2022

Gendered Negotiation of Space- A Study on Gender and Mobility Among Transgender Persons in Pakistan

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GENDERED NEGOTIATION OF SPACE:

A STUDY ON GENDER AND MOBILITY AMONG TRANSGENDER PERSONS IN

PAKISTAN

BY

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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the

Doctor of Philosophy

Major in Sociology

South Dakota State University

2022

DISSERTATION ACCEPTANCE PAGE
Sana Illahe

This dissertation is approved as a creditable and independent investigation by a candidate

for the Doctor of Philosophy degree and is acceptable for meeting the dissertation

requirements for this degree. Acceptance of this does not imply that the conclusions

reached by the candidate are necessarily the conclusions of the major department.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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ABSTRACT

GENDERED NEGOTIATION OF SPACE:

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Transgender persons, known as *khwaja sira* in Pakistan, have historically been marginalized and excluded from various spatial domains, as they do not fit the societal norms of binary gender. They are subject to gender discipline by the Pakistani society to coerce them into conforming to the social norms. This research study uses in-depth interviews and applies grounded theory in conjunction with Michel Foucault's concept of discipline to explore how *khwaja sira* are subject to societal discipline in Pakistan. The discipline ranges from tacit to overt forms, including verbal and sexual harassment. *Khwaja sira* are disciplined within their families, in formal institutions such as healthcare systems, schools etc., as well as in public spaces such as streets and bazaars. The study shows transgender persons' negotiation of the gender discipline within these spaces, including resistance as their response to the societal discipline.

Keywords: Transgender person, *khwaja sira*, discipline, negotiation, resistance

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Nearly half of transgender persons in the U.S. have attempted suicide at least once in their lifetime. That is almost ten times the rate of U.S. population (4.6%). Additionally, 82% of transgender persons in the U.S. have had suicidal thoughts (James et al. 2016). These statistics point to an imbalance of a grave nature in the lived experiences of transgender persons. Transgender persons are subject to exclusions and discrimination from society including exclusion from their families, from formal institutions, and not just in the US; from public domains in Pakistan as well (James et a. 2016; Ali 2016). While transgender persons' experiences are not documented in Pakistan, the discriminatory attitudes towards transgender persons are attempts to discipline them according to the gender norms of the society. The term "discipline" literally means to train, "to punish for the sake of enforcing obedience or perfecting character" according to societal standard or "to bring a group under control." (Merriam-Webster. (n.d.)). The everyday lives of transgender persons are full of such discipline aimed at controlling their expression and "perfecting" or correcting their gender. The term "discipline" is similarly used by Michel Foucault to explain how prisoners are coerced in prisons, disciplined into behaving in ways that society deems appropriate (Foucault cited in Hass 1996). This study attempts to uncover the forms of discipline that transgender persons are subject to, by society and how they respond to the discipline, and how they negotiate their mobility in families, institutions, and the public spaces in Pakistan. The idea of discipline is one of the central themes of this dissertation and will be discussed further in the literature review, methodology, and the subsequent chapters.

Transgender persons are subject to gender discipline by the society to a great extent, resulting in their marginalized experiences. Fifty percent of the transgender persons surveyed under *The Report of U.S. Transgender Survey,* who were out to their families had experienced some form of rejection from family, including their families choosing not to speak/spend time with them (James et al. 2016: 65)[1]. More than half (58%) experienced some form of harassment or assault at the hands of law enforcement officers, institutionalizing the discrimination against transgender persons, including being forced to engage in sexual activity to avoid being arrested (ibid: 14). Many reported negative experiences at healthcare providers, including being denied treatment. Seventy seven percent of the transgender persons in the same survey were subject to harassment in schools, including verbal or physical or sexual assault (ibid: 131). Nearly half (47%) of respondents were sexually assaulted at some point in their lifetime (ibid: 15).

While the statistics presented are from the US, there are similarities in the lived experiences of the transgender persons in Pakistan. Based on reports from one of the four provinces in Pakistan, more than 300 transgender persons reported to be victims of physical and sexual assault within a year, while many still choose to not report out of the fear of harassment from police themselves (Ali 2016), putting transgender persons in Pakistan at a higher risk. The harassment towards transgender persons is a form of discipline coercing transgender persons to behave according to the societally accepted gender binary standards.

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[1] The U.S. Transgender Survey (USTS) examines the experiences of transgender people in the United States, with 27,715 participants across all fifty states, as well as, U.S. territories such as the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico etc. The survey was conducted online in the summer of 2015 by the National Center for Transgender Equality, for transgender adults (18 and older) in the United States, with the aims to shift how the public and policymakers view the lives of transgender persons and the challenges they face. The USTS report provided a detailed look at the experiences of transgender people across a wide range of categories, such as education, employment, family life, health, housing, and interactions with the criminal justice system.

During the same year in the same province, fifty transgender persons were killed (Ali 2016), demonstrating the risk and the extent of violence geared towards transgender persons, making them highly vulnerable to societal discipline.

Transgender people also face high levels of sexual violence in Pakistan, as well as verbal and physical harassment, for lack of acceptance towards their non-conforming gender expression (Aurat Foundation 2016: 30). The strict gender binary norms rooted in culture, colonial history and religion have excluded transgender persons from mainstream society. Their marginalized experiences contribute to their lack to acceptance. They negotiate their space in ways to minimize experienced violence and discrimination.

There are inequalities present in Pakistan for transgender persons on the intersections of gender and space. Transgender people face verbal and physical harassment in public transportation (Silan et al. 2016). Most transgender people living in urban areas are forced to reside in slums and informal communities with limited and underdeveloped infrastructure including unpaved walkways, congested housing, and inadequate sanitation facilities (Asia Society 2013; UN-Habitat 2014), which disadvantages them unequally based on their gender (Chant and Mcllwaine 2013: 3). With urbanization on the rise in Pakistan, there is urban development including construction of roads and bridges, city transportation, high-rise buildings, and consequently, new jobs. Amidst all these developments and embellishments of the city reside marginalized transgender people who are often denied the right to a number of these developments, including jobs, public transportation etc., based on their gender identity. With greater economic development, including neoliberal policies, urban development takes place all around these informal and less developed communities where transgender persons often reside, rendering starker the

differences between the developed and underdeveloped parts of the city (McGranahan et al. 2016; LEAD 2017). The work opportunities created as a result of this development are not readily and equally available to transgender people because of the stigma attached to them, which further hampers the chances of improving their living conditions (Aurat Foundation 2016: 27).

To combat some of these issues, a recent law, Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, (2018) was passed recognizing the rights of transgender citizens, including the rights to free education, healthcare, labor force participation, inclusion in welfare programs such etc. The act also forbids any form of discrimination against transgender persons (Government of Punjab 2018). The penalties mentioned in the act against those, that force transgender persons to beg on the streets, or deny them the right to use any public space, force them to leave households, or physically harm them, are fine and imprisonment between six months and two years (ibid: 46). While it affords transgender persons protection in terms of recognizing their socio-economic rights, it does not give concrete the penalties for violations in their access to healthcare, education, job market, etc. Although overall a positive development, questions still remain about the lived experiences of navigating different spaces: How well is the law enforced? To what degree does it eliminate discrimination towards transgender persons or improve their status in the society? This research aims to answer these questions by exploring the lived experiences of Pakistani transgender persons. The findings will inform an inclusive urban development policy based on how transgender persons navigate through different spaces in Pakistan.

To this end, this study delves deeply into transgender persons' daily experiences around spatial mobility. Using interview data, this examines how they navigate their daily

routes and tries to understand how gender intersects with movement in different spaces including public spaces. The study exposes levels of inclusiveness in the development of cities. It also highlights the impacts of the lack of inclusiveness on the lives of transgender persons informed by the question: how does gender affect how transgender persons negotiate their mobility in different spaces specifically familial domains, institutions and public domains? Mobility, in this context, means the "ability…to move" freely (Merriam-Webster. (n.d.)), i.e., transgender person's ability to move about freely in different spaces in the face of societal discipline in Pakistan.

Defining Transgender

This section unpacks the term transgender, and how it is used in Pakistani law, in comparison to western literature. The western definition, for transgender persons has evolved over time. Taken from the *Transgender Studies Reader,* it refers to somebody who permanently changes their social gender through the public presentation of self without any genital transformation (Stryker 2006: 4). A more recent and widely accepted definition of a transgender person would be someone whose gender identity is different from the gender they were assigned at birth (National Center for Trans Equality 2016). The history of the transgender term has also seen its usage as a "pangender" umbrella term by scholars such as Feinberg (1992 cited in Stryker 2006) for a perceived community consisting of transsexuals, drag queens, butches, hermaphrodites, cross-dressers, masculine women, effeminate men, sissies, tomboys etc., who mobilize in a struggle for social, political and economic justice (Stryker 2006: 4).

Pakistan has adapted the definition in a culturally specific way. According to Pakistani law, under section 2(n) of the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2018, a transgender person is someone who is: (i) "Intersex" (*khusra*) with a "mixture of male and female genital features or congenital ambiguities"; or (ii) "eunuch (*hijra*) assigned male at birth, but undergoes genital excision or castration"; or (iii) a "transgender man, transgender woman, *Khwaja Sira* or any person whose gender identity or gender expression differs from the social norms and cultural expectations based on the sex they were assigned at the time of their birth." According to this definition, any person who identifies emotionally or psychologically with the sex other than one's biological or legal sex at birth, irrespective of any later biological change, would be classified as a transgender person (Government of Punjab 2018: 3). The Act assumes a prior understanding of the term transgender while defining it, while leaving some ambiguity and a need for further inquiry about the term[2].

There are a number of gender and cultural identities that are chunked together by the Pakistani law in one category of transgender. Locally "*hijras*", "*khwaja siras*", "*khusra*" and many other terms are used interchangeably for transgender people without their agreement or consent. However, there is a general consensus among the trans

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[2] Transgender Persons Welfare Policy by Punjab Social Protection Authority, Government of Pakistan, 2018 defines sex as one's biological attributes as either male or female. It is primarily linked with physical characteristics such as chromosomes, hormone prevalence, and external and internal anatomy. Gender is primarily a social construct referring to roles, behaviors, activities, and attributes that a society deems appropriate for a given sex. Gender is further explained in the theoretical perspectives. Gender identity refers to a person's sense of their own selves as male, female or a mix of both or neither that may or may not be consistent with the sex assigned at their birth.
Gender expression refers to how a person presents and expresses what they perceive their gender identity. Gender nonconforming are people who express their genders in ways that deviate from normative cultural expectations. Cisgender refers to those whose self-identity conforms with their gender assigned at birth. Cissexism refers to harassment and discrimination based on being gender nonconforming (also often discussed as 'transphobia' in case of transgender persons).

community that *khwaja sira* is culturally esteemed over the other terms, as it dates back to the Mughal era from the 16th to 18th centuries when the transgender community enjoyed a higher status in the royal courts and the society as well (Munir 2017). The derogatory connotations attached to the other terms can be linked to the loss of status of transgender people, deeply rooted in the various processes of development in Pakistan dating back to its colonial roots (ibid).

A term that the legal act of 2018 uses to define transgender, but leaves unexplained, is intersex which differs from how the western literature sees it. An intersex individual is a person who either has anatomic characteristic of both sexes or whose external genitalia are do not fit the typical male or female (Stryker 2006; ISAN n.d.). Western literature sees intersex as different from transgender in that many intersex people hide or are "in the closet" about or do not know about their intersex status, and knowingly do not interact with other persons of their type; only a few of them own their identity, in contrast to those who identify as transgender who often feel the need to consolidate a transgender identity (Costello cited in Government of Punjab 2018). The term transsexual though relatively outdated in the western literature, also becomes a subset of the definition provided according to the law of Pakistan based on the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act of Pakistan, 2018. Transsexual refers to those who have undergone gender-affirming medical interventions, such as hormones and surgery (Medical News Today 2021).

For the purpose of this study, I will be using the term transgender in the Pakistani context. In terms of a gender identity, it includes various aspects of the umbrella term transgender. Within the transgender category in Pakistan, I also explore the term *khwaja sira*. *Khwaja sira* is not only a gender identity but is also a cultural identity. To attain the

status of a *khwaja sira*, one has to gain confidence and membership within the *khwaja sira* clan, and take an oath (verbal, financial or in kind) at the hands of a *guru* (master) who is considered the head of a specific *khwaja sira* household/family. The *guru* and the *khwaja sira* community provide protection to one another[3]. This study uses the umbrella term of transgender persons while also exploring *khwaja sira* as its subset. While the term *khwaja sira* is often translated in English as a transgender person in Pakistan, but anytime the term transgender person is used, it cannot be automatically taken to mean *khwaja sira.* The term *khwaja sira* in this study is specifically used to refer to the specific gender and cultural identity fitting this category. On the other hand, the term transgender persons is used as an umbrella term to refer to the participants interviewed in this study that are transgender but are not part of the *khwaja sira* group. There are two main reasons for using both of those terms in the study are, the first one is to appeal to a wider western audience that is more familiar with the term transgender rather than *khwaja sira*. The second reason is to provide the closest possible translation of *khwaja sira.*

The results of the study illustrate transgender persons' negotiation of the limitations imposed on their mobility in different spaces of Pakistan. Many similarities exist in the gender-based discrimination and the discipline transgender persons are subject to such as being driven out of homes, facing physical and sexual harassment, fear of law enforcement officers, and being denied healthcare. These kinds of discriminations have surfaced in the western research (Grant et al. 2011; James et al. 2016) and also are evident in the interview data in this research as well. However, the goal of this study was not to make the results generalizable to the transgender community across the globe, but to be context specific to

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[3] This information was obtained from the interview with the first gatekeeper.

Lahore, Pakistan. There are cultural/ contextual/ legal nuances that may not be applicable to other parts of the world. In this study, the forms of gender discipline in Pakistan are explored in depth, along with how it makes the *khwaja sira* feel, and how they resist, respond to, and negotiate this discipline.

Intellectual Merit

The literature on transgender studies is largely westernized and misses out on local cultural nuances within the Pakistani context. The western limitations of intersectional research on gender and space does not capture the true essence of Pakistani transgender persons' experiences given place-specific patriarchal norms, class complexities, safety issues, and cultural and religious stigmas. My research opens up the opportunity to understand gender and space in a non-western cultural context. The interviews give rich and deep understanding of intersectional mobility and space negotiations, necessary to expose the non-inclusive nature of transportation and urbanization to policy makers in Pakistan.

Dissertation Organization

As this chapter lays out the context of the research study briefly, chapter 2 reviews the theoretical perspectives on transgender and gender non-conformity, followed by a review of literature on mobility and access to public spaces for gender non-conforming people, and the forms of gender discipline that takes place within families, institutions and out on the streets. It then unpacks transgender mobility in the context of Pakistan. To give a clearer picture, this section looks at the various development stages in the political history of Pakistan that impacted the status of transgender people and marginalized this population. This section lays out events that facilitated the ostracization of transgender people starting

from the pre-colonial era to colonization to Islamic fundamentalism coupled with neo-liberal regimes. This segues into what social exclusion of Pakistani transgender people looks like and what it encompasses. Chapter 3 focuses on the detailed methods used for the study. This is followed by the chapters on the findings of the study.

Chapter 4 shows the various forms of discipline that transgender persons are subject to in public spaces, such as streets, transport, marketplaces etc., and how *khwaja sira* respond to and negotiate the discipline in these spaces. Chapter 5 focuses on how transgender persons navigate gender discipline within their families. The chapter explores the processes and stages of transition through which transgender persons come to understand their identity and express themselves amidst constant gender discipline from their families, and how they respond to them. Chapter 6 shows how transgender persons are subject to gender discipline in various formal public institutions, thus institutionalizing the discrimination and discipline against them. This chapter explores the discipline within health systems, schools, and law enforcement etc. and shows how transgender persons navigate these institutions. Chapter 7 provides a brief discussion and conclusion to the study.

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The aim of this chapter is to understand how transgender status affects the navigation of public and private domains. We will look at the existing literature to show how transgender persons are treated by the society. The literature review will also examine the factors that affect how transgender persons are viewed by the society and what are the implications of these for the transgender persons. Overall, the aim of this chapter is to review the existing literature to understand how transgender persons negotiate mobility in urban spaces in Pakistan. In order to understand this, first I will explore how sociologists have theorized gender, specifically gender non-conformity. I will then specifically explore how transgender persons have been treated historically in Pakistan. Then I will examine the kinds of pressure to gender conformation and gender discipline that transgender persons come across in specific spaces, such as within families, within public institutions, as well as in public spaces such as streets and markets places. Through this, the chapter also highlights the gaps in the literature that the current study will endeavor to cover, including how transgender persons navigate through the discipline that they are subjected to, and how they negotiate their mobility.

Theoretical Approaches on Transgender Negotiation of Identity and Space

This section reviews the key theoretical approaches on non-binary gender identity, from a variety of perspectives. West and Zimmerman (1987) were one of the first to apply the theory of social constructionism to demonstrate the socially constructed nature of gender (as opposed to something innate) that is constructed by and for social interaction, on the

basis of dominant gender norms. Joan Scott provides us with an understanding of gender (1986; 2008), where the meaning of gender goes beyond the social construction of bodies and instead addresses relations of power and the creation of knowledge that embrace symbolic relations of subordination and hierarchy[4]. Queer theory focuses on the fluidity of gender and sexuality. It started with questioning the derogatory nouns for homosexuality or effeminacy. The term queer is used for those individuals who wanted to label themselves with a non-binary, who needed fluidity, and not binary opposites, to challenge the hegemonic assumptions of sexuality (Jagose cited in Callis 2009: 214). A queer identity implied "that not everybody is queer in the same way". It focuses on the constructed-ness of gendered and sexual identities and categorizations. To queer theorists, heterosexuality and homosexuality are binary social constructs rather than innate sexual types (Seidman cited in Callis 2009: 215).

Similarly, transgender studies address gender by going into the epistemological questions of what bodies mean, that is, how bodies are represented and what is considered as legitimate knowledge. They consider the embodied experience of the speaking subject, i.e., the experiential knowledge of the subject, as important as other more objective forms of knowledge. Particularly, no other voices in a dialog should have the liberty to obscure the voice of the transgender; therefore, the field's relationship to the trans community is considered as an important one (Stryker 2006: 13). The above approaches articulate well with Foucault's idea of subjugated knowledges, where it's these chunks of historical knowledge that are hidden under the formal and legitimated systems (Foucault 1976: 83).

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[4] Joan Scott's "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis," originally published in 1986 in *The American Historical Review*, examines the category of "gender" and its limitations, when referring to body's social constructions.

Similarly, the other kind of subjugated knowledges, according to Foucault (1976), are those that have been discredited as nonconceptual ones. In the Foucauldian sense, relations to power determine what will or will not be considered as truth (Dillon 2010: 373). A discourse is not just a means to facilitate and affirm the truth but also serves as a hindrance to it. Anyone deviating from the recognized truth and, specifically, anyone deviating sexually from the recognized sexual truth in this discourse is sexually deviant, altogether another species to human (Foucault cited in Callis 2009: 222).

Foucault identifies a form of objectification which Rabinow (1984: 11) called 'subjectification' as the process of self-formation, where a person actively participates in the process to subjectify oneself through a variety of "operations on one's body, soul, mind and thoughts", although mediated by an external authority, in this case society in general. This is the same process that is reflected in the term 'discipline' by him. The 'subjectification' takes place through slow societal discipline through these operations done on one's body and mind. This definition is the reference through which Foucault invents sexuality, whereby which we categorize ourselves, where we fit in terms of these categories, and whether our sexual habits and arrangements are included in these lists or not. Their absence results in that we worry about the normalcy of our practices. In short, sex is not only categorized but defined and regulated by society[56]. The regulation and reinforcement of these categories by society is the knowledge through which people are disciplined into becoming sexually normative subjects[7].

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[5] Foucault, Michel. 1980. *Truth and Subjectivity: Howison Lectures.* Retrieved from Berkeley Library, University of California. https://guides.lib.berkeley.edu/c.php?g=901488&p=6487003
[6] Foucault, Michel. 1980. An Introduction. Vol. 1 of History of Sexuality. Translated by Robert Hurley. New York: Vintage.
[7] Foucault, Michel, 1926-1984. Discipline and Punish: the Birth of the Prison. New York :Pantheon Books, 1977.

Social Definitions and Discipline. Knowledge of subjects is tied to social control, as demonstrated by Foucault's concept of genealogy (Foucault 1980). Foucault uses genealogy to trace the origins of knowledge and relate discourses and their ties to social power and control. Foucault's genealogies aim to allow individuals to have the voice that they are otherwise robbed of by the system (Foucault 1995).

The first step in this control of individuals begins by creating categories such as that of sex, and then normatively defining those categories. These social definitions become operational within a society and form the basis of subordination of those who do not conform. They work in binary oppositions, such as normal versus abnormal, or healthy versus sick. The definitions of normality are regulated, through discipline, to exert social control. The knowledge of what defines normality becomes so prevalent and dispersed, that individuals in the society become subject to these definitions (Foucault 1990). Those that do not conform to the definitions are subjected to constant discipline, instead of brutal punishments.

Foucault gives us the tools of subjectification and discipline to work with, but despite his preoccupation with power and its effects on the body and sexuality, he does not explore the extent to which gender determines the techniques and degrees of discipline exerted on the body. While it does not negate his theoretical framework, it does expose important gaps in his work that can be remedied by exploring the extent of discipline and the forms of discipline that are exerted on body when gender non-conformity comes into play.

For Butler (1993), gender and sexuality cannot be separated; the "gender trouble" is present in existing identity categories. To put together an identity requires some

differentiation from others, but often that is what the category excludes. To Butler, all gender is an imitation, and there is no original. The act that one does and performs has been ongoing prior to one's existence (Butler 1993). Being out as a heterosexual is closely accompanied by the closet itself, to the extent that the closet defines being out (ibid: 312). Heterosexual identity is imitated as original, where the original itself is a copy of nothing (ibid). For heterosexuality to be the origin, it has to be something original in comparison; hence presupposing the imitation or copy or homosexuality where heterosexuality is advocated for as the original. The imitation becomes necessary for heterosexuality to perform, because of the risks of being undone (ibid: 314). So, gender is an act which has been rehearsed, but requires actors to reproduce as a reality over and over again to maintain the hegemony of heteronormative standards (ibid: 272). Such a thought process emphasizes the constructed nature of gender in order to fight for those identities that do not conform to the artificial and imitated. The reality of gender is constituted by its performance, so the gender for a transvestite is as real as anyone else whose performance complies with social norm (ibid: 278).

Butler reiterates Foucault's question of truth essentially by asking who and what can we become in a world where our limits and meanings are set out prior to us. And what if we try to be something which is not recognized by the given system of truth (Butler 2001: 621)? She extends it further by hinting at the place of not-being "within the field of being, living, breathing, attempting to love, as that which is neither fully negated nor acknowledged". In such a place, how does one negotiate the unrecognition of one's gender which is such an essential part of one's existence (p. 622)?

In her essay about gender affirmation surgery, then considered sex reassignment, Butler discusses the predicament when the intersex subject refuses to get the genital that "they have for him", which is what is needed to be loved (Butler 2001: 634), often referred to as the "cultural genital," or the legitimate genital (Garfinkel 2006) that ought to have been there instead of the genital that actually exists. Having refused their transaction of love in exchange for a "seduction to subjection", the subject "desubjugates" himself by disrupting the politics of truth (ibid: 635). He demonstrates a possibility of acceptance beyond the established norm, while still being somewhere "between the norm and its failure…he is, finally, neither one; he is the human in its anonymity" (ibid). Butler uses this example to demonstrate one instance of (or doing away with) gender oppression where some are unrecognized until they harm or tweak their bodies according to the existing faulty and disturbed gender system.

Gender is thus part of a response to the production of knowledge of the body, how a body is perceived and accepted by others. With the production of knowledge always communicating and responding to certain expectations and forms of validation (Platero cited in Vincete 2021), instead of working in a void, it is the result of negotiations of power relations.

Transgender Persons

Transgender persons' gender identity or gender expression does not align with their assigned birth sex. This makes them gender non-conforming according to the societal gender norm. How the society views transgender persons affect the way they experience life, and as a result how they move about and interact in any space. Gender affirmation is

important to transgender persons (King & Gamarel 2021). Gender affirmation refers to psychological, social, legal, and/or medical validation of one's gender by the society and is an important social determinant of trans health. Apart from facing overt forms of Gender-based victimization (GBV) such as sexual harassment, housing discrimination etc., deep averse events include conveying rejection of an individual's gender identity, such as if the transgender person did not "pass" as or was not socially perceived as the gender with which they identified, it leads to higher levels of non-affirmation microaggressions towards them (Parr & Howe 2020).

Transgender persons also face pervasive stigma and violence due to multiple marginalized social identities (transgender status, sex work, gender non-conformity), which intersect with social inequities such as housing security and employment, further reinforcing them (Ganju & Saggurti 2017). Transmen also feel the pressure to pass the test of manhood, i.e., are they masculine enough to be categorized as men, and failing to pass it leads to exclusion from the desired rank as well as stigmatization. Even if medical and legal obstacles such as surgeries can be overcome, social obstacles and social stigmatization remain a significant fear among transgender individuals (Gauthier & Chaudoir 2004).

Transgender Mobility

Power differentials as well as differences in access to resources generate different potentials for mobility. For marginalized groups such as transgender individuals, the extent of these differences can even result in forms of 'immobility' (Hanam et al. 2006). Public spaces are often highly cis-normative and heteronormative, as they operate to preserve the

hegemonic gender order (Cresswell 1996), consequently, homosexual and non-binary gender individuals find themselves 'out of place' in public spaces (Valentine, cited in Lubitow et al. 2017). The politics of mobility arise out of inequality in power relations and privileges that are unevenly distributed among people and unevenly alter the potential for mobility (Hannnam et al. 2006: 15). Some see streets as public spheres that are "mediums of citizenship" as well as "theaters of social life" where differences among people are both experienced and displayed (D'Arcuz, cited in Prytherch 2018).

Mobility for men, women, and transgender people becomes a very different experience. Fear of violence and harassment is the main factor that attributes to gendering of public spaces; and the gendered nature of public spaces results in continued high levels of harassment and violence for different groups (Doan 2007; Valentine, cited in Lubitow et al. 2017). Gender minorities report much higher levels of fear of violence than cismen (Lubitow et al. 2017). The deep sense of susceptibility to violence significantly alters their everyday movement (ibid: 1400), resulting them in often feeling the need to restrict their movement in public spaces in order to avoid perceived dangers (ibid). These findings further establish public spaces as a gendered domain.

The National Transgender Discrimination Survey (NTDS) showed that 63% of 7500 gender non-conforming respondents had experienced serious acts of discrimination (including job loss, eviction, assault, denial of medical services) (Grant et al. 2011). Twenty two percent of the respondents reported harassment or disrespect when questioned about the use of public transportation. Another 4% reported being physically assaulted, and 9% reported being denied equal treatment (Grant et al. 2011). Studies show that as a result of exclusion from society, transgender persons are more likely to be homeless, have

depressive disorders, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and other complex chronic health conditions that required multidisciplinary care compared to other genders (Wang et al. 2021). Violence, discrimination, and harassment through gender policing also exists in schools, sexual victimization in the criminal justice system, and negative judgment of gender variation in faith-based institutions such as churches (Graham 2014). Traveling as a transgender or gender non-confirming individual can be complex with emotional labor related to their gender identity and gender expression when moving into different spaces or situations. Transgender and gender non-binary tourists often feel fear and anxiety related to sharing their gender identity when going through tourist processes related to identification documents, security thresholds, and check-in procedures (Olson & Reddy-Best 2019).

Such everyday discrimination and violence also varies on the basis of social location and affects trans people's experiences of public space (Lubitow et al. 2017). Exhibiting non-binary gender identity out on the streets in public spaces needs a different kind of movement, a mobility both restricted and shaped by transphobia and heterosexism, "transmobilities," reflecting how transgender and gender nonconforming people experience gender, shaping their mobility (Lubitow et. al 2017). These include various coping mechanisms, which vary according to specific public spaces. For example, this can be observed in public recreational spaces.

The obstacles transgender persons encounter in public recreation facilities affect how they use, experience, and perceive these facilities (Oakleaf & Richmond 2017). For example, transgender persons often avoided swimming at public pools, so their transgender status would not be detected. Some avoided the use of bathroom facility, even refusing to

drink water so a need for restroom use does not arise, as a risk mitigation strategy, leaving fewer options available for recreational activities (Oakleaf & Richmond 2017).

