Threatened Academic Professional Identities: Gender Dynamics, Workplace Conditions and 'Unconscious Complicity'

by

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Abstract

The main aim of this thesis is to investigate the aspects affecting the academic professional identities of ten full-time women academics working at an Algerian university. Significantly, the study shows that their academic professional identities appear to be threatened by either all or some of the following dimensions: a) gender dynamics; b) workplace conditions; and c) their 'unconscious complicity'.

Regarding the gender dynamics, this thesis demonstrates that there exists an inconsistency between the women academics' own positioning in academia and that of society. Society implies the family and/or the broader community - acquaintances, neighbours and other individuals outside the networking circles. In their accounts, women academics define themselves as teachers-researchers ['*enseignants-chercheurs*']. Research represents the preparation preceding their teaching tasks, especially when they are assigned a new module that goes beyond their field of expertise. It also refers to scholarly publications such as books and journal articles. As for society, data evidence, interestingly, shows that society perceives academic work as suitable for women. This prevalent narrative is underpinned by two main assumptions. First, it confuses academic flexibility – the ability to work anywhere – with free time; hence, it only recognises women academics' nine or twelve teaching hours. Second, it, surprisingly, depicts the university setting as a space wherein women-men interactions are very limited, given that women academics spend most of their time between the classroom walls with their students. Although many women academics acknowledged the existence of such a discourse, only a few of them shared their experiences of how they were threatened by it, mainly when their partners and in-laws seemed to embrace it and, consequently, hindered women academics' tasks beyond the workplace.

Workplace conditions represent another source of threat. Women academics demonstrated that they were operating in inadequate and unsupportive conditions, some of which were the consequence of a forced relocation to a faculty wherein they were not the owners. These challenges barely enabled them to perform their teaching duties *in situ*. Other practices, particularly in relation to research and professional development, were not institutionally supported. These challenging conditions led women academics to teach and leave. Interestingly, beyond the 'teach and leave' phenomenon, women academics showed that they were not weakened by the unsupportive working conditions. They, therefore, engaged in

autonomous forms of professional development in order to enact their academic professional identities as 'teachers-researchers'. These practices, however, were limited and individualistic. More importantly, they reflected an 'unconscious complicity' that did not help them change the *status quo* at the workplace and reinforced the gendered discourse revolving around women's role in academia.

Data was ethnographically collected over a period of three months at an Algerian university, specifically an English Department, using observations, semi-structured interviews, and informal conversations. It involved ten women academics as the main respondents, and other faculty members – a male librarian, a male academic, a group of female students and the female Head of the English Department. Their accounts added richness and depth to the enquiry.

The thesis contributes to the existing scholarship in literature and theory. The 'feminisation' discourse in the existing literature focuses predominantly on school teaching. Its relation to academia in my study will hopefully enable researchers around the world to investigate whether similar gendered and naïve discourses exist, particularly in relation to the universal 'flexibility' of academia. The findings linked to the undesired relocation and its aftermath are crucial for any decision-makers planning for a relocation in higher education settings. The concept of 'unconscious complicity' demonstrates that women academics' inability to enact their academic professional identities does not only stem from external forces, as many research studies show, but also from their own practices which, in essence, were meant to keep them going. This might help other researchers shed equal light on academics' role in sustaining their challenging experiences in relation to gender and beyond.

Dedication

I dedicate this thesis to my grandmother, Zina, who witnessed the beginning of this PhD journey, but unfortunately not its end.

This thesis is also dedicated to my heroine, my mother Dalila. Thank you for your prayers, endless love and encouragement.

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List of Abbreviations

AHE: Algerian Higher Education

CoPs: Communities of Practice

CPD: Continuing Professional Development

MHESR: Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1. Thesis focus

This qualitative research explores the academic professional identities[1] of ten full-time women academics at an Algerian university, which seem to be threatened by either all or some of these aspects: a) gender dynamics; b) workplace conditions; and c) their 'unconscious complicity'.

Interestingly, data evidence shows that there appears to be a lack of congruence between women academics' views of themselves, and those of society[2]. Regarding women academics' views, they all perceived themselves as teachers-researchers [*'enseignants-chercheurs'*]. In this sense, they considered research as the hallmark of their academic professional identities, which mainly distinguishes them from teachers at other levels. Research refers to the preparation preceding their teaching tasks, especially when they are in charge of a new module that is beyond their specialism. It also implies scholarly outputs in the forms of journal articles and books.

While keeping in perspective these perceptions, the aforementioned inconsistency in their views stems from a naïve societal discourse that perceives academic work as suitable for women for two main reasons. It, on the one hand, views academic work as on-site teaching only and confuses academic flexibility – i.e., the ability to work anywhere – with free, extra time. That is, any time beyond the nine or twelve teaching hours per week is regarded as free time that allows women to perform their gendered duties at home as wives and mothers. On the other hand, it surprisingly portrays university as a "locked space" (Chorouk#II)[3], wherein most interactions occur among women academics and their students in the classroom, unlike other jobs that entail women-men interactions. This, again, depicts academic work as

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[1] 'Academic professional identity' is chosen over 'academic identity' because based on my search, even though they are sometimes used interchangeably, 'academic identity' might refer to that of students. Also, I deliberately added 'academic' before 'professional identity' to give more precision, as the latter may imply the professional identity of, for example, a 'nurse' or an 'accountant'. In the literature, 'pre-professional identity' is often used when referring to university students.

[2] For all respondents, society broadly represents neighbours, acquaintances, as well as people they randomly met in the doctor's waiting rooms and Turkish baths, for instance. For a few women academics, society also includes their family members, namely their partners and in-laws.

[3] This is an extract taken from Chorouk's interview data. Chorouk is a woman academic and the symbol (#II) refers to 'individual interview' (see Chapter Five, section 5.9).

revolving around classroom teaching only. Those who seemed threatened by this societal narrative were those whose family members appeared to be influenced by it.

The threat on women academics' professional identities also stems from the workplace. Women academics' accounts revealed that they were working in challenging conditions, some of which were due to an undesired relocation to a faculty wherein they were not the owners. These challenges hardly allowed them to fulfil their teaching tasks. Other practices that go beyond teaching were not institutionally supported, particularly continuing professional development activities such as conference participations abroad. The challenges associated with the workplace environment, consequently, gave rise to a 'teach and leave' phenomenon. As the name indicates, it refers to women academics' tendency to teach and leave the university as soon as they had performed their teaching role. Interestingly, whilst the 'teach and leave' phenomenon portrays them as docile to the threat caused by the workplace conditions, which barely allowed them to perform their on-site teaching role, some autonomy was reflected in their accounts.

Autonomy manifests itself in women academics' attempts to find ways to develop professionally and maintain their perceptions of themselves as teachers-researchers. These attempts consist of self-funding their conferences abroad, albeit occasionally, and using internet to, for example, read open-access journal articles and participate in MOOCs[4]. These professional development practices, nevertheless, were limited, given the restricted access to online resources. The majority of women academics showed their inability to purchase books online, and which were only available abroad, due to living in a predominantly cash society and shipping restrictions. Likewise, conferences overseas required going through daunting visa procedures that were costly and necessitated several months of savings. In addition, a few women academics were hindered by their partners to participate at conferences abroad, as one of them declared about what her partner told her: "I go with you or I won't let you go" (Randa#II).

In addition to being limited, engaging in these professional development practices reflected a sense of individualism, leading to an 'unconscious complicity' in maintaining the threat(s)[5]

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[4] MOOCs refer to Massive Open Online Courses. They are a form of e-learning (see Chapter Three, subsection 3.2.2).
[5] Depending on women academics' cases, it is either the threat stemming from the workplace conditions, the gender dynamics, or both.

on women academics' professional identities. Apropos of the workplace conditions, given that the aforementioned practices mostly occurred beyond the 'teach and leave', they appeared to be escapist ways that sustained the inadequate and unsupportive working conditions. To explain, the majority of women academics escaped the threatening workplace environment and engaged in limited and individualistic professional development opportunities beyond it, instead of openly resisting it. Furthermore, their accounts did not show any intention to bring about change at the collective level or take initiatives to make the workplace a space where they could thrive as teachers-researchers.

Some women academics' 'unconscious complicity'[6] also extends to the societal narrative around academia. Although these women academics performed work-related tasks at home, which could be seen as a way of disrupting the societal narrative that perceives academia as on-site teaching only, the place wherein these professional development practices took place was not very strategic. Women's presence at home was associated with their gendered tasks. Hence, these ways of professional development were negatively affected by the gendered expectations that appeared to be dominant at home. It could be said, therefore, that women academics' responses to the threat(s), on the one hand, demonstrates their autonomy and desire to protect their academic professional identities and maintain their perceptions of themselves as teachers-researchers. On the other, they reveal that women academics did not target the threatening sources, which maintained the threat(s) on their academic professional identities.

The data mentioned earlier was ethnographically collected over a three-month period, employing three data tools: observation, semi-structured interviews and informal conversations. In addition to the ten women academics who took part in this study, as noted previously, other faculty members were recruited. They were a group of female students, a male academic, a male librarian and the female Head of the English Department. Their accounts helped me ethnographically understand what was going on in the field and beyond. Hence, they added depth and richness to this study.

The significance of this study lies in its contribution to the existing scholarship. Literature-wise, while the suitability of teaching for women is largely prominent around school teaching

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[6] 'Complicity' denotes a willingness to participate in an immoral activity (Merriam-Webster, 2020). Given that this is not the case of my participants, I added the adjective 'unconscious' to explain that they were not aware of their complicity and their contribution to the threat(s) that their academic professional identities experienced.

(Chapter Four), this research unveils a gendered discourse surrounding women in academia. Inspired by the school teaching literature, this could be referred to as the 'feminisation' discourse (Acker, 1983; Griffiths, 2006; Drudy, 2008; Kelleher, 2011; Moreau, 2019). Furthermore, given the lack of research linking the effect of forced relocation with academics' professional identities, my study contributes to this scholarship by discussing the aftermath of a forced relocation and its effect on women academics' professional identities. Methodologically, this study's population is diverse. Albeit focused on women academics, this research includes other faculty members whose accounts have enriched the enquiry, particularly from an ethnographic point of view. This is not usual in teacher/academic professional identity scholarship. Theoretically, through the concept 'unconscious complicity', I contribute to Petriglieri's (2011) theory, particularly her six ways of responding to identity threats. After coining this term, I realised that 'unconscious complicity' is considered by Orton *et al.* (2021) as a type of complicity in their paper about the health and social inequalities that European Roma population experience. This further reinforces my claim that complicity is not always conscious.

Being at the outset of the thesis, and before moving any further, I would like to clarify that my use of 'individual' and 'society' in my thesis might imply that I am using them in the old binary way, thereby drawing clear-cut boundaries between the two and excluding the individual from society. In fact, this is not my intention. I imagine 'individual' and 'society' as being in two dotted, rather than firmly closed, circles. This means that the two are mutually dependent on each other. Basically, by claiming that individuals' identities are socially constructed all throughout the thesis indicates that I am considering the individual part and parcel of society. However, at many instances, I felt the urge to put the spotlight on what was *apparently* stemming from academics themselves or their surroundings (be it at the workplace or beyond), to which I refer as 'society'; i.e., family, colleagues, neighbours etc. In other words, informed by the data, I refer to society as either family members or the broader community within which academics live and operate. At the end of my thesis, and through the concept of 'unconscious complicity', which I explained previously, I show that individuals both influence and are influenced by society, which makes the individual a social agent, *par excellence.*

1.2. Personal motivation and thesis importance

This section discusses the impetus behind exploring this research topic and explains the shift in my thesis focus. Coming from a TEFL background, in which I was deeply immersed during my Masters, my plan, prior to starting my PhD programme, was to extend this immersion to the PhD. Unexpectedly, my literature review readings, which mainly revolved around the field of education, led me to the scholarship of gender/women's studies. This first encounter was particularly through a book entitled *Gender and Leadership in Education: Women Achieving Against the Odds* (2015). This book was a gateway to the fascinating world of gender/women's studies.

My initial readings across the scholarship of gender and higher education revealed that gender inequalities are portrayed through various metaphors such as 'glass ceiling'[7] and 'leaky pipeline'[8], to name but a few. These metaphors reflect women's struggles to achieve senior and leadership positions due to an array of factors, most of which are sociocultural and organisational. As the reading progressed, I began to notice that the body of literature in that area is predominantly focused on gender inequalities regarding women's access to leadership positions, in both basic and higher education. Albeit a pertinent issue, I wondered: "what about the aspects affecting women in seeking continuing professional development[9] throughout their career span?" This question was underpinned by the assumption that leadership might be a personal endeavour, but continuing professional development could be argued to be a necessity. Beyond the gender aspect, I also sensed that there was a noticeable shortage of literature with regard to continuing professional development in academia, compared to the well-documented schoolteachers' continuing professional development. This partly explains my focus on academics, rather than on schoolteachers.

What also triggered my interest in women academics is my identity as a prospective woman academic at an Algerian university. This PhD research has been funded by the Algerian government who, in return, expects me to take an academic position at one of the Algerian

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[7] "[i]t underlies the idea that the top positions are the ones where the gender disadvantage occurs (or mostly occurs)" (Gaiaschi and Musumeci, 2020, p. 4).

[8] "[…] If obstacles persist from the early steps and up to the middle levels of the ladder, the career trajectory should be considered as a pipeline "leaking" female talents through all the ranks" (ibid.).

[9] Continuing professional development is defined differently by different researchers. As explained in Chapter Three, it generally refers to the practices that academics engage in with an aim to hone their knowledge and skills in any area of academic work, not just teaching.

universities after earning my PhD degree. Before receiving this PhD scholarship, I had no interest in becoming a woman academic. Hence, I never sought to know about the world of academia. All the knowledge I had about higher education was merely related to my experience as a university student. After I felt that my future self is going to be involved in that world, I started to enthusiastically develop this interest. In this regard, the existing literature related to women academics has taken me on an exciting journey to discover women academics' diverse experiences in the academy. However, it seemed to be heavily focused on European, North American and Australian universities (this is discussed thoroughly in Chapter Four). Thus, this further ignited my curiosity to explore women academics' stories in a setting which I believe is understudied – the Algerian university.

Therefore, I went to the data collection field with an aim to investigate the factors affecting, both positively and negatively, women academics' continuing professional development (CPD) practices. It is based on this initial focus of the study that my interview schedule, information sheet, and other documents presented in the appendices, revolved around CPD. Following the nature of qualitative inquiry, after collecting my data, coming back to England and delving deeply into the data analysis, I discovered that the story is much more than just 'factors affecting women academics' CPD at an Algerian university'. It became apparent that there was a certain nuance and depth in women academics' accounts. In their stories, I could see that there was a shadow of identity. For example, they defined themselves in a way that not only seems incongruent with the society in which they live (see Chapter Six), but also with the workplace conditions in which they operate (see Chapter Seven).

This research contributes to the academic professional identity scholarship by looking comprehensively at the 'personal', 'professional' and 'contextual' aspects affecting a group of women academics' professional identities working at an Algerian university. When paralleled with schoolteacher professional identity, academic professional identity is not as researched in the existing scholarship (Drennan *et al.*, 2017; Trautwein, 2018). This includes exploring it from a gender perspective. In an attempt to make the literature to some extent balanced, this study also sheds light on a group of women academics from the so-called 'Global South'. Having discussed the motivation behind carrying out this study and my thesis importance, I next address the thesis aim and research questions.

1.3. Aim and research questions

The aim of this thesis is to explore the aspects affecting the academic professional identities of ten women academics working at an Algerian university. The research questions that this enquiry seeks to address are presented below:

- **(RQ1)**: What are the aspects affecting women academics' professional identities?
- **(RQ2)**: How do these aspects affect women academics' professional identities?
- **(RQ3)**: What is the role of women academics in shaping their own professional identities?

1.4. Methodological decisions

I qualitatively collected my data over a period of three months at an Algerian university, and specifically at an English Department[10] due to access-related reasons (see Chapter Five, section 5.5). My main participants were ten women academics. However, given the ethnographic nature of my study which made of me, in a non-pejorative sense, 'a spy', I have chosen to include other respondents in this enquiry. They were: five female students, one male academic, the female Head of the English Department and a male librarian. Significantly, merging the accounts of all these participants was crucial and has rendered the data chapters rich in nuances. Furthermore, during data analysis, I realised that female students' voices were extremely helpful in discussing the circulating societal narrative to which many women academics referred (see Chapter Six).

As far as women academics are concerned, they were all working full-time at a public university and had at least five years of work experience in academia at the time. Some of them were previously schoolteachers and worked in either public and/or private schools. Regarding their marital status, the majority of them were married and had children. Rank-wise, they belonged to different categories; some were PhD holders and others in the process of completing their PhDs (see table 5.1 in subsection 5.6.1). However, regardless of their rank, they were all referred to as 'teachers-researchers'. One of the ten women academics occupied a senior position, in addition to her role as a 'teacher-researcher'.

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[10] It is called 'the EFL Department'. However, compared to middle and high schools where only the four skills are taught, in the English Department, English is used as a medium of instruction to teach a variety of modules, such as educational psychology, British/American civilisation and literature etc.

Methodologically, given that the aim of this thesis is to provide an in-depth description and interpretation of the influences affecting a group of women academics' professional identities, I have found that ethnography is the most compatible methodology. Ethnography has allowed me to obtain first-hand experiences *in situ* and have access to unquantifiable elements such as perceptions, emotions and invisible practices (Gobo, 2008; Fetterman, 2010; Madden, 2017; Creswell and Poth, 2018). All the aforementioned elements were unveiled by a variety of data tools, namely ethnographic observations, semi-structured interviews and informal conversations. As the data chapters will demonstrate, merging these three data methods has enriched the enquiry and enabled me to maintain a balance between my predominant voice in my observations, and those of my participants in semi-structured interviews and informal conversations. The data gathered was analysed using thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006; 2013).

1.5. Theoretical tools

In this section, I briefly discuss how I constructed a theoretical framework that would help me articulate my findings and add depth to my interpretations of the data. Overall, women academics' accounts revealed that their academic professional identities were affected by a number of dimensions. Some were closely related to their personal lives, and others to the workplace. Gender was at the heart of women academics' personal experiences. Their workplace experiences were largely related to the university context and environment in which they operated. To capture women academics' multidimensional experiences, I have found that Day and Kington's (2008) theory is useful and fits well in this study. Focusing on school teaching, Day and Kington (2008) classify the dimensions shaping schoolteachers' professional identity into three overlapping categories: 'personal', 'contextual/situated-located' and 'professional'. Despite their focus on school teaching, my study demonstrates that their theory can be applicable to higher education.

Delving deeper into the data, it became apparent that although Day and Kington's (2008) theory was useful to explain some of the findings, it has its limitations. Those were related to the fact that even though it recognises gender as an influencing aspect, it does not thoroughly cover the details related to the gender aspect, which emerged as an important element in my study (see Chapter Six). To explain, data analysis showed that the academic profession was regarded as a suitable profession for women. This societal discourse, as put by my participants, was underpinned by two main assumptions. First, the time beyond the nine or

twelve teaching hours was understood as 'free' time instead of 'flexible' time that allows women academics to perform work anywhere they want. Second, the university setting was perceived as a "locked space" (Chorouk#II), limiting the interactions of women with the other (i.e., men) and safeguarding their respectability and reputation. To theoretically interpret and critique this discourse, I brought to the forefront Butler's theory of performativity (1999).

Like Day and Kington (2008), this gender-related theory acknowledges the social environment's influence on individuals' gender identities. Butler (1999) believes that one's gender identity is a set of repetitive acts that defines who one is. Even though she states that these acts are regulated by social norms, Butler (ibid.) acknowledges individuals' roles in disturbing this regulatory system through 'subversion', 'resignification', 'decontextualisation' and 'recontextualisation', to use Butler's lexicon (Baril, 2007, p. 76). This idea of challenging the discourse has enabled me to discuss how women academics were perpetuating the gender discourse related to academia through enacting their gender identity the way that is socially expected from them. It is important to note that although Butler's (1999) theory is not based on empirical research, studies such as Afzali (2017) prove its applicability in the field of education.

The third theoretical tool that complements the two previous theories is Petriglieri's (2011). Petriglieri's (2011) theory focuses deeply on identities under threats. She believes that each individual's identity "is accompanied by a conceptuali[s]ation of what it means to be 'X'" (p. 643). In my study, it is women academics' conceptualisation of what it means to be a woman academic at an Algerian university. What could be considered as threats are, according to Petriglieri (2011), "experiences appraised as indicating potential harm to the value, meanings, or enactment of an identity" (p. 644). Petriglieri (2011) further mentions that there are diverse threatening sources; these could be seen through the lens of Day and Kington's (2008) theory (i.e., personal, contextual and professional). Furthermore, she also explains that there are at least six ways of responding to threats; the consequences of these responses are categorised as either eliminating the threats or maintaining them. The way women academics in my research responded to the threat(s) is not in parallel with any of the six responses Petriglieri (2011) suggests, nor by the three others added by Holmes *et al.* (2016) (see Chapter Two, subsection 2.5.1). Therefore, I contribute to this theory by adding another identity-threat response which I named 'unconscious complicity'. After naming this response as such, I

realised that the name has been used recently by Orton *et al*. (2021) in their paper on health and social inequalities. This, therefore, reinforces my claim that complicity is not always conscious.

1.6. Setting the scene: Contextual background

To understand the data in Chapters Six and Seven, there appears to be a need for a section that equips the reader with some relevant information about the Algerian higher education sector. Some of my findings, particularly in Chapter Six, refer to the status of women in the Algerian society. In this respect, I have decided to devote a section where I briefly discuss women's status throughout the Algerian history.

1.6.1. The Algerian higher education

This section aims to selectively provide some background knowledge on the Algerian higher education, which is deemed important to understand my findings. It starts with describing the Algerian higher education, its governing body and the budget allocated to this sector. Then, it moves to discussing the last major reform implemented in the previously-cited sector. Afterwards, it delineates the ranks of academics, explains the different types of contracts, recruitment procedures, role requirements and promotion criteria, in addition to academics' rights. It also gives a glimpse into staff development opportunities and the Algerian ministry's attitudes towards them. Much of this data is outlined in Appendix E, based on official documents (mainly the Executive Decree 08-130 of May 03, 2008). Although statistics related to gender in the Algerian higher education are scarce, I devote a small part where I provide some useful information about gender in the same sector.

- *A broad description of the Algerian Higher Education (AHE)*

The Algerian Higher Education (henceforth, AHE) is a sector directed by the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research (MHESR). It is composed of fifty universities and a number of other national schools, centres and institutes, all of which offer free education to Algerian citizens (Rose, 2015, p. 6; European Commission, 2017, p. 1). My participants belong to one of the fifty universities. Djalel (2015, p. 231) and the European Commission (2017, p. 20) point out to the public status of the Algerian university. In this regard, the European Commission (2017, p. 20) further states that "[h]igher education teaching staff are

public servants and the general rules governing their careers are set out in the general statutes for public-sector workers".

- *Budget*

Budget-wise, based on World Bank (2012, p. 17), 99% of Algerian higher education institutions are funded by the Algerian government. This funding differs from one year to another, based on an annual financial law agreed upon by the Algerian parliament. The 2018 economic report, which coincides with the data collection period, shows that the AHE sector is among the top five sectors which are well-funded by the Algerian government (Algérie Presse Service, 2018). The budget is estimated to have reached 313 billion Algerian dinars (DA), which represents around 7% of the total national budget (Schoelen, 2020). This budget finances "institution administration, infrastructure, teaching, and research – including those national research centers attached to the Ministry – as well as students' social services" (Schoelen, 2020, n.p.).

Commenting on the 2018 economic report, an online newspaper article (Litamine, 2017) further states that unlike other sectors, the AHE was not concerned with the austerity that hit the whole country at that time. Whilst this might show the importance of the sector at the governmental level, no further information is provided on how this budget was managed by the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research and the affiliated institutions.

- *Reform*

As for the reform, in 2004-2005, the MHESR decided to adopt the Bologna system, which is known as the LMD in Algeria (i.e., Licence/Bachelor, Masters, Doctorate) (Benghabrit-Remaoun and Rabahi-Senouci, 2009; Sarnou *et al*., 2012; Miliani, 2017). The system that preceded the LMD is named the 'classical' or 'old' system (Zekri, 2020). As the data chapters will further show, many of my participants belong to it. Seemingly, one of the major aims underpinning this reform is to revitalise the Algerian higher education and render it more compatible with the standards of other universities around the world, both in terms of quality education and world ranking (Laaredj-Campbell, 2016, p. 264; Djoudi, 2018, p. 7).

- *Academics' ranks and role requirements: Broad description*

As per Article 28 in the Executive Decree 08-130 of May 3, 2008, at the Algerian university level, there are five main ranks of academic personnel, listed in a top-down order: 'professors', 'class A lecturer (Assistant Professor)', 'class B lecturer', 'class A assistant lecturer', and 'class B assistant lecturer' (Djalel, 2015, pp. 234). Regardless of their rank, Djalel (2015, p. 231) broadly explains that the role requirements of the teacher-researcher revolve around:

- Ensuring the fulfilment of the weekly teaching schedule as set by the ministry, which ranges between six and twelve hours, depending on the rank (see Appendix E);
- Getting involved in continuing professional development programmes and activities to improve and upgrade their skills as teachers-researchers;
- Taking part in the production and dissemination of knowledge.

Furthermore, regarding the supervision role of the teacher-researcher, Djalel (ibid.) further states, while referring to a ministerial policy document (the Executive Decree 08-130 of May 3, 2008), that it is carried out based on an agreement between the academic and the head of the department on the number of students and hours, which do not exceed four per week, and students. Teachers-researchers are also required to annually submit a report on their achievements during the academic year (Article 23 of the same Executive Decree).

Besides these role requirements that the academic must accomplish, there are other tasks which do not have the same compulsory status. Professors, assistant-professors and assistant lecturers might all be solicited to participate in the administrative management of pedagogical structures, and work as an associate teacher/researcher at an institution other than the one in which they operate (Mezache, 2003, p. 29).

- *Recruitment, promotion criteria and role requirements: Further detail*

It is worthy to mention that not all academics working at Algerian universities are permanent. Some of them can be recruited as temporary lecturers ['*Enseignants Vacataires*'], associate lecturers ['*Maîtres Associés*'] or invited lecturers ['*Maîtres Invités*']. Given that all the women academics taking part in this study are permanent teachers-researchers, I have decided not to delve into the details of the other types of contracts. For the interested readers,

more detail regarding these contracts, except for temporary lecturers, can be found in the Executive Decree 01-294 of October 1, 2001.

According to the European Commission report on the Algerian Higher Education (2017, pp. 19-20), any newly-recruited academic for a potentially permanent position at an Algerian university starts as a 'class B assistant lecturer'. The position is open to either PhD holders whose recruitment is based merely on their qualifications, or Magister degree (Masters degree of the classical system) holders appointed upon their success in a national competitive examination. Upon their recruitment, as per Article 16 of the Executive Decree 08-130 of May 3, 2008, class B assistant lecturers undertake a one-year probationary apprenticeship, or more if required, before being either officially appointed as teachers-researchers or released without prior notice or compensation (Djalel, 2015, p. 231).

Promotion criteria to higher ranks are clearly outlined in the European Commission report (2017, p. 21) and are presented in Appendix E, which reflects the articles outlined in the Executive Decree 08-130 of May 3, 2008. In addition to the promotion criteria, I also explain role requirements and weekly teaching schedule related to each academic status. As shown in the tables (Appendix E), assistant lecturers class B and A are the least concerned with publications, because they are expected to be in the process of carrying out their doctoral research. However, the obtention of the doctoral degree requires the publication of at least one journal article (Djalel, 2015, p. 359). Policy documents from the MHESR show some flexibility regarding assistant-lecturers' teaching schedule, particularly those who are doctoral researchers. For example, 25% reduction of their teaching schedule during their first, second and third year of doctorate, and 50% reduction in their final year (MHESR, 2016).

While reading the ministerial documents outlining the role requirements of all teachers-researchers (the Executive Decree 08-130 of May 03, 2008), I noticed that the pedagogical duties are overemphasised. Arguably, this quantification might put the other tasks required from academics, particularly those related to research, in a secondary position. Mezache (2003, p. 29) reminds us that: "university education is mainly nourished by research results carried out by the teacher and the student" (translated from French). However, as soon as I read the Executive Decree 10-232 of October 4, 2010, I realised that it covers the research activities available for teachers-researchers; yet, not as part of their position as teachers-researchers but as teachers-researchers who choose to sign a renewable three-year contract to

belong to research units/laboratories/teams at the level of any Algerian higher education institution (Article 2).

Therefore, it is not mandatory for teachers-researchers to be part of research units/laboratories/teams, but it is rather a choice that makes the teacher-researcher monthly remunerated, alongside their salary (Article 11). Before signing the contract, teachers-researchers are familiarised with the project(s) they are expected to be part of, the time frame, and the other role requirements (Article 4). This is somewhat confusing as, in my view, these research activities should automatically be part of their status as teachers-researchers. Also, this, again, makes research seem secondary or optional for the other teachers-researchers who are not members of any research unit/laboratory/team.

- *Academics' rights*

Alongside requirements, teachers-researchers have also rights (Djalel, 2015). To state a few, as per Article 5 of the Executive Decree of May 3, 2008, they need to be provided with an adequate environment to fulfil their role requirements, especially hygiene and security. They are also allowed to participate at national/international conferences and seminars without losing their salaries (Article 13). Additionally, the department to which academics belong has to constantly organise professional development programmes and activities to allow them to hone their pedagogical and research skills (ibid., p. 232), as per Article 22 of the same Executive Decree.

Furthermore, academics have the right to be part of academics' unions. According to an official ministerial document published by the online newspaper (EchoroukOnline, 2019), there are overall six of them: 1) National Syndicate of Academics (SNEU); 2) National Council of Academics (CNES); 3) National Syndicate of Medical Teachers-Researchers (SNECHU); 4) National Federation of Workers of Higher Education and Scientific Research (FNTES); 5) National Federation of Public Administration Employees in the Higher Education Sector (SNAPAP); and 6) National Autonomous Union of Higher Education Employees (SNAPES).

These syndicates/federations/unions seem to function as a bridge between academics and other higher education employees, and the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research. The online newspaper (ENTV, 2021) reports that the previous higher education minister, Abdelbaki Benziane, received the members of the National Council of Academics

(CNES) to discuss important matters related to Algerian academics, such as: research laboratories, the classification of academic journals and the issue of housing (also called in French: ['*logement de fonction*']). Hence, the ultimate aim of the council is to improve academics' social and professional lives.

In the online newspaper, DjelfaInfo, Bensalem (2022) also reports that the National Autonomous Union of Higher Education Employees (SNAPES) has written a petition where many points related to academics' social and professional life are raised. In addition to the issue of housing and salary, SNAPES maintains that academics should receive adequate funding to be able to seize training and professional development opportunities overseas. It also demands that the requirements for such overseas opportunities should be uniform at the national level, and that the duration of academics' stays abroad should increase. The application file for overseas stays seems to be problematic too, which leads SNAPES to suggest that a specific office should take charge of such files, specifically visa applications and currency exchange. SNAPES also requests that academics should be provided with offices and staffrooms in institutions where these are unavailable.

- *Continuing professional development*

As per the Article 22 of the policy document related to teachers-researchers' rights, it is mandatory for their institutions to constantly create professional development opportunities (Djalel, 2015, p. 240). In a section entitled 'Continuing Professional Development for Academic Staff Working in Higher Education', the European Commision (2017) states that higher education teaching staff in Algeria benefit from a number of professional development opportunities. Nevertheless, researchers have noticed that academics' training and development overseas, in particular, seem to be highly valued by the MHESR (e.g., Rose, 2015; Djalel, 2015). In his paper, Djalel (2015) covers all these academic stays abroad and categorises them as follows: i) residential training abroad of more than six months, and ii) short-term professional development training.

The former is particularly offered to academics who are in the process of accomplishing their doctoral research (ibid., p. 240). The latter is concerned with all academics without any exception. The short-term stay involves, for example, conference participations abroad. Overall, these opportunities enable them to finish their doctoral training through residential grants abroad or to engage in the necessary research work to achieve university accreditation.

They also allow higher-ranking academics to update their pedagogical and scientific knowledge through the granting of a sabbatical year, or to take part in international scientific events, be it as a speaker or otherwise. During professional development periods, higher education teaching staff are placed on secondment and continue to receive part of their pay and to have their living expenses abroad covered, as noted previously.

- *Gender-related information*

Legislatively, Article 32 of the Constitution of the Algerian Republic clearly states that all citizens are equal and prohibits all sorts of discrimination based on birth, race, sex, opinion, or any other personal or social condition or circumstance (EuroMed Rights, 2021). Other articles "determine the guarantee of fundamental human rights (Art.38), full participation in economic, social and cultural life for all persons (Art.34), and the promotion of parity between men and women in the labour market (Art.36)" (ibid., p. 3). This, therefore, makes women and men theoretically equal in the workplace and beyond.

To date, and by legislation, academics still belong to the public service ['*fonction publique*'] (Kouaci, 2021); this implies that they have as many similar rights as employees in other public sectors. For example, like women in other public sectors, women academics are entitled to 98 days/14 weeks of maternity leave, while receiving 100% of their salary. After resuming work, they are allowed to have two hours of breastfeeding per day for the first six months and one hour for the second six months. On the other hand, male academics are granted only three days of paid paternity leave. Whilst this might be justified by the fact that women need time to recover to be able to resume work, it also, arguably, shows that women are somewhat expected to be the primary childcarers. In addition to the fourteen weeks of maternity leave, women can request 0 to 5 years of leave to raise a young child. These are, nevertheless, unpaid.

In the academic arena, there is, unfortunately, a noticeable lack of detailed national, regional and departmental statistics and information on academics and gender balance at the Algerian university. A few years ago, Ait-Zai *et al*. (2014) also reported, in different places of their national report, a scarcity of statistical data on gender in Algerian universities and research institutions. Interestingly, one of their recommendations is to create a Ministry of Statistics that could help researchers explore gender in this specific context and have access to statistical data in other areas too (pp. 9-10). Based on my search, at the time of writing, most

of the gender-related statistics at the Algerian higher education level relate to females and males' enrolment (e.g., STATISTA, 2022). As far as academics are concerned, the online newspaper (Algérie Press Service, 2022) states briefly, based on the minister's statement, that in Algeria, out of 63.500 academics, 27.000 are women. They, therefore, represent 42% of the academic staff. This information is indeed important but very limited to trigger further evaluative discussion on this topic so far.

1.6.2. Women's status throughout Algerian history

In parallel with the data chapters that discuss some gendered ideologies, I have decided to add this subsection to provide some insights into the status of women in Algeria, from a historical and sociocultural perspective. This discussion will hopefully help the reader understand some participants' accounts, particularly when they draw connections, both implicitly and explicitly, between the status of women in old and contemporary Algeria.

1.6.2.1. The Algerian War of Independence

Over the course of the French-Algerian war (1830-1962), Algerian women gained national and international recognition and were portrayed as revolutionary and iconic (Marzouki, 2010; Rohloff, 2012; Laaredj-Campbell, 2016). They were "combatants, spies, fundraisers, and couriers, as well as nurses, launderers, and cooks" (Turshen, 2002, p. 890); some of these roles were not allowed for women before the Algerian war. In the pre-colonial period, albeit rarely discussed with regard to women's status, Keddie (2006) depicts Algeria as a purely patrilineal/patriarchal conservative society where obedience, housework and childcare were the main functions associated with the majority of Algerian women. Arguably, this could have been one reason why the French coloniser viewed the invasion as a mere "mission of civilisation" (Vince, 2015, p. 72) rather than a colonisation *per se.*

This might also indicate that women were the backbone of the Algerian society, and eventually a target through which colonisation tactics were employed. In this regard, Vince (2010, p. 446) reports that to infiltrate the French values into the Algerian 'traditional' society, the French coloniser adopted three main strategies. First, educating Algerian young girls in French schools. Second, attempting to 'unveil' the veiled women to detach them from the Islamic values and principles. Third, providing women with the right to vote for the first time. These strategies were, indeed, viewed by some nationalists as a threat to the Arabo-

Islamic identity, an identity that women were responsible to safely guard. Taking women's veil as an example, Leonhardt (2013, p. 10) states:

> Wearing the veil was both an act of resistance to the colonial powers and a useful tool for carrying out attacks: Fanon praised its "revolutionary value". Despite these powerful connotations Fanon also wrote that most Algerians embraced the wearing of the veil, as "tradition demanded the rigid separation of the sexes".

Interestingly, the Algerian war was central to women's empowerment. That is, it seemed that no societal force was "able to hide the war from [them]", and also "because the war and the resistance movement were infiltrating Algerians' homes and businesses" (Rohloff, 2012, p. 9). In this regard, Algerian women deserved the label of *Mujahidat* (combatants/fighters) (Seferdjeli, 2012) for two main reasons. First, as noted earlier, due to their mobilisations and contributions in various military (e.g., carrying explosives and planting bombs in French cafés) and non-military roles (e.g., nursing the injured combatants, washing, cooking, and performing administrative works) (Tricic, 2014; Rohloff, 2012). Second, a number of them showed their ability to get out of their customary realm, join the army and fight alongside men, even though only 4.5% of Algerian women were literate (Amrane, 1991, p. 27), twenty-two women out of 503 were university students (ibid., pp. 225-227), and an estimated number of 3% of them were lucky to work outside their homes.

The temporary removal of societal hurdles and the respect women gained *vis-à-vis* their contribution in the national struggle generated high hopes for a new Algerian mindset to emerge, particularly with regard to their gender roles in the newly independent Algeria (Knauss, 2019). Nevertheless, what happened in the post-liberation phase was expressed in two different ways. To some veterans, expecting women to go back to their traditional roles was both disappointing and unfair (de Abes, 2011). To some others, as claimed by Rohloff (2012), the Algerian society underwent a slight change and the Algerian war allowed women a certain degree of freedom. The next subsection discusses this phase in further detail.

1.6.2.2. Post-liberation

Algeria gained its independence on the 5th of July 1962. At the beginning of the independence, the sociocultural and political situation seemed promising thanks to the educational reforms in favour of women (Moghadam, 2011). Rohloff (2012) states that women became more and more educated; both primary and secondary schools' enrolment witnessed a dramatic increase. However, women's involvement in the workforce arose from

1.8 to only 4.4 % from 1966 until 1987 (ibid., p. 14). According to Rohloff (2012), many historians found that on the political and economic side there was no intention or interest in changing women's status, apart from educating them. By way of illustration, a former combatant named Meriem Belmihoub argued that in order to change the Algerian economic situation, it would be better to consider involving women in the workforce. Years later, Ahmed Ben Bella, the president who reigned between 1963 and 1965, opined that he was an advocate of women's liberation, but not at the economic level. According to him, "women should not be involved in employment outside the home until the children reach the age of their majority" (Knauss, 2019, p. 155). His view was shared by the president Houari Boumedienne who also publicly stated, in an Algerian high school where he was invited to receive an award, that "the girls' role is as mothers and upholders of Islamic Arab morality, the boys' is to assume political responsibility for the state" (Rowbotham, 1972, p. 242). Thus, despite the revolutionary and heroic roles women played during the Algerian war, certain spheres including the political one were still reserved to men, and eventually women had little or no chance to join them (Laaredj-Campbell, 2016).

Similarly, Helie-Lucas (2004) claims that despite the challenges they had been through during almost 132 years of colonialism, "attitudes towards women's rights in Algerian society continued to evolve in the form of strict marriage and divorce laws, increased rates of domestic violence...women's unemployment, harassment, and seclusion" (p. 110). Put differently, the equality between both men and women, as well as the amount of respect women gained during the Algerian war did not persist longer after Algeria's independence, because the changing roles at that period were, according to Blair (1986), "due to necessity, the need to survive" only (p. 37). Ironically, a well-positioned politician called Mohamed Khider, when asked by a former woman combatant named Djamila Boupacha about the possibility of changing women's roles after the independence, clearly answered in French: ["*que la femme fasse le couscous et nous la politique*"], which translates to "let the woman cook the couscous and let us [men] take care of politics" (Knauss, 2019, p. 154). This seems to indicate that women in Algeria were once again expected to be the guardians of the national identity, and a means through which the Arabo-Islamic identity could be restored after long years of struggle and colonial threat for the land and religio-cultural values.

- *The Family Code (Le Code de la Famille) of 1984*

Before the Family Code was established by the Algerian government to protect the Algerian family from external 'Western' forces, what underpinned the Algerian society was "a mixture of French civil code and interpretations of Muslim law" (Laaredj-Campbell, 2016, p. 181). Algerian women had the right to travel and get married without essentially having a male escort [*a mahram*] (her brother, father, grand-father, husband or father-in-law). However, this code seemed to target three main pillars: women, education and the juridical system (Messaoudi and Schemla, 1998, p. 48).

Women were obliged to have a male companion when traveling. As for their working rights, the Family Code provided women with the right to work, but married women who were interested in integrating the workforce after their marriage still needed their husbands' acceptance (de Abes, 2010, p. 7). Algerian women's reactions to the 1989 Family Code were diverse. Laaredj-Campbell (2016), in her research on women's literacy in an Algerian rural area, found that most rural women were not aware of its content. In urban regions, on the other hand, studies claim that some women showed discontentment towards it (Benzenine, 2012, Salhi, 2003). By way of illustration, some women veterans joined other young Algerian activists in their mobilisations carrying slogans rejecting the Family Code: "No to Silence, Yes to Democracy!". Yet, despite all the unity and solidarity that those women voiced, their vehement attempts to reject the legislative code failed, as it was officially introduced and implemented in 1984 (Salhi, 2003, p. 30).

- *The Black Decade*

Under the reign of the president Chadli Ben Djedid (1979-1992), an Islamic fundamentalist party (FIS) gained a huge influence due to the number of seats (188 out of 430) it won (Turshen, 2002; Moghadam, 2011). The government's attempts to cancel the elections and ban the FIS failed. In a dictatorial way, FIS claimed their will to set stricter measurements which correlate with their own interpretations of the *Sharia* law[11] (Moghadam, 2003, p. 170). Apropos of women, they believed that "a woman is above all a mother, a sister, a wife or a daughter" in need of rescue from the alarming attempts of 'Westernisation' (Moghadam, 2001, p. 139). It is reported that the fundamentalists not only believed and spread the belief

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[11] Islam's legal law. This involves the Quran (the Muslim sacred book) and the Hadith (the sayings of the prophet Muhammad).

that housework was more suitable for women than working outside (Rohloff, 2012), but also sent death threats to many women activists and workers in different disciplines (Salhi, 2003).

Women's social progress was interrupted by the FIS. Their advancement was considered a threat to the nature of the Algerian Arabo-Islamic identity. According to Moghadam (2011, p. 184), "[i]n 1990, 20 percent of the university teaching staff and about half the teaching force at lower levels were women". Despite being socially recognised as an appropriate profession for women, female teachers were also targeted by the fundamentalists (Rohloff, 2012), because in their perspective, women's place is at home (Moghadam, 2011, p. 187). Turshen (2002, p. 897-898) demonstrates that FIS' attempt to establish an 'Islamic' traditional society did not end at this stage; they tried to deliver a series of *fatwa* (Islamic interpretations) that legalises killing women, who reject the idea of wearing the veil, kidnapping and rape. Many women attempted to publicly confront the FIS, but the price of their opposition most of the time costed them their lives (ibid.). This, however, did not stop many women from protesting and teaching despite the call for boycott of schools and the constant assassination of teachers by the GIA (*Groupe Islamique Armé*/Armed Islamic Group) (ibid.).

- *Algerian women's status from year 2000 onwards*

By the late 1990s, the Black Decade finally came to its end. Under the reign of the president Abdelaziz Bouteflika, promises were made "to reward women for their sacrifices and collective action in the previous decade" (Moghadam, 2011, p. 192). These promises were fulfilled in the form of policies implemented in favour of women's access to education and integration into the workforce (Rohloff, 2012; Laaredj-Campbell, 2016). According to Benzenine (2012), literacy rate in Algeria increased from 37% in 1966 to 92% in 2008. Females' enrolment in schools and universities has also witnessed a remarkable increase (Benzaid, 2020, p. 50). Benzaid (2020, p. 49) states that female graduates outnumbered male graduates from 1995 to 2009.

In 2005, the government also agreed to partially revise the 1984 Family Code (Moghadam, 2011). Consequently, women have been liberated from most of the explicit restrictions hampering their social advancement and autonomy within the family (Kellie and Breslin, 2010). Under the twenty-year rule of Bouteflika, Algerian women have been progressing within many employment sectors. Yet, education is one of the fields which appear to be the most dominated by women (Marzouki, 2010, p. 45), including higher education (Benzenine,

2012). In 2007, 55% of Algerian women were primary school teachers and 50% at the secondary level (Rohloff, 2012, p. 28), but no national statistics are found on the percentage of women in the higher education sector.

In the Anna Lindh Report (2021), the survey conducted by the Algerian woman academic and leader at Sétif University, Nawel Abdelatif Mami, also indicates that women in Algeria have been welcomed in male-dominated fields, such as politics, police and religious advice (Benzenine, 2012). To explore intercultural trends and social change in the Euro-Mediterranean region, 13,000 people across the Mediterranean were surveyed. Regarding Algeria, the survey's results demonstrate that despite the previously-mentioned improvement in Algerian women's status:

> [86% of respondents in Algeria] want to see women playing an even bigger role in looking after children and the home. Women also have a recognised role in domains which have often been portrayed as reflecting feminine ideals, such as education, arts and culture (The Anna Lindh report, 2021, p. 105).

As mentioned in the quote, the vast majority of respondents in Algeria perceived childcare and domesticity as the primary functions for women. With regard to the professions, education, arts and culture were regarded as the most suitable jobs for women compared to government and politics, science and technology, as well as business. This probably explains women's domination of the education field, as shown in the statistics provided previously. Although the survey's results are not representative of the whole Algerian population, they have led the researcher to claim that some society members still cling to 'traditional' thinking in relation to women's role in society, in spite of the progress that women have made throughout the years. Having provided significant contextual information about Algeria, I present the thesis outline in the following section.

1.7. Thesis outline

This thesis is structured into eight chapters. Except for the present chapter, the next seven chapters are briefly outlined below:

- *Chapter Two: Theoretical tools*

In this chapter, I justify why Day and Kington's (2008), Butler's (1999) and Petrieglieri's (2011) theories are relevant to this study. All these researchers consider identity as socially

constructed. In order to track the source of influence of these researchers, I open the chapter with a brief discussion of how identity started to be perceived as socially constructed. Day and Kington (2008) consider teacher professional identity as being influenced by an array of dimensions: personal, contextual and professional. Butler (1999) focuses thoroughly on the socially-constructed nature of gender and gender identity, which Day and Kington (2008) also consider, yet briefly. Petriglieri (2011) is deeply engaged in discussing the threats that individuals' identities undergo, and which are not only caused by external threatening sources, but also how individuals may respond to them.

- *Chapter Three: Academic professional identity*

In this literature review chapter, I address a key concept which is at the heart of this study: 'academic professional identity'. Given that there was a constant 'interaction' between my data chapters and literature review chapters, I also contextualise this study's findings by attempting to position them alongside other existing studies.

- *Chapter Four: Women in academia*

This chapter complements the former. By drawing on the relevant literature, it discusses in more detail how gender may impact upon women in academia.

- *Chapter Five: Research methodology*

This chapter is concerned with discussing the methodological underpinnings of this study. It justifies why ethnography is suitable as a methodology and explains the rationale behind the social constructivist paradigm and philosophical assumptions. It, then, describes how my data collection was planned and conducted. This includes seeking access, fieldwork experience, as well as the data analysis process. The chapter also addresses my ethical considerations, rigour and trustworthiness, in addition to my reflexivity.

- *Chapter Six: Gender dynamics amid societal misconception of academia*

This first data chapter discusses the lack of congruence that seems to exist between women academics' views of themselves and their roles in academia (i.e., their academic professional identities) and the societal perceptions of their roles. Data analysis further reveals that this lack of congruence is apparently due to a prevailing societal narrative that considers academia as a suitable profession for women and acknowledges women academics' teaching

role solely. This narrative is underpinned by two main assumptions. The first includes a misinterpretation of 'flexible' time in academia as 'free' time, which allows women to return to their private realms after their nine or twelve teaching hours per week to carry out their gendered roles. The second assumption involves a depiction of the university as a "locked" space, wherein women are somewhat detached from the outside world, particularly men; hence, safe and protected (Chorouk#II). Inspired by the school-teaching literature (e.g., Acker, 1983; Griffiths, 2006; Drudy, 2008; Kelleher, 2011; Moreau, 2019), I refer to this narrative as the 'feminisation' discourse. The chapter further shows the repercussions of this lack of congruence on some women academics' practices and how this eventually threatens their academic professional identities.

- *Chapter Seven: Identity-threatening workplace conditions and 'unconscious complicity'*

This second and last data chapter further reveals that the threat does not only stem from the lack of congruence experienced at the personal level. The challenging working conditions represent another kind of threat to women academics' professional identities, as they also affect their professional practices at the workplace. These inadequate working conditions led women academics to 'teach and leave', which appeared to be their best option in such a hostile place, as they depicted it. The last section in this chapter further demonstrates that women academics are not as passive as they might be depicted by the 'teach and leave' phenomenon. In an attempt to protect their threatened academic professional identities, they autonomously engaged in some forms of professional development that were, nevertheless, limited, individualistic and that, most importantly, reflected an 'unconscious complicity' at either one or two levels. Engaging in these individualistic forms of professional development gave the impression that it was an escapist act from the workplace challenges that seemed to threaten their academic professional identities. In other words, women academics did not appear enthusiastic to collectively bring about change by claiming for their rights and taking initiatives to make the workplace less hostile. This, therefore, contributed to the persistence of the challenging working conditions.

'Unconscious complicity' also extends to the societal narrative. All women academics, including those whose family members seemed to embrace the societal discourse that considers academia as a teaching-based arena, engaged in professional development practices at home. Given that home is associated with the gendered duties that some women academics

are expected to perform, it could be said that some women academics engaged in a subversive act that challenges the societal discourse. However, the place where this subversion took place (i.e., home) did not seem to be a very strategic place for subversion, as any work fulfilled there is regarded as extra. This is illustrated in some women academics' experiences whose attempts to carry out work-related tasks at home got interrupted, because their family members thought that they were doing extra work. This maintenance of the threat through these chosen ways of professional development explains my choice of the word 'unconscious complicity'.

- *Chapter Eight: Further discussion and conclusion*

This last chapter is concerned with addressing the research questions by discussing the main findings, as well as further connecting them to the existing literature and theoretical tools. It further delineates the thesis contribution, strengths and limitations, implications, and offers suggestions for further research. The chapter concludes with my reflections over the PhD journey.

CHAPTER TWO: THEORETICAL TOOLS

2.1. Introduction

In this chapter, I begin by discussing how identity started to be considered as socially constructed, rather than predominantly internal (section **2.2**). This discussion is significant, given that the three theories adopted in this research follow this line of thought and view identity as such. Moreover, it will in turn assist in understanding how the core concept 'academic professional identity' is perceived in this enquiry (next chapter, section **3.2**).

Then, I explain Day and Kington's (2008) three interrelated dimensions of understanding teacher/academic professional identity: situated-located, professional and personal (**2.3**). Despite its focus on compulsory education, I argue about the possible transferability of their theory to the university setting, by relating it to some higher education studies, informed by the themes that emerged from my data. Due to the salience of gender and given that Day and Kington (2008) do not seem to thoroughly report how gender might affect teacher/academic professional identity, I draw upon Butler's (1999) theory of performativity (**2.4**). Arguably, the two theories blended together offer an interesting theoretical lens through which I could interpret how women academics' identities are affected by the complex interrelationship of their personal and professional lives, within and beyond the workplace.

Additionally, I argue that while Day and Kington (2008) propose their previously-stated dimensions as affecting positively and/or negatively teachers/academics' professional identities, Petriglieri (2011) – i.e., the third theory – sheds light largely on the negative side of it; hence, the theory's name 'identity under threat(s)' (**2.5**). I justify its usefulness in this research by highlighting that she focuses not only on investigating the 'threatening sources' affecting individuals, which could be seen through the lens of Day and Kington's (2008) dimensions mentioned earlier, but also how individuals might respond to them, in a way that either protects the threatened identity or maintains the threat(s).

2.2. Identity

In this section, I address the two prevalent ways of looking at identity in the existing scholarship: the first perceives identity as predominantly internal to the individual, whilst the second emphasises the potential external influences on the individual's identity, without denying the internal dimension of it (Benwell and Stokoe, 2006). The usefulness of this

discussion lies in its ability to briefly trace the source of influence of the theories adopted in this study – Day and Kington (2008), Butler (1999) and Petriglieri (2011) –, all of which seem to intersect in their acknowledgment that identity is not constructed in a vacuum but is socially constructed. Hence, adopting the latter view which emphasises the need to study identity in its context and in relation to others. It further helps in the way 'academic professional identity', a key concept in this enquiry, is conceptualised.

The nature/source of identity has long been contested among scholars (Day *et al*., 2006; Benwell and Stokoe, 2006; Hammack, 2015). This contestation mainly revolves around the personal and social dimensions of identity (ibid.) – that is, whether identity is predominantly internal or external to the individual. The two prominent pioneers, as far as this identity-related contestation is concerned, are Cooley (1902) and Mead (1934). For the early writer Cooley (1902), identity was initially viewed as fixed with little influence from external forces (cited in Day *et al*., 2006, p. 602). The individual, therefore, was deemed to have a sense of 'self-awareness', or 'project of the self' (Benwell and Stokoe, 2006, p. 17), which enables them to be fully aware of the external influences, and eventually filtrate and interpret them reflexively (Day *et al*., 2006, p. 602).

