The goal in relationships is to do no harm.

That I was experienced in studying school startups, had written about crossing cultural boundaries, and could leave immediately compelled me to answer a call for unspecified help on this unprecedented project to educate young detainees held by the U.S. military in Iraq. It was not lost on me that I fit the profile of other Americans called on to interfere in Iraq: I did not speak Arabic or study juvenile detention, military culture, war zones, Middle East geography, or Iraqi education.

1 Camp Victory, the largest U.S. military base in Iraq, is located outside Baghdad.

And yet, the following narrative—a mere footnote to a disastrous war—tells a story that to my knowledge has not been told elsewhere. Besides recounting a U.S. military effort that should not be forgotten, the story I am about to tell calls attention to the blinders, both mine and others', that the collective “we” wear when we do not understand enough about another culture. Despite the best intentions, our vision blurs.

School startups under even the best conditions are notoriously complicated and improvisational. Planning leaves too little time to reflect on the contradictions of daily practice, whether in a war zone or urban charter school. This school in Iraq exemplifies how the ideas behind any new school can lose their power as they cycle through the bureaucratic layers and into the classroom.

Besides the usual caveats about my own White Western monolingual urban identity and the philosophical tenets that make any description only partial and idiosyncratic, I was admittedly outside my comfort level. I arrived in Iraq in mid-August 2007, straight from a comfortable life in New York City, to sleep with seven other women in a “dry” shipping container. Dry meant there was no running water and the bathrooms were 200 yards away—though if I wanted to, I could walk to Saddam’s former palace and use his old, shoddily constructed shower with the gold-handled fixtures.

The military rules and ranks were more foreign to me than the Arabic-language classrooms where I spent my days. I was the oldest person at Camp Victory, an outlier in this high-testosterone community of 30,000 young people, mostly men between the ages of 19 and 32, led by senior officers in their fifties. As a 65-year-old grandmother, I sometimes hitchhiked the mile or so from the team office to the mess hall in afternoon heat that reached 130 degrees (like a sauna and not entirely unpleasant if you think of it that way). Those who gave me a lift often greeted me by saying, “I usually don’t stop for hitchhikers, but you remind me of my mother.” During an incoming mortar attack (harmless it turned out), a young officer from the South solicitously suggested, “Ma’am, why don’t you go into the next room where you’ll find a chair to sit in.” Senior citizen goes to war was perhaps a subtext, but the context was the work—24/7. Documenting the school kept me centered, but even so, I got just a glimpse of what detainment must have been like for these Iraqi teenagers.

Before I set foot in the school I needed to gain minimal trust—for a start, unrestricted access to classrooms and permission to take notes with a laptop in full view. I also needed guidance about informed consent and parental permissions,

the standards of academic research ethics with juveniles, but the Marine colonel I reported to rebuffed me: “There are no ethics in detention centers. Get on with it.” Since I could not contact parents for permissions—detainees hardly knew if their parents were alive—parental permission was not possible. I accepted that some people, for instance journalists, report without conforming to institutional review board (IRB) processes and that military regulations do support some key IRB guidelines: I was forbidden to record the ID numbers detainees wore on their wrists, so I never identified any individual detainee, even in my notes, and no detainee was required to talk to me against his will. Although I had been against the war from its inception, I had chosen to work on this project, and so I got on with it.²

THE SCHOOL AND HOW IT CAME TO BE

“I am impressed,” I wrote on my first school day. “Opening any kind of school on this schedule requires Herculean effort. Are there medals for this?” The facility would be familiar in any impoverished, warm-weather U.S. school district with repurposed structures: four new soccer fields; a library with abundant natural light, whitewashed walls, and empty shelves; a small teachers’ room and similarly sized medic’s office; and classrooms with stacking plastic chairs, long plastic tables, TVs, small whiteboards, equipment for mopping the floors, and not much else. Anyone who taught in mobile units on a school playground or during the heyday of open education, where there were no full walls between adjacent rooms, would recognize these classrooms. The quality of the construction implied “temporary,” but the entire facility impressively signaled “school.”

But this was not any school. I heard from a member of the Army Corps of Engineers who worked for 13 straight days to “harden” (fortify) this abandoned military training site that, like many “instant” schools, this one was set in a compromised space. The school was “inside the wire” but closer to local civilian territory than other structures on the base, which made it vulnerable to incoming mortars fired by insurgents. That Iraqis frequently fired on the base but never at the school suggests that they chose not to attack their young fellow countrymen. Engineers built multi-ton blast walls and waist-high cement bunkers everywhere on the base, but the school had extra barriers. No one could enter or leave the

² An exploration of the crucially important subject of research ethics in war is beyond the scope of this narrative, but excellent guidance can be found in Goodhand (2000).

school without the guards moving a large Humvee to allow a vehicle to pass.³ The military had positioned gates at intervals to prevent potential escapees from having direct routes to exits. Guard towers overlooked the soccer fields. A nine-man, highly trained SWAT team equipped with non-lethal rubber bullets—reputed to be close to lethal if fired at close range—stood ready to react to trouble. I never did get used to the “Deadly Weapons Authorized” sign, although soldiers on duty at the school checked their weapons into a designated arms room to prevent detainees from grabbing a gun. With all this military protection, it was easy to forget that these young detainees could be dangerous, but the general in charge of detainee ops urged me to take care, reminding me that two juveniles had recently killed a third.

Security routines ruled, a hybrid of military and prison logistics. I could see immediately that academic rigor would be hard to instill in these students, what with no homework or insistence on mastering academics. Their incentive for learning was to get a good report to the release board, based more on behavior than education. But security routines guaranteed less than optimal schooling. Guards woke the detainees at 5 AM, breakfast was from 6 to 7 AM, then the youth were loaded into 11 (new and expensive) buses for the 20-minute ride to Dar al-Hikmah. Twenty-five guards unloaded the buses one at a time, and each detainee was searched for contraband that he might use to make weapons. At 9 AM, four hours after wakeup call, classes finally began. At 4 PM, the procedure was reversed. Guards inspected every pocket for scraps of paper, bottle caps, or pencil fragments, then returned the detainees to their tents at 5 PM. It seemed to me a slow-motion grind for both guards and detainees.

The same could be said of latrine breaks. The military had scrounged Iraqi-style latrines (for squatting), but not enough. (Outside contractors installed them without a cleaning contract, an odd detail that was either shoddy or consciously left to military ingenuity.) Bathroom routines often challenge schools, but the military required detainees, who were never trusted to be alone, to be escorted by trained escort teams. Three times a day, alongside their classmates, the young men waited in a squat for 25 minutes, hands behind their heads (called “stalled movement,” necessary for security), while taking turns on the WC and washing at the sinks, and then squatting again until the escorts returned them to class.

3 I use “guard” to describe all the U.S. military personnel whose job was to regulate the daily life of the Iraqi juvenile detainees. These enlisted men deployed from various Army national guard units to conduct force protection, which included care and custody of detainees at Dar Al-Hikmah. When I was there, guards came from infantry units in New Mexico and California, military police from Rhode Island and Michigan, and field artillery from Utah.

School had begun inauspiciously the week before I arrived. On the first day, the military had divided the approximately 700 detainees into classes of 60 students each, but 60 adolescent bodies did not fit into these small classrooms. Soldiers immediately sent all the detainees back to their tents, and the next day only 250 detainees arrived, split into eight classes of 23-30. Now each detainee would attend school only one day out of three, instead of six days a week. That change weakened the entire point of the school—to provide a consistent, intensive educational experience for all detainees—and the gap between intention and execution was widened in one fell swoop. Visitors, military inspectors, and the press, however, would hardly notice.

Running a school for juveniles detained in war was unprecedented in the history of U.S. military combat operations. Marine reservist Major General Stone, a charismatic and wealthy Silicon Valley software developer and the new head of Detainee Operations TF-134, lobbied General David Petraeus for a site, cajoled visiting Senator Lindsey Graham for funds, and fought resistance to his idea up and down the chain of command. Even without final approval, he ordered his U.S. military and Iraqi civilian staff to create a school on paper. This being the military, the school would need an “official” emblem. The clever overworked soldier tasked to design it found a private school logo on the Internet, overlaid the image on the red, white, and black Iraqi flag, added the name of the school in Arabic, and voila—the exquisite symbol of Dar al-Hikmah was born.

The school was indeed an inspired vision, but “vision” was not exactly the right word for this nascent effort. No military doctrine existed for how to operate a school for juveniles, and neither Stone nor his staff had professional education experience. As Stone said at a press conference during the first week of school, “I’m not sure where we’re going to go with the youth, other than I’m very hopeful.” Moreover, the noble goal of educating young Iraqi detainees was not Stone’s most pressing priority. He also was responsible for the increasing number of Iraqi adults being swept off the streets during the U.S. surge, who were confined in an overcrowded detention facility at Bucca, a tinderbox always on the verge of a riot. My first day on the job, in a raucous bout of after-hours storytelling to initiate me into the team—non-alcoholic, due to base rules, but with the feel of everyone wishing for a drink—Stone told me emphatically, “This school is not Exeter, and this is war.”

Because the Geneva Conventions require that juveniles captured during a conflict be held no more than a year, Stone charged his staff with creating a time-limited experience powerful enough to convince adolescent detainees not to join—or

rejoin—the insurgency. In the absence of a crafted school mission statement, I collected a list of intentions gathered directly from Stone and his staff:

- **Practical:** Keep these teenage detainees occupied, give them skills, and keep them away from identified extremists.
- **Possible:** Open their minds to respect another way of thinking. That is the best we can do . . . we are not running a prep school, only a detention center.
- **Values laden:** Turn their world upside down and change the detainees' perspective so they see themselves as part of the future of the new Iraq, rather than of the insurgency.
- **Optics** (how the undertaking looks to others): Convince the wider world that Americans care about the education of Arab adolescents as much as (or more than) Arabs themselves do.
- **Aspirational:** Hope that the future prime minister and other ministers in Iraq come from this detainee population.

To their credit, the military leadership thought hard about whether the school was to represent an American or an Iraqi enterprise, and whether to infuse the school environment with civilian or military culture. The military could have hired Americans or depended on uniformed teachers from their ranks, but they did not. Two decisions, reached early on, specified (1) only Iraqis or Iraqi-Americans could teach; (2) no one in uniform was permitted in a teaching role. These two key values shaped the school as the only consistent practices unrelated to keeping order, and thus attempted to de-emphasize the military circumstances of detention during war and demonstrate faith in the future of a new Iraq led by Iraqis.