When it comes to going to school and colleges, transgender students, among other factors, take into consideration a university's attitudes towards their gender identity before choosing a graduate school (Goldberg et al. 2021). For transgender persons that engaged in sex work specifically, coping with stigma and violence came in the shape of running away from violence perpetrators; some opted not to disclose their 'stigmatized' sex work profession. At the same time, peer support was the most commonly described coping resource (Ganju & Saggurti 2017). Despite a range of strategies to cope with transgender harassment and discrimination, negative interactions with gender-binary transit users, transit staff, and passers-by still occur (Lubitow et al. 2017).

Transgender in the Context of Pakistan

In order to understand the process through which transgender persons became outcast in Pakistani public spaces, this section explores a brief history of perceptions of transgender people and attitudes towards them, as well as their changing status. It will cover the following periods:

Mughal – Colonial Period

In the pre-colonial era, transgender people, especially *khwaja sira* served in the royal courts of Mughal emperors for centuries and were therefore considered socio-economic elites (Hinchy 2013: v). They enjoyed a rather exalted spiritual status; they were the first to enter the shrines of the saints, were sought for blessings for new-born and newlyweds, served as army generals, and served as advisers on important matters of public interests in the royal

courts (Asad 2016). Their inability to reproduce made them ideal guards and companions for the royal women[8] (Khan 2014a: 172). There was also a general fear about offending or annoying transgender persons as they were believed to have the power to curse as well (ibid: 170).

Despite of the aforementioned, there were inequalities within the transgender communities and all transgender people did not enjoy a similar status in the precolonial times (Hinchy 2013). There were marginalized *hijra* communities during the Mughal era when the *khwaja sira* community was in service to the royal courts (ibid: 2). However, sources suggest that special rights such as land grants were given to the *hijra* community under the Maratha dynasty, further affirming the socially privileged position of transgender people under the pre-colonial Mughal and Maratha dynasties (Khan 2016: 70; Hinchy 2013: 2).

Transgender people were open in their expression and were a visible and vibrant part of the pre-colonial population. Their eccentric gender expression was considered an unacceptable moral standard by the British, and their presence in public spaces considered 'obscene' (Hinchy 2013: 1). The British legally criminalized the transgender category under the Criminal Tribes Act (CTA) of 1871. Part II of the Act called for strict police controls such as surveillance, arrests and punishments including public beating and even killing of people from transgender tribes (Khan 2016: 70) in order to discipline and reform them out of their "unnatural" ways of behaving (Westcott 2018). This Act promoted the shunning of transgender people in public spaces by legitimizing violence against them. This Act was eventually repealed in 1947, following the partition of Pakistan. But

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[8] They were eunuchs and had been castrated.

homosexual acts remained illegal, punishable by up to ten years in prison, under Section 377 of country's penal code, inherited from the same British law. This did not guarantee any protection to transgender people, as a transwoman seen dating a man would still be considered homosexual.

Islamization, Western Assistance and the Status of Ambiguous Sex

There was a brief moment of potential for improved status for transgender persons in Pakistan during the reign of Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto, a contested but popular leader to the Pakistani masses. He brought secular and socialist reforms into his politics in the 1970s promising to redeem the lost status of the minorities and empower the marginalized (Herring 1979). His nationalization program disturbed the elitist class balance in Pakistan, and was seen as a sign of hope by the impoverished, the landless, laborers, students, minority groups and women, and thus, by extension sexual minorities (Khalique 2018).

The populist era ended with a military coup in Pakistan, with the US entering the geopolitical landscape to defend Afghanistan from the Soviet Union in exchange for pledging military and economic assistance to Pakistan. The assistance was contingent upon replacing the socialist reforms introduced by Bhutto, with a capitalist regime under Zia ul Haq (Shams 2016). This regime was also marked and mandated by extreme religious fundamentalism (ibid). Legislation was passed incorporating extremist and fundamentalist Sharia law, which punished extramarital sex with a 'stoning to death' sentence under the Hudood Ordinance, 1979 (Rehman and Polymenopoulou 2013: 34). A similar punishment was mandated for forced sexual assault, in the case the victim could not bring enough witnesses (ibid). Though the Hudood Ordinance did not explicitly target transgender or

homosexual people, homosexual men and women that may or may not share the gender identity with transgender people have been punished and executed under this law (ibid). The extremist Islamic reforms upholding patriarchal values have helped further reinforce the stigma against transgender people. To add fuel to the fire, preachers in the mosques have used certain heteronormative interpretations of Quranic verses (i.e., "men who dress or act like women or women who dress or act like men, are cursed and will go to the hell"), to further provoke sentiments against those of non-binary gender, degrading their status further in society (Hajjar 2004)[9].

TRANSGENDER STATUS IN PAKISTAN: KEY AREAS OF CONCERN

The effects of the aforementioned and other key factors on Pakistani transgender persons are explored in more depth in the following sections. I begin with an in-depth discussion of issues related to neoliberal economic development in Pakistan.

Neoliberalism and Transgender People

Neoliberal policies that were brought into Pakistan in the late 1970s through 90s, further provoked the religious notions coupled with the neo-liberal fast-paced economic development, proved to marginalize transgender persons on the sheer basis of their gender. Neoliberalism can be defined as an era of political and economic power with competitive and aggressive measures for economic development through a free market mechanism,

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[9] The strong political link between the neoliberal regimes and religious fundamentalism has been examined in many Islamic countries during this era, where neo-liberal advocates like USA have encouraged religious extremist groups as a strategy to minimize the influence of the left. A similar case of Egypt under Sadat's regime is explored in Ashley Smith's "Islamic fundamentalism, the Arab Spring, and the Left"- Gilbert Achcar. *International Socialist Review*: 103.

eliminating governments' role in regulating their economies (Babb 1997). The neo-liberal era replaced Bhutto's nationalization program with privatization, liberalization, and deregulation by entering into agreements with the International Monetary Fund (Shams 2016).

Neoliberal policies and Structural Adjustment Programs worked towards enhancing the competitiveness of a national economy based on its macroeconomic indicators, promoting a highly non-inclusive development at the expense of vulnerable groups in many societies. Competitive industries thrived on low wages and bad working conditions (Zaidi 2018). When unemployment in a country rises, food prices go up, making day-to-day survival even more difficult. With a low tax-to-GDP ratio in Pakistan, the state's ability to transfer resources to low-income groups became exceedingly limited (Zaidi 2018). Those on welfare schemes were directly impacted because of the budget cut on social welfare (Mallick 2014). Privatization of health and cutbacks on education expenditures also meant lack of access to free or affordable education and health facilities for those in marginalized groups. Increased economic pressures in the cities also caused more violence and conflict, as the population became more frustrated with the economy (Ahmed and Khan 2009). Violence towards marginalized groups, including transgender people, became more pronounced, as their religiously contested gender non-binary identity became an easy target for the masses, religious authorities, and governments (Siddiqi 2019). This era was marked by a more unequal society with a richer elite against a highly unprotected and marginalized underclass of communities that had no political and legal representation. It reinforced "social forms" adopted by the elites and the privileged as the normative and ideal

conditions for society as a whole, including the traditional gender-binary and heteronormativity (Khan 2014b).

Urbanization and Transgender Persons

Urbanization, though associated with economic growth and, ideally, the opening of social and political avenues for all populations, is not equal for all (Ahmed 2014). It may exacerbate gender inequalities and injustices based on heightened poverty levels (Ahmed 2014). On the one hand, cities provide an environment for transgender communities to express themselves more freely, based on the conception of cities as a source of freedom of expression (Simmel, cited in Weinstein 1950). On the other hand, cities also present a number of gendered limitations including the avenues for equitable access to work, capital accumulation, mobility, safety, security and equal political representation across gender groups (Chant 2013). Urbanization may not necessarily be followed by prosperity. The urban population in Pakistan was estimated to be 36% of the total population in 2013, with forty seven percent dwelling in informal residential settlements, i.e., slums (UN-Habitat 2014). Slums are a group of densely populated households lacking durability and protection against climatic hazards, with insufficient living space, lack of easy access to safe and sufficient water and inadequate sanitation. They also lack security of tenure, making its residents susceptible to forced evictions (UN-Habitat (2003:1). Socioeconomic inequalities and the lack of decent work opportunities for transgender people force most transgender people to live in informal neighborhoods, making them more susceptible to violence, sexual abuse, harassment, crime and mental and physical illnesses (Asia Society 2013; Chant 2013).

Furthermore, cities do not provide an equal and fair access to space and mobility to transgender people. Due to the stigma attached with transgender persons, many spaces governed by patriarchal norms exclude transgender persons (McIlwaine 2013). In order to render themselves invisible, transgender people prefer to be more mobile at night, which poses further threats of physical violence to them (Aurat Foundation 2016). Where the new and blooming urban public transportation in Pakistan has positively impacted the daily mobility for cismen and especially for ciswomen, on the other hand, this development excludes transgender people, as they are not accepted and are not welcome in either of the gender segregated compartments (Mamun et al. 2016), making verbal and physical harassment in public transport a part of their mobility experience (Silan et al. 2016).

Marginalization

Fast-paced development was marked by the social and economic out-casting of those that did not fit the normative conditions of society, including those falling out of the gender binary. This invisibility for transgender persons began on a familial level and built to a holistic societal exclusion. There is a transphobia in the community that keeps transgender persons at the brink of exclusion. They are also stigmatized as a result of their participation in sex work, especially under the Islamic values of Pakistan (Zakria 1970).

Familial Exclusion. Parents are more receptive to what they perceive as gender nonconformity among their young daughters, while their responses in relation to sons are more complex (Kane 2006). Parents consider it their own responsibility in accomplishing gender with and for their sons to match hegemonic ideals of masculinity. Heterosexual fathers are more motivated by their own personal endorsement of hegemonic masculinity

(Kane 2006). A different study shows that adolescents who are male, of non-Western ethnicity, and who are more religious (as indicated by frequency of religious service attendance), were less accepting of same-sex sexuality and gender non-conformity in comparison to female, Western and less religious peers (Collier et al. 2013).

Gender non-conformity is often seen as a disease that may be cured over time, or with marriage, or at the hands of a spiritual or religious guide. Most transgender people go through domestic violence at a young age as a means to discipline them into a binary gender expression (Abbas et al. 2014). A study comparing the experiences of 295 transgender adults with their siblings showed that the transgender siblings received less social support from family than their non-transgender siblings. They were more likely to experience harassment and discrimination than their non-transgender sisters and brothers (Factor and Rothblum 2007). Children often escaped the persecution by fleeing from their homes for safety and to be able to express their true self. Most transgender people spend their lives as Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in their own cities and countries in the face of housing discrimination (Munir 2018).

Housing Discrimination. As IDPs that have fled from homes to escape violence in search of safety, transgender people struggle to find proper housing and shelter which puts them at the highest risk of violence and abuse (Munir 2018). They are mostly turned down from housing, on the pretext of restricting the neighborhood to 'noble and respectable' people and not allowing sex work (Munir 2017). Even if they find housing, they need to find a guarantor to vouch for their character, and offer assurance to the landlord of the legitimacy of renting party and that they will abide by the renting rules and pay the rent in time etc. The provision of a guarantor becomes near impossible for transgender persons

given the dissolute ties with the families (ibid). Some have to bargain a lease in exchange for sexual services and are stuck in the continual loop of sexual abuse at the hands of house owners throughout the tenure (ibid). There are often restrictions posed on transgender tenants that they cannot leave the house late night or have late night visitors. This makes it particularly challenging for them as most transgender people, invisiblize themselves by engaging in activities at night, in order to avoid being harassed by society members during the daytime. Those whose livelihoods depend on dancing, entertainment, or sex work also face serious livelihood difficulties with such bans (Hamzic 2019). Many have reported neighbors complaining to the police out of a general transphobia, and whose complaints forced transgender persons to be evicted from their housing. Transgender persons have also been turned away from natural disaster refugee camps because of the lack of consensus on which gender segregated quarter they should belong to (Rumbach and Knight 2014).

Health Access. Transgender people are susceptible to HIV and are often unable to get treatment because of the expenses involved (Akhtar et al. 2018). They are the least likely to receive treatment because of gender specific wards. Transgender people in Pakistan are faced with dangerous living and working conditions (Boyce 2018). Survivors of violence at work have often faced direct physical and psychological injuries that remain untreated (Bachmann 2015).

Education. For many transgender people, school is noted to be one of the first sources of negative experiences (Tabassum and Jamil 2014). Schools breed the strict notions of binary gender and those who do not conform to these are often bullied and harassed (ibid). Feminine traits and expressions in boys are seen as a sign of weakness and failure and is often punished in schools (ibid). Some transgender children even reported to

be sexually abused by their seniors or school staff such as guards and gate keepers. Transgender children consequently have a high drop-out rate (Munir 2018). Those who want to continue education, and/or those who belong to higher class families, often continue their education at home (ibid).

Employment Opportunities. With minimal education, there are less chances of getting formal employment. Those who get formal employment are subject to similar mistreatment and workplace harassment based on their gender (Zahra et al. 2016). Many work in informal sectors, with the largest proportion resorting to begging on the streets and working in vulnerable industries, such as sex work (Abdullah et al. 2012). Job application forms had two genders listed, excluding a third, having them to misidentify as any of the two, just like most schools. In 2009, Section 377 of Supreme Court passed a ruling to include the third gender. Similarly, 2% of job quotas are now kept for those belonging to a third gender. Yet, many claim it is only on paper, and transgender people still experience exclusion from mainstream employment (Ingber 2018). Factor and Rothblum (2007) showed that transgender people earned much less income than their non-transgender siblings, even if they had higher education.

Justice System. In 2017, transgender people were part of the Pakistani census data for the first time. Despite the inclusion of a third gender in national identity cards, many transgender people still choose to not openly identify themselves as the third gender category because of the long-standing stigma attached with this identity (Ingber 2018). In 2009, the transgender community were given the right to vote, and run for public office. Only 97 transgender voters registered out of an estimated population of 500,000 (Ingber 2018). In 2012 their right to property inheritance was recognized (Barker 2018). The

Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2018 further prohibited any discrimination against transgender citizens by employers, educational institutions, healthcare providers, transportation service providers and any private business or service provider.

Despite these changes, the situation remained grave; in one of the four provinces, forty nine transgender citizens were killed and more than 300 reported to be victims of physical and sexual assault between 2015-16 (Ali 2016). The reported number is not close to accurate since many transgender persons even hesitate to report such incidents to the police or go to the police stations, out of a fear of harassment and blame by the police themselves (ibid). Transgender people have been victimized by police themselves; they have been mocked, threatened, blackmailed, as well as physically and sexually assaulted by the police (Asad 2016). The courts have also blamed transgender victims in many cases, having posited the question of whether a sex worker can be raped (Asad 2016).

Conclusion

The literature review gives an insight into how transgender persons experience public spaces and what their marginalization looks like in public institutions. It also shows the various forms of exclusions that transgender persons face through various historical eras. What we know through our review is that transgender persons face exclusion when they are out on the streets, where the heteronormative spaces make them feel out of place, compelling them to think of ways to mitigate the risks in public spaces. We also learnt that transgender persons face exclusions in formal institutions such health system, judicial system etc., as well as within their own families that tend to gender discipline them. What we have yet to uncover is what this gender discipline really looks like up close for

transgender persons, what forms it takes as well as what are the implications of such gender discipline for the transgender persons. In the upcoming chapters, through interviews, we will also uncover how transgender person respond to this gender discipline and how they negotiate their mobility.

CHAPTER 3: DATA & METHODS

Gender affects people's mobility and ease of access to public spaces. Transgender persons face unacceptance by other genders, they face stigma from the society, and are considered the outsider in public spaces, restricting their mobility in the public spaces in Pakistan. Pakistani culture is strongly patriarchal, legitimized through religious teachings and practices (Behzad 2017). This current study aims to understand how transgender persons negotiate mobility in urban spaces of Pakistan. It does so by asking and answering questions of how transgender persons are gender disciplined in public spaces, institutions as well as within families, and how this affects how they navigate public spaces. This study researches these questions using interview data from a grounded theory perspective, which is explained below.

Theoretical Framework

The investigation is informed by a grounded theory approach. A grounded theory approach helps generate a general theory based on the participants' view of processes, actions or interactions in a study. The interpretivist grounded theory assumes the multiplicity of realities that are interpreted, as knowledge is mutually created by the researcher and the participants (Charmaz 2006). The interpretivist grounded theory offers fluidity while Straussian grounded theory provides more structured tools to adopting a grounded theory approach (Corbin & Strauss 1990). A mix of these approaches were used, starting with a more structured framework of Straussian approach during the data analysis, and culminating in interpretivist approach to allow for flexibility in data analysis wherever necessary. The result was a framework based on the experiential knowledge of the

participant, which in this case may be preferred over other more objective forms of knowledges because of the unique nature of the participants in the specific context of Pakistan; knowledge that is completely grounded in participants' embodied experiences.

In conjunction with the grounded theory approach, the work of Michel Foucault (1980, 1984, 1990, 1995) provides us with some of tools including discipline, power, sexuality and subjectivity that inform the exploration of the research questions of the study. These constructs, though applied on sexuality but not specifically on gender by him, are discussed below.

Social Definitions of Normality. Foucault (1995) brought our attention to a system of punishment and discipline: one is a kind of outright torture, the latter is a hidden form of control and coercion. It seeks to control the population by creating binary oppositions within them, including the gender binary categories of male and female (Foucault 1980). These oppositions create social hierarchies among people. The oppositions are solidified through the discipline of the bodies and the "souls". A variety of institutions, like schools, hospitals, and prisons work around these oppositions such as normal/abnormal or healthy/diseased, to reinforce them while subordinating the socially non-conforming people, as a means to coerce them into conforming. The modern society creates subjects (identities) by disciplining them through the lens of socially accepted definitions of normality or normalcy, material institutions such as schools, and the judgment of professionals or intellectuals. Foucault (1995) refers to them private, invisible forms of discipline of the "soul."

Knowledge. The formation of knowledge and the exercise of power are one and the same. There is no single nexus of power; populations are controlled and constructed as subjects by dispersed loci of power in contemporary society (Foucault 1990). The example of power of knowledge is a permanent record of a citizen's misbehaviors. It threatens to permanently marginalize a person if they do not behave in a manner suited to the law. Its normalizing force is enacted invisibly. A permanent record is visible to police and employers at specific institutions, making the person and their acts permanently visible as a written case. This decentralized and invisible knowledge creates a one-sided power-knowledge relation, a relation that for Foucault is deeply coercive to the soul (ibid).

Bodies. Foucault shows us how external structures (like institutions of power) produce subjects (1990). He offers a genealogy of social control, in that how dispersed and invisible power controls bodies (ibid). The move away from torture is not to punish less, but to punish more efficiently and deeply (Foucault 1995).

Discipline. Foucault (1995) draws comparison with the torture in the earlier times that was a public spectacle (be it public executions or public work gangs), as well as physical pain. On the contrary discipline is secretive, hidden from public eye and is abstract. No singular entity is responsible for delivering this punishment, as the locus of power is now dispersed (ibid).

Disciplinary power circulates around and within people as they form relationships in multiple contexts, and as they navigate spaces (Foucault 1995). Discipline regulates their bodies wherever disciplinary power is exhibited, produced and reproduced. Discipline

objectifies the people on whom it is applied. This type of power forms knowledge about the individuals, categorizes them through the social established hierarchical ranks, and coerces them to conform and become disciplined. The discipline guarantee submission of the people (ibid).

The term discipline that emerged from the themes explored in the current study, is a means to coerce transgender persons to conform to societal gender binary standards. These are sometimes discreet, tacit, and seemingly harmless forms of discipline such as staring at a transgender person. On the other occasions this discipline can take shape of outright exclusion, or even physical attacks etc. The discipline works deeply within a person as it coerces one to conform against one's will, it also makes one self-conscious of what acts they are being disciplined for. The other terms that are central to this study are negotiation and resistance.

Negotiation. Negotiation refers "to dealing with" or "handling" a matter to "arrive at its settlement" (Merriam-Webster. (n.d.)). In the current study, negotiation is used to refer to the ways transgender persons adopt to deal with or handle the discipline that they are subjected to, not to come to a final settlement, but to achieve an ongoing process of settlement, which includes a range of possibilities including submitting to the discipline and acquiescing to become a gender disciplined subject as well as responding to the discipline with resistance.

Resistance. Resistance refers to the refusal to submit or comply (Merriam-Webster. (n.d.)) and used in the current study as the kinds of actions taken by *khwaja sira* to break free from the societal gender discipline.

The above concepts were used as tools to guide the themes that emerged from the third step in the coding process, as discussed in the research analysis in the sections below.

Research Design

A qualitative methodology was adopted to study the in-depth experiences of transgender persons and to understand how they are disciplined by society and how they negotiate mobility with the discipline they ae subject to. The study population was transgender persons in Pakistan, known as *'khwaja sira'* in the local language known as *Urdu*. Because they do not conform to the gender binary norms that only see the world in binary oppositions of cis-gender men and women, they face a lot of stigma and exclusion from the cis-normative society. The voices of *khwaja sira'*s do not reach the policy makers as well.

Sampling and Protocol

The primary mode this study adopted to understand how transgender persons in Pakistan negotiate their mobility on everyday basis, was through semi-structured interviews. A set of questions were compiled to construct the interview instrument (see Appendix A). Predesigned interview questions allowed for a flow of direction in the conversation. It minimized the chances of awkward silences in the interview. On the whole, the participants felt comfortable with the questions asked. Some even suggested what further specific questions could be asked and were generous in answering them. At the same time, a semi-structured interview allowed for more flexibility and aided in eliciting candid responses from study participants (Creswell and Poth 2018). This flexibility was used to a full

advantage, as there were questions and probes added on spot based on the content of each interview. Some questions were eliminated during interviews, as some participants already answered those questions on their own during the course of the conversation.

The sampling methods chosen for this study were snowball and convenience sampling. Snowball sampling helped establish the much-needed connection and trust between the researcher and the participants (Creswell and Poth 2018). Two gatekeepers were identified during the interview phase. They served as the intermediaries in building trust with participants. Convenience sampling was also used so as to allow any participants to be recruited that found out about the study and were interested in participating.

Informed consent was sought verbally by participants in Urdu language and was translated in Punjabi language wherever necessary (the English translation can be found in Appendix B). Participants were told that their participation was voluntary, and they had a right to not answer any question or exit the interview at any time. Any potential emotional harm and monetary benefits of participating in the interview were also explained. Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval for research with human subjects was received for the research project, and the study was declared exempt from further review by IRB[10]. Permission was obtained for a verbal consent. A number of the transgender participants were not literate and a need for written consent and signature would have aroused their suspicions and doubts about the document they were signing, making them reluctant to participate and impeding the recruitment process.

Research Process

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[10] Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval for research with human subjects was received on September 15, 2020 with the IRB approval number: IRB-2009006-EXM.

Interviews were conducted online through zoom, skype and cell phones, depending on whichever was most convenient to the participants. The guidelines relating to the COVID-19 pandemic did not allow to meet participants in person, so all of the interviews conducted were online or on phone. My search on NGOs serving for transgender persons lead me to find a Pakistani documentary filmmaker who was then editing his film on transgender persons. While I could not get a hold of his film yet, the film maker did introduce me to my first participant who served as a gate keeper and helped connect me with the transgender community in Pakistan. The first conversation with this gatekeeper took place in November 2020 on zoom. This was an unstructured interview, aimed at educating me as an interviewer about the ethical ways to address transgender persons in Pakistan and the challenges they face. My first gatekeeper served as my mentor who helped me navigate the field with the local insider knowledge about the Pakistani transgender communities. The interview protocol was then developed in consultation with the first gate keeper. The first gate keeper was later formally interviewed using the developed formal protocol in March 2021. The interviews lasted until June 2021, with a majority of interviews taking place in April and May 2021. There were many gaps between interviews in this period due to recruitment challenges, related to the pandemic or reluctance to come forward from the participants' end.

The interviews were primarily in Urdu language, with some segments in Punjabi (a local dialect) to facilitate candidness and flow in conversations, and some parts were in English based on participants' ease and comfort. There are many words that are informally used in Urdu language on everyday basis that are derived directly from English, e.g., commute, bus, time etc. Such words were not translated in Urdu during the interviews, as

they are widely understood and used in Pakistan. The interviews mostly lasted 60 to 90 minutes, with the exception of five interviews. Two interviews were shorter that lasted about 45 minutes. Another three went over 2-3 hours, where a lot of specific details were being discussed. All participants consented to being recorded. Each interview was recorded in a password protected phone recorder. Notes were also taken simultaneously.

The two gatekeepers were recruited in two different phases of the interviews. The gatekeepers fully agreed to participate and fulfill the role of the informant for the research, though confidentiality limitations precluded a letter of collaboration with the gatekeepers. The gatekeepers also helped to establish the researcher's credibility and trustworthiness for other participants and allow for effective access to the population (Miller 1998). The use of snowball or referral sampling was done by asking each participant to refer other transgender persons they know and pass the advertisement flyer onwards. Following the participant recruitment guidelines for grounded theory, the intention was to recruit 20-25 transgender persons for interviews until saturation in the data is reached (Mason 2010). However, the study was only able to recruit 18 participants as theoretical saturation was reached by then. Any transgender person above the age of 18 who volunteered was welcome to join the study.

The first informant/ gatekeeper distributed my research flyers within her community by sending the photo of the flyer to her friends on their phones. It contained my contact details and brief introduction to the research. Only two participants voluntarily reached out to me with their contact information themselves. All other participants had their numbers passed on to me by the gatekeepers or by other participants assuring me that

they are expecting my call. I messaged and/ or called these participants and set our interview time in person, on phone, zoom, or skype, depending on their convenience.

The first gatekeeper served as the first participant for the study. The informant, a trans-woman, and a trans-rights activist, works for the inclusion and integration of the transgender community in the broader society. She helped connect me with five participants. Another six participants were snowball referred by participants themselves. By the twelfth participant (including the gatekeeper), the snowball sampling results seemed to slow down as there were no new referrals. After a wait of two weeks, the gatekeeper helped connect me with a transwoman who was not previously interviewed. By this time, there seemed to be a saturation in the results for transwomen, as I was hearing similar themes in our conversations and similar responses to most questions. After another three weeks, the gatekeeper connected me to a transman. Both gatekeepers were well-educated, well-spoken, and like the first gatekeeper, was very well connected with the trans community. This opened the gates to the world of transmen for the study. This person also served as a second informant who helped recruit five transmen. In the end, a total of 18 participants were interviewed; with 12 transwomen and 6 transmen. By this time of the study, it had become harder to reach my first gatekeeper due to some health problems she was facing. At this point, the second gatekeeper became very involved with the study and helped recruit the remaining participants. Later on, in the analysis phase, I continued to consult the second gatekeeper for emerging codes and themes to validity of my results.

Compensation. A sum of an equivalent of $15, converted in the local currency of Pakistani Rupees, was given to each participant. The amount highly incentivized the recruitment. It served as a token of gratitude. The amount was kept low enough to ensure

that participants do not feel obligated to participate or to continue answering questions had they felt uncomfortable. All participants happily participated in the study for the monetary incentive. There was one exception, as one participant, the first gatekeeper, outrightly refused to accept any monetary payment in exchange for the interview, for their help with building the interview instrument, or for helping recruit other participants. The reasons presented were that of holding the values of helping others on purely humanitarian grounds, close to heart. I obliged the wish of this participant and thanked them for their favor. I used the same money to buy them a present that they had suggested their liking towards during the interview.

Data Handling. Identifiers, such as names, contact information and recordings, were collected, but all identifiers were removed from the interview data before data were stored. Identifiable information has been safely kept in password protected files and will be deleted upon completion of the research study. Any names collected or identified during interviews were not transcribed, to ensure nonidentified data. Pseudonyms were given to participants in reports and publications, to ensure participants' confidentiality. The interviews recorded were immediately transferred from the recorder to a password protected hard drive to minimize chances of privacy violation in case of theft etc. These interview recordings will be deleted as soon as the study is complete.

All attempts were made to pose questions in the most comfortable way. Attempts were also made to begin and end interviews with light questions. Most participants were very generous in sharing their life stories. During the interviews, many different emotions were shared between the participants and myself. There were funny stories where we

laughed. We also shared moments of anger at how society excludes specific people. There were a few participants who shared very difficult life stories, and they almost cried while remembering and narrating these incidents. Participants also shared a sense of relief after talking about their life challenges with me. Some of them specifically mentioned a feeling of catharsis after being able to talk to someone about their journey. Some participants felt attached and wanted to stay in touch after the interview.