Later, Day *et al*. (2006, p. 602) further indicate, there has been a "connection between self-awareness and the perceived opinion of others […] as a major influence on the construction of self". This is also echoed in Benwell and Stokoe (2006, p. 17) who also report this shift in the treatment of identity. In this respect, Cooley (1902) widened his initial views of the nature/source of identity, and developed a metaphor called 'the looking glass self', which refers to the social influence on identity through 'self-feeling'. In this sense, the individual's identity is believed to be the result of one's imaginations and interpretations of how one is perceived in the minds of others. This view, although recognises the influence of the social milieu through the individual's imagination, appears to be superficial, as it does not fully depict the potential influence of the social environment, wherein language and experience play a key role. Hence, the sociologist Mead (1934), in *Mind, Self and Society*, goes even further and suggests his theory of the self that focuses primarily on the development of an individual's self as a result of one's ongoing interactions and communication with the social environment (cited in Beijaard *et al*., 2004 and Day *et al*., 2006). It seems, therefore, that the differences in these scholars' earlier and later views, regarding the nature of identity, lie mainly in the degree to which, and in what circumstances, the public world can influence the individual's sense of self.

Key works such as Cooley's (1902) and Mead's (1934) represent theoretical foundations for contemporary scholars who currently perceive identity as socially constructed, including those whose works I am adopting in this enquiry (i.e., Day and Kington, 2008; Butler, 1999 and Petriglieri, 2011). Nevertheless, despite the significance of their works, Cooley (1902) and Mead (1934) do not appear to fully recognise the plurality of identity (cited in Day *et al*., 2006, p. 602); for example, an individual having a gender identity, a professional identity and an ethnic identity, to name but a few. Stryker and Stryker (2016, p. 34) state that "[t]he conception of self as, in part, made up of identities, does not appear in the sociological literature until the middle of the 20th century". In this regard, Goffman (1959), who can also be situated in this theoretical lineage, suggests in his theatre-inspired work, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, the idea that people have multiple 'selves', enacted across different times and spaces. Burkitt (2011, p. 280) succinctly explains Goffman's approach as follows:

> The idea here is that we are like actors on a stage playing different roles for an audience composed of our fellow social beings, putting on a face or appearance 'front stage' for those we are to impress while reserving other feelings and behaviours for 'backstage' areas where our intended audience cannot see us.

Nevertheless, what seems to be problematic about Goffman's work is that it does not explain how individuals' identities constantly develop and change over time (cited in Day *et al*., 2006). This developmental approach is offered by the psychoanalyst Erikson (1959; 1968), who, unlike the aforementioned researchers, offers a psychosocial framework that studies identity formation across eight life stages (cited in Day *et al*., 2006, p. 603; Côté and Levine, 2002, p. 14). Although this research is not particularly focused on tracking this identity development process, this developmental approach points out to the lifelong influence of the social environment on individuals' identities. In the field of education, particularly in relation to 'professional identity', Ball (1972, p. 18) distinguishes between two types of identity: situated and substantive. The former is a malleable form of self that adapts to diverse social situations, whereas the latter is the core form that involves the way in which individuals think about themselves – self-presentation (cited in Day *et al.,* 2006). The rationale behind this whole discussion, therefore, is to show the extent to which the external world of the individual started to be more and more emphasised in different fields, without disregarding the internal one, indeed.

As stated previously, influenced by the foregoing early scholars, many contemporary researchers study identity in its context. A further unpacking of the term 'context' may lead one to think about places (e.g., universities, classrooms, administrations, and houses); professions (e.g., academia); people (e.g., family members, colleagues, students); beliefs (e.g., religious); and cultural norms (e.g., patriarchy) among other countless elements. To illustrate this link between the context and the individual's identity, in his psychological book, the contemporary researcher McLaughlin (2012, p. 29) recounts having had an exercise where he, and other staff members at his university, had to differently answer five identical questions: "who are you?". The purpose behind such an activity was to get people to think about their perceptions of themselves and the influencing dimensions shaping these perceptions, as well as their relationships with others. Whilst many people answered the first question by giving their names, they deemed it important to extend their thinking and reflect upon *who they are* at the interpersonal and sociocultural levels, to be able to answer the other remaining questions. Their diverse answers, such as: wife/partner/husband; working/middle class; father/mother/carer, portrayed identity as a very complex notion, influenced by a variety of factors, across different contexts. Thus, this makes identity "not a fixed attribute of a person, but a relational phenomenon" (Beijaard *et al*., 2004, p. 108).

To reiterate, I have briefly discussed the different views of 'identity', as it is beyond the scope of this study to delve deeply into its historical roots. I have shown that, initially, identity started to be seen as predominantly cognitive. Yet, this view later shifted making identity a socially-constructed phenomenon, *par excellence*. That is, it is constantly shaped by multiple dimensions involving not only individuals themselves, but also the wider context in which they operate. As I stated at the outset of this section, this discussion will enable one to understand the reasoning adopted by the following theorists *vis-a-vis* identity, as well as the conceptualisation of 'academic professional identity' in this research. I now move to discussing the three theories embraced in this enquiry – Day and Kington (2008), Butler (1999) and Petriglieri (2011), respectively. These three theories altogether seem to adopt the socially-constructed view of identity addressed in this section.

2.3. Day and Kington's (2008) theory: Conceptualising teacher/academic professional identity

Day and Kington (2008) conducted their four-year longitudinal and mixed-method research with 300 teachers working in 100 primary and secondary schools in England. Their study aimed to examine *Variations in Teachers' Work, Lives and Effectiveness*. They, therefore, suggest that teacher professional identity could be examined from three overlapping dimensions: situated-located, professional and personal. These dimensions are also referred to as identities, "[e]ach composite identity is made up of sub- or competing identities" (Day and Kington, 2008, p. 11). Their model is similar to Mockler's (2011), who, based on her longitudinal research conducted in Australia, she labelled the dimensions as follows: external political, professional and personal. Her research emerged to highlight the importance of the humanistic approach; that is, what it means to *be* a teacher, which seemed to be overlooked by the excessive focus on what works in teaching and the neoliberal discourses reigning in Australia, US and UK at the time. This seems to justify why she explicitly labelled one of the dimensions 'external political', while in Day and Kington (2008), the political element is part of the professional dimension. Yet, despite the different labels and scrutiny, they both recognise the socially-constructed nature of teacher professional identity.

It could be argued that school teaching is different than academic work (Trautwein, 2018). Teaching for many academics around the world is one role among many others such as research and service (ibid.), and this seems to apply to the Algerian higher education context too (see Chapter One, subsection 1.6.1). However, despite the differences that could exist between both settings, schools and universities, teachers/academics' professional identities are, arguably, both influenced by similar dimensions: personal, contextual and professional. This justifies my decision to use Day and Kington's (2008) theory as a tool to make sense of the data related to the women academics' professional identities, all of which is presented in Chapters Six and Seven.

2.3.1. The situated-located dimension

The situated-located dimension, as Day and Kington (2008) name it, suggests that teacher professional identity is closely linked to the school, as well as the working conditions in which the school operates. This might involve teaching resources, relationships with pupils, level of disadvantage and support from school leaders and colleagues (ibid.). Similar to

school teaching, researchers focusing on higher education have found that the context in which academics work shapes their academic professional identities (Clarke *et al*., 2013; Pifer and Baker, 2013; van Lankveld *et al*., 2017).

Informed by my findings, the situated-located dimension in this study, as discussed fully in Chapter Three (section 3.3.1), examines: 1) academics' experiences with a 'forced relocation' to a setting owned by another faculty, which could generate a sense of lack of belongingness. According to Merriam Webster (2022), the synonym for the adjective 'forced' is 'involuntary'. 'Relocation' is to move to a new location (ibid.). In my study, therefore, 'forced relocation' is deliberately used to refer to a relocation that was against the academics' will; i.e., the decision to relocate was made without taking into account the views of those concerned (see Chapter Seven for the data evidence).

Beyond, but still applicable to, academia, relocation has been experienced as a grief, as demonstrated in Milligan's (2003) study. Such literature reminds us that before expecting an academic to fulfil given tasks such as teaching, it appears to be first necessary to ensure that the working conditions meet the local/national/international standards. These include considerations of background noise (Rioux, 2017), which might not only affect academics' wellbeing but also their professional practices.

When a move is taking place, academics will have to adjust to a new working environment. Studies (e.g., Rioux, 2017; Whitton, 2018) demonstrate that the workspace such as the office and staffroom have to be adequate enough to enhance the feeling of belonging, as they can hugely affect academics' productivity (Whitton, 2008). Whitton's (2008) study, for example, shows how due to the inadequate workspace, academics had to select the tasks they could perform at work and at home. The workspace enabled administrative tasks which did not require much concentration, while home was associated with other intense tasks such as research.

2.3.2. The professional dimension

The professional dimension relates to teachers' professional roles and local and/or national policy-related expectations that incorporate the characteristics of a 'good' teacher. In this regard, Day and Kington (2008) further add that there is often an unparallel between what is required from teachers and teachers' view of themselves and their roles. It might also include teachers' professional experiences such as those related to teacher education and continuing

professional development. As discussed in Chapter Three, and in parallel with this study's findings (see Chapter Seven), the professional dimension in this study explores academics' experiences with the lack/inefficiency of induction programmes and continuing professional development, institutional support and their collegial relationships.

Literature shows that the presence or lack of induction programmes and ongoing professional development influences academics' professional identities (Smith and Rattray, 2018; Teräs, 2016). Higher education institutions undergo various changes, and academics' roles and responsibilities are eventually shaped by them. Therefore, teacher education programmes are a form of 'welcoming on board' for academics to prepare them for their journeys in academia (Al-Kurdi *et al*., 2020; Sanders *et al*., 202). For instance, as data analysis reveals (see Chapter Seven, subsection 7.5.1), Algerian universities underwent a new pedagogical reform, which was new to my participants. Novice participants received an explanatory training to get familiar with the principles of this new system; however, many others did not. King *et al*.'s (2018) qualitative research demonstrates that despite academics' potential, inadequacy in supporting academics' transition into academia might generate feelings of being lost and less confident. Whilst some academics hardly handle this feeling and struggle to navigate their ways autonomously, others prefer to leave academia towards other occupations that give them a sense of self that was lost in academia (King *et al*., 2018).

In addition to induction programmes, academics' ongoing professional development is a process that necessitates academics' personal efforts and initiatives (both individual and collective), as well as institutional/governmental support. This could involve conference attendance/participation (Sanders *et al*., 2020), e-learning (Bruguera *et al*., 2019; Sia and Cheriet, 2019), and engagement in CoPs (Houghton *et al*., 2015). These forms of development make the academic a lifelong learner and a constant knowledge-seeker, in need to update their skills and improve their pedagogical/scholarly practices. Conferences, for example, are found to be important sites for knowledge dissemination and networking (Henderson *et al*., 2018; Henderson and Moreau, 2020). Literature also shows that sharing knowledge among colleagues through informal conversations (Thomson and Trigwell, 2018) and team-based learning (Gast *et al*., 2017) is beneficial. It can, for example, shape academics' teacherly identities by enhancing collaboration and fostering autonomy, in that it makes them less dependent on institutional support (Thomson and Trigwell, 2018).

2.3.3. The personal dimension

The personal dimension relates to teachers' experiences beyond the school, at the heart of which are, for instance, teachers' gender, class and race (Mockler, 2011). This dimension could also involve teachers' prior experiences as students. Yet, this does not only include their educational background, but also their social roles as partners, child-carers and friends, among others. Day and Kington (2008, p. 11) further add "[f]eedback comes from family and friends, and they often become sources of tension as the individual's sense of identity can become out of step". This, therefore, shows how influential can teachers' personal relationships be in shaping their professional identities.

Informed by my findings, the personal dimension in this study, as addressed briefly at the end of Chapter Three and elaborated in Chapter Four, is linked to academics' gender and their gender roles as wives and daughters-in-law. Given that Day and Kington (2008) discuss the personal dimension broadly without going deeply into how salient gender can be in influencing teacher/academic professional identity, I argue that there is a need to draw upon Butler's theory of performativity which, arguably, is a useful theoretical lens through which the data in relation to the women academics' professional identities could be thoroughly interpreted. For example, in Chapter Six, the participants claim that academia is socially perceived as suitable for women. They also offer two reasons underpinning this societal narrative, both of which are gendered.

Butler's (1999) concept of *gender performativity* delves into the power of such essentialist social discourses, which will help me discuss this part of the data. Butler's perception of individuals' ability to enact their *agency* in order to disrupt such gendered narratives will also enable me to interpret some respondents' choice to be agentic and its impact on their academic professional identities. It is important to highlight, lastly, that Butler's theory goes in line with Day and Kington's, as they both view identity as fluid and recognise the socially-constructed nature of it. In the following section, I attempt to discuss Butler's theory in detail.

2.4. Butler's theory of gender performativity

In this section, I draw upon Butler's concept of 'performativity'. The importance of the concept lies in viewing gender identity as socially constructed, shaped by powerful social and cultural norms. These norms are performed by the individual, who, through their performativity, they constitute their own gender identity. This will, arguably, reinforce and

reproduce the gender norms that legitimise one's existence. Whilst this portrays individuals as docile bodies, externally manipulated, Butler suggests that they have *agency*, but still within the established social and cultural framework. This means that they can disrupt the established system, but never totally escape from it. In this research, Butler's theory serves as a linguistic baggage that could help me interpret the role of gender in the women academics' professional identities. Specifically, it will help me interpret: 1) the societal narrative that looks at academia as a suitable profession for women; 2) how some women academics' professional identities seem to be affected by this discourse when it is adopted by some family members; and 3) the role of women in challenging, to a limited extent, this discourse (see Chapters Six and Seven).

2.4.1. What is gender performativity?

In her seminal work, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (1990) and its new edition (1999) which I will be referring to, Butler (1999) begins her writing with contesting the feminist scholarship that depicted women as one entity, with a universally stable identity (Salih, 2002; Baril, 2007; Shams, 2020). To explain, feminism, in essence, predominantly aims to defend women's issues (Butler, 1999). Yet, Butler (1999, pp. 2-8) claims that women were represented in the feminist arena as a homogeneous entity, and her book, *Gender Trouble*, came to critique this universalism and essentialism (Evans, 2014, p. xxi).

According to Butler (1999), particularly in the openings of her book, the way feminist theories categorised women was paradoxically supporting the social heteronormativity: men/masculinity, women/femininity. That is, what the book critically engages in is the notion of categorising women as one entity, sharing a universal identity. In other words, the fact that women have the same body characteristics does not make them all the same, sharing one identical gender identity. By saying that, Butler did not reveal any intention to abandon feminism, nor did she induce others to abandon or replace the term 'women' (Baril, 2007). On the contrary, in the preface of her 1999 book edition, Butler (1999) seems to locate her work within the feminist scholarship (p. vii). Yet, what Butler seems to suggest is a reconsideration of the feminist principles which, in essence, were advocating for women's emancipation, but in parallel, they could have been self-defeating, given the essentialist take they adopted (Shams, 2020).

Contesting this essentialist view in the openings of her book sets the ground for her ground-breaking notion of *gender performativity*. Butler introduces the readers to the concept by critically engaging with the works of some key thinkers and theorists such as Jacques Derrida, Simone de Beauvoir, Michel Foucault and John Langshaw Austin, to name only a few. The discussion around the concept of gender performativity has been extended to other subsequent books such as *Bodies that Matter* (1993) and *The Psychic Life of Power* (1997), which, arguably, further unpack and clarify the notion of gender performativity (e.g., Butler, 1993, p. x). A main thread of 'performativity' is Butler's perception of sex as a social construct, similar to gender.

In *Gender Trouble*, Butler seems to differ from the mainstream feminism that seemed to take for granted the idea that sex is biologically determined, and is, therefore, binary (Salih, 2002). This could be illustrated through de Beauvoir's famous statement: "one is not born, but rather becomes a woman". Although de Beauvoir's statement helped Butler build her argument on gender performativity, de Beauvoir did not appear to look at sex as socially constructed, but a biological and natural aspect (Salih, 2002, pp. 45-46). As for Butler, even by recognising the anatomical differences in humans, she thinks that this is not a solid ground upon which gender identity should be framed into *either* man/masculine *or* woman/feminine (Lloyd, 2015, p. 3). In *Bodies that Matter*, Butler (1993, pp. 7-8) explains further:

> Consider the medical interpellation which (the recent emergence of the sonogram notwithstanding) shifts an infant from an 'it' to a 'she' or a 'he', and in that naming the girl is 'girled', brought into the domain of language and kinship through the interpellation of gender. But that 'girling' of the girl does not end there; on the contrary, that founding interpellation is reiterated by various authorities and throughout the various intervals of time to reinforce or contest this naturalized effect. The naming is at once the setting of a boundary, and also the repeated inculcation of a norm.

Therefore, Butler resists the binary presentation of gender, and gives space for a person to become what they envisage to be, forming their own identities (Lloyd, 2015). Notwithstanding, one's gender is not something that is there waiting to be selected as clothes in the wardrobe (Butler, 1993, p. x), but is rather socially framed (Salih, 2002; Tong and Botts, 2018). This is clearly portrayed in Butler's (1999) own words: gender is "a set of repeated acts within a highly rigid regulatory frame" (p. 45). The terms 'rigid' and 'frame' denote the limits and the constraints put by external forces on the gendered body.

In the previously cited books, gender is depicted as a set of repetitive acts that a person - to whom Butler refers as *subject* (e.g., Butler, 1993, p. 3; Butler, 2015) - performs, which makes gender a process of 'doing' rather than 'being' (Butler, 1999, p. 34). In this sense, Butler conceives gender as a way of constantly enacting a set of acts that fits into social and cultural norms. This regular performativity makes the person feel that the acts are their own, while they are already set by an external force: the constitutive power structures (Butler, 2015). In her discussion of gender performativity, Butler uses the term *subject* meaning the *doer*, and rejects the idea that this doer/subject pre-exists the deed (Butler, 1999, p. 34). She continues: "[t]here is no gender identity behind the expressions of gender; that identity is performatively constituted by the very "expressions" that are said to be its results" (ibid.). In other words, she believes that the actions are not the product of the subject, because the actions are already predetermined and associated to the subject. Yet, this comes with an important caveat: it is not the deeds (actions) that are imposed on the subject, but it is the doer/subject that is imposed on the performed acts and shaped by them. In Butler's (2015, p. 6) words: "I am still being formed as I form myself in the here and now".

In her book that offers a useful overview of Butlers' major ideas, Salih (2002) further shows how crucial is the 'doing' in Butler's work. She states: "gender acts are not performed by the subject, but they performatively constitute a subject that is the effect of discourse rather than the cause of it" (p. 65). These discourses constitute the norms as Butler (2015) seems to claim: "[a] norm may be said to precede us, to circulate in the world before it touches upon us" (p. 5). Discourses and norms so far remain vague; Butler (2015, p. 7), however, unpacks this in the following quote:

> I am not only already in the hands of someone else before I start to work with my own hands, but I am also, as it were, in the "hands" of institutions, discourses, environments, including technologies and life processes, handled by an organic and inorganic object field that exceeds the human.

This quote, which also builds up on the arguments Butler has made in her previously-cited publications, seems to point towards her argument that the hallmark of performativity lies in the powerful external forces and discourses that shape it (Salih, 2002; Hey, 2006; Shams, 2020).

Relating this discussion to the data in Chapter Six, it could be said that associating women with academic work based on the assumption that women academics teach nine to twelve hours per week only, which helps them reconcile work and family life, is a naïve view. From a Butlerian perspective, therefore, it might be argued that the societal discourse that associates women with such acts (e.g., working in 'female-friendly' professions, teaching and leaving the institution to perform their domestic duties) have already been there before the existence of the subjects who, based on their presumably 'biological' characteristics, were already gendered. Also, and paradoxically, by performing what is socioculturally expected from them – e.g., teaching and leaving the institution -, women engage in a process of gendering themselves. Interestingly, by regularly performing their gendered acts (e.g., teaching and going home), they are also in the process of forming themselves as women academics; hence, reiterating what is externally expected from them, although they might think that they are the ones who take these actions, yet they are not, as Butler (1999) seems to argue.

2.4.2. Butler's critics

Despite her profound influence, especially on the feminist understanding of gender, Butler and her works have been critiqued, and sometimes harshly criticised, for a number of reasons. These mainly include her complex writing and ideas (Salih, 2002, pp. 145-147), as well as her problematic conceptualisation of agency (ibid., p. 148). In what follows, I shall discuss these two main critiques in the order stated.

- **Complex language**

Butler's books have been criticised for using ambiguous language (e.g., Nussbaum, 1999). A journalist even awarded Butler the first prize of the bad academic writer in 1998 (Salih, 2002; Birkenstein, 2010; Shams, 2020). In the *New Republic*, the philosopher Nussbaum (1999) in her essay, *The Professor of Parody*, extensively criticised Butler's eminent work for being obscure and esoteric (Salih, 2002; Birkenstein, 2010). Nussbaum (1999, n.p) argues that Butler's obscure language "bullies the reader into granting that, since one cannot figure out what is going on, there must be something significant going on". In *New York Times*, Butler reacted back to the accusation of being a bad writer, under the title "*A Bad Writer Bites Back*". Butler (1999) also brought up this criticism in the new edition of their book *Gender Trouble*. She states:

It would be a mistake to think that received grammar is the best vehicle for expressing radical views, given the constraints that grammar imposes upon thought, indeed, upon the thinkable itself. But formulations that twist grammar or that implicitly call into question the subject-verb requirements of propositional sense are clearly irritating for some (pp. xix–xx).

In a defence of Butler, Birkenstein (2010) offers a counterargument to that of Nussbaum mentioned earlier. While she recognises language complexity in Butler's works, she argues that "it would not have had the wide impact it has had were it not for its ability to consistently make recognizable arguments that readers can identify, summarize, and debate" (ibid., p. 273). I would argue, however, that Butler's ideas have been, to some extent, simplified to be able to be understood. I, personally, and perhaps other readers too, before getting into Butler's first-hand scholarly work, started with the books that introduce us to Butler's ideas. These introductory publications, such as Salih (2002) and Smith-Laing (2017) in English, and Baril (2007) in French, arguably, offer a useful overview of the main ideas discussed in Butler's books in a comprehensible language.

Moreover, reading readers' views on *Goodreads*, a book-related website, has helped me not only have a general idea of Butler's main ideas, but also different reactions, understandings and critiques. With this overview in mind, I could finally be able to approach Butler's complex works with less confusion. From another perspective, it could be said that Butler's writing on gender subversion might have inspired her to subvert the conventional and usual style of writing. This language subversion is not merely at a personal level. Salih (2003, p. 46) argues that in Butler's works, "[t]he reader is implicitly invited to relinquish her normative assumptions regarding both style and 'being' in order to challenge, suspend and, ultimately, expand those norms". Therefore, writing intentionally in such a complex way seems to have political implications.

- **Agency**

Given Butler's belief that there is no subject pre-existing the deed, many researchers, such as Nussbaum (1999), have criticised Butler's work for being deterministic, depicting subjects as fatalists and passive (Salih, 2002; Shams, 2020). This perceived lack of agency lies in the discourse that is believed to precede gender: "[t]here is only a taking up of the tools where they lie, where the very "taking up" is enabled by the tool lying there" (Butler, 1999, p. 199). This has led many researchers to wonder: "[i]f gender is merely a discursive deed, is there

still a human subject, or is it simply language itself, that is (un)doing gender?" (Xie, 2014, p. 28).

It is important to note, however, that Butler does not claim that subjects are dispossessed of their agency (Salih, 2003; Shams, 2020). She argues that there are possibilities of agency by subverting the social and cultural norms. According to Baril (2007, p. 76), 'subversion', 'resignification', 'decontextualisation' and 'recontextualisation' are the terms that Butler uses to indicate the possible transformations of the discourse. What seems problematic for many researchers, nonetheless, is that this agency is enacted *within* the powerful discourse and *never outside* of it (Salih, 2002, p. 68).

Stated differently, in Butler's view, a subject never succeeds in escaping the discourse. They perform agency only by not conforming to the conventional. This might seem obscure as Butler does not provide in her works any prescriptive steps on how to effectively resist the gender-related social norms (Tong and Botts, 2018, p. 248). Yet, she provides an example of how drag performance can be a culturally subversive act that challenges the binary, 'normal' gender identity that equates a man with masculinity and a woman with femininity. It could be said, however, that drag still acts within the discourse that has established gender as masculine and feminine. Thus, drag is not about transcending the boundaries of the discourse of masculinity and femininity (Butler, 1993, p. 125). In this respect, Nussbaum (1999) found it problematic that a subject is only able to slightly disrupt the power structures and never make a radical change. In a very assertive manner, she reacts:

> Isn't this like saying to a slave that the institution of slavery will never change, but you can find ways of mocking it and subverting it, finding your personal freedom within those acts of carefully limited defiance? Yet it is a fact that the institution of slavery can be changed, and was changed--but not by people who took a Butler-like view of the possibilities. It was changed because people did not rest content with parodic performance: they demanded, and to some extent they got, social upheaval (n.p).

Nussbaum's passage implies that subversion is only understood as drag. Nevertheless, drag performativity is just an example Butler provides to explain the subversive acts, unconventional with the norms (e.g., Butler, 1993, pp. 124-125). Butler clarifies: "if drag is performative, that does not mean that all performativity is to be understood as drag" (ibid., pp. 230-231). There are, hence, multiple ways of subverting the discourse, and the fact that these are not listed in Butler's works might be disappointing for some readers (Salih, 2002, p.

149). Salih (ibid.) further adds that this act is deliberate and definitely not an aspect that Butler would overlook. Butler, Salih (ibid.) claims, is aware that "'event' and 'context' cannot be fully determined in advance". This Butlerian view of agency will help me interpret how some of the women academics in my study seem to disrupt, albeit in a limited way, the societal discourse that reduces their academic job to on-site teaching only (see Chapter Seven, section 7.6).

Butler's conceptualisation of agency has been further criticised by Nussbaum (1999). Nussbaum (1999) asserts that Butler's conceptualisation of agency – mainly viewed as parody – does not solve real-life problems such as women's rape, hunger and beating. Women experiencing such issues do not improve their lives through parody, Nussbaum argues. Butler's feminism, according to Nussbaum (1999, n.p) takes us "away from the material side of life, toward a type of verbal and symbolic politics that makes only the flimsiest of connections with the real situation of real women". In such a way, Butler was depicted as an alien that lives in her own world, where parodying is probably the solution for her own malaise.

What Nussbaum (1999) thinks is important, therefore, is "to be dedicated to the public good and to achieve something through that effort". It might be said that this criticism is due to Butler's work that is merely theoretical and does not have any empirical foundations. Nevertheless, the studies that have used Butler's theory of gender performativity have applied it in real-life contexts and in a variety of fields, including gender and education (e.g., Afzali, 2017). Many of them seem to agree on its applicability, which, therefore, opposes what Nussbaum seems to claim. Next, I discuss the third theory – Petrieglieri's (2011) - which will enable me to explain the threat(s) experienced by the women academics in my research, stemming from either all or some of the following dimensions: the gender dynamics within the family and/or the workplace conditions. In addition, the theory assists in interpreting how the women academics respond to the threat(s).

2.5. Petrieglieri's (2011) theory: Identity under threat(s)

In this study, Petrieglieri's (2011) theory on identity threats complements the two previous theories. That is, as discussed earlier, Day and Kington (2008) propose three dimensions that might affect positively and/or negatively teacher professional identity – contextual, professional and personal. Under the personal dimension wherein gender is relevant, Butler

(1999) was added to the discussion. What mainly characterises Petriglieri's (2011) theory is not only the light she sheds on the potential external influences on individuals' identities, but also how individuals may respond to them and the consequences of these responses – elimination or maintenance of identity threats (p. 655). Moreover, whilst Day and Kington's (2008) theory could be used to examine, I highlight, both positive and negative influences on teacher professional identity, Petriglieri (2011) focuses specifically on identity *threats* in any organisation. In this respect, despite the fact that it is not based on empirical research but rather a review of the literature, it has been useful in various fields addressing identity threats. These involve, but are not exclusive to, gender and leadership (Ibarra and Petriglieri, 2017; Meister *et al.*, 2017), management learning (Callagher *et al.*, 2021), as well as education (McMillan *et al.*, 2021).

Two key concepts are at the heart of Petriglieri's (2011) theory: identity and threat. Apropos of the former, "each identity of a person is accompanied by a conceptuali[s]ation of what it means to be 'X'" (p. 643). An identity *threat*, she adds, represents "experiences appraised as indicating potential harm to the value, meanings, or enactment of an identity" (p. 644). Having defined identity threat, based on her synthesis of the identity threat literature in organisational studies, she goes on claiming that individuals' identities could be threatened by three main sources: individuals themselves, others, and/or the material world (p. 647). To explain, according to Petriglieri (2011, p. 647), individuals can be a threatening source such as when they enact an identity-threatening action that is incongruent with the meanings they associate with that particular identity.

The two other sources – others and the material world – holistically represent the external forces. Yet, they seem to refer to two different things. Following an example that illustrates the threats caused by 'others' – or what she also calls individual's 'social world' – she argues that: "threats may originate from beliefs and prejudices held by a society as a whole", or also interpersonal interactions (p. 647). This point seems to be relevant in the first data chapter (see Chapter Six). The material world, as exemplified in Petriglieri (2011, p. 647), is a traumatic event such as a car accident. However, as argued by Miscenko and Day (2016, p. 223), the material world threat could be interpreted in multiple ways. Citing Elsbach's (2003) research, Miscenko and Day (2016, p. 223) further claim that it might be in a form of a relocation from one office to another wherein one's actions are constrained, such as hindering the display of one's personal belongings. The material world's threat is reported in the second data chapter (Chapter Seven).

Petriglieri's (2011) theory includes another important concept: identity threat responses. She argues that "[a]ppraising an experience as threatening drives an individual to pursue an anticipatory coping response in an effort to negate the potential harm" (p. 647). She, therefore, suggests six ways of addressing identity threatening sources. They fall within two categories: identity-protection responses and identity-restructuring responses. Whilst the former "target[s] the source of the threat in order to protect the threatened identity" (p. 647), the latter "target[s] the threatened identity in order to make it less of an object for potential harm". Each of the categories encompasses three coping mechanisms (pp. 647-648). I delineate below the strategies belonging to the first category:

1) *Derogation*: This occurs when an individual confronts and denounces the threatening source (Petriglieri, 2011, p. 647), without necessarily being in a direct contact with them (p. 650). Whilst there is a potential reduction of the threat's severity, according to her, this response maintains the identity threat, particularly when it is strong and frequent (p. 649). She suggests, therefore, that individuals should engage in "identity-restructuring responses […] to decrease the severity or likelihood of future identity harm" (ibid.) – these restructuring responses will be explained shortly.

2) *Concealment*: This implies that the individual hides the threatened identity in front of the threatening source, hoping that this would reduce the harmful attitude originating from it (ibid., p. 647). In contrast to the previous response, this, according to Petriglieri (2011, p. 647), does not reduce the severity but rather "decrease[s] the likelihood of potential identity harm".

3) *Positive distinctiveness*: This denotes the individual's attempts to alter the threatening source's opinion by stating the virtues of the threatened identity (ibid., p. 648 and p. 650). Similar to 'concealment', this response aims to lessen the likelihood of the potential threat, but as opposed to 'concealment', the individual is rather proactive. However, "individuals are unlikely to use it if they feel that they will not be able to change others' perceptions of their identity" (Petriglieri, 2011, p. 650).

In what follows, I present the three remaining responses under the second category – identity-restructuring responses:

4) *Identity exit*: This indicates that the individual abandons the threatened identity (ibid., p. 648).

5) *Meaning change*: Altering the meaning of a threatened identity, according to Petriglieri (2011, p. 648), "is only relevant when an identity threat indicates that the association between an identity and its current meanings is unsustainable in the future".

6) *Importance change*: This involves a reconsideration of the importance of the threatened identity. Holmes *et al*. (2016) exemplify it as changing the importance of a racial identity in defining who one is (p. 211).

I explained above the two main concepts inherent to Petriglieri's (2011) theory on identity threats, 'threatening sources' and 'individuals' coping responses', which are also relevant to this enquiry. In the remainder of the section, I discuss the critique of the theory, which confirms that it is an expandable, rather than a 'one-size-fits-all' model.

2.5.1. Petriglieri's critics

Despite the relevance of Petriglieri's (2011) theory in multiple fields, as mentioned previously, it has its weaknesses. Holmes *et al.*'s (2016) research, for instance, demonstrates that individuals do not always respond to identity threats in one of the six ways suggested by Petriglieri (2011). Based on their narrative research aiming to explore social identity threat experiences within 134 individuals – specifically business students at a higher education institution and professionals who attended an academic conference – they identified three additional ways of identity threat responses. They label them as follow: 1) constructive action; 2) ignore; and 3) seek assistance.

The first refers to "an individual attempts to overcome an identity threat by engaging in what he or she perceives to be productive behavio[u]r, but does not address the threatened identity directly" (Holmes *et al.*, 2016, p. 211). To exemplify, one of their participants who identifies as a Black woman felt that her identity, as a Black woman, was threatened given the limited chances for promotion, compared to her White colleagues. As a first response to the threat, she worked harder to climb the professional ladder. Yet, when she did not receive any reward, she thought that it was wiser to quit her job and look for another job where she could flourish as a Black woman (ibid., p. 212). The second response, as the name suggests, implies that the individual ignores the identity threatening source.

The third and last response denotes that the individual asks for guidance from an authority. This is illustrated in an experience of one of Holmes *et al.*'s (2016) participants who, after

finding some racial insults stuck on his accommodation door, he chose to seek assistance from the authority, as he did not know the threatening source. Holmes *et al*., (2016) research, therefore, confirms the diversity inherent to individuals through the multiple responses they adopt. This makes Petriglieri's (2011) six ways of identity threat responses only 'possible', rather than 'one-size-fits-all' reactions. Stated differently, Petriglieri's (2011) theory proved to be an expendable model and a useful starting point for many studies, including mine, as the data chapters Six and Seven will further demonstrate.

2.6. Conclusion

This chapter addressed the three theoretical tools adopted in this study. Prior to this, however, I decided to first locate them within the stream of research that views identity as socially constructed, given that they all revolve around 'identity'. This entailed drawing briefly upon early scholars such as Cooley (1902), Mead (1934), Goffman (1959) and Erikson (1959; 1968) most of whom were cited in Day *et al*. (2006). Furthermore, I provided an overview of Day and Kington's (2008) three interlinked dimensions of understanding teacher/academic professional identity: situated-located, professional and personal. By relating them to the reviewed literature conducted in higher education, I argued that this theory might also be applicable to the university context. The content of each of the dimensions was informed by the themes that emerged from my data. I further highlighted that these themes will be thoroughly reviewed in the next two literature review chapters.

Given that Day and Kington (2008) discussed shortly the gender element in their work, I justified how Butler's theory of 'performativity' could be useful in my interpretation of some gender-related aspects in my enquiry. Then, I added to my discussion Petriglieri's (2011) theory, which tackles particularly 'identity under threat(s)'. In so doing, I stated that while Day and Kington (2008) present their dimensions as affecting positively and/or negatively teachers/academics' professional identities, Petriglieri (2011) focuses primarily on the negative side of it – i.e., 'threat(s)'. I also argued that her theory is also useful in its endeavour to examine the threatening sources, as well as how people might respond to them. The three theories altogether will help me to theoretically make sense of my data and recount the story that my study aims to tell.

It is important to highlight that none of the previously-mentioned theorists are concerned with academic professional identity *per se*. Day and Kington's (2008) theory was developed in the

school context. Butler's (1999) theory is, arguably, more open and tackles the socially-constructed notion of gender and gender identities in any institution. Petriglieri's (2011) theory is not particularly focused on academics' identities either, but it is still concerned with individuals' identities in any organisation. Merging these theories together might seem odd for the readers who are very familiar with the profiles of the theorists, some of whom might appear rebellious and others, to a certain extent, conformist. I, nevertheless, am not interested in their differences – as they do not seem to have a direct impact on my study – as much as I am in the intersection of their views, which serves the nature of my research; that is, in the way they all acknowledge identity to be socially constructed. This common agreement vis-a-vis the nature of identity allows me to extend and/or apply their theories to the higher education context with ease.

Debatably, academics might be different from schoolteachers, given their role requirements and the nature of institutions to which they belong. One of the differences that could be stated is the curriculum; yet this is beyond the scope of this thesis. Alongside differences, they also have many similarities. Their professional identities can all be affected by a number of factors that can be grouped into three interrelated categories, as I will further elaborate in the next chapter. These aspects, as reflected in the data chapters Six and Seven, relate to: the setting in which these academics operate; the professional development opportunities that academics have or wish to have; and their challenging experiences with their families, mainly their partners and in-laws due to some misconceptions. Thus, I have found that each of Day and Kington's (2008) suggested categories could be a 'home' for my emerging themes (see next chapter).

Butler's theory manifests itself when Day and Kington's (2008) theory fails to explain in greater detail the gender ideologies; for example, how some of the women academics seemed affected by the gender ideologies and misconceptions at the level of their families (see Chapter Four). Many of these factors represented a threat to the women academics. Yet, the threat, conversely, also stems from the way the women academics respond to the threat. In this regard, Petriglieri's (2011) theory serves me well in my interpretation of the threat that the women academics' professional identities both undergo and recreate. In the following chapter, I discuss 'academic professional identity', as well as some of the themes that have emerged from my data.

CHAPTER THREE: ACADEMIC PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY

3.1. Introduction

This chapter discusses academic professional identity and the multiple aspects that have the potential to affect it. First, I discuss, from a social constructivist view, academic professional identity, and the extent to which it differs from schoolteacher professional identity. In so doing, I demonstrate that the former is underexplored compared to the latter. Hence, this study, whose aim is to investigate the aspects affecting a group of women academics' professional identities, adds to this understudied area. Then, inspired by Day and Kington (2008) – which I explained in Chapter Two, section **2.3** – I discuss the themes that emerged from my data within the theorists' suggested dimensions. To reiterate, these dimensions are thought to be influencing academics' professional identities, and are classified into, I highlight, three overlapping clusters: 'situated-located/contextual', 'professional' and 'personal'. Whilst it might appear that Day and Kington's (2008) theory is perhaps leading the literature review, I should highlight that it has been adopted after the emergence of the themes and not the opposite. Thus, I thought that it might be more organised to discuss the themes within the previously-cited dimensions.

In the first dimension (subsection **3.2.1**), I show that the contextual aspects, when related to teacher/academic identity, are usually confined to what happens within the workplace such as lack of equipment/resources, and/or beyond – i.e., policy changes. To the best of my knowledge, and at the time of writing, the relationship between the workplace as a space and academics' professional identities has been rarely investigated. Thus, by drawing upon the scholarship of environmental psychology, I address the importance of the workplace as a space. This involves some studies that demonstrate how an unexpected relocation to an undesired setting might impact upon academics' professional practices and identities. My study also contributes to this literature.

Apropos of the professional dimension (**3.2.2**), I discuss academics' need to get involved in multiple forms of professional development. This includes an adequate induction programme that prepares them for their academic journeys, and other forms of professional development that can be both institutionally supported and/or self-funded, individual and/or collective. The last dimension I address is the personal (**3.2.3**). I briefly refer to researchers who claim the influence of a variety of personal elements on academics' professional identities, one of

which is academics' gender. This section paves the way for the next chapter that discusses thoroughly how gender seems to affect women academics' professional identities in academia, given that the core participants of my research are women academics.

3.2. Academics' professional identities

Over the last few decades, there has been a growing interest in academics' experiences and professional identities (Kreber, 2010; Clarke *et al*., 2013; Pifer and Baker, 2013; McNaughton and Billot, 2016; Nevgi and Löfström, 2015; van Lankveld *et al*., 2017; Trautwein, 2018). Despite this attention, I argue that academic professional identity remains an underexplored area (Drennan *et al*., 2017), compared to compulsory schoolteacher professional identity (Trautwein, 2018). This study, therefore, finds its place alongside these studies and contributes to this scholarship.

'Lecturer professional identity' (Evison *et al*., 2021), 'University teacher identity' (Korhonen and Törmä, 2016) and 'academics' professional identity' (Trautwein, 2018) are among the terms adopted by several researchers investigating the professional identity of academics in higher education. Such variation in labels does not appear to be common in the field of schoolteacher professional identity. This is probably due to academics' different and multiple roles in higher education. These roles are performed in different higher education institutions that determine, to varying degrees, the predominance of each of the academics' roles. To explain this further, my search reveals that in European and North American countries, specifically, there exists a range of university types (Taylor, 1999, p. 41): teaching-intensive universities (e.g., Angervall and Beach, 2020), research-intensive universities (e.g., Acker and Armenti, 2004), among others. As their names indicate, they seem to imply what role is the most emphasised: teaching or research. As discussed in subsection 1.6.1, in Algeria, this study's context, the majority of universities are public, owned and funded by the state. Algerian academics in all public universities are, theoretically, expected to teach, do research, supervise students, and perform administrative tasks. The label 'teacher-researcher' ['*enseignant-chercheur*'] is used by the Algerian government to refer broadly to academics in higher education. This label appears to differentiate them from teachers at other levels, to whom the label 'teacher' ['*enseignant*'] is employed.

Debatably, within the field of education, academic professional identity seems to differ, in many aspects, from that of schoolteachers. According to Trautwein (2018) "while the

professional identity of schoolteachers is largely equivalent to their teaching identity, the *professional identity of academics* is related to the threefold field of academia – research, teaching and administration" (p. 996, emphasis in original). 'Largely' in the quote denotes that the core role of schoolteachers is teaching, rather than disassociating schoolteachers from performing roles that go beyond teaching, such as research and service. In line with Trautwein (2018), van Lankveld *et al*. (2017, p. 326), in their research about teacher identity in academia, also indicate that "some aspects of teacher identity development might be different for university teachers since they have to combine the teaching role with other roles such as that of researcher or practitioner". Feather (2010, p. 192) refers to this – teaching, research and service – as "the holy trinity of academic identity".

The use of 'the holy trinity' as an analogy of academic professional identity implies that these are contested (e.g., Clegg, 2008). The debate around this "contested triad" (Krause, 2009, p. 420) is mostly ignited by the question: is academic identity only about teaching, research and service? (Feather, 2010), especially that higher education institutions, particularly in the so-called 'Global North', are constantly changing, which might also affect academics' roles, practices and identities (Pifer and Baker, 2013). These changes, Pifer and Baker (2013, p. 120) further indicate, "are connected to managerialism, marketi[s]ation and commerciali[s]ation, expansion, globali[s]ation, diversification, accountability, governance, technology". Given that it is beyond the scope of this study to discuss further what this debate is all about, what I find rather important to highlight is that in this research, I explicitly state that academic professional identity *broadly* revolves around the threefold field of academia – teaching, research and service – without claiming that this is what acutely *defines* an academic professional identity.

The definition of academic professional identity which I adopt in this study is Petriglieri's (2011) (mentioned in Chapter Two, section 2.5). To reiterate, she perceives identity, albeit not precisely in relation to academia, as follows: "each identity of a person is accompanied by a conceptuali[s]ation of what it means to be 'X'" (p. 643). The 'X' in the academic context could be the status of being an academic. Arguably, this definition reflects some sense of agency in how individuals perceive themselves as academics. Furthermore, it does not offer a universal definition of academic professional identity, with which some academics would not probably identify. This definition, moreover, enables one to approach the data with the curiosity to discover how the participants view themselves as academics, rather than going to the data collection field with a predetermined definition in mind. Interestingly, I have found

that Rosewell and Ashwin (2019) also share the same viewpoint. By giving their participants the freedom to position themselves in academia, their paper offers a variety of perceptions of what it means to be an academic.

In the field of education, teacher/academic professional identity is recognised as not being static but is constructed and constantly reconstructed (Sfard and Prusak, 2005; Beijaard and Meijer, 2017; Vermunt *et al*., 2017; Pennington and Richards, 2016; Flores and Day, 2006; Trautwein, 2018; Yuan and Burns, 2017). Although this research is not particularly concerned with tracking the whole process of (re)constructing an academic professional identity, these studies are useful as they point out to the fluidity of identity. They further intersect in acknowledging identity as subject to multiple influences. This joins my earlier conceptualisation of identity (Chapter Two, section 2.2), wherein I discussed how identity started to be viewed as socially constructed.

Thus, over the course of their professional careers, academics' professional identities appear to be affected by various aspects, internal and external to themselves. These aspects are categorised and labelled in different ways. Yet, most of these discussions which acknowledge the multidimensional nature of identity, predominantly in the field of schoolteacher professional identity, seem to be encompassed in the theoretical model proposed by Day and Kington (2008), which I addressed in the previous chapter (section 2.3). Accordingly, I have chosen to adopt the dimensions in my theoretical discussion of the themes that emerged from my data, hoping to render the chapter more organised. In so doing, given that academic professional identity is, debatably, understudied (Drennan *et al*., 2017; Trautwein, 2018), I derive from schoolteacher-related literature whenever I feel that it is relevant to the university context, as Trautwein (2018) also suggests.

3.2.1. The situated-located/contextual facet

In parallel with the social-constructivist treatment of identity in this study (see Chapter Two, section 2.2), the environment surrounding academics both inside and outside the working environment is found to shape academics' professional identities (Clarke *et al*., 2013; Pifer and Baker, 2013; van Lankveld *et al*., 2017). As per the subheading, and as stated previously in section 2.2, the use of 'context' and 'contextual', is vague and multifaceted. This, arguably, shows in the following statement made by Pifer and Baker (2013, p. 118): "[f]or academics, professional identities are constructed within the contexts of the institution (including the academic department or unit), the discipline, the region or nation, and the

profession itself". Hence, informed by my data, I limit my discussion in this subsection to the contextual elements which occur specifically *within* academics' workplaces. What I, and other researchers, mean exactly by 'within' will be addressed shortly.

Albeit focusing on school teaching, Day *et al.* (2006, p. 610) discuss this element of identity situatedness and claim that "[f]or all teachers, identity will be affected by external (policy) and internal (organisational) […] experiences past and present". More specifically, in their discussion of the relationship between the *internal* workplace context and teacher identity evolution, Pennington and Richards (2016, p. 14) acknowledge the existence of *favouring conditions* and *disfavouring conditions,* claiming that these conditions contribute hugely to the development of teacher identity. They further state that disfavouring physical (e.g., lack of adequate equipment and facilities) and administrative (e.g., lack of support, bureaucracy) conditions at the level of the educational institution play an important role in academics' motivation towards their roles. In their own words, Pennington and Richards (2016, p. 15) assert:

> Under such [disfavouring] conditions, teachers may lose motivation as they come to feel that they cannot realize a situated identity that is consistent with their values. When favouring conditions prevail, it is more likely for teachers to achieve a good match between their teaching ideals and their classroom identity and so easier for them to maintain high motivation in their work.

I concur with the aforementioned researchers on the importance of creating a supportive working environment for teachers and academics alike. Nevertheless, as demonstrated above, even when educational researchers give importance to the internal institutional environment as having the potential to affect teachers'/academics' identities, they appear to take for granted the physical notion of the workplace. The relationship between the school/university setting, as a container of the "organisational life" (Lawrence and Dover, 2015, p. 371), and teachers'/academics' professional identities seems to be overlooked (Nordbäck *et al*., 2021, p. 332). In this vein, Lawrence and Dover (2015), highlighting the importance of exploring places, assert that "[t]he places in which organi[s]ational life occurs can have profound impacts on actors, actions, and outcomes but are largely ignored in organi[s]ational research" (p. 371).

Hence, informed by my findings that reveal the importance of the work*place* (see Chapter Seven, sections 7.2 and 7.3), my discussion of the contextual elements shaping academics' professional identities values the physical notion of the setting, towards which a sense of belongingness and attachment could be developed (Nordbäck *et al*., 2021; Lawrence and Dover, 2015). By emphasising the significance of this oft-neglected relationship between the academic and the physical work*place*, I sometimes draw upon the scholarship of environmental psychology (e.g., Rioux, 2017). This is echoed in Grey and O'Toole (2020, p. 206) who also draw upon some environmental psychology literature in their study about 'place, identity, and community lifeboating', and claim that this is "a road less travelled" in identity scholarship (ibid.).

Arguably, discussing the physical aspect of the workplace, as a space incorporating other contextual elements, in relation to academics' identities is particularly important because, according to the sociologist Oldenburg (1989), besides one's home which seems to be people's primary place, people's secondary place might be the workplace, wherein we usually spend most of our time outside of the house. This goes in line with Smith (2017, p. 3) who argues that "[t]he need to belong to other people as well as places is a universal constant and is central to human experience". Therefore, recognising and acknowledging the idea that the workplace, as a whole, could be a vital aspect in academics' lives and identities should be more acknowledged in the literature, as many aspects of it (e.g., workplace (re)location) seem to be overlooked or less emphasised, as I will further elaborate.

In their book entitled *Workplace Attachments: Managing Beneath the Surface*, Grady *et al*. (2020) address the locational dimension of workplace attachment, among others. They state that the locational realm "includes the attachments to geographical places such as buildings, neighbourhoods, communities, or countries. These attachments may be to a physical location or to the ideas and concepts associated with the location that represents those feelings" (Grady *et al*., 2020, p. 49). Arguably, within the educational sphere, the literature discussing the workplace from a geographical perspective extensively focuses on teachers' relocation, mobility and transfer to international settings, especially in relation to expatriates (e.g., Kuzhabekova and Lee, 2018). While this could definitely be a significant aspect in academics' lives and identities, the power of teachers'/academics' relocation, from one workplace to another, within national or regional territories should not be underestimated. It might be an important contextual element that could hugely affect academics' identities, and

shape, to varying degrees, the dynamics of their personal lives and the university atmosphere, as I will further discuss.

Before I address specifically the importance of the workplace location in academics' lives, I shall refer briefly to Milligan's study (2003). It demonstrates how the employees of an organisation were deeply affected when the organisation moved from one site to another, to the extent that their reaction was similar to a grief, as shown in the title of her work: *loss of site: organisational moves as organisational deaths.* These grief-like emotions are thoroughly explained in Jeffreys' (1995) book, *Coping with Workplace Grief: Dealing with Loss and Grief.* Jeffrey poetically states in one of the book passages:

> For many employees it [the move from the 'old' to the 'new' workplace] is as if they have slipped through a crack in the universe and no longer recognise where or who they are. What was once a secure home-away-from-home has become a frightening, unfriendly and even hostile workplace (p. 44).

This quote, particularly the 'home-away-from-home' part, corroborates Oldenburg (1989) who, as cited earlier, considered the workplace as the secondary place wherein people spend most of their time away from their first place, which is 'home'. In the context of schools, Rioux and Pignault's research (2013) offers an interesting descriptive discussion and statistical evaluation of French secondary schoolteachers' attachment to their workplace. They conducted their research with 158 female and male teachers working in one high school. The participants, aged between 27 and 56 years old, had different profiles and sociodemographic variables (e.g., sex; teaching experiences within the school and outside; teaching qualifications; and marital status). The main objectives of their research were to: 1) evaluate the participants' attachment to the workplace; 2) identify the places that had meaning to their work; 3) define the variables associated with the overall workplace attachment; and 4) evaluate the impact of these variables on their overall workplace attachment. To meet these objectives, a questionnaire was distributed with open-ended questions.

One of the main findings of their study revealed that all teachers expressed an attachment to the workplace, albeit in different ways and levels. Also, teachers were attached to different areas in the school, for different reasons. For example, the classroom and the resource room were associated with usefulness, enjoyment, and autonomy, whereas the staffroom, the

school canteen and the corridors were related to informal communication and network with their colleagues. Although the authors did not explicitly discuss the workplace attachment from a professional identity perspective, it seems that the impact of the workplace on teachers' sense of self and work was considered throughout the whole study. This has led the researchers to suggest that the "workplace attachment could be used as a tool to assess employee integration and to anticipate requests to move or to be posted elsewhere" (Rioux and Pignault, 2013, p. 12), and therefore, reinforcing the idea that place attachment matters in teachers' lives, and should be considered carefully by those responsible of the relocation process.

Consistent with this element of teachers' relocation, one of the rare in-depth studies investigating the impact of relocation on teachers' lives is Cowley's (1999) PhD research. She particularly investigates teachers' relocation and its impact on the teaching quality. Although it is a relatively old reference, it could still be considered as a relevant research study, especially that it reports how teachers lived the relocation and the feelings they developed. Furthermore, its relevance in the study lies in what I would call the 'forced relocation' aspect and its effect on schoolteachers, which could also be useful in my discussion of university academics.

Cowley's (1999) research sheds light on Tasmanian schoolteachers who had to nationally relocate because of: 1) the transfer policy enacted in 1994 in the Tasmanian state which aimed to provide equity in terms of how teachers were spread throughout the schools; or 2) promotion reasons. The findings she obtained from qualitative and quantitative methods broadly revealed that the relocation affected the participants' personal and professional lives. At the personal level, it affected, both positively and negatively, teachers' confidence, family situation, self-esteem and stress levels. At the professional level, the quality of teachers' teaching practices was also affected. More specifically, the relocated teachers whose teaching practices improved, or were not negatively affected by the relocation, were those who thought that they received adequate support. Support is a key concept in Cowley's (1999) study and is part of her study's implication too. Highlighting the necessity of support, she argues:

> Appropriate support is necessary to minimise the negative impacts and to maximise the positive impacts of relocation on teachers, their work and their quality of teaching. Appropriate support is best provided by the system, schools and school staff in order to assist relocated teachers to adapt to their new school context. With appropriate support, relocation can reinvigorate and broaden teachers' teaching as they grow and learn from the relocation experience. However, the opposite is also true (p. v).

Based on her statement, relocation, although hard given the bonds developed between the teacher and the 'old' workplace, could be smoother, less brutal and even a motive for positive change in teachers' lives and practices, if adequate support is provided.

Another recent and interesting study on the link between the institutional space and the formation of individual, social and professional identities in a higher education context is Whitton's (2018). As per my search, his study is one of the rare studies offering a thick description and detailed accounts of "how changed spatial practice has had a detrimental effect on perceptions of academic productivity, wellbeing and identity", in a university context (p. 251). Whitton (2008) conducted a case study that describes a campus transformation over a period of ten years at Manchester Metropolitan University. This decision aimed to combine the number of individual campuses (from seven to two); provide students and staff with more adequate facilities; create opportunities to improve teaching and research practices; and strengthen the university brand nationally and internationally.