Other embryonic ideas were slow to cohere, and answers to the perennial questions of what to teach and how to teach it were murky at best. The Strategic Communications Plan signed by Major General Stone ordered that “our engagement must be culturally appropriate: Iraqi values, not Western, must have primacy.” But the primacy of Iraqi values necessarily conflicted with exposure to Western values that the military hoped the Iraq of the future would adopt. As part of my role was to find opportunities for “changing juvenile mindsets,” I was dismayed to find that the school planners—a mix of American military

personnel, Iraqi American civilian teachers, and one local Iraqi teacher—never proposed teaching anything other than the Iraqi curriculum. Could a rote Iraqi curriculum persuade these young men to believe in a unified Iraq and moderate Islam? Perhaps they already embraced such ideas, but no one had asked them, nor would most Americans on site have trusted their answers. The school, like the occupation, faced the tension between respecting Iraqi values and making Iraqis into democratic citizens.

Other than English instruction, the classroom structure was the same whether it was a lecture on methods of water purification or basic Iraqi geography: students raised their hands to answer the teachers' questions. I hoped to write down discussions, note students' questions, and record debate—all hallmarks of the best American curriculum—but these teachers followed the traditional Iraqi template of lecture and recitation, with the teacher as absolute authority. It may have been colossally naive to begin with so many contradictory goals, but every school startup faces similar inconsistencies; time is too limited to think through how all but the most central values will translate into practice. Even as I began to observe, it nagged at me how this American school could educate detainees to Iraqi norms and yet change those norms to reflect U.S. military goals.

My favorite sergeant, who ran the school day-to-day, had no school administrative experience but did have a calm demeanor and excellent judgment. He carried around a tattered e-mail printout confirming that the Iraqi education minister would provide a newly revised post-Saddam curriculum, but by the third week of school he was gnashing his teeth and lamenting that the final agreement still languished, unsigned, on the minister's desk—perhaps a not-so-subtle signal of ministerial disapproval. He showed me another document meant to be a “brainstorming device and vague curriculum outline” that got sent up the chain of command and came back as a binding agreement. The planners had written in this 10-page “Juvenile Education Report” that the school's goal was “to provide the detainees with basic educational skills to the Iraqi fifth-grade level while opening their minds to the democratic process and the concepts therein, while creating a more compliant population.” It would be hard to beat that mixed message.

The school plan offered the detainees a chance to learn, but it also aimed to expose them to idealized American values of tolerance and diversity. Created to educate Iraqis, Dar al-Hikmah was still “school” as American soldiers imagined it. Classes would take place six days a week, but not Friday, the Muslim day of rest; subject-matter teachers would move from classroom to classroom; the schedule would include lunch, prayer, soccer, Arabic, math, geography, civics,

and English. Contrary to usual Iraqi practice, the planners decided to track detainees into academic levels. They used familiar American methods to chart progress, including anecdotal behavior sheets, tests scores, report cards, and health information. Enlisted men set up folders to hold students' classwork—not for every detainee but enough to demonstrate their intention to keep records. Most problematic in this original school plan was class size. Sixty students to one teacher was not unheard of in Iraq's best schools, but these inexperienced administrators clearly had not visualized that number of adolescents in the new school's classrooms.

ADOLESCENTS IN DETENTION AT CAMP CROPPER

Flash to the 30 minutes' drive from the dusty center of Camp Victory to the even dustier school grounds on another part of the base. After traveling across the world to finally see the school for myself, I was turned back for not having the correct badge. (Was it a careless bureaucratic error, or had I not yet earned that elusive minimal trust?) I was taken instead to Camp Cropper on another edge of Camp Victory to see where the juveniles were quartered. Cropper is the rumored site of Saddam Hussein's execution and where the Americans were detaining several thousand adults, including "high-value detainees" from Saddam's inner circle. In this hot, unrelievedly brown environment ringed with coiled razor wire, and after many more checkpoints that required finessing my lack of a proper badge, I finally set eyes on the young detainees I had been fantasizing about.

My Iraqi American driver concealed her ID card so no one could punish her prominent Baghdad family for having a relative working for the American military. The ubiquitous multi-ton concrete barriers faded from my consciousness as the teenagers milling about outside their tents came into focus—most of them 16 and 17 but some as young as 11. Groomed and ready for prayers—the Qur'an dictates having a clean body and clean clothes when praying—some were wearing spotless white *dishdashas* (ankle-length shirts) rather than their usual yellow jumpsuits. They were a startlingly attractive group of teenagers. Some looked as familiar to me as the olive-skinned, brown-eyed Semitic teenagers I grew up with. A bilingual-bicultural advisor (BBA) attached to the military took me to meet a poised detainee who was serving as compound chief. He greeted us politely in a mix of English and Arabic as if we were guests in his home, even though we were talking across a wire mesh fence. This handsome 16-year-old chatted pleasantly about daily life with manners any American parent would brag about, until he became agitated and begged the BBA to arrange a new exam

schedule at his old school so as not to delay his university entrance. He railed against his unfair detention that was derailing his life. “Of course I will do it,” the BBA agreed, although she had no intention—or standing—to intervene. “He needs to believe in his future . . . to have hope,” she said. Encouraging hope (even false hope) was an all-hands effort emanating from Major General Stone. Hopelessness was thought to be dangerous in a post–Abu Ghraib world. As Northwestern law professor Joseph Margulies (representing detainees at Guantanamo and Camp Cropper) said on October 24, 2007, “Guantanamo was built as a place to extinguish hope . . . the hope of going home, the hope of being reunited with family, the hope of family coming to you. Hope keeps prisoners alive. And if you extinguish hope, a prisoner will curl up and die.”

As I recorded the day’s experience in my notes, I wondered, who were these charming teenagers? Extremists? Thwarted university students? I got to know them over the month I worked in Iraq because they talked to me as an interesting diversion or because they thought it might speed their release, although I told them repeatedly it would not. However, I could not fully tap into their complex thinking, especially since the availability and skill of Arabic translators was scandalously low, and I had few opportunities to clarify what I thought I understood. When a detainee had mastered enough English, I found our conversations more thoughtful, which bends this account toward English-speaking detainees. Detainees could refuse to talk to me, and some did. Refusal—whether a coping strategy to avoid churning up feelings, to conserve energy, or to show their peers they were not cooperating with any American woman—was final and in their control. However, without any inducements, most detainees willingly shared details about their own and their family’s education, work, leisure time, religion, and career aims.

I also heard stories from the guards. At Camp Cropper I watched the soldiers outside the wire mesh who kept the confined detainees always in sight, wondering how they could stand the boredom. The detainees essentially governed themselves within highly supervised physical boundaries and American-devised student-council-like organizational structures. They served their own locally provisioned food, did their own laundry, shaved and cut each other’s hair in special enclosures with guard-issued implements that were counted after every use, listened to Arabic music on guard-controlled radios that produced mostly static, and played soccer in bare feet. Some prayed. Some read the Qur’an. Depending on individual temperaments, life in detention could be either unbearably monotonous or reassuringly routine, for both detainees and their guards.

Although U.S. military representatives intended their treatment of these juveniles to nourish hope, the youths' lives were a mix of hope and hopelessness. In one version of hope, detention was a novel adventure for those who had never left home and had had limited educational opportunities. This view included formal schooling, good food, and the parents' relief that their sons were out of harm's way during a raging civil war. These young men also got the best medical care in Iraq at the state-of-the-art hospital that served soldiers and detainees as equals. This picture was hopeful, sometimes even fun—when a group of detainees moved into new tents, the surveillance camera caught them exuberantly doing backflips off the stacked sleeping mats. One described his compound mates: “We are all brothers.” I thought it was psychologically healthy that the detainees reported helping and being helped by others. Those who were in this hopeful mode told me of visits from their families, recounting them down to smallest detail (the “taxi cost 50,000 dinars”). The detainees told their parents about the good food and new school—just the sort of messages the military hoped would reach families and tribes. Some argued, as did Steve Carleton Ford and colleagues, that “Baghdad teenagers showed heightened sense of self in the face of war” (Carlton-Ford et. al 2008). Being detained with others strengthened their pride, as they stood in solidarity with their tent mates. I wanted to be convinced that perhaps this sense of belonging, confidence, and optimism would help them learn.

But such impressions of detention could shift in an instant. Although detainees concealed or repressed their considerable anger toward the Americans in conversations with me, they described tears, depression, fear, sadness, and loneliness. I met bereft 11- to 17-year-olds who missed their families more than they could bear. They worried about family members who might be dead, injured, or displaced from their homes. A 12-year-old tried to control his tears: “I don't know if my father is alive, and I haven't heard from my mother.” One detainee said he had no visitors because his mother was sick and “my father and two brothers are in Bucca.” He pleaded to be transferred to Bucca to be with them. An increased burden of guilt for getting caught fell on oldest sons who were responsible for supplementing the family income. An only child of a divorced mother (both rare in the stories I heard) told me, “My mother is alone. I don't know how she gets money now, but when she visits, she tells me not to worry. My mom is sad, very lonely without me.” Some detainees were bewildered by detention. “I never thought I would be in this situation,” lamented one young man who said his family didn't know where he was. Another admitted, “I don't want my family to know that I was captured. I'm ashamed.” And even when detainees wanted to tell their families where they were, the officer in charge acknowledged that reaching a wrong phone number on the first try could end the effort. A

16-year-old detainee with sad eyes told me, “Before bed, I think about my family, especially my mother. Sometimes I cry. Most of the time I sit by myself.” Many detainees reported “keeping to myself,” which seemed unlikely, given the social interactions I observed. Perhaps they wanted their captors to think they were minding their own business and not suspect them of conspiring with others.

Detainees’ stories of their capture sounded rehearsed: “I was in my bed under the blanket when the soldiers came and took me away.” Only the bedtimes differed. In the one story that rang true, the teller had a sparkle in his eye as he told me, “You won’t hear from me that I was under the blanket at home. I was at the supermarket and a soldier kicked my car, and I hit him back. He arrested me.” The American soldiers told me more believable stories of how detainees came to be captured: a young man in the wrong place at the wrong time; a committed insurgent attempting to defend his country by killing U.S. soldiers; a hapless adolescent caught in the sectarian snare of meddling neighbors who reported him for some vendetta; a youngster with criminal tendencies and poor judgment; or a desperate 16-year-old earning money for his poverty-stricken family by helping insurgents. Even if detainees’ capture stories did not always ring true, I found their description of the lives they lived before being captured to be credible.