Data Analysis

After the transcription and translation of semi-structured interviews, the transcriptions were transferred and stored in Nvivo software to manage the data in an organized manner. Here began the open coding process, listing the data into open codes. In open coding, each line of the interview was read and coded specifically looking for any events, actions or interactions that can be compared with others for similarities and differences (Corbin & Strauss 1990). These events and interactions were given conceptual labels, that serve as the initial codes. This process began with reading each line in the transcription and highlighting and marking any meaningful events as a code or called technically known as a Node in NVivo 12. In this way, conceptually similar events/actions/interactions are grouped together to form categories and subcategories.

In the next phase of axial coding, relations were sought among different codes, which were combined into categories. Here "parent" and "child" nodes were determined, indicating any codes that were related to each other, in that sub-categories were identified and related to main categories. Then, a selective coding phase commenced. This was later in the study where relationships with Foucauldian framework was also identified and

drawn from. In this phase, all interrelated codes were further refined and grouped into fewer categories or themes, while also keeping in mind the external theory (Creswell and Poth 2018). Looking for emerging themes on a routine basis helped identify new questions that were then added in the interviews to get more in-depth answers. The initial line coding delivered 168 codes in NVivo. After drawing the relationships, these were condensed into over thirty axial codes, that upon careful comparisons with codes and theory provided three common themes of the study: discipline, negotiation and resistance. These themes are spread into three chapters that covered these themes in different spatial domains.

Triangulation

Validity was ensured using triangulation of methods (Creswell 2013; Grange and Kerr 2010). The first gatekeeper reviewed some of the findings for emerging phenomenon for place-based confirmation. Some of the later findings were corroborated by the second informant who was more familiar with issues of transmen specifically. The initial codes and the resulting themes that emerged from the interviews specifically were taken back to them for counterchecking (member-checking), with examples and instances from codes and themes. Both the gatekeepers confirmed that the emerging codes and themes were in line with what they had said in their interviews, or what they felt the trans-community members experienced.

Biases. I have also been a resident of Lahore, Pakistan, so it is timely to state my own potential biases of negotiating space as a woman in the city. There may also have been specific phenomenon that I have the potential to overlook being in the insider group as a resident of the city. I was also able to resonate with many experiences of transwomen.

Many transwomen, such as Ayat and Komal also made references to similarities of their experiences to those of women. Though I have done my utmost to not miss anything, due to these similarities, the possibility of not noticing something as different always exist. In the results chapter, I have disclosed any outliers in the study. In order to ensure reliability and rigor in the results, a primary code list was created based on the themes in my findings and were shared with my advisor. The codebook was then applied independently.

Emotional Challenges

One of the challenges I faced during and after the interviews was staying an objective researcher. I had to constantly struggle to navigate between my human empathetic self and an objective researcher. The stories the participants related in the interviews reflected a lot of trauma, and these stories stayed with me even after the interviews were over. The struggle was about how to stay detached from emotional accounts, and how to be an observer who observes yet stays back when she sees injustice. There were many sleepless nights after the interviews. One of the ways I coped with the emotional trauma of the research was to schedule interviews almost 3-4 days apart from each other, to allow myself the time to mentally and emotionally recover from the effect they had on me. To learn tips on how to listen to stories of neglect, harassment and assault in an empathetic manner and yet not internalize the pain, a mental health counselor was consulted.

The art of staying detached is something I have yet to master in my research. Once the interviews were over, there was a fear of going back to the interviews to transcribe and code them. I was conscious of the pain I felt for the participants during the interview

process. I forced myself to go back to those same interviews and transcribe, translate, code them and analyze them, while trying my best to not be affected.

In consultation with the counselor, it was decided that I should conduct the interviews first, and then they should be translated and transcribed in the second phase. Therefore, coding and data analysis were done after the interviews were completed. During the data collection process, I primarily relied on the notes that I took during the interviews to come up with the preliminary themes and pose new thematic questions to the participants. This strategy allowed me the emotional space away from the data between different data collection and analysis phases, but it impeded with a typical grounded theory approach. In hindsight, if the data was collected, translated, transcribed and also analyzed simultaneously during the data collection process, more theoretical questions could have been posed to participants based on the emerging themes of the grounded theory.

The emotional aspect of the research was not only high because of the trauma-laden stories that were shared by the participants. The emotions in the research also came from the connection and trust that was established among the participants and myself. They all shared intimate life experiences with me. I was grateful to them for being generous and trusting of me. I was also able to relate to many stories, as a woman who has lived in Pakistan and has found it challenging navigating public spaces which are predominantly seen as men's domains. Some participants opened up more than the others. Similarly, some interviews lasted much longer than the others. There was one particular interview, which happened over two sittings, each sitting almost an hour and a half long, where the participant shared many of their life stories. A month after this interview, this participant passed away due to a sudden illness. This was also an emotionally traumatic part of the

research process, for me and for other research participants. This included offering my condolences to all the other participants who were mutual friends with this person, but it also made going back to translating, transcribing and then coding those specific interviews emotionally draining.

Participant Biographies

Below are short introductions to each of the eighteen participants of the study, with their rounded ages, some physical features, and other characteristics without giving away too much information. The youngest participant was in late teens and the oldest in their mid-forties, with a majority ranging between ages 27-33. Participants represented different stages in their transition. The exact ages, facial features including skin or eye color, for some participants are described, but for the others are not revealed due to confidentiality reasons, as many of the study participants belonged to a tightly-knit *khwaja sira* community, which could make it easy for them to recognize one another's characteristics. But the following biographies are there to aid the readers with a visual imagination of the participants as well as to aid in building a connection with the participants.

Saami is a transman in his mid-twenties. He has a relatively round face, handsome features, with a strong angular jawline. He kept a small stubble around his chin when he was interviewed. But he changes the way he shaves his beard every now and then to experiment with his look. He has a strong build, and says that he has no trouble coming across as a male. He is confident, and very well-spoken. He describes his family as a well-educated and progressive family. At work and among friends, he is accepted as a male, but

he does not disclose his gender identity fully in family, and is often treated there as a female.

Haris is a transman, in his early twenties. He looks young and handsome, with light colored eyes. He wears his shirt with sleeves rolled all the way up to his elbows, proudly revealing his muscular arms and carries himself with a good sense of style. He comes across as calm, comfortable and confident when he speaks.

Kaanita is a transwoman in her early twenties. She has medium-length hair reaching just below her shoulders. She dresses up in matching *shalwar kameez* usually, traditional Pakistani dress with a long knee-length shirt, with traditional pants or leggings, and a scarf around her neck. She gets her clothes stitched by the tailor. She lives by herself. She considers herself outspoken and short-tempered. She is intuitive and instantly picks up on any misbehavior around her or her loved ones and instantly calls them out.

Ayat is a transwoman in her mid-thirties, who loves to go out. She considers herself an extroverted person. She also likes to help people out and be of service to others. Ayat has shoulder-length hair that she keeps perfectly and neatly straightened. She wears trendy *shalwar kameez* that she buys from the famous Pakistani brands. Her nails were neatly polished in pink when we met. She is eloquent in her ways of speaking, and is charming and fun to talk to. She has a confident yet very relaxed demeanor, and carries herself in a poised manner. Her apartment, was at the time, undergoing renovations that she was actively involved in, from shopping for the wood for her furniture to styling her lounge etc. She shares her living space with her romantic partner.

Shama is a transwoman in her early thirties. She is fully transitioned as a woman, has a strong buil; the length of her hair reach her knees. She is very proud of her hair, its

shine and length, and uses a lot of oils and herbs to keep it in good shape. She likes wearing bright colored clothes, and bright make up. She pursues sex work for a living.

Roshan is a transwoman who is in her early thirties. She is tall, slim, beautiful and stylish and has short-hair that she is trying to grow longer. She is in the early stages of her transition and comes across as a very shy and timid person, who sometimes struggles to put her feelings into words. Roshan engages in sex work for a living. She is not happy with her current means of supporting her financial means, and is trying to switch to a job that she finds more respectable. She had to take a long break from her work as a public sector employee to facilitate her transition, in order to avoid questions and scrutiny from peers.

Nadia, a transwoman is in her late twenties. She works at a private sector organization where she is a team lead, managing almost ten people as their supervisor. Her job is hectic but she is happy with her career growth. She is candid, friendly and seems very relaxed in the way she speaks. She says she has come a long way, learned a lot, and looks very feminine now in comparison to the early stages of her transition and feels comfortable with how she looks.

Falak is a transwoman; she is open about her gender expression among all her circles. She currently earns her living by dancing at events. She also recently secured a job position at a public sector facility that she feels very proud of and feels relieved about a stable income stream.

Kundan, is a transwoman in her late twenties. She is a make-up artist by profession. She is bold, proud and confident and is known as someone who is quick to anger. She shares her apartment with a friend.

Bilal is a transman in his early twenties. He is tall, lean and good looking. He is well-spoken, very candid, and is confident in his gender expression. He has a deep husky voice. Like many other transmen, he is saving money for breast removal surgery, and still has a long way to go in gathering the amount of money needed.

Twinkle is in her early thirties. She is a fully transitioned woman. She is open in her gender expression among all her circles. She is very confident, lives by herself, and is highly educated. She works at a private sector organization with a high paying position, and she is happy about her career progression so far.

Rehan is a transman in his early twenties. He usually wears bright colored shirts. He has a petite build. He is open in his gender expression in his friends circle, but not fully out with his family yet. He is currently on a look out for jobs.

Meera is a transwoman in her late twenties. She is an artist, and is very poetic when she expresses herself in a regular conversation as well. She has a petite build, with short hair. She lives away from her family, and with her partner who she is in a committed and happy relationship with.

Komal is a transwoman in her late twenties. She is tall and has a fashionable taste in clothing, keeping up with the current trends in her *shalwar kameez*. She is well-educated and has a job that pays her well. She is a very shy person and calls herself introverted. She has a strong and tight group of friends that she talks her heart out with, other than these people she mostly keeps to herself. She is well-spoken, speaks in a soft and low voice, in a polite manner; she does not like to answer back even to any mean comments by others. She lives with her family and abides by most of the rules imposed by her family.

Tina is a young transwoman, who is excited about entering her twenties soon. She has a very relaxed demeanor. She is very confident, upbeat about life and full of self-love. She loves the way she looks, and is happy with the outcomes of her transition, and thinks highly of her beauty and style. She has a very positive outlook towards any difficult experiences and wants to learn from them.

Farhan is a transman in his early twenties. He has a chubby build. He lives with his family and is currently on a look-out for a job. He has a strained relationship with his family currently because of their lack of acceptance towards his gender.

Majid is a transman in his early forties. He wears plain *shalwar kameez* in white and grey tones designed for men. He has a chubby build, and lives by himself.

Aliya is a transwoman in her early thirties. She does not consider herself fully transitioned, and does not consider herself as feminine-looking as some of her friends. She is somewhat discreet about her gender expression and attempts to wear gender-neutral clothes, as she feels most comfortable with them. She has worked at a private sector organization for many years now, and is happy with her career and everyday work there.

CHAPTER 4: NAVIGATING STREETS AND PUBLIC SPACES FOR
TRANSGENDER PERSONS IN PAKISTAN

This chapter explores how transgender persons move about in public spaces in Pakistan. It uncovers what spaces become safe or unsafe for them to move about with ease. The chapter shows various mechanisms of gender discipline that transgender persons become subjected to by the society, ranging from tacit to explicit and aggressive behaviors. It is the extent of disciplining that takes place within a spatial setting that makes it safe or unsafe for them to move about freely. Transgender persons are disciplined according to the societally agreed upon definitions of normality (Foucault 1990). The data collected from the interviews uses Foucault's idea of discipline (Foucault 1995). As opposed to punishment, which for Foucault is medieval and meant to be public, brutal spectacle orchestrated on behalf of a visible autocratic monarch, "discipline" is dispersed, there is no central authority that executes it, but it is everywhere executed by everyday people and hence works deeper than public forms of corporal punishment. This chapter explores the different mechanisms used within public spaces to discipline the transgender persons, and how these kinds of harassment affect their perception of those spaces. It also shows how transgender persons in Pakistan respond to and cope with such discipline and navigate potentially hostile environments, while negotiating their ways to break free of the societal disciplining. This chapter particularly focuses on how transwomen navigate the streets, as the interviews highlight the challenges they face in passing through public spaces as transwomen, where their physical safety becomes threatened, while streets were not as much of a concern among transmen.

Social Definitions and Discipline

The discipline works by categorizing people as normal versus abnormal, examining them, analyzing and scrutinizing them, and eventually outrightly excluding some from the society. The first step in this control of individuals begins by creating categories such as that of sex, and then defining those categories. These become the social definitions that are operational within a society and form the basis of subordination in the society. They work in binary oppositions, such as normal versus abnormal, or healthy versus sick. Everyone is supposed to be driven by these ideologies of normality. The definitions of normality are regulated, through discipline, to maintain their meanings.

The knowledge of what defines normality becomes so prevalent and dispersed that individuals in the society become subject to these definitions (Foucault 1990). Those that do not conform to the definitions are subjected to constant discipline, instead of brutal punishments. This discipline happens through everyday responses or reactions, such as words, gestures, remarks, or physical violence. The discipline and regulation of the social definitions, as explored in this chapter, show how the hierarchies are continuously reproduced, and how this kind of disciplining power control transgender people's bodies. This chapter shows that the transgender persons recognize the disciplining that is taking place, they resist internalizing the societal discipline and how they negotiate through this disciplining to break free from the social definitions.

Going Out

This section explores the daily routines of going out, which involves the decision of whether to go out in public or not, specifically for transwomen. The daily lives of

transgender persons involve going out and navigating the public eye repetitively. The interviews did not demonstrate much concern around going out among transmen, with the exception of two participants who speak of the fear of interrogation by police when out in the streets (discussed in chapter 6). The interviews showed that some transwomen loved going out and being with people, while some did not enjoy it. Yet some others hesitated. Here we explore in depth how transwomen feel about going out, especially unpacking their hesitation.

Disciplined into Not Going Out

A number of transwomen feel they cannot move about freely in public due to prevailing heteronormative and cis-normative attitudes. Kaanita considers herself outspoken and claims she is not afraid of anything, yet she mentions wanting to avoid going out. Choosing to avoid the outside is not uncommon among transgender people.

> *Usually, I stay outside like in the morning, I go to beauty parlor for work then I go to office and then from office to home and if there's something I need from shop then I go outside. Mostly I do not like to go outside if there's any work then I go, otherwise I avoid going out.*

One of the reasons for choosing not to go out as often, stated by Kaanita later was an attempt from her side to reduce the number of arguments she is likely to get in when people stare at her. Similarly, Roshan also suggests a preference to not go out, rendering herself invisible on occasions she does not deem important.

> *Well, if I have an important work only then I go outside otherwise I don't feel like going outside…*

While part of this could be a personality trait, Roshan also suggests in between her talks that it is the stares, and the way people look at her that makes her uncomfortable in going out. There is a commonality of this trait among transgender people. On the one hand

transgender persons interviewed for this research strive to be visible through their most authentic gender expression (this will be explored later in the chapter), contrary to that many avoid being seen outside. The behaviors such as stares could slowly be disciplining transgender people in Pakistan into becoming invisible in the public spaces.

Individual Agency in Going Out

While some are disciplined into not stepping out of their homes and into invisibility, others exercise their individual agency in going out. For them, how much they would like to step out, is just a matter of personal preference. Shama has a strong build and pursues sex work for a living. According to her, the main reason she does not go out a lot is because there are as many as "sixty-nine" stairs to her apartment. She explains here how she negotiates her way through the world.

> *My clients sometimes come to me, or I can go out, if needed. But I am not afraid of being out and about.*

Shama recognizes the fear and reluctance associated with going out. Though she does not indicate that it was a fear that she had felt in the past or it is her peers who feel that fear, but she addresses that for her going out is her personal preference, and she does not concern herself with similar fears of stares that her peers mentioned above. Her mention of the word "afraid" tells us that she is aware of the discipline that society puts transgender persons through, but she does not submit to that kind of discipline, she instead chooses the path of resistance, demonstrating her individual agency.

Other forms to resistance to the disciplining come in the form of wanting to change the system from within, through advocacy. Ayat loves to go out and loves being with her friends, but she also would try to help out anyone who is in need, be it by doing something

for them, or just by listening to their challenges. She has negotiated her way into living her life on her terms and advocates the same to others everyday. She says:

> *I have a lot of friends, so everyday there's something going on. Either I am going somewhere or someone's coming to my place. Lots to do with activism happens all day. If people have issues they come and seek help. A lot of what shouldn't be appropriate to mention, happens. Like it's become part of my routine, which may be big for the other person. For example, if I help someone, or if I sit and listen to someone's problem, for them it's a really big deal, for me it may be nothing. It's part of my daily life.*

Her boyfriend also joined us in the middle of our virtual conversation on a video call. With her lifestyle, she is almost always on the go.

> *I have to go out a lot. Office, to home, for my own groceries. I go out to market. Sometimes I can spend three days at home. But I can't count. I go out a lot.*

No fear of stares, or verbal harassment affects her daily routine, as she carries on with her life, without even commenting on them. This represents her individual agency.

Tacit Staring

Public stares are seen as a form of violating behavior that transgender person's experience on the streets on regular basis. Kaanita touches on the ideas of what is considered respectable in terms of gender, and what kind of people are most acceptable in public spaces based on the standard binary gender definitions, which dictate how transgender persons are viewed in Pakistan's public space.

> *We can't go out for ourselves. Even girls from good and respectable families cannot, but being a trans when people see us, they are like what the hell is this one,*

> *this not a boy or a girl then what is this. When a girl or transwoman is nearby, you can almost see their mentality… it is very bad.*

This tells us how those definitions are communicated to her by societal attitudes and behaviors. It is communicated to her that she does not fit these social definitions of what's considered normal and what's considered respectable, which discourages her from going outside in public too much. A lot of what is considered less than normal is communicated through how people "*see*" them. The same is echoed by other transwomen such as Roshan.

Roshan is very shy person. She usually chooses to not speak up for herself. Once she warmed up, also talked how how those social definitions of normality are communicated to her, where staring seems to be a common way through which the definitions of normality are communicated.

> *…because I feel when I go outside, all children of any gender, women and men as well are just staring at me…in an insulting way. They look at me in a way that I can see they are saying look who is going. I feel like a guilty person...like who am I actually.*

Once these social definitions of normality are established by people in power and as they trickle down to society, they are communicated through various mechanisms. As mentioned, stares seem to be a common mechanism through which, transgender people are communicated that they are not fitting the definitions of normality. These stares consequently discourage transgender persons from being in the public eye. This essentially becomes one of the ways through which transgender persons are disciplined. Some transgender people keep to themselves, preferring not to go out too much if there isn't a need for it. For them, stares discipline them into becoming invisible from the mainstream society.

These stares become a means to communicate the definitions of normality or the lack thereof. Kaanita talks about the stares while explaining what the word "safe" meant to her. She communicates how she feels safe when she is not being stared at. Conversely, being stared at in public makes her feel unsafe.

> *If I explain safe then I would like to say that if someone is safe from the tongue of others and eyes of others they are safe. It does not matter if you are a woman, transwoman, girl or child, if you are safe from the harassing male stare then you are safe.*

For her, her safety is defined by being away from stares and the harsh speech of others. This idea that stares make *khwaja sira* feel unsafe is further confirmed by Komal for whom the stares make a tough day even tougher to get through.

> *If I am already not feeling well, and barely managing. Like then it is unsafe for me to go outside in the morning and face people's glares and stares and the way they look at me.*

Stares were seen unanimously by all transgender persons as a violating behavior, and for most of them, it turns their whereabouts into an unsafe space. Stares become one of the many disciplining mechanisms experienced by transgender persons. Kaanita expresses how she feels violated by the stares and feels compelled to behave or dress in certain ways to avoid being stared at.

> *I wear shawl* (a cloak like covering) *and if my shawl just drops near my neck then a man would start staring at my neck ...like what the hell is this, as if they have not seen one before. So, I cover myself more.*

Here we see that the stares do the job of disciplining Kaanita into wearing and covering up in the manner that the society deems appropriate for her. While transwomen faced staring, staring did not come up as a concern for any of the transmen that were interviewed.

There are specific places that often become a site of harassment and disciplining for transgender persons. These places often came up in the data where transgender persons were either required to go or wanted to go freely. One such place is the local marketplace called *bazaar*.

Bazaar

There are many kinds of markets in Lahore, such as big malls with shops representing brands or unbranded shops, or streets lined with shops. Typical local *bazaars* (markets) have a character of their own. *Bazaars* usually have crowded rows and rows of stalls and carts, some under the open sky, while the others covered by sheds, and yet the other small shops properly built into a covered buildings. These showcase all possible saleable items on relatively discounted prices. It is a common practice among stall and cart keepers to make calls of sales and discounts out loud, announcing price reductions, and saying slogans about the traits of the items being sold, intending to grab attention of potential customers passing by.

A feeling of angst among participants is observed when it comes to navigating through crowded spaces like the local *bazaars* described here. Komal tells us about the stares that communicate those social definitions of what is normal and who is not considered normal.

> *I also noticed when we go to local markets there are shop keepers, they just stare at anyone… like transman, gay, transwomen, lesbians etc. They would just look at all of them in the same perspective.*

Here Komal opens up and points to the fact that anyone that seems to come across as outside of the heteronormative gender binary realm, gets viewed by the society as less than

normal, and are looked on in a suspicious manner. In this case, the society is the people in the *bazaars*.

Local *bazaars* become a site of harassment for transwomen particularly. Ayat is *fond of going to local bazars and markets and collecting antiques and interior…fond of all kinds of clothes… and…so fond of going to icchhra*. She talks about a popular local market in Lahore, Pakistan called Icchhra that is well-known for its very affordable prices even for the same products that are sold at much higher prices in other areas. In terms of the area, it is a big market, parts of it are covered but the other parts of it are uncovered stalls right next to each other. Ayat talks about her discomfort in going to these crowded places as explained earlier. She would like to negotiate her place by educating the people in the markets, but says it is not feasible to fight or argue with them.

> *I can't go there alone...the environment there is not comfortable for me... I don't prefer going to these places. They are crowded places… you can't go and fight there and give people lecture on morality.*

But she quickly adds that she is not afraid of going to places. She just chooses the places based on people's behaviors in those places.

> *There is no issue going places. Times have changed. Everyone goes to same places. …I go to malls and buy stuff from one place, or the brands that are my favorite are near my place. To the malls I go once or twice in a month.*

The interviews suggest a difference in the culture and atmosphere between the local *bazaars* and that of the shopping malls that host big brands. While the local bazaars present a hostile environment towards the transgender community, on the other hand, *khwaja sira* feel much safer shopping at the malls that host the big brands. The attitudes including stares, verbal and sexual harassment aimed towards them that impact the transgender persons negatively does not seem to be present in the malls. The interview data suggests

that people from higher income bracket and better educational backgrounds visit the malls, in comparison to the local *bazaars,* and that may be the reason that potentially helps keep the environment safer for *khwaja sira* at the malls. While Ayat's choice of going to malls suggests being disciplined into invisibility from certain sites, like *icchra bazaar*, but at the same time speaks of her negotiation through the societal disciplining by opting for places like modern shopping malls where she does not feel she is being disciplined.

The interviews overall suggest how vulnerable the *bazaars* make transgender persons to the societal discipline. *Bazaars* become a microcosm of the overall society where the members of the heteronormative Pakistani society visit, and where any gender non-conformity gets highlighted, leaving *khwaja sira* at the mercy of the society i.e., the people present there. They are subjected to all forms of discipline explored in this chapter ranging from stares, to verbal attacks to physical and sexual harassment.

Verbal Harassment- "Eve teasing"

Other ways of societal disciplining come in the form of verbal harassment. Verbal harassment is when any negative comments are passed to *khwaja sira*, while eve-teasing is a specific form of derogatory commentary that is sexual in nature and passed on *khawja sira*. Nadia sheds light on the kinds of "eve-teasing" she has to deal with. Nadia works at a multinational corporation. She is candid and friendly. She adds other ways through which the social definitions of normality are communicated to her:

> *These small cart keepers in the bazzar say out loud to me many times that are your breasts real? Or do you stuff your clothes? That's really awkward. I can't go in these markets with my mom and sisters.*

Mocking. Another behavioral violation that the transgender people experience frequently is others mocking them, or not taking their word seriously. Though this manifests in many ways, Komal explains how people imitate as a means of mocking them. This takes us back to the dispersed loci of power that is present everywhere, and coercing its subjects to conform. Since transgender persons do not fit societal definitions of normality, society easily subjects them to mockery, reinforcing the cis-normative ideology that they are less than "normal", and therefore should not be treated with the same respect or need to be taken as seriously. Roshan reminisced an incident with excruciating pain that she is almost never taken seriously because she is transgender.

> *When we were passing by, they looked at us so badly, and then they used my way of talking and my tone of talking, it is so weird like why are they doing it, like they are absolutely copying me, and making fun.*

Equally frustrated, Ayat adds to this, in her own interview, how this mocking behavior violates people:

> *Harassment is also when they don't take you seriously, they have fun with what you say, and they make fun of it.*

Komal, while explaining what makes her feel unsafe in this world, adds mockery in her list of unsafe behaviors. For Komal, this kind of mocking, copying and belittling happens in the local bazaars.

> *Unsafe for me is to go to the market and face those people who copy my accent and tease me.*

"Eve Teasing" and Making a Pass. In the case of transgender persons, the violating behavior from passersby often take the shape of making passes. Komal tells us that even

in cafés and restaurants, the dining experience usually involves some man making a pass at her or her friends, which is mostly sexual in nature.

> *Nowadays there is trend of hanging out at chai studios, like when you go there with your friends in the evening, even the waiters say that that man over there is wondering about your mobile number.*

There is a deep-rooted idea in the Pakistani culture, which views and categorizes all transgender persons as sex workers, or readily available for sex. This categorization often translates and manifests into them being treated as sex objects. The experience in Uber also varies. The app-based rides such as Uber themselves sometimes become site of harassment for the *khwaja sira*. Most of these harassments are based on the social definitions that society attributes to the *khwaja sira*, where sex work is associated with them. Twinkle explains her and her colleagues' experience.

> *Even with Uber itself, you have different forms of harassment you know. Some of the drivers are really fast...they would start as soon as we step in their car, and they would say come and sit in the front seat and you know, they start talking to us and start trying to hit on us. They talk really cheap.*

Kundan talks about her experiences, and how she gets categorized as something she is not, just because she is a transgender person.

> *I was travelling alone in uber, and he asked me "madam how much do you charge for a month?"*

She further elaborates after this how incidents of this kind often happen that people make deliberate attempts to categorize them as sex workers, in order to demean them and show them that the sexual objectification is suited for transgender persons as they don't the societal standards.

A number of *khwaja sira* talk about harassment from uber drivers in different forms. Some are bombarded with calls the next morning, making sexual passes at them, which relates back to the categorizations society associates with people that do not align with their definitions of "normality." Twinkle talks about various forms of harassment that take place when she takes a ride on Uber. Once the Uber driver receives a transgender client's cellphone number, they usually save that number unethically and keep it for later use.

> *Like if they have saved our number on their devices, then from the next day you keep getting calls from the drivers because they're thinking she's a trans woman, she will hook up easily.*

Sometimes, if they don't experience harassment right away, it comes in the form of stalking later. Twinkle ties it to societal perceptions of *khwaja sira* being considered as sexually active or available.

> *And, you know, the next day, you get all these calls from these Uber drivers…. I've complained a lot to the company, many times and so they've never really told me the outcome of the whole situation. But they've always said that we will deal with this situation. Don't worry!*

While sometimes, the harassment takes place later through phone calls, on the other occasions, this pass-making happens rather instantly and face-to-face. Nadia tells us:

> *Some of them are really fast and they're in a bit of a rush. So they would start as soon as we step in their car, and they would say come and sit in the front seat and you know, they start talking to us and start trying to hit on us. They talk really cheap.*

The instant face-to-face harassment of this nature is hard to deal with for participants. Twinkle directs our attention to those who are new to their transition and are not accustomed to this kind of societal aggressive harassment, and do not have the means or resources to fully support themselves

We're privileged we have the money; we have the education; we know how to deal with these things in a decent manner. But you know the new girls that are coming in, the new girls that are transitioning… for them it's really difficult. This is traumatic. They have to deal with all these issues.

Twinkle makes reference here to the fact that she has become well-versed with societal ways of disciplining her through its normalizing force. She has also learnt how to cope with it, and how to negotiate through the kind of disciplining that society puts her through. She also turns our attention towards the younger transgender persons who have not yet recognized, and in turn learnt to resist the societal conditioning.