His study reveals that "the move to the new campus has disrupted continuity and introduced new working rhythms" (ibid., p. 183). This opposed the managerial discourse that introduced the campus new design with excessive optimism, ignoring the effects that it might have on staff members' lives and identities. To illustrate, academics described their working space as similar to "a call centre" (ibid., p. 187), given that they moved from individual offices to an open-plan space. This description, arguably, reflects how their academic identities were affected by the new design. In contrast, although staff voices were considered in the pre-transformation period, the managerial discourse indicated that the open space was an attempt to encourage more collegiality which could have been inhibited by individual offices. Hence, staff voices, although taken into consideration, did not seem to be influential in that sense.

In addition to the emotional side, the open working space had many disadvantages in terms of academics' tasks and responsibilities: lack of concentration on complex tasks due to noise and distractions; the size and layout were not practical for academics' tasks, to name but a

few. Although many academics adopted some coping strategies, the working conditions led many of them to consider working from home to be more productive, when they were not scheduled to teach. The tasks that they preferred to fulfil at home involved planification, marking and research. Yet, even though their homes provided much more space than their new workplace for storing work stuff, working from there rendered the boundaries between work and family lives blurry for many academics. For some others, it reduced collegiality but maintained their wellbeing (ibid., p. 204). Interestingly, many other participants felt nostalgic towards their personalised desks, and offices that carried plenty of materials and resources, as opposed to their new space. This nostalgic feeling reflected a lack of sense of belonging (ibid., p. 216).

Many elements in Whitton's study (2018) are in parallel with Rioux's model in her psychosocial discussion of comfort at work (2012; 2017). She discusses the latter from three perspectives: physical, evaluative and psychological. While discussing the physical dimension, she refers to the International Organisation for Standardisation, which offers healthy and safe working standards that could be adopted and adapted by countries, based on their sociocultural, political and legislative features (ibid., 2017, p. 404). At the heart of these standards lies the issue of environmental 'nuisance'. This could involve exposure to disturbing noise, which is deemed detrimental to employees' health and wellbeing. Workspace layout is another essential factor to be considered to ensure job satisfaction and productivity. It includes postural considerations at workstations (e.g., use of keyboard, screen, mouse); light; distance among employees in shared offices; room temperature; and space decoration. By drawing on a number of key studies, her study also links between these environmental conditions and workplace attachment, which I discussed earlier in this section.

To summarise, given that academics' professional identities are socially constructed, they are likely to be affected by contextual factors, within and beyond the workplace. In this subsection, I focused particularly on the factors inside the workplace. However, unlike many researchers who tend to focus largely on the (in)adequate means and resources, or teachers/academics' relationships with institutional leaders when investigating teachers/academics' workplace, I demonstrated that it is of similar importance to examine the space wherein academics operate, and academics' feelings towards it, as this would help researchers analyse teachers/academics' behaviours and attitudes. For example, as stated earlier, some of Whitton's (2018) participants preferred to perform tasks that required much

concentration at home and quick, mostly administrative tasks at their office. It appeared that this attitude was due to a lack of sense of belongingness to the new workplace. Hence, academics' feelings towards the workplace led to an undesired change in some of their practices and identities, as mentioned previously.

Before I move to the next subsection, it is important to highlight that there seems to be an overlap between the contextual elements discussed in this subsection and the professional elements that I discuss next. Arguably, some aspects such as academics' relationships with colleagues, which are covered in the professional dimension (subsection 3.2.2), might be considered as both contextual and professional. This goes in line with what Day and Kington (2008) and Mockler (2011) claim regarding the overlapping nature of the personal, contextual, and professional dimensions.

3.2.2. The professional facet

The professional elements discussed in this subsection relate to academics' need to engage in multiple forms of professional development. Engaging in professional development seems to start with an induction process that 'welcomes academics on board' and prepares them for their academic journeys (Nicholls, 2001; King *et al*., 2018). After that, academics are expected to get involved in a variety of professional development activities that constantly enhance their skills and upgrade their knowledge (Nicholls, 2001; Sia and Cheriet, 2019; Sanders *et al*., 2020). These might include, but are not exclusive to, attending/participating at conferences, getting involved in digital technology like MOOCs (Massive Open Online Courses), and taking part in collective learning. One way of learning collectively might be achieved through academics' engagement in 'communities of practice' with their colleagues who could represent their 'significant others' (Lave and Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998; Wenger *et al*., 2002; Wenger and Wenger-Trayner, 2015). Before I discuss some of the forms of academics' professional development, I shall first demonstrate why it is necessary for academics to develop professionally, particularly in the context of higher education.

3.2.2.1. Academics' professional development: Why does it matter?

Over the last decades, academics' professional development has gained considerable attention from scholars in a variety of fields (Nicholls, 2001; King, 2004; Kálmán *et al*., 2020; Sanders *et al*., 2020). Due to the changing nature of universities across the globe, and their core feature of being sites for knowledge production, transmission and dissemination

(Sanders *et al*., 2020), it is crucial for academics to engage in professional development that would equip them with the necessary skills to navigate their ways in the challenging academe (Al-Kurdi *et al*., 2020; Sanders *et al*., 2020). Sanders *et al*. (2020, p. 2) remind us of the complex roles of academics:

> Academics are the core group of employees that fulfil not only the primary mission of all institutions of higher education, that is, to educate and prepare the future workforce, but also fulfil the strategic mission of research universities (i.e., to create and disseminate new knowledge).

As discussed in section 3.2, academics' roles seem to revolve broadly, and to varying degrees, around teaching, research, and service. Therefore, the existing scholarship related to academics' professional development is as multifaceted as their roles. Some studies discuss broadly academics' professional development as a significant aspect of their lives (e.g., Ferman, 2002). Others are more specific and examine extensively academics' professional development in relation to academics' teaching and pedagogical practices (Leibowitz, 2016; Thomson and Trigwell, 2018; Kálmán *et al*., 2020; Teräs, 2016), for example. Hence, it is worthy to mention that in my following discussion, I shall attempt to address professional development in a more inclusive way. My position goes in line with Teräs (2016, p. 259) who, despite her focus on academics' professional development as teachers, argues that "while teaching is an important part of academic work, it is only a part of it", and that "it should be emphasised that the professional development needs of academic staff go well beyond pedagogical skills".

There is a plethora of terms used to refer to academics' professional development (O'Brien and Jones, 2014): continuing/continuous professional development, ongoing professional development, staff development. The list is not an exhaustive one. Among the previously-cited terms, professional development is, arguably, more inclusive and captures any form of professional development that an academic can engage in, throughout their career span. This is reflected in the following quote by Nicholls (2001, p. 37) who states that "[p]rofessional development is a dynamic process that spans one's entire career in a profession, from preparation and induction to completion and retirement". To explain further, 'training' generally refers to a formal type of professional development which is often the induction programme. 'Continuing/ongoing professional development' refers to those forms of professional development that go beyond the induction programme (Bressman *et al*., 2018).

Hence, it is because of being comprehensive that I adopt 'professional development' in this part.

3.2.2.2. Forms of professional development

The literature reveals the existence of a variety of ways of professional development: individual/collective, self-initiated, formal/informal, among others (Ferman, 2002). Ferman (2002, p. 152) claims that these professional development strategies constitute altogether 'a rich mosaic'. They can take the form of training that newly-recruited academics receive (King *et al*., 2018), as I stated earlier, networking (Ferman, 2002), using social media (Esposito, 2017), informal conversations (Thomson and Trigwell, 2018), and attending conferences (Sanders *et al*., 2020). This, therefore, makes professional development an individual endeavour and/or a collective one, both of which could be supported by 'significant others' such as institutions and colleagues.

- ***Induction programmes***

A strong body of literature demonstrates that it is crucial for teachers/academics to enrol in an adequate induction process that would introduce them to their professional life (e.g., Wong, 2004; Darling-Hammond, 2017; King *et al*., 2018). Most of this literature, however, seems to be more focused on compulsory teacher education, in terms of what works and what does not, particularly in European, Australian and North American contexts. In higher education, academics' induction process, especially in terms of investigating the extent of its success, is less emphasised (Billot and King, 2017; King *et al*., 2018), albeit significant. Moreover, it seems to be more inclined towards academics as *teachers* in Europe, Australia and US; thus, overlooking other important aspects of academics' lives which go beyond their pedagogical practices (Teräs, 2016)**.** In Algeria, Sia and Cheriet (2019, p. 51) claim that the induction programme initiated by the Algerian Ministry of Higher Education focuses on 'ICT and Pedagogical Practices' and 'Pedagogical Accompaniment'. This is surprising, given the multifaceted and challenging nature of academic work, which eventually makes academics' needs and responsibilities shifting (Ssempebwa *et al*., 2016)**,** in need to be adequately scaffolded, since the start of their academic journeys.

The induction phase is important to consider by higher education institutions to assure an adequate 'welcoming on board' for academics (King *et al*., 2018), where academics are supported to 'find their feet' within their institutions (Wadesango and Machingamba, 2011).

Indeed, there does not seem to have one single way of preparing academics for their academic journeys (King *et al*., 2018). Induction, for Billot and King (2017, p. 612), could consist of "attend[ing] a brief orientation session on joining a higher education institution (HEI), attendance at a series of self-selected workshops, completion of mandatory online tutorials or a pedagogical training programme, or combinations of these".

The same researchers noticed that, on real grounds, induction trainings often focus on academics' academic responsibilities, especially teaching, without considering the *person* who is going to fulfil them. Hence, they go even further and insist, based on their research data, that induction should not only focus on *what* an academic is going to *do* (i.e., their academic roles and responsibilities), but also *who* they are going to *be* and *become*: their professional identity (re)formation (ibid., p. 613). Therefore, while it does matter to have an induction for, using Wenger's (1998) lexicon, 'new-comers', it is as equally important to make this induction adequate and supportive of academics' diverse needs. By using the terminology 'new-comers', I do not only mean academics who are new to the profession, but also those who have been in academia, yet new to the institution. Academic institutions are different and heterogeneous, as the literature keeps reminding us (Callender *et al*., 2020), and so are academics' journeys.

Some empirical studies on early career academics have reported a 'swim or sink' tendency associated with induction programmes (Ssempebwa *et al*., 2016; King *et al*., 2018), many of which have failed to retain academics. The reason underpinning this 'swim and sink' ideology, according to Ssempebwa *et al*. (2016, p. 1855), "is that people selected to teach at the university level should have the competence to figure out what is required of them and do it well". This seems to show in King *et al*.'s (2018) study. King *et al*.'s (2018) qualitative research was conducted with 30 academics in five different universities in the UK, all of whom were extremely enthusiastic and happy to have joined academia to make a change in it (McKay and Monk, 2017).

Many respondents in King *et al*.'s (2018) research stated that, given that they all came from different professional backgrounds, they expected to receive a robust support that would help them transition into academia smoothly. Yet, in reality, the majority felt abandoned and lost in the academic landscape. These complaints were made despite them being strongly confident in terms of their specialty. Academia, however, is not about mastering one's specialty only. One participant in their research, who ended up leaving the academe, said that

he was allocated responsibilities that he was hardly able to perform. "These responsibilities covered all aspects of academic practice from teaching to research, from module or program leadership to the pastoral care of students" (ibid., p. 479). These responsibilities, however, do not seem to be tackled in many induction programmes. In the following account, Wadesango and Machingambi (2011, p. 1) state many aspects that new academics need in an induction programme.

> New employees also need to understand the organisation's mission, vision, goals, values and philosophy; personnel practices, health and safety rules, and of course the job they are required to do, with clear methods, timescales and expectations […] This can only be achieved through a well-planned induction programme.

Having discussed the significance of induction programmes as an institutional and professional imperative, not as a 'luxury', as Wadesango and Machingambi (2011, p. 7) put it, I move to discussing the importance of conferences in academics' lives and identities.

- *Conference attendance and participation*

After being introduced to academic life through an induction programme, which is not the case of every academic, academics are expected in all cases to engage in what is called 'ongoing/continuous/continuing professional development' (Sia and Cheriet, 2019; Sanders *et al*., 2020). I join O'Brien and Jones (2014, p. 683) in their preference of 'continuing' over 'continuous' professional development. In their words, they state:

> The 'ing' form of the term 'continuing' was preferred to the term 'continuous' because the latter suggested something that was unbroken while the former, more appropriately, indicated that such development was ongoing and that breaks of varying periods of time would occur en route.

Continuing professional development enables academics to constantly further their knowledge and update their skills as professionals. One way through which academics can professionally develop is by attending national and/or international conferences (Sanders *et al*., 2020). In the academic profession, academic mobility, particularly for (inter)national conference attendance/participation, seems to be a salient aspect of academics' careers. The degree of this salience, nevertheless, may vary according to the discipline (Black *et al*., 2020), and the institution to which the academic belongs, which might accord high or lesser recognition and reward to conference participation.

Some researchers are highly critical of conferences utility (Henderson and Burford, 2020). By drawing on the novelist David Lodge's *Small World*, where he sarcastically portrays academics as clerics and conferences as pilgrimages, Getman (1992, p. 231) argues that,

> For those involved in creative scholarship, conferences are an interruption, but they also occasionally provide an opportunity to meet people interested in similar issues located on remote campuses. They give those who have abandoned any serious effort at scholarship a substitute for the excitement that once came from discovery and creation. They give the non-scholar a chance to appropriate the manner and language of serious academics.

Regardless of such critiques, conferences can be crucial events for researchers to investigate aspects of the academic profession, as well as for academics to shape their careers and professional identities (Henderson, 2015, Henderson *et al*., 2018; Henderson and Moreau, 2020). Although it could be argued that conferences may not be as prestigious as, for instance, research publications, according to Henderson and Burford (2020, p. 290), "some conferences publish papers in the form of conference proceedings; others result in edited books or special issues of journals, where papers are redrafted and collected together by an editor or group of editors". Therefore, as put by Zippel (2017, p. 84), "international conferences are a highly visible form of academic practice that represents and creates prestige and status for invited participants", in that they help them make a reputation both nationally and internationally (Seierstad and Healy, 2012). Furthermore, conference attendance/participation, particularly the international ones, shapes the academic's career in multiple ways. It allows the academic to disseminate knowledge, exchange ideas, and establish international research networks (Henderson *et al*., 2018; Mair and Frew, 2016; Hinsley *et al*., 2017; Black *et al*., 2020; Johnson *et al*., 2017; Walters, 2019). In what follows, I address e-learning as another form of professional development.

- *e-Learning*

With the widespread use of digital technology, which has shaped all aspects of our lives, including education, literature demonstrates that internet can be a wealthy source of professional development (Bruguera *et al*., 2019; Sia and Cheriet, 2019). Through internet, academics can seek professional development in multiple ways. This could involve, but is not restricted to, getting involved in webinars and Massive Open Online Courses (henceforth,

MOOCs) (Mabuan, 2020), reading books and articles, watching YouTube videos, and using social media like Twitter and Facebook (Esposito, 2017).

MOOCs platforms allow academics from all over the world, with internet connection, to a free subscription that gives them access to many free and ready-made courses in a variety of disciplines. Some of these platforms are Coursera, FutureLearn and edX. Patru and Balaji (2016, pp. 32-33) identify a myriad of benefits of MOOCs. These involve: the removal of tuition fees, given that many MOOCs are free; flexible access to any course at any time and place; and the absence of rigid entry requirements, to name but a few. Despite the popularity of these platforms and their potential benefits for the democratisation of learning and development, my literature search supports Mabuan's (2020) claim that the area, MOOCs as a professional development tool for teachers, is under-researched.

In the Algerian context, Sia and Cheriet (2019) distributed a questionnaire to 180 Algerian academics, more females than males, and from various universities. Their teaching experience at the time ranged between 6 and more than 20 years. 67,6% held a Magister degree, and 32.4% were doctorates. They report that the vast majority of their research participants were not aware of the existence of MOOCs. Those who were familiar with it acknowledged their benefits, at the core of which is the concretisation of the limited theoretical knowledge they received as part of their induction programme (p. 61). This theoretical knowledge, as I stated earlier, is purely pedagogy-related. Interestingly, many of their participants stated that they naïvely associated academics' professional development with conference participation/attendance, travel and transport, before they took part in Sia and Cheriet's research. Sia and Cheriet's study, albeit enlightening for their participants, it seems to focus on the benefits of MOOCs as a professional development tool, overlooking the potential challenges associated with them.

This means of professional development, despite its benefits, is not free from challenges (Patru and Balaji, 2016). Some researchers have found that free courses are a way of enticing users to other more in-depth but paid courses, noting that many free courses require a fee, although small, to deliver a certificate upon course completion. This is referred to as "the freemium business model" (Patru and Balaji, 2016, p. 71). Spector (2017, p. 139), in his critical evaluation of MOOCs, points out that "[a] completion certificate for a MOOC participant is equivalent to being given a thank you note for attendance when exiting a movie

theat[re] at the end of a movie", given that there is no solid proof that all participants achieve the goals intended, even when the course is fully completed (ibid.).

Also, whilst paying fees might not be problematic for many people, given the advantages these platforms seem to have, compared to the fees they ask for, others, especially those in the so-called 'developing countries', might face obstacles (Patru and Balaji, 2016, p. 26). For instance, many nations have lower to middle income economies, as Patru and Balaji (2016) also indicate. Yet, although they concentrate on 'developing countries', what their work fails to mention as part of the barriers, is the existence of cash societies which are not adherent of using credit cards, as my findings will further demonstrate about Algeria. Given that these platforms claim to offer *massive* open online courses, I argue that they still need to re-consider some of their options if their real aim is purely humanitarian: to democratise learning and development globally (ibid., p. 24).

As far as online reading of scholarly works is concerned, whilst many academics have the privilege to access any scholarly work they desire for their teaching and research practices, for many others, the process is full of challenges (Macalister, 2018). At the heart of these challenges is restricted access to scholarly publications (Macalister, 2018; Enakrire and Ngoaketsi, 2020), particularly in 'developing countries', outside of US and Europe (Meadows, 2015; Himmelstein *et al*., 2018; Karaganis, 2018). Macalister (2018) conducted his research on professional development and the place of journals in English language teaching (ELT). Drawing on a survey of 465 ELT professionals, predominantly from the Asia-Pacific region, he found out that reading books and journal articles was common among professionals in higher education, compared to other sectors. There were many reasons for engaging in online reading, some of which are: gaining new knowledge and updating one's skills in a specific area; reading for teaching purposes (e.g., course preparation); and progressing in one's career. This form of professional development, however, is not immune to challenges, as I stated. Some respondents struggled to have access to journals "either because their institution had limited or no subscriptions in place or because they were expected to pay themselves or because of limited access to the internet generally" (ibid., p. 248). The literature further shows that this limited or lack of access has given rise to a phenomenon called 'shadow libraries' (Karaganis, 2018), despite attempts to remedy the situation through Open Access, which, as the name suggests, seems to give academics across the globe accessibility to some research literature legally.

Although the types of professional development I discussed earlier can be collective, I discuss next more explicitly the importance of collective professional development.

- *Collective professional development*

Based on the literature, while academics' individual initiatives are beneficial, their engagement in collective professional development activities also appears to be fruitful, not only to their own development, but also to that of their institutions. To explain the latter, Al-Kurdi *et al*. (2020, p. 218) argue that "[r]eluctance to share knowledge by academics would undermine the institution's efforts to achieve its objectives, enhance research collaboration, and enhance innovation in society at large". They exemplify this knowledge-hiding with academics who often incline towards individualism to the point that when they teach the same course, they are reluctant to share its related knowledge and resources with others (ibid., p. 219). Other examples include, for instance, hiding information about call for papers and scholarly events (Hernaus *et al*., 2019).

Knowledge sharing could involve team-based learning (Gast *et al*., 2017), informal conversations among colleagues (Thomson and Trigwell, 2018), to name only a few. Thomson and Trigwell (2018) conducted 24 semi-structured interviews with mid-career academics at several departments, all belonging to an Australian research-intensive university. Their study aimed to investigate how informal conversations among colleagues contribute to developing academics as teachers. Their data analysis revealed that informal conversations helped academics in a variety of ways. They felt that they helped them share their teaching-related challenges, which probably necessitated some confidentiality and which they could not share, for example, in public or in formal professional development programmes. Furthermore, informal conversations not only enhanced teachers' collaboration, but also their autonomy, given that they collectively managed to discuss and seek solutions for their teaching-related problems, without being over-dependent on external support.

Such collective endeavours could be seen through the lens of Wenger's 'communities of practice'. Many studies on academics' professional learning and development revolve around the importance of academics/teachers' involvement in communities of practice (CoPs) (Houghton *et al*., 2015). The concept, introduced by the theorists Lave and Wenger (1991), has been succinctly redefined many years after their original work as "groups of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they

interact regularly" (Wenger and Wenger-Trayner, 2015, p. 1). This makes it a social learning theory, *par excellence* (Wenger, 1998).

Within the scope of research on teacher identity, CoPs consider social interactions at the heart of teacher identity and imply the need for teachers to engage and get involved in one community or more, which could possibly exist within the workplace or beyond, occur both physically and/or virtually (Pennington and Richards, 2016), and happen both formally and informally (Wenger and Wenger-Trayner, 2015, p. 2). The theory has been widely adopted in the social sciences field and beyond. But, in the field of education, its presence is highly remarkable in studies that examine identity development of newly qualified teachers who are expected to join the pre-established communities of teachers who are considered, in Lave and Wenger's (1991) and Wenger's (1998) view, as 'more knowledgeable others.' This could be linked to the roots of the theory which was initially developed based on Lave and Wenger's anthropological observations of different apprentices in different domains (e.g., midwives, medical claims processing, non-drinking alcoholics, meat cutters). Arguably, this leads the theory to lie heavily on the idea of 'expertise' that the so-called 'old-timers' possess in a given community, and 'newcomers' do not or do to a lesser extent. In Wenger's words (Lave and Wenger, 1991, p. 40), this is a process where the 'newcomers' move from the 'periphery' to the 'centre' while engaging in the communities' practice(s).

To provide a deeper understanding of what communities of practice consist of, and differentiate them from other types of communities, the theorist Wenger (1998) outlines the following set of characteristics: *the domain*, *the community* and *the practice*. The domain refers to the knowledge interests and the endeavours that the community members have in common. Then, by engaging with people who share the same areas of interest, communities get established, both intentionally or unintentionally, as put by Wenger who, by referring to the CoP definition provided earlier, says: "this definition allows us, but does not assume intentionality: learning can be the reason the community comes together or an incidental outcome of members' interactions" (Wenger and Wenger-Trayner, 2015, p. 2; Wenger *et al.*, 2002). The established communities, thus, involve members who are, in essence, practitioners and who "develop a shared repertoire of resources: experiences, stories, tools, ways of addressing recurring problems - in short a shared practice. This takes time and sustained interaction" (Wenger and Wenger-Trayner, 2015, p. 2). These three characteristics are also referred to in Wenger's earlier work (1998, pp. 73-85) as *mutual engagement*, *joint*

enterprise, and *shared repertoire*. In the following part, I discuss the last dimension affecting academics' professional identities: the personal.

3.2.3. The personal facet

The literature demonstrates that the (re)construction of academic professional identity is fuelled by many personal and biographical aspects that make them inextricably linked (Day *et al*., 2006; Day and Kington, 2008; Mockler, 2011). If we step back and look at academics' lives holistically, we acknowledge the fact that an academic, beyond their professional roles, is an individual whose personal experiences, including their previous schooling experiences, beliefs and emotions, race, class and gender affect, to varying degrees, their professional identities (Day *et al*., 2006; Day and Kington, 2008; Bukor, 2015; Zembylas, 2003; Pennington and Richards, 2016; Mockler, 2011; Pifer and Baker, 2013). Given that the personal dimension is broad, informed by my data that demonstrates that gender is a significant factor affecting women academic' professional identities, I am particularly interested in discussing in detail the 'how' and 'why' of the matter. This will be thoroughly addressed in the following chapter.

3.3. Conclusion

This chapter started with a discussion of the main concept adopted in this study: academic professional identity. Based on my observation, as well as some of the studies I referred to, there is a relative lack of research in this area, compared to schoolteacher professional identity. My thesis will, therefore, contribute to this understudied field. Then, I argued that the literature of the themes that emerged from the data could be discussed within the three interrelated dimensions suggested by Day and Kington (2008): 'situated-located/contextual', 'professional' and 'personal'. The rationale behind this decision is my desire to render the discussion in this chapter more organised.

In light of the 'contextual' dimension, I argued that, at the time of writing, the link between the workplace as a space and academics' professional identities has been rarely explored; hence, the need for the environmental psychology scholarship. Informed by the data, I drew upon some studies that show how a forced relocation to an undesired workplace can potentially impact upon academics' professional practices and identities. My thesis also adds to the scarce scholarship in this field.

As for the 'professional' dimension, I stated that academics' professional development is a joint effort of academics themselves and the institutions to which they belong. Academics' professional development usually starts with an induction programme that familiarises the academic with the profession and the environment in which they will be working. This step seems to be important as it might determine to a certain extent academics' views of their institutions and their levels of trust in them. I also addressed other forms of professional development which could be institutionally supported and/or self-funded, individual and/or collective.

Lastly, I briefly discussed the 'personal' dimension to pave the way for the next chapter that discusses thoroughly how gender appears to impact upon women in academia, given that the key participants in my research are women academics.

CHAPTER FOUR: WOMEN IN ACADEMIA

4.1. Introduction

This chapter discusses how gender could affect women academics' professional lives and identities. In the previous chapter, inspired by Day and Kington's (2008) overlapping categorisation of the contextual, professional, and personal dimensions, I discussed broadly and briefly at the end of the chapter, how the personal aspects of academics' lives might affect their professional identities. Given that this chapter is informed by my findings that demonstrate the significance of gender in the lives of women academics, I decided to devote a whole chapter addressing in depth *why* and *how* gender influences women academics' professional identities.

In the first section, informed by my findings, I discuss the flexibility of academia by reviewing various studies conducted in the 'Global North' and 'Global South'. In the predominant literature, flexibility is discussed as an advantage of academia, as well as a disadvantage generating work-family conflicts. In some other scarce literature, it is mistaken for free time, and is merely seen as an advantage, allowing women to return to their houses to fulfil their domestic chores after performing their teaching task (**4.2**). My study finds its place alongside this scarce scholarship. Then, I move to discussing the discourse that considers academia as a respectable place for women, allowing limited interactions with men (**4.3**). In my first data chapter, I shall demonstrate how these two aspects seem to underpin the 'feminisation' discourse revolving around academia - by 'feminisation', I refer to the association of academic work with women. In the last section, I address women academics' experiences with patriarchy, particularly when related to their international mobility (**4.4**). This discussion is informed by the data related to some women academics' inability to attend conferences abroad without their partners (see Chapter Six, subsection 6.5.1).

4.2. Women academics and job 'flexibility'

Some European (e.g., Santos and Cabral-Cardoso, 2008; Rafnsdóttir and Heijstra, 2013; Wilton and Ross, 2017) and non-European studies (e.g., Chareb, 2010) reveal that university is somewhat regarded as an inviting sphere allowing academics to have variant degrees of time and space flexibility to carry out work-related tasks. Furthermore, academic work, due to its flexibility (McDermott, 2020, p. 169), seems to enable women, in particular, to have

time for everyone, especially the family. In their study based on twenty-one interviews conducted with women and men academics working in Western Canada, Wilton and Ross (2017) aimed to explore the academics' views on their work-family life 'balance', with an interest in gender differences and/or similarities. One of their key findings is flexibility, which was mentioned by their participants as an asset of the academy. They discussed it from three interlinked perspectives: 1) the possibility to adjust the working hours in accordance with family needs; 2) the work's flexible nature; and 3) the multiplicity of career paths the academic might take. To further explain the interconnectedness of the aforementioned elements, the researchers go on saying that academics' presence is required when they teach, have meetings, perform administrative work, and/or office hours. In the remaining time, academics are, to a certain extent, free to plan their week. Furthermore, although they could be framed by the contract type, promotion standards and other status-related factors, it is the academics' responsibility to decide upon their research plans, which, then, leads them to different career trajectories. However, whilst it could be that "academics have discretion in deciding when (and where) to conduct their research, prepare for their classes, mark student assignments, and meet their students" (Beigi *et al*., 2018, p. 4), this facet of academia might be *illusionary* and *misleading*. The confusion might be both to people in the academy as well as to those outside of it, given that it overlooks the nature of academia which is usually portrayed by the scholarly discourse as 'greedy' (Coser, 1974).

What I mean by *illusionary* and *misleading* to people in the academe can be explained from different perspectives. For example, Pelech's study (2015) reports that some of her women participants joined academia due to its flexible nature and ability to allow them to combine work and non-work commitments. However, as soon as they entered academia, academics often reveal that as much as academia facilitates work-family 'balance' (Santos and Cabral-Cardoso, 2008; Rafnsdóttir and Heijstra, 2013; Wilton and Ross, 2017), it paradoxically creates work-family conflict (Beigi *et al*., 2018), principally because of the blurred boundaries between the two. Work-family conflict is defined, in Greenhaus and Beutell's classic work (1985, p. 77), as "a form of interrole conflict in which the role pressures from work and family domains are mutually incompatible in some respect".

Another perspective from which flexibility has been stated as a disadvantage of academia is with regard to the unclear amount of work required from academics (Wilton and Ross, 2017). Hence, as much as flexibility can be a privilege, it might turn out being complex and challenging (Beigi *et al*., 2018), leading some academics to feel confused about how much

they should accomplish professionally (O'Meara and Campbell, 2011), although they might be aware of their various responsibilities associated with their academic profession. In other words, given that academic work does not always require a 9-to-5 availability at the workplace, due to this flexibility, academics might find themselves dissatisfied about the huge amount of work they end up performing during the week (ibid.), and sometimes on weekends and in holidays. Interestingly, studies such as Ennis's (2012) also demonstrate that even faculty members who sometimes choose part-time positions to have more flexibility, might be surprised by the amount of work they need to accomplish. Consequently, they find themselves arguing that flexibility is a 'myth' (Ennis, 2012).

The people outside of academia represent the larger society within which, and with whom, academics live (Mason *et al*., 2013), including family. The effect of the 'illusionary' facet at their level can be extremely complex, particularly when their expectations clash with the 'greedy' demands of academia, and subsequently affect academics. This is reflected in this passage:

> Academe is exploitive of the already blurred boundaries between home and work that are its trademark, with its students' assignments created and evaluated off-campus, its research and writing appearing to non-academics as *not*-work, because they're not done *at* work. With its activity that goes on in places where home or family or solitude are supposed to happen - at the kitchen table, in the car, at the park. With its activity that looks suspiciously like leisure to outsiders but that is done on behalf - holiday gatherings, intramural games, university concerts or plays, meetings over lunch, fundraising over dinner, community activism or engagement or schmoosing on the weekends (Kinser, 2016, p. xi, emphasis in original).

Academics, regardless of their gender, may find that the extract portrays their experiences in academia, wherein the boundaries between work and personal lives are often indiscernible. Nevertheless, Rafnsdóttir and Heijstra's (2013) research shows that dealing with the society's misconceptualisation of academia is particularly challenging for women, given the gender roles socioculturally assigned to them, as partners and the primary childcarers. In some other studies that I will shortly review, however, it seems that women academics themselves, whether intentionally or not, contribute to reinforcing this misperception regarding academia, as shown in the following study carried out in Algeria.

In her doctoral thesis written in Arabic, and conducted in the Algerian academic context, Chareb (2010) aimed to investigate how academics' gender shaped their lives, both at home

(the private space socioculturally associated with women) and at the workplace (the public space socioculturally associated with men). In carrying out her qualitative research, she employed observation, spontaneous conversations, and interviews with twelve women academics and thirteen men academics, belonging to different departments at Oran University, Algeria. One of her findings reveals that the academic work was regarded by all participants as the most flexible job, compared to primary, middle and high school teaching. The flexibility of the academe and its ability to offer work-family 'balance' led the women participants' male family members to encourage Chareb's (2010) women participants to join academia, in contrast to other sectors (e.g., industrial and administrative).

Arguably, there seems to be a common feature with regard to this finding in Chareb's (2010) research and the aforementioned European studies (e.g., Pelech, 2015). In the latter, most of the participants referred to their desire to spend time with their children as the reason that pushed them to join the academy. In the former, the patriarchal power appears to be more explicit in their accounts reporting their decisions to join academia. However, male members' desire to involve women in the academic profession is not only fuelled by their aim to protect women from harm (see section 4.3), but also to ensure that women's careers do not threaten the gender order – women as homemakers and men as the primary breadwinners. In this point, I refer back to the social perception of academia as a profession that allows the interface of work and family lives.

Interestingly, Chareb (2010) found out that women academics' teaching hours were stated by women and men participants as the main and only reason for women's availability at the workplace. Thus, the necessity to engage in research, at the workplace and beyond, was overlooked and completely unstated by them during the interviews and informal conversations. This was surprising to Chareb (2010), given that the Algerian ministry expects any academic to be involved in research-related activities, regardless of their title (see Chapter One, subsection 1.6.1). This is reflected in the sociographic table where half of the population (six out of twelve) of the women participants denied any involvement in research units, three responded 'somehow', and only three answered 'yes'. In contrast, ten out of thirteen men academics responded 'yes', and three answered 'somehow'. It is also important to note that the majority of the women participants (nine out of twelve) occupied the position of 'maître assistant', which is the lowest position on the Algerian career ladder according to Chareb (2010, p. 294). Furthermore, three of them were ['*maître de conférence*'], which indicate that they were PhD holders and taught fewer teaching sessions than the ['*maître-*

assistant']. On the other hand, five of the men academics were professors, five were ['*maître de conférence*'], and three were ['*maître assistants*'] (see Appendix E). Seemingly, unlike the European studies mentioned earlier, the flexibility of academia was understood by Chareb's (2010) participants as free time allowing women academics to fulfil their domestic responsibilities.

As opposed to women and men academics' optimistic accounts regarding the paralleling 'flexibility' of academia with women's gendered roles as wives and mothers, a male academic in Chareb's (2010, p. 244) research made an exceptional statement arguing that:

> […] time is not a safe ground for women academics' professional careers, because based on my own experience [as an academic working] in the [university's] administration, I have noticed that women academics get into the classroom and leave it to go back home directly […], she is quasi-withdrawn (my translation from Arabic).

The passage reveals what might lie behind the temporal flexibility of the academe, which, as noted earlier, is socially considered as an asset of the academy. In line with the extract, in the extant literature, time has been found to be a powerful, socially constructed aspect (Zerubavel, 1981) experienced differently by men and women (Davies, 1990, p. 239; Forman, 1989, p. 1; Bryson, 2007, p. 122). Zerubavel (1981), a pioneer in the sociology of time, indicates that time "regulates the lives of social entities such as families, professional groups, religious communities, complex organizations, or even entire nations" (p. xii). To locate this within the academic sphere, in Chareb's (2010) research, men academics, alongside their academic profession, chose to be involved in other paid activities in their 'free' time, most of which were political. Their decisions for engaging in political activities were not only underpinned by their aim to earn more money, but also the necessity to restore their 'masculinities' that were to some extent lost in the 'feminised' academia, particularly that, in their accounts, academic work was depicted as teaching-based. In other words, a women's sphere *par excellence*.

Moreover, in the male academics' opinions, going back home after their teaching sessions was not necessary, since, unlike women, they did not have domestic tasks that required their immediate presence. On the other hand, as reflected in the aforementioned extract stated by Chareb's (2010) respondent, women academics were performing what is socioculturally viewed as suitable for their gender - i.e., teaching, and beyond that, they were only

responsible for their unpaid labour taking place at home. This, therefore, appears to show how the flexibility of academic work is socially used to preserve the gender order that still draws clear-cut boundaries between men's world (the public realm), and women's world (the private realm), in a way that reinforces the assumption of men being the primary breadwinners and women as homemakers. Also, this shows how time and space flexibility in academia can be used as a means to pull women back to their private realm, despite being granted the freedom to access the public one (i.e., the workplace).

In a study focused particularly on the notion of time in the 'flexible' academia, Rafnsdóttir and Heijstra's (2013) qualitative study aimed to explore whether gender played a role in the way men and women academics in Iceland used time to combine their family and work lives. Their study was based on twenty in-depth interviews with ten men academics and ten women academics working full time at different institutions across Iceland. They were all parents of children ranging from six months to over twenty years old at the time. Their findings show that although the academic work was perceived as flexible for both men and women, the way 'flexible' time was being used by both men and women academics was found to be gendered. For instance, when men were working extensively at home, they did not feel that they had to justify their excessive working hours to their partners. Women academics, on the other hand, had to negotiate their working time. They also had to convince their partners that the 'excessive' time they spent on research at home, instead of spending it with the family, was going to yield positive outcomes for their family's financial state.

As noted earlier, Rafnsdóttir and Heijstra's (2013) research claims to offer an in-depth understanding of the gendered use of time and flexibility in academia. It aimed to reveal how gendered time use contributes to work-family conflict, which are experienced mostly by women academics. Despite the fact that the study reveals some gender inequity in relation to time use in academia, it does not seem to be different from other 'Global North' studies in its discussion of time flexibility in academia and women academics' experiences of work-family conflict. Nevertheless, Chareb's (2010) research brings into light some distinct sociocultural elements. To explain this further, Chareb's (2010) research, as described previously, not only shows how time is used in the academy by men and women academics, but it also discusses how academic flexibility is studied and planned by women academics' family members, particularly their husbands and/or their fathers, before women academics joined the academic

profession. Thus, how women academics will spend their time in academia appears to be calculated beforehand, in 'patriarchal' societies similar to the one Chareb (2010) depicts.

In the aforementioned enquiry, some women academics were only allowed by their male family members to exercise academic work due to its flexibility. Others, because of the socially-praised flexibility of academia, they switched from non-academic jobs to academia. Also, the respondents in both studies, Rafnsdóttir and Heijstra (2013) and Chareb (2010), were expected to do research, regardless of their different job titles. Yet, it seems that the participants in Rafnsdóttir and Heijstra (2013), in line with the current literature, described how time is structured from the perspective of the blurred boundaries between their family lives and their work-related tasks when at home, and in an environment that is often aware of the 'greediness' of academia. In the middle of the blurred boundaries between work and family life, they felt that they had to find ways to excel at both because their careers were under threat if they stagnated.

In contrast, in Chareb's (2010) research, the women participants, nine of whom were 'maître assistant' and three were 'maître de conférence', did not discuss the flexibility from the view of the blurred boundaries between work and family life. Instead, they discussed it merely as a privilege that allowed them to excel in their gendered roles in their private realm. That is, the intersection of work and family life was not mentioned as a threat to their careers, because research did not seem to be a preoccupation, as I explained earlier. As indicated by Chareb (2010), not mentioning their research-related tasks, when discussing flexibility, might have reflected their personal uninterest, although I argue that the researcher did not try to look deep into this aspect of their lives. In the next section, informed by my findings, I address the literature around the 'respectability' of academic work.

4.3. University: A respect(full) place for women

As the subheading suggests, my readings of some scarce literature conducted in a few Arab countries have revealed a narrative around the university being a safe and respectful workplace for women. Interestingly, based on my search, this notion of respect in academia does not seem to be existent in the reviewed literature conducted in Canada, Iceland, USA, which I reviewed earlier and others. Far from any essentialist-like intention, I can argue that this might be due to some sociocultural differences in the participants researched. The following discussion further shows that the status of religious interpretations in the contexts under study also seems to play a role. At the heart of these religious interpretations are the

nuanced discourses around women and their role of safeguarding their own, as well as their family honour. One way through which women can uphold this honour is to access a profession that would not jeopardise the sociocultural norms. Interestingly, academia appears to be one of these, as demonstrated in the following studies.

Karadsheh *et al.*'s (2019) research was conducted in Oman. They employed questionnaire as the main data tool, and in-depth interviews as the second data method. The aim of their mixed-methods study was to find out what were the most appropriate jobs for Omani women from the perspective of 3,150 women and men in different regions in Oman. The researchers considered three main dimensions underpinning the participants' preferences: social, economic, and cultural. In addition, with an aim to examine any possible influences on the participants' responses, their enquiry took into account the participants' educational, sociocultural and economic background. Their study reveals that teaching was at the top of the most appropriate professions for women, without being level-specific (i.e., school teaching, or higher education).

Karadsheh *et al.* (2019) also draw a clear connection between the men participants' preferences and their low educational level and qualifications, in addition to the rural areas where they lived. The researchers argue that the men participants still held onto the traditional association of women with some types of professions. Interestingly, among the sociocultural reasons mentioned by the respondents were: the nature of the work goes in line with women's 'natural' characteristics; work hours allow women to perform their domestic tasks; and there is less tendency of interacting with men. The first two reasons have already been addressed earlier in this chapter (section 4.2). The third reason, nevertheless, is what underpins the discussion in this subsection.

Given that Karadsheh *et al.*'s (2019) study broadly discusses the societal preferences with regard to women's work, I shall add to the discussion a more in-depth study, at the heart of which is academia. Arguably, Chareb's (2010) doctoral research would further reinforce the salience of the finding - the notion of respect in academic work. Chareb's (2010) research, which I described in detail previously (section 4.2), also found out that among the reasons leading men to prefer academic work for women is the respectful environment that characterises university. In line with the naïve association of academia merely with teaching by Chareb's (2010) participants, which I discussed in the previous subsection, academia was further misunderstood. That is, academia was described as a space where women academics'

interactions with men are limited. In other words, women academics' time in academia was associated with on-site teaching taking place in amphitheatres or classrooms with their students. Hence, reducing the possibility of interactions with men.

In addition to the different types of publications (journal article and doctoral research), Karadsheh *et al*. (2019) and Chareb's (2010) research share a number of similarities and differences, both of which are important to highlight. To start with the differences, unlike Karadsheh *et al*.'s (2019) men participants who held low qualifications, the men respondents in Chareb's (2010) were academics with higher qualifications and positions. Furthermore, in Chareb's (2010) enquiry, even those who held 'traditional' views regarding women's association with academia, they did not all come from rural areas. Therefore, the determinist relationship between the men participants' views and their background, as claimed by Karadsheh *et al.* (2019), does not seem to be pertinent.

Despite these differences, however, both studies intersect in relating their discussions of the notion of respect in academic work to patriarchal structures and the gender norms they seek to preserve. By so doing, in their discussion, they approach religious interpretations as a source from which this feminisation discourse appears to stem. Also, the same source not only seems to be a reference, but a convincing tool that is always at their disposal. To exemplify this, when Mernissi (1991), the Moroccan Islamic feminist, tried to defend women's right to leadership in a debate with her male neighbours, they provided her with an 'authentic' *Hadith* (the prophet's saying) that proves the contrary. Her reaction at that moment was a defeating silence. Yet, Mernissi's silence, if I shall metaphorically describe it, was 'the calm before the storm'. That is, the reason for her to make in-depth search resulting in the production of a thought-provoking and enlightening book entitled *The Veil and the Male Elite: The feminist Interpretation of Women's Rights in Islam* (1991).

A further unpacking of the religious interpretations, that I broadly linked to academic work earlier, brings into the forefront various Arabic concepts such as ['*ird'*], ['*ikhtilat'*], ['*khulwa'*], ['*sharaf'*]. The latter has been the title of Elif Shafak's novel (2013), entitled in English '*Honour'*. Despite the slightly different meanings the aforementioned concepts might carry, they all fall within the discourse of women and their ultimate responsibility to preserve their own honour, which is tightly linked to their family honour too. Women's responsibility, however, appears to be often under the control and surveillance of their male family members, particularly the father and the husband. In Algeria, reports show that the

responsibility seems to be socioculturally heavy that many women who get sexually harassed at the workplace do not report it to the police out of fear from being victim-blamed (e.g., Amnesty International, 2014, p. 13), despite the existence of supportive laws (Hersch, 2015).

The male members' preoccupation with women's reputation and honour, as far as academia is concerned, is also evident in many studies such as those presented earlier: Karadsheh *et al*.'s (2019) conducted in the Omani context; Chareb's (2010) conducted in Algeria; and others like Bagader (2000-2001) and Alwedinani (2016) conducted in Saudi Arabia. The two last studies, although conducted in two different decades, they both indicate the existence of patriarchal structures, albeit in different degrees of power. Bagader's (2000-2001) non-empirical paper on *Women, Higher Education and Society* in Saudi Arabia reveals that despite women's presence in the academic workplace, women faculty members often face challenges in attending many local and international events that require the presence of their male companion. This is not only linked to the strict maintenance of gender segregation in Saudi institutions at that time, but also to women's responsibility to preserve their social reputation, as noted earlier.

Unlike Bagader's (2000-2001), Alwedinani's (2016) research is empirical, focusing on *Gender and Subject Choice* in Saudi Higher Education. Although it reflects some changes at the Saudi sociocultural level, many women participants referred to the father, as the decision maker regarding their specialisation in higher education. This indicates that gender interactions, as far as women's work is concerned, academic or not, are carefully considered by the fathers before making their decision on the most suitable profession for their daughters. This joins my earlier discussion (section 4.2) on how the flexibility of academe is sometimes considered by the male members before encouraging women to join the sector.

To provide vivid examples on this complex relationship between the notion of respect in academia, the patriarchal structures, and how this affects women's movement and behaviour at the workplace, I shall refer back to Chareb's (2010) research, which offers an interesting discussion on this matter. In addition to the differences in how women and men academics reported their time use in Chareb's (2010) enquiry, there were also differences in how space was used at the workplace. The findings show that women academics often 'preferred' to spend their time in places such as classrooms and research laboratories/units. Their constant availability at these places, according to Chareb (2010), reflected their desire to avoid any public gaze, particularly the male one, as I will further elaborate.

Furthermore, the feeling of being locked in some specific places was a consequence of the lack of other adequate places at their disposal. Interestingly, there seemed to be a gender-based agreement on the usage of the staffroom. That is, when the staffrooms were used by men, women had to automatically avoid them and look for other places. Likewise, men academics went through the same process when the staffrooms were being used by the women academics. Yet, this was not as unsettling as it was for women because men had other alternative places like the university café, which was a male-dominated space, *par excellence*.

Avoiding the male-occupied staffrooms was much more required from the women academics whose husbands were in the same sector. Based on Chareb's (2010) analysis, men academics were concerned that their wives, as well as themselves, might be pointed at by other men academics, given the importance of honour and reputation. This concern led some women participants to feel under an unbearable surveillance which, interestingly, reminds me of the Foucauldian relationship of power and the panopticon. The latter is often associated with Jeremy Bentham and refers to a tower that is surrounded by various cells and placed at the centre of an institution (e.g., a prison or a school). The watchman in the tower watches everyone in the cells, but they are unable to see him. Therefore, they always think that they are being observed. In this regard, in *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault (1977) explains that the aim behind the panopticon is to render the individual:

> subjected to a field of visibility [...] assumes responsibility for the constraints of power; he makes them play simultaneously upon himself; he inscribes in himself the power relation in which he simultaneously plays both roles; he becomes the principle of his own subjection (pp. 202-203).

This goes in line with Benseddik's (2020, p. 580) research where she depicted this surveillance as one of the society's defence mechanisms to women's work that shook the social order and the family stability. This felt surveillance is deeply expressed in many passages, one of which is the following:

> Sometimes I feel that I cannot handle the pressure anymore, so I think of another career, but I haven't found anything suitable […] Although my husband is open-minded to some extent, but he always repeats: "you're not aware of society and men's world, what is said at the back of people […]" (Chareb, 2010, pp. 253-254, my translation from Arabic).

The situation was not very different for some of the women academics whose husbands worked beyond academia:

> My husband works beyond academia; despite this, I have to act as if he works here, as he probably hears things that could be interpreted from the perspective of the person […] Even if he doesn't work with me, he gets all the news as if he works with me. I've discovered another person after our marriage. When we were abroad, he accepted things that he no longer accepts now. This is due to society; society leads men to be strict somehow, and this sounds OK and understandable to me (Chareb, 2010, p. 254, my translation from Arabic).

According to Chareb (2010), this behaviour of seeking partial invisibility meets the socially approved rules of safeguarding one's femininity. Chareb (2010) further argues that this is what the patriarchal structures seek to reinforce. That is, drawing visible lines between masculine and feminine spaces, and making men and women academics internalise this as a moral norm and behave accordingly in the workplace. Whilst this demonstrates that both men and women academics are limited with regard to the places they can frequent, it shows that women academics are much more limited, given the lack of alternative places at their disposal, unlike men, as mentioned earlier.

The discussion in this subsection reveals asymmetries and gender inequalities in terms of how women and men are expected to perform in academia. It further demonstrates that despite women's access to the public sphere, which could be considered a disruption to the gender system that has long associated women with the private realm (Ennaji, 2020, p. 15), women academics' movements seem to be still monitored, mostly by male family members. This surveillance and the gendered restriction that comes with it appear to be introduced as a form of protection, as the above discussion seems to imply. In the literature, the unequal power relationships between women and men in the private and public spheres are, most often than not, due to 'patriarchy'. In the next section, I will delve into patriarchy as a critical issue hampering women academics' professional advancement.

4.4. Women academics and patriarchy

In this section, I show that patriarchy can be a hindering factor for women academics' professional achievements, particularly those that go beyond their teaching practices such as

seeking short-term mobility for academic purposes. What is meant by 'patriarchy' will be shortly explained.

Almansour and Kempner (2016) conducted their research with nine Saudi women professors in an all-women university, considered the largest globally. Their aim was to investigate the degree of women professors' involvement in the larger society, through political, social and cultural participation, given that the university claimed that its main mission is to contribute to the public good. Data analysis revealed that despite women's participation in the public sphere, both nationally and internationally, they were hindered by various issues: institutional (e.g., bureaucracy), and sociocultural. The sociocultural factors were merely gender-based.

Women professors had enormous responsibilities as partners, mothers and daughters-in-law. In the house, their responsibilities included cooking daily and in special religious occasions like *Ramadan*, *Eid Al-Fitr* and *Eid Al-Adha*, taking care of the mother-in-law, and ensuring the reparation of anything damaged at home. Furthermore, given the Saudi laws at that time, women were only able to have a chauffeur rather than drive, to be able to go to and from university to other research institutions. This, therefore, hampered their national mobility. As for their international mobility, they were required to be accompanied by a male escort. Yet, "because a husband, brother or father may not always be available or supportive to accompany [them], the ability to present one's research and engage in the global public sphere is limited by family obligations and support" (ibid., p. 882). Arguably, this gendered mobility issue is identified by the authors as a distinctive feature of the Saudi context they investigated, compared to the existing literature which they describe as largely 'Western' (ibid.). Other studies, however, show that this issue of women academics' mobility is not exclusive to Saudi Arabia (e.g., Afzali, 2017; Shah, 2018; 2020). Yet, taking into account the contexts within which those studies were conducted, I concur with Almansour and Kempner (2016, p. 882) that the issue seems to be predominant in non-Western contexts.

In a doctoral study conducted in Afghanistan, Afzali (2017) aimed to examine, using questionnaires and interviews, women and men academics' perceptions of gender inequality in an Afghan university. The study intersects with the previous one in many points, one of which is: the patriarchy that women academics experience, especially with regard to their mobility. To explain further, her data analysis reveals that women academics in Afghanistan, like Saudi women in the previous study, were fully responsible of domestic chores and childcare. Domesticity is considered a woman's role. Hence, sharing housework with women

is considered a threat to men's masculinity, regardless of the man's intellectual status. Her Afghan women participants were also required to have a male chaperone when traveling abroad. This, therefore, deeply affected their career development, especially in terms of research and promotion opportunities. Women's inability to attend international events has also emerged in Llorent-Bedmar *et al.* (2017), while they link it specifically to married women academics at a Moroccan university. In this respect, one of their male participants reported:

> […] At times, if [women academics] are married, husbands can exert their power and prevent them from travelling abroad. In my opinion, a married Moroccan female university teacher with children inescapably needs her husband's support to combine her married life with her research career (p. 38).

Using a feminist methodological lens, Shah (2018; 2020) gathered interview data on Malaysian Muslim women academics' perceptions of gender equality and the extent to which their professional lives were affected by the prevailing sociocultural discourses. Whilst women's inability to access leadership positions is still problematised in the existing literature (Griffiths, 2012; Llorent-Bedmar *et al.*, 2017), Shah's (2020) participants were all privileged and held leadership positions such as deans, directors and head of departments. Her data analysis revealed, however, that despite occupying top managerial positions, and having the right to drive, which was not the case of Saudi women in Almansour and Kempner's (2016) study, women academics' international travel was restricted. Backing it up with some religious texts, the respondents explained that they had to have their husbands' permission or company to be able to travel for research purposes. Yet, despite seeing it as an inhibiting factor for their research fulfilment, asking for permission to travel was, interestingly, not regarded as a gender equality issue, but an important religious practice they were *happy* to embrace. To contextualise the religious practice they referred to, it is important to add that women of any nationality are only allowed to enter Saudi Arabia for Muslim pilgrimage with a male escort, except for women above 45 years old (Thimm, 2021). A male escort, or ['*mahram'*] in Arabic*,* is "defined as a close male relative to whom the female pilgrim is in a relationship that excludes marriage" (ibid., p. 19). Going back to Shah's participants who appeared to embrace this ideology in their international mobility, they further maintained that it was a matter of different gender practices, rather than a gender equality issue *per se*.