Alas, uncertainty prevailed—a powerlessness that could bury hope. Many detainees wondered, Why was I captured? What was I charged with? How long before my release? The U.S. military promoted transparency by instituting six-month case reviews, but despite good intentions, these reviews were reputed to be cursory. Detainees often did not know the contents of their capture records or—as is usual in war—have legal help to make their case. While the press and various humanitarian groups saw these reviews as being better than nothing, the detainees believed fervently that they mattered greatly. Most adjusted their behavior to present a favorable record.

But not all. At Cropper I saw a young man locked up in a security housing unit—in other words, solitary confinement in a six-foot-square wire cage. His offense seemed to be nothing more than a typical middle school dust-up. Or maybe it lost something when translated as “arm-wrestling.” The sanguine BBA noted that the detainee had water and that a guard was standing nearby to ensure his safety. The young man’s imminent release after 24 hours in the cage may have accounted for his cheerful demeanor, but it was hard to believe “he didn’t seem to mind at all.” That image of a 15-year-old caged in the hot sun still haunts me. Hope seemed a puny abstraction.

And yet the school was a source of hope. Education confers dignity and recognizes the worth of those privileged to receive it. In Iraq, as almost everywhere in the world, formal education can unlock access to a better future. These detainees had hopeful, credible career aims: to become doctors, teachers, pharmacists, translators, bodyguards for government leaders, and officers in the Iraqi army. Even those who had no previous schooling and wanted to return to village life to care for their land and livestock hungered for education. Despite the American military's ambitious plans to promote literacy, books were scarce, except for the Qur'an. Only the chief and an English speaker in each compound, chosen by the military for their leadership qualities and English facility, had access to pencil, paper, and an Arab-English dictionary. The military had permitted library books until pages ended up as "chai rocks"—pieces of paper carrying illicit messages, dipped in sweet tea mixed with dirt, hardened in the sun, and hurled over the walls or into other compounds. Discordant goals on the ground (encouraging literacy but forbidding books) foreshadowed the intractable dilemma of creating a coherent educational experience.

TEACHING DEMOCRACY IN A COERCED ENVIRONMENT

The classroom was the stated arena for "turning the detainees' world upside down" and introducing them to democratic concepts. But what classroom experience could be powerful enough to convince a teenager who was invested in a civil war to abandon it? Without any experience of democracy (making choices, seeing that one's actions matter, free elections), the democratic process could only be an abstract principle to a captive adolescent, even if he valued these ideas. Some guards believed that raising their hands to decide which DVD to watch gave detainees practice in making choices. But this mild exercise could hardly teach tolerance for other sects engaged in the bloody war or model how to settle sectarian disputes at the ballot box. For these juveniles, choosing DVDs was as close it came to demonstrating democracy.

Every good education involves transformation, so it is fair to ask whether the detainees could have been dramatically changed by any program, especially one created by an enemy. Diversified methods and novel curriculum that could have exposed detainees to another way of thinking were nowhere visible on any teachers' agenda. Teachers at Dar al-Hikmah were in fact contractually bound to keep their opinions to themselves. They could not discuss politics or reveal themselves as Shia or Sunni, and they had to promote the idea of "One Iraq." The civics teacher allowed that the Dar al-Hikmah rules were stricter than in his old

school; he said he missed teaching “outside the wire,” where he could reveal his thinking to his students and solicit theirs.

I learned how inappropriate political talk was when I got caught up in asking the faculty to introduce *Guernica*, Picasso’s famously anti-war 1937 painting of the Spanish Civil War.⁴ I brought hard-to-procure color copies of the painting to a faculty meeting and, with admirable good nature and Arab charm, each teacher spoke against using it. One teacher correctly pointed out that the “detainees don’t know about the Spanish Civil War, and they don’t care.” (But they did know war!) Another added, “Why raise anything dangerous and prone to cause trouble?” Another agreed: “We don’t want any topic that brings up the questions: ‘Why am I here? Why can’t I be released?’ That is all the detainees care about or express in class.” Even the linguist on duty, a young U.S. soldier educated in Iraq until she was 16, became so agitated that she stepped out of her translator’s role—with a (necessary) apology—to agree with the teachers. She interjected that in Iraq she had never been asked to discuss subjects that did not have a “right” answer and questioned how teachers could even begin to teach such things. That teachers might ask detainees to draw something in response to seeing *Guernica* prompted one teacher to argue, “Why would you even want them to draw non-Iraqi art anyway?” While teachers did not embrace—and in fact emphatically rejected—self-expression in their own classrooms, they willingly discussed these ideas with easy laughs and open-ended possibilities (“What about a piece of sculpture about Iraq?”). But open-ended discussion was not “school” in this U.S. military setting. As for what detainees should be taught, one teacher spoke for all: Iraqi curriculum. Why would you want to change it? When I raised the issue of how to meet the school’s stated goal of opening minds to the democratic process, one teacher responded, “All we can teach for now is One Iraq. Love your country. Strive for peace.” I soon became skeptical that any curriculum taught in an authoritarian manner could promote compromise and encourage the multiple perspectives needed to overcome a divided Iraq.

Teaching for democracy and One Iraq fell to the charismatic local Iraqi civics teacher. He was in his thirties, and he risked his life every time he traveled from his home to Camp Victory. Since most Iraqi schools were closed and even low-paid work was scarce, he was pleased to be at Dar al-Hikmah but nervous that, if curfews prevented him from returning to work after his day off, he could lose this highly valued job. When I visited his class one afternoon during Ramadan, he seemed relaxed and engaged, although he lectured sitting down, facing the first

4 Other than this attempted intervention, I didn’t influence what happened at school; I made recommendations after I left.

row of students across a narrow table rather than standing, as he usually did. The 27 detainees answered questions when asked and took notes on yellow legal pads using plastic safety pens, which were collected after class. The detainees obeyed on cue, perhaps because all papers, which were filed under their ID numbers, went to the board that reviewed records for their release, or perhaps because the authority of the teacher was absolute. This teacher did not have enough English, nor I any Arabic, to discuss his six-page handwritten notes, so I was beholden to the linguist assigned to me. This linguist listened for several minutes and told me the topic written on the board was, “What unites people of one country together?” The list on the board generated by detainees from the lecture included “language, culture,” and some words the linguist said he did not know. Thus the linguist translated the civics teacher’s 30-minute lecture all too succinctly as “the teacher is talking about democracy . . . and more democracy.”

The teacher’s notes, titled “The Democratic System in Iraq”—translated and summarized later by an American graduate student—included ideas for understanding democracy as we in America know it: upholding human rights, the need for a more educated Iraqi society, the importance of music and art to the public education curriculum, government by the majority party, fairness in exercising power, equal treatment before the law, and free elections. The lecture had even cited John Dewey. Democracy—this incomplete, ambitious aspiration even in our most democratic of societies—may have puzzled the students as they experienced entirely undemocratic American detainment. But even if the detainees had wanted to explore the relevance this lecture had to their lives—how they would fit into the post-Saddam One Iraq or what the future held for them and their *ummah* (community/nation)—those discussions would have been out of sync with both teachers’ obligation to avoid politics and detainees’ understanding of school. Left not only unspoken in any planning meeting but unnoticed by all (including me at the time) was the irony of teaching American-style democracy in a coerced environment. Such is the fog of educational practice in war.

LITERACY AND ILLITERACY

People in societies with strong oral traditions who memorize the Qur'an by rote develop legendary memories. I was amazed to see these Iraqi detainees—without pencils or paper or access to books—respond in detail to teachers' lectures during lively class discussions. Thus I was baffled by how often people characterized the juvenile (and adult) detainees as illiterate or incapable of independent thinking, or by written comments like “most lack reasoning skills,” which was variously attributed to living under Saddam or to a relentlessly rote, primarily oral curriculum. This demeaning of detainees' abilities seeped into conversations on the base and into press accounts. However, neither living under a dictator nor rote education wipes away the human ability to think. I saw too many classes in which 28 out of 30 detainees produced a page of written Arabic text to believe that “most” juvenile detainees were illiterate.

The illiteracy myth began before the school opened: “If only these detainees could read, they would see the Qur'an forbids violence.” The military had organized literacy classes (at great expense) for the 60 percent of adult detainees who were believed to need reading instruction. Most adults could read the Qur'an on their own—some adults were insulted by lessons in reading it—but it was too late to backtrack from a well-publicized campaign to eradicate illiteracy (and from the expensive contract behind it). By then, the image of detainees' illiteracy—cited everywhere by military higher-ups and thus in visitors' accounts in the press—had reinforced resistance to seeing the young men as smart and capable learners, some with significant prior education and skills on which to build.

One response to the civics lecture on democracy exemplified for me the tendency to consider detainees less capable than they probably were. I asked an Arabic-speaking consultant to the military to look at the civics teacher's notes; he judged them “too advanced for the intended audience . . . more like a *Foreign Affairs* article than a high school lecture . . . The teacher should simplify the material.” This call to simplify reflected the typical response to the detainees, even when there was evidence of their skill.

To divide the youths into academic tracks, the sergeant in charge of day-to-day administration collected rudimentary assessments, the results of which he carried in his pocket:

- 39% Advanced (High School)
- 17% Intermediate (Middle School)
- 23% Primary
- 13% Basic (Illiterate)⁵

Neither the assessments nor the classes yielded enough clues to support the theory that most detainees were illiterate, but the stereotype persisted. The result of this illiteracy narrative was that the school had no budget for materials above the fifth-grade level.

Teachers targeted their lectures “to the middle,” much as they would have in Iraqi schools, where only students who passed exams stayed in school. Despite experiencing a possible academic mismatch, detainees enthusiastically praised the school. Only once, when a teacher was absent and I found myself alone with the class (and guards), did an angry detainee rail at me about this “baby school.” Otherwise, politeness (or perhaps fear of a bad record) ruled. An honest-seeming detainee told me, “I want to learn, but I don’t think my peers do. They sit with their hands folded and look at the teacher, but they don’t focus or listen. They have their own thoughts.” The detainees’ willingness to appear engaged—even if they were not—bespoke remarkable self-control.