Backhanded Advice. Friends also use personal conversations to discipline transgender persons. Falaks' experiences make her feel that not only her friends do not understand her gender, but they also advice her to conform. Falak's friends told her to think about her family and the connections her family will be establishing in the future and how her newly transitioned looks could negatively impact those connections.

My friends said please change yourself; don't do this to yourself. I told them I am not doing it deliberately. I am as you see me. They said when someone comes for your sister's marriage then they will see you like this and run away, why do you not care about that. I cry that everyone has issues with me. I really wanted to die but somewhere inside you have to be strong.

Such a conversation that comes from close confidants that make one feel less than normal, have deeper effect of discipline, as these are people that transgender persons feel safe with, as compared to the rest of the society, yet they end up verbally violating them too. None of

the transmen that were interviewed indicated similar forms of verbal harassment in the streets and market places, as were experienced by the transwomen.

Overt Sexual Harassment

So far, we explored what verbal and visual harassment looks like for transgender persons in Pakistan. Additionally, physical touch is also something that the *khwaja sira* experience, frequently, and it is used to scare, harass, and exert power over the *khwaja sira*, attempting to discipline them.

Molestation

Komal frequently fears passing through crowds because of the sexual harassment that takes place there.

> *When I pass through crowded areas, I don't feel comfortable there as I don't like someone to touch me or grab me. When there's crowd, I pass very carefully... people deliberately harass us.*

Komal tells us how others' unwarranted touch can make her feel unsafe. She starts feeling like an unclean, impure person after such a touch. This suggests that Komal deeply internalizes the societal punishment and discipling that is done through such an unwarranted touch.

> *Being a trans I feel unsafe anyway, like someone can harass me physically too easily. So, I try to not move alone in any unsafe places. Someone will touch me; I have OCD (Obsessive Compulsive Disorder) now if someone touches me, I think that part of mine is dirty, and I start washing it until I am satisfied.*

Nadia echoes how such molestation takes place in *bazaars*, when passing through narrow passages lined up with selling carts.

> *Most of the time in the…local bazaars, when I see the items on "thailay"* (small selling carts/ counter tops). *When I bargain for discounts, the shopkeepers always try to close in on me, touch me because they know that I am transgender…our community's image in society is that we are almost always sex workers or beggars.*

This brings us to the same categorization as stated earlier for transgender people being associated with either sex work or are often seen as beggars. Society has put a tag on them defining them. Nadia explains that since she and her other community members are seen as sex workers in the eyes of the society, so they are treated openly in a sexually objectifying way, under the assumption that their occupation has a sexual nature to it. By defining her in this way, society has created a certain knowledge about them, a power over them, to be able to control their bodies. Nadia talks about how unwarranted touch is used as a means of disciplining them.

Komal talks about similar kinds of discipline in the form of unwarranted touch that she faces in the market for being her true self, which disciplines her into not wanting to go to the bazaars, rendering her invisible from these sites. She would hesitate to go there alone.

> *When I am passing through a crowded space, I don't feel comfortable there, I don't like someone to touch me, I pass very carefully. People deliberately touch us and harass us. If you want to shop for good and economical stuff then you can find it from the local bazaar* (markets)*, like jhumkay, payal* (earrings and anklets and other jewelry)*, but it's just not comfortable going there.*

Komal's fear of molestation has made her reluctant to go to *bazaars*. She feels threatened there and has been disciplined into not going to *bazaars*, unless accompanied by any of her friends.

Local Buses

Another place that brings about similar harassing experiences for transgender women are local public buses. A typical local public bus has a seating for men in the back, and you

will mostly find women in the front, lending the bus some gender segregation. These buses are very cheap and affordable and are mostly crowded, with most people standing against each other in the smallest space that they are able to find. With the limited seating in the local buses, the unspoken decorum is to leave your seat for a senior citizen or an older lady, or even offer your seat to a woman, if you are a man who has occupied a seat.

Komal explains her experience with local public transport before her transition started. During this time, she travelled in male compartments of buses. She still remembers her college and university experiences with a cringe and suggested that she could not erase some of the harassment she faced from her mind when she travelled by local buses.

> *During very rush hours, you hardly find seat for yourself. So I had to travel by standing in the bus…I would put my bagpack to my back side so anyone's genital part does not touch me. Sometimes they even pushed your bag aside and start rubbing their genitals to your back. And luckily, if I found a seat and I am seated then you know there's that space in between my seat around my back so from behind someone would be touching me from their finger. This man was just crawling his finger on my arm.*

Komal is explaining the incidents of the time when she was a college going boy, who hadn't transitioned yet. Komal suggested that her demeanor and her walking and talking style and the way she looked did not really conform to the socially accepted normal male. While she was disciplined into being a boy, but she always gave away her feminine side anytime she walked or talked. So, for her the most difficult time of her life was that before transition when she felt like she in the wrong clothes, wrong body and wrong pronoun, and body was subject to societal discipline. The similar kind of molestation on local transport was echoed in a number of interviews in the study.

Another space, appearing frequently in the interviews as a space where transgender persons felt violated were universities. Going to university is a different experience for everyone, and one of the factors that affect the experience is a person's gender.

Going to University

Universities are another place where the predominant gender and sexual norms of the society are exhibited and enforced by its members. While the schools and colleges in Pakistan are sometimes gender segregated, universities adopt a uniform co-education system where members of both binary genders can be enrolled. For transgender persons this is both beneficial as they don't have to conform to a specific gendered school, especially if their identity does not align with that gender. But it is also a difficult experience, as the interviews reveal the constant binary gendered reinforcement that takes place in universities. Participants talked about harassment and bullying in universities, and other kinds of violating behavior that they faced that made them feel unsafe during their university experience. Here, we unpack the manifestation of misbehavior and harassment in universities.

Sometimes, the discipline takes the shape of outright neglect from peers, and at other times it translates into criticism. Komal tells us how the peers at her university either ignored her or bullied her. She never felt appreciated and felt excluded from the usual community that one is able build in university life.

> *You know there are some of my friends who bully me or some who harass me like I never found a good mentor nor lecturers who appreciate me.*

For some transgender persons, mobility within the university area can be a very tough experience. University is a place of harassment and violation for many of them. University becomes a difficult experience for transgender persons, as often transgender persons are

frowned upon by peers for the way they speak or walk, as their overall demeanor does not seem fitting with the definition of a gender- binary person. Komal talks about the negative comments she would receive on the way she spoke and walked:

> *I did my masters... there is this religious group in the university, they would stop me on the way and bully me like look at how you walk and how you talk. So, at that time I neither say hmmm or haan because if I said hmm, they would grab me or if I say haan then they will also grab me.*

Komal was afraid of responding to these comments, she was aware of the gender disciplining that happens in university through verbal and physical harassment. When a person, enrolled as a male, are not seen as fitting a male prototype, they will be harassed by the peers, in order to discipline them into the appropriate behavior that fits the societal definition ascribed to them. In this case, Komal had was disciplined to act as male as possible to get by her university life. Komal's angst in her university life was also based on her recognition that the identity she had to conform to, to keep herself from constant punishments, clashed with her true identity. She felt female on the inside but on the outside she had to look like a male, which tormented her, ruining her university going experience for her making "*university time*" the "*worst time*" for her.

Rape

Overt sexual harassment for transgender persons take the form of incidences as grave as rape that go unnoticed and unreported. Falak makes money by dancing at events. While she also recently secured a job position at a health facility, but she still earns a major chunk of her income by being invited to events and celebration where she preforms her dance. Falak's dancing work poses her to dangers of various kinds at these events that she refers

to as *functions*. She must travel to different cities depending on where the *function* is held. One of the things she doesn't like about these events, usually a *Mehndi* event is that people are usually drunk there. *Mehndi* is one of the many wedding festivities where the bride and the other women in the household put red/brown colored *henna* tattoo on the palms of their hands. This particular occasion usually involves music and dances, including rehearsed and spontaneous dance performances by the guests and organizers, and sometimes by the bride and the groom as well. Falak reveals the atmosphere at mehndi events specifically for transgender performers.

> *When we are doing dance for them...they touch us...on our back, or legs and sometimes they put money in their mouth, and they know we need the money, so we do take money from their mouth. And if they are from elite class sometimes after the event, they just grab us.*

A lot of transgender persons recognize that this behavior is sexually objectifying them, and is demeaning to them. The molestation is not what they signed up for when they were offered a job to dance at a particular event.

The objectification of transgender persons is evident from the kind of unwarranted touch at the events that the participants talked about. This objectification translates into active sexual aggression and violence against transgender persons. Though not the only participant experiencing sexual violence, but Falak was one of the few who openly talked about her life events that had caused extreme trauma to her:

> *Last time I was in the function...we had to run from the function, but they grabbed two of us and then brutally raped us... ten boys at the same time with one woman. In the very cold weather, outside at night, and we can't even see them, then they call their friends, and we can't run from there...one person uses us then second comes for using us, because they are drunk, then one by one everyone comes and*

rapes. I was just looking at the sky and praying to GOD…oh God please save me now.

This incident also speaks of how people are defined, categorized, and regulated by the society. Here transgender persons are treated as mere sexual objects. Through the definitions of normality, their categorizations include association with sex work, and it is regulated by force, turning them into objects of sexual pleasure. Similar sex work related violent experiences were echoed in *The Report of the U.S. Transgender Survey* as well, showing that sex workers or those perceived as sex workers experienced higher levels of violence. About three-quarters (72%) were sexually assaulted, which is substantially higher rate than the overall sample (James et al. 2016). Nearly half (41%) of those working in the underground economy, were physically attacked with over one-third (36%) sexually assaulted, making this categorical perception of transgender persons seen as sexual objects, and the resulting violence towards them more universal than just the context of Pakistan.

Public Intrusion into Homes (blurred boundaries). Many transgender people have in fact experienced intrusion into their homes, because of this very association that society draws between transgender people and sex work, and hence sexually objectifying them. Kaanita speaks of such an intrusive incident where a man walked into her own house, thinking she is sexually available.

I was sitting with my friends and my front door might have been open for cross ventilation. A man walks in on us…I was surprised, I grabbed his arm and took him to door and asked who are you and why are you here. He said the shop keeper from below sent me to get a loan from you. I cursed him and I think even slapped him. I said are you mad, this is my home and you come here for loan…like we are not safe in own homes.

This shows the blurred boundaries between the private and public spaces, specifically that *khwaja sira* experience. The feeling that they are not safe at their homes, which is a personal and private space and is turned into a public domain for them, represents this dispersed loci of power that is used to control people's bodies. This is done through the categorization of *khwaja sira* as sexual objects. The intrusion posed a threat of sexual violence towards Kaanita that based on the perceived association of her with sex work.

The three main forms of discipline in public spaces are shown in the figure 1 below that lists out the various intensities of these forms of discipline under them. The forms of discipline in public spaces range from stares to verbal attacks to sexual harassment.

Stares	Eye-teasing Making a pass Mocking Backhanded advice	Molestation Rape

Discomfort   *Sexual*

violence
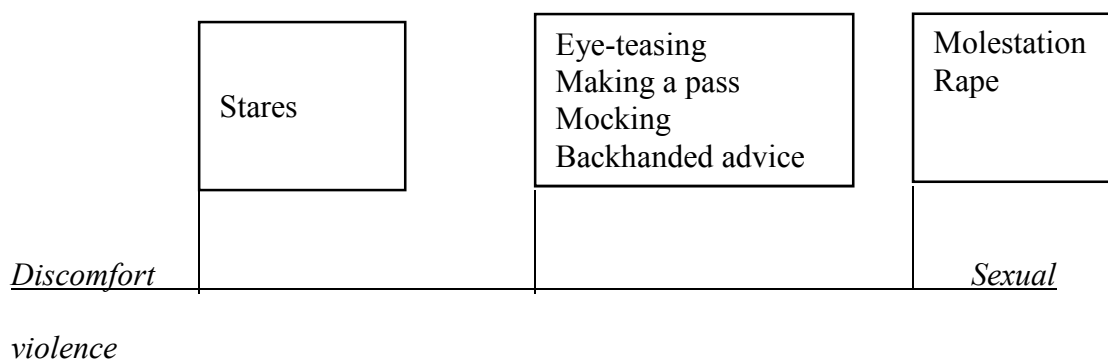
Figure 1: Continuum of Risk in Public Spaces

Navigating Heteronormative Spaces

To make sense of their world and why society behaves differently with them, *khwaja sira* often set standards of what behavior is acceptable to the society, and what isn't. They learn of these standards through societal disciplining. To help navigate their movement in the public, they follow these standards that they are disciplined into, to avoid possible

harassment. When they fail to conform, or when others do not meet those standards, then they feel that the violence that happens towards them is almost justified. At this point, they have internalized the discipling that has been geared towards them to the extent that they actively participate in the process to subjectify themselves, based on societal discipling, "operations on one's body, soul, mind and thoughts", even though mediated by external authority (Foucault cited in Rabinow 1984: 11).

In the face the gender discipline in cis-normative and gender normative society, people on the gender spectrum use specific tactics to cope, resist and negotiate the terms they live in the society. While some resist, others are merely using various techniques to cope with the discipline. The response to the discipline exists on a continuum that ranges from coping, resistance and negotiation.

Coping with Harassment

Given the different forms of harassment that the transgender persons in Pakistan face, this research uncovers many ways that they have adopted to cope, adapt and respond to the behaviors they face. This section shows the various coping strategies that participants have come up with to combat the hostile environments and attempt to live harmoniously during their daily lives, without becoming subject to discipline.

Avoiding Walks

One of the many trends seen among the *khwaja sira* community is to avoid walking in streets or public areas where they have the chance of being targeted to stares or verbal attacks. They try to minimize their contact with such hostile environments, in order to maintain their peace. In other words, the hostile environments discipline khwaja sira into invisibility. Even though Ayat loves going out on jogs and runs or regular walks, she avoids

them. She enjoys the freedom to be able to walk, but sometimes has to suppress her urge to walk because of people' perceptions around her.

> *I sometimes really feel like going out for walks at night, with my headphones. I have to consciously stop myself. I can't. Because I know that if I go, people will think I am on sex business. This is a fact here…their mindset is made.*

The definitions and categorizations follow *khwaja sira*. If a transgender person steps out after dark for a stroll, they are automatically assumed to be sex worker, and are subject to harassment. These attitudes discourage transgender persons from stepping out after dark, even if they feel the need to go for a stroll. This kind of visibility that transgender persons feel during a walk resembles the idea of the surveillance subjecting them to a strict watch, controlling their behaviour and disciplining them into invisibility (Foucault 1995). Kaanita also avoids going out to places for a similar reason, and only goes on necessary business. She will avoid it if and as long as it can be avoided.

> *Mostly I do not like to go outside… if there's any work then I go otherwise I avoid going out.*

Temporality and Public Space Negotiation

One of the common coping mechanisms almost across all transgender participants was the choice of time to go out. Almost all participants' experiences suggest that the time of the day that one chooses to step outside has a bearing on how the experience turns out for them. Ayat talks about the times of the day that feel safe for her to walk around in the neighborhood. She sees the night time as problematic. The reason explained by her circles back to the categorization and association of *khwaja sira* with sex work, and how nighttime is associated with illegal activities such as sex work that is conducted under-the-table.

While walking, within my locality I feel safe until evening ...and in morning. At nights, I avoid it, as people have the image that if she is out at night what could she possibly be out for. I do go with people, with friends, and then people don't bother and judge us.

Kaanita further verifies Ayat's explanation (in a separate interview) that how the choice of time may be associated with acceptable versus unacceptable work, and how it has bearing on the person. She prefers daytime activities to keep her image clean and clear of people's perceptions around sex work.

I prefer to go out during the daytime. I do all my work in the daytime as compared to nighttime. Because if I go outside for some work at night, people think of it in a bad light that she is going for prostitution.

While the choice of time seems to be a factor that one considers before stepping out, Komal's experiences show us that there are different times that work for different people, which is reflected through her choice of time.

Firstly, evening! There's darkness around so if you want to book Uber from your home, no one is noticing you at that time. If you drape a shawl, dupatta (traditional scarf) *or something, we can go outside in the evening.*

Komal's choice is determined by the need to invisiblize herself. Her choice of time is evening, and it suits her because it gives her a chance to camouflage in her surroundings. As much as there seems to be a desire to have the authentic appearance and expression through fashion etc., and a need for an outright and authentic exhibit of the expression by looking a certain way within the trans community, there exits the dichotomy of the need to invisiblize oneself as well in the public domain, to attain and maintain harmony with the surroundings. There is paradox of wanting to stand out yet camouflage and hide as well.

Choice of Commute

Another mechanism that specifically transwomen adopt is opting for specific modes of travel. Their goal is to try to balance between a ride that serves their need the best and minimizes any chances of discipline towards them. Given Komal's experience of the local public buses, she would usually try to escape the bus experiences by walking:

> *Like many times I do walk to my home because I cannot book a rikshaw for me and on buses I do not want to go. I had to travel like that because if I go by walk, I have to walk forty five minutes to get home. So sometimes I have to manage myself in a bus…it is like on daily basis.*

A *rickshaw* is a small three-wheeled vehicle that is built on the engine of a motorbike or a scooter usually generates a lot of noise, with the driver sitting in the front and has space for two passengers in back of the covered version. An uncovered version has the driver sitting on the motorbike and has a carrier in the back with a shed and usually carries four passengers. Kaanita stays away from local buses for similar reasons as explained by Komal and chooses *rickshaw* instead. Her reasons for avoiding the public buses are two-fold as she wants to avoid the discipline, as well as wants to avoid getting infuriated at the discipline. She knows she will immediately react to their disciplining attempts, so in order to avoid an argument with people, she avoids the crowded buses.

> *I prefer to travel by special rickshaw that only has me as the passenger. I don't like public transport or other type of local rikshaws because there are so many people there and they tend to talk and consequently misbehave with me. I react offensively if someone misbehaves with me.*

For Ayat, rickshaw doesn't do the full job of keeping her safe.

> *Rikshaw seems unsafe at night, especially because it's open from all sides.*

Ayat is cognizant of the fact that the rickshaw being open from all sides makes it more vulnerable and susceptible to violence towards her as a *khwaja sira*.

Twinkle feels that stopping a *rickshaw* on the road can be cumbersome, as the small *rickshaw* can easily become a site of harassment for transgender people. At the same time, there are wait times and chances of harassment on road during the wait time as well. Even the act of stopping a *rickshaw* while waving at them attracts attention from the passersby switching on the surveillance and their disciplining attitudes. So, Twinkle wants to avoid the rickshaw.

> *So, you know, we'd step out, we'll try to stop a rickshaw. You know whether it stops or not but you have to hear comments… or see people look at you and stuff like that and then you know, buses have their own forms of harassment.*

Kundan is a make-up artist by profession… she is usually quick to anger. She does not like the idea of using *rickshaw* because for that she has to step out and look for one and be in people's eyes, till she finds one.

> *I do not like to go out and find auto riskshaw…I don't like the process of looking for a rickshaw… I also do not have my own car right now, I wish I did.*

The public transport experience is also not the same for all. For some, specific types of public transportation such as the orange train are preferred. Orange train is a new sky train that is recently constructed along the busiest areas of the old town of Lahore. It has more seating capacity than a regular local bus or a bigger sized Metro bus. The higher seating capacity allows for a decent riding experience, eradicating chances of physical harassment.

> *There are seats, no one can touch you from back side so, I would prefer orange train…my friends say that there is no dhakkam dhakki (*pushing and prodding*) in there like in metro or bus or local rikshaw.*

Nadia has struggled in the metro bus, for the lack of acceptance towards her in either compartment. It resulted in confusion for her, as neither the male nor the female compartment accepted that she fit the social definitions for that compartment.

> *I used to travel by metro bus…that was my start of transition, and everyone told me to go to the male side of the bus, and the others said go to the female side so that was very awkward experience. Then Uber and Careem came to the rescue, and I do not feel any need of public transport anymore.*

Ayat's first preference is of going by her own car. But she likes the reliability and safety of an app-based rideshare, if a friend's car is not available.

> *I mean own car should be preferred. I use Uber and Careem these days. I book these six to seven times during the day, because I don't have a car. But my boyfriend has a car, and on the weekends I am usually with him, so on weekends I go with him on his car. Otherwise, with friends who have cars, and if we are all going together.*

The fact that the app-based rides are trackable are what makes them most safe for Ayat. Safety is a huge concern for all transgender persons when using any kind of transport.

> *But so far, I prefer Uber and Careem, if you travelling at night is safer, because you are booking the car through an app. Sometimes I am coming back from parties alone at night on weekends, and they are trackable by app.*

App-based rides also provide *khwaja sira* with the cover that they look for, and render them less publicly visible when they need it. Komal finds comfort in the fact that Uber picks her up right at her doorstep.

> *He can come in front of my home, so you don't have to bother why people are staring at you like that, when you pass them.*

Kundan also feels the safest when a car picks her up at her doorstep as well.

> *I use Careem and Uber mostly. It is safe… you stay away from people bullying you, and abusing you because there are some unsensitized people, in fact communities like the rikshaw and taxi drivers and I don't want to face them. You get services at your home doorstep, that is the safest thing.*

Twinkle also feels safe in Uber as it helps avoid the discipline she faces in the other means of transport:

> *So over the past four or five years with getting an Uber, what has happened is that …we kind of escape all that bullying that used to happen outside. So, in comparison to that Careem and Uber have relieved me. I escape all that bullying.*

On the other hand, the downside of using app-based rides is the amount of money one ends up spending on them. Twinkle spends as much as half of her income on her daily commute these days.

> *It's becoming increasingly expensive for me to spend money on my convenience…I spent about fifty percent of my salary on Uber these days because my office is a bit far from my place, so that becomes really expensive. But you know, we feel safe within Uber.*

While car pools and app-based rides offer a sense of security to *khwaja sira*, they sometimes also become a site of harassment, as explored in the earlier section. On the other hand, while local buses pose a threat of harassment to *khwaja sira*, some forms of public transport serve some people well.

Presentation of Self and Public Space Negotiation

One of the responses to discipline is dressing in the ways considered most acceptable and modest by the society. This is one of the ways through which *khwaja sira* camouflage themselves and merge with their surroundings and thus avoid attracting attention from passersby. For many *khwaja sira*, the choice of dressing is the means of avoiding harassment. Though most of them expressed their love for dressing up, and their interviews reflect how dressing up contributes to gender affirmation for them. However, while going

out they are disciplined into assimilating into the societal norm. Kaanita is particular about using a *shawl* (drape) as a cover for any of her clothing and suggests others do the same.

> *We should think about it, if we are going out with this dress at least we have to drape a big shawl around us so when we arrive at our location then we can put off the shawl.*

Ayat indicates that the location determines the kind of dress one should be wearing:

> *If I put on heavy make-up and wear short skirt to Anarkali and Ichhra* (two of the most popular and crowded local *bazaars* in Lahore)*, then of course people will stare....but if I am wearing shalwar kameez and dressed up in moderation, then only those people will stare at me who are "chuttiya"* (she uses an abusive word to express her frustration at the people who stare)*... but not everyone. So, you've got to understand that you should take care of the societal norms.*

Ayat has been disciplined by the society to choose the dress according to the societal norms, as that will prevent harassment from happening.

> *Disapproval towards Overt Dressing*

One of the ways of avoiding harassment as seen previously is through the choice of dressing. Similarly, *khwaja sira* think that dressing has a lot to do with how one is being treated by others. If the way one dresses is not what is considered a morally acceptable standard by the society, then any resulting violence against them is warranted. Kaanita criticizes the overt dressing and behavior of other transwomen that she does not approve of.

> *Like there are these transwomen when they go out, they wear deep neck, fitted shirts, smiling big with others. Alright! you are third gender; you are a trans, but you don't have to act this way! Every person is responsible for their own self-respect.*

Kaanita considers the overt behavior by *khwaja sira* as irresponsible. She says that their respect is in their own hands, and will only be granted to them if they meet societal norms

in dressing and in behavior. She brings us back to the idea of merging in the surroundings and not deliberately trying to stand out, in order to camouflage, in the face of danger. Ayat reiterates this point by showing us what choice is not acceptable and will definitely result in creating a hostile environment for them.

> *If I put on heavy make-up and wear short skirt to Anarkali and Ichhra then ofcourse people will stare and glare at me… I should take care of the societal norms.*

Kaanita disapproves of the way other transgender people dress and suggests that they bring the harassment on them by dressing overtly. The only way according to her to control and minimize the harassment is by controlling the kind of dressing they do.

> *We also need to control our dressing because if you are wearing short tops and tight pants in which our body is prominent then obviously people will pass different comments on you…Before controlling people's catcalling, we should control ourselves. When I go out with such a dress people will notice me and will knock on my doors. It has happened four or five times, I fought with them, even though I had draped a shawl over my clothes; what will happen if I didn't.*

This is the internalization of societal discipline that Foucault talks about that transgender people have internalized the idea if they are faced with hostility, they themselves are to blame as they have defied the societal norm.

Together is stronger

Most transgender persons in the study felt they were more at risk of assault when navigating their neighborhoods alone, as compared to when they were in the company of friends. The participants preferred to go out in groups as it would help make them feel safer. Ayat tells us that there are some places where it is much preferred to go in groups to avoid harassment. Ayat seems to have an understanding of which places may turn hostile towards transgender

people, and may be more prone to punishing and discipling them. These are the places where they should go in groups to protect one another.

> *But the important thing is that where are we going and is that place safe for you? Usually, I go out with my community and transmen, so it is in a group, so people avoid teasing us.*

Regardless of whether the place is safe for one, for Ayat going out in group with her friends shields her from the public comments. For the others too, it is their friends that serve as protective barrier between them and the world. A specific type of friend that have outspoken qualities can really help in certain situations. Komal is often criticized by the people around her for her timid, shy and quiet personality and that she does not speak loud. Komal uses her social support in terms of her friends from the trans-community to speak up on her behalf in case a situation may arise.

> *Now everyone said that I cannot be loud but when I do visit the local market, I try to take my friend with me; she is very loud, so I take her with me even if she does not want to shop.*

The fact that someone is with them gives them a sense of security that nobody can violate them. Komal expresses her relief in knowing that anytime someone mocks them in the market, her friend would fiercely fight back, giving her a sense of comfort. This is Komal and her friend's way of negotiating the disciplining that takes place.

> *Some people tease us, like these big aunties looked at us in the market and made faces and said some things. My friend picked it up and repeated "yes we are khusra[11], so what!". She is quite loud; I love to go shopping with her; she handles things in good way so I know that if someone tells me something then my friend is there to speak with them.*

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[11] Khusra: this term is used for transgender person in Pakistan in a derogatory manner.

Another specific type of company that the transwomen feel protected with, from any harassment is a male company. One of the coping mechanisms is taking along a friend that is visibly masculine and macho enough to keep them safe from harassment at the hands of others. In the quote below, Ayat explains how having a male friend by her side can save her from harassment.

> *I picked an office colleague… a full male bodied person, not trans at all…he looks very male, and nobody can call him anything but a man.*

Here Ayat herself makes use of the societal definition and category of what it is that is considered male and normal, and so takes them along for helping upgrade how society defines her.

Apart from a specific type of company, it is specific places that are not as safe to go alone. Ayat talks about her trip to a far-flung local market called *Lakkar Mandi* literally translated as wood market. This market specializes in wood. In the following quote, Ayat explains that while getting her house renovations done, she needed wood from this market for tables, but this is not the kind of market where her usual coping mechanisms would work. She brought her unquestionably masculine friend to buy more validity for how own social categorization, but despite that she is subjected to mockery.

> *Now despite having my male friend with me, I had to face so much harassment in that place…they don't take you seriously, they have to make fun. You must tell them I need this, if you have it give it, if not then say it. Imagine, this happened when I was with my friend. If I were alone I would've run away, even though I am very good at giving people shut-up calls. But you can't use all your tricks in all places. In this market, if I fight, they will beat me up that she is wrong.*

Ayat has recognized the kind of disciplining that is used in certain places such as this specific market, making it unsafe for her as a transwoman. The usual negotiation around

this disciplining that would work for her in other places, may not work in this specific market. In this market, no matter what happened and whose fault it was, the violence would turn against her as she is a transwoman, transgressing the social definitions, and so is considered the wrong one by virtue of her gender and mannerism. In this case, her negotiating mechanism is to bring a strong and masculine friend with her and lay low and not answer back to anyone.

Figure 2 below shows the discipline continuum for *khwaja sira*.