The studies presented earlier all bring to the forefront an interesting concept, patriarchy, that often goes hand in hand with gender inequalities. Whilst patriarchy is a universal phenomenon that broadly refers to the unequal power relationships among men and women, whereby men are superior and women are inferior (Walby, 1989), the sources feeding into patriarchal structures remain diverse. In Arab and/or Muslim-majority contexts such as the ones mentioned earlier – Saudi Arabia (Almansour and Kempner, 2016), Afghanistan (Afzali, 2017), Morocco (Llorent-Bedmar *et al*., 2017), and Malaysia (Shah, 2018; 2020) – scholars often make referral to religious interpretations, mostly held by men, as the main source of patriarchy. Nevertheless, in *Do Muslim Women Need Saving*? Abu-Lughod (2013) attempts to redirect the attention placed on Islam – as the main source of problems in the Muslim world, as perceived by the 'Western' eye (also known as gendered Orientalism) (ibid.) – towards other sociopolitical and socioeconomic factors. This view is also shared by Ennaji (2020, p. 4) who argues that "focusing solely on religion may blur or stop any serious assessment of the living conditions of women in the region and thus impedes social change and women's liberation". Yet, despite Abu-Lughod's (2013) interesting discussion, religious interpretations still emerge as an element underpinning women's issues, especially patriarchy, in many enquiries such as those presented earlier - Almansour and Kempner (2016); Afzali, (2017); Llorent-Bedmar *et al*. (2017); and Shah (2018; 2020).

Additionally, it appears difficult to shift one's attention towards factors other than the religious when Muslim women scholars themselves are defending Muslim women's issues, either implicitly or explicitly, under the banner of *Islamic* Feminism (Lazreg, 1988), as I shall further develop. The name itself (Islamic Feminism), whether intentionally or not, brings one back to the religious framework, whenever gender inequalities are discussed, particularly women's mobility. Nevertheless, before I move further to discussing this type of feminism, in line with Abu-Lughod (2013), I argue that one should be cautious not to uncritically make Islam the sole point of reference to which all Muslim women's issues are irrationally associated.

The debate around whether 'Islam is a source of patriarchy' is probably one of the key drivers giving rise to *Islamic Feminism,* although not all scholars identify with the name (Al-Sharmani, 2014, p. 83). Unlike religious interpretations often held by men, Islamic Feminism has been an arena where women, both Muslim and non-Muslim, have played a crucial role in challenging these prevailing and taken-for-granted interpretations (Mernissi, 1991;

Stowasser, 1994; Wadud, 1999; 2006; Barlas, 2002; Barazangi, 2015). Therefore, the reforming contributions of these women scholars have given voice to women who have long been abstained from such Islamic teachings. Also, they have reminded the readers of the active role women played during the prophet Muhammed's time, arguing that "Islam and the Quran do not establish any inherent spiritual, intellectual, or physical inferiority of women" (Shah, 2018, p. 43). Furthermore, "if women's rights are a problem for some modern Muslim men, it is neither because of the Koran nor the Prophet, nor the Islamic tradition, but simply because those rights conflict with the interests of a male elite" (Mernissi, 1991, p. ix). Hence, these scholars have engaged in what Wadud (2006) succinctly calls 'the gender jihad', which stands for struggle for gender justice, away from the pejorative meaning associated with the word ['*jihad*'] (ibid., p. 10).

Within the gender *jihad*, to use Wadud's (2006) terminology, and among the dominant interpretations that Muslim (feminist) scholars have challenged is the one that grants men the right to dominate women. This includes the necessity for women to have a male chaperone or ['*mahram*'] while traveling (Abdul Kodir, 2013), as I stated earlier in this section. Abdul Kodir (2013) offers a thought-provoking discussion of the prophet Muhammad's saying or ['*hadith*'] that foregrounds this ideology. Seemingly, the referral to multiple theologians in Islamic jurisprudence or ['*fiq'h*'] indicates that the ['*hadith*'] does not have one single interpretation. Throughout his book chapter, Abdul Kodir (2013) reports that some scholars claim that it is mandatory for women, across different times and contexts, to be accompanied by a male escort. Others say that it is permissible not to have a ['*mahram*'] in specific situations where the woman does not have one. Other interpretations show some flexibility and suggest that times have changed, and travel is now safer than at the time of the prophet where war was very common among tribes; thus, protection was deemed necessary.

Beyond the ['*mahram*'] ideology, but still within the male authority framework, there appears to be a constant referral to the following Quranic verse (4:34):

> Men are the upholders and maintainers [*qawwāmūn*] of women by virtue of that in which God has favored some of them above others [*ba'dahum 'alā ba'd*] and by virtue of their spending from their wealth (for the support of women) (Lamrabet, 2018, p. 120).

Similar to Lamrabet (2018, p. 139), Abou-Bakr (2015, p. 85) declares: "It is indeed the verse that most often touches our lives as Muslim women and so deserves our attention and scholarly contestation". Maintainers/providers or ['*qawwāmūn*'] in the above verse is an adjective derived from the noun guardianship or ['*qiwāma*'] that, as the common interpretations suggest (Mir-Hosseini *et al*., 2015), stands for a divine privilege allocated to men to hold authority and exert it over women in all aspects of life.

In a chapter entitled *The Management of Public and Private Spheres*, Lamrabet (2018) analyses this concept - guardianship ['*qiwāma*'] - that has been a powerful source of justifying the right for patriarchy. She claims that this verse is rooted in a historical era where, socioculturally, men were the financial providers for their families including women (ibid., p. 124). She, then, boldly asserts: "[s]o, contrary to the patriarchal interpretations of ['*qiwāma*'] that affirm the superiority of men to women, ['*qiwāma*'] denotes the responsibility of some, vis-à-vis others ['*taklīf*'], rather than an honor ['*tashrīf*'] bestowed on one party, vis-à-vis another" (p. 125). Therefore, as Abou-Bakr (2015, p. 109) puts it, the applicability of this verse has moved "from a limited and specific financial injunction to a pervasive rule and standard criterion that govern all aspects of the marital relationship". However, Mir-Hosseini *et al*.'s (2015) edited book, *Men in Charge? Rethinking Authority in Muslim Legal Tradition*, offers nuanced interpretations that go beyond the financial level. Yet, despite the different approaches they adopt in their analyses and interpretations, they all conclude arguing that the verse has been decontextualized and misused to legitimise patriarchy and draw clear boundaries between women and men's roles in the private and public spheres, respectively.

4.5. Conclusion

The discussion in this chapter was gender-based. Compared to the previous chapter which could have concerned both women and men, this chapter addressed the literature focusing predominantly on women academics' experiences. Informed by my findings, I discussed how time flexibility around women academics' use of time in academia is discussed, using literature from the 'Global North' and 'Global South'. I then moved to addressing the scarce discourse around the 'respectability' of the university setting. This discourse appears to be largely embedded in a few studies that have been published in Arabic. Additionally, I addressed women academics' experiences with patriarchy. Overall, the whole discussion

demonstrates that gender is a social construct, and women's struggles mainly stem from this social construction which is often unjust towards them.

Most of the studies reviewed in this chapter and the previous one are qualitative in nature. They have demonstrated that identity is very intricate and many aspects of it cannot be well captured using a quantitative approach. Additionally, they have showed that identities are socially constructed and are subject to multiple influences. For this reason, I also embrace a qualitative approach in this enquiry. These methodological decisions will be covered in the following chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

5.1. Introduction

In this chapter, I begin by discussing the rationale behind the adoption of the qualitative approach (section **5.2**). Then, I move to explaining the suitability of the social constructivist paradigm and philosophical assumptions (**5.3**), as well as ethnography (**5.4**) in this enquiry. The discussion, therefore, goes from general to specific. Moreover, I explain how I sought access from gatekeepers to access the field (**5.5**), wherein I also discuss the setting where I conducted my fieldwork. In subsection (**5.6.1**), I provide information about the participants under study. I go further and recount how I navigated the field, particularly how I managed my relationships there, and continuously sought access from gatekeepers (**5.6.2** and **5.6.3**, respectively). Section (**5.7**) tackles the multiple data collection methods used in this study, namely observation (**5.7.1**), informal conversations (**5.7.2**) and semi-structured interviews (**5.7.3**). Section (**5.8**) is dedicated to describing the way I physically left the field. Next, I show how I organised and analysed my data thematically (**5.9** and **5.10**). Lastly, I conclude the chapter by articulating the ethical considerations (**5.11**), reflexivity, rigour and trustworthiness (**5.12**).

As a reminder to the reader, this study aims to investigate the aspects affecting ten full-time women academics' professional identities at an Algerian university, precisely at an English Department. In the following, I provide the last version of the research questions guiding this enquiry:

- **(RQ1)**: What are the aspects affecting women academics' professional identities?
- **(RQ2)**: How do these aspects affect women academics' professional identities?
- **(RQ3)**: What is the role of women academics in shaping their own academic professional identities?

5.2. Qualitative interpretivist approach

Following the nature of the topic under study, which is reflected in the previously-stated research questions, I have decided to adopt the qualitative interpretivist approach. In his book, *Doing and Writing Qualitative Research*, Holliday (2016) explains that qualitative research studies "are open-ended and set up research opportunities designed to lead the researcher into unforeseen areas of discovery within the lives of the people she is

investigating" (p. 6). This quote reflects my research aim that has slightly shifted from initially exploring, in an Algerian university, women academics' perceptions of the aspects affecting their engagement in continuing professional development, to more broadly investigating the aspects affecting their academic professional identities, as explained in Chapter One, section (1.2). In discussing the flexibility of one of the qualitative research methodologies (i.e., ethnography), Hammersley and Atkinson (2007, p. 3) state that "[ethnographers] begin with an interest in some particular area of social life […] It is expected that the initial interests and questions that motivated the research will be refined, and perhaps even transformed over the course of the research". Hence, in line with the previously-cited scholars (Holliday, 2016; Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007) and others (Delamont, 2016, p. 63; Merriam and Tisdell, 2016, p. 18), I argue that what stimulated this shift is the flexibility and openness to the unexpected inherent to the qualitative approach.

In addition to the flexibility portrayed in "unforeseen areas of discovery", Holliday's (2016) previous quote involves other significant qualitative terms such as: researcher and people (p. 6). Regarding the former, as someone who previously studied in a higher education context where only statistical data was valued, it was exciting to know that qualitative research recognises the researcher as the main research instrument (Merriam and Tisdell, 2016; Cohen *et al*., 2018). I discovered that my role entails making sense of the complex world and uncovering the variation of meanings that people ascribe to the same phenomenon (Creswell and Poth, 2018; Denzin and Lincoln, 2018; Merriam and Tisdell, 2016). Yet, taking up this role is not immune to challenges. These will be covered in the remainder of the chapter.

As for the latter – i.e., people – a salient feature of qualitative approach is its attempt to understand "how people interpret their experiences, how they construct their worlds, and what meanings they attribute to their experiences" (Merriam and Tisdell, 2016, p. 6). In this process, I personally had the privilege to have access to hidden meanings and emotions which would not have been captured through a quantitative approach. A mixed-method approach was not deemed appropriate either, due to the aim of this enquiry which has remained fully focused, since the start, on providing rich description and interpreting the respondents' accounts. In what follows, I discuss the rationale behind embracing social constructivism as a paradigm, epistemology and ontology.

5.3. The social constructivist paradigm and philosophical assumptions

In this section, I address the social constructivist paradigm which I adopted to examine the respondents' accounts in the present study. Social constructivism relies on reporting and interpreting the multiple views which are "not only simply imprinted on individuals but are formed through interaction with others (hence social construction) and through historical and cultural norms that operate in individuals' lives" (Creswell and Poth, 2018, p. 24). Therefore, in parallel with the literature reviewed earlier and the theories discussed, one would notice that identity is not exclusively internal to the individual. Rather, multiple dimensions come into play and affect it both positively and negatively. Many of these dimensions pertain to the environment within which individuals live and work. This is what this study is interested to explore with regard to a group of women academics' professional identities.

As stated, social constructivism acknowledges the multiplicity of realities inherent to humans, rather than seeking to champion the existence of one single reality. Accordingly, I state that social constructivism shapes the way I see reality (my ontology), in that I perceive that there are multiple realities that people construct and reconstruct in different contexts and circumstances (Denzin and Lincoln, 2018; Merriam and Tisdell, 2016). I further maintain that social constructivism also shapes the way I see the nature of knowledge (my epistemology), in that people's different realities involve complex meanings that need to be uncovered and interpreted by the researcher. Uncovering these hidden meanings can be achieved by employing a number of data tools whose kernel is quality rather than quantity (see section 5.7). Similar to the data collection process, data interpretation is subjective, as Byrne (2021, p. 3) asserts: "there should be no expectation that codes or themes interpreted by one researcher may be reproduced by another". Hence, the data obtained can be approached and interpreted differently by different researchers.

In summary, consistent with the above principles of social constructivism, Merriam and Tisdell (2016) illustrate saying: "just as there will be multiple accounts of eyewitnesses to a crime, so too there will be multiple constructions of how people have experienced a particular phenomenon, how they have made meaning of their lives, or how they have come to understand certain processes" (p. 243). In this regard, it can be concluded that through adopting a social constructivist lens, my research will not only depict the ways in which multiple realities are constructed between my respondents and their surrounding environment, but also how knowledge is co-constructed between myself, the researcher, and

my participants. To meet these objectives, I have chosen ethnography as a methodology, which I will discuss in further detail in the following section.

5.4. Ethnography

To carry out my investigation, I adopted ethnography as a methodology. It generally refers to writing about a given group of people in a particular milieu by closely examining the way they think of, talk about, and engage in their daily life practices (Gobo, 2008; Fetterman, 2010; Madden, 2017; Creswell and Poth, 2018). Ethnography places a significant focus on the researcher's immersion in *si tu*. That is, the researcher is expected to spend a considerable amount of time with the group under study (Merriam and Tisdell, 2016) in its 'natural' environment which "[has] not been set up for research purposes" (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007, p. 4). In his book, *Being Ethnographic*, Madden (2017) claims that due to ethnography's interest in cultural and social interpretation, it is, arguably, the most apposite methodology sociologists have at their disposal. This goes back to the inquiry's aim which is to delve into the actions and daily lives of the respondents.

The selection of ethnography over other methodologies was driven by my research aim. As I explained in section 5.2, I initially endeavoured to investigate, in one of the Algerian universities, women academics' perceptions of the factors affecting their engagement in continuing professional development. To get this 'emic' perspectives (Fetterman, 2010; Madden, 2017) – i.e., understanding the phenomenon from the participants' viewpoints – I had to spend time with the respondents in their natural setting – university. This process entailed making my "whole body as an organic recording device" (Madden, 2017, p. 19), which later allowed me to interpret their complex experiences with an analytical eye. The respondents' perceptions of the environment in which they lived and worked, although intersected at some instances, they also differed from one person to another, as reflected in the data chapters. I was able to report the overt and covert meanings behind their perceptions and behaviours through what is referred to in qualitative research as 'thick description' (Geertz, 1993). 'Thick description' is at the core of qualitative research (Holliday, 2016, p. 83), especially ethnography (Merriam and Tisdell, 2016, p. 229). It refers to the amount of sociocultural detail that the researcher provides about the context, as well as the respondents under study (Holliday, 2016; Merriam and Tisdell, 2016).

One of the challenges I faced when reading about ethnography is the overlap it seems to have with 'case study'. Traditionally, the key distinction between them lied in the number of years that ethnographers used to spend in the field - this is referred to as "long-term ethnography" (Madden, 2017, p. 17). Nowadays, however, ethnography does not require such length of time - i.e., "short-term ethnography" (ibid.). This, in my view, makes it even closer to case study in its principles. Yet, with deep research, I realised that ethnography, although does not necessarily entail spending years with the participants, it cannot be carried out in a few days or hours, as opposed to case study (Parker-Jenkins, 2018). This, therefore, takes one back to the 'thick description' that requires prolonged participation in the field, and this, arguably, cannot be achieved in a few hours or days.

From a positivist point of view, ethnography has been criticised for its subjectivity (Madden, 2017, p. 20), lack of rigour, and inability to generalise (Pole and Morrison, 2003, p. 15). In their book, *Ethnography for Education*, Pole and Morrison (ibid.) further maintain that such criticism does not jeopardise the ability of ethnography to reach what it aims to achieve. Rather, it targets "the nature of knowledge which ethnography yields" (ibid.), which is the impossibility of reaching one universal truth. Regarding the doubts revolving around the ethnographer's subjectivity, which might affect the study's rigour, I, as an ethnographer, followed some strategies in an attempt to produce a rigorous enquiry. These are described throughout the chapter, particularly in section 5.12. In the next section, I describe my experience of seeking access to the field.

5.5. Seeking access

In this section, I recount how I gained access to be able to carry out my fieldwork. In doing so, I highlight two different aspects. First, the way my thinking has changed throughout time, as far as the selection of the data collection setting is concerned. Second, how my experience of seeking access from familiar gatekeepers embodied an unexpected insider-outsider dimension.

The repercussions of being exclusively familiar with the quantitative principles was very apparent in my early decisions of the setting, wherein I would seek access and collect data. At the beginning of this enquiry, I believed that by conducting my research in various Algerian regions, I would get rich and culturally diverse data. Debatably, this positivist thinking would have been reasonable if my aim was representativeness. As my understanding evolved,

however, I discovered that this is not in parallel with the values of qualitative research, which I explained in section 5.2.

My selection of the setting was largely influenced by the experiences of many of my fellow researchers. Many of my colleagues' access requests, from unfamiliar settings, were rejected. I did not want to go through the same process, as this would have slowed down my progress, particularly that I am a full-time, sponsored researcher. Hence, I decided to seek access from a familiar setting, assuming that my familiarity would undoubtedly be my entry pass. This familiar setting was the English Department at the anonymised University X. The latter has a link with my academic history. I had some contacts already established there (Burgess, 1984) and was familiar with both the physical setting of the university and the administrative hierarchy located inside and outside of the university. Moreover, it was geographically convenient for me.

My journey of seeking access started after I successfully passed my first annual meeting. I decided to go to Algeria for holidays to get the access approval as quickly as possible. I was accompanied by a fellow PhD researcher who was also keen to obtain the access before going back to England. We both thought that the person responsible for issuing us the permission was the Head of the English Department, but after we talked to her and explained our research purposes, she kindly apologised and clearly said that she never wrote/signed such a paper. She tried to help and directed us to another key person in a higher position, albeit not sure he would be the one responsible for that. The day after, my friend and I went to see the person in his office, and we briefly explained our request. He immediately said that we needed to provide a status letter and a paper wherein our research topic, aims, and duration of the data collection are stated in detail. We left his office with a huge relief after we thanked him vividly.

Two days later, we left the files and our personal phone numbers to the female assistants. As we had a few days left before returning to England, my friend and I were going back on a daily basis to the person's office, but our approvals were not yet issued. After we succeeded to finally meet him, we were informed that he was not responsible for signing such a paper as we did not belong anymore to any Algerian university. His words portrayed us as Algerians *but* international students. We were not only 'special' cases to deal with, as he said, but also the first at the level of the Foreign Languages Faculty to make such a request.

Our journey, my friend and I, did not go as expected. We were directed to a person responsible for the international relations. Unfortunately, she was not responding to the Dean's calls, which made him apologise and promise that he would do his best to get in touch with her as soon as he could. Yet, the day of my return to England arrived. I left Algeria with mixed feelings. I was both proud that I made that preliminary step, although nothing was guaranteed, and anxious to leave without my permission paper that was necessary to get the ethical approval from my university in England. However, I was lucky that my friend was staying further. She was able to collect my access approval and scan it to me a week after. From this experience, I learnt that familiar settings should not be taken for granted. This also allowed me to know my position as a researcher, in that I was both an insider, given my Algerianness, and an outsider, given that I belonged to a British university. In the following section, I discuss some significant aspects about the fieldwork.

5.6. Fieldwork

In this section, I discuss my fieldwork experience. Fieldwork is sometimes used interchangeably with 'participant observation' and/or 'ethnography' (O'Reilly, 2009). In my study, I use the term 'ethnography' to refer to the way data is collected, written and analysed - hence, as a process and product (Merriam and Tisdell, 2016, pp. 28-29). 'Participant observation' refers to one of the data gathering tools, and 'fieldwork' is the core setting in which data is collected. In this respect, I pre-planned my fieldwork considering the university's entry, holidays and days-off. I started my data collection in October 2018, following the start of the academic year. However, knowing the culture of the Algerian university, with no intention to generalise, I would have adopted a different plan if my focus was on students rather than teachers, that is, even if the entry day is officially on the 1st of October, for instance, most students will come a day, a week, or a month after.

This section includes three subsections, wherein I provide information about the way I recruited my participants (5.6.1), how I built relationships in the field (5.6.2) and continued seeking access (5.6.3).

5.6.1. Participants

The main participants of this enquiry are women academics. However, when I was reading about ethnography, I found out that the ethnographer is sometimes considered a 'spy' (Aberese-Ako, 2017, p. 305). Far from the negative connotation that this term may carry, it

means that the ethnographer collects data from different sources and different people in the community under study. Accordingly, I decided to recruit other participants who were part of the setting I researched, namely a male academic, female students and other staff members.

Furthermore, this decision to recruit respondents other than women academics seems congruent with my social constructivist paradigm and philosophical assumptions (section 5.3), which values the environment within which individuals operate and acknowledges its potential influence on their identities. The contribution of these participants, who also belong to the environment researched, proved to be helpful as the data chapters will demonstrate, particularly that the main respondents were not always available to help me understand what was going on in the field. Furthermore, during my data analysis, I realised that women academics were giving their own perceptions of themselves and those of the society in which they live (see Chapter Six). Arguably, these participants are part of the wider society to which the women academics referred.

Academics were approached in three different ways: 1) via email; 2) face-to-face; or 3) via connections. First, I had some emails of the academics I already knew but were unreachable at university. I sent them an email attaching an introductory letter, explaining relevant information about my research (see Appendix D). Second, the people whom I met face-to-face were both familiar and unfamiliar. These people were accessible in the field. Third, selecting participants through connections was done at an early stage of my data collection where I was too shy to approach unfamiliar people, and at an advanced stage where I started to panic because I had a few participants. Those academics, however, were inaccessible at university, and even when they were contacted by SMS/email, they did not reply.

As for the female students, I recruited one of them before starting the fieldwork. She was suggested by a friend who did her pilot study at the same department. As for the rest, since I was physically present *in situ*, it was not difficult for me to recruit them. Yet, as they were suggested by their friends whom I interviewed, I thought that would be useful, in the sense that it reduced the possibility of being rejected or regarded as suspicious (Cohen *et al.*, 2018). While this so-called 'snowballing technique' involves the researcher asking for more participants. In my case, it is my students-participants who suggested their friends, because they considered their involvement in my research as "unforgettable" (#IC). In addition to the academics and students, two other staff members participated in this enquiry – a librarian and the Head of the English Department.

The following two tables present some information about my respondents and their contribution in my study:

	Participants' Pseudonyms	Gender	Academic and Marital Status	Contribution in the Study	
				Interviews	Informal Conversations
Academics	Djamila	Female	PhD holder, MCB, married, dependent children	x	
	Zina	Female	PhD holder, MCB, married, no children	x	
	Lamia	Female	PhD holder, MCB, divorced, dependent children	x	
	Randa	Female	PhD holder, MCB, married, dependent children	x	x
	Chorouk	Female	PhD candidate, MAA, married, dependent children	x	x
	Hind	Female	PhD candidate, MAB, single	x	x
	Siham	Female	PhD holder, MAA, leader at university married, adult children	x	
	Warda	Female	PhD candidate, MAA, married, dependent children	x	x
	Ranim	Female	PhD holder, MCB, married, dependent children	x	x
	Lyna	Female	PhD holder, MCA, married, adult children	x	x
	Wassim	Male	N/A	x	

Table 5.1. Academics' profiles and their contribution in the study

	Participants' Pseudonyms	Gender	Contribution in the Study	
			Interviews	Informal Conversations
Students	Shahrazed	Female	x	
	Rimi	Female	x	x
	Ritadj	Female	x	x
	Ismahane	Female	x	
	Mani	Female	x	
Other Staff Members	Ilham	Female		x
	Anis	Male		x

Table 5.2. Students' and other staff members' information and contribution in the study

Although the aim was not to have a gender-balanced study, given that it is in essence about women academics, I would have wished to recruit more than one male teacher. Not only were all academics teaching two days per week, and definitely not easily reached, but also women academics outnumbered men at the English Department. This issue was faced by Hiouani (2020) who also conducted her study at an Algerian university. Furthermore, one male academic withdrew indirectly for unknown reasons.

In the above table (5.1), there are a few abbreviations and terms that need to be unpacked. As explained in Chapter One, subsection 1.6.1, terms such as MCB and MCA refer to academics' ranks. For example, MCB refers to 'Maître de Conférence B' and MCA means 'Maître de Conférence A'. Academics belonging to this category are PhD holders. 'Dependent' children are children below 15 years old and adult children are those who are, or exceed, eighteen years old. N/A means 'not applicable', as the information is not deemed important to be mentioned. Before I move further, it is important to add that all women academics worked full-time and had at least five years of work experience in academia. Some women academics were previously schoolteachers. In the next subsection, I recount how I managed maintaining/reinforcing my relationships in the field.

5.6.2. 'Breaking the ice': Building relationships and reinforcing others

There is a remarkable emphasis on how pertinent establishing fieldwork relationships can be (Holliday, 2016; Delamont, 2016; Madden, 2017). As opposed to the initial step where I took the access request for granted due to my familiarity (section 5.5), I learnt to be more careful in the research setting. Hence, before I officially started my data collection, though no other formalities were requested, I thought it would be both ethical and respectful to inform the Head of the English Department of my arrival. Between the car parking and the Head of the Department's office, while holding the Dean's permission, the ethics committee approval and my status letter in hand, I was trying to guess the questions one might ask to the first Algerian but 'international' researcher in the history of the faculty, as further explained in section (5.5).

Like Herrera's 'newcomer' experience depicted in Holliday's (2016, p. 154) book, the first questions I was asked by the Head of the Department, as she was skimming through the papers that I handed her, were: "what do you intend to do? And how long is it going to take?". I immediately answered citing my research aims and methods one after the other (Cohen *et al.*, 2018), and concluded my answer with: "it is going to take three months only". My brief answer seemed sufficient. She handed me my papers back, and before wishing me good luck, she recommended that I would better start the week after as most academics and students had not yet joined the institution. This step did not only help show my willingness to start my fieldwork there, but also paved the way to later have an informal conversation with her, despite her busy schedule.

My attempt to 'break the ice' and establish a relationship with the Head of the Department was just a starting point. I also went to see the librarian who welcomed me warmly, and in contrast to the Head of the Department to whom I was unfamiliar, I did not have to go through the same stages of introduction and explanation. Yet, although we previously met each other, the question this time came with a different tone, and in a different format: "what are you doing here?!", the librarian wondered. When I explained my plan to collect data for a three-month period, we unintentionally found ourselves having an informal, spontaneous conversation, during which the librarian pointed out to how privileged I should feel as a PhD researcher abroad, with all the available means and resources at my disposal. I did not realise at the time of the discussion, but this was data, corroborated later on by the academics and students.

After making such a comment, he kindly asked me to provide him with 'the must-read books' that should be available in every English Department's library. I promised to come back with a list of some of the books available in my university's library. In the two subsequent days, I went to see him again with the list of books requested. With a large smile, he sincerely thanked me and showed his readiness to help me with anything related to my fieldwork. Like the Head of the Department and the librarian, I now realise that the way I approached other staff members and fostered relationships with academics was merely influenced by my knowledge of the local culture, to which the first contact is very important.

Although my research does not primarily focus on students nor does it entail being immersed in their world, as it is the case with women academics, their company had helped me go through various challenges. It is important to mention that students were more cooperative than I ever expected. On my first arrival to the field, for example, my observations and informal conversations could not answer all my field-related questions, if not being later answered by the students who often seemed more aware of what was going on than academics and staff members.

To have such a strong bond with the female students, I did not have to pre-plan anything, our relationships were established smoothly and spontaneously. Being fully aware of my primary aim in the fieldwork and keeping it in sight, I 'voluntarily' played many roles, which were cited by the students themselves: a friend, a teacher, a psychologist, and a researcher. With all the doubts and the downs that a researcher may go through in the field, from questioning one's role to reflecting on how good one's own practice is, my students-participants were, on some occasions, the mirror through which I could adjust many actions and change many plans, all of which seemed to work at the end.

5.6.3. The continuing process of gaining access

Unexpectedly, seeking access did not stop at getting the approval from the Dean of the Faculty of Foreign Languages (section 5.5). I also naively believed that apart from informing the Head of the English Department of my arrival to begin my fieldwork, no further access negotiation was required. Yet, once in the field, I found myself negotiating access with the security agents who held the keys of the rooms where I was supposed to conduct my interviews. It is important to note that only academics were eligible to have access to the closed rooms to carry out their teaching tasks.

I undertook one of my interviews at the university court, but as soon as it started raining, we had to carry on the interview at the entry of the library that was very noisy, then to an open classroom because of the noise. In the middle of the interview, the security agent came and asked us to go out. I tried to kindly explain that we had a few questions left and we were about to leave immediately after. Before interviewing another student, I went directly to the security agent and kindly asked him to open any available classroom for me, he opened the room and said: "stay as much as you want, I do not mind!". This joins what Delamont (2016) mentions in her book: "Do not relax: Access is a process" (p. 81).

5.7. Data collection methods

In this section, I address the data collection tools employed in the field, wherein I stayed for three months. To achieve the initial research aim, which was to investigate the factors affecting women academics' engagement in continuing professional development, I adopted three data methods: observation, semi-structured interviews, and informal conversations. Apart from observation, the other two methods were extremely challenging for my introvert self. Initiating talks with individuals and interacting with them entailed going out of my shell. As much as it was fascinating as an experience, it also created a certain turbulence in my personality. I recount how I handled these methods below, but I first start with observation.

5.7.1. Observation

In ethnography, observation is deemed to be the primary data tool that helps to examine the context in which the participants operate (Madden, 2017; Delamont, 2016; Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007). After having decided upon ethnography, which relies heavily upon observation, what was worrying me most were my observation skills, particularly in a familiar setting. Hence, I felt an urgent need to develop these skills. I, therefore, joined a friend to a conference where she was a presenter and decided to observe, at the back of the room, what was going on, with no observation guidelines at hand. The second attempt was in collaboration with my first supervisor, at the time, who accepted that I test my observation skills in one of the sessions he ran. After spending around an hour and a half following my observation guidelines, I felt lost, unfocused and could not go through my notes as I considered them meaningless. I was "…confronted with the following two questions: (1) how much context do I have to cover, and (2) how will I recognise a pattern when I see it?" (Fife, 2005, p. 1). Consequently, the urge to develop my observation skills seemed to be more

serious than I ever imagined. More frightening was the concept of 'thick description' that I came across wherever ethnography was mentioned.

In accordance with the access approval I obtained, my aim was to conduct my data collection at the English Department, which was located 'temporarily' at the Faculty of Medicine, based on what I heard there. However, as it was my first time of doing ethnographic observations, I decided to write down any observable patterns in my fieldnotes, hoping that this would make sense later. Writing any observable pattern in my fieldnotes was also an attempt to reach, to some extent, "seeing the familiar strange". This included observing the whole university, its location and some of my participants' practices there. The purpose behind observing the whole university and not framing it to the English Department goes back to my aim to holistically examine the milieu within which the respondents' work. As a reminder to the reader, my initial aim was to investigate the factors affecting women academics' involvement in continuing professional development. The latter could take any form within and beyond the university. Therefore, this entailed adopting an ethnographic eye to understand the phenomenon under study.

While reading about observation, I came across several concepts, some of which are: participant/non-participant observation, and overt/covert participation. In the field, I was an overt participant observer. Regarding being an overt observer, I was constantly observing, listening and most of the academics knew about my role there, to the extent that some were inviting me into their classrooms, without asking further questions about why they were going to be observed. Whilst for my participation, I was a participant in some instances, such as when a woman academic asked me to speak, on her behalf, to the administrator to solve an issue for her student. I felt for a few minutes in a woman academic's body, trying to convince the administrator that the student's transcript should be corrected, and calming down the male student who seemed furious.

Observation was the first data method I embraced in the field. It not only helped me get an initial idea of what was going on there, from my own perspective, but also prepare some questions to be asked during my interviews and semi-structured interviews. In this respect, Cohen *et al.* (2018, p. 511) claim that "participant observation is useful for enabling researchers to check their definitions of key terms that are used by participants…". A brief example of this is the use of 'teacher' instead of 'lecturer'. Generally, we use the term lecturer for someone who gives lectures and runs sessions at university, but the local culture I

studied used to use the term 'teacher', whatever their rank was. Also, what I attempted to understand at the beginning of my fieldwork was why the English Department was not located in the Faculty of Foreign Languages, alongside other department like French and Spanish. This point was covered later in my informal discussion with the librarian, as well as my interviews with the academics and students. In the following section, I discuss how I carried out my informal conversations.

5.7.2. Informal conversations

It is claimed that informal conversations (IC) in ethnography, as in some other research methodologies, can complement formal interviews (Swain and Spire, 2020; Swain and King, 2022). In the literature, various terms seem to be used interchangeably with 'informal conversations' such as '(casual) conversations' (Madden, 2017), 'natural conversations' (Bernard, 2011) and 'small talk' (Driessen and Janssen, 2013). It is argued that "small talk helps to establish, maintain, and expand the network of interlocutors. More importantly, it provides access to information that is difficult to get otherwise and could be central to understanding the local culture" (Driessen and Janssen, 2013, p. 250). What I find particularly interesting about this data tool is that the respondents are not distracted by the audio-recorder being switched on and off as it is the case in formal interviews (Swain and Spire, 2020). This is what, arguably, renders the discussion more 'natural' and informal, which eventually makes the participants at ease (ibid.).

Prior to conducting my fieldwork, I was ignorant to the fact that the 'informality' of the conversations does not exclude the need to have prior knowledge on this data tool before entering the field. Reflecting on the experience, I admit that during my early preparations for the fieldwork, I focused on interviews and observations to the extent that I overlooked how salient were casual conversations to my research. This is probably because informal conversations are understudied and underused compared to the two previously mentioned data methods (Swain and King, 2022, p. 2). It is, therefore, important for us, ethnographic researchers, to bear in mind that, "rather than seeing 'interviews' and 'small talk' as distinct modes of gathering information…", we need "…to view them on a continuum of communion between the fieldworker and interlocutor" (Driessen and Janssen, 2013, p. 253), as I highlighted at the beginning of this section.

There are some examples through which I can demonstrate how direct and straightforward I was in questioning people. Driessen and Janssen (2013) claim that "asking too many and too straightforward questions, in particular at the beginning of fieldwork, may be detrimental" (p. 253). To illustrate, at the outset of my data collection, I did not know how to initiate talk with the secretary. I randomly asked her some 'warm-up' questions, and then I immediately moved on to the questions I aimed to get an answer for. I cannot say how she felt about this, as she did not show anything at all, or I probably was not good enough at deciphering her body language in the first few weeks. What was frustrating at that time was my ability to speak the local language, but the difficulty of initiating talks. This is probably due to my introvert identity. On introversion in fieldwork, Moskos (2011, p. 163) reports: "In conversation, introverts have a natural desire not to impose themselves on others", adding, "introverts don't like starting conversations with strangers". However, the more I immersed myself in the field, the more I learned "[…] to develop the virtues that facilitate social communication and feelings of communion and trust" (Driessen and Janssen, 2013, p. 258).

In the example mentioned above, I implicitly show that informal conversations are not similar to everyday conversations, in the sense that that they are not always without a purpose (Swain and Spire, 2020). In many informal conversations, I had some pre-arranged questions about the field, "which hints at asymmetrical power relations with the researcher having an underlying agenda and ulterior intention" (ibid. n.p.). In many others, however, conversations were completely spontaneous, without any predetermined questions in mind, although even in such situations, Swain and Spire (2020, n.p.) further claim that "the researcher will [still] try and maintain some control of the proceedings". The aforementioned spontaneity includes the locations in which these informal conversations were carried out - inside the institution: in classrooms, offices, and the library; or outside the institution in public spaces; i.e., wherever the opportunity arose. My experience, in this sense, was somewhat similar to that of Burgess's (1988, p. 140, cited in Swain and Spire, 2020, n.p.):

> "A chance encounter with a teacher on the corridor in the administrative block; a brief word with a new member of staff on the stairs to the common room; a short conversation with a teacher in the school grounds during a 'free' lesson; a long discussion with a deputy head in the school car park after a difficult meeting …".

In the field, informal conversations, thus, played a number of roles. At the outset of the fieldwork, they enabled me to "gain trust, establish a rapport, and form an empathetic, non-

hierarchical, set of relationships" (Swain and Spire, 2020, n.p.), such as those with the librarian, the secretary and the students. Small talk was also carried out before conducting my interviews. It was a necessary step that 'broke the ice' and 'warmed-up' the interviewee and paved the way for the interview to take place. Informal conversations also allowed me to collect interesting data that my participants were likely to forget or overlook in an interview. Additionally, some informal conversations were carried out with people who were not going to be interviewed – such as the Head of the English Department –; this was followed with an aim that those people "may confirm, diversify, or refute cultural information gathered elsewhere" (Driessen and Janssen, 2013, p. 254).

Unlike interviews where English was the predominant language used by the respondents, informal conversations were carried out in different languages. Given that I gave them the chance to use any language they wanted – Algerian Arabic, French or English –, it is hard to deduce why each participant preferred to use a specific language. However, my interpretations regarding their language use would perhaps require more detail about: the persons with whom these informal conversations were carried out, and the conditions in which they happened. As for the former – who the participants were –, I sensed that the Algerian dialect was used with the respondents with whom the rapport was somewhat strong and where there was a certain power equality, such as some academics, who enthusiastically saw me as a future colleague, and students, who treated me as a student like them. Apropos of the librarian and the secretary, the Algerian dialect was the means of communication by default given that their mastery of English seemed limited.

The language chosen also depended on the conditions in which these informal conversations happened. For example, after the interviews, specifically those happening inside the classrooms, some participants preferred to carry on speaking in English. In these interviews, the teacher was in their usual place – sitting at their desks –, and I was opposite to them as if I were their student. This might explain why the switch to the Algerian dialect, or French, was not made. The same situation happened in the Head of the English Department's office. Although I initiated the discussion in the Algerian dialect, she preferred to use English. This might, arguably, portray the asymmetrical power relationships between her and me. That is, her response in English might have been a reminder that I was in the English Department where English is expected to be the only language spoken. What makes this interpretation less likely, however, is the fact that academics themselves were not using English, but rather

the Algerian dialect, as my observations reveal. My observations further unveil that English was predominantly used by the academics when addressing their students. Therefore, this leads me to claim that the use of English by some academics, as well as the Head of the English Department, represents their will to create certain boundaries that were, in my view, similar to those drawn between them and the students.

Before I move to the next part where I address the last method – semi-structured interviews –, I find it important to add that casual conversations generally lasted from a few minutes to one hour or so. In order to keep record of them, I preferred to note them either in the library when the conversations ended, or after leaving the setting in my fieldnotes journal or my passworded computer. In this process, I tried to remember the exact words said by the participants, but, of course, the memory did fail me sometimes; so, as Swain and Spire (2020, n.p.) put it, the general aim was to capture the ideas and thoughts of the respondents rather than their exact words.

5.7.3. Semi-structured individual/group interviews

As I previously mentioned, I considered semi-structured interviews to be the core of my ethnographic research, and I was expecting that most of my data would emerge from them. I chose semi-structured interviews over other types, such as merely structured or unstructured interviews deliberately. That is, the intention was to provide my participants with the opportunity to speak without necessarily feeling too much guided by a list of questions, or not being guided to the extent of feeling lost and not knowing what to speak about. In what follows, I tackle the process of undertaking my interviews, starting with how I prepared for them.

I) Setting the stage for interviews

Before conducting my interviews, I followed certain strategies. I read about how they should be undertaken, learned techniques from the sessions I attended at my university, and asked my fellow colleagues to share their experiences in the field. The interview schedule (see Appendix B) has been subject to change several times; I was always going back and forth to my research questions at the time, and to the relevant literature. Further questions were added, and others omitted or refined based on my informal conversations and/or observations.

To arrange for the interviews, participants were contacted via e-mail, or phone, when they agreed to share their personal numbers. Sometimes, we accidentally met in person at university and agreed on the interview time and place. On the day of the interview, deciding upon the interview place depended on the participant. When the participant was a teacher, they generally decided upon the place and sometimes managed to ask the security guard to open a closed room for us to conduct the interview. With the students, interviews were conducted at random places, decided upon minutes before the interview. As for my vestimentary style, I tried to wear as simple clothes as I could, neither too formal, nor informal, because I wanted the interviews to seem spontaneous (despite it being semi-structured), rather than a frightening job interview.

II) Starting out the interviews

At the start of each interview, I followed certain guidelines that I found useful. These guidelines were inspired by my readings (e.g., Kvale, 2007) and the experiences of some of my fellow colleagues which I gathered in a printed document. I began by introducing myself again, explaining the aim of my research and why I selected the participant. Then, I explained the consent form, the ethics related to the interview process and asked my interviewees if they permitted the interview to be audio-recorded. All my interviews were audio-recorded, except two e-mail interviews. I was not sure of the necessity of the 'introduction' part, when the participants were familiar to me, but it served as a good momentum enabling my participant and myself to laugh before we started the interview.

As some of the participants were familiar, I preferred to start interviewing them, based on the assumption that I would feel more comfortable with those I knew. This was also a strategy to prepare my introvert self to interviewing, which seemed very challenging since the beginning. This assumption proved wrong, as I discovered that familiarity never meant taking for granted the easiness of conducting interviews. Unexpectedly, I sometimes felt more at ease with some participants that I met in the field for the first time, than those whom I already knew.

Furthermore, in all my interviews, I allowed my participants to provide me with their feedback, comments or suggestions. The few comments I received helped me adjust and re-order the questions for the next interviews. I remember one of my women participants reacting to an interview question: "I find this question so indiscrete!"; the question was "how

do you describe your working environment?". After I explained that my intention was not to be indiscrete, and that she had the right not to answer the question, even though everything being said was going to be anonymised, she unveiled so many aspects that I did not expect to hear.

The way I and my participants sat during the interview was not pre-planned. At the beginning, I thought that the way we sat was dependent on how the place was already arranged. Yet, there appeared to be power dynamics in the way some of my participants chose to sit. As most of my interviews were done with academics, the academic immediately walked towards their 'usual' place - the desk - and I was opposite to them sitting on a chair. In front of me was a table perfectly in the middle enabling me to put my recorder. This shows that there was a certain authority move on the academics' part. The only sitting that I had to arrange by myself was with my male participant. We were both in an empty classroom, and as opposed to most of my participants, he preferred to sit at a table just as students do. Due to some cultural norms that I was familiar with, I could not sit right next to him. Therefore, I took a chair and sat by the edge of the table. As an Algerian, I had the privilege to avoid certain acts that would have probably harmed my reputation and that of my participant. This was further confirmed when I had another interview in the same classroom with a female student, and the security guard came to ask us to leave the room because 'couples' were taking advantage of the open classrooms to sit privately. During that interview, I was sitting next to my female participant in the same room where I interviewed my male participant.

Given the nature of semi-structured interviews, I rarely followed the same order of questions. 'Rarely' because it happened during my first interviews where I was frightened and stressed out. As soon as I restored my confidence, it seemed that I started to improve as an introvert interviewer. In addition to that, I could rarely take notes during the interviews, because I noticed that most of my participants became "reactive to the presences of notebooks" (Madden, 2017, p. 134), and cut short their answers whenever I looked down towards the notebook placed on my lap. This, however, did not affect me as I could maintain eye contact and write down any notes after the interviews.

It is important to highlight that in some interviews, my participants preferred to have either a copy of the interview schedule or take the schedule I had and answer directly. In my early interviews, I did not expect this to happen, and it is among the reasons why I followed the initial order of the interview questions, but I managed to lead the direction of the interview

and ask, when possible, further questions. Other conditions affected many aspects of the interview, such as its duration. Interviewing my participants while they had classes or other academic tasks was different from other participants with whom I met in their 'spare' time. This difference lies in the way they were responding (e.g., in a rush), and thus determining my psychological state too – i.e., whether I felt comfortable or not.

Flexibility manifested itself in my interviews, as it did throughout the whole process of conducting this research. I had a woman participant with whom the interview time and location were arranged. On the day of the interview, I noticed that my participant was sick, but she seemed ready to be interviewed. I felt empathetic and showed my ability to interview her as soon as she recovers and feels better. She seemed grateful, and shared her personal number with me immediately, so that we decide on another suitable day for interviewing. Sharing personal numbers between an academic and a researcher, who was familiar many years ago, did not seem very common at that university. Unintentionally, I enabled trust to develop between my participant and myself through my flexibility, and, indeed, my ethical considerations, which I will cover later in this chapter.

It is important to mention that in addition to the previously-mentioned data tools, I planned to use academics' reflective journals and photographs to add more depth and nuances to the data. Most of the women academics I consulted did not welcome the idea of keeping a reflective journal as part of my data collection process. The two academics who accepted handed me back the journals at the end of my fieldwork, with only two or three pages written, and wherein the data provided was deemed irrelevant. Whilst in the field, I also realised that photographs would jeopardise my attempts to anonymise the setting and its people. Hence, I used the photographs that I took as a memory aid only, particularly in my description of the setting (see Chapter Seven). In what follows, I discuss how I left the field.

5.8. Leaving the field

In ethnography, I find that telling the 'ends' is as crucial as telling 'the beginnings', but still, to date, "fewer advice books suggest when and how to leave, and autobiographical accounts of exits are less common than stories of entrances" (Delamont, 2016, p. 121).

- *When and how to exit?*

Before my fieldwork ended, I was eagerly waiting to fulfil it all and move to data organisation, analysis and interpretation. Despite it being an exhausting task, I had a strange sentiment while leaving my fieldwork - a mixture of relief and nostalgic warmth that I developed towards the setting and its people. As expected, the weight of my responsibilities increased, especially when I reminded myself constantly that I am the instrument that could, or not, 'bring the fieldwork alive to the reader'. I am not sure if I really left the field; I might have left it physically, but never emotionally or mentally (Delamont, 2016). The process of going back to the data requires recalling all the memories – that is, what happened exactly in the fieldwork from the beginning until the end. As probably various educational projects, my data gathering had "to terminate at the end of a term or semester" (ibid., p. 124). Having a fixed date can be advantageous, in the sense that it helps the ethnographer divide the tasks according to their timeline, as it was the case with my interviews and observations (ibid., 2016). In simplistic terms, knowing when my fieldwork ends helped me inform my participants with the end date, and set the dates to conduct interviews accordingly. In this regard, it is believed that fieldwork can come to its end when data saturation is reached (Saunders *et al.*, 2018). Although my fieldwork start date was dependent on many factors, no new data further emerged before my fieldwork ended.

Having established and reinforced many relationships made me carefully consider *how* I should leave the field. This process was mainly shaped by the following advice: "remember that people who agree to help are doing you a favour. Letters of thanks should be sent, no matter how busy you are" (Cohen *et al.*, 2018, p. 136). While in England, and prior to entering the field, I bought many letters of thanks, as I was aware that people were going to devote time, energy and probably travel expenses to take part in my research. In addition to being ethical and trustworthy to the data, rewarding them with thank you cards was the least I could do. Having collected my data, I moved to the organisation process.

5.9. Data organisation

Rendering the data collected intelligible to myself and the reader did not actually start when the fieldwork ended, but simultaneously while the data was being gathered (Patton, 2015). This process started with the way I was organising the data in my fieldnotes. Like Madden (2017), I kept one diary only. I did not follow any pre-planned way of organisation; it was

spontaneously done using colourful pens and highlighters. In my diary, I included my observations, reflections, comments and thoughts, in addition to some informal conversations I noted down in the setting. The rest of the informal conversations were digitally recorded outside the setting, as I found it more practical than handwriting them.

Part of this process of rendering the data intelligible is the transcription of interviews. Transcribing audio recordings is an indispensable step that every interviewer goes through (Kowal and O'Connell, 2014). This process is nevertheless recognised for being onerous, requiring certain skills and enormous patience. From another perspective, interview transcription is germane to the data analysis process, and can be useful to get more familiar with the data collected through interviews. Hence, I chose to be the transcriber of my audio-recorded data.

Before I started transcribing the semi-structured interviews, I tried to familiarise myself with the literature around this topic and discuss it with more experienced transcribers. I realised, however, that there is no 'best' way of transcribing an interview. Each qualitative researcher has a rationale behind their chosen way of transcription. Personally, I wanted my interview transcripts to be as 'natural' as possible, representing to a certain extent the oral version of it. Hence, I tried to include many features in the interview (Braun and Clarke, 2013): verbal (spoken words), prosodic (duration, loudness, pitch) and paralinguistic (breathing, sighing). Moreover, following Braun and Clarke (2013), I decided not to correct the grammatical mistakes my participants made, I added [*sic*] next to the ones I identified in order not to be confused with any other mistakes I could make while transcribing. In the following figure, I present the notation key I followed in my transcription:

Symbols	Description
…	Very little pause
[…]	Extracts omitted
Uhhh	Hesitation
---	Unfinished sentence
[*sic*]	Error made by the participant

Table 5.3. Explanation of the symbols used in my interview transcripts

Going through this transcription process myself, albeit time-consuming, provided me with the privilege to return "to the field through the research imaginary" (Blackman and Commane, 2012, p. 229). It further allowed me to constantly reflect upon my participants' diverse views and start my interpretation attempts ahead. Indeed, I would argue that no transcriber/qualitative researcher is fully able to put aside their prejudices and biases. There is always a risk to mishear some utterances, unintentionally exclude others, and even hear some through their own "cultural-linguistic filters" (Oliver *et al*., 2005, p. 1282). To ensure the accuracy and readability of my transcripts, I reiterated the transcripts. I successively listened to the segment when it was not very clear due to noise in the background, for instance. Also, at the end of each transcription, I listened to the oral version of the interview while simultaneously reading the transcript.

Whilst this transcription process might appear straightforward, I faced a set of challenges on my way through. First, my interview questions and answers were mostly in English, but given the multilingual context my participants and I come from, there were some words in languages other than English (i.e., French, Algerian Arabic). Therefore, I wrestled with the dilemma of 'accurately' translating them, without losing the original meaning. Following Merriam and Tisdell (2016), I decided to transcribe the words in the language in which they were said and add my own translation next to them. Finding the exact translation of words is almost impossible, especially that some words carry cultural meanings that my participants

wished to convey. To ensure the rigour of my translation, I discussed it with fellow PhD colleagues who have the same background as me and my participants. I could further reinforce the precision of my translation through checking them with all my participants. While this was possible with the few who were active on social media, most of my respondents were clear from the beginning that they were always available to respond to my enquiries face-to-face, but less on emails.

Transcribing my own data was both a challenge and an endeavour. It was a crucial step that prepared me for the next stages of data analysis and interpretation. Most important was the bond it reinforced between me and my participants' stories. Before I move to the next part where I discuss my choice of thematic analysis, and since I have collected data from different data tools, I will clearly articulate what abbreviations I have chosen for them in the table below.

Data Types	Abbreviations
Fieldnotes: **Observation**, Informal **Conversation**, **My Reflections**	(pseudonym#OBS), (pseudonym#IC), (#MR)
Individual **I**nterview	(pseudonym#II)
Group **I**nterview	(pseudonym#GI)
Email **I**nterview	(pseudonym#EI)
Facebook **D**iscussion	(pseudonym#FD)

Table 5.4. Abbreviations of the data source

As the table shows, there are multiple data sources, each of which has its own abbreviation in my data chapters. Before each abbreviation I add the hash sign (#) which does not imply anything specific, but it is only used to separate the abbreviation from the participant's pseudonym. In what follows, I explain the mode of analysis used in this enquiry – thematic analysis.

5.10. Thematic analysis

To analyse my data, I followed Braun and Clarke's (2006; 2013) six-step framework of doing thematic analysis (TA). This process, however, was not linear. It entailed going back and forth through the steps, whenever necessary (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p. 86). This is further illustrated in the following figure provided by Howitt and Cramer (2011, p. 336).
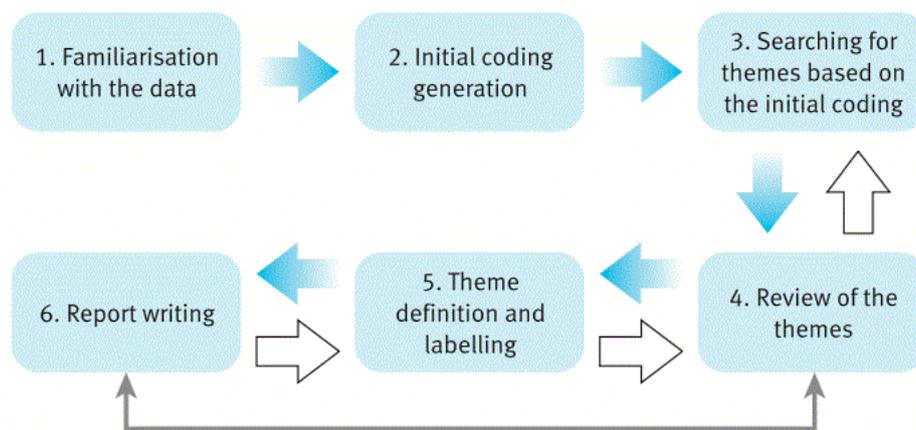
Figure 5.1. TA model as illustrated in Howitt and Cramer (2011, p. 336)

TA appears to be one of the most commonly used methods of analysis, especially in the social sciences field. On the one hand, it offers a comprehensible and useful framework that may help the reader fully and thoroughly articulate how the data was analysed, which may also reinforce the trustworthiness of the study. On the other hand, it seems to suit the exploratory nature of qualitative research and its inductive approach (Braun and Clarke, 2013). It is defined by the authors (ibid., p. 175) as "a method for identifying themes and patterns of meaning across a dataset in relation to a research question". This, however, should not be done in a way that gives excessive value to the research questions, or even the themes under which the interview questions were developed at the detriment of the 'new' emerging data. Accordingly, in addition to explaining the process of transcribing my interview data (section 5.9), I shall explain in the remainder of the section the process of analysing my data. This starts with the pre-coding phase.