BEYOND ACADEMICS

Like many adolescents, detainees had more to say about non-academics than about their classes. No wonder. The realities of the classroom did not always match the schedule. Frequently, six teachers were assigned to six classrooms, but eight classes of detainees came to school, leaving 60 detainees without teachers. Guards took charge of the 60 and played DVDs for them. The detainees didn’t complain; on the contrary, as one said, “TV and soccer are my favorite things in school.” Another said, “At school I like to play soccer and see videos. I like the tape with songs and belly dancers most.” The cover of that favorite tape was falsely labelled “Rebuilding Iraq.” Donated chess sets and dominoes languished on the shelves, mostly unused, but detainees had more than enough screen time. The planners

⁵ This does not include the 8 percent who were classified as “extremists” and not allowed at school.

wanted detainees to have some “entertainment,” but they never thought of using educational media to occupy teacher-less classes. Detainees gorged on *Superman* and *Spiderman* with Arabic subtitles, and cheered the Iraqi soccer team’s upset victory over Saudi Arabia. But they mostly begged for Tom and Jerry cartoons. On their love for Tom and Jerry, guards and detainees agreed, as one teenager explained: “Tom and Jerry is beautiful because it is funny. All Iraqi people think it is funny. I like the way the cat and mouse fight.” The interpreter interjected without being asked that he liked Tom and Jerry too. No one ever seemed bored, even by the same cartoons: “I want to see it so many times because I like it,” one detainee said. The guards and detainees could “relax and laugh together” over this universal humor. Perhaps the films and videos, even Tom and Jerry, could have been used to spark analysis and group discussion, but this never happened because it would have fallen outside the accepted pedagogy. And no one even thought of it, including me, as I sometimes zoned out during screen time, lost in the fog of war or undone by the afternoon heat.

The teacher shortage meant that, the longer detainees went without teachers, the more downtime with DVDs they came to expect. And the more they watched DVDs, the more removed they became from disciplined learning and the harder teachers had to work to restore good study habits. With a stable and sufficient staff, the school could have encouraged detainees to work much harder than they did. As it was, the obvious improvisation in starting this school had to raise speculation that the Americans were not capable of organizing a proper school—or did not really care to.

But school is never just about academics. The way any school demonstrates kindness carries both comfort and symbolism. The food, the living conditions, and the respectful treatment shown by adults can be as powerful as—maybe even more powerful than—classroom instruction. And in this school, food was done right. When I could I ate lunch in classrooms, rather than with the soldiers, which the detainees liked, since it validated that the Americans were treating them well. Detainees ate tasty, fresh local food, unlike the soldiers’ bland fatty fare sent from Florida at great expense. Under guard, detainees picked up lunch in large Styrofoam containers and served it themselves in their classrooms on paper plates. Utensils were mostly forbidden; we scooped thick bean and vegetable stews (mostly okra) with pita bread. The menu included fresh fruit, sweet chai, and refreshing bottles of ice-cold water (elsewhere on base we drank bottled water, hot from the sun). A teacher marveled that, unlike his “miserable Iraqi childhood” with no water at school, these detainees got cold water whenever they asked. He gestured to the bottles in huge ice containers, which were available

to both generals and detainees: “We all drink the same.” Surely the message of equality, worth, and simple humanity was not lost on the detainees and likely came across more powerfully than lectures about democracy. As I observed daily life at the school, I came to believe that exposing detainees to the best American treatment that the military could support was more likely to convince the detainees of American good-will than any specific curriculum.

TEACHING UNDER GUARD

Teacher morale was remarkably high, despite the war-zone conditions. Although teachers taught for money and the chance to work, many expressed a passionate mission to “build the new Iraq”—at least in public. Congenial colleagues chatted in animated Arabic on shared rides to quarters, at lunch, and on breaks, when they often brought pastry for each other. Local Iraqi teachers took life-threatening risks by cooperating with the U.S. military and—in a bizarre policy—were forbidden to move around Camp Victory without an escort. They had worse living conditions (cots rather than beds) and much lower salaries than the well-paid émigré Iraqi Americans doing the same teaching, and their meager pay was often late or incomplete. In order not to be recognized by detainees who might disclose their work with Americans, local Iraqi teachers taught with fake names, wore hats and sunglasses, and sometimes changed their facial hair. The satisfactions these skilled teachers got from teaching were hard to see. They rarely saw the same students; the rosters shifted as detainees were released and others rolled up; they did not know the names of their students, nor did detainees know the teachers’ (fake) names. Arabic-only speakers were sometimes assigned to teach English. Yet the teachers persisted in good spirits; their ethos was to soldier on.

Perhaps the guards helped. “It is a pleasure not to think about classroom control,” said an Iraqi American teacher, not missing a job in the U.S. Three guards sat in each classroom (each carrying pepper spray and a radio), always next to the most efficient air conditioners. They left only when they rotated for meals (20 minutes each) or to bring back a dry cereal snack. Guards kept detainees in their seats until the teacher arrived, reminded slouching students to sit up, supervised cleanup, monitored non-routine requests to use the WC, handed out water, controlled the TV, dealt with medical emergencies, and sometimes even made photocopies, thus eliminating non-teaching duties that often drain American teachers.

U.S. soldiers with a knack for language and a willingness to learn some Arabic were rewarded by respectful attention from the detainees. The students gathered around a sergeant—a truck driver in civilian life—who carried a Qur’an and had taught himself some Arabic. He was pleased that “kids want to talk to me every day about what I am reading in the Qur’an.” Detainees also surrounded an Army linguist who had escaped from war-torn Sudan. These teenagers wanted to hear—in Arabic—about life outside Iraq. But most guards distanced themselves from the detainees. The language barrier was tough, and the U.S.–Iraqi cultural boundaries were overlaid with compliance and authority issues that may have interfered with their ability to feel empathy. Some soldiers felt for “these poor kids who were in the wrong place at the wrong time,” while others seethed because they knew someone who had been killed by the Iraqi forces. The angry guards were more likely to complain about resources given to “educate the enemy” or to argue that an “uneducated enemy is easier to fight.” My first day on the job, an officer told me that “guards are not convinced these detainees are redeemable individuals.” Although doctrine discouraged engaging the guards in the classroom, I imagined that a curriculum for the guards about how to interact with the detainees in a teaching role would improve the soldiers’ military life, if not help detainees. But perhaps it asks too much of human capacity to ask guards to educate their enemy.

Guards sometimes behaved like rowdy teenagers. I heard unassigned guards in an empty classroom guffawing so loudly as they watched a movie that they interfered with teaching in the room next door. Or paper airplanes sent over the classroom wall would suddenly land on detainees, courtesy of the guards taking a break next door. A BBA recounted how, when he asked soldiers outside his classroom to be quiet, one guard gave him the finger and cursed him. He told me, “I make \$180,000 a year. I know my culture. How can I do my job with the detainees when the guards disrespect me? I am going to General Stone about the zoo that he is trying to present as a school.” These guards may have reflected tensions at Cropper, where they faced confrontational behavior from detainees who threw bottles of urine and feces at them—but it was only the guards who erupted at school.

Perhaps the guards were not hostile but merely bored. Warriors often recount the incredible boredom they experience between battles, but no soldier about to deploy could have envisioned spending so many mind-numbing hours in Arabic-language classrooms guarding compliant 11- to 17-year-olds. The mostly young guard force, a mix of about 70 combat-trained infantry, military police, and field artillery units, did not appreciate their safe assignment. One soldier spoke for others: “I’d rather be out kicking down doors in Baghdad. Every soldier needs a

bit of danger every day.” Not that soldiers talked about their boredom; in their world, the way to wage war was to stay in your lane, put one foot in front of the other, and get the job done. But their body language told the story—their tedious expressions, glazed-over eyes, or the kind of nervous energy I associate with high schools where students are tuned out and just waiting for the bell to ring.

RELIGION

I looked for Sunni-Shia tensions, expecting that relations outside the wire would be mirrored inside. But sectarian tensions were not salient at school, although perhaps the self-control the detainees exhibited in class kept sectarian differences out of sight. The military reasoned that, although underlying tensions might erupt if they denied Sunni-Shia friction, if they treated the sects as warring groups they would be accepting or even promoting the cleavage. Thus they took no chances at Cropper: they separated the Sunni and Shia tents, Shias and Sunnis prayed in different spaces at school (oddly labeled “Study Hall” on the schedule), but otherwise students spent the school day together.

In keeping with the goal of One Iraq, the school planning officer aimed to merge Sunni and Shia tents at the “right” time, and as a first step he ordered all detainees to ride the buses and take classes together. Guards were skeptical: “Sunnis and Shias never talk to each other.” “They won’t play on the same soccer team.” “They sit together in class by sect.” “I am surprised that Shias and Sunnis can ride the buses together without fighting.” The 90 percent Sunni majority in detention—due primarily to the Sunni insurgency in majority Shia Iraq—surprised many Shias, which made the guards’ perspectives credible. As it happened, it was only accidental that I (or the guards) could even tell Sunnis and Shias apart. All the jumpsuits were marked with a large “J,” but the detainee marking the Shia uniforms wrote G for “juvenile” and then crossed it out with an X, making it possible to tell Shia from Sunni. I interpreted their separateness more benignly than the guards did. The two Shia tents at Cropper housed 25 to 35 detainees each, and thus accorded more opportunities for community than was possible for the Sunnis in their two large compounds with 350 detainees each. Buses were loaded and unloaded by tent by tent, so it seemed natural that Shias sat together when filing into class. On the soccer field, when no one was playing due to the hot the afternoon sun, I assumed that detainees hung out in the scarce shade with those they knew best.

Sectarian war seemed far away and adults connected to the school reinforced that narrative. No one there—civilian or military, Iraqi or American—publicly imagined a future other than One Iraq. Many detainees begged to be released into the united Iraq they believed (perhaps disingenuously) had already been secured by the U.S. Both detainees and Iraqi American adults often talked of how it “used to be,” when sectarian quarrels did not come between neighbors and Sunni fathers and Shia mothers could live peacefully in one family. Everyone who had experienced it yearned for this earlier era. A Shia detainee, in lively, sophisticated English—learned, he said, during his seven months in detention—recounted an all-too-typical story of a family fractured by war:

My father was an officer in Saddam’s army. He was killed in the Iraq–Iran war. My mother is a doctor—a Shia, by the way. Everyone in my family is more educated than I am. I left school after nine years. My sister is a teacher. My mother has visited me three times. She doesn’t want to leave Iraq, but my brothers and sisters have fled. Our family will only be together in Iraq when the Shias and Sunnis stop killing each other.

Even as the military worried about sectarianism, they took religious observance seriously, assuming every detainee needed a prayer rug and a Qur’an. Soon they found otherwise. Juveniles confirmed their own lack of observance, although they acknowledged praying more in detention “because I have more time” or “it is something to do.” As Ramadan approached, most Sunnis planned to fast, even if they hadn’t in Saddam’s secular Iraq. One detainee exemplified the rest: “On the outside, some days I fasted and some days I drank Pepsi with my family . . . One day, yes; other day, maybe, maybe not. Here it is no big deal to fast.” The military planned for a smooth Ramadan at Cropper, arranging for appropriate meals after sundown and before sunup. A BBA taught a 15-minute “cultural awareness” class at 3:15 (AM and PM) to impress on the 24-hour guard force not to drink, eat, or smoke near the detainees. The Iraqi youth minister brought (delicious) dates to the detainees, a traditional food to break the fast.