Discipline Continuum

Discipline   Resistance

Disciplined subject   **Recognition**   **Desubjugated person**

Disciplined responses:
- Not going out in public
- Trying to act invisible
- Using camouflage techniques
- Changing the presentation of oneself
- Changing the mode of transport

Desubjugated responses:
- Being visible in public spaces
- Authentic Gender expression
- Dress with preferred clothes/accessories
- Seek out surgical or hormonal treatments

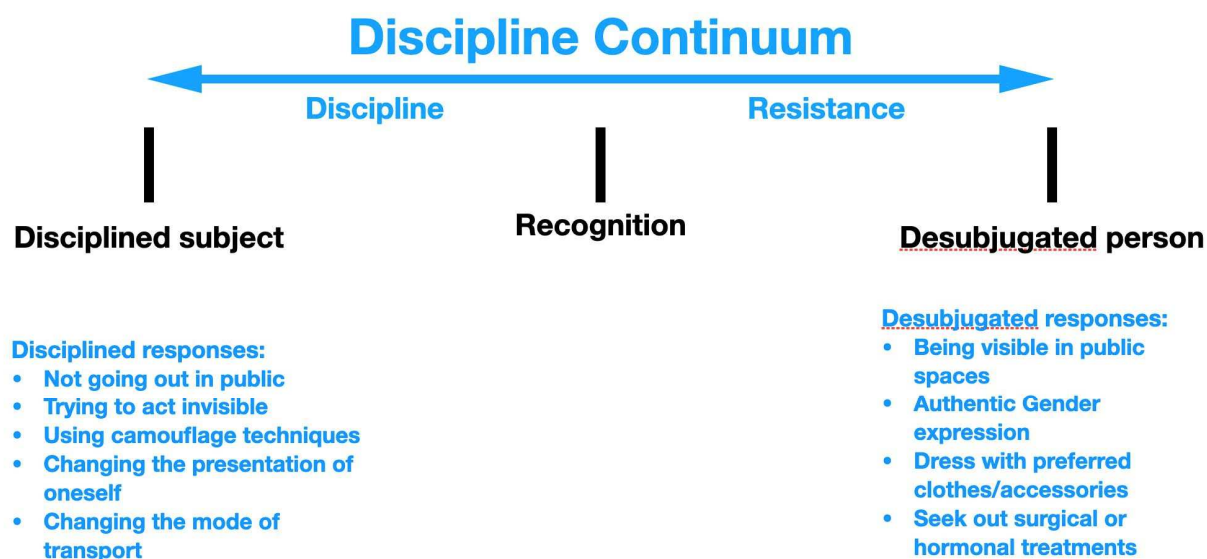*Figure 2: Discipline Continuum*

Figure 2 (above) shows the result of the discipline on *khwaja sira*, and the responses of the *khwaja sira* to the discipline, in terms of a continuum. The left side of the continuum reflects the acquiescence to the discipline, of which the transgender person in question has become an effectively disciplined subject. The center of the continuum is the point in their

life when and where the transgender person recognizes the discipline they are subjected to. Recognition bifurcates the continuum with a discipline state on one side and a resistance state on the other. On the resistance side, the end state is a state of desubjugation and the transgender person is effectively free from societal disciplines based on how much they are able to resist the discipline. A disciplined person has acquiesced to the discipline. They use responses such as not going out in public, trying to act invisible when in public, altering their presentation of self, changing their mode of transport etc. All of these responses also exist on a continuum of discipline. The responses on the resistance side of the continuum include being visible in public spaces, authentic gender expression, which includes body language, clothes, accessories, surgical treatments, and hormonal treatments etc.

The midpoint of the continuum represents the point of recognition, with the end states lying on each side, with a series of responses enacted by the transgender person along the continuum based on the discipline and the agency that the transgender person has, or feels that they have. Each new experience begins at the recognition point. This is the point where one gains awareness and consciousness of the ongoing discipline in society, and chooses to select their response based on factors such as their level of agency. If a transgender person reaches either of the two end states, there is still the possibility of moving out of it. Either end state is in not a definitive, concrete result. Based on new experiences and continuous discipline, the transgender person may move from a disciplined or desubjugated state to anywhere along the continuum.

Reclaiming Space

Some transgender persons respond to discipline in a way that will allow them to be reclaim their space in the society. Regardless of whether transgender persons are able to negotiate their way out of the societal discipline that is geared towards them, the first step usually takes place in recognizing the tools society uses to discipline them and then resisting the disciplining.

Resistance

One way transgender persons negotiate out of the discipline by simply resisting the forces of disciple applied to them.

> *But I am not afraid of being out and about. I don't experience people talking at me. I not only talk back, I make sure I shut them up.*

Here Shama recognizes that verbal attacks are a common tool to discipline transgender people. After recognizing, she creates resistance to the discipline of verbal harassment, by pushing back through verbal rebuttals, disallowing the discipline to be internalized.

Loud Responses: Choice of Words

One of the key ways transgender people ward off the societal disciplining applied to them is by negotiating with words. For transwomen some loud and aggressive responses help back off any hostility that is geared towards them. Most transwomen suggested that being loud and equally or more offensive in response to verbal harassment works in their favor. Shama, who tackles *"aggressively"* with the world, according to her, says there is no other way but to react and respond curtly to people when they pass comments. She narrates an incident where she picked up on others' comments and reacted immediately, in order to put their moral compasses back into place.

So, over there, there were these women… and they were kind of whispering something around the words "khusra"… pointing at me and so I gave it to them.. in the middle of the market and I… kind of took off their pants, haha… metaphorically!! in front of everybody that you are women, and being women …you're talking about me like this… I told them that you guys should be ashamed of yourself.

Kaanita handles harassment using her loud responses. She also believes this works well as people not only back off after hearing her, but her loud comments also call for intervention from third parties often.

Yes, this one day I went to get some medicine during daytime and an old man comes to me and said "you beauty I have been noticing you from such a distance, you weren't even paying attention to me" I said out very loud "are you out of your mind, do you want me to help you land in your grave, what kind of activities are you involved in!" He tries to ask for my phone number so that we can meet. So, there's this other man standing near us he said to me, please you can go, don't mind him and all.

Using loud responses draws people's attention to the activity that's going on. Even if one isn't willing to indulge in loud responses themselves, there is a recognition in the community that loud comments can back off people. In such instance, where that recognition exists, Komal usually borrows a friend's voice as her defense mechanism.

Obviously, I do not take a pistol with me that if someone hurts me, I shoot them. I think my weapon is my friend's tongue. Can you believe she abuses more than men can? and she needs to! When we go somewhere and if someone is looking at us from far away, she starts shouting at them till we get there and grab them.

While Komal recognizes the need to back off people using loud responses, which for her, her friends take care of, and she has reaped the benefits of it, but she still hasn't reverted to answering people herself. Similarly, not all transwomen believe that being loud can help

prevent trouble. Some believe that if you choose your words wisely and nicely, you may be able to earn more respect among people. Tina thinks that earning respect and good treatment is in one's own hands and can be achieved using good words and carefully.

> *You also have to be a good speaker. If I called you bad then you will call me bad twice, and if I spoke to you in a good manner then you will treat me in a similar way as well.*

Agency and Non-Binary Persons

Transgender people redeem and recreate their space in the heteronormative, binary gendered spaces. They adopt certain methods to tackle the violence and reclaim some of the public territory that is taken away from them through the hostility over time. This is first and foremost done through a deep recognition that they are subjected to disciplining. Only after they have recognized this, are they able to resist the discipline and consequently negotiate the new terms of their personal definitions.

Gender discipline work towards invisiblizing the authentic gender expression of *khwaja sira*. They are forced to conform to the societally prevalent binary gender expressions, if they want to avoid being subjected to the disciplining forms. Consequently, this discipline invisiblizes *khwaja sira*. In the presence of such invisiblizing discipline, visibility of transgender persons in the public spaces represent their agency.

Becoming Visible

The simplest way of reclaiming that space is by being visible, so the presence of *khwaja sira* can be normalized in public spaces. Ayat does this by becoming visible to the world, as she believes only then the world will become aware that transgender people exist and

only then spaces will become inclusive of all. She takes the responsibility of teaching the society, on her shoulders, by stepping out.

> *Once I step out, only then they will know I also exist. They come from a certain mindset, it's not their fault. They have seen people like me, but they didn't act like me ... so hopefully the next time I will go, they will be sensitized a little bit, and they will think that I am a trans but I am an educated person, I have my ways of being. So, the societal change will come about like this.*

Here Ayat recognizes the social definitions of normalcy, and intends to correct them slowly, renegotiating those definitions. *Khwaja sira* have previously not had the means to educate themselves, and so the society has not seen many transgender persons that are educated, but instead has seen *khwaja sira* being associated with sex work, begging on streets and other such activities that are not considered respectable by the society. Ayat suggests that the only way to show society that *khwaja sira* are educated as well and are as regular and normal of people as they are, by being visible to the society.

Building Reputation- Transgender Agency

Another way through which *khwaja sira* are seen to be reclaiming their lost space is by building their connections over time and building a reputation. This can help them earn respect, find their place in one of the societally 'respectful' categories and consequently regain a peaceful space in their surroundings. Many transgender persons take their time to build their reputation in their surrounding environment, by acting in the ways that are considered acceptable and respectable by the norm in their neighborhoods, including Ayat.

> *I've been living in this locality for four to five years, so people here know me and have become aware about me. Initially they would question. They know now that I*

> *keep to myself, and I don't bug anyone. A couple of aunties are nose poking. But*
> *now I am on good terms with all. So, you make your space and your respect.*

It has taken years for Ayat to build her image in her community that she means no harm to others. She has negotiated her way into making her place in her neighborhood. She further elaborates on the kind of goodwill gestures that help build the image that she has built. Ayat chooses to contribute positively to her neighborhood that has benefitted her reputation.

> *I used to distribute goods and ration during pandemic. So, they know I do good*
> *stuff for the local community. Like if the auntie would tell me or the uncle would*
> *tell me something I would do chores for them, so I've created my goodwill and my*
> *reputation here has been built.*

Ayat is now regarded as a respectable person in the community who does what society deems as good deeds; this enables her to walk about in her community with her head held high, reclaiming the space she thought that the *khwaja sira* have lost.

In their attempt to show respect to societal standards and social norms, *khwaja sira* sometimes choose to lie about their ways of being, to get by respectfully. Shama recognizes that her engagement in sex work may turn people in her neighborhood against her, so she has managed to maintain her real occupation a secret, to build her reputation that is regarded as morally and ethically correct by het society.

> *No one in my locality knows about my sex work. Initially they would say a word or*
> *two about how I dress and look, or that I am a khusra, but I have put everyone*
> *right. I gave it to them. Now they all respect me, or let's say are afraid of me may*
> *be. But when I go to the shop now, the milk man gives me milk first, and the families*
> *around also notice that she keeps to herself, so they respect me. They think I work*
> *for an NGO, that's what I tell people.*

For Shama, it is not only that fact that she had to hide her sex-work to build her reputation, it was also important for her to speak up against the harassment as and when it happens. Many transgender people have used this as a mechanism to scare people off and away from them. They want the people around them to know that this person refuses to be a victim. Kaanita tells us that she educates people about her existence and her rights by speaking up and standing up for herself.

> *There are a few bike shops around, so sometimes I have clashed with them. A person was clapping[12] behind me and when I turned back, he was acting like he didn't do that. So, I slapped him, shouted on him so everyone in that place can see and remember.*

Kaanita uses this example to demonstrate that she has worked hard and aggressively to build her image as a tough person who should not be teased or violated in any way. She aims to build her reputation as someone who is capable of fighting back, so people can remember her as a fighter, which enables her to reclaim her peace while moving about in her neighborhood.

There is a continuum of resistance that is explored in this section. In order to navigate the discipline that takes place in public spaces, some transgender persons resort to acquiesce, while submitting to the discipline unwillingly. Others adopt coping mechanisms such as choosing to go for different marketplaces or using time as a means to become invisible in crowds. Other mechanisms include resistance to the disciplining, by responding aggressively to the disciplining mechanisms, such as verbal rebuttals. Yet the others are working on changing the system from within through advocacy.

Figure 3 shows *khwaja sira's* responses to discipline in terms of a continuum.

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[12] Clapping is considered a standard gesture among the *khwaja sira* community. *Khwaja sira* clap to express themselves. But when others clap behind them, it is seen as a way of insult towards them.

Figure 3: Resistance Continuum

Figure 3 (above) illustrates the resistance continuum as it applies to *khwaja sira* reacting to the different levels of disciplines imposed on them by societal forces. The responses begin with recognition, or the awareness and consciousness of the disciplines. The amount of agency that a person feels informs which response(s) they decide to use. The continuum moves towards the right with increasing resistance through acquiescence, coping or avoidance, active resistance, and finally acting to change the system, with all these responses in favor of the transgender person to desubjugate them.

Conclusion

Transgender persons in Pakistan are subjected to various forms of gender discipline that force them to conform to societal gender norms. These norms are established by the society in a way that they become standard definition of normality that the society must adhere to in order to come across as normal. Stares are the most common gender discipline experience that transgender persons go through in their everyday routines. Stares work towards communicating to transgender persons that they are not fitting the definitions of normality, and consequently discipline them into conforming to the societal norm. Verbal attacks ranging from mockery to eve teasing are also used to discipline transgender

persons. Physical and sexual harassment, including groping as well as rape is indicated in the data as a disciplining tool. For example, in public transport, sexual harassment in the male compartments for transwomen and verbal harassment in the female compartments disciplines transgender persons into presenting themselves inauthentically but according to the societal norm in order to appease the society and be accepted in either compartment.

While many conform to the norm in the wake of discipline, others respond to the discipline by resisting and negotiating their way out of the discipline. This process of desubjugation involves becoming a disciplined subject and then breaking free from it. The desubjugation process starts with a recognition of the discipline and the tools of discipline being applied, while some learn to merely cope with discipline, others acquiesce, yet others actively resist the discipline by fighting back. There are a few that are also slowly working towards changing the system from within, by becoming more visible and normalizing non-binary gender expression.

CHAPTER 5: NAVIGATING FAMILIAL DOMAINS AS A TRANSGENDER
PERSON IN PAKISTAN

The previous chapter discussed the public spaces where transgender persons are disciplined through various forms. The true origin of this public discipline starts in very private domains, such as families. The disciplining of transgender persons starts at a rather young age within their families and homes, through various mechanisms. *Khwaja sira* are disciplined in their families from their childhood according to the prevailing the social definitions of normality with respect to gender. The data through the interviews shows that *khwaja sira* come to understand their true gender identity in steps. This understanding is constantly hampered by the gender discipline that takes place at home. Recognition of their authentic gender expression comes in steps. But they soon find that their happiness lies in their true gender expression despite being subjected to disciplining by their families. After they recognize this discipline, they start to negotiate their own identities by attempting to break free from the discipline. This chapter explores in depth the contradictory nature of familial domains and shows how *khwaja sira* feel accepted and safe in these spaces, as well as how they are violated within these very spaces. The chapter explores the journeys of *khwaja sira* in exploring their identities and their process of desubjugation after becoming a subject to discipline by their loved ones. It shows how they negotiate the discipline from their close family members within the "safe" spaces of their homes.

Gender Exploration

The first stage that transgender people navigate is when they start exploring their likes and dislikes during their early years. The exploration of their gender expression causes

turbulence in the household, as they come across as gender ambiguous and non-conforming. For example, parents get concerned about a boy child playing with a doll (usually associated with girl child), or scolding children for wearing clothes that do not associate with the gender assigned at their birth. Most transgender persons in the study, even when they were children, understood their natural inclination and attraction towards behaviors that may not necessarily associated with their gender. They talk about how their behaviors were different from the social definitions assigned to their gender. These formative behaviors and experiences were not taught to them by the society but were a part of them naturally knowing who they were. At the same time, the interviews also revealed that for most transgender persons, defying the definitions of gender normality as children were not considered a threat by their families.

Dress-up and Play. Roshan explains how she knew from the very beginning that she only felt comfortable in girl's clothes. She is speaking of the recognition that as a child she did not fit the social definition ascribed to her, and she did not need to, the society did not demand that of her.

> *While growing up, I was wearing girls' clothes. I felt myself a female from childhood. And my family also did not say anything to me at those times. They thought I am a child so it's alright if I love to wear those clothes.*

In childhood, this usually did not become a subject of attention and discipline by the family as they assumed it is a childhood phase in the passing. Falak explains how she loved wearing jewelry and indulged in other dress-up games that were associated with girl children, and no one really stopped her.

> *When I was a child, I loved wearing bangles and saari ... my family members thought he is a child, but in time he will be fine, so they didn't stop me then.*

Kaanita talks about how she was not so happy playing sports as a child that were associated with her assigned gender as a boy, instead she looked up to the women in her family and wanted to be in their company only.

> *In childhood we do not know who we are. Usually, boys play with bat and ball but I played with dupattas (women's scarves). I liked to wear chooriyan (bangles), makeup, and blush-on and I really like lenses. A child that is four or five years of age, doesn't know about these things when cousins my age played with bat and ball, catch and run, I was more interested in spending my whole day with my aunt and mom and grandma.*

The Feeling Inside

A number of participants point to a feeling of happiness to be associated with a different gender. This feeling help them recognize and confirm within themselves their authentic gender. This is the recognition of their personal definition which is different from social definitions ascribed to them.

> *From the start we are transgender, from childhood I had feelings of "she", I loved to hear "she" word for me from people. These are the feelings in our heart and we love to hear it from people.*

The above quote by Nadia was also echoed by other participants such as Ayat, Twinkle and Komal.

Gender Discipline

One of the themes that emerges from the interviews is the varying degree of unacceptance towards the behaviors of transgender persons by their family members. Though not in early childhood, the lack of acceptance starts at a young age when transgender persons start being criticized for acting in ways that do not mesh with the socially accepted gender norm. This

happens when the families realize the behavior isn't just a phase but actually reflects who the child is. The crucial component of such a lack of acceptance is the discipling that happens through various punishments or pressures that are exerted on transgender children and adults.

The pressures from the family usually come in the form of verbal attacks, such as scolding, taunting etc. that dissuade them from pursuing the behavior or act that they truly believe in. Roshan received taunts from her father who did not allow her to express herself as a girl. The taunts worked as a disciplining tool to have Roshan behave in a boyish manner. Eradicating her true expression would be the only way she would not receive that punishment of taunt.

> *In my childhood my fathers also taunted me … I tried to live like a boy…so people do not taunt me.*

Verbal attacks are often used by families to express disappointment towards transgender expression. Komal explains how her friends' family expressed their disappointment in her.

> *I have friends whose parents have told them that it would have still been better had we adopted an animal instead of keeping you... and that it was better you were never born.*

Despite the discipline that transgender persons are subjected to, many recognize that their calling to their true gender cannot be tamed. Falak tells us that the feeling that she is a girl is deep-seated in her, and it is so strong that no disciplining mechanism could take it away, and turn her into a boy that they think she is:

> *But the thing is this something is deep inside you no matter what anyone does, even if they beat you up.*

Confusion and Angst

Transgender persons also revealed becoming confused at a young age as they wanted to and liked to do things a certain way but were constantly told otherwise by their family members, making them conform to normative gender identities. At a very young age, they recognize their true identities get suppressed through gender-disciplining, causing a lot of confusion. This confusion marks the beginning of an inner turmoil, which result from the attempts to impose a gender identity based on the social definitions of normality. Roshan explains how she was always confused as a child about what she should do, and felt that she never did anything right.

> *I was only 7 or 8 years old then, I thought that everyone is right, I am wrong. I was a child and children usually do mistakes but if I do mistakes, everyone taunted me of my gender, saying that you are acting like khusra that's why you do these things.*

Here again, we are reminded of how the term *khusra* is used pejoratively to demean a person, even within families. This also serves as a threat that if one acts in a way that defies the social normal, they will be called a *khusra*, with negative meanings associated with the word. This threat acts as a means of disciplining the transgender persons into conforming.

Komal also points to the confusion caused by the disciplining that goes against one's own reality. She says they have to adapt to how family wants them to behave. In this process, they don't fully understand what is wrong with them and why are they being treated differently.

> *The family pressurizes the children who don't even know his or her own self, when they are only fifteen or sixteen years old, they do not know what is right or wrong.*

Pressures of Gender Conformation

Transgender people are constantly disciplined by their families to adapt to behaviors that are associated with the gender assigned to them at birth. Most transgender persons had to face a challenge as a child to play in a way that felt personally right to them. As an adult the pressures to conform took a different shape. These included pressures to wear specific kinds of clothes. They also faced challenges being acknowledged as who they are and what they truly wanted to be acknowledged as. Most of the study participants told stories in which parents had tried to go against the will of the person to forcibly change their behavior. Sometimes that came in the form of admitting them to an all-boys school when they did not want to go there. Falak tells us her story of wanting to go to school like a regular girl, but she was admitted to an all-boys school on the pretext that it will fix her.

> *I was ready for school like a girl. My father had been noticing me since seventh standard that I am not really changing. So, he took me out of the… school and sent me to the…school…for boys... I cried a lot that I do not want to study in this school, but my father didn't listen to me, and my mother couldn't interfere; he is a very strict person.*

Admitting transgender children in the schools of their birth sex is common practice. Kane (2006) shows a study that it's usually fathers who take the onus of ensuring normative gender development for their sons, as they feel inherently responsible reinforcing their gender. The interviews also revealed that none of the transmen felt their parents were particularly concerned about them as a "girl" engaging in behaviors associated with boys. However, most of the transwomen revealed that even as a child when they played with girl toys or talked like a girl, their parents would get particularly concerned that their boy child

is not masculine enough according to a society norms. This pattern in parents' differential treatment of boy and girl children is evident in other studies as well (Maccoby 1998; Kane 2006), that reveal that parents enforce stricter gender boundaries for their boy child as compared to a girl child. A son engaging in feminine expression is conceived as more of a threat than a daughter engaging in masculine expression, usually attributed to patriarchal nature of society that privileges men and hegemonic masculine expression from men[13].

Patriarchy and masculinity co-exist in a mutually reinforcing fashion in Pakistan. Masculinity in Pakistan is usually seen as a man's ability to take the lead and control in decision-making, as well as the responsibility in protecting and safeguarding women, who are seen as a weaker sex. Physically, a strong-built body, with an addition of mustache, sometimes a beard or clean shaven in a relatively urban setting are associated with masculinity as well (Aurat Foundation 2016). Similarly, riding motor bikes is also considered part of masculinity in young male adults.

While Roshan seemed aware of her true identity, she also had to go to school as a boy. This served to reproduce the societal categories and definitions of normality, but it also left her feeling incomplete and empty inside, based on the recognition her own identity that she had gained.

> *Then I studied as a boy and applied for police job, did training, did job, but after 13 years of job I feel I am not happy from inside, there's something incomplete.*

Roshan tells us how she succumbed to the family pressures for the most part and was pressured and disciplined into living like a boy against her own will and wishes. She did it to stay out of trouble with the family, and to avoid the insults from them.

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[13] 'Hegemonic masculinity' is the masculinity that captures the privileged and hegemonic position in a given hierarchy of gender relations (p.76).

My family forced me to live like a boy, they beat me, insulted me… I thought as a boy I am fine, but if I live like a trans then it's all insult and everyone against me.

For teenage and adult transgender persons, instances of pressure into gender conformation also come in the form of imposing a mode of transport that parents associate with the gender the person was born into. For example, forcing transwomen to ride a motorbike, in order for them to strengthen their masculinity. Motorbikes in Pakistan are a common mode of transport for men. Traditionally, boys get a motor bike as they enter the later years of their teens, and boys usually use it show off their masculinity, that they are no longer boys, but are turning into men. Kundan tells us how she was given a bike on her eighteenth birthday by her father and was forced to ride it, so she could also strengthen her masculine side. She rode it for a while out of family's pressure.

It was very bad experience. I just ride the bike because of my family and their pressure that men should ride bikes, then luckily at my gym time my bike was stolen. I just laughed and thanked God that it's gone.

Kundan was also pressured into cutting her hair. Except in her case, she had reached a certain age and she had recognized the discipline she was being subjected to. She decided to fight it and resisted internalizing the disciplining that was geared towards her. She threated to leave home.

My family was after me to cut my hair, change my get up; I said if these things are issue for you, I will leave home.

Coming Out

Coming out conversation is a big challenge that most transgender persons remember in their lives. It is mostly not well accepted by the families and is often followed by some consequences, almost always in the shape of restrictions, that the person must face at the hands of the family, as that final attempt to discipline them. When Saami came out to family in his early twenties, the conversation with his "well-educated" and "progressive" family didn't go so well.

> *When my mother came home, I told her as well as my siblings. It didn't go very well, they didn't support me. They forced me to quit my job, to stop seeing my friends, changed my wardrobe so it'll help me change back into what they want.*

Roshan explains how she realized over time that her true happiness is in being seen as a woman, so she started her transition with a hormone therapy. She has now told her mother about her hormone therapy.

> *I have now conveyed to my mother about my hormone therapy and that I am not doing these things just like that, it is not into my hands, I am this person.*

Haris tells us about his coming out conversation, which wasn't taken very well by his family members because of social definitions attached with Haris.

> *I told my family about my hormones treatment. They started shouting at me. At first, I told my uncle about it, he didn't get it and started lecturing me on sin and reward and then I talked to my grandmother and...she didn't get it either.*

A disciplining tactic that is often used on a number of transgender persons is that of religion, in that transgressing gender norms will earn the person sins in the hereafter. Religion has a lot of legitimacy that is reinforced by politics as well as constitution. Religion is often used as a moral standard in Pakistan. Most children in Pakistan are raised

on religious values that the parents uphold, and parents often consult religious priests for advice over regular everyday matters, so their families live according to the religious preaching. Religion card is frequently used for transgender persons to tell them that their gender non-conformity is actually equivalent to denying the perfect gender God has created for them.

Family Reactions and Advice

The coming out conversations are often followed by either immediate reactions or some sort of advice to help discipline the person in question out of their situation and back into a 'normal' life. Roshan was sent to doctors multiple time by her family, to diagnose the issue with her.

> *My elder brothers said that I am sexually weak and I need to get a doctor check-up. They think if someone is sexually weak, so he/she is transgender. I went to many doctors but it's nothing like that. I told my family many times.*

Other suggestions and advice that come in handy as a disciplining tool are that of getting the person married. Through Haris' quote it also seems there is history of such a tactic having worked for other people in the past. Haris had a similar conversation with her grandmother who gave reference to an aunt who behaved in masculine ways but was disciplined and 'fixed' after marriage.

> *Ami (mother/ grandmother) said your phupho (paternal aunt) was also like you too, but she got married and now they're happy and I started to explain to her that … my problem is different, and I am not interested in my opposite gender, but she didn't get my point.*

Reclaiming the Self through Separation

Most transgender people realize at some point in their lives that they are being disciplined and tamed constantly, and that in order to break free from this disciplining, it may be easier to express themselves openly outside of their families and away from their homes. After being force-disciplined for years, many participants narrated stories of how they chose to separate from their families, to break away from the family restrictions and to live according to the standards they set for themselves. The usual cultural norm in Pakistan is to stay closely knitted and connected with one's family (Youssuf & Steinberg 2017). This sometimes means living with parents and extended family throughout one's whole life[14]. Those who are disciplined by their families often remain disciplined for their entire lives. But the lack of acceptance for transgender people from family and immediate society not only threatens the freedom of expression of transgender individuals, but also forces them to make difficult choices of separation from loved ones and close community to break free from the discipline.

This separation is an important one as this is where the transgender persons not only recognize the cis-normative and heteronormative discipline, they were a part of, but this also marks as their resistance towards the discipline, to fight back and establish and reclaim their true self identity. This is the attempt to defy the social definitions of normality and negotiate to live by their own definitions.

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[14] Based on the Hofstede cultural dimension score, Youssuf and Steinberg (2017) drew a comparison between Pakistani and American society to show that close-knit families are of utmost importance in Pakistani culture. It disapproves sons leaving their family even after they are married. While comparing with the US, they show that America teaches its people to be independent. The score of 91 for US, as compared to a core of 14 for Pakistan, proves that people in the US strive to be independent, and self-sufficient, by living on their own and providing for themselves.

Kundan's family has been after her to cut her hair short like a boy, but at one point, she decided she would much rather leave her family home than cut her hair and be disciplined into their family's definition of normal.

My family was after me to cut my hair. Change your get up, they would say. I said if these things are issue for you guys, I can just leave home. I need myself; I need my life.

On the other hand, Kaanita's reasons for separating from family were the restrictions she faced in terms the late night curfews etc.

I could not go outside much… I separated from family and told them I will visit you, you can also visit my place but I can't live with you.

She had recognized she could meet them but she will need to live away to be able to own her real identity and live the way she wants to live.