- *Pre-coding*: Merriam and Tisdell (2016) opine that "[data] collection and analysis should be a simultaneous process in qualitative research" (p. 195). Following Braun and Clarke (2006; 2013), the analysis stage starts with the familiarisation with the data, which "is

observational and casual, rather than systematic and precise" (ibid., 2013, p. 205). In my case, this familiarisation process was done through listening to the interviews prior to their transcription while doing something else, such as waiting for another participant to arrive to an interview or cooking. I also used to go the library while doing my fieldwork and read through my observations and informal conversations, make comments in the margins, try to circle the recurring concepts, attempt to make sense of the data gathered, as well as identify some emergent questions that needed further exploration (Merriam and Tisdell, 2016; Braun and Clarke, 2013). The next step was to further read my data and try to generate initial codes (Braun and Clarke, 2006; 2013).

- *Coding*: A code, according to Saldana (2015), is like a book title. Whilst a book title summarises the whole story, a code summarises a tiny part of it. Through my readings, I discovered that there are many types of coding (e.g., descriptive/semantic, interpretative) (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p. 84). This refers to the degree of deepness, whether the code is explicit (the former) or latent (the latter) (ibid., 2013, p. 207). Keeping in sight this variation of codes, I started reading and manually labelling my textual data and writing the initial codes in the margins, using mostly descriptive coding at first. Interpretative coding was somewhat difficult as it required relating the data to the theory (ibid.), which was hard to achieve at the initial coding phase. The following table illustrates this process, which, again, was mostly descriptive:

Data Extracts	Descriptive Codes
[...] we don't have [...] real space, we are wanderers at times, we are wandering from one place to another (Chorouk#II).	Territoriality issue
Oh, there are many things to change! First, we start with the site, because we are not in our site, we go elsewhere where we can feel that we are the residents of the site, here we are just renting from another faculty, it's about the site [emphasis] (Lyna#II).	Desire to own a faculty/lack of belonging to the faculty
We have a small room, called room of teachers, but I don't think..., I don't consider it as a room of teachers [...] (Randa#II).	Unhappiness with the state of the staffroom

Table 5.5. Example of descriptive coding from my interview data

Then, it was during the interpretative coding process that I discovered that there was an element of 'identity' reflected in the data. The following table exemplifies this:

Data Extracts	Interpretative Codes
[...] there are some people who think that they [women academics] have less work, though it's not the case, and most of the time, they do confuse, or they do not take into consideration that a university teacher is also a researcher (Chorouk#II).	Asymmetry between her perception of who a woman academic is (teachers-researchers) and that of some others [society members] → [academic professional identity]
I just consider myself as a worker more than a teacher, because there is nothing that shows that we are in an environment in which professional career is promoted, that is why I feel myself more as a worker, more than a teacher at university (Randa#II).	Her academic professional identity is threatened by the institutional environment

Table 5.6. Example of interpretative coding from my interview data

To explain this further, whilst doing descriptive coding, for instance, I noticed that there appeared to be no parallel in perceptions – how women academics view themselves and how they think they are viewed by others. At the interpretative coding stage, this was identified as 'identity'. This relates to the definition of 'identity' discussed in Chapters Two and Three. After coding the data gathered, the next step is generating themes (Braun and Clarke, 2006; 2013).

- *Theming and reviewing themes*: Having my initial codes in front of me, I started my attempts to develop themes. This was not a linear process; I had to return to the data several times to change some of the codes (Braun and Clarke, 2006; 2013). During this process, I attempted to connect codes with one another based on similarities and possible overlap found in the data (Braun and Clarke, 2013, p. 225). Furthermore, I cross-examined my respondents'

interviews with my ethnographic observations and informal conversations. Frequency was an important element but selecting the main aspects relevant to my research questions was also crucial (Braun and Clarke, 2013).

The research questions, however, served more as a guide, with an openness to the unexpected to emerge. This flexibility, which is a key asset of qualitative research (section 5.2), manifests itself in the study's aim that shifted during the analysis process from investigating the aspects affecting women academics' engagement in continuing professional development to examining the aspects affecting their academic professional identity. The following table exemplifies how a theme was crafted:

Codes	Theme
Territoriality issue	
Desire to own a faculty/lack of belonging to the faculty	Relocation and its aftermath
Unhappiness with the state of the staffroom	

Table 5.7. Example of how a theme was generated based on the codes

After generating themes, the next step is to review them (Braun and Clarke, 2013, pp. 233-234). At this phase, I tried to follow the strategies provided by Braun and Clarke (2013, p. 234), such as testing the potential themes against the codes and the whole dataset. The hardest strategy was to disregard some of the themes, which are not enough supported by the data gathered. These interesting themes, nevertheless, will be further examined for future publications, such as *Academics-students' relationships: Masters students as partners in*

learning. The following two steps involve labelling themes and writing the report, respectively. In my case, these happened simultaneously.

- *Labelling themes and write-up process*: The themes were, indeed, already labelled, but the final labelling happened at the write-up stage. I tried to choose titles that best reflected the data related to each theme and, most importantly, involved my participants' voices (Howitt and Cramer, 2011, p. 340). Sometimes, I used some small data extracts as section titles, with the exception of subsection 7.6.1, wherein the quote in the title belongs to an academic who did not take part in this study, but it seemed representative of what the women-participants said regarding the use of internet as a container of professional development opportunities.

Apropos of the write-up process, although the themes were developed, writing them in a meaningful way, similar to storytelling, was extremely challenging. This entailed countless drafting and re-drafting, and, unexpectedly, I had to go back to read the transcripts again, check the codes and themes many times and cry over the energy all this process required. This is best illustrated in the figure provided by Howitt and Cramer (2011) I mentioned previously. After all these attempts, with the assistance of my supervisors, I wrote a story that is deemed faithful to the data collected. This story is told in Chapters Six and Seven. The next section tackles the ethical considerations adopted in this study.

5.11. Ethical considerations

In this section, I introduce the ethical procedures I followed to ensure producing an ethical ethnographic research (Madden, 2017). Cohen *et al*. (2018), emphasising the role of good ethical considerations, claim that "ethical problems in educational research can often result from thoughtlessness, oversight or taking matters for granted" (p. 112). In this respect, there were certain guidelines that I followed prior, during and after data collection. These are explained as follow.

- *Ethical application*

Prior to starting my data collection, I immersed myself in my ethical application for over two months before sending it to the Ethics Committee at Canterbury Christ Church University. In so doing, I gained a greater understanding of how significant conducting fieldwork in an ethical way was (Creswell and Poth, 2018; Delamont, 2016). In my application, I not only

demonstrated my adherence to safeguarding the confidentiality, anonymity and privacy of my participants, but also my own safety – i.e., risk assessment. Hence, after a few modifications required by the Committee, which further extended my awareness of some potential ethical issues that might have arisen in the course of data collection, I obtained the ethical approval (see Appendix A).

- *Explaining the consent form to the participants*

My ethical considerations not only involved the strategic design of the consent forms and information leaflets (see Appendix D), but also a plain explanation of their purpose to my potential participants. In the two aforementioned forms, I ensured that any ethics-related detail related to my participants is well explained. Furthermore, I added my personal Algerian/UK numbers, as well as my academic e-mail for further enquiries.

As I explained previously in subsection 5.6.2, my respondents were recruited in two different ways: via e-mail, and in-person. With those contacted via e-mail, besides the attached introductory letter explaining what my research is all about, I tried to be as brief as I could in order not to overwhelm them with much information all at once. I mentioned that their privacy, confidentiality and anonymity are going to be guaranteed, and that they can withdraw from the study at any time, without going into further details. Explaining the ethics to the participants whom I personally met in the field was somewhat different, as it was done "on a case-by-case basis" (Cohen *et al*., 2018). That is, thanks to my Algerian citizenship, which allowed me to be aware of some cultural norms, I was aware that claiming for a written consent might be seen as a lack of trust between both parties. This echoes Cohen *et al.* (2018, p. 111) who state that "what is acceptable in a western culture may not apply elsewhere" (ibid.). Therefore, I had to carefully plan how to ask for the consent form to be completed.

Among the participants recruited, there were a few whom I already knew. Hence, it was relatively easy to explain to them, at the recruitment stage, that their oral consents count for me, but it would be better to have their written consents too, as it was a requirement by my university. I noticed that they were open to the idea of signing the consent form. Two participants even expressed how systematic and organised were my consent forms. Yet, one participant complained about the length of the consent form. Hence, he found my brief summary of its content helpful. With the other respondents whom I got to know for the first

time, I was somewhat cautious. In my first meeting with them, I often avoided mentioning the necessity of having a written consent, and only ensured to have their oral agreement. However, as soon as the rapport was developed – usually after I conducted the interview with them – I claimed the consent form to be signed. In all cases, I assured that my "participants do really understand the implications of the research, not mindlessly sign a consent form" (Cohen *et al.*, 2018, p. 125).

Leaving the written consent until the end of the interview was also problematic, as it was not always possible to obtain it. To explain, the interviews sometimes took place in uncomfortable conditions, such as when most of my respondents had classes, had plenty of paperwork in their offices, or were in a rush to leave the institution immediately after the interview. Thus, I preferred to be understanding and leave the consent forms for later, since, as I stated earlier, I had their oral consent. Nevertheless, not everything happened as planned. I was unable to collect the remaining written consents before I came back to England due to my participants' absences, as well as my inability to find them inside the institution. I failed to do so even when I sought help from the university administration to provide me with their teaching timetable that determine their availability within the university.

As I explained in the data collection methods (section 5.7), I adopted three main methods: observation, semi-structured interviews, and informal conversations. In the next part, I shall explain what ethical lines were adopted in my interviews and informal conversations, respectively.

- *Maintaining an ethical approach to interviewing*

Prior to the interview, regardless of whether I provided my participants with the consent form or not, I emphasised the recapitulation of all the ethical procedures. Before I officially started my interviews, I wrote all the ethical lines that my participants needed to be aware of on a Word document and printed them. During the first interviews, I was always going back to the colourful paper in order to ensure that I covered everything, but as soon as I got used to the interviews, I thought that I was able to memorise all the ethical lines and that there was no need to keep the paper in front of me. Consequently, at the beginning of some interviews, I forgot to explain cover all the ethical elements, but I managed to mention them at the end of it.

As per the ethical parameters, I explained to my participants that I was going to was replace their names and the name of the institution with pseudonyms (Creswell and Creswell, 2018). Delamont (2016) believes that "the main purpose of the pseudonyms is to protect them [the participants] *for the rest of their lives* from intrusive 'others'" (p. 157, emphasis in original). My initial plan was to give my participants the chance to choose their own pseudonyms, but similar to consent forms, I did not have enough time to decide upon them with any of my academics-participants. In contrast, all my students-participants chose their own pseudonyms and were glad to be given such an opportunity. Delamont (2016) further claims that "not only do the informants then know who they are, but they may be identifiable to others in the setting" (p. 157). This quote made me carefully consider the pseudonyms used to 'disguise' my participants, as well as the institution they belong to, in my thesis and future publications (ibid.).

- *Maintaining an ethical approach to the informal conversations*

The informed consent related to the informal conversations is somewhat different. My participation within the fieldwork was not covert, and almost everyone knew of my temporary role there - i.e., a researcher collecting data. During many informal conversations, I was sometimes listening to significant stories, anecdotes and answers to some of my ignorant questions, but as soon as some participants finished opening up, they added that this should stay between us - my participant and me. This notion of 'between you and me' made me worried, particularly that I promised to keep their secrets 'in a well' (an expression translated from the Arabic dialect). This raised two major questions: shall I use the data that can add more meaning to what was said during the interviews? Or shall I stick to the confidentiality ignoring how useful the informal conversations can be? Taking a final decision was extremely difficult. I ended up not using any information that my participants were not ready to share, even under pseudonyms. Hence, any information obtained during my informal conversations and mentioned in the data chapters was agreed to be shared.

- *After collecting data*

After collecting data, I tried to maintain the privacy and anonymity of my participants. I, therefore, did not use all the information provided by them or described their physical appearance, which would have made them easily identifiable. I rather used the information that they seemed happy to share, such as their marital status and rank. Furthermore, the protection of the setting and its people involves securing the observed behaviours, the

conversations, along with the interviews conducted in a passworded computer (Brooks *et al*., 2014) or a diary where no real name is mentioned. Although any ethics-related information was included in the information leaflet I provided to my respondents, I assured that they understand the ethics related to their participation by repeating them whenever I had the chance to. For instance, one of my women participants found an interview question to be indiscrete, but when I mentioned that everything is going to be anonymised, kept private and confidential, she answered the question in a comfortable way. Lastly, despite some of my respondents' permission to mention their real name in my thesis and publications, I preferred to replace them by a pseudonym of their choice or mine, as I previously stated.

Reciprocity

In addition to privacy, I adopted a key ethical procedure: reciprocity. By reciprocity I mean "giving or giving back something to the participants in the research in return for their participation" (Cohen *et al*., 2018). This, however, does not have to be confused with what I call in French '*donnant-donnant*' or 'give and take' policy. During my fieldwork, I was fully aware that my participants were not to be exploited by any means. I kept in mind that they were doing me a favour, giving up time to take part in my research. In return, I had to give them something back (Creswell and Creswell, 2018).

The notion of reciprocity started in the early times of my research. I was giving either moral or material support, or sometimes both. Nevertheless, knowing the prevalent cultural norms in the context, I ran out the possibility of rewarding them with money as a result of their participation. To illustrate, a librarian asked me to provide him with a list of 'must have' books that needed to be in every library, and so I did. Also, during my interviews with teachers, I provided *most* of them with water and juice. This was not possible with all of them as the nearest shop from which I used to buy was closed. I also had lunch with a woman participant after we had an interview; then, I took her to the place where she wanted to go by car instead of taking a taxi. Additionally, since most of my students-participants were considering doing a PhD after they graduate, I spent many hours sharing my PhD-related experiences, as well as sharing my humble knowledge in qualitative research. In the next section, I shall show my attempts to produce a sound and trustworthy research.

5.12. Reflexivity, rigour and trustworthiness

Qualitative research often prompts questions and concerns about how rigorous and trustworthy the research is (Holliday, 2016; Cohen *et al*. 2018; Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007; Madden, 2017; Delamont, 2016; Merriam and Tisdell, 2016). In this section, I address the strategies I followed in an attempt to make my research reflexive, rigorous and trustworthy. This section goes hand in hand with the ethics section, as the rigour and trustworthiness of the research "involves conducting the investigation in an ethical manner" (Merriam and Tisdell, 2016, p. 237). I shall start with articulating how I have been reflexive throughout undertaking this enquiry. This involves acknowledging my biases and prejudices, particularly in relation to a familiar setting.

5.12.1. Reflexivity

Reflexivity is part and parcel of qualitative research (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007). It represents "a rejection of the idea that social research is, or can be, carried out in some autonomous realm that is insulated from the wider society and from the biography of the researcher" (ibid., p. 15). Since I acknowledged my subjectivity at the outset of this enquiry, I started my PhD with writing down my assumptions about the phenomenon under study (Madden, 2017). This helped me, as well as my supervisors, know what influenced my thinking at the time. Putting those assumptions into words helped me raise my awareness on my potential influence and informed my forthcoming attempts to locate my subjectivity, whenever possible.

At the heart of this reflexivity process is reflecting upon my position as a researcher in the field – i.e., insider, outsider, or in-between. The notion of being an 'insider/outsider' is one of the aspects that have been explored by a myriad of researchers in different fields due to its effect on the researcher and the researched (Spradley, 1980; Adler and Adler, 1987). This notion manifests itself implicitly in the whole chapter, but here I make more explicit explanations to clarify how I locate myself as a researcher. In this enquiry, I position myself as an insider because of my Algerian citizenship which allowed me to be familiar with the social setting and its local culture. This familiarity, nevertheless, was both a 'blessing' and a 'burden'. That is, I previously had some experience in the research field which, as I mentioned previously, equipped me with some understanding of the local culture (Holliday,

2016), including the prevailing cultural norms and the hierarchical positions of the higher educational system.

Familiarity allowed me to strategically decide where and how to observe. The access I obtained permitted my observations inside the staffroom. Yet, as an insider who knew that academics would not possibly welcome nor feel at ease with the presence of a non-academic, even if I was familiar to some of them, I decided not to observe there. This familiarity facilitated my understanding of the cultural norms that were crucial to bear in mind while planning for my interviews and informal conversations. My gender also played a significant role here. For example, as I stated earlier (section 5.11), while interviewing a male participant in an empty classroom, I could not sit right next to him. I had to bring another chair and leave some distance between us, because sitting next to him in an empty classroom could have been misinterpreted. Also, although another male respondent did share his personal number with me, I could not call him; I preferred to text him instead. This particular understanding of the cultural norms was further reinforced when my students-participants told me stories about how a male academic working in the same university reacted to a call by one of his female students, saying that he was married, and such calls were not permitted anymore.

Body language was also part of the cultural understanding I had. The way I behaved with my participants was gender-based. I could be able to kiss my female participants on the cheeks, but not the males. We were also able to touch each other's arms and shoulders when we greeted each other. Furthermore, I could take my female participants on my car to their desired destinations, but not the males. These are examples that reflect my own cultural values which were, to a certain extent, similar to that of the local culture I studied. Knowing what was 'expected' and what was, or was not, 'accepted' was, indeed, one of the assets of my familiarity with the setting and its people.

Being an insider also had some limitations. It first raised the following question: 'how can I see something familiar through the eyes of a stranger?' (Van Maanen, 1995; Holliday, 2016), which remained a serious conundrum, especially during my fieldwork. As an insider, I could easily fall into the trap of taking observed behaviours and acts for granted or as social conventions. In order to avoid this, I was vigilant by constantly questioning what I observed and heard. Another way to cope with this issue was to discuss my fieldwork experience with

my supervisors. As they were not familiar with the setting the way I was, they helped me see some patterns, that I was taking for granted, as worth considering in the analysis.

This reflexivity upon my researcher position makes me acknowledge that I was an 'in-betweener', starting from day one in the field or even earlier. When I went to seek access, I was indeed Algerian, familiar to them, *but* an international researcher. Even my relationship with my participants was paradoxical. Many were very open during informal conversations, knowing that I understood the stories they were sharing with me, but utterances such as: "this is between you and me" and "don't say everything in your research", all of a sudden reminded me of who I was – again, a home, *but* an international researcher. Conversely, during interviews, the same participants were not as open as they were during the informal conversations we had previously. I came to realise that in such situations, I was an international researcher collecting data. Surprisingly, as soon as the interview ended, they reopened again, making me feel less like an international researcher and more like someone that they trusted. Unexpectedly, I was sarcastically labelled a "spy" - "when will you come to my classroom and spy on me?" - Would I still be sarcastically labelled a spy if I were an Algerian doing a PhD study in an Algerian university? I asked myself. All these questions have been reflexively thought about over my data collection process and after. Finally, it is worth mentioning that this 'in-betweenness' created a chaos inside my mind and a paradoxical feeling, which was not very easy to experience. In the next subsection, I discuss the rigour and trustworthiness of the enquiry.

5.12.2. Rigour and trustworthiness

This subsection aims to justify why my interpretation of the data, in the following two data chapters, honestly represents the data collected (Rallis and Rossman, 2009). Merriam and Tisdell (2016) argue that qualitative research "should consider validity and reliability from a perspective congruent with the philosophical assumptions underlying the paradigm. This may even result in naming the concepts themselves differently" (p. 239). In this respect, I argue that using different terms than the positivist terminologies, 'validity' and 'reliability', is consistent with the principles of qualitative research, which holds a different view on how the research findings should be perceived. Accordingly, I have selected the terms 'rigour' and 'trustworthiness' which appear to go in harmony with my research approach, which is purely qualitative.

There are many ways in which a researcher can ensure the transparency and credibility of their research and its faithfulness to the data. Throughout my readings, I have found Rallis and Rossman's (2009, p. 269) strategies well structured. Hence, I decided to adopt them in my enquiry. They are presented below:

- 'Prolonged engagement: I spent three months in the field, and this allowed me to do my investigation in my participants' 'natural' environment on a daily basis; hence, having "more than a snapshot view of the phenomenon" (ibid., p. 269).

- 'Triangulation': I ethnographically collected data from multiple sources – observation, informal conversations and semi-structured interviews. These allowed for a holistic understanding of my participants' perceptions and attitudes in the field and beyond. This comprehensive understanding manifests itself in the 'thick description', which is a thorough and detailed description and contextualisation of my findings, as explained in section (5.4).

- 'Member checks: I listened to the interviews more than once (Hays and Singh, 2012), transcribed them myself, and whenever possible, I discussed them with some of my participants to ensure the accuracy of my transcription (Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Rallis and Rossman, 2009).

- 'Critical friend': I used to constantly discuss my findings with my supervisors whose comments challenged my thinking, particularly in relation to the emerging themes and my early interpretations. I also had many discussions with a doctoral friend who is familiar with the setting under study, and whose feedback was very helpful.

- 'Using my community of practice': I used 'my community of practice' and discussed with fellow colleagues and presented at seminars and conferences some aspects of my thesis, particularly my interpretation of the data. The audience's constructive comments helped me reflect more deeply upon my findings.

I add to Rallis and Rossman's (2009) strategies the following two techniques:

- I fully articulated the steps of collecting and analysing the data (sections 5.7, 5.9 and 5.10).
- I reflexively discussed my positionality and identified the potential bias and subjectivity (subsection 5.12.1).

5.13. Conclusion

In this chapter, I articulated my methodological choices. I explained that qualitative interpretivist approach was selected over others, namely quantitative and mixed methods, due to its ability to yield in-depth data and hidden meanings about the participants' lives. I went further to discuss why social constructivism is deemed useful as a paradigm, epistemology, as well as ontology. Furthermore, I justified why I embraced ethnography as a methodology by stating its main characteristics, notably 'thick description', which was achieved by having access to the respondents' first-hand experiences and being with them in their 'natural' milieu for a considerable period of time.

Additionally, I attempted to chronologically recount the steps I followed to conduct my fieldwork. This started with requesting access and getting the approval. Then, I explained how I managed navigating my fieldwork, which involved recruiting participants, building new relationships and reinforcing others, as well as continuously seeking access from gatekeepers, namely security guards. Also, I discussed the three main methods I adopted in this inquiry, wherein I briefly mentioned that I initially planned to have more than three data tools, but due to some circumstances such as ensuring the setting anonymity, I had to be flexible and only keep three of them – observation, informal conversations and semi-structured interviews.

After having explained the process of leaving the field, which entailed rewarding my participants for their time and energy, I justified how I organised my data. Then, I transparently articulated how I analysed my data thematically by attempting to follow the six-step model of Braun and Clarke (2006; 2013). By the end of the chapter, I explained my ethical considerations, reflexivity, and the strategies I followed to ensure producing a rigorous and trustworthy inquiry, some of which are suggested by Rallis and Rossman (2009). The following two chapters report my data findings.

CHAPTER SIX: GENDER DYNAMICS AMID SOCIETAL MISCONCEPTION OF ACADEMIA

6.1. Introduction

This first data chapter examines the inconsistency that seems to exist between how the women academics perceive their roles in academia, and how they feel society perceives them. By society, some women participants, both academics and students, refer broadly to the larger social environment, such as their neighbours or acquaintances. Others, however, refer, specifically, to close family members such as their partners and in-laws. This chapter is divided into three main sections. The first one explores the women academics' views of what it means to be a woman academic. Overall, they all view themselves as teachers-researchers. Research is discussed in two ways: 1) as a discovery process that enables them to widen their knowledge in their specialities, and 2) as scholarly outputs in the forms of books and journal articles. In this sense, their views appear to reflect their academic professional identities; that is, *who they are* as women academics and *who they want to become* (section **6.2**).

The second main section (**6.3**) discusses the women participants' views of the societal discourse around the suitability of teaching for women. In section **6.4**, the discussion sheds more light on the societal discourse turning, specifically, around academic work. Data suggests that society – as the larger social environment and/or family members – appears to naïvely consider academia as a teaching-based field. Seemingly, the reasons underpinning this societal perception relate to some misinterpreted characteristics of academia. First, 'the abundance of time and lengthy holidays' (**6.4.1**). The data presented below reports that 'flexible' time is misinterpreted as 'free' time, given that women's work is solely framed around their nine or twelve teaching hours that compulsorily require their availability at the workplace. From a societal perspective, any time beyond the teaching hours is considered as 'free' time, allowing women to return to their homes to perform their gendered duties as wives and mothers. Second, some women academics report that university is perceived by society as a "locked" space (**6.4.2**). In other words, a space where women are safe and respected. Also, given the sole emphasis on women academics' teaching role, they are expected to spend most of their time with their students and have limited interactions with their male counterparts at the workplace.

In the third main section (**6.5**), I address the impact that this lack of congruence seems to have on some women academics' professional identities, particularly when embraced by their family members, namely their partners and in-laws. Some women academics found themselves at the intersection of two different and conflicting perceptions: their own views of themselves as academics which revolve around their roles as teachers-researchers, and the society's perceptions of their roles that recognise their on-site teaching role only. This shows in their challenging experiences with regard to fulfilling work-related tasks beyond their teaching hours, both at home and away.

The women academics' challenging experiences include: 1) their partners as inhibitors of work-related tasks at home and beyond (i.e., conference travel); and 2) in-laws' interference and imposition. The first relates to fulfilling their work-related tasks at home and negotiating their conference mobility (**6.5.1**), whereas the second refers to the in-laws' imposition of their naïve perception of academic work on the women academics, whenever they felt that they were engaging in work-related tasks at home (**6.5.2**). As a result, the women academics involved experienced some tensions between their gender identities as wives and daughters-in-law, and their academic professional identities as teachers-researchers. It appears, however, that the family's predominant perceptions of the women academics' roles are powerful and threatening to the academic professional identities of the women concerned.

Before I proceed any further, I should highlight that in this chapter, I tend to rely more on my interviews and informal conversations. As a reminder to the reader, the acronyms used are (#II) for individual interviews, (#GI) for the group interview, (#EI) for email interviews and (#MR) for my reflections.

6.2. Who am I and who I want to be as an academic?

This section discusses how the women academics in my study position themselves in academia. As the data will demonstrate, this positioning involves their perceptions of their key roles at university. These views, for the majority of them, involve an actual description of who they are as women academics, and for a few others (Warda and Randa), who they are and who they envisage to become. In the following passage, Ranim indicates how her professional identity as an academic has changed, given the transition from school teaching to university.

Compared to being a teacher at, let's say, secondary school or private school, it's simply grammar, how to build sentences in English or maybe sometimes discussing topics in English. But here at the level of the university, it's much more engaging and you have to widen up your knowledge, so there is that enjoyment of transmitting that knowledge (Ranim#II).

Throughout our interview, Ranim, describing her experience as an academic, further adds:

[…] at the level of the university, I'm more *épanouie* [fulfilled], in the sense that there is research; even in terms of lectures, here you don't feel that you're speaking simply about the language, it means as I told you being limited to grammar or…, these can be found in secondary school or even earlier, but here it's a kind of cultural knowledge, you're speaking about specialities, it means now the language is simply a tool to acquire more knowledge (Ranim#II).

In the two above quotes, Ranim seems to be discussing two different professional identities. In the first interview extract, she recounts that she experienced being a teacher of English at Algerian primary, secondary and private schools before she decided to join the university (Ranim#II). Although her school teaching experience was rich, given the different levels she taught at, her use of "limited to" denotes that it mainly revolved around teaching the English language. Seemingly, being an academic is different and more satisfying, given the research she has to do to prepare for the modules assigned to her. She does not appear to insinuate that as a schoolteacher, she did not do research as part of her teaching role. What Ranim seems to indicate instead is that teaching at university goes beyond teaching and researching the language itself. It rather includes teaching various modules – such as oral and written expression, educational psychology (Ranim#II) – with English as the medium of instruction. Like Ranim, the researcher role is also evident in Zina's account. She expresses in the interview how privileged she is to be an academic, adding: "[university] is a world of doing research and being involved in the development of education" (Zina#EI).

While Ranim and Zina discuss their academic professional identity with a positive tone, Chorouk's following account depicts her academic professional identity as comprising of multiple challenging roles.

> […] when the woman works in a primary school or high school, it is
> easier for her to play the role of the mother and of the teacher, but
> when she is at university, it's something different, because in addition
> of being the teacher, the mother, she has to do the role, the task of the
> researcher. So, it's not really, it's not easy for her (Chorouk#II).

Arguably, Chorouk makes a naïve connection between mothering and school teaching. This perception of teaching being a 'feminine' profession has been problematised in the school-related literature (e.g., Moreau, 2019, p. 19). From the way she speaks, she does not show any sign of belittling women schoolteachers' job (#OBS), but I feel that she makes this comparison in an attempt to eloquently articulate the distinct features of her job. What Chorouk seems to point out to, therefore, are the different and complex tasks that a woman academic performs, which, in her case, involve being a mother of two children, a teacher and a researcher. Whilst she assumes that a woman schoolteacher's job is an extension of her role as a mother, Chorouk believes that it is a much harder job for her to manage these multiple (sub)identities as an academic:

> […] once I leave my children, I leave my family, I'm no more the
> mother, I am the university teacher and researcher, once I come back
> home, I just put another dress (Chorouk#II).

As far as my observations are concerned, Chorouk does not wear dresses. Therefore, I assume that "I just put another dress" is a metaphor she uses to portray how she manages her identities across different contexts. Her view of her academic professional identity appears to be largely based on her academic tasks as a teacher and a researcher. In her account, she also seems to insinuate that, unlike women schoolteachers, her gender identity as a mother does not infiltrate in her job. By drawing on some differences between her and schoolteachers, she indicates that at university, her professional identity – as a teacher and researcher – is more dominant, whilst at home, with her family members, her gender identity – as a mother – predominates. By saying this, Chorouk does not appear to say that at home, she does not perform work-related tasks; but, given the nature of her academic work that, in her view, does not involve any notion of motherhood, her caregiving tasks are wholly carried at home with her two dependent children at the time, as she mentions in the same interview (#II).

Data analysis indicates that by emphasising the researcher role, all the women academics refer to research as a discovery and learning process that helps one fulfil their teaching practices, as explained by Ranim earlier and all the other women academics. In the following

passage, Warda explicitly mentions another form of research that leads to an international recognition and visibility, and to which she seems more inclined: research publications. Apparently, in addition to teaching, publishing research is what characterises Warda as an academic, particularly that she previously experienced being a schoolteacher, to whom teaching was the core mission. In her own words, she says that her aim as an academic is:

> […] to improve myself as a teacher, to allow myself to write more, to share more my experience with the others, not just with my students but at the international level. Write more articles, write books, be more productive, not just teaching […] (Warda#II).

Warda seems to have an image of the 'ideal' woman academic she envisages to become. She perceives her academic professional identity as revolving mostly around teaching, which does not appear to wholly correspond with her 'ideal' academic self. This shows more at the end of her account: "not just teaching". This view is also explicitly shared by Randa who expresses her desire to be a 'real' researcher whose scholarly activity is not solely based on writing book reviews, which was her case at the time of interviewing (Randa#IC).

In our interview, Siham also reports that her academic professional identity consists of multiple roles: teacher, researcher and one of the university leaders. Like all the other women academics, she claims research to be at the heart of her academic professional identity. By referring specifically to academic conference participations (Siham#II), she regrettably states that her managerial role takes over her researcher role, given her 8-to-16 office hours. Given that our interview was carried out in her office, I could see that her work environment is extremely intense and overwhelming, which further confirms her statement (#OBS).

Likewise, Hind also perceives herself as a teacher-researcher. The type of research she is interested in, however, is mainly related to her specialism – phonetics – as well as her PhD topic. Albeit a PhD candidate, she does not seem to prioritise conference presentations and/or scholarly publications. She rather considers them as postdoctoral projects (Hind#II). At first, her account might appear somewhat puzzling as PhD candidates in Algeria are required to publish at least one article to graduate (see Chapter One, subsection 1.6.1); yet, she mentions elsewhere in the interview that the article she writes as part of her PhD has to have her supervisor's name. I sense, therefore, that she is more inclined to publishing on her own, which is why she considers publishing as a postdoctoral project.

As shown earlier, the women academics were given agency to position themselves as they desired, and no clear-cut definition was imposed on them (see Chapter Three, section 3.2). This view is shared by Rosewell and Ashzin (2019) who also resisted adopting a particular definition of what it means to be an academic. This goes in line with Petriglieri's (2011) following view of identity: "each identity of a person is accompanied by a conceptuali[s]ation of what it means to be 'X'" (p. 643); that is, what it means to be a woman academic from their own perspective. As discussed, the women academics' professional identities mainly revolve around their awareness of their roles in academia as teachers-researchers. Data evidence further suggests that their awareness of these roles is not only theoretical, but it affects their practices on the ground. To illustrate, when I asked Lyna what modules she teaches, she started citing a long list of modules, some of which do not appear to be interrelated (e.g., phonetics, gender studies and translation). To show her readiness to get out of her comfort zone, she added: "I'm multidisciplinary, so I'm not only restricted to one module" (Lyna#II).

Lyna does not seem to have an issue with taking a new module that is not directly related to her specialism. In a way that shows her researcher role, she reports "[…] I always take time before taking a new module that has to do with a speciality which is a bit far from what I'm doing. I always take my time or have two to three months to do some readings" (Lyna#II). Randa and Zina share a similar experience to that of Lyna. Zina enthusiastically comments saying: "[…] by teaching other modules, I could do a lot of research and learned so much" (Zina#EI). Therefore, the academic status seems to take the women academics beyond the borders of the language to go through unexpected pathways, sometimes. This could best illustrate Ranim's account presented earlier wherein she draws upon the differences between her professional identities as a schoolteacher and an academic. This also explains better why she finds the academic profession more enriching.

Following the data presented in this section, the women academics' perceptions seem to be congruent with the label adopted by the Algerian Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research (MHESR). They not only acknowledge their role as teachers, but they are also aware of their role as researchers; hence, teachers-researchers ['*enseignants-chercheurs*'] (see Chapter One, subsection 1.6.1). As the data indicates, they discuss research in two main ways. The first way relates to the subjects they teach, and the second involves research as a scholarly activity (e.g., writing journal articles, conference participation). In this sense, the

women academics claim, both implicitly and explicitly, that those two types of research are what mainly distinguish them as academics from schoolteachers to whom the core mission is teaching the English language itself.

As stated briefly earlier, the diverse views of what it means to be an academic are echoed in Rosewell and Ashwin's (2019) study. Some of their respondents perceive themselves as teachers, and others as researchers to whom research is either perceived as a discovery process or a site for professional recognition. My respondents view themselves as researchers, alongside their teaching role. The discovery side of research is tightly linked to teaching new subjects, while the professional recognition facet is related to the publication of books and journal articles.

From a gender perspective, the data in this section does not seem to correlate with Chareb's (2010). In this study, data analysis suggests that research is regarded as the hallmark of the women academics' professional identities. In Chareb's (2010) research conducted in an Algerian higher education context, her women participants only referred to their teaching roles, as if academic work was teaching-based. This caused a confusion for Chareb (2010) who stated that the confusion stemmed from the incompatibility of her women academics' perceptions of their academic roles with the expectations of the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research (MHESR) towards academics. Her respondents' views of their roles were, interestingly, in line with their own families' perceptions of what it means to be woman academic. This reflects the stability they felt in their work-family lives. It is important to draw upon the differences between my findings and Chareb's (2010) because my participants' perceptions of their own academic professional identities will enable to understand the threat caused by the lack of congruence between some women academics' own positioning and that of society, particularly their family members, as I will further explain in the remainder of this chapter.

6.3. "[O]ur Algerian society likes teaching […] [for] women"

Whilst the previous section discussed the women academics' positioning in academia – which represents their academic professional identities – this section presents the women participants' views of the societal discourse revolving around what it means to be a woman academic. I deliberately mentioned 'the women *participants*' earlier as this section does not only involve the women academics' views of how society appears to perceive them, but also

the female students' voices. I consider the female students as society members whose views are not, indeed, taken for granted as representative of the whole society's perceptions of women academics.

My participants' referral to 'society', as per the heading, seems to be broad. Yet, based on my follow-up questions in our informal conversations and interviews, it refers broadly to neighbours, acquaintances, as well as family members, for some women participants. In a more detailed manner, the female student Ritadj reports that her awareness of the discourse revolving around women academics in Algeria stems from, for example, the discussions taking place among women in the medical doctors' waiting rooms, on taxis, in family gatherings, as well as in the *Hammam* – the Turkish bath.

> The society thinks that female teachers suit for this job (Rimi#II).

All the women participants agree that the societal discourse is typically gendered, as it regards academia as 'female-friendly'; that is, one of the best occupations for women (Moreau, 2019, on school teaching), as portrayed in Rimi's account. Before moving any further, one would be confused by the label 'teachers' used to refer to academics. Although the women academics seemed aware of their roles in academia as teachers-researchers, as shown in section 6.2, and so are the female students, they kept using the term 'teacher'. I personally used it too in my interviews, interchangeably with academics. In my view, its use by my participants and myself is probably due to its prevailing use in the Algerian society to refer to faculty members, whatever their rank is - ['*Ustaad fi al-jamiaa*'] in Arabic and ['*professeur à l'université*'] in French.

['*Ustaad*']*,* in Arabic, or ['*professeur*'], in French, should not be confused, however, with the rank of a professor at university, given that we can also refer to a middle school/high school teacher as ['*ustaad*'] or ['*professeur'*]*.* This kind of labelling (i.e., university teacher) seems to be adopted in the United States of America too. Despite being reductionist as a label, as it might not entirely reflect academics' roles at university, ['u*staad fi al-jamiaa*'] (i.e., a university teacher) sounds more prestigious in the Algerian society as stated by the women academics Ranim, Siham, Zina and Djamila, and the female student Ismahane, compared to teaching at other levels, as I will further discuss (see next section). I opine, however, that

opting for a more inclusive label that captures all academics' tasks is better; hence, the switch from 'university teacher' to 'academic' in my own writing.

During our interview, I asked Chorouk a broad question: "what is, in your view, the society's opinion of university teaching/academia?" My question could have been answered in multiple ways. Yet, unexpectedly, Chorouk directly took a gender-based perspective and precisely linked it to women. In her words, she states,

> I think that our Algerian society likes teaching and prefers teaching over other sorts of jobs, especially when it comes to women […] (Chorouk#II).

The way Chorouk thought about 'women' when I mentioned the two key terms 'society' and 'teaching' seems to echo with the Butlerian theory of performativity. Butler (1999) critically challenges the association of certain practices (teaching) with a given body (women), based on its supposedly 'natural' and 'biological' characteristics. This is similar to the blue colour associated with baby boys and pink with girls, or with the so-called 'male' and 'female' toys which reflect the 'masculinity' and 'femininity' expected from them based on their sex (see Chapter Two, section 2.4). In Chorouk's account, 'society *prefers*' implies that there are external forces that validate certain jobs for women over others. Based on Butler's (1999) theory, no characteristic makes women, by nature, suitable for teaching and unsuitable for other professions. It is rather the regulatory powerful institutions that make such an essentialist connection (Butler, 2015, p. 7). Chorouk's account could also be linked to the Anna Lindh report (2021) which shows that education remains one of the suitable professions for women from the perspective of some Algerian respondents; the ideal role that precedes any paid profession is childcare (see Chapter One, subsection 1.6.2).

Lyna, answering my direct question on the way society regards women university teachers/academics, explains that "[…] teaching for women in Algeria is still seen as the most appropriate, the most appropriate [emphasis] job that a woman can do" (Lyna#II). In addition to her emphasis on "the most appropriate job", the "still" in Lyna's quote denotes that the formula, women and teaching, is not a new phenomenon. It appears to be rooted in the Algerian society, in Lyna's view. In this vein, Warda refers to this persisting ideology saying:

> […] I think that they [women teachers/academics] are regarded as respectable women, doing a respectable job. So, I think in general we still have this attitude towards women, female teachers (Warda#II).

Warda's statement resonates with that of Lyna presented earlier. They both refer to the societal attitudes towards 'women' and 'teaching', a combination that *still* permeates in the Algerian society, as they claim. One could interpret "respectable women" in Warda's account in a variety of ways. This could possibly relate to the moral and social status of both the profession and the people associated with it. That is, Warda seems to refer to the moral status that women teachers/academics achieve when they 'choose' this academic profession as a career, and this moral status is tightly linked to the social status of the profession. Put simply, according to Warda, because teaching is perceived as a respectable job, women teachers/academics would probably feel respectable too. I put 'choose' between inverted commas because, from a Butlerian perspective, there is no choice that is completely free from an external powerful imposition, although the individual might feel that their actions are entirely their own (Butler, 2015).

As society members, the female students do not seem to have a different view, although their perceptions do not, indeed, reflect those of the entire society, as noted previously. Based on my observations in the institution I investigated, I probed the female student Ritadj about the reasons why women academics outnumbered men in the English Department. She referred to two main reasons: the social preference, and what she called the 'natural' preference. In her words, she explains,

> […] first, society favours that a woman becomes a teacher or a doctor [laughter], or a nurse, so these are the jobs that are favoured for a woman, so it's societal, society-driven and then maybe it's nature-driven […] (Ritadj#II).

As I explained earlier using Butler's theory, what Ritadj seems to mean by "nature" are the presumed 'biological' characteristics that are associated with women's body. These characteristics are, based on Ritadj's view, the driving force behind the inclination women feel towards teaching/academia. In a follow-up discussion with Ritadj on Facebook, I asked her to further clarify what she meant by "nature-driven" in the interview. She eventually dissects the term "nature" and explains to me that teaching in general suits the nature of women. Women, according to her, "are endowed with the capacity to nurture, sacrifice,

educate and teach" (Ritadj#FD). Ritadj's understanding of the interrelationship between women and teaching denotes that it is something innate/inborn. What Ritadj seems to refer to is that women have the necessary skills for the teaching profession in their genes, as Ismahane stated "[…] in our nature, we, females, like to give, to teach […]" (Ismahane#GI). This could be one 'feminisation discourse relating the suitability of teaching to women's inner capacities and nature – teaching being a 'feminine' profession (Moreau, 2019).

The discussion appears to be thought-provoking that Ritadj, in an attempt to give more sense to her previous statements, makes the analogy and asks: "the egg or the chicken, which comes first?" (Ritadj#FD). Interestingly, the analogy is as complex as understanding gender and the practices attached to it, although Butler seems to be firm about the idea that gender is a social construct that is formed and in an ongoing process of forming itself. Butler eloquently says that "norms, conventions, institutional forms of power, are already acting prior to any action I may undertake, prior to there being an "I" who thinks of itself from time to time as the seat or source of its own action" (Butler, 2015, p. 6). The complexity of this relationship between women and the associated practices shows in another Facebook discussion initiated by Ritadj:

> You know, sometimes it's hard to make a clear-cut between nature driven and society driven, because gender is a social construct which impels us to abide by norms, and those norms do not necessarily overlap with our nature [hum] as if norms were made by society to preserve gender. In order to keep things in order, each agent knows their roles, duties, rights and constraints […], but society is so influential […] (Ritadj#FD).

It is interesting to see the shift in Ritadj's thinking regarding this perplexing relationship between women and teaching/academia. Interestingly, in the last account, she seems to critically refer to the individual's sex which acts like a core aspect underlying the set of societal expectations dictating how one should be and what one should do, or said differently, one's gender identity. Adhering to these expectations provides, therefore, a certain gender order that eventually ensures some sociocultural stability. This tight relationship between women and teaching is still, in her view, very complex to unpack.

As shown above, there seems to be an agreement among the majority of the women participants - academics and students alike - on the societal association of teaching/academia with women. The data presented earlier addresses women and academic work. Yet, I,

confusingly, started to get the impression from the way the association between women and academic work was discussed that the revolving discourse is similar to that of school teaching which is well documented in the existing scholarship (e.g., Acker, 1989; Griffiths, 2006; Drudy, 2008; Kelleher, 2011; Moreau, 2019). This might demonstrate that, based on my participants' accounts above, the discourse around the 'female-friendliness' of teaching (see Moreau, 2019, pp. 21-23) transcends the borders of school teaching and, surprisingly, includes academia too. Nevertheless, unlike school teaching, the discourse related to academia being a 'female-friendly' profession is, to the best of my knowledge, not as common, if ever existent in the current literature. Hence, the following section will address in further detail the discourse around the suitability of academic work for women.

6.4. Societal misconception of academia

Using evidence from my data, this section discusses two main factors making academia appear as a good profession for women, from a societal perspective. As explained in the previous section, 'society' implies, for some women academics, family members, and for others, neighbours, acquaintances and, as Ritadj mentioned, people she meets in the doctor's waiting room and Turkish bath (#FD). As the discussion will further reveal, these two factors are based on a societal misinterpretation of academic work. This misinterpretation, firstly, includes 'time flexibility and lengthy holidays in academia'. Seemingly, these are mistakenly understood as free time allowing women to better perform their gendered domestic roles. Secondly, the depiction of university as a "locked space" (Chorouk#II) that does not jeopardise women's and, particularly, their family's social reputation, given that most of women academics' job is believed to revolve around classroom teaching, and does not entail extensive women-men interactions. These two factors are addressed below in the following order:

1) The 'illusionary' flexibility of academia.

2) University as "a locked space".

6.4.1. The 'illusionary' flexibility of academia

During our interview, Hind seems to allude that time is one of the key elements characterising academic work. She says: "[…] teachers here [at university] are free, for example, to teach nine to twelve hours a week. At high school, they have fixed hours […]"

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(Hind#II). Hind's passage might be ambiguous, but what she seems to refer to is the different teaching workload that full-time university academics and high school teachers in Algeria are allocated. Similarly, during our group interview, the female student, Mani, mentions in the midst of a response that women, in her view, exist in great proportions in the teaching field and academia. For example, in 2020, women teachers were believed to represent around 82.34% of the teaching staff (YCHARTS, 2022), while in academia, women make up around 42% of the academic staff, in 2022 (Algérie Press Service, 2022). When I asked Mani for more clarification about this domination, she claimed: "I give you one cultural or social factor, women, they love teaching because they will have a long period of holidays [laughter]" (Mani#II).

Reading Hind and Mani's interview extracts, one would imagine academia as an attractive place to join. When people hear the word 'holidays', they might think of several dimensions such as: relaxation, leisure, travel and time-off. However, data analysis suggests that holiday time is rather considered as a gendered notion, socioculturally associated with women's ability to perform their gender roles as wives and mothers, as I will further elaborate.

Similar to this notion of holidays is the time women academics in Algeria have beyond the nine or twelve teaching hours, mentioned earlier by Hind. Therefore, as insinuated by my participants, socioculturally speaking, the more the profession offers time, the more it is suitable for women. Academia appears to be one of these occupations. Seemingly, the abundance of time and lengthy holidays are not just two presumed characteristics of academic work, but they also appear to be two gendered concepts holding patriarchal ideologies. To exemplify, when I broadly asked Randa, a married woman academic, about the societal perception of women university academics, she revealed:

> […] men prefer to get married to women teachers, because we don't
> have, we have only nine hours per week, and you are monthly paid,
> so it's perfect for men to be everywhere, to be a wonder woman
> (Randa#II).

She further stated,

We are expected to be everywhere and perfect everywhere […] we have to take care of the children, to have enough time for everyone, for the husband, for the children, and that's it, I think that…, we are expected to be perfect in every field [laughter], in every place [laughter]" (Randa#II).

It is interesting to hear Randa explain how time can be one of the elements making men approach women academics for marriage. Her use of "we", however, is confusing; I am unsure whether she is speaking in a collective manner that involves other women, or she is implicitly trying to share her personal story while hiding behind that pronoun. Regarding the second interpretation, the discussion with other participants will reveal that this is not only Randa's case. What I find interesting in her account are the nine/twelve hours of teaching that seem to fully represent women's work in academia, based on the societal perception. Whilst Randa explains to whom time is important in her first passage (i.e., men), in the second passage, Randa is more specific; she explains what elements make time an important aspect. More specifically, she discusses the expectations related to women academics in 'holiday' time and the time beyond the nine or twelve hours they teach. The reader would probably notice that the 'female-friendliness' of academia reflects some 'family-friendliness' (Moreau, 2019, on school teaching).

To explain further, according to Randa, beyond her paid work (academia), the woman academic is expected to have time for her other gendered and non-paid roles. This may denote that holidays and non-working hours/days-off are expected to be dedicated to the partner, childcare and the domestic tasks she is expected to perform. A wonder woman, according to Randa, is the epitome of the successful woman academic who manages to work and allocate time to her family. This societal assumption, that academic work equals having abundant time, might suggest that women's occupational roles are tightly linked to and paralleled with their socially prescribed roles as mothers and wives, as Randa appears to indicate. The accounts seem to reflect Randa's life at the time. Randa was married and had two children at school age. During the interview, while answering a different question, Randa mentioned that her partner is the main breadwinner (Randa#II), and that she is the one responsible for the house chores such as the cleaning, cooking and laundry (Randa#IC).

In line with the above, the idea that men choose to marry a woman academic might probably denote that the time related to academia can be used as a means used to preserve the gender order. The latter, despite women's existence in academia which is a public sphere, still

considers women's gender roles as wives and mothers as their primary functions. This reminds me of Davies's (1990, p. 239) perception of women's time as being relational. This view is also shared by a number of other researchers such as Forman (1989, p. 1) and Bryson (2007, p. 122). Although Davies's (1990) divide between women and men's time as being 'relational' and 'linear', respectively, could be seen as essentialist, I concur with Odih (2007, p. 93) that time is often disproportionately exhibited by women and men. This shows in the expectations of some women academics' partners and in-laws (see subsections 6.5.1 and 6.5.2).

The female student, Shahrazed, goes even further and assumes that holiday time can rank second on the list of criteria that the Algerian man embraces when selecting a wife. In an essentialist, yet funny manner referring to the, arguably, superficial criteria, she says: "Beauty first, and holidays second [ironic laughter]." She, then, tries to rectify her overgeneralisation and adds: "I think it depends always on the male individual" (Shahrazed#GI). While answering the same question I asked to Randa, the female student Ritadj makes the same claim about the Algerian man's preferences:

> She [the woman teacher/academic] is favoured as a wife [laughter],
> lots of men say I prefer her to be a teacher, they say that education is
> good for a woman, she has holidays, she has the summer holidays
> […] (Ritadj#II).

In parallel with Randa's claim presented earlier, Ritadj directly links the question to women academics and family life in the Algerian society. This seems to show that teaching, in sociocultural terms, is not only viewed as 'female-friendly' in harmony with women's 'natural' characteristics, but also 'family-friendly' (Moreau, 2019), serving the interest of the family, as stated earlier. In Algeria, women academics' seasonal holidays almost coincide with children's school holidays. Taking the example of the academic year 2022-2023, seasonal holidays for academics almost coincide with children's school holidays. Academics' seasonal holidays are as follows: winter (from 22-12-2022 to 07-01-2023), spring (from 23-03-2023 to 08-04-2023), and summer (from 08-07-2023 to 02-09-2023). School seasonal holidays are the following: winter (from 22-12-2022 to 08-01-2023), spring (from 23-03-2023 to 09-04-2023), and summer (starting from 04-07-2023 for schoolteachers) (Eddirasa, 2022). Therefore, my own interpretation suggests that because women are naïvely constructed to be the primary child-carers, summer holidays allow them to perform this

gendered responsibility; hence, keeping the gendered system stable and in harmony with their work.

All the passages I referred to earlier seem to reduce women's academic work to teaching solely, although, as women academics seem to voice (section 6.2), the role-related requirements go beyond teaching. In this line of thought, Chorouk, Lyna and Siham report that time in academia can be confusing and tricky. In an interview extract, Chorouk declares:

> […] there are some people who think that they [women academics] have less work, though it's not the case, and most of the time, they do confuse, or they do not take into consideration that a university teacher is also a researcher (Chorouk#II).

In a similar account, Lyna furiously states:

> […] we work too much! and they don't see, because they [society members] perceive it in terms of teaching, what you teach in class (Lyna#II).

Following Chorouk's passage, what seems to be tricky is how fluid research is – both as teaching-related and as a scholarly activity, as I explained in section 6.2. Research can be undertaken in multiple spaces, within or beyond the institution, and at different times, given that it is not necessarily framed by a schedule like teaching. Therefore, the fixed hours of teaching and the flexibility of time beyond these hours might be confusing to the extent that flexible time is misperceived as free time, as Lyna appears to argue. As I stated in Chapter One (subsection 1.6.1), even though the Executive Decree 08-130 of May 3, 2008, outlines academics' role requirements (see Appendix E), namely those related to teaching, research and service, I noticed that it overemphasises teaching over other duties, which are also important. What I find confusing is the fact that a whole Executive Decree (10-232 of October 4, 2010) is dedicated to the research activities that teachers-researchers can be involved in and remunerated for, alongside their role as teachers-researchers. This, in my view, makes the researcher role, as part of their permanent contract as teachers-researchers, appear secondary or optional. Luckily, my participants seem aware of the importance of research as part of their position as permanent teachers-researchers (see section 6.2).

To reiterate, time and lengthy holidays appear to be two dominant reasons for the socially-perceived appropriateness of academic work for women. Time in academia is discussed

differently in the existing literature. Many studies conducted largely in European and American contexts (e.g., Wilton and Ross, 2017; Pelech, 2015) demonstrate that time in academia is flexible, rather than extra and abundant. Therefore, time flexibility is seen as an advantage allowing women to reconcile work and family life, with the recognition that women can perform work beyond the workplace. On the other hand, as discussed in Chapter Four, section 4.2, studies such as Pelech (2015) reveal that time creates conflicts for women, given the blurred boundaries between work and family life. In contrast, my finding reveals that society calculates women academics' work based on their on-site teaching hours (nine to twelve per week). Hence, my data demonstrates that society has an extremely optimistic view regarding time in academia. It is merely seen as advantage, allowing women to return to their private realm to perform their primary functions as wives and mothers as soon as they fulfil their teaching role *in situ*.