But at school, cultural blinders—or at least a lack of understanding—caused military administrators to either overlook or ignore local knowledge when creating a Ramadan schedule. Iraqi teachers would have embraced the usual mornings at school and time to rest in the afternoon, but the newly arrived officer charged with making the schedule imagined hungry, wide-awake detainees at loose ends hours before sundown. He chose to hold afternoon classes to reduce the time between school and sunset. Teachers often see such an ill-advised

decision coming, but they rarely have the power to contest it. So, from the first day of Ramadan, the schedule proved a mistake. School started at noon. A reporter from the *London Times* was visiting. Fasting teachers looked gray and washed out, perhaps their bodies' response to the first day of fasting. After a nap in an icy air-conditioned space they returned to class refreshed and chatting jovially, but a late afternoon English class exuded lethargy, and most detainees slept on their prayer rugs. The teacher complained, "There will be no benefit from school for a month," emphatically gesturing to the sleeping class. "I can teach comfortably in the morning, but not in the afternoon."

But however it was scheduled, Ramadan was a welcome event for some detainees. A Ramadan picnic remains a pleasant memory of the sense of community I saw among the Shias; my notes reflect this meal as the most relaxed I ever saw any detainees:

The Sunnis mostly fasted, so the military cancelled lunch, though anyone could request food. I gravitated to Shia prayers, surprised to find a picnic in progress, with 14 of 16 enjoying their Halal MREs (Meals Ready to Eat, the military rations for battle). While a guard removed the heating element in each MRE foil packet, forbidden to the detainees as a possible weapon, the detainees lounged on prayer rugs chatting amiably in groups of three or four. The two fasters happily talked to me. As the rest indulged in junk-food heaven (pretzels, peanuts, sunflower seeds), they looked like any good friends enjoying a break from the usual school routine.

SCHOOL IN THE PUBLIC EYE

Publicity—always a priority for Major General Stone—pulled in just as many directions as the other school goals. Although using scarce resources to educate possible terrorists highlighted American generosity toward Iraqi youth, it also generated unpopularity. The Arab press could construe the American effort to educate captives as brainwashing—and it did.

To mark the school opening, Major General Stone held a briefing. Tariq al-Hashemi, the vice president of Iraq, signaled his support by attending. The military gave out a document in not quite grammatical English that read, "Education can spark a fire inside Iraq's youth to continue their education and

rebuild Iraq for their future . . . The mission is to . . . give a vision of hope for the future by pursuing truth . . . The overall [school] program is meant to enlighten minds that have been darkened by extremists.”

Two weeks later, Major General Stone invited the world to see this fledgling school. For nine of the next 14 days, diverse opinion-shapers arrived in droves: the Western and Arab print press, Anderson Cooper, Martha Raddatz, U.S. congressional delegations, Iraqi politicians, the inspector general of the Army, the International Red Cross, and high-ranking officers from the Multi-National Force–Iraq. Even Iraqi soccer stars came “to boost detainee morale.” Calculated to impress, these visits demonstrated U.S. efforts to educate their enemy and showcase the school as a symbol of America’s hope for Iraq. That the war on the ground was bloody and the adult detainees at Bucca barely under control made this new school an especially encouraging, almost heartwarming “must see” for any official visitor to the war zone.

These visits, however, cost dearly. No new school can withstand such scrutiny without dedicating substantial resources to visitors, especially if the school is simultaneously educating students. This school lacked sufficient personnel, but the military staff knew more about welcoming higher-ups than fine-tuning curriculum, so it was no contest what got their attention. Day-to-day school military administrators—already few by usual school standards—prepared meticulously for these high-stakes occasions, working out routes through the school and talking points timed to the minute. Visits highlighted care and custody more than teaching and learning. The Inspector General of the Army and his entourage were taken to only one class, and the five minutes they stayed to watch students studying the Arabic alphabet could not help but reinforce a widely held image of “illiterate detainees.” Details had to be exact: staff went to great lengths to replace the old Iraqi flag featuring Saddam’s handwriting, lest some newspaper print a picture of this obsolete symbol hanging on the library wall. After almost every VIP visit, a new rule came from any high-ranking leader who happened to accompany a delegation—for instance, no soccer on VIP days because detainees playing with bare feet would track mud into the classrooms.

One final vignette illustrates a particularly dramatic day of cultural misunderstanding. Tariq al-Hashemi’s deputies arrived to join Major General Stone, ABC, and the *New York Times*. Everyone was watching the detainees play soccer (wearing new soccer shoes donated by the Iraqi minister of youth and sports), when suddenly Iraqi visitors began handing envelopes to any detainee who happened to be on the field or in the library. Americans assumed it was some

kind of certificate, but each envelope in fact held a U.S. \$100 bill. The Iraqis giving out money randomly was hard to square with an (often unmet) ideal of American fairness. The stunned U.S. military bystanders thought even Major General Stone was blindsided. That night a small riot in the adult detainee compound seemed connected to this unequally offered cash gift. Iraqi adults, however, saw only good intentions; traditionally, Iraqis bring gifts when they visit people they don't know, and if those people are poor, they bring money. International law required the guards to log this money as personal property, and that is how soldiers spent the rest of their disrupted day. Detainees could claim it on release or give it to their families on visitation day, which was exactly what the Iraqis who gave the cash meant to happen.

What the military meant to happen to the school after the worldwide attention it received was less clear than I had understood at the outset of my stay. I should have paid more attention to Major General Stone's admonition that he was not aiming to create a prep school but a tool of war. I was mindful of a sign, posted deep inside one of the military offices, that read, "A vision without resources is hallucination." The military pushed forward with the school, ignoring obstacles that prevented a fully realized enterprise: limited resources (not enough money to pay more teachers), distracting priorities (VIP visitors who drained energy needed to develop a stronger school), and competing pressures (learning pitted against security requirements). The war zone added its own challenges: arcane military regulations, anxious detainees, and the stress of deployment on guards. But more resources, better planning, a clearer vision, and even more latrines might not have accomplished the idealistic goal of preparing these adolescents to contribute to a new social order after at most one year of intermittent schooling.

The detainees' self-control at school was striking. These young men were too guarded, in both senses of the word: too much under guard and too circumspect to open themselves up to being transformed in this American detention center or to allow their world to be "turned upside down." Most deeply held values are not changed easily, and attempting to reshape these detainees in a coerced environment—if they indeed even needed to be convinced about One Iraq—was perhaps a fool's errand. But it was still a marker of hope that there was a school at all.

How to honor Iraqi values and yet transform the detainees to be more like "us" turned out to be a central dilemma of the entire occupation. A more competently run school with a rigorous Iraqi curriculum at all academic levels would have been a miraculous gift to these detained Iraqi youth—an olive branch rather

than a tool of war. But that would have required additional resources and Iraqi educational expertise beyond the capacity of the U.S. detainee operations. Such a school may have been even less likely to help change the detainees' world views, if indeed any school curriculum anywhere can be said to transform students. The creation of this school was couched in the language of cultural awareness: "The importance of local context in evaluating and understanding . . . cannot be over-emphasized. We must be vigilant against our own bias." But, in reality, Dar al-Hikmah was mandated to serve the American war effort.

And yet . . . Despite its haphazard curriculum, the unexamined values at the classroom level, and large doses of Tom and Jerry, I believe the effort to create Dar al-Hikmah was positive. Anecdotes filtered up that parents wanted their children to stay in detention for their own safety—perhaps one measure of success. The military everywhere cited another, more difficult measure: only 12 juveniles who attended the school were recaptured by the U.S. military. No one attempted to find out why. Was it because the school transformed the majority who were not recaptured—as the military would like to believe—or was it because those detainees were not terrorists in the first place, were smart enough to evade recapture, or were dead? In June 2009, when the U.S. Status of Forces in Iraq restricted the mandate to detain, the military gradually phased out the school.

I came to believe that the successes and failures of the school had more to do with how detainees were treated than with any specific classroom practice. I saw that it was more effective to adopt the rote Iraqi curriculum and to shift hearts and minds—if indeed they needed shifting—by treating detainees humanely rather than by pushing any particular course of study. The food, the living conditions, and the detainees' treatment by the guards (even though they were sometimes bored, hostile, or acting out) appeared as powerful as anything that happened during the school day. A school may be "serious" not because of the rigor of the curriculum or the homework or the exams, but because the adults underscore the seriousness of the meaning of "school." That would have required creating a different curriculum, not only for the detainees but for the military.

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SCHOOL-BASED INTERVENTION IN ONGOING CRISIS: LESSONS FROM A PSYCHOSOCIAL AND TRAUMA-FOCUSED APPROACH IN GAZA SCHOOLS

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AND KARAM AL-SHANTI

It is a complex challenge to design education in emergencies responses that meet local needs, are sensitive to local culture, build on international guidelines for best practice, and use research-based methods. This paper presents lessons learned from the implementation of the Better Learning Program, a school-based response in Gaza that combined psychosocial and trauma-focused approaches, and discusses how international guidelines were incorporated. The Better Learning Program intervention was designed as a partially manualized,¹ multi-level approach to help teachers, school counselors, and parents empower schoolchildren with strategies for calming and self-regulation. The stepwise approach first targeted all pupils, then pupils who reported having nightmares and sleep disturbances. The goal was to help these students regain lost learning capacity and strengthen resilience within the school community. The intervention was implemented in 40 schools over two and a half years, with a target group of 35,000 pupils. Teachers and school counselors reported that the combined psychosocial and trauma-focused approach was compatible with their educational perspectives. The approach appeared to enable teachers to be more proactive when teaching pupils affected by war. This paper concludes with reflections and lessons learned.

1 Manualized approaches use exact steps so that each person has relatively the same experience.

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BACKGROUND

Each year between January 2009 and November 2012, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) recorded an average of ten “limited escalations” between Israeli and Palestinian armed groups, each lasting nearly three days. Several reports have documented the negative psychosocial impact these hostilities have had on children in the Gaza Strip (e.g., UNICEF 2010; UNESCO 2012), where 101 civilians were killed and 1,046 wounded in an eight-day escalation in November 2012 (OCHA 2013).