Roshan decided she could not take the insults in the form of taunts and ridiculing any longer, and decided to separate from her family. Her family talked about the shame and stress they felt when others pointed fingers at Roshan's way of living, so she left home in hopes to relieve everyone.

About six years ago, my elder brothers started taunting me that we feel shame when people talk about you so… I left my home…sometimes I visit home.

Kundan tells us that she also visits her family as she does live close, but she is not fully accepted, so her visits to the family house only happen if the family seems to be tolerating her real self well.

I do go to meet them usually because they live near my house, but I am separated

from them. In our families there's only tolerance not acceptance, so it depends how

much they can tolerate me.

Kundan explains that acceptance is when people live in harmony and peace with each other without criticizing one another. She explains that her family does not accept her, but barely tolerates her, in that they live together while constantly being picked on, as she feels judged by her family members based on what they feel is right or wrong according to their standards. Because of the cultural norm of living in close knitted families, instead of being open about wanting to leave homes, some transgender persons find it easier to move to another city for job as an excuse of getting away from home.

Kaanita left home to work in another city, but eventually moved back to the same city, but never returned home.

I took separation for the job. First, I got a job in Multan and then I came back home

in Lahore and started doing work here.

Kundan didn't actually leave for another city but she used job in another city as an excuse to leave home.

I lied to them that I got a job in Islamabad in a salon. For 6 to 7 months, I was in

the same town... then I started going home…then they came to my home, my mother,

my father, my brother. I showed them I have my wardrobe and my room. Now they

are used to it.

Kundan separated from her family to strengthen herself and her ways of living. Once she had taken the time, it was then only a matter of letting her family know that she is a transgender woman and is different from what they expected. Now that she doesn't

live at her family house, she felt free to be herself around her family members, as they had no choice but to accept her as she is. Kundan's remark that her family is now accustomed to her way of being, demonstrates that her method of gender negotiation worked with her family. She is now able to share her identity with her family.

The Desire to Break Free

Those transgender persons that recognize that their true identity is different from the one they are being discipled into within their families often feel the angst to break free. They want to dissociate themselves from the discipline in the shape of the behaviors and activities that are imposed on them. Many transgender participants talk about the feeling free outside of their homes. We explored that transgender persons feel unsafe to authentically express themselves in public domains such as streets and market places in the previous chapter, where they would attempt to invisiblize themselves. This comes as paradox as we see here that *khawja sira* feel safe to express themselves outside of their homes. They feel particularly at ease with expressing themselves among their friends. This gives most of them a realization that they might need to escape the discipline at home eventually in search of, and to actualize their true identities, freedom and self-expression. Komal talks about how she used to feel these pangs of envy seeing her friends, as she wanted to express herself as openly as them.

I saw my friends…I felt complexed… why am I not like that; I want to be like that… Roshan had also recognized that she is not happy anywhere she is forced to conform to gender norms. She began to develop a sense that she needs to move away from home in order to express her identity as truly as possible.

> *After spending a lot of time like that, I felt that I am not happy with myself at home, then slowly I decided I needed to live away so I can live happily. If I tell you openly that I am a transwoman or a female only then I feel happy because I am that from inside*

Transgender persons recognize they are subject to constant discipline and then they realize that the spaces that subject them to this discipline are impeding their process of understanding and consequently expressing themselves. This establishes their desire to break free from the discipline. This desire is coupled with the comparison they draw from other places where they are able to express themselves freely. Aliya tells us it is only among her friends that she is able to express her gender fully, and not at home, with her family.

> *There are some family issues we have to face from our sisters, brothers and parents; they do not like it so, in our homes we do live like a male but when we go outside in our friends' circle, we do appear as 'she'.*

These realizations of breaking free from the discipline are a vital part of transgender persons' transition, along with the recognition of the spaces that allow for such transition to happen smoothly.

The Transition

After the realization of what is missing in their life and how that reality can really be achieved begins the transition process. Such a realization usually occurs in the presence of others that are able to express themselves with ease, without being punished or disciplined, and by drawing comparisons to the kinds of restrictions one feels in different spaces. Roshan tells us that after meeting her friends, she felt the urge to look like them and so, began her transition process.

I wanted to be like my friends. I left the job, I left my home...and I started my transition. I started hormones and now I know everyone laughs at me but I am happy because I am living who I am from inside so, I don't feel their taunts much.

The transtition is part of the desubjugation process that allows *khwaja sira* to recognize the discipline and realize the steps that need to be taken to break free from the discipline. The comparison with friends to understand and validate one's expression and the support from friends is a key element of the desubjugation process.

Moving away from family for transgender persons not only allows them to live their life in an authentic manner, but for some it also enables them to get their true identity recognized by their families and loved ones. This shows the possibility of breaking free from the discipline that was causing them to be the subjects of the social definitions of normality. Instead of remaining disciplined, the transgender persons negotiated their way to their desubjugation.

The figure below shows the stages through which this negotiation is achieved.
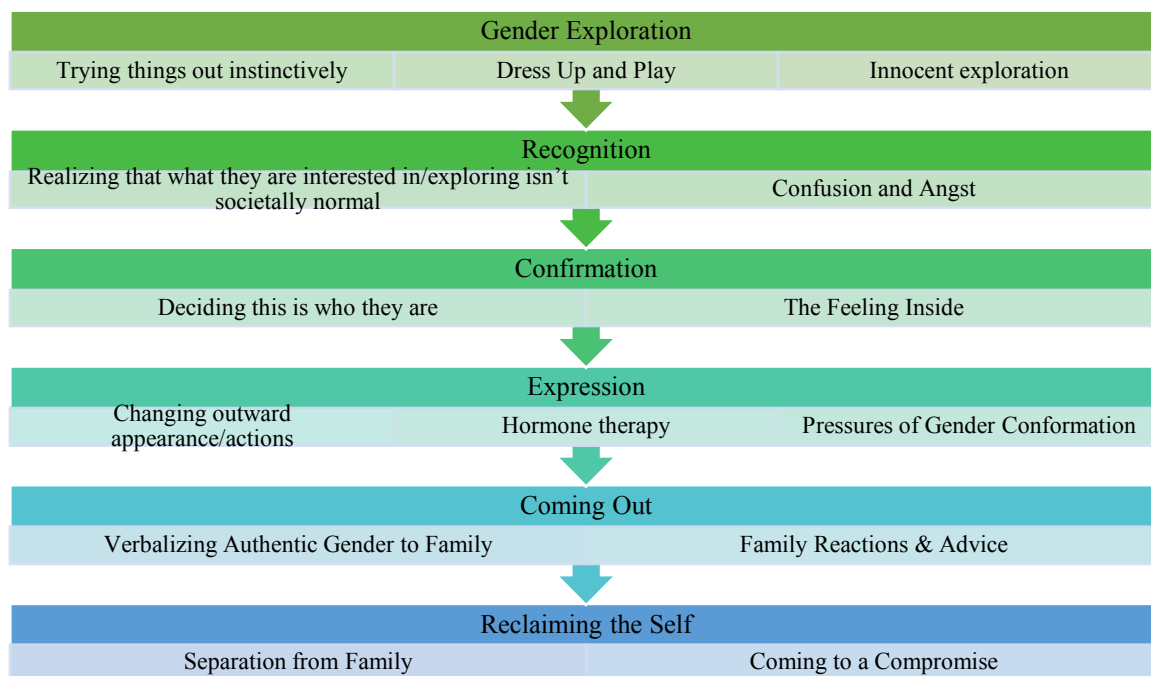
Gender Exploration		
Trying things out instinctively	Dress Up and Play	Innocent exploration

Recognition	
Realizing that what they are interested in/exploring isn't societally normal	Confusion and Angst

Confirmation	
Deciding this is who they are	The Feeling Inside

Expression		
Changing outward appearance/actions	Hormone therapy	Pressures of Gender Conformation

Coming Out	
Verbalizing Authentic Gender to Family	Family Reactions & Advice

Reclaiming the Self	
Separation from Family	Coming to a Compromise

Figure 4: Stages of Navigating Gender Transition within Familial Domains

Figure 4 illustrates the various stages in the transition of transgender persons within familial domains. It comprises of the first stage as being that of gender exploration. This stage usually, not always, comes in the childhood. The right side of this figure shows the extent or kind of discipline that is faced during this stage. The first instances of gender exploration among transgender persons are sometimes ignored by parents who consider these as innocent acts without any consequences of discipline. In other cases, these acts become subject to scrutiny and the transgender person becomes subject to discipline from hereon, through the forms of scolding or beating from parents. As they are subjected to discipline over time, the stage of recognition sets in, and the transgender persons become aware that the expression they are interested in exploring may not be societally accepted as "normal". This stage is usually marked by a confusion about what is right and who

should they be following, as well as and angst about wanting to be a certain way but not being able to be it.

Despite the discipline, and the resulting confusion that the discipline puts them through, transgender persons are able to see their truth through the deep feelings inside them. This marks the next stage of confirmation within themselves, where they recognize and decide on their authentic self, and that they cannot be disciplined out of who they are. Often times, this confirmation comes with a comparison with others. In some cases, recognition and confirmation stage could be overlapping, while in others they may be years apart. For example, Roshan had recognized her gender identity earlier when she lived at her house, and went to the wrong school and college, but it also after she made comparisons with her transwomen friends that she confirmed to herself who she is. The next stage is that of expression. Expression of varying degree happens over different stages, so the act of expression is not specific to one stage in transition. However, this particular stage is marked by that fact that it's the first time transgender persons become open and deliberate about their expression. It moves from an instinctive state of being to a recognized expression. It involves changing outward appearances and presentation of self, and includes hormone therapy, despite the various pressures of gender conformation that transgender persons become subject to.

The next stage is that of coming out, which involves the verbalization or announcement of transgender person's authentic gender among their family members. This is usually marked by some family disagreements and strong reactions over the announcement or advice on possible treatment plans by family members. The last stage is that of reclaiming the self that in most cases in the current sample is done by separation

from family in order to solidify one's identity fully. This is where the transition comes a full circle by coming back to what felt as an instinctive feeling in the beginning but was suppressed by the discipline by the loved ones. At this point, most transgender persons take separation from their families, while others accept a state of compromise with their family members (discussed later in the chapter), in order to reclaim their true self.

Acceptance

Family's acceptance of transgender persons can be seen on a continuum. Rather than complete acceptance of their gender, as none of the interviews suggested absolute acceptance by parents, there are some traits that are more easily accepted by the families. Similarly, there are some family members who are more supportive of the gender expression than the others. There was always some sort of reluctance to accepting their gender expression, or in other cases a compromise seems to be reached. The following section explores acceptance in terms of what support from parents and other family members look like.

Support from Parents

Interviews showed that there is usually some support from either of the parents or from a family member that makes the *khwaja sira* feel accepted and validated at home despite the gender discipline.

> *I live with my family. My family is very supportive in every matter.*

Tina started out by telling that she receives full support from her family in all matters. She was the only participant who suggested full support from parents. To her that support

particularly shows up in the form of acceptance for the way she dressed. For most transgender persons how they present themselves through clothing seems to make a vital part of one's gender expression. The validation for transgender persons usually come in the form of acceptance towards one's clothing and dress choices. If transgender person's dress is considered right or accepted by their family, they felt validated.

I get ready from my home like wear my heels, my dresses. My family supports me. Though Tina feels supported by her family overall, she further opens us and reveals that she feels her true support really comes from her mother. Tina's mother continues to become a protective shield between Tina and her father, and not only defends her but supports her in however she wants to live. Many transgender persons talked about their mothers as more supportive than their fathers. In a typical household, due to patriarchal norms, a majority of mothers in Pakistan are stay-at-home moms. Mothers tend to often give weight to children's individual wishes as compared to fathers who are relatively more concerned about upholding the societal norms (Ali et al. 2011), as also suggested by Kane (2006) that fathers feel personally responsible for having their boy children act in masculine ways. This may also be due to the fact that it's the fathers who usually work outside and come face to face to the outside world and society.

> *My mother told my father that if Tina wanted to do something she will do it, no matter what, secretly or openly; it is good that our children stay open in front of us. For last five years my father understands my mother's statement and he hasn't told me off.*

Many transgender persons felt supported by their mothers and received some validation about their authentic gender expression from them. Roshan tells us that as a child she used to play with make-up and jewelry and her mother used to buy her those, even though her mother considered her a boy. Roshan, as a child always felt supported by her mother because of this.

> *I have two more brothers and no sister, so my mother used to bring me girls' stuff*
>
> *like jewelry, make-up and dresses.*

Nadia feels the support from her mother to the extent that she does not like going to her house if her mother is not at home, she does not feel supported in her absence.

> *Ever since I have come out, if my father was going to suppress me in the absence*
>
> *of my mom then I would leave. I always try to not go home when my mother is not*
>
> *at home.*

Komal also finds an ally in her mother. Her father severely discriminated against her, but her mother made up for that mistreatment by paying her special attention, which convinced her to continue to stay at home and not leave.

> *In my case, I faced negligence from my father so my mother gave me 200% to cover*
>
> *for him as well. If my mother also said that my father is doing right then maybe I*
>
> *would also have left my home at an early age.*

The only support from father was in Tina's case. He does not outrightly support her, but he accepts her mother's request to not interfere in how she is dressing or behaving. Tina also seems to more confident in her gender expression. Her gender exploration process was also not as hard as other transwomen who had to deal with adversary from parents. She is younger than most of her transwomen friends and feels fully transitioned.

For a number of transgender persons, support and acceptance from parents and family comes gradually. In case of Haris, a transman, his family, though initially not in agreement with the change of his gender, has come to reluctantly accept his new gender with time.

In the start they did not understand me, just like every transperson's story, but slowly now they accept me that he is like that, we can't do anything.

Many think the support from the family provide them a shield, protecting them from the punishments of the outside world. Tina thinks it's because of the family's support that she is safe from outside disciplining as well. The fact that her family supports her helps situate her well in her world.

My family is my major safety…because of my family, bad people stay away from me… like some people are violent and some are shemale lovers, these people get in the homes of transwomen and do bad things, they beat them up and cut their hairs so I am safe because my family is with me. Otherwise, I would've also faced many issues outside with men but when they see I live with my family, they step back.

Similar experiences of support from immediate families correlating with better lived experiences outside of homes as well were the echoed in *The Report of the U.S. Transgender Survey* as well that transgender persons whose families were supportive reported a lower number and variety of negative experiences relating to economic stability and health, such as experiencing homelessness, attempting suicide, or experiencing serious psychological distress[15].

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[15] James, Sandy. E., Jody Herman, L., Susan Rankin, Mara Keisling, Lisa Mottet, and Ma'ayan

Anafi. 2016. "The Report of the 2015 U.S. Transgender Survey. National Center for Transgender Equality." https://transequality.org/sites/default/files/docs/usts/USTS-Full-Report-Dec17.pdf

Not all transgender persons had similar amount of support from their parents, especially mothers. Though Kundan has left home, but she feels that her decisions are not accepted and supported by her mother still.

My mother does not agree with me. She says stop all this and come back home, sometimes we get into argument, but mostly I just ignore her.

The Compromise

While the families don't seem fully comfortable with the change of gender of their loved ones, there seems to be a certain leeway, a give-and-take that they allow their family members. There are certain family restrictions or behaviors that the newly gender transitioned persons seem to settle with. The acceptance of restrictions from families is mostly in exchange of some freedom of the gender expression that the family is allowing them. Both parties reach an unspoken compromise on fulfilling the terms laid out by the other. For example, in case of Ayat's family, they have come to accept the way Ayat presents herself publicly, but she would still refrain from coming to family events in her feminine dressed.

My family is very progressive; they're educated people, they come from a good background. They say we accept you as you are, but don't come in this get-up on any family gathering. And it's honestly not really been said with words, it's this understanding between us.

In other cases, families of the transgender persons accept most of their gender expression in an unspoken way, and don't object to their ways of being, but leave out some exceptions,

such as continuing to use to the old pronouns. This is true in Komal's case, as her mother accepts her way of dressing, but still continues to use 'he' pronouns for her.

> *My mom actually accepts me as a trans but she always said no you're my son, she always uses words like "kya kar rahe ho? Kahan se aa rahe ho?"* (what are you doing, where are you coming from: where in both instances her mother is using the masculine case in Urdu*) she talks to me like I am her son.*

In this case, Komal does not seem to mind her mother's refusal to refer to her as her daughter, and that is the compromise she seems to be willingly making in exchange for the acceptance her mother shows for her dressing.

Yet most transgender persons have come to accept that their family members may never fully accept their true gender expression. They have come to a compromise that there may need to be some pretention in the presence of the family members at home, just to keep the peace of the house going, as evident from Aliya's interview.

> *We have to come back home, and it is difficult to live at home. You have to pretend in front of your family which you sometimes may not want to.*

This pretention or act often happens in the form of playing a different dress-up. A number of transwomen participants indicated that it is common practice among them and their friends to dress as a male at home, and as a female when they are outside. So, in this case, the space to express one's gender is found outside of their homes. Aliya continues in her interview to highlight this further.

> *It's at home that I wear normal clothes but when I go outside with my friends on parties, then I change my get-up and go there. Oh, it's feels so good; it makes me happy because in my family I do not live like that but outside I do.*

Kaanita also wears different set of clothes whenever she visits home, just to stay within the gender conforms of the family.

> *I do not wear female shalwar kameez and bra when I come home; I wear pants, shirt and big shawl on it and then I can go home…my hair stay the same and my other things but I do change my clothes.*

Similarly, Twinkle who lives away from family, but meets her family often, changes into different set of clothes for home.

> *When I am at my family home then… I leave early… I first travel to my own apartment… get ready and then go to work. And then if I have to go back to the family home that I just come back to my apartment, change and then go back to my family home. They don't want to transform me, but I don't wear feminine clothes in front of them, as they don't let me.*

Similarly, some transgender people that live with their families have developed an understanding over time that they will probably need to come to a compromise for some of the curfews and restrictions imposed on them by their parents. Through this, there is a mutual acceptance of the traits, that they find undesirable in one another. Family accepts some of the gender expression, while still imposing some restrictions that the transgender person puts up with more comfortably due to this sense of exchange. There is a resulting validation one gets from the parents' acceptance of some of their gender expression. Komal explains how she is not allowed to stay out late at nights, as the norm goes for women in Pakistan. While this frustrates her as it restricts her movement and freedom, but it gives her a sense of validation when her parents restrict her in the same way they restrict their

other daughters. This gives the gender affirmation she needs from them and makes her feel they have accepted her as a woman.

> *They say if we accept you like this then you should act like a girl. Do girls go outside at this time? I think it is justified. She always told me that girls never go out at night. You know this is the norm that a respectful family's daughter can't go out after it's dark. She knows everything, she asks me that where are you going, to whom you are going? She accepts it as says OK go but come early!*

For some transgender persons, the families have become more open to discussing the possibility of another gender. While families still express disappointment or sadness over their change in gender, the family still shows signs of a gradual process of coming to terms with the new gender, allowing for avenues for more open conversations. Ayat takes us through a similar conversation with her sister that enabled her to communicate to her that she is the same person at heart with a different body.

> *She said I just miss my old brother. I said … I'm the same brother… but... I... live a different life and this is how I am. The same person is very much inside me.*

While many families with transgender members have come to a comprise amongst themselves, not everyone has had a similar experience of at least a partial acceptance by family members with some terms and conditions. Some narrate incidents of outright rejection. Shama is narrating an incident of her grandfathers' death, where the norm is to physically console and comfort grieving family member for the loss of their loved ones, but Shama was not offered such a consolation at this specific occasion, demonstrating a lack of acceptance towards her and giving her a sense that no middle ground of compromise can be reached among family members.

> *Going home is horrible. I always hope I don't need to go home. My dad didn't even hug me on the grandpa's death. I said OK if not even now then who cares about you. I cared for my grandfather while he sick, I was sad I couldn't see him before he died.*

Reuniting and Gaining Family Acceptance

After the move away from family, a transgender person still wishes to gain acceptance by their family members in their authentic gender. Moving away gives them the power to express themselves more authentically without the fear of rejection or discipline from the family members. This is where one negotiates to break free from societal definitions that control their bodies, and they attempt to create their own definitions, and get them accepted by their family. Ayat is happy to feel accepted by her sister after her move. She walks us through her experiences of allowing her sister to see her as her authentic self.

> *The good thing is that last time when my sister was here, we kind of did open up, I had consciously not removed my nail polish and I had consciously not tied up my hair. I was still wearing unisex clothes. So, she looked at me and she said that no, something is different. You look changed.*

Ayat felt her sister's curiosity was piqued in a positive and accepting way. Transgender person receives validation in their gender when their dressing is accepted by their families. They are more easily able to carry out fashion conversations after their move away from homes. Most transwomen receive gender affirmation through the conversation over fashion. Even if the family member is not fully accepting the gender, as long as they are conversing around fashion, this brings validation to their sense of style. Ayat explains that

she received this validation through a visit to her apartment by her sister, where she was able to gain her sister's confidence, and bond about fashion with her more openly, giving her a sense of fulfillment.

> *She saw my pictures, she saw my clothes… she also saw some of my jewelry and she really liked it. And she picked up some of my jewelry because she said that, you know, I like it, I'm going to take it with me. So I liked it. You know, I loved her bag…I said can I keep it, it's just really smashing good. So, it was very nice that we were able to talk about these things that we could never before.*

Ayat successfully negotiated her way her out of the social definitions, and created acceptance towards her new gender with her family through this conversation.

The acceptance and levels of discipline towards transgender persons in familial spaces in shown in the figure below.
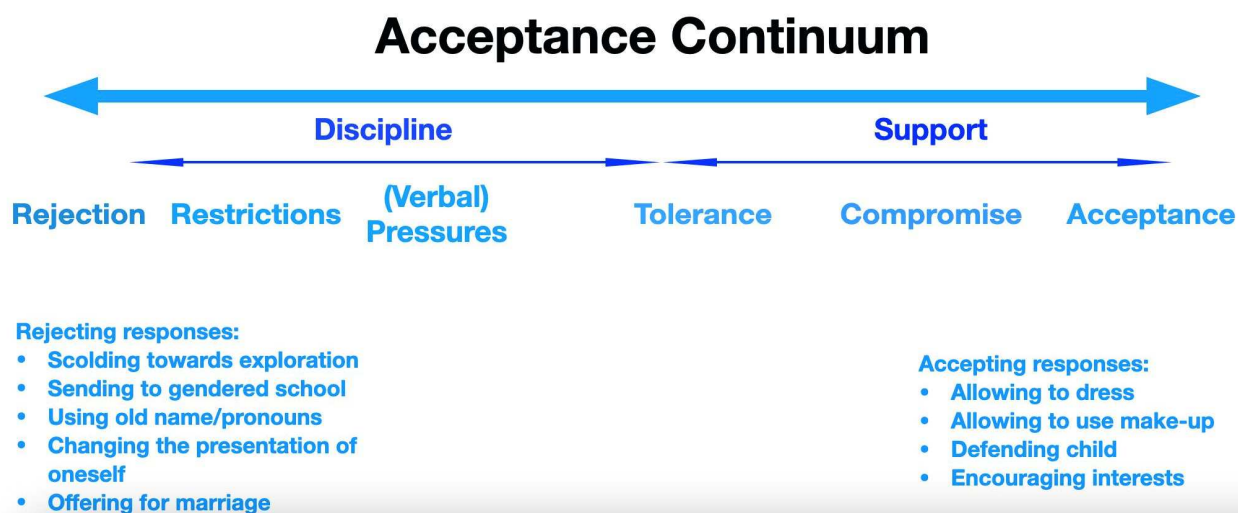

Figure 5: Acceptance Continuum

Based on the interviews, figure 5 shows what a family's acceptance continuum towards their transgender family members look like. On the extreme end of discipline is outright

rejection and the extreme end of support is complete acceptance. While we don't see instances of complete acceptance, there are instances of outright rejection, such as in Shama's case, she saw outright rejection towards her at her grandfather's funeral, where her family members refused to speak to her. Other forms of discipline towards the gender can be seen in terms of restrictions being imposed on transgender persons against their gender expression as well as pressures to conform. The right side of the continuum shows levels of support that transgender persons get from their family members. Tolerance is the mid-point, almost a neutral point where transgender persons are neither accepted nor rejected; it's the point where transgender persons are able to coexist with their families in a relatively harmonious situation. Due to the heavy amounts of discipline faced by transgender persons towards their gender expression, the interviews show that tolerance is seen by them in a rather positive light. Compromise is also an important point in the continuum seen in the families of some transgender persons, that allows for acceptance towards specific gender expressions in exchange for some restrictions.

How Societal Pressures Affect Family Dynamics

This chapter walks through different stages in transition of a transgender person and the acceptance (lack of) towards them in a familial domain, in a more or less chronological order. Time and again, transgender persons are disciplined and told to change the way they look, dress, and present themselves, because they are defying the social definitions of normality. This may happen during any of the stages of transition. Most transgender persons suggested that on many occasions, the disciplining from parents is a result of the societal disciplining, i.e., the pressures that parents feel from the neighborhood or extended family about disciplining one's gender non-conforming kid. Komal explains how she

would catch the eyes of the women in the neighborhood, who then would always conspire and complain to her family about her dressing or her looks.

> *Especially when you live at your birth home, the aunties in the street, those social aunties start saying to my mother that please guide your son, he should cut his hair.*

Komal's frustration with this incident lies in the fact that they interfere in her life, get her mother worked up about her ways of living, and pressure her into disciplining her 'son.' Komal had given in to the disciplining and changed the way she looks multiple times. But she had still never managed to please everyone because she could not look like the 'male' that they all wanted her to, the male that fit their definition of 'male.'

> *Hello! why should I cut my hair? Like I have done almost everything now to please them, if I cut my hair, I will still never look like a male that they want to.*

For most transgender persons coming face to face with extended family members is not a pleasant experience hardly devoid of consequences. Most of such interactions with extended family result in further arguments with the immediate family, as they complain and pressurize the immediate family to discipline their transgender family members' dressing and expressions. Roshan explains how her family has to go through mental stress every time an extended family member points fingers at how Roshan presents herself.

> *It's difficult to cross paths with my family relatives in market, they live close to where I live. When they see me like this, they don't leave my family in peace. They taunt my family about me, so my family also undergoes pressures because of me.*

Roshan explains how specific events can lead to stress for family, adding the pressure of being gender disciplined. The family feels disgrace in being associated with a person who is involved in things that are not considered normal.

After my transition there were few videos leaked of mine and those videos were seen by my family and my other family members are now more stressed.

Komal avoids going to family events because of all the objections on her looks she has to face from the events.

If I go to family events wearing male dress, even then they would say oh you look female, look at his eyebrows, why doesn't he have facial hair, his hair is too long, cut his hair, why his nails are too long? I love to attend events but those places are not for me.

Komal has to assimilate and show up as male member of the household in these family events, because that is the only acceptable way there. Even as a male, she has to hear a lot of objections as she does not fit the society's definition of male.

*I wanted to go to my family events like my cousin's marriage but I can't. Even they insist my family that please bring Komal with you. If I go there as a male I know what will happen and there's no way for a female getup that I go to my cousin's marriage wearing sharara or lehnga (*a traditional skirt worn on weddings and festivals*), then I'll just be wajibul qatal* (an expression used by the fundamental Muslim priests to suggest that someone indulging in an irreligious activity can or should be killed, to get rid of evil from the society).

If she appears in these gatherings as a woman, as her authentic self, and if she really wears what she wants to, she will probably get killed at their hands. The expression she used for that seemingly warranted killing to rid the society of the wrong, was instant and involuntary. She has been disciplined into believing that she is against the norm and so is deserving of any amount of punishment. This is pointing us back to the discipline that

Foucault talked about where no one in specific in responsible for delivering the modern-day punishments[16], but the subject is operating on autopilot, and is aware that they must abide of the norm of the society, without questioning it. According to Komal, her authentic gender expression is unacceptable for her extended family, that constitutes her immediate circle of society, as she lays down for us the extent of its unacceptability.

When Roshan comes face to face with extended family outside of home, she avoids them, their judgment, and their disciplining by wearing a mask.

> *I try to wear mask to avoid such situations because then they don't see me or judge me as I am not showing my face to them.*

For other transgender persons, their immediate family support is all they are concerned about, and they can fight the rest, as long as they feel supported by their immediate family, such as Tina. She does not concern herself with anyone other than her family that supports her fully.

> *You know if your family members agree with you then you don't need to bother about your neighborhood; you can fight with them.*

Komal thinks that it's usually not the immediate family that has issues with one's identity, it is really the social pressures that pressurize the families to discipline their children's gender with restrictions to the extent that it drives them out their own homes eventually.