My finding resonates with Chareb's (2010) research, also conducted at an Algerian university. Like my participant Randa, who discusses men's preference to marry an academic wife, Chareb also found the same patriarchal element related to women academics' 'choice' to join academia. That is, the decision that some of her women academics made regarding joining academia was rather undertaken by their male family members, regardless of their marital status. When women were single, the decisions to enter academia were highly dependent on the father's consensus, and once they got married, the husband acted as the decision maker. One of the reasons underpinning this decision is the 'illusionary' flexibility of academia that, supposedly, allows women to spend most of their time indoors. Thus, academia was regarded as a profession that does not jeopardise the gender order. The main difference between my work and Chareb's, as far as the perception of time is concerned, is that her women participants seemed to act in coherence with the societal perception. In my research, the women academics appear to strongly disagree with it, and, as discussed in 6.2, they seem to acknowledge that academia is demanding and is not only based on teaching. In the next subsection, I will discuss the second factor making academia appear to society as a suitable profession for women.

6.4.2. University as "a locked space"

When the discourse around 'women' and 'university teaching/academia' is brought to the forefront, having enough time and lengthy holidays are not the only aspects making academia look like a suitable profession for women. I have found the notion of "locked space"

(Chorouk#II) as a characteristic of university another interesting finding that could be added to the two interrelated aspects - abundance of time and lengthy holidays. This societal perspective is expressed in a variety of ways by seven of my participants, two women academics and five female students. To exemplify this common perspective, I refer to Chorouk who says:

> when a woman is a teacher, she's just in front of her students, she's in a locked space, nobody can see her or look at her, so it's somehow synonymous of [*sic*] respect (Chorouk#II).

Similar to Warda who mentions the word "respect" in section 6.3, Chorouk uses it too to portray the suitability of academia for women. Chorouk's use of the adjective "locked" seems to be very expressive. It appears to portray an isolation from the outside world and a protection from the 'other'. I intentionally put the term 'other' in inverted commas, because no random other seems to be concerned here. The 'other' appears to be well identified: the category of men. This seems to be reflected in Lyna's following extract, when I asked her to elaborate on the reason(s) behind viewing teaching/academia as a profession that is socially appropriate for women,

> Maybe because she [the woman academic] is not having many relationships with people outside the teaching environment, it's not like administration where women can be in contact, it's the contact that matters, with all people from different categories, different kinds of people, so it's in relation to this. Maybe a woman teachers' contact with the environment is restricted, is constrained and is reduced to her learners (Lyna#II).

In line with the above discussion on the notion of "locked space", in our vocal follow-up discussion on Facebook (#FD), the female student Ritadj states that the Algerian society cares about women's reputation excessively. She mentions one venerated term which, according to her, is part of the society's discourse when it comes to selecting the professions that suit women; this Arabic term is ['*horma*'], ['*pudeur*'] in French, and modesty, honour and respectability in English (Frindéthié, 2016, p. 64).

Discussing women's reputation from a sociocultural perspective does not only involve the term ['*horma*']; two other terms referred to as ['s*haraf*'] (in English, honour) and ['i*rd*'] (in English, honour and reputation) are also part of this discourse, as discussed in Chapter Four,

section 4.3. Despite the different meanings they might carry, they all seem to be underpinned by religio-cultural ideologies, whose concern is to enshrine women and maintain their respect and safety. From a sociocultural standpoint, ['*sharaf*'], ['*ird*'] and ['*horma*'] all refer to a fundamental precept, both explicit and implicit, which places the preservation of honour of a certain nation, society, family or an individual heavily on the back of women. Honour ['s*haraf*'], for example, is the title of a novel written by Elif Shafak, as well as the title of a series released in September 2020 on Netflix, both portraying honour killing, as a result of dishonouring the reputation of the women's families.

The finding discussed in this subsection is in line with Laaredj-Cambell's (2016) data. In her book based on her doctoral research on women's literacy in the Algerian city of Tiaret, she states that many Algerian women since their early age encounter a gendered system that dictates what is doable and what is not, both at the theoretical and practical levels. Many examples were given to explain this regulating system, but only two have been chosen to maintain the thread of my interpretation. Laaredj-Campbell (2016, p. 152) indicates that when girls reach a certain age, they abstain from playing outside in order to stop their interactions with the other gender and be protected from the eyes of strangers. Although this gendered system might be changing and letting go certain practices across time and space, it also still holds tightly to others. Space alienation is another example of this gendered system (Laaredj-Campbell, 2016), a point reinforced by Benneghrouzi and Zitouni's research (2018) in Mostaganem city, Algeria. Part of this gendered discourse within the Algerian context is also labelling women (usually wives) as ['*eddar*'] (house) by men (Benneghrouzi and Zitouni, 2018, p. 207), as a way of maintaining ['*horma*']. To locate this notion of ['*horma*'] in the educational field, Bacher (2013) in his doctoral research studying Algerian schoolteachers' attitudes claims that ['*horma*'] in maintained between male and women teachers through reduced eye contact, for instance.

Merging the aforementioned discourse to this notion of "locked space" raised by Chorouk and corroborated by six other participants, university teaching/academia seems to be socially perceived as a profession wherein interactions are only held within the educational setting, and where access is only given to the eligible - academics, students and other personnel. Interestingly, as Lyna put it earlier, the society's perception of academia goes even further, framing women's academic tasks to teaching and reducing their workplace interactions merely to their learners. This societal thinking makes academia one of the professions that do

not violate the aforementioned precept. This interpretation could be further corroborated by the woman student Rimi who states that:

> […] females prefer teaching because of a social thinking, for instance my brothers, my father or my husband, it depends, what do they like? the female to teach, they don't like her to work in another profession. Related to the Algerian society, the Algerian mentality claims that […] the setting is conservative, even their [women's] interaction is limited, it cannot be done with other people apart from those in the institution and compared to someone who works in the administration or in a medical profession, so there is a kind of mentality that affects this thing (Rimi#II).

What seems interesting in Rimi's extract is her referral to a sort of patriarchal chain that involves the father and/or the brothers, and the husband. My metaphorical use of the word 'chain' to analyse Rimi's account reflects the passing of a torch from the father and/the brothers, when the woman is single, to the husband, as soon as she gets married, as I mentioned in section 6.4.1. This seems to show how the patriarchal system is maintained and how women academics' workplace is expected to be an extension of the private realm, where women are, in sociocultural terms, safe and protected. The two female students, Ismahane and Mani, seem to support this interpretation through their following account:

> Ismahane: [teaching is] safer for them, they will not meet men, let's take an example of someone in the Algerian context who wants to get married, he would prefer to get married to a teacher, why? Because his wife will probably not meet a lot of ...
>
> Mani: male teachers?
>
> Ismahane: males in her context, it's socially and culturally based […] (Ismahane&Mani#GI).

Stressing the importance of the idea of interactions that many people, particularly men, hold into, Shahrazed opines:

> […] most of the arguments they [males] give to why they don't want their wives to work, it's because of the varied interactions with other males […] (#GI).

Shahrazed's account, albeit not directly linked to academic work, could be added to the previous extracts to highlight how women's interactions are carefully considered by society, especially men, with regard to women's professional careers. In the process of interviewing, I found the accounts interesting but also paradoxical with the nature of an educational setting, particularly the university. The societal views are even contradictory with what the women academics think of their roles as academics (see section 6.2). Hence, I was eager to investigate further this idea that the university as an educational setting was socially perceived as "a restricted space for interactions" (Lyna#II). Based on my own observations of the university environment I investigated, despite the fact that the women academics outnumbered men at the English Department, the environment was not exclusive to women (#OBS). That is, in the university I investigated and beyond, there also exist male academics and male staff members working alongside women, except in countries that apply 'sex-segregation' policies like Saudi Arabia (e.g., Almansour and Kempner, 2016).

I decided to probe further to know what my participants think of this societal view. Therefore, I asked Lyna to elaborate further, and while expressing an ironic laughter, she considered this view of restriction as "stereotypical" (#II). Despite being stereotypical, as she put it, this ideology seemed to have an effect on some women academics' attitudes. To illustrate, Lyna was constantly referring to gender during our interview, so this ignited my curiosity to know if there were some women academics in the institution who were not open to their male counterparts. Lyna hesitantly said:

> Sure, yeah, maybe sometimes because of cultural considerations because of religious… [pause] (Lyna#II).

Although I noticed that Lyna audaciously expressed some 'rebellious' thoughts in many passages, it seemed hard for her to critically discuss religiocultural elements. The reason behind this reluctance probably shows in a different excerpt where she mentions that "the notion of free women in Algeria is very stereotypical, it's like libertine but it's not", "when you say I'm a free woman, you're judged to be this and that, but you're not appreciated as such" (#II). By free, Lyna means any attitude that is different from what is already agreed upon socioculturally, and this involves women-men interactions. It is noteworthy that I considered making a participant's vignette for Lyna to describe her in more detail, but this would have made her easily identifiable.

In addition to Lyna's idea of stereotype mentioned earlier, Ritadj seems to have a different perspective, in terms of the notion of restriction. She says that even if there is a co-presence between men and women academics within the educational setting, there is no expected ['*khulwa*'] (in English, privacy) between them. That is, women and men teachers/academics are expected not to be in the same classroom alone, for example, as the profession requires having more time and interactions with students than with colleagues themselves. Ritadj goes further and says that in other professions, "[…] some men who are not respectful could break the limits with women who are wives of other men" (#FD). It is, again, very interesting to see the referral to "men" at the end of her account, to whom ['*horma*'] seems to be important.

To summarise what has been discussed in this subsection, it could be argued that 'respect' and 'safety', in the context of women and the university setting, might be two terms which implicitly embody powerful dominant ideologies. These powerful ideologies, apparently, still try to manipulate and control women's behaviour, despite giving them the freedom to step outside their houses for work. What appears to make academia even more appropriate, compared to teaching at other levels, is the short amount of time (nine to twelve hours of teaching per week) that women academics spend at university. This, therefore, makes their interactions with their men colleagues less likely to happen. In other words, in addition to being a 'female-friendly' profession that seems to offer lengthy time and holidays that ensure women academics' full availability to perform gendered domestic roles (see section 6.4.1), being a woman academic also fits with the societal principles that claim to 'protect' women from harm and ensure their safety through the concept of ['*horma*'].

What is surprising is that this stereotype, as Lyna previously put it, contradicts with the principles of the Algerian academia which does not seem to be solely based on classroom teaching and all-day interactions with the students. This reductionist and naïve view of academia, as discussed throughout the chapter, appears to threaten some women academics' professional lives and identities (see next section). That is, expecting women academics to be locked into a workplace and have interactions with the students sheds more light on their teaching role and overlooks others, such as research, supervision, collaboration with colleagues inside and outside the institution, and administrative/departmental tasks.

In the Omani context, for example, Karadsheh *et al.* (2019) found that the idea that women teachers/academics have less tendency to interact with their male colleagues is one of the reasons making teaching look like a suitable profession for women. Karadsheh *et al.*'s

research, however, does not delve into this reason and explores it deeply. This finding also resonates with Chareb's (2010) doctoral research conducted in the Algerian context and published in Arabic. Similar to Karadsheh *et al*. (2019), she found out that the respectability of academia was a driving force behind her women participants' integration in academia, particularly that many were encouraged by male family members to do so. Interestingly, she found out that to maintain academics' reputation, particularly women's, there was a sort of unplanned, spontaneous, gender-based agreement on the usage of the staffroom among colleagues. To explain, when the staffroom was used by men, women had to automatically avoid them and look for other places (e.g., classrooms).

Men academics followed the same process when women academics used the staffroom. Men, however, had other alternative places like the university café, which was a male-dominated space, *par excellence.* This shows how this notion of restriction not only affected women-men interactions, but, from a gender perspective, it affected women more than men, particularly those who were married. Her married women academics were the most required to follow the aforementioned process, because, as stated by Chareb (2010), women academics' partners, whether they were in the same occupation or not, were excessively concerned with their wives' reputation, and eventually their own reputation too - also known as ['*ird*']. This finding, in addition to the 'illusionary' flexibility of academia, represent two facets of a discourse that seems to threaten some women academics' professional identities, as I shall discuss next.

6.5. Experiencing the family's misunderstanding of academia

This section demonstrates that three women academics, namely Chorouk, Randa and Warda, have linked, implicitly or explicitly, the misconception of academia to either their partners, their in-laws, or both. Whilst it is somewhat reassuring to see that only three out of ten women academics are affected by the discourse, it is worth highlighting the fact that not all women academics opened up to me and shared their personal stories as Chorouk, Randa and Warda did. Chorouk and Warda, for example, were the only two women academics who shared with me their partners' professions. I felt that the others were not ready to share this and other useful details, such as the household composition (number of children etc.).

As stated, the prevailing gendered discourse around the suitability of academia for women seems to have a direct effect on three women academics' professional identities, namely

Chorouk, Randa and Warda. This direct effect stems from their family members, namely their partners and in-laws, who appear to misconceive academic work and attempt to hinder women academics' practices that go beyond on-site teaching. There seems to be a need to bring the theory early and say that according to Petriglieri (2011), this is considered an identity threat and is defined as "experiences appraised as indicating potential harm to the value, meanings, or enactment of an identity" (p. 644). Djamila, for example, although she states that there is a prevailing lack of knowledge regarding women's roles in academia, she is not affected by this misconceptualisation at the level of her family. She explicitly reports: "I feel in harmony with my expectations, my life, professional and personal life, ['*Al-hamdulillah*'] (I thank Allah)" (Djamila#II). Likewise, Lamia also states that many people have a naïve thinking in relation to women's work in academia, but it is not affecting her at the family level (Lamia#II).

Apropos of the women academics who seem threatened by the discourse (Chorouk, Randa and Warda), they all consider themselves as teachers-researchers, as discussed in section 6.2. However, since academia is naïvely considered as an on-site teaching job by their family members, they find themselves hindered to carry out tasks other than on-site teaching (nine or twelve hours per week). These job-related tasks take place at home (e.g., reading, lecture preparation) and beyond (e.g., academic conference mobility). In this vein, the section is divided into two subsections: 1) the women academics' experiences with their partners; and 2) their experiences with the in-laws. The first subsection is further divided into two other sub-subsections: 1) the first one includes the partner's impact on the women academics' conference mobility. The second sub-subsection includes the partner's expectations related to the gendered duties that the women academics are expected to perform in the private realm. As for the in-laws, whether the woman academic lives with them or not, the experiences mainly involve their interference through making comments on the work-related tasks that the women academics try to accomplish. Through their comments, the in-laws blame the women academics for fulfilling work at home. Hence, expecting them to only perform the domestic duties assigned to them.

6.5.1. "[T]he mentality […] of the husband" at home and beyond

At the time of data collection, most of the women academics participating in this research were married. The "mentality" of the male partner in some women academics' lives appears to be of a powerful influence. Data analysis reveals that those women academics' experiences

with the partners involve many aspects which could be classified into two categories: within the house and beyond the house. Apropos of their experiences beyond the house, in the first sub-subsection, I discuss the women academics' experiences with the partners in terms of academic conferences that require women's mobility, particularly the international ones. I then move to their experiences within the house which, as I stated previously, revolve around women's domestic chores.

6.5.1.1. "[H]e always wants to go with me to discover the world, otherwise he won't accept"

In an interview, before deciding to recount her own experience with her partner, Warda broadly reported that what she thinks to be the main hindering factor in married women academics' lives is,

> […] the mentality of the male, of the husband generally who would not accept that their wives would contribute to conferences, to develop abroad, to participate in conferences, to do anything that progress, that we should do to progress, it hinders especially better than it helps (Warda#II).

Different terms were employed by the participants to refer to the influence of the partner: "the mentality of the male", as in Warda's previous passage, "the Algerian male brain" (Mani#GI), "the male ego" (Shahrazed#GI), and "the Algerian spirit" as Ranim (#II) puts it. My analysis of Warda's account suggests that she laments the dominant attitude that the male partner exerts over his wife. By her use of 'we' [in line 4], she becomes more specific. She relates the issue to herself and other Algerian women academics willing to participate at conferences, given that these mostly take place overseas and often require women's mobility. By the end of our interview, Warda was very emotional. She tried to hold back her tears while answering the last interview questions which she related to aspects of her marital experience with her partner. Warda did not mention anything about her own marital status during the interview. However, as soon as the interview ended and I switched the recorder off, she explained to me, in an informal conversation that she agreed to be shared, that she was in the process of divorcing. Her career means a lot to her, but her husband created a barrier in her way to fulfil her professional responsibilities. Her career-related dissatisfaction, albeit not directly related to her husband, was clearly expressed at the beginning of our interview, when I asked about her perception of her own career as a woman academic:

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> […] I think I'm not where I should be [pause]. I mean I've been too ambitious. I wanted to do too many things in the past and now if I regard my career, I think I'm way too far from what I have actually aimed at becoming, yeah, I think I'm quite far from what I want to be in my career (Warda#II).

She maintained that it is:

> […] with regard to the rank, with regard to finishing my doctorate degree, my PhD, with regard to writing articles. This is what I mean by being too far from the aim I'm targeting, actually (Warda#II).

Going back to Warda's initial statement, her husband was against her participation at conferences abroad, as she seemed to emphasise. I could sense that she was extremely disappointed with her husband's attitude, especially through the way she expressed herself in French saying: ["*il pense ainsi, malgré qu'il est médecin*!"] (he thinks that way, even though he is a medical doctor!) (#IC). Another woman participant's husband is a medical doctor too and she seemed as surprised as Warda regarding their husbands' way of thinking. Apparently, the status of a medical doctor in Algeria, and perhaps in other countries too, represents the elite and an intellectual person who is, probably, expected to be more open-minded, understanding and familiar with her job requirements. This could possibly explain Warda's disenchantment, especially that she waited for too long for the 'good' partner who would be supportive regarding her career, as she regrettably declared (#IC).

Warda's passages could be interpreted in a variety of ways. My interpretation entails adopting a religiocultural point of view. Given that the research context is predominantly Islamic and the participants identify as Muslims, women's travel, especially when it entails crossing geographical boundaries has long been a topic of debate and an advocated matter by some Islamic feminists. This is echoed in Shah's (2018; 2020) research conducted with Malaysian Muslim women academics who, despite occupying managerial roles, they were only able to move internationally with her husbands, or at least permitted by their partners to do so. This finding is also supported by Almansour and Kempner's (2016) conducted in a Saudi university, and Afzali (2017) in an Afghan university. This is not to say that this is a principle all (Muslim) husbands adhere to, and all Algerian women academics suffer from. However, when some of them [men] do, their wives' national/international mobility becomes highly dependent on the men's availability which does not always meet that of the women academics. For the women academics who brought this issue to the forefront, not only is the

institutional funding hard to achieve (see Chapter Seven, subsection 7.5.2), but also when they succeed to achieve it, they feel the urge to go through a process of negotiation for their international, and sometimes national, travel, with their partners.

Given that Warda mentioned specifically 'conference participation *abroad*', her partner could have been her travel companion if he wanted. Yet, in addition to the availability, and the religiocultural perspective which could have been the reason for restricting Warda's movement, financing the trip for two people (or more, in the case of children) can be a financial burden, particularly in terms of visa fees, travel and accommodation expenses. Therefore, if the woman academic gets funding from her home institution or the conference organisation, she will need to think, or even worry, about her partner too, taking into account the complexity of the aforementioned financial elements (see next chapter).

Another possible interpretation for restricting some women academics', and probably Warda's, movement is suggested by Randa who, in her own words, opines:

> […] there are some husbands who get jealous of their partners because of that: you are a teacher, you've the possibility to go abroad, 'I go with you or I won't let you go'. It is my case anyway [nervous laughter]. He always wants to go with me to discover the world, otherwise he won't accept (Randa#II).

In a similar vein, the students Ismahane and Shahrazed (#GI) refer to the husband's 'selfishness' and 'ego' which could be somewhat close to what Randa means.

> Ismahane: […] sometimes the man doesn't want you to professionally develop yourself because he's selfish, he wants himself to be all the time at the top.
>
> Shahrazed: Of course, I talked about the ego.

In the same group interview, Mani told me about a story of a woman academic who, because of her international mobility, got divorced. This reminded me of my participant Warda who was going through divorce procedures for a similar reason. In their own words, Mani and Shahrazed recount:

Mani: […] who told us about that girl who has? ah yes, her name is […], she was married [civil marriage] but they didn't have the wedding yet, she had to go abroad […] he [her husband] told her if you go, I will divorce you!

Shahrazed: Seriously?

Mani: She thought he was joking, when she came back, she found that he signed for divorce

Shahrazed: I think they are very few, we are surprised when we hear a woman talking about her husband being supportive.

Going back to Randa's passage, it seems that Randa's husband perceives conference participation primarily as a chance to do tourism. I am unsure, however, of the extent to which he understands what academic conferences might mean to his wife. I am not sure either of his awareness of the personal, professional and social benefits that conferences could bring to Randa herself (e.g., self-satisfaction), and her professional trajectory (e.g., career opportunities). Those benefits which go beyond world exploration (i.e., tourism). Indeed, attending conferences abroad could be an opportunity to present one's research, widen one's professional network, and get to know other places and cultures, alone or with a partner. However, what I find surprising in Randa's account is tying one of the main elements that could contribute to her professional career - academic conferences - with her husband's availability, whose travel to the conference destination would not be as professionally rewarding as it might be for Randa.

In line with the data provided above and the different angles from which it is interpreted, there seems to be a notion of patriarchy reflected in the participants' data This notion cognates with the previous discussion around academia being a place where women are, in Chorouk's words, "locked" and the naïve idea that what matters most is on-site teaching and anything else is extra. In the literature, the partners' "mentality", as my participants put it, with regard to women's national/international mobility has been discussed from a religiocultural perspective in studies such as Almansour and Kempner (2016) conducted on women academics at a Saudi university, Afzali (2018) conducted on women academics in the Afghan context, and Shah (2018; 2020) in the Malaysian context.

6.5.1.2. *"I either find you asleep or in front of your computer"*

In the data, the partner's "mentality" is not only discussed in relation to conferences abroad, but it is also linked to women academics' experiences at home. In this respect, Rimi shares a story of a woman academic who was teaching her a module that required the use of Facebook, and who had an issue with her partner. In her own words, she recounts:

> Rimi: I had a teacher, her husband was against teaching in HE because of the context [teaching adults], he forbids her from having a Facebook account, even though she used it to deal with her students
>
> Researcher: Did he require that she stops teaching?
>
> Rimi: No, but he was against this interaction with her students.
>
> Researcher: He let her work, but he limited her contact with people?
>
> Rimi: That's it. She teaches a module that requires the use of a Facebook account [the module is not mentioned for anonymity purposes]; we created a group in which we communicated virtually, so in order not to interact with her peers or her students on Facebook.
>
> Researcher: Is she still teaching in HE?
>
> Rimi: Yes, she told us that the problem was fixed with her husband, and she could explain to him the purpose of having a Facebook account (Rimi#II).

Although the story is not narrated by one of the women academics participating in this research, the story Rimi shares might reveal another aspect of the negotiation process one of her teachers experienced with her husband. It might also demonstrate the consequences of the misconception of what 'being an academic' means. That is, anything that goes beyond the teaching role, which indeed only occurs within the classroom, is questioned by society members - the husband in this case.

In addition to creating a barrier to the women academics' conference participation abroad, as Warda and Randa narrate, and limiting the woman academic's interaction with her students and peers, as revealed by Rimi, the husband's "mentality" is discussed in relation to women's domestic roles inside the house. In an informal conversation, Chorouk regrettably mentioned

that, often, when her husband went back home from work, he told her: "I either find you asleep or in front of your computer" (#IC). Although it might appear that the partner was concerned about Chorouk's welfare in the last part of the extract, the tone and the context in which Chorouk shared the anecdote indicate that her husband had other expectations, rather than finding his wife having some rest or performing her work-related tasks. These expectations might be related to the domestic chores she is expected to carry out, as Ranim also broadly opines:

> [...] culturally speaking [emphasis], even though women work, they go out from home, but they still have to bear the responsibility, for example if she's married, to be a wife, it means to cook, to prepare dinner [...] it's not that easy for women especially if they are married, especially with a number of children [laughter]. Yes, because even the Algerian spirit, even though [uhh] let's say with the globalisation, maybe the new generation is accepting women's work but in terms of help inside home, there is still work to be done...not much… they [men] don't help a lot [laughter] (Ranim#II).

As Chorouk and Ranim's accounts indicate, women academics' roles as wives and mothers involve certain commitments and carry heavy sociocultural expectations, which are to run a house, cook food, look after the husband and take care of the children. This is often referred to in the literature as the 'double-shift' (Hochschild, 1989). Ranim's account seems powerful, as she refers to the changes that have happened to the Algerian society due to globalisation. What she seemed to refer to is that Algerian women have been able to enter the workforce and occupy important positions. However, according to Ranim, it seems that even if they have been allowed to step out of their houses, the expectations related to their domesticity are still part of the Algerian society (see Chapter One, subsection 1.6.2). It is important to note that this might not be the case of all Algerian women, but some of the respondents voiced it as an issue they were experiencing.

Some women academics, as Ranim states, find themselves expected to manage both responsibilities, that of their work and, to a large extent, that of their homes. In other words, based on the previously-cited accounts, it could be said that despite the changes that have resulted in liberating women to be allowed to work, they do not seem to be liberated from what Mernissi (1987, p. 165) calls "traditional domestic chains". In this respect, Mani (#GI), stressing how women's performance of the domestic chores are prioritised in a marital relationship, says: "You have an article? Go and cook! This is what the man is doing all the

time". This passage, albeit somewhat essentialist, could be related to Chorouk's account, where she seems to show that her husband's expectation was to find her performing a domestic chore, rather than resting or working. To give some context to Chorouk's account, it might be useful to mention that, at the time of the interview, she was a mother of two children and living with her family-in-law. Chorouk's following account is more illustrative:

> I'm not saying that they [men] don't have responsibilities, they do, but the environment is much more, how shall I say it [uhh], I mean a wife would easily understand her husband in case he has to work, he has to read a book, but a wife finds difficulties at times, in making her husband, for instance, understand that instead of preparing dinner, she has to prepare, to read a book, or to read an article (Chorouk#II).

Therefore, these excerpts, particularly that of Chorouk and Ranim, express a lack of understanding and support. In this regard, Shahrazed says that,

> […] family support should be there, the mother, the father, the husband, the husband especially, I mean he shouldn't prioritise dinner over an article or a PhD (Shahrazed#GI).

Based on the accounts presented in this section, as Shahrazed states, women academics do need family support, particularly that of the husband and the life partner, who needs to be aware of what it means to be a woman academic.

The domesticity expected from women seems to be well documented in the existing literature (see Chapter Four). However, what makes it somewhat different in this study is its relation to the notion of the 'illusionary' flexibility of academia addressed earlier (section 6.4.1). That is, as revealed by the participants, women academics seem to be only expected to teach their nine or twelve hours, and in the remaining time, they are expected by their partners to carry out their gendered domestic tasks, as it shows clearly in Chorouk's partner who, when he gets home after work, he expects her to perform domestic duties instead of working or resting. In Chareb's (2010) where the 'illusionary' flexibility of academia is discussed, her respondents did not seem to face the same challenges as some of my participants, given that they did not show any intention to carry out work-related tasks at home. Therefore, their views were congruent with those of their partners.

6.5.2. In-laws: "[N]ow, you have got your PhD, this laptop, what is it for?"

In addition to the partner's "mentality", one of the powerful aspects that appears to threaten some women academics' professional identities, particularly Chorouk, is the interference of their in-laws. Ritadj, the single female student, elaborating on her response on the way society perceives women academics, claims that not only the man prefers a woman academic because of the reasons stated earlier in this chapter (lengthy holidays and enough time for the family), but also the man's family or the in-laws who appear to interfere in this life decision. I asked Ritadj to clarify further how the in-laws might interfere in the man's choice of his bride, and how this in turn could influence the life of women academics. In an assertive way, emphasising the powerful influence of the in-laws, she added that the interference can take place:

> […] implicitly, explicitly, indirectly, throughout education because a man is brought up in a family, so if the family is maybe conservative, they don't like a woman to work etc., he would be influenced, whether he likes it or not, so there's a higher percentage of him asking for what the family has as a conception about a woman (Ritadj#II).

In parallel with Ritadj's account, my interviews with two women academics reveal that the power of in-laws was affecting their lives, to varying degrees. What Ritadj seems to mean by "conservative" is the degree of openness of the man's family and the extent to which it adheres to the taken-for-granted values and gender ideologies that have long supported women's enclosure in the private space (home) more than her presence outside of it – the public space (see Chapter One, section 1.6.2). She also appears to insinuate to how powerful can be the influence of the family and the environment in which a man grows in shaping his worldview, especially in terms of the expectations he may hold towards women's roles.

While Ritadj provides her view of how in-laws could be influential, the woman academic Chorouk recounts her own experience with them and laments their intrusion in her professional life. Chorouk was married with two children at the time of data collection. Unlike all the other women academics who participated in this research, she lives with her in-laws in the same house. This family type is called ['*osrah*'] in the Algerian society and is regarded as a traditional family structure, given the predominance of nuclear families nowadays, called ['*aylah*'] (Boutefnouchet, 1984; Tiliouine and Achoui, 2018). In the

following extract, Chorouk provides me with a vivid example of her own experience with her in-laws saying:

> The best example is that my own family always, I mean when we are invited somewhere, they just tell me yes, 'we are waiting for you', and I just say no, I cannot because I have to reread my lessons because I have class tomorrow, and I have to be ready, they just say that 'we do not understand, you are working with the same syllabus, all you need is just to repeat'. NO [emphasis], we cannot! And when I explain to them, they simply don't understand, they just tell me 'no, it is you', it is because of your desire to, to be, I mean to do more, they do not, I do not agree with them and I do not waste time trying to explain to them because I know that they cannot understand. Only teachers like me at the level of the university would understand me […] (Chorouk#II).

Her in-laws' misconception of what it means to be an academic seems to affect Chorouk. The end of her account reflects a desperate feeling towards her in-laws' misunderstanding. Although her excerpt might be interpreted variously, I would argue that the in-laws' lack of understanding of the multifaceted aspects of Chorouk's profession might not only result in creating an unsupportive environment for her, but also in distracting her, as it was the case when she was busy working at home and her in-laws insisted that she joined them to go out. Apparently, the in-laws, by reducing her academic tasks to on-site teaching only, confuse between school teaching and 'university teaching'.

The label 'university teaching' in itself, as adopted by Chorouk at the end of her passage, is reductionist and leads to confusion, as I argued in section 6.3. It overshadows all the other tasks that an academic engages in, and sheds light primarily on their teaching role. The accurate example that could support this interpretation is in the same extract, where the in-laws expect Chorouk to be bound by a static syllabus requiring one single preparation that could, perhaps, last a whole academic year or more. Based on my own experience as a former Algerian student, schoolteachers in Algeria are framed by a syllabus and textbooks that last for years. Therefore, the lesson plans may be used for several years, unless the teacher voluntarily makes some amendments to them. Keeping lesson plans for years is referred to in the literature as the 'yellow notes' phenomenon (McCowan, 2018, p. 134). Based on this idea, the in-laws commented on Chorouk's fulfilment of her work-related tasks at home.

Her in-laws' misconception of her role as a woman academic appears to generate a tension. This tension/clash lies in the way Chorouk perceives herself and how her in-laws perceive her. That is, an issue of being perceived not in the same way as one perceives oneself. "Is it important to be recognised/perceived in exactly the same way as we recognise/perceive ourselves?" one might wonder. In the case of Chorouk, the issue is not in the variety of perceptions, but, again, in the tension that exists between them. The in-laws seemed to impose their own perception of Chorouk on her, by trying, whether intentionally or not, to control her behaviour accordingly, so that she fits with the kind of 'woman academic' they imagine. Chorouk, on the other hand, though she appears to resist by explaining her 'real' tasks to them, her resistance is limited, and this shows at the end of the extract where she appears 'tired' of explaining *who she really was* to her in-laws. This could show that the misconception is hard to be changed.

Randa is another married woman participant who, after we finished the interview, insisted that I add the influence of the in-laws to what she said, as she completely forgot to mention it during the interview. She started chuckling while she seemed to be thinking of something. She then told me that she had an anecdote to tell related to her in-laws:

> After I got my PhD, I decided to invite my in-laws over to celebrate that big achievement, I was still busy preparing the dinner when they came; I had my laptop on the table, so my sister-in law openly said: 'now, you have got your PhD, this laptop, what is it for?' (Randa#IC).

Unlike Chorouk, Randa lives in a separate house with her husband and two children – this family type is ['*Aylah*'], as noted earlier (Boutefnouchet, 1984; Tiliouine and Achoui, 2018). However, on an occasion that necessitated a gathering with her in-laws, she felt that she had to deal with their expectations and misconceptions related to her professional life. Randa seemed surprised that her sister-in-law considered Randa's PhD as the end of her research journey. What is also worth mentioning is the extent to which the laptop caught the sister-in-law's attention, among all the other things that could have been in the house. The impact of the in-laws' interference in Randa's life could be less frequent than in Chorouk's, given that the latter has to deal with them on a daily basis. Still, being expected to conform to the sister-in-law's expectations might be frustrating, especially on a celebration day where she was probably waiting to hear encouragement and support for further professional achievements. These achievements might be, for example, publications of books and articles, and/or

achieving a higher professional status, and engaging in further research that the PhD degree could have stimulated.

To reiterate, as the data suggests, like some women academics' partners, their in-laws seem to have the same naïve and non-holistic understanding of academic work. The data presented earlier portrays some incidents where in-laws appeared to impose their perception of academia on their daughters-in-law, when they performed work-related tasks at home. In Randa's case, for instance, she was cooking but the presence of her laptop on the table was a symbol of work for her sister-in-law. In-laws, whether they lived in the same house as the women academics or not, seemed to exert a sort of policing that is not very different from the one exerted by the husband over his wife.

In the current higher education literature, there seems to be a lack of research showing the influence of in-laws on women academics' professional identities. Even Chareb's (2010) study that I kept referring to throughout the chapter given the resemblance of some of our findings, does not report any influence from her participants' in-laws. This was probably due to her participants who, again, did not have any intention to perform any work-related tasks at home. Thus, they did not face any issues with their in-laws. In their discussion of women and family structures in Algeria, Ouadah-Bedidi and Saadi (2014, p. 8) suggest three types of hierarchies regarding family structures. The first type is vertical; it consists of the power that old generations hold compared to young generations. The second type is horizontal, and it involves the power that men hold compared to women. They name the third type 'lateral'; it refers to the power mothers-in-law exert over daughters-in-law. Although in the data presented above, some passages were not specifically about the mother-in-law, but other in-law members like the sister-in-law, the passages still reflected power dimensions exerted over women academics. As Ouadah-Bedidi and Saadi (2014, p. 8) suggest, it could be said that in-laws were probably deriving their 'masculine' power from the patriarchy that they, themselves, experienced. Thus, they worked as protectors of sociocultural norms (Addi, 2005; Ouadah-Bedidi and Saadi, 2014).

6.6. Conclusion

In this chapter, particularly in the first two main sections (6.2 and 6.3), evidence from the data showed that a lack of congruence appears to exist between the women academics' perceptions of themselves and their roles in academia as teachers-researchers, which also

represent their academic professional identities, and the societal perceptions of women academics' roles. Compared to the women academics who viewed themselves as teachers-researchers, the societal view of women academics' roles appeared to be reduced to teaching solely. This was due to the 'illusionary' flexibility of academe that does not frame women academics' work-related tasks to a particularly setting, except for teaching. Also, society members perceive university as a "locked" space that ensures women's safety and protection, particularly that, in their view, women spend most of their time with their students, and have limited interactions with their male counterparts. It was worth discussing this lack of congruence, as it seems to have impacted upon some women academics' professional identities, and this shows through their challenging experiences with social groups such as their partners (conference mobility and domestic chores) and in-laws. These social groups, by expecting women to fulfil their gender-related tasks beyond their nine or twelve hours of teaching (two days a week), were imposing their naïve view of women academic roles. This in turn seemed to have threatened the academic professional identities of the women concerned.

From a theoretical perspective, this chapter, informed by Day and Kington's and Butler theories, demonstrates how gender affects women academics' professional identities. Even when women make a huge achievement and contribute to the public sphere, particularly in one of the 'suitable' professions, social norms can be extremely influential. They are a powerful regulating system (Butler, 1999; 2015). This showed in women's challenging experiences with family members that reduced their work to on-site teaching only, although women had different views of themselves and their roles in academia. Therefore, home, as the place where the women academics' challenging experiences took place, seemed to be a 'fertile soil' allowing women's gender identities as wives and mothers to predominate. In the next chapter, I discuss how the women academics' professional identities appear to be impacted upon by their inadequate working conditions. For the women academics who are threatened by their family's misunderstanding of academia, this challenging working environment seems to have accentuated the threat even further.

CHAPTER SEVEN: IDENTITY-THREATENING WORKPLACE CONITIONS AND 'UNCONSCIOUS COMPLICITY'

7.1. Introduction

Using data from my observations, informal conversations and semi-structured interviews, this chapter reports how the women academics depict their experiences at the workplace and how these appear to impact upon their academic professional identities. This chapter is presented in four main sections. The first section addresses the women academics' lack of belonging to the institution to which they 'temporarily' relocated (section **7.2**). This feeling was triggered by the fact that their English Department was, in their view, isolated from other foreign language departments, as well as a sense of inferiority stemming from constant quarrel with the owner, the Medical Department, over the use of classrooms and teaching resources (**7.3**). Beyond the classroom, the women academics' accounts reveal that no physical space adequately welcomed their personal, social, and/or professional practices. What added to all these struggles, my data suggests, is the lack of a collegial environment, which rendered the environment hostile (**7.4**). The women academics also lament the insufficient institutional support. Although funding for conferences and study days abroad is sometimes offered, according to the participants, it is processed 'behind the scenes' in obscure ways - bureaucracy and unequal fund distribution (**7.5**).

In light of these challenging experiences, the women academics felt that they were only able to perform their teaching duties, albeit hardly. In other words, they were not capable of enacting their academic professional identities as teachers-researchers. Hence, they felt compelled to teach and leave the workplace as soon as they fulfilled their nine or twelve teaching hours. Whilst this gave me the impression that they were weakened by the workplace conditions, their accounts reveal that they autonomously engaged in some professional development practices beyond the institution, mainly at home. Paradoxically, while this demonstrates that they managed to take action to alleviate the threat on their academic professional identities, the forms of professional development were limited, individualistic and, most importantly, reflect a sense of 'unconscious complicity' (**7.6**).

7.2.   Relocation: Feeling like 'nomads'

Data evidence demonstrates that seven out of ten women academics express, both implicitly and explicitly, a feeling of unbelonging to the university setting. I have chosen the metaphor 'nomads' as part of this section's title because I feel that on many occasions my participants furiously depict themselves as such. I present below one of the passages that makes me adopt this particular metaphor:

> […] we don't have […] real space, we are wanderers at times, we are
> wandering from one place to another (Chorouk#II).

A quick Google search reveals that nomads are people of the desert who do not have a fixed domicile, and who keep moving from one place to another. Being a nomad means that there is no permanent residence to call home, or they probably consider any land they go to as their home. Whilst this might be a choice and a usual lifestyle for nomads, this is not the case for my participants, as put by Chorouk:

> As individuals, we may have a house but without having a home, so
> it's the same thing, we don't feel at home, and this is necessary
> because we need to have a space that belongs to us (Chorouk#II).

Once in the field, I found that the location of the English Department was mysterious, in the sense that it was not where it should have been. The first thing I tried to understand, therefore, was the reason for which the English Department was transferred from the Faculty of Foreign Languages, where all foreign language departments are supposed to be (French, Spanish and English), to a newly founded faculty that belongs to Health and Medical studies. The latter is approximately 6.3 km away by car from the Foreign Languages Faculty. According to the librarian, Anis, the decision was taken in July 2013, and the relocation was announced as 'temporary' by some decision makers. Based on my discussion with Anis (#IC), rumours about the construction of a new faculty for all foreign language departments started to circulate, with no official announcement from those responsible. The main reason that was explicitly communicated regarding this unexpected relocation, Anis added, was the large number of students and shortage of rooms at the Faculty of Foreign Languages that provoked disagreements between some foreign language departments. Apparently, this was not the first time where the English Department witnessed a relocation. My discussions with the female student, Ritadj, and the librarian, Anis, further reveal that the English Department

was previously transferred to another faculty. Yet, they report that the last move lasted longer than the previous one, albeit initially announced as a short-term relocation (#IC).

Since the relocation lasted longer than expected, the university setting seems to be problematic for the majority of the women academics (Randa, Chorouk, Hind, Ranim, Djamila, Lyna and Warda). They express their feelings towards it in different ways and tones. To illustrate, at the end of our interview, when I asked Lyna broadly what she would change within the institution if she had the chance to, she expressed herself as follows:

> Oh, there are many things to change! First, we start with the site, because we are not in our site, we go elsewhere where we can feel that we are the residents of the site, here we are just renting from another faculty, it's about the site [emphasis] (Lyna#II).

As I mentioned previously, my question was broadly asked without being specific about their workplace at the time. Nevertheless, the first thing Lyna thought about was the setting. This seems to provide evidence that the workplace, for Lyna and other participants, is not simply a matter of relocating to a setting with a descent architectural and physical design, given that the Faculty of Medicine is new compared to the Faculty of Foreign Languages. It is rather a matter of belonging and attachment that they feel towards the setting, where their personal, social and professional tasks take place – such as break/lunch time, social interactions, professional exchanges, teaching.

In line with the literature reviewed in Chapter Three, subsection 3.2.1, it appears necessary for individuals to have a sense of attachment and belonging to the workplace (Grady *et al*., 2020), which is sometimes portrayed as 'home-away-from-home' (Jeffrey, 1995, p. 44). Albeit not carried out with academics, Milligan's (2003) study demonstrates that the employees had grief-like emotions after an undesired relocation to a new workplace. In his book, Jeffrey (1995, p. 44) also likens workplace relocation to a "crack in the universe". All these studies point out to the importance of place in people's lives. Having said that, it is not only about what this particular setting represents to them, but also the way it represents them.

To explain further, at the entry of the faculty, it was clear from its name that the only department the faculty represents is that of medicine. "Please, take me to the Faculty of Medicine" was my request and that of my participants to the taxi drivers, whilst the real destination was the English Department that is located at the Faculty of Medicine (#MR).

Interestingly, the Faculty of Medicine was represented everywhere, starting from the skeleton models in some classrooms to the official papers stuck on the walls of the English Department. When I negotiated my interview dates and places, many respondents referred to 'the Faculty of Medicine', instead of 'the English Department' (#MR). The latter, therefore, seems to have a territoriality issue. It is depicted by my participants as an 'intruder', and similar are their feelings of themselves there. This feeling is triggered by many factors, as I shall further discuss in the following section.

7.3. Living the relocation: Not just 'nomads' but 'barefoot nomads'

It appears that five years after the move which happened exactly in 2013, as explained in the previous section, the issue of belonging is still problematic. The dual representation of the workplace - what the place represents to them and how it represents them - persists and is affecting them and affecting their professional practices in multiple ways and to varying degrees. "It is not our site, it's the medical one [laughter]" (Ranim#II), "it's not our university" (Randa#II), and "we are not in our site" as Lyna expresses herself above, kept emerging in almost every interview and informal conversation I analysed. Therefore, by scrutinising these reiterated utterances, it seems that the workplace is an issue affecting multiple aspects of the women academics' professional lives, and eventually threatening their academic professional identities as teachers-researchers. These aspects might be classified into two categories: those directly related to teaching (e.g., classrooms and the associated resources), and others that go beyond their teaching practice but still occur in the workplace.

7.3.1. Classroom-related challenges

Almost all my respondents complain about the daunting process of securing a classroom. Our interview, Djamila and I, was conducted in a classroom in the Faculty of Medicine. Surprisingly, we managed to quickly secure a place for the interview, because Djamila had just finished her session in the same room. The classroom, all painted in white, had a whiteboard, wooden desk and chair for the teacher, where Djamila preferred to sit for the interview, and wooden tables and similar chairs for the students. As I sat on one of those chairs, I discovered that they were not very comfortable to sit on for hours, or even for twenty-five minutes, the duration of the interview. The classroom we were in had crooked vertical blinds and windows that overlooked the tram lines which were under construction since 2013. The walls were not soundproof, and because one of the windows' glasses was

broken, we could hear everything happening outside. This mainly involved the noise of the construction trucks, and students' loud voices as they were either buying from the only food stall close to the area or waiting in large groups for the free university transport provided for them (#OBS). Therefore, as shown in the following account, Djamila's short answer carries a lot of meanings, particularly of an inadequate environment for working:

Researcher: How do you perceive your working environment?

Djamila: Boring, just look behind you, noisy (Djamila#II).

As mentioned earlier, it was surprising that Djamila and I managed to quickly find a room to conduct our interview. According to seven of my participants, the first concern that precedes the issue of teaching resources, which will be discussed shortly, is securing a room for teaching. Chorouk explains that: "[…] at times, we feel that we are in a kind of fights or quarrel of rooms" (#II). Chorouk's passage depicts a struggle that many other respondents report (Djamila, Hind, Randa, Warda, Ritadj and Ranim). Seemingly, based on my participants' accounts, one of the achievements that an academic at the English Department aims to make within the institution is to find a room where they can teach, without having to negotiate that. The female student Ritadj narrates her own story that explains better how her teachers' negotiation process happens:

> [The shortage of rooms] was really problematic, we used to walk with our teachers in the university looking for a room, and it happened to us, we are having a lecture and another teacher comes and tells our teacher that 'it's my room', so we stop the lecture and we need to look for another room […] (Ritadj#II).

Data from my observations and informal conversations with some academics, students and other staff members further corroborates Chorouk's earlier account where she mentions 'fight' and 'quarrel' as part of the academics' lived experiences within the institution. To be precise, the 'fights' and 'quarrels' she mentions happen constantly between the English and the medical personnel. It seems, therefore, that their feeling of unbelonging also stems from these constant confrontations between them and the medical staff. To relate this to my experience in the field, in order to recruit participants, I had to find them first in the big Faculty of Medicine. Waiting for them next to the staffroom did not seem to be a good option because most of them used to leave the university after teaching, as I will further explain.

Thus, in order to gain time in recruiting participants, I asked the secretary at the English Department to help me find the women academics by giving me the exact number of the classrooms where they were teaching (e.g., classroom n°50). Seemingly, because of the 'fights' for rooms, I rarely found the women academics teaching in the classrooms indicated by the secretary. Therefore, my plan to go through the secretary did not seem to work either, as I had to check many classrooms to be able to find them (#MR).

> […] the number of medical students is growing, our chances to have an amphitheatre is [*sic*] lessening […] (Hind#II).

> Sometimes, I, I rely on technology […] but it's not our university, it's difficult to have access to, for example, data shows, to computers, we always rely on medicine department, and they…, it's not always easy to have access to them (Randa#II).

Hind and Randa's statements appear to be congruent with that of Lyna presented earlier. Their comments go deeper into details and reflect some of the issues associated with their unbelonging to the workplace. Both Randa and Hind feel that priority often, if not always, goes to the real owners of the setting: the Medical Department. Therefore, what seems frustrating for Randa and Hind is not only the power and priority that the Medical Department holds, but also the feeling of dependence on the Medical Department regarding the resources they need for teaching. In this regard, the student Shahrazed expresses her opinion saying:

> I think the prominent problem we have at the university of [X] is because it is a university for medical students, so everything is under the banner of medicine, everything is theirs, it belongs to them. This is the problem! so whenever you go to the room, they [academics and security guards] check: do medical students need it? So, this is what we depend on (#GI).

In line with the above, beyond the expressed anomaly of 'fighting' for rooms, as put by Chorouk, finding adequate resources for teaching is another issue that my participants voice. Ranim, for instance, finds the lack of technological tools in her classroom unhelpful (Ranim#II). Due to the lack of technology, the academic would, therefore, try to make use of 'basic' teaching tools such as pen and papers. These, however, appear to be as problematic as technological equipment, as Hind seems to unpleasantly declare in the following detailed extracts:

At the beginning [of the academic year], they give you a brush and one cartridge of ink, and this is just going to be for one whole... let's say if I'm really trying to be economical [laughter], it's going to be for just one week. Teaching like three, four, sometimes five sessions per week, it's not enough. For example, for making copies, you have to wait. If you're really in need, or you're in a rush, you've to do it yourself […]. In the morning, I had to go downtown to make copies and come back, yes, I had to because there are none (Hind#II).

She adds:

There is always lack of paper, of cartridge, I don't know why. They're supposed to have a certain budget for everything, at least give me my share for the whole year, my share for the whole year [emphasis], and I'm going to take care of it, but not like this (Hind#II).

The administration does not provide anything for us, OK, we are even making our own copies. We are making our own copies at home, there is no paper, there is no ink, it's really troublesome for our development, yes (Hind#II).

Every academic, according to Ranim, "is doing his [her] best, leaning on himself [or herself] to arrange or find a classroom and so on [..]" (#II). This might portray the academics' dedication and commitment to the profession through their attempts to cope with these challenges. Yet, associating the workplace with 'fights' and 'quarrels', and lacking what the academics consider as necessary materials for teaching might not only affect the nature and the pace of academics' teaching practice, but also how they feel about themselves and their work.

The difficulty of having access to materials and the English Department's reliance on the Medical Department, the owner of the place, seem to have generated a feeling of powerlessness of change and guilt in some participants. This appears to be voiced through the following excerpt, where Randa explains what she feels due to her inability to use the materials needed for her lecture:

[…] So, I always rely on the traditional way of giving lectures. Sometimes it's difficult, because students are bored by the way, by dictating for example, I…all the time I dictate. I understand them perfectly. I always tell them I know it's boring, you just have to excuse me, I don't have any other choices (Randa#II).

She maintains saying that:

> [The lack of means] are obstacles [*sic*] putting barriers to the process of the lecture, the advancement of the lecture. I don't feel that I'm satisfied after each lecture. I always like to give everything to my students, but the means here are not available (Randa#II).

The way Randa responded to the interview questions seems to reflect feelings of disappointment, despair and dissatisfaction. Apparently, Randa is aware that there are various pedagogical practices to engage her students in the lesson, better than dictating, especially that most of the modules she is teaching require the use of more innovative means than what she qualifies as 'traditional' - i.e., dictating. Nevertheless, her inability to bring about change, which in turn made her resort to a 'traditional' approach, developed a feeling of dissatisfaction and guilt. This is reflected in the way she expresses her apologies to her students, as if she was blaming herself for something she was unable to provide.

As the following quote reveals, Hind also shares the same concern as Randa. She shows her frustration with the use of handouts while she could have used the projector to make her teaching more efficient.

> […] what if I need a projector, there is only one projector in four or five classrooms, it's really going to be very hard to use it, I rely on handouts, for example, ink, it's really [laughter], lacking from every direction (Hind#II).

These accounts remind me of a short discussion I had with the Head of the English Department. I remember her saying that the academics have all the necessary means to carry out their duties, including data shows. It should be reminded that the head of department is responsible for the pedagogical and administrative functioning of the department, and exercises hierarchical authority over the staff placed under their responsibility (Tlemcen University, n.d.). This implies that they should not only be aware of the shortage of pedagogical equipment, but also find solutions for that shortage.

Interestingly, teaching is not the only aspect reflected in my participants' extracts. Data analysis also reveals that beyond their teaching task, other dimensions of their professional lives are affected by, and contribute to, their sense of unbelonging to the setting. These are discussed in the next subsection.

7.3.2. Challenges beyond the classroom

This subsection includes my participants' dissatisfaction with multiple aspects in the institution, namely the staffroom, library, locked offices, transport and unsanitary toilets.

- *Staffroom*

Apropos of the staffroom, based on my interviews and observations, although most academics at the English Department do not have offices, the staffroom is, surprisingly, the least busy place within the English Department (#OBS). The women academics' following passages seem to reflect their disappointment with the staffroom's state:

> We have a small room, called room of teachers, but I don't think…, I don't consider it as a room of teachers […] (Randa#II).

> […] we have a room, you see an empty room, it's not really comfortable for teachers […] we don't even have a place where we can meet, the room is too small, uncomfortable. Sometimes, I make an appointment with students to that we can meet because I supervise students and so we go trying to find a room elsewhere (Warda#II).

The staffroom is not very different from the classrooms described above (subsection 7.3.1). It is painted in white and has many windows with one-way mirror film, allowing academics to see the university courtyard without being exposed or seen from outside. This one-way system seems to allow academics some privacy while using the staffroom. As for the equipment, it has one large, oval, wooden table and a few wooden chairs. The room has two heating radiators that do function properly, making the temperature in the room cold and unsuitable for everyone. I conducted my fieldwork in Autumn (from October until December), and because the university is surrounded by a series of mountains at the back, and the Mediterranean Sea at the front, there was often a cold penetrating wind that made people shiver (#OBS), as Djamila also mentioned in our interview (#II).

The staffroom is located on the ground floor of the English Department's building, opposite to the administration. From the inside, apart from the dusty table, the chairs and some official papers stuck on its walls, nothing else could be found there, and this is clearly an issue to all the women academics I interviewed. When I first visited the staffroom, there were exactly eight chairs, obviously less than the actual number of academics. It was around 2 pm, some chairs were still on the table upside down, after the floor was cleaned by the cleaning staff in

the morning. The staffroom seems to serve as a relatively good place to stay at during the gaps between the teaching hours.

Based on my observations and interpretation of the participants' accounts, it appears to be more of a waiting room than a staffroom. I rarely saw academics sitting there. When I did, it was, again, at break and lunch times (#OBS). I personally regret not having the chance to stay with the academics while they were sitting in the staffroom to find out more about what was going on there. This was not possible because only academics were allowed to access it. However, albeit limited and only observing from the stairs leading to the first floor, I could notice that no one used to stay in the staffroom for long times (#OBS). When they did, their gatherings reflected friendship and camaraderie networks, which were easily noticed. These networks might even give clues on who gets along with whom (#MR). Each of these cliques used to come together to the staffroom at break and lunchtimes and leave the institution together as well (#OBS).