Many communities in Gaza are in need of education in emergencies interventions, but the education sector suffers a shortage of almost two hundred school buildings, which forces schools to run double shifts (OCHA 2014). Efforts to track children in Gaza who are not in school led the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) and the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) to identify schoolchildren in Beit Hanoon, a North Gaza district severely affected by the ongoing conflict, as likely to need considerable psychosocial support. Teachers and parents interviewed by UNRWA and NRC in 2011 expressed their concerns and asked for help in dealing with the large number of frightened children who were having problems concentrating at school. Standard practice was to refer pupils with severe stress symptoms to school counselors, but the school system could not accommodate the high number of pupils in need of counseling. Although several mental health projects have been implemented in Gaza, schools generally do not provide school-based mental health interventions, and despite the severity of the situation, teachers to date have not had systematic training to deal with mental health issues. Most schools in Gaza have at least one thousand pupils who are served by one school counselor, who usually has just a bachelor’s degree in psychology; some have received supplementary training from UNRWA or the Ministry of Education and Higher Education.

The international guidelines discussed in the next section represent a comprehensive general framework for providing education in emergencies. However, practitioners must adapt to local conditions and needs, and fieldworkers often are left alone to make complex decisions in the midst of a chaotic emergency, with few practical materials at hand. Documented examples of how to operationalize established guidelines in specific school-based interventions are scarce, thus it is important for practitioners to document their experiences in order to bridge the gap between theory and practice in the field. This paper describes the Better Learning Program (BLP), a comprehensive

response for education in emergencies. We discuss its implementation in 40 schools in Gaza between January 2012 and July 2014, when 35,000 pupils were targeted, and demonstrate how BLP was informed by research-based methods and international guidelines for best practices for education in emergencies responses.

GUIDELINES ON MENTAL HEALTH AND PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT

The Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) has issued a set of international guidelines on providing mental health and psychosocial support in emergency settings (IASC 2007; Patel et al. 2012). In 2008, the World Health Organization (WHO) launched the Mental Health Gap Action Programme (mhGAP) to address the lack of mental health care in low- and middle-income countries. In 2010, mhGAP also issued the “Intervention Guide Module” for mental health, which provided guidelines for non-specialist health-care providers on how to deal with conditions such as depression, psychosis, seizures, and suicide. In 2013, new guidelines were issued on how to assess, prevent, and treat conditions associated with traumatic stress. The aim of these guidelines is to scale-up mental health care to include non-specialized staff by providing manuals for clinical decision-making (WHO 2010; WHO and OCHA 2013). UNICEF has also developed a facilitators’ guide for education in emergencies that offers recommendations for supporting schools in emergency situations and includes the WHO strategy for scaling-up mental health beyond the use of specialized staff (UNICEF 2010).

The term “mental health and psychosocial support” (MHPSS) is broadly defined by the IASC as any type of local or outside support that aims to protect or promote psychosocial well-being and/or prevent or treat mental illness (IASC 2007). The term “traumatic stress” describes a variety of emotionally overwhelming reactions to traumatic events, such as actual or threatened serious injury or death (American Psychological Association 2013).

Debates about how to deal with traumatic stress in emergency settings reflect a divide between advocates for general psychosocial interventions and those for specific trauma-focused approaches (e.g., Miller and Rasmussen 2009). Key questions include the cultural validity of the concept of traumatic stress (de Jong 2004) and the level of therapeutic exposure needed to desensitize trauma-related memories.

However, the past decade also has brought consensus on how best to prevent traumatic stress from becoming a mental health problem. A comprehensive review of intervention research on the treatment of those exposed to disasters and mass violence identified five widely accepted and empirically supported principles that are used to inform intervention and prevention efforts, both in the immediate aftermath of a critical event and up to three months thereafter (Hobfoll et al. 2007). These five principles are (1) to promote a sense of security, (2) to calm, (3) to foster a sense of self- and collective efficacy, (4) to promote connectedness, and (5) to instill hope. The same principles are included in such guidelines as Psychological First Aid (PFA; Brymer et al. 2013), “The European Network for Traumatic Stress Guidelines” (Bisson et al. 2010), and Skills for Psychological Recovery (SPR; Berkowitz et al. 2010). These guidelines present best practices for MHPSS after a critical event and show the concepts to be fairly easy to understand and deliver.

These various guidelines agree that prevention efforts can and often should be delivered by non-specialists, particularly those who are close to the affected individuals. This puts teachers in an ideal position to deliver preventive measures in ongoing crisis and postconflict contexts. This is reflected in the Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies’ (INEE) “Minimum Standards for Education” manual (2010), which encourages education in emergencies practitioners to address their pupils’ psychological well-being. Many organizations have provided guidelines, such as clinical decision-making manuals, to help non-health-care specialists provide mental health and psychosocial support in emergency settings (IASC 2007; Patel et al. 2012; UNICEF 2010; WHO 2010; WHO and OCHA 2013). The UNICEF facilitator’s guide includes advice specifically for non-health-care staff who are providing mental health support to schools in emergencies.

While psychological support is now often included in educational programs for pupils, several studies show that much of what is labeled a mental health intervention or psychosocial support in education in emergencies settings has not been properly evaluated or researched and fails to draw from the best available knowledge (Dybdahl, Kravic, and Shrestha 2010; WHO 2010). The INEE highlights this lack of research and the need to document field experiences in order to bolster the professionalization of the education in emergencies field (INEE 2016). It is important to understand more fully how different approaches to mental health and psychosocial support complement each other (IASC 2007), and to bridge the gap between general psychosocial approaches and specific

trauma-focused approaches in order to tailor interventions and target a broader spectrum of needs (for overview, see Miller and Rasmussen 2009; Ehlers et al. 2010; Gillies et al. 2013).

Finally, school-age children and young people are particularly vulnerable in the context of crises and disasters (Norris et al. 2002). They are more likely than adults to be affected negatively, and to be more severely so. Their level of cognitive ability and lack of life experience may impair their capacity to handle an acute sense of helplessness or to make sense of the world, and may cause them to lose their perceived sense of safety and social support (Norris et al. 2002). These findings point to the need for a psychosocial approach that targets all pupils and helps them make meaning of a situation, understand their reactions, and learn coping strategies.

DESIGNING THE INTERVENTION

Three rounds of the BLP intervention were implemented in Gaza from 2012 to 2014 at schools identified as having a high number of pupils with impaired mental health. In the first round, which occurred in January 2012, ten teachers and ten school counselors from ten UNRWA schools were trained. The second round was a direct response to the eight-day escalation in hostilities in November and December 2012, and included teachers and counselors from ten schools run by the Ministry of Education and Higher Education and ten UNRWA schools in the most affected areas. The third round began in February 2014 with another ten UNRWA schools. In the third round, to support the program's sustainability, eight counselors from previous cohorts received instruction to become master trainers who would support previously trained teachers and conduct new trainings.

Members of the intervention team formed by NRC were certified teachers and/or school counselors.² Although UNRWA representatives were not part of the team, they attended the training sessions and were given regular updates. Three educational advisors supported the participating schools full time for one year by holding parents' meetings and teacher trainings, and by facilitating routines, holding regular meetings with school principals, and monitoring the intervention for quality control.

² Laura Marshall: team leader/teacher. Karam Al-Shanti: project coordinator/teacher. Ahmad Akram Herzallah and Machmod Al Fiqy: educational advisors/teachers. Amjad Joma: educational advisor/ PhD/ educational psychologist. Helen S. Norheim: educational psychologist. Jon-Håkon Schultz: PhD/educational psychologist/researcher. Safwat Diab: external advisor/PhD/educational psychologist/researcher, the Islamic University, Gaza.

THE FRAMEWORK OF THE INTERVENTION

The Better Learning Program consists of two components: BLP-1 reaches out to all pupils and provides psychoeducation and coping skills, while BLP-2 is a specialized intervention for those with chronic symptoms of traumatic stress. Both components fall under the term “MHPSS,” which combines a psychosocial and trauma-focused approach. A trauma-focused approach directly addresses the symptoms of traumatic stress and in some cases the actual traumatic event(s): BLP-1 does so by engaging students in conversations about being afraid of specific aspects of war and conflict, and BLP-2 does so by talking about and drawing images from traumatic nightmares in a systematic way. The framework of the two-pronged BLP intervention was built on the following:

- First, all pupils are targeted by a population-based, multi-layered approach (BLP-1); second, pupils reporting nightmares and sleep disturbances are targeted (BLP-2); and third, students are given an external referral for specialized treatment if necessary
- A multi-level approach targets teachers, school counselors, and parents to enable them to provide pupils with strategies for calming themselves and self-regulation
- School-based collaboration between teachers and school counselors
- A textbook that provides model language (BLP-1) and a manualized approach (BLP-2)
- An empowerment-oriented approach that emphasizes resilience in the school community using a combination of psychosocial and trauma-focused methods

Using the population-based approach of BLP-1, we targeted all pupils attending selected schools. The traditional intervention pyramid (IASC 2007) is geared to the general population, and it has different proportions of individuals in different layers when a specific population is targeted. Our expectations for the intervention pyramid for our target population were based on two primary assumptions: Because the sickest pupils would not be able to attend school, there would likely be fewer individuals in the top layer who needed specialized services not provided by the school counseling service. Moreover, some 20 percent of the pupils would volunteer when offered treatment, and would meet the criteria of

having repeated trauma-induced nightmares or other symptoms of traumatic stress that severely affected their ability to function in school. BLP-1, which targeted all pupils from six to sixteen years of age, was carried out by teachers (Schultz et al. 2013a). Because these teachers expressed uncertainty about how to deliver psychosocial support, we used a step-by-step procedure that applied research-informed principles, including practical explanations to help pupils understand stress-related symptoms. A two-hour teacher training was followed up with additional sessions for sharing experiences.

BLP-2 enrolled pupils ages nine to sixteen with persistent trauma-related nightmares (Schultz et al. 2013b). They were selected during a screening interview based on the following criteria: they were experiencing nightmares caused by a traumatic event three or more nights per week, the nightmares had lasted three months or more, and they were interfering with the pupils' daily functioning. Participation was voluntary, and enrollment required parental consent. The intervention consisted of four group sessions, followed by four individual sessions that specifically addressed the nightmares. The school counselor, who was in charge, worked with a teacher, and both had received formal training in all the steps of BLP-2. Basic training lasted for three days, including two days of case presentation and ongoing follow-up support. In the last round of implementation, the school counselor conducted individual sessions with pupils without the teacher, due to the therapeutic aspects of the work.