> *This is why parents disown their children because of society pressures, society norms, people's reactions and that's why they leave their houses. You know it is a big decision I can never think about leaving my home.*

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[16] Foucault, Michel, 1926-1984. "The Gentle Punishment." *Discipline and Punish: the Birth of the Prison*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1977: 129-131

It does seem from the pressures of the extended family, that this immediate society becomes a surveillance[17] for transgender persons, where their gender expression is constantly visible and vulnerable to the society and consequently their gender gets disciplined and corrected according to the societal definitions constantly.

Conclusion

For transgender persons, the process of understanding oneself and one's authentic gender identity is not a straightforward one, as they are faced with continuous gender discipline from their families. The process usually starts with an exploratory stage of discovering of one's interest in toys and games that are usually associated with the opposite gender, which leads to some concern in the family. Some parents become more concerned than the others who pressurize their children to play with the toys that conform to the gender norms. From childhood toys to adult habits, *khwaja sira* go through gender discipline by their families continuously. This discipline comes in the shape of trying to teach them the "normal" behavior in terms of expression, clothes etc. Forms of discipline take the shape of scolding or taunting them about their gender expression, or even by giving them physical beating. The constant gender discipline results in confusion about one's identity, and also leads to angst and frustration. Despite all this, *khwaja sira* come to recognize and confirm their authentic gender identities within themselves. After coming out to their families, and

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[17] Foucault talks about surveillance done by a dome-shaped style of the prison building, called the Panopticon, with the tower positioned in the middle in such a way that everyone stays under permanent surveillance. This helps create a state of visibility that helps control inmate behaviors and bodies, and assures an automatic functioning of power. In this case, when the prisoners know that they are subject to a constant but unidentifiable gaze, they know they are being watched, the gaze engraves in them, in their souls. The disciplinary power of the panopticon involves surveillance and control that works on the bodies and into the souls of the inmates. They become self-disciplined.

having owned their authentic gender expression, *khwaja sira* are faced with harsh reactions from families and in many instances even advised to seek medical help. Most of the *khwaja sira* decide to leave their homes and separate from their families in order to reclaim their gender freely.

Families' acceptance towards transgender persons exists on a continuum. While there may be complete acceptance or support from one family member in a rare case, the support where it exits, mostly takes the form of a compromise. The family accepts specific forms of gender expression, where *khwaja sira* become comfortable with the gender discipline in exchange for freedom in specific forms of gender expression, such as accepting the wrong use of pronouns by family members in exchange for the permission to wear desired clothes.

One of the disciplining techniques parents use is forcibly enrolling their *khwaja sira* children or young adults in the schools or colleges that are gender segregated according to the gender assigned to them at birth, outrightly negating their authentic gender identity. This is a trend seen among most families of *khwaja sira*, with a strong belief in the institution of schools to discipline their transgender children into "normal" behavior. While we explored how transgender persons in Pakistan are disciplined by their families and how they negotiate the discipline within their families in this chapter, the next chapter makes way for us to explore how formal social institutions such as schools and healthcare systems gender discipline the transgender persons in Pakistan and explores any mechanisms transgender persons adopt in navigating these institutions.

CHAPTER 6: NAVIGATING INSTITUTIONS AS A TRANSGENDER PERSON IN PAKISTAN

Families are those first places where transgender persons become subject to gender discipline. Being faced with gender discipline in a prime place such as one's home, at a prime time, such as the impressionable young or teen years make the process of recognizing and expressing one's authentic gender identity even more challenging for transgender persons. However, the institutions of families are not the only ones that transgender persons must navigate gender discipline through. Transgender persons are subject to gender discipline at material institutions that include formal public or private institutions such as schools, healthcare systems etc., thus turning the discipline towards them more formal, legitimized by more formal institutions.

Foucault (1995) talks about the hierarchical power that institutions possess that come with the kind of surveillance that happens there, where everyone is supervised. This power itself even supervises the individuals who are considered the professional authorities that are assigned the task of supervising others. Foucault says "at the heart of all disciplinary systems functions a small penal mechanism…with its own laws, its specific offenses, its particular forms of judgement."(1995: 177-178). This penal mechanism with its judgment is speaking of the institutions categorically define what is considered "normal" and then use these definitions as the standard to pass judgements on what and who is to be considered and labeled as "normal," leaving out a vast array of possible "others," left feeling less than normal. This process normalizes the creation of hierarchies among people. The fact that these hierarchies are created within institutions render them as legitimate,

coercing people to conform to what is considered normal. This is the coercive disciplinary power that the institutions possess.

This chapter focuses on how transgender persons are disciplined by formal or material institutions such as schools, health systems, police etc. These institutions along with the "knowledge" created by the social definitions of normality are used to discipline the transgender persons in Pakistan. The stories narrated in this chapter reflect the private, invisible yet "total"[18] disciplining of the "soul" that Foucault talked about, that help turn individuals into subjects and normalize their identities. The disciplinary power of institutions is rather invisible and dispersed, because you cannot visibly see it or point to it, but it is the kind of power that is deep enough to force people to submit and conform. For example, the chapter shows how transgender persons, through the mistreatment by health professionals, are disciplined into becoming invisible at the healthcare systems.

Discipline forces people to internalize social definitions of normality, thereby creating a socially acceptable identity that is deemed acceptable by society. At the same time, people within the same society are sometimes able to recognize and resist the society's control over their bodies. The chapter shows how transgender persons are subject to the social definitions of institutions and the knowledge created by them. It shows the consequent disciplining done by these institutions, but also reveals how transgender persons make active choices of resisting the discipline, and thus resisting societal subjectification subject, negotiating their way out of the disciplinary system.

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[18] Foucault talks about the strictness and rigidity in institutions that do a "total" (p. 249) surveillance of the subject's bodies and consequently disciplines their "souls." Foucault uses the institution of prison to lay out his case, whereas I apply this on institutions such as schools.
Foucault, Michel. 1995. "Complete and Austere Institutions." Pp. 231–56 in *Discipline and punish: The birth of the*
  prison. New York: Vintage.

The first institution that we discuss in this chapter with it disciplinary powers is that of the education system in the forms of schools, colleges and universities.

School

The school system is Pakistan is divided between public schools and private schools. Many public schools are free of charge for students to attend, while the others have minimal tuition fee; they are characterized by a large number of students in each class, with poor quality of education, many of them lack the decent facilities, such as proper furniture, sanitation etc., and have underpaid teachers and staff[19]. Private schools, on the other hand, have higher quality of education, have better facilities, better curriculum, as well as are more expensive to attend. This creates a gap in the quality of education attained in each of these types of schools[20], as well the standard of living of living of the students who attend these institutions. Most public schools and a vast majority of private schools are gender segregated, divided into all-boys schools and all-girls schools.

Perceived Disciplinary Power of Schools. The interview data shows that most transgender persons were enrolled in a gender segregated school. Almost all of the study participants were enrolled in schools that aligned with the sex assigned at birth, as opposed to the one they truly identified with. The interviews suggested a strong sense among participants of not being able to belong to the institution; there was a strong sense of being

[19] Anon. n.d. "Education and Schools in Pakistan." Education and Schools in Pakistan | Expat Arrivals. Retrieved May 19, 2022 (https://www.expatarrivals.com/asia-pacific/pakistan/education-and-schools-pakistan).

[20] Hunter, Rober. 2020. "Education in Pakistan." WENR. Retrieved May 19, 2022 (https://wenr.wes.org/2020/02/education-in-pakistan).

at the wrong school as they were disciplined into acting like the gender they didn't identify with. They were also expected to behave like their peers and in accordance with the unspoken gender norms laid out by the school, such as the "normal" mannerism of a boy. Parents of transwomen deliberately enrolled their children in an all-boys school in hopes to reform and discipline their behavior into a more masculine kind. The expectation was that the school will fix and discipline the child into the "normal" gender mannerism. At an early age, parents would notice signs that their children are not playing the sports that were associated with boys, or their body language matched more with that of a girl's instead of boy's.

As discussed in the previous chapter, parents were usually more concerned about their perceived boy child as being not boy or masculine enough. One of the ways parents countered this dilemma was by enrolling their transgender child in an all-boys school, so the school teaches the child their gender, and the child learns how to behave like boy from their peers. There was a sense of belief in the power schools to discipline transgender persons. Falak's father decided against Falak's will, to enroll her in an all-boys' school, so she will start acting more "normal" in terms of gender.

> *My father was noticing me since 7th grade that there are no changes in me, I am not the son he wants. My father admitted me in an all-boys government school, with 150 students in a class to toughen me up. I was previously in a private school, so it was a different experience for me. I cried a lot that I don't want to study in this school but my father didn't listen to me.*

In the Foucauldian sense, this is that system of discipline seeking to control the population by creating a binary opposition of "normal[21]" versus "abnormal" within the institution of education. Here "normal" is akin to acting masculine if a person is assigned the male sex at birth.

Komal's father insisted on enrolling her in an all-boys' school, as a male student, in the hopes to discipline her into the "normal" behavior.

> *I spent my three years in that all-boys' public school and then college. Only I know*
> *with what difficulty I spent those years at the school.*

In the school that was not meant for them, they were made to wear clothes they did not want to wear, and use pronouns they did not want to use for themselves.

> *I had to wear a sash in school, and I didn't want to. I was always scolded by my*
> *teachers when I didn't wear one.*

The sash or a stole is a part of the girls' uniform across the schools in Pakistan. Saami explains how he was forced to wear a sash. He mostly avoided wearing it but was disciplined (scolded) into wearing it by teachers. Saami also explains how later on in his life, when he wanted to teach at a school, the school would not hire him because his clothes were not feminine enough.

> *I went looking for a job as a teacher. My documents and degrees said female so I*
> *had to act female during my job hunt too. They refused me because I did not look*
> *female enough. They want stylish female teachers. I felt really bad about it. They*

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[21] Foucault, Michel. 1995. "The Means of Correct Training." Pp. 170–94 in *Discipline and punish: The birth of the*
       prison. New York: Vintage.

wanted to hire teachers by their looks and fashion, not by their experience and

skills.

While the institutions of school discipline the students, they also discipline the teachers, as can be seen in quote above. This circles us back to Foucault's idea that the supervisors are also supervised in this disciplinary surveillance system[22]. In schools, transgender persons are forced to dress as per the societal gender norms, which made them realize they were at the wrong school, in a body and mannerism that is unacceptable to this wrong school. Yet, they were forced to pretend and express themselves as the gender they were expected to be. If a person realized that they need to transition to the other gender, university was not the place to do that. This would mean transgressing the bounds of normality set by the society. Komal wanted to transition, but she knew she may not be able to put up with everyone, and even go to the university if she started transitioning, as the societal response would be difficult to handle:

> *When I was in the university, I got admission as a male, like I didn't transition at that time but I knew that if I started my transitioning during my studies then I could not move about and go to university like that. So, I stuck to wearing male clothes, kept short hair. It was tough for me...that span of male identity, that period is very difficult for me.*

Komal talks about her tough time at the university, as she could not transition and had to continue on with her male identity. There is a sense of coercion that seems to be experienced by the participants when this pretense is taking place. They want to transition, but there is a fear in being their authentic self; the transition will have consequences by the institution they are enrolled in. It will be followed by stricter discipline. That is the

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[22] Foucault, Michel. 1977. "The Means of Correct Training." Pp. 170–94 in *Discipline and punish: The birth of the prison.* New York: Vintage.

"knowledge[23]" that has been transmitted to Komal through which the power is exerted on her to continue to pretend to act as "normal" according to the society and not as the gender she is.

Gender disciplining in school. Gender discipline happens in schools in several ways, through peers pressuring into societal norms or transgender students being picked on, mocked by peers or punished teachers. There are many means adopted to discipline people at school. Falak was enrolled in an all-boys' school where her body language, way of speaking or expressions were not acceptable to those around her and left her in a confusion. Means of discipline were adopted in the school, demanding obedience from Falak, when her ways seemed different from "normal."

> *On my first day at school someone gave me two slaps straight on my face to fix my*
>
> *girly way of speaking. I thought what is this!*

Other means of disciplining a student into "normal" behavior adopted in schools are of verbal nature. Komal talks about the mocking behavior coming from her teacher and peers upon finding her voice not as masculine as they had expected as per the social definitions of normality.

> *During my first presentation my lecturer started laughing and told me "Your voice*
>
> *is so…" I said what? What happened with my voice, you've seen me talk in the*
>
> *class! I thought why they are insulting me when I am standing on the dais and*

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[23] Foucault, Michel. 1980. *Truth and Subjectivity: Howison Lectures.* Retrieved from Berkeley Library, University of California. https://guides.lib.berkeley.edu/c.php?g=901488&p=6487003 Foucault, Michel. 1980. *Truth and Subjectivity: Howison Lectures.* Retrieved from Berkeley Library, University of California. https://guides.lib.berkeley.edu/c.php?g=901488&p=6487003

giving a presentation. You can expect it from students but not from your teachers.

When teacher laughs at me then obviously everyone starts laughing.

Komal's experience indicates how those in power can help the 'discipline' by giving it legitimacy, as the mockery is now coming from an authority figure, a teacher, thus giving an institutional power to the discipline.

Falak's experience at the boys' school was marked by harassment from fellow students and teachers at school. Her body was directly controlled through harassment in the form of touching, and teasing. She quotes an example of such control over her body.

Only I know how I saved myself from boys… whenever I went to the washroom, they would block the washroom; it was very awkward. They were stubborn and stupid they touched me, teased me for the way I talked and walked and harassed me.

For most transgender people their struggles of not fitting in, and feeling well-accepted by the society, based on the definitions of normality, begin at school. Kaanita's experience in the boys' school made her feel unsafe, as she was punished often for her lack of "normality". She was given titles from her peers reflecting that she is less than normal.

When I got admission in boys' school then there's no safe place. Our life starts from school. All children called me "khusra[24]." At that time, we also don't know what is it.

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[24] Both *hijra* and *khusra* are terms used to refer to transgender people. This term means 'transgender person', but the people in the trans community do not appreciate the use of these terms for them. Based the interview with Ayat, they don't like being associated with them as they are both used in a derogatory and condescending manner to speak of transgender persons as belonging to neither of the gender binary categories, when in fact transgender persons belong to both categories.

She learnt the term "*khusra*" in her school for the first time, where it was used for her. This is a derogatory term used to refer to transgender persons. Kaanita recalls that this term was later used for at a number of occasions in her during her life in other spheres as well. Transmen also had experiences of being forced to wear uniforms for school that they did not associate with. They was some indication of verbal harassment for them in schools, especially the usage of the term *khusra* or *hijra* for them. None of the transmen reported any physical or sexual harassment of the nature that transwomen experienced in schools. Bilal recalls the use of term *hijra* for him in school.

> *I hated my uniform, I had cut my hair short, they said I had different way of walking*
>
> *than others. The other students said "you are hijra." Why are you like this!*

The term *khusra*, along with the term *hijra* used for Bilal helped create that opposition that a disciplining society operates through. It is the opposition of normal versus abnormal; the opposition of socially accepted gender of male or female versus the unaccepted *khusra* or *hiijra*.

The Choice Between Gender and School. Most transgender people felt there was a clash between their own gender identity and the school they attended. The schools they attended reinforced the societal definitions of normality in gender. The transgender persons were aware that they did not fit those definitions of normal in gender. When the society forced these definitions on them, it caused them emotional distress. Komal explains that going as a male clashed with her true identity, which had made her depressed during her university life.

I was not male from inside, it was clashing with me. People say their best time was university life, but I say my worst time is my university time.

For most transgender people it was the understanding that there is a need for education for them to build their future, that kept them going through the difficult path. Komal takes us through her everyday struggle of convincing herself to continue her education.

Every day I decided to not go to university the next day…but later at night I would decide I cannot give up. I need to make my life.

As a result of this iterative discipline, Komal was disciplined into behaving as the society wanted her to, during this time, in order to achieve her desire of attending university.

Falak also recognized the need for education while also addressing her need to be in the right gender. So, she endured people's mocking and behavior and started her transition. This is the choice Falak actively made, breaking free from how society wanted to subjugate her. She refused to internalize the impacts of objectification, and to subjectify her in the process.

Then slowly I focused on my transition. I decided I'll let them do what they are doing or saying. I finished my first year at university and then I interacted with more trans people and then I understood myself even more. It gave me a chance to explore myself.

While Falak was subject to societal disciplining at her university, the outcome for her was different from Komal's. She slowly negotiated out of the discipline and continued onwards with her transition journey despite what she heard from others. Komal did end up with a more prestigious job position after university than Falak, indicating how the structure also

advantages those that are disciplined according to what society considers normal. At the same time, in terms of personality, Komal continued being her obedient yet timid self through university and later at work too, as compared to Falak, who was more outspoken. Others were unable to cope with the discipline at school, including the feelings of exclusion they felt there, and consequently discontinued education. Bilal's educational journey was cut short by the depression he felt due to the discipline he faced at school everyday.

> *Just because of my teacher's behavior towards my way of walking and speaking I barely finished tenth standard. I didn't leave school but I would not go to college because of the depression I felt for how badly they treated me.*

Self-Discovery. School also becomes a place for discovering more about one's gender, sexuality, and attraction by watching and learning from peers' behaviors, or by watching and drawing comparisons with oneself. This is how the social definitions of normalcy come into being informally through student interactions within the formal institution of school. For Kaanita, school became the place where she found out about where she stood in comparison to her peers. She found she was "normally" supposed to get attracted to girls according to her peers, but instead she did not feel attracted to them.

> *In the school, I was with girls like I am their brother or sister, then slowly I understood my attraction for girls is different. People started telling me you are gay, you are "khusra," so with time I understood myself that I different from boys...I am not a boy nor a girl. I am different ...I am boy by sex, but by gender I am female ...I am trans.*

Health System

Other than schools, hospitals are another of these institutions that discipline transgender persons. Where hospitals provide treatment to all, they do discriminate against transgender people. Sixty percent of the transgender persons in the US were denied treatment by a health care professional or center (Grant et al 2017). While such statistics are not present for Pakistan, almost all participants had stories about themselves or their friends being denied treatment at the hospital. One of the main reasons quoted for being denied treatment is the question of admitting a transgender person in a male or female ward. Falak speaks of a transgender friend who was outrightly denied treatment for a similar reason.

> *She had gastric issue, there was a lot of pain in her belly but they are not giving her place in male or female ward and said "there's no ward for khwaja sira, so there's no place for you. So, you have to go somewhere else."*

Being denied treatment is a form of discipline inflicted upon a transgender person. It communicates to them that they do not fit the hospital's social definition of normalcy. This is how the institution of hospital participates in the disciplining of the subjects.

Almost all participants talked about their fear of going to hospitals. Many called hospitals "unsafe," as hospitals made them feel unaccepted, creating an awareness among the transgender persons about the institutions' definitions of what is normal and what is not, what is acceptable and what is not. This has dire consequences subjecting the bodies of the transgender persons, as all this happens during an illness when one's body and mind are already undergoing internal stress, while being marginalized by the institution. This is also echoed in *The Report of the 2015 U.S. Transgender Survey*, that showed that one-third (33%) of those transgender persons who saw a healthcare provider in the past year reported

having at least one negative experience related to being transgender, including being refused treatment, verbally harassed, or physically or sexually assaulted, or having to educate the provider about transgender people in order to get the required and appropriate care (James et al. 2016). This speaks to universal nature of the discipline that health systems readily subject transgender persons to, across different geographical regions and contexts, making them feel less than normal. Komal narrates an incident of her friend, where interactions with hospital personnel make her feel less than normal.

> *She was HIV positive so when she goes there for her follow-up, doctors look at her in an awkward way that she felt she should not have gone there. She said they touch me like I have contagious disease, and in fact they try not to touch me. She has HIV she is already suffering from stress. I was crying when I heard this. Doctor should not be treating her in that way, how will other staff learn then?*

The stories they hear from friends also create a further sense of fear among them about hospitals, as they become aware they are unable to match the institutional definition of acceptable and normal. Komal tells us about her fear of going to the hospital, which is derived from her friends' difficult experiences at the hospital.

> *I have heard those hospital experiences are not good for us so, I try not to go, it is like a phobia for me. I will fully cover myself and that's how I go to hospital. Normally people have hospital phobia but for me I have heard about these things from others.*

The same fear of seeking medical attention is also echoed in *The Report of the 2015 U.S. Transgender Survey* that showed that in the past year, 23% of the respondents did not

see a doctor when they needed to because of fear of being mistreated as a transgender person.

Identity Checks

The formation of knowledge is the same as exercise of power in the Foucauldian sense, which creates social definitions leading to social hierarchies of normality[25]. There is no single nexus of power; populations are controlled and constructed as subjects by dispersed loci of power. The example of power of knowledge is a "permanent record," that comes in the form of an identity card which permanently ascribes a gender to a person, eliminating the possibility of fluidity in gender. The everyday power is manifested through this document to verify a person's gender identity threatening to permanently marginalize a transgender person through discipline, failing to acknowledge fluidity in their gender and affirm their transition. The power of verifications keep a check on whether the person behaves in the manner suited to the gender that appears on that document. The normalizing force of this document is enacted invisibly. It makes the person permanently visible through their document.

According to the interviews, there are many everyday challenges that transgender people face in getting their documentation such as identity cards or driver's license switched to the transitioned gender. These include the need for bringing hormone therapy certifications. These certificates are a challenge to attain. They are also required to bring

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[25] Foucault, Michel. 1980. *Truth and Subjectivity: Howison Lectures.* Retrieved from Berkeley Library, University of California. https://guides.lib.berkeley.edu/c.php?g=901488&p=6487003 Foucault, Michel. 1980. *Truth and Subjectivity: Howison Lectures.* Retrieved from Berkeley Library, University of California. https://guides.lib.berkeley.edu/c.php?g=901488&p=6487003

sex change surgery documents, breast or ovary removal surgery documents. Saami and Haris also talked about the ID card office now suggesting that a board will convene on whether gender for any specific person can be changed on the ID card, making the process highly bureaucratic and unattainable.

Consequently, the gender mentioned in a transgender person's documentation in Pakistan will almost always not match with their current gender identity that has undergone the transition. Except for Bilal, no other person in the sample had their authentic gender appear on their documentation. In Bilal's case, it happened because his family had never filed any official documentation for Bilal since his birth, so all his identity documentation was filed after his 18th birthday as male under his new name. Many transgender persons feel much more at peace going to places that do not require any identity verification, as Saami, a transman explains:

> *Well, there are few places where I easily go to, like cinemas, malls, parks, I am*
> *relaxed there, where documents are not required.*

While there are challenges for many in feeling accepted by society in their true gender, there are some that face the opposite challenge. While their appearance match their real gender identity, their documents do not, to the extent that certain places have a hard time accepting the gender displayed on the identity documents. This happens mostly in places where identity verification may be required, for those who haven't yet been able to get the gender on their identity card changed due to tedious administrative processes. The permanence of the record has a normalizing force which is enacted invisibly by making one permanently visible as a document (Foucault 1995: 189-190). This invisible knowledge resembles in principle to the idea of surveillance, except now it's documented,

making one constantly visible and watched, making it deeply coercive. Saami goes on to explain, with a slight joy and frustration in his voice when he talks about how masculine he looks that people refuse to understand that he was once assigned a different gender.

> *I can easily pass as a male, unless it is place where documents are required for entering, such as hospitals, banks etc. I do not feel comfortable going there as my documents and my appearance do not match now so there are questions, and they don't accept that these are my documents.*

The visible record leaves one captive in case of a change, which is inevitable in a person who transitioning through genders. Saami narrates an incident about being excluded from the ladies' section.

> *At government hospital, that was my first time, and I thought they look at the CNIC (Computerized National Identity Card), so I entered female line. I could see people talking. Ladies usually have a lot of issues. A woman said what are you doing in our line, it's a woman's line and then she told other people and created a scene and gathered people...*

In this case, the lack of acceptance towards Saami based on his look was an attempt to discipline him according to the social definitions of normality that subordinate anything less than normal. While he was already aware of the chances of such a scene, but the fact that he carried a written record in his hand had made him move to a line that matched that written and visible record, as opposed to his true self and presentation. In this case, Saami had to use his written record to prove, against his will, that he was a woman at a hospital.

> *I showed my ID card... usually I go to bank, there I face this problem. It's like too much.*

The Report of the 2015 U.S. Transgender Survey also reveals that a similar issue exists in the U.S. More than two-thirds (68%) of the transgender respondents reported that none of their IDs had the gender they preferred. Nearly one-third (32%) of respondents who have shown an ID with a name or gender that did not match their gender presentation were verbally harassed, denied service, or assaulted (James et al. 2016: 9).

Workplace

Gender-based workplace discrimination is common in Pakistan. For transgender persons, this discrimination comes in many shapes and forms, as the social definitions of normality play a role in these. How one presents themselves or appears usually become the focal point in this discipline. A person who does not appear masculine enough or feminine enough according the definition of normality is subject to discipline. This happened to Saami in the form of rejection from a job, after he had started taking his hormonal treatment that brought many visible changes in him:

> *...my voice was changed and my facial hairs were growing; so nobody was giving me job, my documents says I am female, and they want typical make up female teachers with makeup and dresses, which I am not.*

He tells us that a certain prototype was expected for the job and he could not match that visual definition of normality for the job, despite the written record of gender that he carried with him.

Based on the interviews, it seemed that both transmen and transwomen faced issues in the hiring process. The transition was also more difficult to achieve at workplace.

Roshan's career and transition story is slightly different. She was working in her last job for 13 years before her transition, as a man. She has now taken a long leave from her job for her transition. She says the new Transgender Bill will allow her to work in the same department as a woman. She was previously sexually harassed and received sexual passes multiple times from her boss, for her feminine demeanor.

> *… because of my transition I have left my job… I didn't resign from my job because I want to join again.. and I will tell them that I had some gender related issues.*

Roshan didn't see herself transitioning with ease during her job, so she took a break and is hopeful that she will be accepted in the same job as a woman once she has transitioned.

For some, workplace provided the opportunity to affirm their gender. Farhan talks about how his job helped with his transition.

> *An NGO provided me with job as an office boy. I went there as a boy, so I got the much needed support. Before this I would be seen as a girl. Then I cut off from my family initially, and started hormones. In the beginning, when my voice changed and my beard grew, people seemed to judge me and ask if I am a girl or boy, but not after a while.*

While many expressed angst against the discrimination towards them during the hiring process, within the sphere of this study, most of the transgender persons felt comfortable at their workplace. Eight transwomen and two transmen revealed satisfaction with their workplace. Two transwomen wanted to switch to jobs other than sex related work for the hostile treatment they received from their clients. Two other transwomen who engaged in sex work for a living expressed their satisfaction with their work. For all other

participants that were employed by private or public sector organizations felt included and accepted there. Most transgender people within the sphere of this study, were able to reveal their true gender identities at their workplace with ease and feel accepted there. Most of the interviews demonstrate satisfactory views of these places. Kaanita feels accepted at her office, and is satisfied with her work because of that.

> *If I talk about my office, they accept me that I am third gender… like they treat me very well…they actually put me in female category.*

The fact that Kaanita is accepted as someone who is not male at her workplace is her break-free from the social definitions. She is able to desubjugate herself from the gender norm at her workplace by defying the social definitions of normality and creating her own personal definition of her identity. She calls herself female and uses female pronoun for herself, but she takes comfort in the fact that her office mates accept her as someone other than male, and respect her as someone who is transitioning towards female.

Saami desubjugated himself by reaching out to his friends through social media and opening up to them about his story of gender transition. They not only understood him well, but also connected him to an organization, which is where Saami works now.

> *She referred me to her business partner; they hired me based on my* (high) *qualification....*

Similarly, Twinkle feels highly satisfied at her work at an organization that advocate for trans rights.

> *The office is an ideal situation for us, because it's a transgender organization. So, you know, we have an enabling environment. You know, sensitization is not an issue there.*

While transgender people's bodies are being regulated on the standards of normality, reproducing the social hierarchies, but these right here are stories of gender re-negotiation by transgender people. They have refused to internalize society's discipline, and refused to subjectify themselves. Instead, they have recreated their personal definitions within their environments.

Law Enforcement

The institution of law enforcement has its own ways of disciplining transgender persons. The interviews often spoke of behaviors from the police that violated transgender persons specifically because of their gender, appearance and presentation.

Rehan gets questioned by the police about his gender and his presentation, in an attempt to discipline him about his clothes based on the gender stated on his ID card.