Once, I was having a conversation with a woman academic after I attended her class for observations. In the classroom where we were, one of her male students came over to inform her that he needed to get his marksheet corrected in the administration. The woman academic was in a rush to leave the institution with her woman colleague and friend who owned a car. Before she left, she asked me to go on her behalf to the administration and kindly ask the administrator to do the correction himself (#OBS). This incident is narrated here to explain that, based on my own observations, the presence of academics in the staffroom and their way of leaving the institution in groups seemed to be highly dependent on the availability of transport.

- *Transport*

It is not mentioned explicitly, anywhere in the interview data, that transport is an issue. I could sense, however, that it was problematic and a reason for the women academics to feel the urge to leave the institution after their teaching hours. As I mentioned in subsection 7.3.1, unlike students, no transport was provided for academics by stakeholders, and only a few women academics owned cars (#OBS). Furthermore, the construction of tram lines which were adjacent to the Faculty of Medicine made the situation even worse, not only in terms of the noise as discussed by Djamila earlier, but also the mud covering the area near the entrance of the university, leading to the availability of a few taxis only. In addition, since the

main administration (e.g., Dean, Vice-Dean) was still in the Faculty of Foreign Languages, academics seemed to work in a split-site university. As a result, transport was an issue, particularly that they had to travel to the main faculty for meetings with the Dean (#OBS).

Furthermore, many women academics like Ranim and Randa lived in distant cities and had to commute. Therefore, they had to take at least three taxis to arrive to the Faculty of Medicine, and sometimes queue for them (#IC). As a matter of illustration, and this seems to be common in some areas in Algeria based on my knowledge, a taxi traveling between two cities would wait long minutes, and sometimes hours, to pick up the number of passengers needed, as no booking option is available prior to travel. This transport issue appears to explain partly why some women academics were most of the time in a rush to leave the institution and join their cities (#OBS). Whilst this could have affected all academics, regardless of their gender, women seem to be the most affected by transport.

To further explain how the unavailability of transport might have affected the women academics more than men, I shall refer back to Chapter Four, section 4.3, where I discussed how women's 'safety' and 'reputation' are important for some society members (e.g., Chareb, 2010). I shall add to this safety-related discussion another sociocultural element that implies that women, in many parts of Algeria, are socioculturally expected to get back home before it gets dark after their working hours. The existence of this phenomenon seems to be underpinned by both reputation and safety concerns such as sexual harassment. To provide some context, female students who reside in Algerian university accommodations like my participant Rimi, are not allowed to get into, or leave, the university accommodation after 18:00 in winter and 20:00 in spring and summer. According to Rimi, this seems to be a regulation that is applicable across the country, given that all university accommodations are state-owned. In contrast, male students are allowed to enter or leave the accommodation at any time (#IC). Therefore, compared to women academics' restricted movements, men academics are not restricted by time, and in case transport is not available, they could 'hitchhike' (#MR).

- *Absence of offices and shortage of toilets*

To resume my description of the English Department's building: to the left of the staffroom, there was a dusty bar-like countertop whose function was not clear enough. Yet, I could see that it served as a useful temporary desk to many students and academics who had quick

administrative tasks (e.g., writing letters or checking one's papers). Near the countertop, there was a long hallway leading to closed offices. Upstairs, on the right, there were two offices: one for the woman secretary of the Head of the Department, and the other was composed of two connecting rooms, that of the Head of the Department, and her woman administrator, who is also a teacher-researcher (#OBS). On the left, there were locked and unused offices, in addition to unused toilets with locked doors. Before conducting my interviews, I did not understand why these offices and toilets were closed, but it appeared later, particularly after my interview with Randa, that I was not the only one questioning that.

Randa even complained about it during my interview with her and hopelessly said: "[…] we don't even have toilets, how can we have a room [nervous laughter]". She felt embarrassed saying that and added: "I'm sorry if I'm mentioning this, but it is, for me, it's important to understand, for our health, I'm suffering from this point, I'm trying all the time to talk about this, but no one listens to my ---" (#II). It is astonishing to see that Randa is deprived of a basic right that is even mentioned in the Executive Decree 08-130 of May 03, 2008. Article 5 states that teachers-researchers should have all the necessary means that help them accomplish all their missions as well as professionally progress, including hygiene and security. It could be said, therefore, that this Article is breached, given the conditions in which Randa and all the participants work.

Randa not only referred to the locked toilets located in the English Department's building, as noted earlier, but also others which were next to the classrooms where the women academics were teaching. Based on my discussions with the students (#IC), these toilets were locked to keep them clean for institutional events like conferences, especially for foreign scholars visiting the place. The only available toilets were located at the university court and were shared by anyone at the university. In addition to being unsanitary due to the irregular availability of water and lack of toilet paper, some of them were not practical, given that they were 'squat toilets' – toilets with a hole in the ground. Anyone using these toilets had to use their own bottle of water or buy one, although many, according to all female students (#IC), preferred to wait until they went back home.

To relate this issue to the literature, Rioux (2017) relates workplace conditions to workplace attachment, saying that "[t]he environmental context is essential to understand evaluative (e.g., environmental satisfaction at work) and psychological (e.g., attachment to the workplace) processes" (p. 408). She refers to the International Organisation for

Standardisation that institutions across the world may adopt and adapt to ensure the wellbeing of their employees. Interestingly, although she tackles many workplace conditions such as workspace layout, noise, light and room temperature, she does not mention the need for employees to have toilets given that it is an obvious human need.

At the English Department's building, the walls downstairs were a place where the university announcements and events were posted, some written by hand and others printed, in Arabic, English and French languages (#OBS). Given the large space and the absence of signposts within the English Department, compared to other departments in the faculty, someone who visits the place for the first time would easily get lost (#MR). My students-participants introduced me to a novice woman academic who had just started her PhD at the time and was not familiar with the university setting. She came from a different English Department situated in another city. She was surprised that there was not any signpost indicating where her supervisor's office was. In fact, her supervisor did not have an office there, but was a director of a research unit located, not in the Faculty of Medicine, but in the Faculty of Foreign Languages (#OBS). Hence, it was somewhat hard to explain to her what was exactly happening there (#MR).

As the majority of women academics complained during the interviews, many closed offices could have served as a space for academics to work, sit and relax. Within the English Department, no teacher had an office, apart from the Head of the Department and the administrators. However, in the Faculty of Foreign Languages, the few who had offices were well ranked (Professor or Assistant Professor) and at the same time responsible for research laboratories (#MR). While scrutinising the Executive Decrees mentioned in Chapter One, none of them seems to mention explicitly academics' rights to have offices; yet, the issue of lack of offices and staffrooms is among the points covered in the petition written by the National Autonomous Union of Higher Education Employees (SNAPES). It could even be part of the conditions that make academics progress professionally, as per the Article 5 of the Executive Decree 08-130.

This lack of offices, along with the inadequate staffroom, does not seem to be an issue of space only, but an obstacle for the majority of women academics' tasks too. When I asked Chorouk what she would change in the institution if she had the chance to, she said:

> Giving teachers the opportunity to work, to have an office, even if the office is shared by two or three or four teachers, having a desk, I mean providing the teacher with all, with everything that would facilitate the task of teaching (Chorouk#II).

The unavailability of offices also affects Warda, who regrets not having an office where she can receive her students. In an individual interview, she declared that she was unable to find a suitable place to meet her supervisees, not even a classroom. In addition to the issue of finding a classroom, as explained in subsection 7.3.1, classrooms get locked by security guards to prevent couples (male and female students) from gathering, as I was told by a security agent (#IC). The latter asked me to leave the classroom where I was conducting my interview with Ritadj. After I begged him to let me finish my interview, he explained to me that the setting was 'conservative', and the fact that couples were taking advantage of open classrooms to sit privately and do 'inappropriate' things, as he said, it stood against the social conventions (#IC).

- *Library*

In addition to the staffroom, the library is another space provided for academics. It is located in another building, architecturally detached from, but close to the English Department. The whole building, composed of ground and first floors, is shared between the Medical and the English Departments, and yet with separate libraries. The Medical Department's library occupies a big part of the ground and the first floors, and the English Department's library occupies a similar part on the ground floor only. This probably shows the privilege that the Medical Department has. Near the English Department's library, another zone is available for students and academics, but it was mostly used by students for conversational study given that the libraries were both silent zones (#OBS).

The interior of the English Department's library is divided into two parts. On the right, there are a few shelving units, on top of each there is a printed paper mentioning the disciplines of the books it contained (e.g., grammar, vocabulary, British civilisation). On the left, there are several tables and chairs, different and more comfortable than those in the classrooms. On each wall of the library, signs such as 'quiet, please!' and 'no food, no drink' are displayed in Arabic (#OBS). Nevertheless, those signs were not always respected by students and staff alike. As a researcher there, the library was a relatively good place for me to write down and elaborate my fieldnotes compared to the other noisy areas around (#MR). However, as it was

not always a quiet place, some participants did not seem interested to work there. For example, the participant Warda, whom I first met in the library, reveals that she tried to work there regularly, but the conditions were not helpful at all. When I met her, she was reading a text from her phone and trying to take notes on her notebook. Yet, since there was no Wi-Fi and no computer was available for both academics and students, Warda carried her own computer with her. Her computer, nevertheless, needed to be charged, but the sockets were not functional. After I enquired, the librarian told me that there was an electric issue with the plug sockets, which led to their dysfunction (#IC).

Due to such inadequate conditions in the library, Hind reports that she does not even have a staff library card as most of the books she needs are not available (#II). Hind is not the only participant complaining about the library, the unavailability of the books needed, as well as the outdatedness of those available; the student Ritadj, the women academics Warda, Djamila and the librarian himself are also frustrated with the situation. The student Ritadj expresses herself as follows:

> We need to have also updated books [whispering: "focus on that!"], we don't have enough books, we need to have an electronic library that has contact with foreign universities so that they send them, they should buy books, they should do something for us to have enough resources, for both books and articles. Articles are also very interesting, very important, they facilitate the understanding…equipment […] (Ritadj#II).

Based on my observations which are supported by Ritadj's account, the available books and catalogues in the library are all printed. The e-resources did not exist within the English Department's library at the time. Ritadj, while complaining about the limited choice of books, directly thought of a potential collaboration between the University [X] and other foreign and particularly 'Western' universities. Surprisingly, she was not the first to think about it. Whilst having a discussion with the librarian Anis, he also showed his dissatisfaction with the quality of the library; he unhesitantly asked me to tell him about the library system of my British university, and as I was getting ready to respond, he anticipated: "we compare the incomparable, right?" (#IC). When I started describing the available services (e.g., borrowing/return machines and smartcards), he expressed his disappointment by a deep sigh. This was followed by some advice, given that he knew that I am a prospective woman academic: "now that you're aware of these circumstances, make your career plans there and

do not come back!", insinuating that immigration is better for me than going back to work at any Algerian university.

My discussion with Anis lasted around half an hour. Given his excitement to take part in my study, I tried to seize the opportunity to ask him any question I had concerning the academics and their limited use of the library. Anis seems aware of the limited choice of books. Yet, he thinks that library staff should collaborate with all academics to know the types of books they need. What I find interesting, albeit puzzling, is his following statement: "we asked teachers to provide us with a list of the books they needed, nobody showed up! How can we know what books are needed?!" (#IC). Anis' statement is open to various interpretations. My own interpretation suggests that the academics at the English Department are perhaps demotivated to collaborate in any ways within the institution. That is, the university is depicted as a hostile place that is solely associated with their teaching and administrative tasks. Any other tasks, including their search for books is carried out beyond the institution's gates. Hind's following account seems to corroborate this interpretation:

> […] I think that in bookstores like [name of the bookshop], he has got really nice books […] but here, I have no idea, but I think there are many books available, yes, maybe (Hind#II).

The bookstore Hind mentions is well known in the area. His bookshop is rich of books of all genres. What makes it more special than other bookshops is the option of renting a book. He also brings from overseas, usually from France, books that are not available in other libraries. Given that I visited this bookstore while I was in the field, I can say that it is larger, and has a variety of printed and audio resources than the English Department's library (#OBS). What could be added to my early interpretation might be that academics need many books for their teaching and research that it is not practical for them to always make a list of books and hand them to the librarian who would go through a whole process that might be time-consuming – make the request, wait for it to be accepted or rejected, and so on. In fact, according to the University of Tlemcen (n.d.), which lists all the missions of the university leaders based on official documents, it is the head of the faculty's library who is supposed to assist both teachers and students in their library search and provide them with the books needed to carry out their pedagogical and research duties.

In addition to the bookstore, Djamila adds another way through which she can get the books needed, and which are unavailable in the library: "in my case, in my field, books related to theory are very rare unless I check and look for them in the net, here there is nothing, I had to buy some books from abroad throughout platforms, Amazon […]" (Djamila#II). Data analysis in this chapter will demonstrate that Djamila is privileged, as not every respondent is able to order books from abroad (see subsection 7.6.1).

To reiterate, this section offers an ethnographic thick description of the multiple factors that seem to affect the women academics' professional practices and identities. These factors could be seen through the lens of Day and Kington's (2008) as well as Petriglieri's (2011) theories. The former suggests that teachers'/academics' professional identities are affected by situated-located/contextual aspects which could include relocation, as I stated in Chapter Three, subsection 3.2.1. Through the lens of Petriglieri's (2011) theory, these inadequate workplace conditions might be perceived as a threat to their academic professional identities. That is, in the previous chapter (section 6.2), the women academics' perceptions of academia depict the university as a very intellectual place in which they hope to thrive professionally as teachers-researchers. However, the appalling working conditions uncovered earlier do not seem to reflect a higher education institution, wherein such aspirations could be met. In Chapter One, subsection 1.6.1, I mentioned that it is considered a right for academics to work in an adequate workplace (Djalel, 2015, p. 232). My data analysis suggests that the women academics' aspirations, at some point, shifted from a desire to thrive as academics to a desire to own a site, not fight for rooms, have restrooms and be provided with the necessary means needed for teaching and research, as their accounts voice.

In the literature, studies linking relocation to teachers/academics' professional identities seem to be scarce. Most of the scholarship that tackles relocation in relation to teachers/academics focuses extensively on teachers' mobility and transfer to international contexts, particularly with regard to expatriates (e.g., Kuzhabekova and Lee, 2018). As for regional relocation, Whitton's (2018) doctoral study, t*he new university: space, place and identity*, shows how academics' relocation to a newly-built site where, in contrast to my participants, they were the owners, jeopardised their professional practices and affected their identities. For instance, having to use the university office to do tasks which entailed little concentration, and performing the other more intense tasks at home, due to the inadequacy of the new open-space offices and noise. This "nuisance", as Rioux (2017, p. 405) names it, is reflected in

Djamila's account in subsection 7.3.1. The state of the staffroom, library, as well as the lack of offices in my findings can also be part of Rioux's (ibid.) model, where she draws clear connections between workplace conditions and workplace attachment. Like my research, Cowdrey's (1999) study also addresses 'forced relocation'. Her study, nonetheless, shows that those who experienced smoothly the relocation to new institutions were well supported, insinuating that institutional support is key, which is not the case of my participants. In what follows, I shall discuss another finding that could be partly triggered by the inconvenient working conditions: limited interactions and collaboration among colleagues.

7.4. "[Teachers] don't want to share, they just want to keep everything for themselves"

The limited interaction and collaboration among academics represent a phenomenon that emerged from the interview data and is corroborated by my observations in the field. When being asked about their relationships with their colleagues, a very few women academics reported that they had good relationships with their colleagues and that some were good friends. However, conversely, almost all women academics denied the existence of a unified community and went even further by characterising it, either explicitly or by alluding, as 'selfish', 'knowledge-hiding', embracing 'individualism'. This claim could, arguably, stand against the notion of a 'community'. The latter, however, is open to various definitions, and similar are the following notions, which manifest themselves in the data: a 'professional' relationship and 'collaboration'.

> Well, it's a professional relationship, no more. Just 'good morning',
> 'how are you?', 'good luck', that's all, I just come to the university
> and I leave […] I'm related to them [colleagues] professionally
> (Randa#II).

Apparently, what Randa means by a 'professional' relationship in her quote is a relationship that has limits, even in work-related matters. Delving more into how she portrays the 'professional' relationships among her colleagues in the university, she laments:

> […] the problem here is, I'm not criticising, but teachers [uhh] tend to
> [uhh], they don't want to share, they just want to keep everything for
> themselves. So, I feel just like I'm in high school, not at a university,
> there are no workshops, and teachers mainly like to teach and leave
> the university, because even if we want to organise something, it

> doesn't work, and I mean, creating workshops at university, I think
> it's very helpful for everyone, sharing experiences, sharing handouts,
> sharing activities, I think that it's perfect, but it doesn't work
> [laughter] (Randa#II).

It did not seem easy for Randa to voice her opinion about her colleagues to a researcher she barely knew. The situation, however, seemed worth telling. The phrase, "I feel just like I'm in high school, not at a university", appears to reflect an identity threat, given her view of her professional status which is not solely based on teaching – as it is the case of high school teachers, in her opinion – but also research and continuing professional development. The latter may take different forms, such as university-based workshops, and teaching and research material exchange, as mentioned in Chapter Three, subsection 3.2.2. By referring to high school, Randa also appears to depict high schools as teaching settings only, although they are also learning environments, wherein collaboration and other forms of professional development could occur among teachers. Yet, given that universities are widely known as being a 'fertile soil' for knowledge production, transmission and dissemination, it is crucial for academics to collaborate to achieve the aforementioned goals. This collaboration may take various forms, such as informal conversations (Thomson and Trigwell, 2018) and team-based learning (Gast *et al.*, 2017).

The lack of 'collaboration' or 'communities of practice' (Wenger, 1998) among colleagues within the institution, according to Randa, negatively affects the institutional environment. For Randa, this makes the university a place where academics come to teach and rush to leave only. This 'teach-and-leave' phenomenon could perhaps be related to academics' unbelonging to the workplace, as discussed earlier (section 7.2). This might resonate with Day (1999a, p. 221) who claims that "[t]he extent to which […] forms of professional development are available e.g., critical friendships, mentoring, networking, action research will depend as much on the culture of the school and the effects of broader policy contexts as on their [teachers'] own inclination or initiative". It appears, therefore, that the university is so hostile that it does not encourage collaborative exchanges. Having said that, I do not overlook the women academics' unwillingness to collaborate, as the data analysis will further unveil.

In parallel with Randa's account, Djamila also seems to depict her preference for limited interactions with the colleagues,

> My relationships [with the colleagues] are purely professional. I've been teaching this morning since nine until now, I don't meet anyone except my students (Djamila#II).

Again, the conceptualisation of a 'professional' relationship with colleagues for both Randa and Djamila is a relationship where no small talk takes place; a relationship where no one bothers the other. Nevertheless, both Randa, Djamila, and others like Ranim, Warda, Siham and Lyna all have colleagues who are also their closest friends, as they mentioned in our informal discussions (#IC). What is striking is that Randa and Djamila's accounts seem to exclude their colleagues, who are also their friends, and with whom discussions in the staffrooms and hallways occur. They probably consider and characterise these relationships as purely personal that they did not think about them as 'professional' when answering the question. To explain this further, while I was having lunch with Randa after our interview, she seemed very grateful to her woman friend and colleague who helped her in her PhD journey. She said: "I was going to drop out of this PhD, but she encouraged me all the way through, and was constantly proofreading my work, I wouldn't have made it without her help" (Randa#IC).

Djamila's relative is also one of her colleagues, with whom she spends a lot of time (#OBS); yet, she does not mention it in the interview. On the one hand, it could be interpreted that Randa and Djamila overlook the 'professional' in the 'personal' (i.e., work-related aspects in their camaraderie/family relations). These relationships are "so familiar perhaps that [they] often escap[e] our attention" (Wenger and Wenger-Trayner, 2015, p. 3). On the other hand, it might also imply that they refer to the majority of colleagues with whom they work and with whom the relationship is purely 'professional', as they state.

This phenomenon of lamenting the inexistence of a community and claiming to have a superficial relationship with colleagues is also brought up by Hind. Hind's following accounts unravel her experience with the colleagues who were teaching phonetics like her. She narrates:

> […] she [her colleague] said, yes, I'm using Daniel Jones, I told her 'no, we're not using Daniel Jones, we're using Peter Roach', I think meetings among teachers, for example, teaching the same speciality are really necessary, because we share, we reflect on what we are doing […] there are teachers in L1 [Bachelor year 1] who are teaching things that are not meant for them, they are meant for Masters students (Hind#II).

While answering a different question, she insists:

> […] I think meetings are really necessary for us today, because we don't meet. Sometimes we teach the same module, but I don't know the teachers who are teaching, I don't meet them. I don't know them, and the day of the exam, we have plenty of problems (Hind#II).

When I asked her to elaborate, she added:

> I have no idea, people are not really in touch, for example, I am in touch with Ms (a former woman academic who became a colleague), we share emails. What about the two other teachers? one of them is trying to catch up, the other teacher, no, no sign of her at all, OK. When I ask the students, they say that we are studying this lesson. I was surprised, this lesson belongs to the second semester, what are you doing?! So, on the day of the exam, we are going to have problems like this. Although we always share the same test paper, the same exam paper, we send it via email, we have a look at it, and we agree whether to do it or not, OK. This is what we have done all these past years, but now, I think it will be a problem (Hind#II).

The two other academics to whom Hind refer in her accounts are novice women academics. Complaining about the limited interactions between her and her colleagues, she finds it critical that other academics teach something that is not included in the semester's curriculum. She seems to blame them for not getting in touch, and most importantly relating this issue to the complex examination preparation process. One might wonder: are these novice academics supposed to get in touch with the more 'experienced' ones, or the opposite? If so, where do they find them, since many academics appear to teach and leave the institution, and using emails does not seem to be part of the institution's cultures? Does the English Department have a role in orienting these novice academics, supporting and monitoring them? The situation within the institution and among colleagues, both novice and experienced, is complex and blurry that there are no answers to these questions at this stage.

Going back to Hind, the interactions she was having in the past years with her colleagues were virtual, by exchanging emails to agree on the same examination paper, but things had changed, as she declares. Therefore, what is limited, in her experience, is not only the physical encounter with her colleagues, but also the virtual one: exchanging emails. It is important to note here too that it is the Head of the English Department's responsibility to create collegial opportunities at the level of the department, being the main leader of the department. Apparently, based on many participants' accounts, the 'collegial' activities at the English Department revolve around attending and being part of viva examinations ['jury de soutenance'], invigilation, and discussions related to the students' examination results (#ICs).

Another angle from which the relationships among the participants and their colleagues can be scrutinised requires to put all the previously-mentioned accounts into context. Many academics like Djamila, Randa, Chorouk, Ranim, and Warda teach two days a week, based on the interviews and informal conversations I had with them. Exceptions exist when the teacher occupies managerial and administrative roles which require more availability, as it is the case of the participant Siham. I was told by Hind (#II) that even when the administration, specifically the Scientific Committee of the Department (University of Tlemcen, n.d.), does not manage to allocate each teacher two days a week for their teaching hours, and it feels the urge to split their teaching hours into more than two days per week, some academics, particularly women, try to negotiate it. That is, instead of teaching, for example, twelve hours in four days, academics negotiate to condense these four days into two days a week, with eventually intensive teaching sessions per day.

In contrary, except Siham who holds a managerial position, Hind, the only single woman academic I interviewed, seems the only respondent who teaches more than two days a week. This might indicate that the other women academics negotiate their teaching timetable in order to manage their work and family duties. Hind's following account gives a glimpse into her preference and that of others:

> […] sometimes there are some teachers, for example, in my case, I cannot teach from eight [in the morning] until four [in the evening], it's impossible for me. I teach from eight until twelve or twelve thirty. I choose a different day. […] In 2014, I've been teaching the whole week […] (Hind#II).

Therefore, on their teaching days, the academics are usually busy, moving from one classroom to another. This in turn gives little chance to their interactions with their colleagues to take place in the staffroom or beyond. In this regard, Hind shares her own experience: "with my colleagues, it [discussion] happens only at twelve thirty to one [lunch time]. We meet here [in the staffroom] just by chance [laughter], we're waiting for just the next sessions, so we're discussing […]" (Hind#II). Thus, the key time where some colleagues could gather within the staffroom was during their in-between teaching time, for usually half-an-hour. During this time, given that I was sitting on the stairs which were above the staffroom, academics' voices resonated in the uncrowded building (#OBS). They were all women. I rarely saw, or even heard, a man academic talking to women in the staffroom.

In addition to the fact that women outnumber men at the English Department, it seems, from my own observations, that women-men interactions are very limited in the setting, probably due to "religio-cultural reasons", as Lyna opines (#II) (see Chapter Six, section 6.4.2). My observation and interpretation, however, does not correlate with the women academics' responses on whether their relationships/interactions with their colleagues are gender-based, upon which they all agree that gender is not a significant factor. Djamila is the only respondent who explicitly states that despite not having any issue with interacting with men, she feels more comfortable interacting with women academics (#II). Gender was found to be an inhibiting factor to the formation of CoP between women and men novice schoolteachers in Djoudir's (2019) study conducted in an Algerian context. This phenomenon is worthy of exploration at the university setting.

As mentioned earlier (section 7.3.2), those who sit together in the staffroom appear to get along with each other. According to Hind, there were a few attempts by the academics themselves to gather and encourage some collegiality, but it seems that these initiatives failed. Hind, in her own words, explains: "[…] there are some teachers, some people who take advantage of these discussions only to just offend each other, I've been there, I've seen people fighting in meetings" (#II). Apparently, failing to differentiate between what is personal and what is professional leads many academics to wonder: "why would I come and waste my time?" (Hind#II), and they eventually avoid attending such meetings. As a witness, Hind finds the situation uncontrollable that she argues that the administration has to set strict rules to be respected in those 'collegial' meetings; "without the rules", she says, "it becomes a jungle" (Hind#II). Setting rules is, in my view, the Head of the Department's responsibility,

as they are the one who can exercise authority over the staff. If such a solution does not work, the issue could, therefore, be forwarded to higher authorities, such as the Faculty Council, whose president is the Dean of the Faculty (University of Tlemcen, n.d.).

An example of the kind of offense happening among academics is narrated by Randa (#IC). At the time, Randa was veiled, dressing modestly. By 'modestly', I mean large clothes that cover the whole body such as relatively large jeans and long tunics. She felt offended that some of her women colleagues criticised her way of clothing and even laughed at it. They thought that she appeared older than she was. It seems, from my conversations with the women academics whom I prefer not to name, that those who behave as such usually hold powerful status and like to undermine and sabotage others. The latter happens in two main ways: by making improper comments, and/or fiercely and unhealthily competing with them to climb even further the professional ladder. It particularly shows in getting institutional funds (see next section).

In summary, in this section I discussed the women academics' perceptions of collegiality and collaboration at the English Department. The data in this section could theoretically be interpreted through the lens of Day and Kington's (2008) theoretical model. As pinpointed in Chapter Three, subsection 3.2.2, the professional dimension plays a key role in teachers' as well as academics' professional identities. In the aforementioned section, I showed that research and professional development practices are both individual and collective endeavours. This collective side appears to be lacking at the women academics' workplace, from their own perspectives. In the following section, I address the women academics' views of institutional support regarding their professional development as teachers-researchers.

7.5.   "[…] there are no efforts done to encourage teachers to evolve in their career"

All the women academics interviewed lament the limited availability of opportunities for professional development within the institution. As discussed earlier, the institution is depicted, to some extent, as a hostile place whose environment is not totally adequate for teaching and research-related practices. In this regard, Djamila expresses herself in relation to the unavailable university support: "[…] there are no efforts done to encourage teachers to evolve in their career" (Djamila#II). This quote is chosen as this section's title as it summarises what all the other respondents report. Similar to Djamila, Lyna emphasises: "No,

no [emphasis] support. We have the minimum, we're surviving, […] even professionally speaking, we're not living fully" (Lyna#II). The inadequate institutional support is discussed by the participants from two different, yet interrelated perspectives: 1) the inadequate induction programme and lack of institutional follow-up; and 2) the ambiguous process of getting institutional funding. In this section, institutional follow-up refers to any formal training or institutional support that academics receive beyond the induction programme.

7.5.1. Inefficient induction programme and absence of institutional follow-up

Five out of ten women academics declare that there was not any induction programme upon their recruitment at university. A very few others refer to the inefficiency of the induction programme they received. Zina explains: "[a]s new teachers, we received a formal training during the first year (three hours per week), but unfortunately, it was more about administrative tasks and it did not help me at all" (#II). Similarly, Ranim claims that the training she received was "not a real training", adding, "when I was accepted in this university, we had a kind of training, but about the LMD system, and, in fact, it wasn't much beneficial" (#II). Data analysis suggests that this contradictory situation – where, theoretically, it was necessary for all academics to be involved in an induction programme, and its lack/inefficiency on the ground – was perhaps a sign that they had to limit their reliance on the institution to offer other adequate professional development opportunities, as Warda seems to indicate:

> […] I understood I have to work on my own and do my best so to
> meet the needs of my students so that's it! I didn't wait for any kind
> of training (#II).

Given that the vast majority of academics belong to the classical system whose implementation preceded that of the LMD system, the training a few of my participants received theoretically familiarised them with the LMD system implemented in the Algerian higher education since 2004 (see Chapter One, subsection 1.6.1). The male academic, Wassim, explains further: "we had a training when we got recruited for two years. It was in French, about the LMD system and how to teach […]" (Wassim#II). It was confusing to know that the training was delivered in French for academics specialised in English, but it appeared later that the training gathered all newly-recruited academics, from several departments, and French was chosen as the bridge language (#IC). This did not seem to be problematic for the training designers, given that the training targeted administrative-related

aspects which all academics, regardless of their specialism, needed. When I asked Wassim about his impression regarding the training, he stated:

> [M]aybe there was not what we call diagnostic assessment before, that's why it was somehow random, there were some objective sides and positive sides, I learnt a lot about how to manage the system in terms of marking, in terms of the credits because you know that I belong to the classical system. I was not familiar with the LMD system, but if I had the chance, I would have included other things, that's why, we didn't have the chance to choose. There was no diagnostic assessment so as the shortcomings are identified, so the trainer should cover the shortcomings, the things that the teachers like, the programme was given to us, but I always believe that I have to rely on myself [laughter] (Wassim#II).

Wassim's account seems to be congruent with that of Zina who, as presented earlier, thinks that the induction programme she received was not well designed. It shed more light on administrative tasks and focused merely on marking and understanding the modules credits, which were new and different than those of the classical system. Seemingly, the training focused on the outcome of academics' teaching and supervision (e.g., marking), but it, surprisingly, seemed to disregard their multiple needs and duties which are as important as understanding the characteristics of the newly-implemented system. Like Wassim, all the women academics found ways to deal with the training deficiencies, or the unavailability of training. In other words, as Hind puts it in the Algerian dialect, ['*nlabkou*'] (Hind#II), meaning that academics are trying to remedy the situation in their own ways. An example which could illustrate what she means is, for example, using an adhesive tape to fix a crack in the wall. To further explain, Siham, on the lack of induction programmes, indicates: "[At university] no, no. I didn't have, nothing, I moved from secondary school to higher education directly without any training. With my experience, I could actually manage" (Siham#II), even though school teaching and academia are different at many levels (e.g., pupils/students) (see Chapter Three, section 3.2). In the lack of such an important induction programme, Hind shares her own experience:

> [S]ometimes, the previous teacher provides you with a syllabus, and you just try to prepare your own lecture or your own lesson plan, but for example in my speciality, phonetics, no, I have never been trained, no (Hind#II).

As noted previously, the lack/inefficiency of the induction programme for the majority of academics could perhaps be an indicator that academics have to rely on themselves regarding other professional opportunities, such as institution-based trainings. It should be noted that Article 22 of the Executive Decree 08-130 of May 03-2008, states that academics' institutions should provide them regularly with professional development opportunities.

Chorouk, commenting on the lack of institutional follow-up, states: "[…] we work by instinct sometimes" (Chorouk#II). Likewise, Lyna declares that what she received was a "life training [laughter]" rather than a formal induction programme or institutional follow-up (Lyna#II). By saying so, Lyna sarcastically and indirectly points out to the lack of any formal training. In addition, she appears to refer to the experiences she went through to improve as an academic. ['*Denia karatni*'] (Life is my teacher) is an expression which is similar to what Lyna mentions in the Algerian dialect. The expression is prevalent in the Algerian society to denote that one may survive, become wiser and more mature throughout time, and often through experiencing 'the ebb and flow' of life. This expression is, for instance, a title of Raï songs performed by well-known Algerian singers, Reda Taliani and Dalila. Both songs refer to the hardships one goes through to learn how to survive in a cruel environment. Lyna's following account might support this interpretation:

> […] it's always difficult when you do not have any training. It's difficult yeah, it's difficult [emphasis], but you can get by, we can manage. That's why it's about love, it's about the passion you have for what you do, because if you have this, this is key. If you have it, you can develop yourself by yourself! (Lyna#II).

As stated earlier, the inadequacy/lack of induction programmes and institutional follow-up led academics to rely on themselves and seek individual ways to survive – by compensating with prior teaching experience, for example. Yet, without denying the importance and benefits of such trainings if they had them. In the literature, the induction programme is argued to be an important phase to 'welcome academics on board' (Al-Kurdi *et al*., 2020; Sanders *et al*., 2020). King *et al*.'s (2018) study demonstrates that failure to support academics' transition into academia might make academics feel lost and less confident to carry out their academic tasks in the challenging academia. Some academics, albeit hardly, might handle those feelings and find ways to manage the lack/inadequacy of the induction programme, which is the case of my main participants. Others, however, choose to leave academia towards other professions that give them a sense of self that they lost in the

academy (King *et al.*, 2018). Unfortunately, the nature of the induction programme and total lack of institutional follow-up are not the only issues the women academics experienced in the workplace. As far as professional development opportunities are concerned, academics have to go through a complex process of getting institutional funding. This is discussed in the next subsection.

7.5.2. The ambiguity of research fund distribution

Some of the inadequate institutional elements unveiled by the women academics are related to the process of getting funds to go abroad for an academic stay. As discussed in Chapter One, subsection 1.6.1, the MHESR devotes a budget for university academics to spend a number of days, and in some cases months, overseas, as Djamila also mentions: "Yes, we have what we call scientific stay, we are allowed to leave the country for let's say ten days to two weeks to perform a training abroad, and to make research in the professional context" (Djamila#II).

Going abroad for training, conference participation and study days is important to the majority of my respondents, especially that those opportunities are rarely available at the national level, as all my main participants declare. Despite being an essential element for academics' professional development, from the MHESR perspective, there does not seem to be enough transparency regarding the process of getting funds. In this regard, Randa reports:

> I submitted my file this year, but it was rejected, without any reason, I did not understand anyway. So, I decided to go on my own, using my own money to improve myself and my career (Randa#II).

Similarly, Warda asserts that institutional support, albeit somewhat available on papers, is:

> [T]oo conditioned, too fussy, you just give up that support and that's why you rely on yourself a hundred percent. Support is given if you want but indirectly you're discouraged not to get it, and so you end up giving up and you end up relying on yourself, so I say there is no support actually. It's too conditioned, from time to time to be given, it's too conditioned that teachers do give up (Warda#II).

Randa and Warda's passages unravel a dimension that is reinforced by many other participants, as I will discuss in the following parts. In the field, and exactly in the staffroom, there were some official papers stuck on the walls inviting university academics to submit

their files if they wished to get a fully-funded academic stay abroad (#OBS). Nevertheless, the way in which those submitted files are processed 'behind the scenes' is depicted by Randa and Warda as obscure. Zina, when being asked about the institutional support regarding research and professional development, she said:

> Because of bureaucracy and other rooted problems, the institution does not provide the necessary elements for developing teachers' competencies and knowledge except when providing support to do a training abroad or attend conferences. Because of the budget and other barriers, not all teachers benefit from that (Zina#EI).

In a follow-up question about the barriers she mentions in her account, she elaborated:

> We have to provide a lot of documents to be funded and most of the time teachers who are highly ranked get more chances in getting funds especially those who hold administrative [managerial] roles. In [year 20**], I was invited by [an overseas university] to do research for six months. I asked for leaving, they [her Algerian university] did not accept though I was ready to fund my stay. I tried again in [year 20**] to ask for one month doing PhD research at [overseas university]. They accepted funding a stay of ten days though I had the right for one month. The ones who benefited from one month were the same highly ranked teachers. It was the last time I asked for funding (Zina#EI).

As shown, Zina also delves deeply into the complexity of getting funds, as Warda and Randa did earlier. However, based on her own experience, she explains that the power of rank plays an important role in the process of getting funds. Her answer is further reinforced through the following extract:

> I think if I have held administrative [managerial] roles, I would have had less barriers in getting funding. Sometimes, we hear about funding conferences and trainings late and we won't have enough time to prepare all the necessary documents. Also, there are restrictions concerning the choice of institutions holding conferences or trainings. The same people benefit every year, and I personally cannot explain that (Zina#EI).

One would probably wonder why Zina is not proactive in finding out about these professional development opportunities herself. Therefore, it is important to say that it is the administration's role to let academics know about the availability of funding (Hind#IC).

Based on my observations, this communication between the administration and the academics happens through formal documents displayed on the staffroom's walls. Following this funding announcement, academics will have to be selective in contacting potential host universities abroad. Because it is a process that might require time, in addition to the daunting visa application process that I will discuss in subsection 7.6.3, academics need to have the necessary time to benefit from these opportunities.

When I conducted the interview with the group of female students, they acknowledged the idea that there were academics more powerful than others. One of them said: "In our [English] department, we cannot say that there's equality. There's all the time someone who makes an abuse of his or her position to get something" (Ismahane#GI). They even mentioned the name of a woman academic who occupied for some years a managerial position. This gave her power that whenever her name was mentioned, everything had to be provided for her. Shahrazed (#GI) commented on Ismahane's account saying: "Yes, it's the power of names". Corroborating the female students' accounts, Hind also reports that anyone in the department who is more powerful than her was generally "[…] someone who is ranked higher […], someone who is more ranked, more experienced", adding "they know how to pressure people" (#II). Names do not appear to be a matter of ranking and occupying managerial positions only, but also of who gets along with whom (see subsection 7.3.2 and section 7.4). Therefore, if someone is involved in a network, which has connections with influential people, they would probably have more privilege than others who are not. Those excerpts seem to resonate with what Zina, Warda and Randa reported earlier.

The women academics referred previously to a daunting and obscure process of getting institutional funding. To explain the process from the beginning, in order to get the government's funding, a file needs to be prepared by academics. At the level of the English Department and beyond (e.g., Dean and Vice-Dean), face-to-face communication is favoured over emails and telephone (#OBS). Seemingly, there is no available platform from which university academics can download any official document that concerns them. Therefore, if the academic wishes to ask for official documents for their file, they need to be present in person. For example, when I met Randa for our interview, she travelled to the Faculty of Foreign Languages just to complete a file, hoping to get funding for a conference participation abroad (Randa#IC).

Additionally, given their relocation, academics need to move between the Faculty of Medicine, where the English Department 'temporarily' is, and the Faculty of Foreign Languages, where the main administrations are, as described in section 7.2. Given that transport is not provided for them, academics have to move between universities at their own expenses, as I learned from Randa (#IC). Thus, what Warda and Zina seem to complain about is not the number of documents they need to prepare, but the daunting process they need to go through to get their papers ready. For this reason, the National Autonomous Union of Higher Education Employees (SNAPES) has written a petition where it is suggested that a specific office should take charge of such files, including the visa and the currency exchange (Bensalem, 2022). It is suggested that more overseas professional development opportunities should be made available, and that the funding related to them should increase (see Chapter One, subsection 1.6.1).

In line with the above, the files submitted to get funds to go abroad are obviously processed at an administrative level. What Zina points out to as 'bureaucracy' in relation to the administration, Warda calls 'mentality' in the following passage:

> […] at the level of the university, administration, if you want to use the word 'mentality' […], if you get what we mean by the word 'mentality'. We've got plenty of obstacles that got in my way of advancing, of progressing in my career (Warda#II).

This is further portrayed by Randa who seems to draw upon another issue that is beyond the complexity of the funding process, that of rejecting an application for a training/conference abroad without providing an alleged reason. Thus, the lack of transparency about the outcome of her application for research fund and, arguably, the unfair way of splitting the funding budget among academics. In her own words, she says:

> […] I was deceived, because they gave 10 days for everyone, and they should have given 8 days for the 6 candidates, and I was the only candidate who was not maintained, when I tried to complain, they tried to give me [uhh], for me it's a pretext not a reason. Well, I said, well no problem I'll do it myself, trying to make savings, doing it on my own (Randa#II).

In addition to the power of rank, bureaucracy, and lack of transparency, the women academics also discuss the lack of institutional support from an economic viewpoint.

Throughout her career as an academic, Ranim contributed to many conferences abroad, some of which were funded by the institution. She mentions a significant factor that affects her funded conferences. The same factor is highlighted by all the women interviewees: Algeria's economic crisis. She reports: "[…] these years we are limited because of the economic crisis, so we are not always paid by the university, it means, maybe once a year if we are lucky to have that, otherwise not" (Ranim#II). By saying that academics are paid once a year, she means being funded once year, and still, according to her, getting funding is not totally guaranteed.

Similarly, Chorouk states that the institution does not support her professional development financially: "I took everything in charge" (Chorouk#II), except when she had to collect data abroad, which was part of her PhD (#II). Siham, the woman academic who also holds a managerial position, explains that at the level of her institution, "[…] we had the opportunity before to have those scholarships, to have those conferences funded by the faculty, now we have no more that, it means if we need those conferences elsewhere, we have to finance them by ourselves […]" (Siham#II). On the other hand, Lyna, Hind and Warda think that even though the economic crisis could be a reason for the budget cut affecting academics' funding, it is more of an excuse which seems to be exaggeratedly used by the state as well as the institution to justify the institutional deficiencies regarding funding.

> […] I don't know if it really happened or it never did, it's just something imaginary, it just filled it in our, made us believe in now, ok, we make it as an excuse sometimes [laughter] (Hind#II).

Warda and Lyna argue that the situation is worse than just an economic crisis that affects research funding: "[…] they [decision makers] are not giving importance to the teachers in higher education or to higher education in general" (Warda#II). Lyna, in further details, avows:

> […] it's not only the economy. I think that it's the attitude of the state too, it's not encouraging too much. I mean we're not that poor, I don't think we're [laughter], so it's as I said the state's attitude to scientific development, to university, it's still very downgrading, they do not appreciate much what universities can do, and what scientific development can do to a country, unfortunately […] (Lyna#II).

She elaborates:

> [I]t's about the state's attitudes towards higher education, scientific research and development. Even when we were richer than that, when our economy was prosperous, we were still not given much in terms of finance (Lyna#II).

There is an incident that could explain what Lyna mean by 'the state's attitude'. In 2018, a few months before my data collection, the Algerian minister of higher education made a very surprising comment when being asked about the sector. He declared: "what are the benefits of the Nobel Prize for the Algerian university?" (Ghanmy, 2018). Paradoxically, the 2018 statistics show that the Algerian government allocates an almost similar budget to higher education as the health sector, which, in theory, might depict the importance of higher education and scientific research (see subsection 1.6.1). In the absence of further information on how the allocated budget is being used and on what aspects of higher education it is being invested, it is hard to further interpret Lyna's account.

It is important to address the inadequacy of institutional support because it not only affects the women academics' experiences in the workplace, but also their perceptions of themselves and their work. The majority of my women respondents feel that, in the institution where they 'temporarily' worked, nothing seems to make them feel as teachers-researchers. One of the powerful passages illustrating this feeling is provided by Randa, who desperately expresses herself as follows:

> I just consider myself as a worker more than a teacher, because there is nothing that shows that we are in an environment in which professional career is promoted, that is why I feel myself more as a worker, more than a teacher at university (Randa#II).

Similarly, Warda, in a very sad tone, states that:

> [The institutional conditions] do affect because you're under pressure [emphasis], you're not yourself, you do not accomplish what you really want to accomplish. It's quite challenging to keep up the hard work everyday, to try to do your best. It's quite challenging (Warda#II).

Randa's ability to teach solely, among other important tasks associated with her academic status, ignited a feeling of inefficacy. That is, she feels more of a worker with a particular

routine, than an academic whose academic roles go beyond teaching. Even teaching is not easily fulfilled given the poor working conditions discussed throughout the chapter, particularly in subsection 7.3.1. The institutional support that would enhance her professional career seems to be inadequate to the extent that her presence at the workplace has become more of a routine, rather than a journey of constant professional fulfilment.

The same feeling, albeit stated differently, was expressed by Warda in the extract above. I find this part: "you're not yourself" very expressive of how she viewed herself as an academic, as if the person she imagined to be – the 'ideal' academic (as discussed in Chapter Six, section 6.2) – was far from being achieved, at the data collection time. These women academics' accounts eloquently state what others have implicitly insinuated throughout the whole chapter – that is, the workplace conditions are a threatening source to their academic professional identities. This appears to correlate with Petriglieri's (2011) definitions of identity threat(s) as: "experiences appraised as indicating potential harm to the value, meaning, or enactment of an identity" (p. 644). In the case of my main respondents, it is their academic professional identities, which revolve mainly around their roles as teachers-researchers.

From the perspective of Day and Kington's (2008) theory, institutional support regarding academics' professional development could pertain to the professional dimension of their theoretical model. As discussed in Chapter Three, subsection 3.2.2, academics' professional development is a joint effort of academics and their institutions. As far as the Algerian higher education is concerned, it is even considered mandatory for higher education institutions to create professional development initiatives (Djalel, 2015, p. 240). These appear to be lacking in the women academics' professional lives. In the following section, I analyse the women academics' reactions to the threat caused by the workplace conditions on their academic professional identities.

7.6. Sense of 'unconscious complicity' in autonomous forms of professional development

Data analysis reveals that beyond the 'teach and leave' phenomenon, all of the women academics take action and autonomously engage in some accessible forms of professional development, which allow them to hone their knowledge in their areas of interest and publish, albeit at a slow pace. By enabling them to develop professionally, they help, to a certain

degree, alleviate the threat that their academic professional identities undergo due to the inadequate and unsupportive working conditions that barely allow them to perform their teaching duties at the workplace. Undertaking these professional development practices, therefore, reflects the women academics' autonomy, in the sense that they are not totally weakened by the institutional challenges and take ownership of their own professional development in order to feel as teachers-researchers.

Albeit reflecting their autonomy, data evidence further shows that these professional development practices help them survive rather than thrive. That is, they are limited and individualistic given that they mostly occurr beyond the workplace, mainly at home. As far as the 'unconscious complicity' is concerned, the individualism characterising these practices portrays them as escapist acts that do not carry any intention to collectively change the *status quo* within the institution. Changing the *status quo* can be achieved by, for example, collectively claiming for their rights and collaboratively creating research and professional development opportunities at the workplace. I make the claim that the women academics are 'unconsciously complicit' after analysing the context in which the women-participants share their decisions to engage in these professional development practices.

From a gender perspective, whilst performing these practices at home could be seen as a subtle disruption to the societal discourse that perceives academia as on-site teaching only, the chosen place wherein some of these practices take place (i.e., home) does not appear very strategic; it rather appears to reinforce the aforementioned societal discourse that perceives any work beyond the workplace as extra and unnecessary (Chapter Six, section 6.4). This is particularly challenging for those women academics whose families hold this misconceptualisation of academia, such as Chorouk who declares that her online readings get interrupted by her husband who expects her to perform her gender duties when at home (Chapter Six, subsection 6.5.1). In the remainder of this section, I address the women academics' forms of professional development and explain how they could carry an 'unconscious complicity'.

7.6.1. "Tell them that despite the awful conditions, we're developing from the internet"

Data evidence unveils that amid the difficult and unsupportive working conditions, the women academics find that internet is a good means through which they can seek

professional development opportunities that help them enact their 'teacher-researcher' identity. In the field, I had an informal conversation with a woman academic who does not take part in this study. My discussion with her consisted of some institution-related enquiries. Through her answers, she seemed frustrated and embarrassed by the fact that the institution was not up to the standards, which were necessary for academics to fulfil their professional roles and unleash their full potential. Surprisingly, in the middle of our conversation, she kindly requested: "do not tell everything [about the working conditions]! Tell them [people reading my work, probably] that despite the awful conditions, we're developing from the internet" (#IC). This passage reflects her concern about the way the institution is going to be portrayed in my study. Perhaps, she was afraid of losing face, because she was unaware that I was going to anonymise the institution and its staff. The second part where she mentions 'internet' indicates the hope associated with it, as a means through which they could, to some extent, reduce the severity of the workplace conditions' threat on their academic professional identities. Internet enables my respondents to read academic books/articles and seek other professional development opportunities such as free webinars, YouTube videos and browsing forums, as I will further explain.

Reading academic books and articles, particularly online, is mentioned by all women academics as part of their professional development practices. By way of illustration, Ranim says: "[…] I'm interested in my field and I read a lot about what is happening elsewhere […]" (#II). Engaging in reading academic books and articles seems to be autonomous, especially that, as discussed in subsection 7.3.2, finding the books needed at the English Department's library is not always successful. Therefore, seeking the needed resources online is a good option. Yet, as Hind reports, even this autonomous act is full of challenges:

> […] the access is restricted. Sometimes you have to pay, you just have a sample, you look at it, but you don't have it, we don't have even here in bookstores, the ability to, for example, order books, to ship it here, it's not really available. You can order it online, but not all teachers have the visa card, or the credit card, so it's going to be really hard to do that (Hind#II).

As mentioned in Hind's account, the actual and predominant way of payment in Algeria is cash (Oakes, 2008; BTI report, 2022). Among all women academics, Djamila is the only participant who indicates that she owns a credit card that she finds useful to order books online (as mentioned in 7.3.2). However, as opposed to many countries, not all items are

eligible for shipping to Algeria. In addition, when I asked Randa whether she was aware of the possibility of using credit cards in Algeria to order books, she said that some banks offer to their customers the possibility to have credit cards. Yet, the transaction fees, particularly for online orders, are exorbitant: "you need to be extremely rich to use a credit card in Algeria!" (#IC), she added.

In our interview, Djamila suggests an alternative to credit cards: "I think, generally, they [academics] find people who travel regularly and they bring them stuff and books and whatever" (Djamila#II). What Djamila suggests is somewhat usual in Algeria. People request, from family members or friends who travel regularly, items which are unavailable in Algeria or cheaper elsewhere. This is what I personally did when I needed books for my Masters dissertation, and so did my friends (#MR). Nevertheless, this is not always a practical option when the books are urgently needed. This, therefore, creates a dilemma for the women academics. It, on the one hand, negatively affects their teaching-related preparation, and, on the other, slows down their research and scholarly accomplishments, as they all seem to voice in our interviews and/or informal conversations. A pertinent example is Randa who avows that due to her inability to have access to the books she needs, book reviews are the only publications she is able to produce (#IC).

In addition to reading open access papers and books, the women academics managed to find other professional development opportunities through internet. These mainly occur beyond the university gates, as there is no available WiFi there, as explained in subsection 7.3.2. Zina states: "I often take part in Coursera and FutureLearn online courses, free webinars" (#II). Similarly, Hind reports:

> […] for me it's always the net [laughter], it's always the net, I search on the net, I have a look at the forum's comments, […]. Sometimes, I look for videos on YouTube, […], YouTube videos are really helpful […] (Hind#II).

Reading books and articles and seeking other forms of professional development online, for all women academics is an act that mainly takes place at home, as they state in the interviews. Thus, from a Butlerian perspective, engaging in these forms of professional development at home could be considered a disruption to the societal discourse that reduces academia to on-site teaching only (Chapter Six, section 6.4). According to Baril (2007, p. 76), Butler (1999)

refers to this disruption as 'subversion', 'resignification', 'decontextualisation' and 'recontextualisation'.

Conversely, choosing home as the sole place within which these practices take place is, arguably, not very strategic. Although the aim is to engage in professional development practices at home, this decision reflects an 'unconscious complicity' that is threatening to the women academics whose family members adopt the aforementioned societal discourse. To explain, as discussed in section 6.5, some women academics who are married and have dependent children are expected to fulfil their domestic tasks upon their return to their houses. This is, for instance, the case of Chorouk, whose partner complains about finding her either asleep or in front of her computer when he gets back home from work. Chorouk's in-laws, as I further explained in subsection 6.5.3, also make blaming comments regarding the readings and research she constantly does at home.

Therefore, even when some women academics escape the institutional conditions that are threatening their academic professional identities to a supposedly safer and cosy place that is supposed to be adequate for carrying out their profession-related tasks, they struggle to alleviate the tension between their gender and academic professional identities. Their gender identities are always predominant, given the heavy sociocultural expectations associated with their roles as wives and mothers. Hence, they are 'unconsciously complicit' in reinforcing the 'feminisation' discourse that perceives women's role in academia as on-site teaching and gives little or no importance to any professional task beyond the nine or twelve teaching hours.

In a study conducted in the Algerian context, Sia and Cheriet (2019) report that most of their participants associated academics' professional development solely with conferences. The majority only discovered what MOOCs (Massive Open Online Courses) mean, when they took part in Sia and Cheriet's study (for a further discussion of MOOCs, see Chapter Three, subsection 3.2.2). This does not correlate with my finding that shows that all my participants were aware of the professional development opportunities available on internet. Whilst Sia and Cheriet (2019) only seem to discuss the benefits of e-learning, particularly MOOCs, my data analysis brings to the forefront context-specific challenges associated with e-learning, namely restricted access and the limited use of credit cards.

This finding goes in line with Macalister (2018) who found that (online) journals contributed to his participants' professional development. Yet, like my participants, some of his respondents, predominantly from the Asia-Pacific region, struggled to have access to online journals for a number of reasons, some of which are the following: their institution had limited or no subscriptions to online journals, they were expected to self-pay their subscriptions, or had limited access to the internet (ibid., p. 248). My finding adds a gender aspect to these challenges, which is the tension that could occur between the women academics' gender identities and their professional identities, given that e-learning takes place at home - the place where some women academics are expected to fulfil their gendered domestic tasks and caring responsibilities. I now move to another self-initiated practice stated by the women academics.