EDUCATIONAL GOALS

Both BLP modules aimed to improve pupils' learning capacity by empowering the school community, integrating coping techniques into daily teaching and learning, and encouraging pupils' natural recovery. All psychosocial support was defined in terms of educational goals in order to be compatible with teachers' educational perspectives. These goals included (1) to establish a sense of stability and safety; (2) to promote calming and a capacity for self-regulation; (3) to increase community and self-efficacy, including where to find support and how to give and receive support; and (4) to promote mastery and hope. These goals were based on commonly accepted prevention efforts for dealing with traumatic stress (e.g., Hobfoll et al. 2007).

The BLP program taught students to identify possible reactions to living in a crisis situation and to understand that these are normal reactions to an abnormal situation. The pupils learned that the body and mind are connected and that a relaxed body cannot be attached to a frightened brain, so that by relaxing the

body the mind also becomes more relaxed. They practiced a range of calming techniques and found their own combination of relaxation exercises to regulate their reactions.

In addition to the goals described above, BLP-2 has a specific approach for pupils with persistent nightmares and sleeping problems. Two evidence-based programs inspired the design: Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavior Therapy (TF-CBT; Cohen, Mannarino, and Deblinger 2012) and Narrative Exposure Therapy (NET; Schauer, Neuner, and Elbert 2011). The focus of the eight sessions in BLP-2 was as follows:

1. Identify reactions to stress. Recognize and describe one's own reactions in detail in order to become more familiar with them.
2. Connect memories to words. Reduce the body's automatic alarm response, which is connected to traumatic memories, by drawing pictures of the worst nightmare during the group session and talking about it in the individual sessions. We aimed to connect fragmented memories to words by working through the worst nightmare(s). This helped frightening life experiences become understandable events that belonged to the past.
3. Collaborate with parents and teachers. Practice, reinforce, and adapt personal relaxation exercise routines. Dialogue between parents and teachers was established to help reduce children's symptoms and improve their learning capacity at school.

Several studies have shown that highly structured protocols can be effective in changing professional behavior in a desired direction (e.g., Lamb et al. 2000). Our Gaza intervention included written models for how to provide explanations and communicate in the classroom. The example below from BLP-2 models language to explain why pupils should talk about their nightmares:

We can reduce the intensity and the power of the nightmares by talking about them during the daytime when we feel safe. Bringing the nightmare out of the dark into the daylight to talk openly about it reduces its power. During the daytime it is easier to see that the horrific things you dream about cannot hurt you now because you are safe. The terrifying event happened a long time ago, and you are safe in the present moment. (Schultz et al. 2013b).

EXPERIENCES FROM THE FIELD

For quality control, NRC conducted a series of focus group interviews with 20 teachers and school counselors, 13 parents of pupils participating in nightmare groups, and 17 teachers—all who had experienced BLP-1. In addition, an external evaluator (Shah 2014) carried out qualitative interviews with pupils, teachers, school counselors, headmasters, and parents who had participated in BLP-1 and BLP-2. These data provide participants' impressions of the implementation process, described below. We also present descriptive data on nightmares from selected samples.

ADAPTABILITY

Some teachers found it inappropriate to demonstrate the calming exercises with teachers of the opposite sex and were left to decide which exercises to use. Pupils, teachers, and school counselors found explanations written out in appropriate language, but they frequently supplemented them with explanations from local traditions and from the Quran. During training we encouraged using a combination of these perspectives to supplement each other without claiming that any one was superior. Some of the school counselors advised parents to seek religious advice from a local sheikh, which we encouraged when doing so was part of a school counselor's repertoire and of a parent's religious belief. When teachers and counselors brought up aspects of martyrdom during training, we argued that this type of explanation might promote hatred and conflict with the healing process, and that such explanations were not a part of BLP.

The majority of pupils interviewed reported that the various exercises were "fun and helpful" and the information "good to have." After all teachers had received the mandatory introduction to BLP-1, 60 percent returned to receive short follow-up sessions. They reported a high degree of satisfaction with the training and with using the methods in their classes, and said that the methods helped improve pupils' ability to concentrate. Some teachers chose to implement the whole procedure described in BLP-1, while the majority saw it as a toolkit and selected what they needed from the various exercises and lessons. The structured approach empowered teachers to be more proactive with pupils affected by the conflict and promoted greater collaboration between the school counselor and teachers. Teachers who were trained in BLP-2 reported that the combined approach of psychosocial and trauma-focused frameworks was compatible with their own educational perspectives and an extended role for teachers, the exception being the more clinical work in individual sessions. School counselors

frequently reported the positive effects of having a clear structure, using groups, and sharing the workload by collaborating with teachers—all of which resulted in a more efficient way to reach the most possible pupils in need.

REDUCTION OF NIGHTMARES

Pupils participating in BLP-2 reported having trauma-induced nightmares an average of five nights a week. Raw data from one of the samples (N=101) indicated that, prior to the intervention, 29 percent had persistent nightmares for three to twelve months, and 71 percent for more than one year. The same nightmare was repeated for 84 percent, and 68 percent reported their dream to be related to an event they considered one of their worst real-life experiences. More than 70 percent could not go back to sleep after waking up from the nightmare, and 64 percent saw “pictures” from the nightmare during the daytime. As many as 79 percent of the pupils between the ages of nine and thirteen had not told their teachers about the nightmare before the intervention. Measured eight weeks after the intervention ended, the nightmares were eliminated or reduced to one night a week for about 70 percent of participants. The remaining 30 percent experienced a reduction but continued to have more than one weekly nightmare. This pattern was generally repeated in the subsequent intervention rounds. A small group had symptoms that did not respond to BLP-2 or were so strong that it was deemed best not to admit them to the group. These pupils were given individual counseling or referred to other external services.

PARENTS’ EXPERIENCES

Few parents (an average of 10% from each school) attended parent-teacher meetings. Those who did attend reported a high degree of satisfaction and noted the need for more information on dealing with conflict-related stress. All parents of pupils who attended nightmare groups came for special meetings and/or received home visits, and they also reported a high degree of satisfaction with the program.

COLLABORATION WITH LOCAL SCHOOL GOVERNANCE AUTHORITY

Close collaboration with UNRWA was vital for the continuation and improvement of the program. Important issues were debated and negotiated, included defining the teacher’s role, agreeing to terms for collaboration between teachers and school counselors, and assessing the quality of parents’ and pupils’ informed consent. Most important was finding theoretical and practical ways to fit the intervention

as a package into the mental health structure and to the school system. It was crucial that administrative and operational UNRWA representatives take part in all formal training sessions in order to be part of the ongoing discussions.

CHALLENGES AND SUGGESTIONS

The most frequent challenges were logistical obstacles, like finding time in a busy school schedule to implement the program and finding space to practice calming exercises, which dedicated teachers, school counselors, and headmasters always found ways to deal with. A more substantial challenge was to redefine the role of teachers in an ongoing crisis. While teachers agreed that many of their pupils were not achieving their full learning potential due to the conflict, they disagreed considerably over how long stress reactions would influence learning capacity and what measures would be most effective in class. For example, some teachers enforced a strict regime of disciplinary actions, while others preferred to just wait and see whether the stress reaction passed. From an educational-psychological perspective, we would argue that neither of these strategies is effective and that schoolchildren benefit most from a proactive teacher who communicates about the current learning situation from a mental health and psychosocial perspective. Pupils should be invited to speak individually with the teacher about how they can reduce their level of fear together so the pupil can concentrate and learn more effectively. Taking such an educational-psychological approach would require that teachers be empowered by having a proper toolkit and that their role be somewhat extended in emergency settings.

Based on the overall experience with the BLP intervention, we consider both BLP components applicable to the roles of school counselors and teachers. The program also was adaptable to the local school system and to the administrative level of the educational authority. We did not successfully engage a large number of parents at traditional parent-teacher meetings for BLP-1, thus the question of how to harness the potential of parental support needs further consideration. A possible solution might be to engage parents by providing information more proactively using local media and smartphones.

CONTINUATION OF BLP AFTER THE INTERVENTION PERIOD

As a MHPSS response to the 50 days of military conflict starting on July 7, 2014, UNRWA decided to scale-up the BLP intervention to reach more pupils. In November 2014, eight local BLP master trainers were assigned to implement

both components of BLP in 135 additional schools. This was completed by December 2015, and the scalability was found to be satisfactory. UNRWA has set a further goal of integrating BLP into the mental health and psychosocial support system in all 245 schools in Gaza by the end of 2016. UNRWA established a six-month project position in the community mental health program to develop and coordinate local procedures and routines for BLP supervision. The BLP material was also adjusted to better reflect Palestinian culture and the mental health and psychosocial support framework of UNRWA.³

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The Better Learning Program underpinning this intervention is distributed free of charge and is not available for commercial use. The authors declare no conflict of interest with the present study.

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BOOK REVIEW

THE OUTCAST MAJORITY: WAR, DEVELOPMENT, AND YOUTH IN AFRICA

BY MARC SOMMERS

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Anthropologist Marc Sommers has spent decades thinking and writing about youth in Africa, frequently while working as a consultant for government and NGO clients. He has written about Education for All in conflict-affected countries for the World Bank, about schooling in South Sudan for UNESCO, and about peace education for refugee youth for the United Nations Refugee Agency. His books include *Fear in Bongoland*, which is about Burundian refugees living in urban Tanzania, and *Stuck*, which describes the barriers Rwandan youth face trying to attain adulthood. In *The Outcast Majority*, he has brought these strands together and written a career-summarizing book. The book details the vast gap between outcast youth in war-affected Africa and the international development enterprise.

Sommers starts with the premise that large populations of young people are not a problem, but their alienation is. His basic argument is that, despite being the majority in almost all African countries, young people are excluded socially, economically, and politically. Finding a way to support them requires “an understanding of the marginalization, exclusion, and sense of alienation that so many experience” (5). He believes that if one listens to these young people, they will reveal their own notions of what it means to become a successful adult and what barriers they face to achieving their goals. He writes, “The way forward is straightforward: uncovering the priorities and potential of ordinary youth before fashioning responses to them” (4).

Sommers then turns to the range of development activities carried out for African youth in post-conflict contexts, including education (in emergencies and otherwise) and job-creation programs. He includes interviews with development experts, who agree with Sommers that the current way of doing things is not working. By juxtaposing interviews with donors and NGO workers and his own decades of quality ethnographic research on youth across the continent, Sommers successfully bridges policy and ethnography.