> *One day, a police man stopped me and asked for my ID card, he said are you a girl, why are you wearing these boy clothes. I answered him that it's my wish, I like to wear these clothes from my childhood... He also has an issue. Why would he have issues?*

While Rehan is the only transman who talks who talks about the police check, Bilal also mentions his fear of being stopped and questioned by a police officer at night. It has not happened to him, but he is most afraid of being frisked by police officer in the breast area. He wants his breast removal surgery done as soon as possible because of this fear. On the other hand, the fear of police checks is more prevalent among transwomen. Transwomen also quoted more incidents of police checks and violations by police, specifically those that were associated with odd jobs and sex work. Among transwomen, Meera who is an artist,

quotes a similar incident of interrogation by the police, attempting to discipline her about what she should carry in her handbag based on her appearance.

> *The police came to me, they didn't check any other person's bags but they checked all my bags. They said what are these female stuff in your bag. Then they took me to the side. So, there are many humiliating moments I face.*

The *Report of the US. Transgender Survey 2015* that was conducted across all fifty states in the USA, with 27,715 transgender persons also reveals that more than half (58%) of transgender respondents in the survey experienced some form of mistreatment at the hands of law enforcement officers (James et al. 2016). Transgender persons are violated and disciplined by the police, through verbal harassment, physical assaulted or sexual assault.

Due to the discipline that the police subjects them to, transgender persons are afraid to reach out the police in case of danger or to report an act of violence against them. Falak talks about how she was afraid to go to the police about an incident of extreme sexual violence in her life, because she feared she will get blamed by the police, or the police will try to gender discipline her.

> *After the function, they just groped us and harassed us, and even rape us. We can't report to the police…they will say we are wrong.*

As evident by Falak's quote, while transgender persons would like to take action against the incident, they are afraid to speak to police about it as it may subject them to more hostile behavior. This speaks of the dispersed loci of power that is working against the transgender persons, including the institution of police which is likely to view the transgender person as the transgressor, subjecting them to more discipline.

Police relations with transgender persons are not so straightforward. The survey mentioned above also echoes the fear of police, making this phenomenon more universal than just limited to Pakistan. More than half (57%) of transgender persons in the sample in the US survey felt uncomfortable in reaching out to the police for help if they needed it (James et al. 2016). Not reaching out to the police in case of a need threatens to marginalize transgender persons even more, as they lack the comfort in seeking the security and safety that other populations seeks immediately in case of danger. The fear of police among transgender persons could be largely due to the gender discipline in the form of harassment that transgender persons face at the hands of the police, doubling their marginalization from the same institution.

Transgender persons are violated by the police to the extent that sometimes they are forced to engage in sexual activity to avoid being arrested. Roshan explains if she goes out late at night she is at the risk of being taken sexual advantage of, by the police.

If I am out late at night, and suddenly patrolling police stops me and ask me that where are you going at this time, then this is a problem because they can take sexual advantage from us… they think if we go outside at night so we go especially for sex work.

This relationship gets further complexed due to the perceived sex work engagement of transgender persons by the police. A number of interviews demonstrated that the police mistakenly assume the person in question, because they are transgender, is engaged in sex work, subjecting them to discipline in shape of verbal or physical harassment. The survey from U.S. also revealed when the police perceived a transgender person was associated with sex work they are more likely to subject them to harassment, abuse, or mistreatment,

with 86% of the respondents experiencing harassment, attack or sexual assault (James et al. 2016). Such incidents make the institution of law and enforcement one that outrightly disciplines them. Instead of offering protection and safeguarding their interests, this institution turns dangerous for them.

While we discussed many spatial domains in this study where transgender persons are disciplined, the data also revealed that there are spaces where *khwaja sira* feel at ease, safe and free of discipline.

Institutions that Negotiate

Transgender persons in Pakistan are subject to constant discipline within their families, and within formal social institutions such as education system and healthcare system etc. They are also subject to gender discipline while walking about on the streets or in market places. As a result, they almost always have to be on guard, during their busy or leisure time, within their homes or outside. This sends them on journey to find or create institutions where they are authentically able to express themselves.

Vision of an Alternative Life. When the home environment becomes hostile, there are other places that offer solace and comfort to the *khwaja sira*, where they feel safe. Places that offer an alternative sense of what life outside of gender disciplined homes could look like, include homes (apartments) of friends that have moved out of their family homes in the past. Aliya tells us how going to her friends' place tempts her to also live freely, where they can buy and wear any kind of clothes at all.

When I go there and I see that they brought some new clothes and they try them on

and show me, I also want to live like that.

The freedom from social definitions of normality and disciplining oneself into a social body come in the form of buying new clothes according to the gender that one identifies with. Visitations and appreciations from friends offer validation, a kind of negotiation that help solidify the break-free from forced definitions of normality.

NGOs. The institutions of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) that specifically focus on the issues of the *khwaja sira*, for example, *Khwaja Sira Society* (KSS) and *TransAction* etc. provide an environment for transgender people to talk about their domestic issues. One such NGO in Lahore offers a lounge for the transwomen and transmen who can sit and chat amongst themselves all day if they want. Kaanita explains about this further:

The NGOs…you can go there and seek counsel. They…have a room where they

give you free space and provide time to do whatever you want. You can play music

there or even dance, or any cultural activities…I feel so comfortable there.

The space provided in these NGOs offers them freedom from constant surveillance that society subjects the *khwaja sira* to. Their bodies are not disciplined and controlled in this area. Unlike the entry into male or female wards of hospitals that reproduce gender hierarchies and subordination, the NGOs working for trans rights do not impose any restrictions on who can enter or who is eligible to be there. It's the fluidity that these places offer the appeal to the *khwaja sira*. The fluidity of gender expression breaks free from the binary opposition otherwise present in the society. As Komal says,

If someone is bisexual, lesbian, transmen, transwoman, gay everyone can come to the NGOs. They are welcome.

Life at Dera. Guru-Chela System. Another informal institution that specifically gives *khwaja sira* a vision of what an alternative lifestyle is a *Dera*. A *dera* is a place that many *khwaja sira* coming from different families call their home. A *dera* operates under the captaincy of a *guru*, the head of the household. A guru is a *khwaja sira* of age and experience who has learnt how to live as a transgender person in the cis-normative world on their own, while creating and maintaining important networks and connections. A *guru* can admit whoever they wish to under their wings of protection, as a *chela*. A *chela* usually offers gift money to the *guru* as a sign of their commitment. Some continue to provide this money for a lifetime. In exchange, the *guru* offers the *chela* the protection and support that the *chela* otherwise lacks in after leaving their homes and families. The *guru* connects their *chela*s with their networks, giving this new *chela* the clan's identity. Komal, who is part of a specific *khwaja sira* clan explains this further:

This is your family system, like your guru is equal to your parents and treats their chelas like their own children and creates a free space for them.

When transgender persons visit a *dera*, the presence of love and acceptance that they are deprived of at their homes attract them to these spaces, along with the presence of like-minded and like-bodied people, who are not subject to discipline for a change. Roshan goes on to explain:

If everyone is beating me at home, and no one loves me and cares about me and you compare that with the dera system then you feel that this option is good for you.

It's also the kind of lifestyle that they see at the *dera* provides them with a vision that lives outside of homes could include all those forms of expressions that they could have only dreamt of doing openly. This includes wearing what one feels like wearing, dancing, singing, or using body language or gestures that families often shun them from using as they are associated with the opposite gender, as well as exploring their sexuality openly, as Komal explains.

> *Because when you feel suppressed at homes and you see that there's a guru and their chela and they live in dera, their house is full of music, and everyone is dancing the way they want to, cross-dressing, even hooking up with their friends, and you see this luxurious and liberated life. It is attractive.*

These are the spaces where transgender persons are able to negotiate and re-write their personal definitions as opposed to conforming to the social definitions written by society. These spaces also allow them to express themselves in the identity they relate to, breaking free from the identity that was created as a result of the internalized discipline and conditioning. In the wide array of spaces that are subjecting the *khwaja sira* to discipline by the society, these few spaces offer the chance to them to desubjugate themselves fully from the discipline.

Conclusion

Transgender persons are disciplined through various institutions. The institutions formally and informally enforce the discipline through the prevailing definitions of normality. The education system enforces this discipline among transgender persons in schools where teachers and peers, through verbal or physical harassment such as mockery, scolding etc.,

disciplining them into behaving according to the "normal" gender standards. They are disciplined for the way they present themselves through clothes, or about their demeanor, mannerism, and their way of talking and walking. Health systems also enforce a similar discipline by treating transgender persons in ways that make them feel less than normal, not admitting them in a particular wards, or by denying them treatment altogether.

Transgender persons are also violated, and gender disciplined by the police that patrols the streets or at check points. They are interrogated about their choice of clothing, and the way they present themselves. The disciplining gets to the point where they are sexually violated by the police themselves. This makes them afraid to reach out to the police in case they need any protection from the law and enforcement doubling their marginalization at the hands of police, disciplining them into invisibility. The identity checks also make it a challenge for transgender persons to pass through institutions or seek out institutional help and support, especially in the cases where their gender expression or appearance does not seem to match with the gender stated on their ID cards, according to societal standards of normality.

However, there are some institutions such as NGOs working for the welfare of *khwaja sira* as well as the institution of *dera* that offer those spaces to *khwaja sira* that are able to resist the discipline enforced by the other institutions.

CHAPTER 7: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Transgender persons' lived experiences are different from people with a binary gender that the heteronormative and cis-normative society privileges. Data shows that transgender persons are subject to violence, policing, and harassment to the extent that it forces them to take drastic steps such as that of attempting suicide (James et a. 2016). This study has attempted to understand what this everyday violence look like, and what it does to the resulting everyday lived experiences of transgender persons, while they are on the move within different spatial domains.

The construct of gender has been developed within the cis-normative societal structure. While it is the bodies that move about and present themselves in certain ways, and require acceptance, it really is more about the power relations, that are produced, reproduced and maintained through the construct of gender. This is done in the society by creating knowledge about the societal "normal," in order to control the populations by creating binary oppositions within them. These oppositions are created using the disciplined subjects of the society and solidified through the everyday discipline geared towards them. The binary oppositions such as normal or abnormal, healthy or diseased are created to create hierarchies within the system, with male or female categorized as "normal," leaving behind an array of possibilities. This knowledge creates and reinforces hierarchies of subordination in the society. It places people such as transgender persons on the lower rung of these hierarchies, making them more unequal than the others, categorizing them as less than "normal." A variety of institutions, like schools, hospitals and others that are discussed in the previous chapters work around these oppositions,

further reinforcing the oppositions and definitions. These definitions become part of the everyday knowledge through which power is exerted to control the populations.

The chapters discussed in this study explore in depth how transgender persons are made to feel less than "normal" based on the socially defined categories of normality. Those that are categorized and certified as "normal" based on these definitions are entitled by the cis-normative society to discipline the others into the "normal" behavior. This discipline starts at a young age within the familial domains of transgender persons. The negotiation through the discipline starts within the multiple embodied identity a transgender person has and the responses to this body, how it is perceived and accepted by others. For transgender people in Pakistan, negotiation between mobility and gender goes beyond the moving about in different spatial locations, as with these familial domains, it is an internal affair, within oneself.

The discipline in families take the shape of scolding young children for wanting to play with the toys that are considered wring for their gender, to forcing the children to go to "right" school according to their gender, and allowing them to be subjected to discipline in the form of bullying and harassment at the school. Later on in life, it takes the shape of objections to the clothing that feels authentic to the transgender person as well as taunting them on their mannerism. Within familial domains, the negotiation of transgender persons happens through various stages starting from the stage of gender exploration through toys and dress-up games in childhood. Despite the gender discipline that they are subject to by their families throughout, transgender persons develop a recognition of a "feeling inside" that helps them know they are not what their families want them to be. The constant

pressures to conform leave them feeling confused and they feel the angst to break free. During some of this confusion and comparisons with their peers a transgender person comes to confirm who are they, within themselves. It is an upspoken confirmation, which also marks the beginning of making their gender expression more deliberate and open. The stage of coming out includes conversations that create discomfort within families, and they are not pleasant for transgender persons to deal with, usually resulting in some strong or reactions advice from the family on how to "cure" their transgender family member. A number of transgender persons choose to separate from their houses to reclaim their selves and express themselves authentically.

Family's acceptance towards transgender persons exists on a continuum, where a complete acceptance from family member rarely exists. Usually acceptance takes the shape of support from one family member, often the mother, in an environment of hostility and lack of support from other family members. While the opposite end of rejection seems to exist in many cases, due to which many transgender persons succumb to separation from their homes. For transwomen, it was mostly the fathers by whom they received most unacceptance towards them. The majority of the cases in the study lay on the spectrum, reflecting a compromise among the transgender persons and their family members. An unspoken exchange is agreed upon where some form of gender affirmation is offered in exchange for some binary gender conforming restrictions. For example, accepting their authentic gender expression through dressing, in exchange for the curfews for when the transgender person should be home, or in exchange for agreeing to not display their authentic gender expression among the extended family. The pressures from the extended

family members often have the negative effect of an increase in the immediate family's pressure to conform as well.

When the homes feel unsafe to express one's authentic gender expression, *khwaja sira* often feel safe in expressing themselves outside of their homes. With the exception of a few places that they truly allow themselves to become visible, such as *dera* and gathering with friends, a majority of spaces outside of homes require them to invisiblize themselves. The discipline taking place within these spaces make them unsafe to express their authentic self. These spaces outside of their homes include formal social institutions such as education system, health care system where transgender persons are often denied service discipline as they do not fit the definitions of societal "normal" categories of male or female. The identity checks that happen at these institutions also complicate things further for them as the ID cards are almost always document their inauthentic gender. While the institution of law enforcement should offer transgender persons an protection from the discipline that takes the shape of violence in the society, police often ends of disciplining transgender persons even more, even in the shape physical or sexual harassment, closing off the avenue for transgender persons to reach out to police in case of any violations towards them from the society.

The discipline in the public domains such as streets, and marketplaces takes the form of stares. Stares communicate to transgender persons that they are being viewed and categorized as less than "normal." The discipline also escalates into verbal harassment, taking the shape of mocking or eve-teasing, which is usually based on the society's perceived association of transgender persons with sex work. They are also subject to overt

sexual harassment, in the shape of molestation in public buses and *bazaars*. The societal discipline at times takes the shape of heinous acts of rape against transgender persons.

The aim of discipline is to produce a subject that is gender-disciplined according to the societal norm. While some transgender persons acquiesce into becoming a disciplined subject, most work towards desubugating themselves out of the discipline. However, the first step towards the process of desubjugation is the recognition of the discipline that transgender persons are subject to. The interviews showed that transgender persons are conscious of the discipline that they experience. They learn to cope with the discipline, through ways such as choosing a specific time of the day or night to go out, choosing the places to go out alone or in groups, or through the choice of dressing that helps them camouflage and becoming "invisible" in public spaces. Some transgender persons move from recognition to coping to a point where they create resistance towards the discipline, in the form verbal rebuttals to verbal or physical harassment. There are some that also work towards changing the system from within. They do that by becoming more "visible" in the society to normalize their presence and visibility in the heteronormative and cis-normative society. The attempts to changing the system include building better image and reputation of *khwaja sira* among people that have previously associated *khwaja sira* with lack of education, sex work and begging etc.

While we discussed spaces that attempt to discipline *khwaja sira* constantly, there are spaces that are free of such discipline as well. These include their friends' apartments that allow them to explore their expression without inhibition. The discussion on clothes and fashion is a vital source of gender affirmation, but also becomes a source of bonding

among transwomen in the gatherings at the gatherings at their apartments. The *dera* is also a place where *khwaja sira* are able to express themselves freely yet feel supported by the extensive *khwaja sira* network that a *dera* and the *guru-chela* relationship offers. Most transgender persons in the study also made reference to specific NGOs that work for the welfare of *khwaja sira*, as a place that offers them the freedom to express their gender without the fear of any discipline. These places are a source of comfort for *khwaja sira* where they do not feel under the surveillance as they do in the rest of the disciplining society.

Limitations

The study was able to recruit a much smaller sample that it had set out to, especially for transmen. This resulted in a lower representation of transmen in the study. Once fully transitioned, transmen are more reluctant to step forward and be recognized as a transman. Once they have made their way into the world as a man, they would like to be recognized as a cis-gender man, as there is a prevalent fear among transmen that their association with being a transman may not be considered masculine enough according to the societal standards. As a result, they fear losing any opportunities that have been made available to them as a male member of the society. This fear of stigma was more prevalent among transmen than it was among transwomen, which prohibited many from volunteering to be interviewed. This was echoed by all transmen participating in the study. For transmen specifically, it was the monetary incentive that incentivized them to participate in the study.

The study is specific to a gender and cultural group in Pakistan. While there are similarities that can be drawn with transgender people across different place-based

contexts, but the study is specific to the *khwaja sira* group in Pakitan. Moreover, the continuums provided in the study serve as a heuristic based on a majority of the sample in the study, but they are in no way definitive and applicable to all transgender persons in Pakistan. Similarly, the points on the continuums presented or the stages of transition may be in a different order for specific transgender persons. Also, not all points may apply to all the transgender people in the different contexts.

Future Research

Lack of consideration to the specific needs of transgender persons in urban development policies normalizes and marginalizes the everyday experiences of this group. There has been a dire need to study the gendered mobility experiences and for them to be brought to the forefront, so they can be consulted as an authentic form of resource by urban policy makers in Pakistan, which accounts for minority voices. This endeavor should be able to ensure equitable planning in Pakistan, resulting in more equal daily lived experiences of marginalized groups.

The data from this study brings in interesting themes that have not yet been explored in this dissertation but will be explored in future works. An example for these includes exploration of the idea of hegemonic femininity among transwomen in Pakistan revealing specific kinds of appearances, presentations of self and mannerisms that are considered more feminine according to societal standards, privileging some transwomen over the others. A deeper exploration of the issues relating to mobility among transmen specifically will also be explored in future works. The study will also be polished further for a book publication.

Broader Impacts

This research brings into perspective the everyday lives of transgender persons given the challenges of mobility. Where top-down policies often miss out on the voices of the people on ground, the results of this study serve as an authentic voice to inform an urban development policy, specifically related to public institutions, streets and transportation that should strive to be inclusive of and cognizant of gender. The recognition of transgender persons' everyday lived notions of safe and unsafe spaces intends to inform the policy makers of the urgency and importance of inclusive urbanization. For more immediate impacts of the study, the results of the study have been shared verbally with the gatekeepers, with the intention of disseminating printed pamphlets of the results with the continuums among the transgender community members in the future. This will transgender persons for a deeper awareness about their daily negotiations of mobility and space. The sharing of results through pamphlets will enable participants to share their perceptions and knowledge with other community members. It will also serve as a document for transgender persons in their early stages of transition to gain an understanding of the community's experiences, allow them to verbalize some of their feelings and be able to recognize the discipline in the society. This sharing of knowledge intends to add to the participants' personal sense of accomplishment. In future, other place-based programs such as UN-Habitat, will be contacted to bring their attention to the mobility and space negotiations of transgender persons in Pakistan.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

    Interview Protocol.

This interview aims to understand transgender persons' experiences related to mobility within their neighborhoods as well as other urban public spaces in Pakistan. It seeks to understand how transgender persons navigate and negotiate their mobility and space in the informal settlements. The interview includes questions about the daily life practices of transgender persons, mobility within the informal settlements, mobility outside of their immediate communities and the issues of safety for transgender persons, and how they negotiate their space while living in the informal settlements.

Your names or the community members' names that you mention will not be included in my paper. This means that you can be very honest in your responses. At the same time, this interview may not be able to bring any immediate positive changes or any solutions to the problems you discuss.

Interview Questions:

- o Age:
- o Pronouns:
- o Identity (how do you identify yourself):
- o Gender expression (discrete/ open etc.):

1. What do you do for a living?
2. What does your usual day look like?
3. How often do you need to go out during a usual day/ night?
4. What is your usual mode of commute?
5. What is your preferred mode of commute?
   a. What it is about this mode that makes it better than others?
6. What is the easiest and most convenient place to go to?
   a. What is it about this place or about going to this place that makes it seem easy and convenient to go there?
   b. How often/ frequently do you (need to) go to this place? (in a day/ week/ month/ year)
7. What places seem rather inconvenient to go to?
   a. What is it about this place or about going to this place that makes it inconvenient?
   b. How often do you need to go there? (in a day/ week/ month/ year)
   c. If any, what measures do you usually take to make this journey less inconvenient/ or more convenient/ pleasant?
8. Tell me about the commuting/ walking experience within your own neighborhood?
   a. Outside your neighborhood?
   b. How safe do you feel when you walk here?
   c. What aspects of the walking make you feel unsafe or safe?
      Probes: during the day, at night, alone? narrow streets? presence of less or more people? men or women? going in groups?
   d. Do others in your household/ or community have similar or different concerns/experience of walking in the streets/ commuting to work as yourself? What are their concerns?

9. What is your preferred time of the day or day of the week to go out?
   a. What makes this time more ideal than the others?
10. Do you use public transport?
    a. What kind?
    b. Tell me about the public transport experience?
       Probes: walking to/ from.
11. Do you think there are places where you are more easily accepted because of your gender?
12. Do you think there are places you are less easily accepted at because of your gender?
13. Do you ever feel the need to change your behavior, expression or dressing when going out, or in certain localities? What makes you want to do that?
14. Is there any one mobility related experience that you would like to share with me?
    a. What is it about this experience that makes it stand out?
15. If you could change one thing (or more) about your mobility related experiences, what would it be?
16. Are there any spaces that are specific to
    a. transwomen?
    b. transmen?
    c. describe them.
17. Are there any spaces that you must never go to? Or where you are not allowed?
18. How do you define safe? What are some examples of being safe for you from your daily life?
19. How do you define unsafe? What are some examples of being unsafe for you from your daily life?
    a. What fears/ concerns do these unsafe examples/ ideas bring? Prompts: Do these fears arise with a crowd? When you are completely alone? In the presence of a few people? Men?
20. Specifically related to mobility, what do you think you can do that men or women cannot?
21. What do you think cis-men and cis-women can do that you cannot?
22. When did you move to your locality?
    a. What were the reasons or events that led you/ your family to move?
    b. How do you feel about the move?
    c. How do you feel about this locality?
23. Have you ever been approached for developmental schemes etc.? How are they of use to you?
24. Do you meet other people from the community? Men, women, trans? Where do you meet them? What are the conversations about?
25. When do you feel relaxed/ peaceful and where?
26. What have I missed? What else is important for me to know?

Appendix B: Consent Form
South Dakota State University
Consent to Participate in Research
  Study Title: Negotiating Gender and Mobility among Transgender Persons in Pakistan

  Principal Investigator: Sana Illahe

You are invited to participate in a research study. This document contains important information about this study and what to expect if you decide to participate.
Your participation in this research study is voluntary and you do not have to participate. Refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits, and you may discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits.

The purpose of the research: This study aims to explore the issues around mobility for transgender person in Pakistan. Gender has a role in people's mobility and ease of access of public spaces. For transgender persons, this issues expands, as notions of acceptance by other genders, stigma, as well as being outsider in the public spaces dictates their mobility in Pakistan.

Expected Time: The interviews will be between 1 hour to 2hours.

The study will be conducted with 20- 25 participants.

Procedures: You will be asked to participate in online interview, where you will asked to answer several questions related to your life.

Summary of risks and benefits: There are no expected risks of participating in this research. However, occasionally participants may feel emotional (including happy or sad) while narrating any life experiences.
Participants will get a stipend of ~PKR 2000 for participating in this study.

Confidentiality of records: Data will be saved on a password protected computer. All identifying information including names, contact information, as well any affiliation with particular organizations will be separated from the study data. Pseudonyms will be used in the study to ensure participants' confidentiality. Interview and focus group transcriptions will be coded using a thematic reduction technique. Major themes in the data and deidentified direct quotes from participants may be included in final reports.

Online Data: Your confidentiality is only as secure as your equipment; no guarantees can be made regarding the interception of data sent via the Internet.

Your responses will be assigned a code number. The list connecting your name to this code will be kept in a password protected file. Only the researcher will have access to the file. When the study is completed and the data have been analyzed, the list will be destroyed.

Video Recording: With your permission, I would like to record your participation so that I

can make an accurate transcript. Once I have made the transcript, I will erase the recordings. Your name will not be in the transcript or my notes.

You will not be identified in any report or publication of this study. Even though we will tell all participants in the study that the comments made during the focus group should be kept confidential, it is possible that participants may repeat comments outside the group.

Because of the nature of the data, it may be possible to deduce your identity; however, there will be no attempt to do so and your data will be reported in a way that will not identify you.

The information that you provide in the study will be handled confidentially. However, there may be circumstances where this information must be released or shared as required by law. The SDSU Institutional Review Board may review the research records for monitoring purposes.

For questions, concerns, or complaints about the study you may contact me at sana.illahe@sdstate.edu or +1 605 690 5846.

For questions about your rights as a participant in this study or to discuss other study-related concerns or complaints with someone who is not part of the research team, you may contact SDSU's Research Integrity and Compliance Officer at +1 605-688-5051 or sdsu.irb@sdstate.edu.

You must be 18 or older to participate. Your consent is implied by participating.

Appendix C

Responsible Conduct of In-person Research.

This script informs prospective participants about measures to protect their health during the pandemic. Some version of this script must be shared with all study participants until effective therapeutics or a vaccine for COVID-19 is widely available. Not all points will be applicable to all studies; investigators should tailor the script to their protocols. Researchers must share the script with participants (via website, email, video chat, or phone call) before the first study visit, and document the exchange.

SDSU researchers will do everything reasonably possible to make sure you stay safe while participating in research studies. We know that COVID-19 will be in our community for many months. SDSU has created internal guidance to assist research teams in minimizing transmission of COVID-19 in research spaces and in the community. We appreciate your participation in our study and your willingness to abide by new guidelines.

Risks associated with COVID-19 infection are well known and we know the disease can be obtained through close contact with someone who is sick or someone who has the virus but is not showing symptoms. While SDSU follows the health and safety guidelines provided by the CDC and SD Health Department (as operationalized by the SD Board of Regents), we cannot guarantee you will not be exposed to the virus during your research visit. Risks of becoming infected with COVID-19 are now part of our daily life.

Please let the research staff know immediately if you experience symptoms and/or are diagnosed with COVID-19 up to 14 days after any study visit.

Remember that participation in research is valuable but also voluntary. Let us know if you are uncomfortable with any of the guidelines below. If possible, we may modify study procedures to address your concerns.

Guidelines to protect research participants

- All research team members self-screen daily to ensure they are not showing any symptoms of COVID-19 before they come to work. Research participants will also self-screen for symptoms before commencing any study visit.
- All study personnel and participants will wear protective equipment appropriate to the research activity. Some research procedures may only recommend a mask and gloves, while others may call for more stringent protective equipment.
- Researchers will follow CDC infection control practices, including social distancing, hand washing, and cleaning and disinfection of study spaces, facilities, and equipment.
- Appointment times will be staggered to minimize the number of study participants at the site, and no more than one visitor may accompany each participant for their study visit.
- Telephone or video conferencing will be used whenever possible in lieu of meeting in person.

Please alert study staff to anything that raises concern throughout your engagement in this research. Thank you for your participation.

Appendix D: Recruitment Flyer

A study at South Dakota State University, department of Sociology seeks Transgender persons over 18 years of age to participate in an interview

The purpose of the study is to explore the issues of mobility among Transgender persons in Pakistan

Time Required: 1 to 2 hours

Compensation: PKR 2000/-

For information, contact:
Sana Illahe
+ 1 605 690 5846,
sana.illahe@sdstate.edu

Principal Investigator: Sana Illahe
Faculty Advisors: Dr. Meredith Redlin
& Dr. Patricia Ahmed

South Dakota State University, department of Sociology

اتیمعاش شـــعبہ ، یورسٹیونی ٹیاسٹ ڈکوٹــا ســاؤتھ کــے عمر ادہیز سے سال 18 لئـــے کـے ویانــٹرو کــو ہے ضرورت یک افـراد نـڈریج ٹــرانس

افـراد نـڈریٹرانســج ںیم پاکســـتان مقصـد کـا مطـالعے اس معلومـات یلیتفـــص بـارے کـے امور کـے رفـت و آمد کـے ہے کرنـا حاصـل

درکـار وقت: 1 - 2 گھنٹـــے

معاوضہ : -/PKR 2000

رابطہ لئـــے کے معلومـات دیمز ںیکـر ثنـــــاءاللہ
+   1   605   690   5846
sana.illahe@sdstate.edu

پرنسـپل ٹیانوسٹ گٹـریگ: ثنـــــاءاللہ
فیٹلکی اریزئـوڈ: ڈاکـــٹر میڈریہـت نیرنلڈ
کو اریزئـوڈ: ڈاکـــٹر پیٹـریسیا حمداد