There is much to like in this book. It includes a great deal of ethnographic detail about the lives of African youth drawn from Sommers' decades of fieldwork. He cites examples from Rwanda, Burundi, the DRC, Sudan, South Sudan, Uganda, Kenya, Somalia, Liberia, and Sierra Leone. He claims that helping the same elite youth over and over again leads to unintended results, such as amplifying the inequality the programs are meant to address and enabling "the favored few [to] reap unjust rewards" (2). This critique of the idea that helping any youth is better than helping no youth is especially insightful. I appreciate that, instead of simply repeating the mantra "participation," his advice for avoiding the common problem of working almost exclusively with elite youth is to work with the "bad boys." I also appreciate his recommendation to advocate with governments and take political action for young people, noting that youth development work too often props up the very regimes that exclude youth.

Some pieces of the book are less useful. For example, Sommers attempts a kind of genealogy of the "program" concept and the drive for quantitative measures of impact, going back to Robert McNamara's 1960s tenure as U.S. secretary of defense and World Bank president. I found that his critiques of development as applied to the conflict-affected youth sector—particularly of short donor timelines, project-based interventions, and the tabulating focus of monitoring and evaluation—are well established elsewhere and thus not a particularly novel contribution.

I want to comment here on my experience using the book as a key text in my master's-level course "Youth and Conflict" during the spring 2016 semester. Students enjoyed Sommers' provocative and honest assessment of development work, but the geographic scope of the work was too broad for my students, given their insufficient knowledge of the multiple African contexts he presents. Sommers jumps around the continent, and the fine-grained detail of his argument was lost when students perceived the action as taking place in an undifferentiated Africa.

The book is really a plea for changes to current practice. Sommers aims to alter the way donors and agencies conceptualize their work with youth in conflict-affected settings in Africa. To this end, he includes a kind of manifesto at the end of the book, titled "Toward Youth Inclusion: A Framework for Change," which consists of 16 clear recommendations for policymakers and practitioners. The book's greatest contribution lies in bringing together deep ethnographic work on conflict-affected youth in Africa and interviews with people in the aid world. Together, these details and voices demonstrate the mismatch between policy

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imperatives and the experiences and goals of young women and men across the African continent. *The Outcast Majority* distills decades of work on these issues and provides a clear call to action for the field. My master's students enjoyed the book, and I am sure it will be appreciated by policy-makers and practitioners as well.

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BOOK REVIEW

ARAB DAWN: ARAB YOUTH AND THE DEMOGRAPHIC DIVIDEND

THEY WILL BRING BY BESSMA MOMANI

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO PRESS, 2015. 176 PAGES

\$45 (HARDCOVER), \$21.95 (PAPER)

ISBN 978-1442628564

In *Arab Dawn*, Bessma Momani offers a nuanced picture of the everyday lives of young people throughout the Arab Middle East. She argues that there are important fundamental differences between today's Arab youth and those of prior generations, and that young people will be driving change in the region. Targeted to a Western audience, including those unfamiliar with the Middle East, *Arab Dawn* counters a media narrative that too often portrays the Arab world as inherently conservative, violent, authoritarian, and misogynistic. Indeed, amid a political environment characterized by the reemergence of a "clash of civilizations" discourse and a media environment rife with negative Muslim and Arab stereotypes, Momani's *Arab Dawn* offers a sliver of hope.

Momani is unapologetic and unpretentious in describing the book's goal. She seeks to present an approachable, atheoretical, and optimistic window onto the experiences of today's Arab young people, and in this she succeeds admirably. She builds on decades of personal experience in the region, seamlessly weaving together engaging anecdotes, public opinion data, and interviews with young people from Morocco to the United Arab Emirates.

The book is organized around four broad themes: bread, freedom, identity, and circularity. Momani describes the macro-level changes currently affecting the Arab world and its youth, including globalization, rising education levels, communications technology, urbanization, and neoliberalism. She argues that, due in part to these changes, today's young Arabs are already better educated, more engaged in civic and political life, and more open to multicultural identities than prior generations.

"Bread," the now infamous term first heard during Egypt's 2011 revolution, speaks to Arab young people's demands for economic security and prosperity. Momani points out the impact of rising education rates, which are leading to greater female participation in the labor market and a new era of consumerism in the Middle East. She is optimistic about increasing entrepreneurship, including among young Arab women.

“Freedom” describes the call for a new social contract from young people in the Arab states. These youth are pushing away from the postindependence contract that curtailed civil and political rights in the name of stability and development, and are calling for more open, inclusive, and democratic states. Momani highlights young people’s commitment to democratic values and their increased participation in the public sphere, driven in part by new media content and the open sharing of ideas.

“Identity” drives home the point that today’s Arab youth cannot be viewed in terms of the binary identities of the past. Many see no contradiction in being simultaneously religious and modern and readily embrace the tenets of multiculturalism and global citizenship.

Finally, “circularity” addresses the high migration rate among Arab youth and argues that their mobility creates a conduit for the flow of ideas. Drawing on the term “social remittances,” Momani has found that Arab youth who study and work abroad are more connected than ever before to their home communities, and that these young migrants serve as a source of modern ideas and values, such as multiculturalism and respect for the environment.

As a short introduction to those unfamiliar with the region, *Arab Dawn* would be an excellent choice for an undergraduate class on globalization, youth cultures, or the Middle East. It also would be a helpful and enjoyable read for professionals, including those working in the field of education in emergencies who are relocating to jobs in the Middle East and North Africa.

On a different note, those steeped in a disciplinary tradition that looks for theoretical explanations might find the book’s analysis wanting, as in many ways it poses more questions than it answers. As one example, when Momani describes young Arabs viewing themselves as global citizens, I could not help but wonder what they mean when they use that phrase.

I recognize that such questions are beyond the scope of this book, in which Momani provides a background for future research and interrogation. There is a particular need for more research on how the personal experiences of Arab youth in the region vary in keeping with their different backgrounds. While Momani certainly recognizes that young people differ in terms of nationality, gender, and class, this is not the focus of her analysis.

For readers of the *Journal on Education in Emergencies*, there is an elephant in the room that is hard to view with optimism: instability. We know there is tremendous political unrest in the Middle East and North Africa region, ranging from outright conflict in Syria and Yemen to a political crackdown on civil society in Egypt, as well as a broader form of instability that stems from declining oil prices in the Arab Gulf States and concerns over succession in Oman and Saudi Arabia.

In her conclusion, Momani cites statistics showing that the vast majority of Arab youth across the region do not support sectarian rhetoric and view ISIS as fundamentally anti-Muslim. She finds this large-scale rejection of the terrorist group a source of optimism. While not disagreeing with her views, I do wonder what the current instability will mean for today's Arab youth, whose attitudes are still being shaped by their life experiences. Indeed, the number of Arab expatriates discussed in the chapter on circularity has grown significantly: since 2011, almost one million Syrians have fled to Europe and North America, not as educated migrants but as refugees, and many millions more have moved to neighboring Arab nations. I cannot help but wonder what effect the region's instability and ongoing violent conflicts will have on this current generation of Arab youth.

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BOOK REVIEW

***EDUCATION AND EMPOWERED CITIZENSHIP IN MALI* BY JAIMIE BLECK**

JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY PRESS, 2015. 207 PAGES

\$39.95 (PAPER)

ISBN 978-1-4214-1781-3

In the introduction to her book, *Education and Empowered Citizenship in Mali*, Jaimie Bleck draws on Western political science theories and a rich bibliography as she describes the evolution of education in Mali. The book addresses three key research questions:

1. How does attending school shape citizens' capacities and willingness to engage in politics?
2. Do all schooling experiences shape students' political knowledge and engagement in the same way?
3. What is the impact of a child's education on parents' political engagement? How does exposure to different types of schooling communities affect parents' political behavior? (150)

Bleck, who is an assistant professor of political science at the University of Notre Dame, begins by defining key terms she uses throughout the book, such as "empowered democratic agents," "the engagement toward the state," "internal efficacy," and "high-initiative participation." She then analyzes how the different types of education students and parents have received affect their political knowledge, and how that knowledge shapes their engagement with and participation in Malian politics. Bleck shows that children who have attended school, whether public schools or madrassas, are more knowledgeable about politics than children who have not. Parents of children who are receiving an education also participate more in politics. Bleck demonstrates that increased education is correlated with more engaged forms of political participation, such as campaigning for government officials and considering a run for office. She argues that there was an important correlation between enrollment in public and private francophone schools and voter turnout during the 2009 municipal elections.

Bleck's book is based on an "immersive survey" of one thousand citizens in ten school districts, and on data from Mali's education ministry, the territorial administration, the National Archives of Mali, and the national assembly, most of which was collected in 2009. With my insider's background—I am Malian—and having received my graduate education in America, I greatly appreciate that Bleck collected data using both strong research methods and deeply involved local communities in her research. As a result, I believe the information she presents is fair, accurate, and clearly interpreted.

I found this book fascinating and difficult to put down. However, there are several issues I hope Bleck will tackle in a second volume. First, the data collected from various sources—young students from public and private schools, their parents, and school officials and administrators—show that many respondents remain skeptical about the political process and democratic system in Mali. It would be interesting to conduct a longitudinal study to determine the impact education has on creating an empowered citizenry over time.

Second, I believe Bleck is right in thinking that increased enrollment in public and private schools is a good thing and that education can empower students. But, in fact, many of Mali's private schools were created without the involvement of education professionals and are supported instead by businesspeople and religious leaders who care little about the quality of education. This issue merits further consideration.

Third, I believe the book would have been improved if Bleck had included some information on the cultural and religious dimensions of education relative to the empowerment of citizens. This is and will continue to be an important issue for education policy-makers in countries with parallel state and religious education systems.

Finally, a comment on the overall topic of the book: because it connects education to empowered citizenship in Mali, some Malian readers are likely to think there is a deeper (Western or American) agenda behind the research. While the relationship between education and democracy is well established in the political science literature, this is not typically the way Malians think about education. The idea that education leads to increased political empowerment contrasts with the French model of education that Malians have come to appreciate. Therein lies much of the book's importance.

I would like to congratulate Bleck for her hard work and for taking an important

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political stand. This book is well structured, well written, and appropriate for academic readers. It successfully presents her methodological approach that uses a survey, her analysis of Mali's political culture, her assessment of the expansion of different types of schools, parents' experiences, and the implications of her findings. The book is highly informative and will help readers better understand the political dimensions of education in Mali. Along with academics who may be interested in the book's findings, I suspect that many Malian scholars, students, civil society organizations, political parties, including members of Congress and Parliament, and parents would appreciate this book. A French translation would also be an excellent contribution.

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