7.6.2. Self-funded academic conferences/study days abroad

Self-funded academic conferences and study days abroad is a recurrent element in my data. The majority of women academics report that whilst only a few conferences and study days are funded by the institution, most of them are paid from 'their own pockets', as Lyna indicates in the following extract:

> [conferences, workshops, and seminars] are individual, personal
> initiatives not [little pause] [institutional initiatives] (Lyna#II).

Almost all women academics (e.g., Warda, Zina, Chorouk and Randa) who benefited from this funded academic stay abroad were given this opportunity as part of their PhD studies, mainly data collection.

Planning for a conference overseas seems to be a financial burden. When I interviewed Randa, she was preparing for a self-funded conference abroad. During my fieldwork, I heard of a national academic conference which, I thought, could have been of interest to her. It appeared later, during our informal conversation, that it was not related to her field. She added that finding a conference in her area of interest is somewhat difficult at the national level. In this respect, Randa declares: "I have to work the whole year trying to make savings in order to do that on my own, and the only way is to participate at conferences, I'm working on that all the time" (#II). Likewise, Lyna states: "[…] when I have a conference participation abroad, I have to struggle to provide myself with the money needed for the trip" (Lyna#II).

Preparing for an academic conference attendance/participation overseas is not only a matter of making savings to pay the conferences' fees, but also applying for visa and affording its expenses. Given that most of the academic conferences that the women academics attend take place abroad – mainly in European countries –, most of their consulates/embassies are situated in the capital Algiers and far from the main big cities. A quick search on Google indicates that Algiers is around 414.5 km far from the big city *Oran* in the West, 318 km in the East, and 1.397.5 km from *Adrar* in the South, by car. In this regard, Randa, in the following account indicates, in a frustrated tone, that attending conferences abroad is a whole family investment. In her own words, she avows:

> It's a burden sometimes, it affects my family. For example, we want to buy something, it's not possible, we have to make savings to move on in my career, as it's the case nowadays, trying to save money to pay more for the conference [she was going to present at] fees, and to pay the plane ticket, and to have a visa card to pay the hotel, so it's a burden sometimes, I feel that it's a burden (Randa#II).

Although I am not a specialist in this field, it seems that the crisis that hit the Algerian economy, from 2014 onwards, have had consequences not only on research funding, as my women-participants voice, but also on the value of the Algerian currency (Fouzi, 2020; Karzabi and Karzabi, 2017). Eventually, this economic crisis appears to have affected the women academics' attempts to finance their own conferences abroad. Given the variant currencies across countries, the exchange rate from the Algerian Dinars to these currencies, mainly Dollars, Pounds and Euros, did not seem to be well balanced, at the time of data collection (Fouzi, 2020). Therefore, in order to be able to finance one conference abroad per year, as Randa mentions, she needs months of savings, especially that she reveals, in an informal discussion, that she earns around 60,000 Algerian Dinars (DA) monthly, which makes it 300 Euros roughly (#IC).

It could be argued that virtual conference presentations might be a less-expensive option in such situations. Yet, albeit primarily based on individuals' perceptions of what conferences are for, one of the assets of conferences might go beyond simply doing a presentation, and involves networking and getting involved in research communities (Henderson *et al*., 2018; Mair and Frew, 2016; Hinsley *et al*., 2017; Black *et al*., 2020; Walters, 2019). For example, Chorouk states:

> I have already participated in different conferences abroad and in Algeria, and it is each time a very, very rich experience, because, especially when the conferences are taking place abroad, we get to know people, teachers from other countries […] (Chorouk#II).

Despite their desire to self-fund their conferences overseas, particularly amid the limited national conferences and lack of research funding, many women academics find themselves challenged by all the fees they have to bear – starting from the costs of currency exchange to conference, visa and accommodation fees. Moreover, as discussed in subsection 6.5.1, a few women academics (Randa and Warda) have to negotiate their conference participation with their partners who seem unaware of its positive effect on the women academics' careers and professional identities. Randa, for example, has to be accompanied by her partner and sometimes her children (#II). This, therefore, makes her conference participation even more costly and occasional.

Many scholarly studies argue that continuing professional development is a joint effort of teachers/academics and 'significant others' such as their colleagues and institution leaders (e.g., Day, 1999b; Ferman, 2002). In this section, data analysis demonstrates that, due to the lack of institutional support in terms of research funding (section 7.5) and, seemingly, the lack of a collegial environment at their department (section 7.4), the women academics decided to take ownership of their professional development to alleviate the threat on their academic professional identities. This explicitly shows, for instance, in Warda's account presented in subsection 7.5.2, where she avows: "you end up giving up [on the complex institutional funding] and you end up relying on yourself" (Warda#II). This finding is not congruent with Ferman's (2002) whose research participants, despite their engagement in all forms of professional development – formal/informal and individual/collective –, they were more inclined towards those that were collaborative.

Engaging in these ways of professional development, arguably, reflects a sense of individualism and 'unconscious complicity'. The women academics seem to flee the challenging working conditions and unsupportive work environment. By taking such an escapist route, the women academics neither confronted the source threatening their professional identities nor did they take a collective action to bring about change in the workplace, and this eventually did not change the *status quo* within the workplace. Furthermore, a few women academic seem to unconsciously sustain the gendered discourse around their roles in academia. This is particularly the case of the women academics whose

families associate their availability at home with their gendered duties as wives and mothers, as discussed in Chapter Six. Therefore, even though working at home could be seen as a disruption to the aforementioned societal discourse, home does not seem to be a strategic place for such subtle resistance. The private sphere is socioculturally seen as a place where gendered tasks such as cooking and childcare are performed. Hence, any work performed there is perceived as extra and is eventually discouraged and interrupted, as it is the case of Chorouk with her partner and in-laws.

In light of the 'identity threat' theory (see Chapter Two, section 2.5), the data discussed in this section adds to the model proposed by Petriglieri (2011). My women-participants responded differently to the threat than what Petriglieri (2011) suggests in her model. That is, they responded to the threat by engaging merely in self-initiated forms of professional development that are limited and individualistic. This chosen response, hence, unconsciously maintains the threat coming from one or, for some, both sources – the family and the institution. Thus, they are, themselves, fuelling the threatening sources; in other words, 'unconsciously complicit' in maintaining the same struggles. This, therefore, echoes Petriglieri's (2011, p. 646) following statement: "[t]hreats originating from individuals themselves stem either from identity conflicts or from carrying out an identity-threatening action", which, in this study, are my participants' individualistic and limited ways of developing professionally. After coining this concept – unconscious complicity –, I have discovered that it has been used recently by Orton *et al.* (2021) in their paper on health and social inequalities related to European Roma populations.

7.7.   Conclusion

In this chapter, I discussed the women academics' challenging experiences in the workplace, using data from my observation, informal conversations and interviews, all of which helped me in my thick description of the university and its cultures. These experiences included: the inadequate working conditions, which seemed to be due to a relocation that was initially announced as temporary but lasted more than they expected. The lack of institutional support they received upon their relocation not only affected my participants' professional practices, but also threatened their academic professional identities - how they feel about themselves and their work as teachers-researchers.

These challenges did not only involve shortage of classrooms and materials needed for teaching, inadequacy of important places such as staffrooms, or unjust research funding, but also lack of collegiality that seemed inexistent among academics. Consequently, many of my respondents seemed impelled to 'teach and leave' to escape the hostile working environment. This chapter also showed that whilst the aforementioned working conditions might impact upon academics, regardless of their gender, evidence from my data uncovered some gendered, sociocultural aspects that seemed to have a much harder impact upon women. This includes, for instance, the need for transport to get back home before it gets dark (see subsection 7.2.2).

In the last section of the chapter, I demonstrated that the women academics were not weakened by the inadequate working conditions that threatened their academic professional identities as teachers-researchers. Beyond the 'teach and leave', they engaged in autonomous forms of professional development in order to help them update their knowledge with regard to the modules they were teaching, as well as publish albeit at a slow pace and to a limited extent. Some of these forms of professional development were sought through internet. This involved online reading, participating at MOOCs, as well as watching YouTube videos. In addition, they also engaged in self-funding their conferences abroad, but this seemed to be occasional due to some logistical difficulties. A further analysis of the data revealed that even though these practices reflect that the women academics took action to protect their threatened academic professional identities, they embodied a sense of 'unconscious complicity' that maintained the threat(s) they were experiencing at the institutional level, family level, or both. In the next chapter, I address my research questions, highlight my thesis contribution, provide some implications, discuss the thesis strengths and limitations and conclude with my personal reflections.

CHAPTER EIGHT: FURTHER DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

8.1. Introduction

In this final chapter, I begin by recapitulating the main findings while addressing my research questions (section **8.2**). I, then, articulate how my thesis contributes to the existing literature (**8.3**). Evidence from the data discussed in the two previous chapters demonstrates that stakeholders, institution leaders, and academics themselves, were responsible for many aspects that were threatening the women academics' professional identities. Thus, I provide a list of implications that would hopefully help sustain the women academics' professional identities both within and beyond the workplace (**8.4**). I also reflectively discuss the strengths and limitations of this study (**8.5**). In section **8.6**, I provide some suggestions for further research and conclude the chapter with my personal reflections on how this thesis has shaped me as a researcher (**8.7**).

Before I proceed any further, it is worthy to remind the reader that the specific aim of this enquiry was to investigate the aspects influencing the academic professional identities of ten women academics working at an Algerian university. That is, given that identity is perceived to be socially constructed, this research seeks to understand a group of women academics' experiences within and beyond the workplace and examine how these affect their academic professional identities. This research was guided by the following research questions (RQs):

- **(RQ1)**: What are the aspects affecting women academics' professional identities?
- **(RQ2)**: How do these aspects affect women academics' professional identities?
- **(RQ3)**: What is the role of women academics in shaping their own academic professional identities?

8.2. Addressing the research questions

This section aims to discuss the key findings and address the three research questions by referring to the existing literature and adopted theoretical tools. The findings presented in Chapters Six and Seven indicate that the women academics' professional identities seem to be threatened by either all or some of the following sources: a) gender dynamics; b) workplace conditions; and c) their 'unconscious complicity'. These threatening sources could be seen through the lens of Day and Kington's (2008) theory. The latter claims that schoolteachers' professional identities are influenced by situated located/contextual,

professional and personal dimensions, all of which are interrelated. Although the theory recognises gender as an influencing aspect, it does not discuss it in greater detail. Therefore, Butler's theory of performativity is included in the discussion below. Petrielieri's (2011) theory, which is largely focused on the negative influence of the aforementioned dimensions, is also significant in explaining what is meant by 'identity threat', 'identity-threatening sources' and 'identity-threatening responses'.

- **(RQ1): What are the aspects affecting women academics' professional identities?**

This research question was addressed in Chapters Six and Seven. In my literature review chapters (Two, Three and Four), I argued, in accordance with contemporary researchers in the field of education and beyond, that it is important to approach identity as a fluid, socially-constructed phenomenon (e.g., Leathwood, 2005; Day and Kington, 2008; Rodgers and Scott, 2008; Petrielieri, 2011; Mockler, 2011). Academic professional identity is no exception (Kreber, 2010; Clarke *et al*., 2013; Pifer and Baker, 2013; McNaughton and Billot, 2016; Nevgi and Löfström, 2015, van Lankveld *et al*., 2017; Trautwein, 2018). Therefore, academic professional identity is not (re)constructed in isolation, but in a social environment that plays a key role in its (re)construction process. In line with this view, my findings demonstrate that the women academics' professional identities were affected by either all or some of the aspects which could be categorised as 'contextual', 'professional' and 'personal'. As the following discussion will further detail, some aspects were related heavily to their workplace, and others beyond it. Yet, they were all interrelated. This classification is inspired by Day and Kington's (2008) theoretical framework.

To start with the personal aspects, one of the key findings discussed in Chapter Six is the lack of congruence between the women academics' views of their roles in academia and the society's views. This finding suggests that the women academics perceived their academic professional identities as revolving predominantly around their roles as teachers and researchers. Research was discussed in two ways: a) as a discovery and learning process that helps them fulfil their teaching duties, particularly when allocated a new module, and b) as scholarly publications and conference participations. Given that five women academics out of ten were schoolteachers prior to joining the university, some of them drew upon some differences between being a schoolteacher and an academic. This shows, for instance, through Ranim's view of English language teaching in Algerian schools as largely based on the language itself such as grammar, while at university the language is used as a means to

explore and teach a variety of fields (beginning of section 6.2). The women academics' perceptions of their roles in academia appear to be congruent with the major expectations of the Algerian Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research (MHERS) with regard to academics' roles. The MHESR considers any academic, regardless of their rank, as a 'teacher-researcher' [*enseignant-chercheur*], as mentioned in subsection 1.6.1.

Interestingly, the women academics' views of who they are and who they want to become as academics did not appear congruent with the society's views, as they voiced. By society, they all referred to the larger community in which they lived, and some particularly involved their family members such as their partners and in-laws. Surprisingly, as the data suggests (section 6.3 and in more detail in section 6.4), there was a prevailing 'grand narrative' that the academic profession is suitable for women, given that it is merely about on-site teaching. What I found interesting in this finding – teaching as a suitable profession for women – is that it is common in the literature related to school teaching (Acker, 1989; Griffiths, 2006; Drudy, 2008; Kelleher, 2011; Moreau, 2019), but not academia, given that it is believed to largely revolve around teaching, research and service (Trautwein, 2018; van Lankveld *et al.*, 2017).

A further analysis of the data reveals that there are two main assumptions underpinning this naïve discourse around the suitability of academia for women: a) the illusionary flexibility of academia, and b) perceiving university as a "locked space". First, all academics in Algeria, regardless of their gender, are required to teach around nine to twelve hours per week, as per the Executive Decree 08-130 of May 3, 2008 (see subsection 1.6.1 and Appendix E). The remaining flexible time – in which they could fulfil other tasks anywhere without being compulsorily required to be at the workplace – was misconceived by society members as 'free' time, according to many of my participants. Time in academia was, therefore, misleading.

The existing body of literature around the flexibility of academia also indicates that time can be illusionary and misleading. However, it is not discussed in the same manner as in my research and Chareb's (2010). As documented in the literature, the flexibility of time in academia has seduced many academics, especially women, to join the profession (Pelech, 2015). Pelech (2015) further shows that her women participants were attracted by the flexibility of academia, given that it allows them to combine work and family life. However, given the greediness of work and family institutions (Coser, 1974), women academics, as

discussed in the existing literature, often struggle with the blurred boundaries of work and family life, because of the misleading flexibility. This is a key factor igniting what is called in the literature 'work-family conflict'. Hence, this scholarly discussion perceives flexibility in academia both as an advantage – allowing 'work-family balance' (Santos and Cabral-Cardoso, 2008; Rafnsdóttir and Heijstra, 2013; Wilton and Ross, 2017) – and a disadvantage – causing 'work-family conflict' (Beigi *et al*., 2018). The societal views, as reflected in my participants' accounts (Chapter Six, subsection 6.4.1), only portray academic flexibility as an advantage that allows women to return to their private realm beyond the teaching hours to perform their gendered tasks. This is, therefore, what makes this finding different from the dominant body of literature that perceives flexibility as the ability to work anywhere, usually beyond the professional tasks (e.g., teaching, meetings, office hours) that require women academics' availability at the workplace.

A notable exception is Chareb's (2010) study that also reports the same finding as my research – the perception of flexibility as 'free' time rather than 'flexible' time. Written in Arabic, Chareb's (2010) study is conducted qualitatively with women and men academics in Algeria. Her study indicates that women academics' teaching sessions were mentioned by women and men participants as the sole reason for women's availability at the workplace. Hence, the need to engage in research and other professional tasks, both at the workplace and beyond, was disregarded and not mentioned anywhere in Chareb's (2010) data. Unlike my respondents (i.e., women academics) who seemed aware of their various roles (Chapter Six, section 6.2), Chareb's (2010) participants, albeit working in academia, overlooked the multiplicity of their roles and described their work as revolving around teaching solely. In this context, see subsection 1.6.1 for my critique of the Executive Decree stating teachers-researchers' role requirements.

Interestingly, my data further indicate that men, as society members, seem to be seduced by the flexibility of academia. Randa, for instance, indicated, albeit in an essentialist way, that it is a criterion making men approach women for marriage (subsection 6.4.1). This view is underpinned by the idea that women, despite their access to the public space, are expected to fulfil their primary functions as wives and mothers, and these eventually require *time*. This is also evident in Chareb's research. Chareb (2010) reports that her women academics were encouraged by their male family members – their fathers, when they were single, and their

husbands, when they got married – to work in academia, as opposed to other industrial and administrative domains that were not deemed suitable for their gender.

Considering academia as a suitable profession for women because of time indicates that time can be a powerful means to control women. This goes in line with Zerubavel's (1981) study being a key reference in the sociology of time. He claims that time is a regulatory means for "families, professional groups, religious communities, complex organizations, or even entire nations" (p. xii). This is also congruent with Davies (1990, p. 239) who, from a gender perspective, claims that women and men experience time differently. For men, time is linear, also called 'clock time', whilst for women time is cyclical, or task-oriented, because of their different tasks such as caregiving that is difficult to be regulated by clock time. Although it would be risky to claim that it is the case of all men and women, the existing scholarship demonstrates that childcare and other domestic duties are predominantly women's responsibility (e.g., Acker and Armenti, 2004; Isgro and Castañeda, 2013; Wilton and Ross, 2017).

Another salient finding underpinning the, arguably, naïve discourse related to the suitability of academic work for women is perceiving the university as a "locked space", as my participant Chorouk put it (Chapter Six, subsection 6.4.2). Chorouk further explained that working in academia is synonymous with respect. Similarly, Lyna unpacked this notion of "locked space" and opined that viewing academia as a suitable profession for women is probably due to their limited relationships with people other than their learners. She further stated that, unlike administrative professions for instance, the academic profession limits women academics' contact with the outside world. Relating this data to the previously discussed finding regarding the nine to twelve hours of teaching at university, it might be argued that the university setting, to some extent, extends women's safety and ensures women academics' reputation beyond the private realm. Women's respectability and reputation appear to be encompassed in an Algerian word provided by the student-participant Ritadj: ['*horma*'], which might be approximately translated to ['*pudeur*'], in French, and *modesty*, *honour and respectability*, in English, as discussed in subsection 6.4.2. This, therefore, seems to make the academic profession one of the professions that do not violate the gender norms that excessively care about women's reputation.

Yet, what I found confusing in this idea of 'limited interactions' is the presence of men in that "locked space", particularly in the university setting I observed, which makes the university

not a woman-exclusive area, except in countries that have gender segregation policies like Saudi Arabia (e.g., Almansour and Kempner, 2016). However, it further appeared from the data analysis that the idea is not about the absence of men. To explain further, according to my student-participant Ritadj, the profession does not require, for example, from women and men academics to have a certain privacy. In contrast, the profession, from a societal point of view, entails spending more time with students – nine to twelve hours of teaching – than with colleagues.

Even though studies with a similar finding are scarce in the literature, this finding goes in accordance with Karadsheh *et al.*'s (2019) mixed-method research conducted in Oman. They collected their data from 3,150 women and men in various Omani regions to investigate the jobs deemed appropriate for Omani women. Although they were not specific whether the data around the suitability of teaching for women was related to tertiary education, they found that the 'respectability' of the educational setting, in general, was one of the main aspects making teaching suitable for women, in their participants' views. My finding – the 'respectability' of academic workplaces – also finds its place alongside Chareb's (2010) study conducted in the Algerian higher education context, as I stated earlier. Albeit not linked to academic professional identity *per se*, she reports that the 'respectability' of academia was expressed by her women and men participants as a key element leading women academics to join the academic profession.

In Chapter Six, subsection 6.4.2, there was a constant referral, particularly by the female students, to male family members such as fathers, brothers and husbands as the ones who are excessively concerned about women's reputation, because it seems to be tightly linked to their own. This is also echoed in Chareb's (2010) study where she states that her women participants' male members, whether they work in academia or beyond, were the most alarmed with women's reputation at their workplace. This finding appears to reflect a notion of patriarchy. The high expectations coming from male family members are associated with a field that, in fact, is not solely based on teaching, but is expected to be a highly intellectual environment that involves research activities, collegiality, staff initiatives and more. Most worrying is the inconsistency between how the women academics, in my study, articulated their academic professional identities, and the societal expectations around them. Although Chareb's (2010) study is a key reference that has supported my findings so far, it does not show this inconsistency, given that her research does not report any incompatibility. In

contrast, it confirms that her women academics' views and behaviours were in line with the societal expectations around them.

In my view, these aforementioned reasons underpinning this naïve misconceptualisation of the academic profession seem to extend the 'feminisation' [12]discourse to higher education, as far as my research is concerned. The assumptions also appear to portray the academic profession as a better place for women than school teaching, because women academics in my research and Chareb's (2010) teach less than schoolteachers, as my participant Hind also stated (subsection 6.4.1) – nine to twelve hours per week. From a Butlerian perspective, this might also show that despite women's success to step out of the private realm and access one of the prestigious professions in Algeria, as explained in section 6.3, they seem to only enact their agency in a social environment that has many plans to preserve the gender order. In Butler's (1999, p. 199) words, "[t]here is only a taking up of the tools where they lie, where the very 'taking up' is enabled by the tool lying there". Stated differently, a subject never succeeds in escaping the discourse. They only perform agency within a powerful regulatory system that ensures that the gender system – where women belong to the private realm despite their achievements, and men belong to the public space – is not jeopardised.

In addition to the 'feminisation' discourse associated with the academic profession, which affected some of the women academics, the majority were also affected by 'contextual' and 'professional' dimensions related to the workplace, to use Day and Kington's (2008) lexicon. These are addressed in Chapter Seven. At the heart of these factors is the forced relocation from the Faculty of Foreign Languages to the Faculty of Medicine that made women academics feel like 'nomads' who "are wandering from one place to another", as Chorouk put it. The relocation to a place where every corner represents the Faculty of Medicine also gave them a sense of lack of belonging that had lasted for years. As I argued in Chapter Three, subsection 3.2.1, although discussions around a (forced) relocation in the field of education are scarce, there is some evidence that could support this finding and show the aftermath of a relocation, if not well managed by decision makers (e.g., Cowley, 1999; Milligan, 2003; Whitton, 2018). Data analysis further reveals that this lack of sense of

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[12] Moreau (2019, p. 15), in her book *Teachers, Gender and the Feminisation Debate*, argues that the concept of 'feminisation' is polysemous, but it is often used without further clarification. Therefore, I need to mention that its use in my study refers to the 'female-friendliness' of the profession, which reflects some 'family-friendliness' too, in the sense that women teachers' careers could be tailored based on their family needs, at the heart of which are childrearing and domestic chores (Ullah, 2016).

belonging is due to the inadequate working environment. This did not only involve the lack of means and resources for teaching and research, but also the lack of collaboration and institutional support for professional development since the start of their careers. After addressing the major aspects affecting the women academics' professional identities, their impact is further discussed next.

- **(RQ2): How do these aspects impact upon women academics' professional identities?**

This research question is addressed in Chapters Six and Seven. Evidence from the data demonstrates that the aspects I mentioned previously could be considered as 'threatening sources' to the women academics' professional identities (Petriglieri, 2011). As demonstrated in Chapter Six, section 6.2, their academic professional identities seemed to be tightly linked to their professional roles and practices. Thus, it was through their affected professional roles and practices – teaching, research, supervision and so on – that the women academics' professional identities were threatened. This complex interconnectedness will be further unpacked.

As mentioned in my answer to the previous question, inspired by Day and Kington's (2008) classification, I view the women academics' professional identities in my study as being influenced by 'personal', 'professional' and 'contextual' dimensions. At the personal level, the lack of congruence between the women academics' perceptions of their roles and the societal views is considered a threat when embodied by the women academics' close family members such as their partners and in-laws; thus, affecting their professional identities. Even though many women academics in my research lamented the societal discourse revolving around their roles in academia, they were not all affected by it at the family level, based on the data provided. This joins Petriglieri's (2011, p. 644) conceptualisation of identity threat(s) as "experiences appraised as indicating potential harm to the value, meanings, or enactment of an identity".

This lack of congruence is caused by a highly gendered phenomenon, which I refer to as the 'feminisation' discourse, inspired by the literature around school teaching (e.g., Acker, 1989; Griffiths, 2006; Drudy, 2008; Kelleher, 2011; Moreau, 2019). As discussed in Chapter Six, section 6.5, this discourse was so powerful that it impacted upon three women academics' professional practices. To explain further, given that the societal perceptions of women

academics' roles revolved around their nine to twelve teaching hours, any professional task that went beyond their teaching schedule seemed to be heavily affected, if not hindered. For example, in 6.5.1.2, Chorouk explained that whenever her husband came back from work, he told her "I either find you asleep or in front of your computer". This, arguably, indicates that any task in the private realm other than women's domestic tasks is met with hostility by societal members – who in Chorouk's case was her husband. Chorouk was also affected by the perception of her in-laws with whom she lived. In a powerful account (subsection 6.5.3), she recounted that when her in-laws and herself were invited somewhere and she could not join them because of her work-related tasks, they were imposing their own perception of *who a woman academic is* on her. This shows in this extract: "[…] we do not understand, you are working with the same syllabus, all you need is just to repeat [the lessons]" (Chorouk#II).

As I argued in Chapter Six (subsection 6.5.3), for Chorouk's in-laws, following a fixed syllabus and textbook seems to be associated with schoolteachers. What appears problematic is that Chorouk's in-laws seemed to naïvely believe that being bound by a static syllabus only requires a single lesson plan that would not be changed or amended for a year or more. This is referred to in the literature as the 'yellow notes' phenomenon (McCowan, 2018, p. 134). As a result, not only did Chorouk's in-laws interrupt her work-related practices, which was probably discouraging, but they also imposed their own perception of Chorouk's role in the academic profession on her. This happened through an attempt to control her behaviour, so that it becomes consistent with the kind of academic they imagined.

The 'feminisation' discourse also impacted upon two women academics' conference participation. In higher education, conference attendance/participation is crucial for academics' professional development (Sanders *et al*., 2020). It provides academics with opportunities to share and discuss their ideas, explore new academic avenues, and build research networks nationally and internationally (Mair and Frew, 2016; Hinsley *et al*., 2017; Johnson *et al*., 2017; Henderson *et al*., 2018; Walters, 2019; Black *et al*., 2020). Nevertheless, the data in 6.5.1.1 demonstrates that Warda's and Randa's partners did not seem to understand how crucial conferences can be in women academics' career trajectory. It is not, however, simply about not understanding what conferences might mean to women academics, but also about preventing women academics from attending/participating at conferences and benefiting from them. Warda's case is an example that could illustrate how it feels when women academics' perceptions of themselves and their roles in academia are not

congruent with their partners'. Warda explained that she had many career-related ambitions such as finishing her PhD, participating at academic conferences and publishing books and articles (section 6.2). Nevertheless, although she seemed a very enthusiastic woman academic, her husband prevented her from reaching her full potential. As a result, she avowed after our interview, in an informal conversation that she accepted to share, that she started her divorce procedures, which apparently seemed the best solution to save her threatened academic professional identity.

Due to Warda's emotional state, I was also emotionally touched, as the divorce of my parents was traumatic for me as a child and that interview brought back some painful memories. Consequently, I was unable to probe further as to why he decided to prevent her from attending/participating at conferences. Yet, in 6.5.1.1, I provided some interpretations that could be useful to understand her husband's decision. Before I discuss the possible interpretations, it is worth adding that Randa's experience also involves the unawareness of her husband, who, she thought, prevented her from going to conferences alone out of jealousy: "I go with you or I won't let you go", adding "he always wants to go with me to *discover the world*, otherwise he won't accept" (my emphasis). Although conference attendance/participation could be an opportunity for tourism, as highlighted in the previous passage, it goes beyond that for the women academics. Chorouk, for example, said that it is an opportunity to meet academics from all over the world (Chapter Seven, subsection, 7.6.2).

As far as the interpretations are concerned, the husband's attitude towards Warda's conference attendance could be a result of his ignorance of what it means to be a woman academic, as it might also be a religiocultural ideology implying that a woman can only travel with her husband – or a male escort in general – or after getting his permission. This male escort is referred to in Arabic as ['*mahram*']. The first interpretation might be corroborated by Chareb's (2010) study, where almost all her participants seem unaware of what it means to be a woman academic. The second interpretation is supported by many studies such as Almansour and Kempner (2016) conducted in Saudi Arabia, Afzali (2017) in Afghanistan, and Shah (2018; 2020) in Malaysia. As I argued in Chapter Four (section 4.4), all these studies seem to have in common the notion of patriarchy (Walby, 1989). According to some Islamic feminists (e.g., Abdul Kodir, 2013; Abou-Bakr, 2015; Lamrabet, 2018), this authoritarian position that men take with regard to managing women's affairs is often underpinned by a particular interpretation of a prophet's saying, also called ['*hadith*'] in

Arabic, that gives men the right for guardianship ['*qiwāma*'] (for a detailed discussion, see Chapter Four, section 4.4). Such interpretations that serve the male interests, as Mernissi (1991, p. ix) puts it, are challenged by the aforementioned Islamic feminists, some of whom seem to either believe that the sayings are misinterpreted, or are time- and context-bound (Mir-Hosseini, *et al*., 2015; Abou-Bakr, 2015).

At the contextual and professional levels involving women academics' experiences at the workplace, the threat upon the majority of women academics' professional identities was caused by the inadequate and inhumane working conditions that were hindering all their professional practices, including teaching, research, and supervision. These appalling working conditions contributed to a phenomenon I observed in the field and was supported by some of my participants' accounts – the 'teach and leave' phenomenon. This 'teach and leave' phenomenon is a key finding in my study.

The name of the Algerian ministry – Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research –, as well as the title it gives to academics – teachers-researchers – seem to indicate that a key mission of the Algerian university revolves around knowledge production, transformation and dissemination (see Chapter One, subsection 1.6.1). In section 6.2, the women academics' accounts portrayed the university as an intellectual environment, and research was regarded as both an asset of the university and an integral component of their academic professional identities. The analysis of their accounts, however, reveals a huge gap and inconsistency between their perceptions of their academic roles and their experiences in the field I ethnographically investigated (a detailed description of the setting is provided in Chapter Seven). These challenging experiences rendered the workplace a hostile place for the women academics and, eventually, threatened their academic professional identities. This could be the reason behind the 'teach and leave' phenomenon.

At the Faculty of Medicine, the women academics described themselves, either implicitly or explicitly, as 'intruders'. This was not only due to the long and undesired relocation, but also the privilege that the medical staff at the Faculty of Medicine seemed to have. In Chapter Seven, I presented women academics' accounts of the challenges they encountered to secure a teaching room. I found Chorouk's association of the workplace with 'fights' and 'quarrels' around classrooms very powerful (subsection 7.3.1). Data demonstrates that women academics were the 'other' compared to the medical staff. They were reliant on them in everything, including access to rooms, resources and materials. The impact of this undesired

overreliance, and perhaps their sense of inferiority, ignited in some participants a feeling of powerlessness of change and guilt. This guilt shows in Randa's account where she stated that she felt compelled to apologise to her students for only being able to dictate, a traditional technique in her view, instead of being innovative, particularly in our digital age (subsection 7.3.1).

Beyond the unpleasant dependence on the medical department, there seemed to be a lack of institutional support to the women academics. Among the challenges that were affecting their teaching practices was the lack of printing facilities at the English department. In fact, there was only one single printer at the English department, but due to the number of academics, the printer constantly ran out of papers and ink. Hind, for instance, shared her experience regarding the urge she felt to go downtown – which entailed travelling in a vehicle – to print. She also voiced her disappointment regarding the insufficient cartridge provided to academics, indicating that she had to always pre-plan how much cartridge she had to use in each teaching session (subsection 7.3.1).

Disappointingly, the challenges did not only turn around securing a room and having access to teaching facilities. My data analysis further shows that even though the English Department had its own library, as opposed to the classrooms that were shared, there was a shortage of library resources, and the overall state of the library was appalling. One of the incidents I personally witnessed in the field was Warda's struggle to prepare for her teaching session in the library, with no Wi-Fi, no computers, and no working sockets to charge her own laptop. Apparently, this shortage of resources was the reason why the majority of academics were dissatisfied with the library and struggled to get the resources needed for teaching and research.

Furthermore, through my daily observations in the field, I could see that the availability of the women academics at the English Department depended on the availability of transport (see subsection 7.3.2). This phenomenon is highly gendered. To explain, given that no transport was provided to the women academics upon their relocation to a distant area and not all women academics owned a car, women usually appeared to rush to leave the institution after their teaching with their women colleagues who owned cars. The sociocultural and gendered factor that comes into play, regarding transport, is women's need to be at home before it gets dark. Rimi, the female student, indicated that in her university accommodation, female students are required to be at the university at an early hour,

compared to male students. Through this finding, I came to realise that women, such as my participants, have other ticking clocks, apart from the 'biological' one – the one that is related to age and fertility. Whilst it could be argued that the 'biological' clock is 'natural', the other clock pressing women to teach and leave is typically sociocultural, although they both seem to affect women academics' professional lives.

Closely related to this 'teach and leave' phenomenon is Randa's experience with the locked toilets near the English Department, and the unsanitary state of the ones available at the Faculty of Medicine. The desperate voice in Randa's powerful accounts appears to depict the struggle associated with the workplace – "[…] we don't even have toilets, how can we have a room?! [nervous laughter]" and "I'm sorry if I'm mentioning this, but it is, for me, it's important to understand, for our health, I'm suffering from this point […]" (#II). As pinpointed in Chapter Three, Rioux (2017) discusses comfort at work as a psychosocial need for any employee, which also applies to my participants. Even though she discusses many indicators of quality life at work such as degrees of noise, workspace, room temperature, to name only a few, she does not mention the need for employees to have sanitary toilets, as it perhaps seems to be an obvious physiological need to be mentioned.

To carry on with the workplace challenges, the state of the available toilets was not the only factor making the women academics feel uncomfortable at work and contributing to the 'teach and leave' phenomenon. The inadequacy of the staffroom, as well as the absence of offices were also problematic. As thoroughly described in subsection 7.3.2, the staffroom was almost always empty. It served as a waiting room during the gaps between the teaching hours, as Hind also confirmed. My participants did not feel that it was worth being called a staffroom, and this was my impression as an observer too. Given that the staffroom or shared offices are usually the places where academics could meet and mingle, its state might have been a reason for the 'teach and leave' phenomenon too. Furthermore, it could have been the reason for the lack of women academics' gatherings with their colleagues, as no adequate places were provided for such opportunities. Yet, data analysis shows that there were other reasons affecting women academics' relationships with their colleagues, as I discuss next.

Among academics themselves, there was a noticeable lack of collaboration. The latter is key in higher education, given the importance of the sector. Collaboration, or Communities of Practice (CoPs) as Wenger (1998) names it, may take various forms, such as informal conversations (Thomson and Trigwell, 2018) and team-based learning (Gast *et al*., 2017), to

name but a few. As I discussed in Chapter Three, collaboration is not only beneficial for the academic, but also the institution. Based on my analysis of some of my participants' accounts, the establishment of CoPs among the women academics seemed to be hindered by individualism, knowledge-hiding and competition. Hind, for instance, stated that there were colleagues fighting during meetings, which does not reflect what universities are for.

Collaboration, however, is not the only professional development opportunity from which the women academics could have benefitted. Theoretically, as per the Executive Decree 08-130 of May 03, 2008, the women academics have the right to benefit from research funding, as they voiced (see subsection 1.6.1). Yet, due to the lack of institutional support with regard to continuing professional development, as the data demonstrates (section 7.5), the pace of the women academics' professional development was affected. The lack of institutional support seemed to have been impacted upon by the austerity that Algeria experienced at the time, as some of my participants reported, but data analysis further reveals that there was an obscure and unfair funding process 'behind the scenes'. In this regard, as mentioned in subsection 1.6.1., the National Autonomous Union of Higher Education Employees (SNAPES) has prepared a set of requests, one of which is suggesting that a specific office should take charge of the visa files for professional development overseas (Bensalem, 2022). On the matter of lack of transparency, a woman academic claimed that the same people were benefitting each time from such professional development opportunities, and others were eventually sabotaged.

- **(RQ3): What is the role of women academics in shaping their academic professional identities?**

In my study, the women academics' role in shaping their academic professional identities is discussed in Chapter Seven. In addressing the two previous questions, I argued that the women academics' professional identities appeared to be threatened by either all or one of the following dimensions: gender dynamics and/or workplace conditions. Surprisingly, data analysis further indicates that 'identity threatening sources', to use Petriglieri's (2011) lexicon, did not only stem from external forces; the women academics themselves seemed to play a key role in maintaining the threat(s) on their academic professional identities. This goes in line with Petriglieri's (2011) statement about individuals being a threatening source themselves when they enact an identity-threatening action that is inconsistent with the meanings they associate with that particular identity (ibid., p. 647). In the case of my

participants, this identity-threatening action lies in the way they responded and reacted to the threat(s) they experienced at the institutional level, the sociocultural one, or both.

As an observer in the field, the 'teach and leave' phenomenon I mentioned earlier gave me the impression that the women academics were totally passive and weakened by their workplace conditions. Overall, based on my observations, nothing seemed to overtly reflect an intellectual environment one would expect to see and feel at a higher education setting. By intellectual environment, I refer to collegiality, teaching and research materials, rich libraries, adequate workspaces, to name but a few. This impression, which was also felt by Chareb (2010) with her own participants, amplified after I undertook some interviews and informal conversations that portrayed the workplace as simply inadequate for academics to thrive, as Chapter Seven demonstrates. Also, from a gender perspective, given that many women academics complained about the societal misconceptualisation of academia (section 6.4), I confusingly found that through teaching and leaving, they were unconsciously, or not, reinforcing it.

Nevertheless, a further analysis of my participants' interviews and informal conversations further revealed that beyond the 'teach and leave' phenomenon, the women academics took action to protect their threatened academic professional identities. This involved engaging in self-directed/autonomous professional development practices that made them feel as ['*enseignants-chercheurs*'] (teachers-researchers), as per the label given to them by the MHESR. These practices enabled them to keep updated in their subject area and beyond, as well as publish, albeit at a slow pace.

A woman academic that I met in the field made an interesting statement that, in my view, reflected some autonomy that was echoed in my participants' accounts too: "Tell them that despite the awful conditions, we're developing from the internet". As I mentioned in subsection 7.6.1, what stood out clearly in her statement is the hope associated with internet. Based on my data analysis, the majority of women academics considered internet as a wealthy source that provided them with a variety of professional development opportunities. This goes in line with Bruguera *et al*. (2019) who also share the same view as my participants. The internet-related professional development opportunities in which they were involved consist of reading academic books and articles (Macalister, 2018), taking part in free webinars such as Coursera (Mabuan, 2020), watching YouTube videos, and browsing forums.

Albeit a rich source, the women academics were limited in taking full advantage of internet due to access restrictions, as voiced by many participants such as Hind. Also, given the unavailability of Wi-Fi at the workplace, all the women academics, with the exception of Siham who had her own office as a leader, seemed to be using internet at home. Home, as some women academics' accounts indicate, was associated with their domestic duties such as cooking and childcare; hence, any academic work performed there was considered extra. This is likely due to perceiving the flexibility of academic work beyond the teaching hours as 'free' time, as I explained earlier. From a Butlerian perspective (see subsection 2.4.2), the decision to carry out these practices at home could be perceived as a form of disruption to the previously-mentioned societal discourse that expects women academics to only perform their domestic duties there.

Nonetheless, despite this supposedly non-conformist practice, the idea to develop professionally at home does not appear to be strategic. Chorouk's experience with her partner might be helpful here. In subsection 6.5.1, Chorouk stated that her partner, after coming back from work, complained about her being either in front of her computer (doing work online) or asleep. Her in-laws also made unpleasant comments about her working at home. This, therefore, might best illustrate how some women academics' professional tasks were discouraged at home. In this sense, home remains a place where Chorouk's gender identity as a wife and a mother predominates her academic professional identity. Thus, it could be claimed that this subtle 'subversion', 'resignification', 'decontextualisation' and 'recontextualisation', to use Butler's lexicon (Baril, 2007, p. 76), did not change the partner's or the in-laws' views about her academic roles. This leads me to argue that the place was not ideal for such 'subversion'.

In addition to internet, the limited availability of academic conferences at the national level and the lack of institutional support regarding funding conferences abroad (see subsection 7.5.2) left no other options for the women academics but to self-fund their international conferences, as they reported. Yet, the logistical difficulties associated with them - conferences - made the process costly or, as Randa succinctly put it, "a burden". These difficulties involved the conundrum of applying for a visa and paying the conference and accommodation fees, alongside other gendered issues like the need to be accompanied by one's partner and children. Hence, while the women academics expected themselves to thrive

in the academy as teachers-researchers, their accounts indicate that they were only able to survive, due to their individualistic practices.

As I argued in subsection 3.2.2, academics' professional development is a joint effort of academics and the institutions to which they belong. This implies that although autonomy is required in seeking professional development, the role of the institution and colleagues cannot be underestimated. Therefore, it would be reasonable to say that the women academics could have claimed for their rights, as well as create opportunities collectively in order to work in an adequate workplace in which they could flourish as teachers-researchers. Yet, this did not seem possible due to their limited and individualistic ways of developing professionally beyond the workplace. Stated differently, these practices seemed to be escapist ways from the workplace problems which could have been resolved if there was some unity among academics.

Significantly, my research findings add to Petrieglieri's (2011) and Holmes *et al.*'s (2016) works. Petrieglieri's (2011) theory seems to be useful in theorising the previously-cited findings. She offers six possible responses to identity threat(s), two of which maintain identity threat(s). Her model has been expended by other researchers such as Holmes *et al.* (2016) and other identity-threat responses have been added. Similarly, in my study, I found that my participants responded in a different way than the ones she and Holmes *et al.* (2016) suggested (see Chapter Two, section 2.5 for a detailed discussion of her theory). Through their individualistic ways of professional development, my respondents seemed to engage in what I would refer to as 'unconscious complicity'. A quick Google search indicates that complicity, by definition, is an act in which the person is aware of its immoral consequences (e.g., crime). This explains why I added the adjective 'unconscious', which implies that through their individualistic practices that kept them active as teachers-researchers, they were complicit in maintaining the threat on their academic professional identities. Their unconscious complicity does not only involve the workplace conditions, which they did not seek to collectively improve, but also the societal discourse that affected a few participants who chose to engage in professional development activities at home. The latter, as I argued earlier, is associated with domestic duties and is, therefore, not a strategic place for professional development, given that they get discouraged and disrupted by some partners and in-laws. At the end of my study, I realised that the concept 'unconscious complicity' has been utilised by Orton *et al.* (2021) in their study about health and social inequalities

experienced by European Roma populations. This further supports my idea that complicity is not always conscious.

8.3. Thesis contribution

- *Literature*

The present study contributes to the existing body of literature on academic professional identity by exploring multiple dimensions affecting a group of women academics' professional identities: personal, contextual, and professional. As opposed to the higher education scholarship, this is rather prominent in the field of school teaching (e.g., Day and Kington, 2008; Mockler, 2011; Pennington and Richards, 2016).

Furthermore, unlike the 'feminisation' discourse that has long been related to school teaching (e.g., Acker, 1989; Griffiths, 2006; Drudy, 2008; Kelleher, 2011; Moreau, 2019), this research has unveiled a 'feminisation' discourse that revolves around the academic profession. Hence, this study contributes to the higher education scholarship, by providing two main assumptions underpinning this essentialist discourse. First, this includes *the flexibility of time in academia*. Given that women academics in Algerian universities teach nine to twelve hours per week, this study shows that time beyond their teaching hours is socially perceived as 'free' time, as opposed to the existing literature, with the notable exception of Chareb (2010). Second, the suitability of the academic profession for women also involves the perception that *university is a "locked" space* that ensures women's reputation and respectability (Chorouk#II). It is important to add that the predominant 'feminisation' discourse that turns around higher education is in relation to female students' enrolment (e.g., Ourliac, 1998; Shavarini, 2005).

This study's findings have demonstrated how a forced relocation from the Faculty of Foreign Languages to the Faculty of Medicine impacted upon the women academics' practices and identities. The scholarship around relocation and its effect on academics' professional identities is scarce. The contextual factors, as discussed in the existing scholarship, focus largely on academics' experiences within the workplace, but overlook academics' feelings towards the setting as a space. This, study, therefore, adds to this area, by using ethnography that enabled me to provide a thick description of the setting, and show how it connects to the women academics' professional identities.

- *Theory*

This thesis contributes to Petriglieri's (2011) theory by adding a novel way of identity-threat response to the six responses her model includes. Informed by my findings, I referred to it as 'unconscious complicity'. I later discovered that the same concept has been used by Orton *et al*. (2021) in their research paper about health and social inequalities witnessed by European Roma populations. This, therefore, supports my claim that complicity is not always conscious, as stated previously.

8.4. Implications

In writing this section, I came to realise that one of the assets of qualitative research is the opportunity it gives to participants to not only voice their perceptions and experiences, which have been at the heart of this study, but to also articulate their aspirations for the future. Accordingly, some of the implications I present in this section are inspired by the suggestions provided by the respondents at the end of our interviews. These implications come under three interrelated categories: institution leaders, government and academics.

- *Institution leaders*

This study has shown that a sense of belonging to a workplace is necessary in the women academics' professional lives and identities. It was unfortunate to see that the relocation process from the Faculty of Foreign Languages to the Faculty of Medicine was sudden and did not take into account academics' voices and emotions. For the women academics who did not own a car, it created an issue with regard to transport (see Chapter Seven, subsection 7.3.2). It is, therefore, essential for all academics to be given an opportunity to express their views and be consulted in such a decision that could jeopardise their professional tasks and threaten their academic professional identities, as it is the case of my participants.

The lack of collegiality and collaboration reflected in my study's findings was extremely disappointing. It is, hence, of utmost importance for institution leaders to encourage collegiality and create initiatives and opportunities where academics are supported and rewarded for collegial activities. In addition, in creating opportunities for conferences abroad, the process of selecting those eligible for it needs to be transparent and fair.

Lastly, the literature related to 'comfort at work' (see Chapter Three, subsection 3.2.1) indicates that employees, including academics, need to work in an adequate environment. Above all, this is one of their rights as discussed in Chapter One, subsection 1.6.1. Academics in my study would have wished to have either individual or collective offices where they could carry their tasks within the workplace without having to rush and leave it immediately after teaching. This also applies to toilets, which are a basic human need.

- *Government*

The Algerian Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research (MHESR) has been showing its intention to improve the quality of the Algerian higher education system through a number of initiatives, one of which is the PhD scheme in which I am taking part. The aim of this scheme is to send students, who are potential academics, to pursue their doctoral studies abroad and return to Algeria to incorporate the knowledge and skills they would have acquired over the course of their PhDs into their academic profession (see Chapter One). This, arguably, indicates that academics are key agents, if not the main pillars of universities.

Following the findings of this study that reported a weak induction programme for some academics, and absence of it for some others, it is worth highlighting the need for academics to be supported since the start of their careers through an adequate induction process. This right could be protected by a firm policy made by the MHESR. If academics are required to be teachers-researchers [*enseignants-chercheurs*], policies should also cover academics' rights to be supported throughout their career span, especially in relation to their ongoing professional development.

Moreover, the findings revealed that national conferences were scarce, and international conference attendance/participation was a complex and costly process (Chapter Seven, subsection 7.6.2). Thus, it is crucial that the MHESR supports, both morally and financially, the organisation of national conferences. This would be an opportunity to bring together academics from all over the country, and provide academics, particularly women who cannot travel without their partners and children such as my participant Randa, with opportunities to present their research locally.

Furthermore, it is vital for academics to operate in a healthy environment where they are respected, recognised and provided with adequate means and resources that facilitate their professional tasks. This was not the case of my participants (see Chapter Seven).

Accordingly, given that the majority of universities across the country are state-owned, the MHESR could request trimestral reports wherein all national universities' staff provide their feedback. This could help the MHESR to constantly communicate with the staff, as well as identify the universities' strengths and weaknesses.

- *Academics*

As my research has revealed, the women academics were 'unconsciously complicit' in maintaining the threat(s) on their academic professional identities, although they engaged in self-directed forms of professional development. This implies that the women academics play a key role in shaping their professional identities. This research has agreed, therefore, that academics' autonomy is required, but given the nature of universities, there is also a need to work jointly with others. Academics may not get along with each other at the personal level, and they are not required to, but one should consider the consequences that this lack of collegiality might have on the institution and its wider objectives: knowledge production, transmission and dissemination. Additionally, women academics need to raise the awareness of their partners and family members about the fact that they have commitments other than teaching. Chorouk, for example, did not want to explain to it her in-laws, as she assumed they would not understand the nature of her work (#II).

8.5. Reflections on the strengths and limitations of this research

- *Research approach*

This study is qualitative in nature. This approach is criticised for its reliance on a small number of participants, which makes it impossible to make generalisations. However, as I explained more fully in Chapter Five, sections 5.2 and 5.4, qualitative research principles, along with ethnography, allowed me to get access to my participants' perceptions and experiences that, undoubtedly, would not have been as nuanced and thorough in a quantitative study.

- *Data tools*

Interviews played a key role in my research, alongside informal conversations and observations. As the data chapters demonstrate, most of the data was gathered through interviews. However, one of the challenges associated with this was my inability to conduct

follow-up interviews with the majority of my participants in the field. This was not only due to the 'teach and leave' phenomenon, which made the process of finding the respondents in the setting extremely hard, but also to time restrictions. That is, I felt urged to come back to England to prepare for my annual review with my supervisory panel to discuss my data collection process and initial data analysis.

After my return to England, and while immersing myself further in the data, more follow-up questions started to emerge. Therefore, I attempted to get in touch with the participants, soliciting them to answer some follow-up questions. Most of the women academics I contacted via email or social media have not replied, apart from Chorouk and Zina. What made things even more challenging was the Covid-19 outbreak which made my return to the field impossible. As opposed to the women academics, I could easily reach the female students for follow-up questions, even after my return to England.

There was another challenge associated with interviews. At the beginning of my fieldwork, I considered conducting a group interview with the women academics as I assumed that this would have stimulated more talk and interaction than individual interviews. However, this was, again, not possible due to the 'teach and leave' phenomenon. In addition, not all the women academics seemed to get along with each other; hence, my decision to employ individual interviews only.

- *Population*

Given that academic professional identity is deemed to be socially constructed in this study, I decided to include participants other than the academics, namely a male librarian, the Head of the English Department, a male academic, and the female students. Although this research is not about female students, in some sections of my data chapters, their voices seemed to be more apparent than those of the women academics. This is likely due to the relatively relaxed atmosphere in which my interviews with the female students were carried out, compared to my interviews with the majority of women academics, which were conducted in a rush or in inadequate spaces within the university - crowded administration, noisy classrooms and university yard. To explain further, as opposed to the female students, many women academics either preferred to have the interview schedule prior to our interview or in front of them while being interviewed. This might reflect some power relationships between the women academics and me. These power relations inhibited the process of probing and

affected the *semi-structured* interview which, in essence, does not systematically follow the interview schedule at hand.

As for the people pertaining to the workplace, in addition to the female students, I also had some informal conversations with the librarian and a very brief conversation with the Head of the English Department, who was also a woman academic. Despite the richness that their voices have added to the data, particularly the librarian Anis, I could have interviewed other institution leaders such as the Dean to further understand some institution-related aspects and decisions that were affecting the women academics' professional identities. Beyond the workplace, I could have interviewed the women academics' family members, particularly their partners, to further examine the prevailing societal discourse on the suitability of academia for women.

- *Data*

Despite the rich data obtained from multiple sources, I could have provided more if I were able to do follow-up interviews. I still have many unanswered questions such as whether the fights and quarrels between my participants and the Medical Department are gender-based, given that the majority of academics at the English Department were women and those belonging to the Medicine Department were mostly men. Another aspect I could have probed is whether the disciplines (Medicine vs. English) were a key factor fuelling those quarrels.

- *My identity*

My identity as an Algerian researcher studying at a British university was a strength and a weakness, particularly during the data collection phase. In this enquiry, I position myself as an 'insider' because of my Algerian citizenship which equipped me with some sense of familiarity with the social setting and its local cultures, including the spoken dialect. In my case, being an 'insider' could be considered a 'blessing' in the sense that it facilitated my understanding of the social and cultural practices that were crucial to respect while doing my fieldwork. For example, while interviewing a male participant in an empty classroom, I could not sit right next to him; I had to bring another chair and leave some distance between us, because sitting next to him in an empty classroom could have been misinterpreted.

Body language or paralinguistic features were also part of the cultural understanding. The way I behaved with my participants was context-based. For instance, I could be able to kiss

my female respondents on the cheeks, but not the males. Also, we could touch each other's arms, shoulders when we greeted each other. These are only examples reflecting how my familiarity with the research context served me in my investigation. Knowing what is 'expected', and what is 'accepted' is one of the assets of familiarity. Uncovering hidden meanings in my participants' utterances was another asset of familiarity that probably an 'outsider' would not easily capture.

In contrast, being an 'insider' had some limitations. It first raised the following question: 'how can I see something familiar through the eyes of a stranger?' (Van Maanen, 1995; Holliday, 2016), which remained a serious conundrum, especially during my fieldwork. As an 'insider', I could easily fall into the trap of taking observed behaviours and acts for granted or as universal conventions. To avoid this, I tried to be vigilant and cautious by neither overlooking certain aspects, nor overemphasising others. Albeit challenging, another way to manage this issue was to acknowledge my own biases, assumptions and prior knowledge (Holliday, 2016).

Conversely, at many instances, I felt that despite my familiarity with the setting, I was not fully an 'insider'. I felt both an insider and an outsider. When I went to seek access, for instance, I was indeed 'Algerian', but an 'international' researcher studying at a British university. Even my relationship with my participants was paradoxical. They were very open during informal conversations, but utterances such as: *'this is between you and me'*, *'don't say everything in your research'*, suddenly reminded me of who I was again: a home, *but* an international researcher. Nevertheless, during interviews, the same respondents were not as open as they were during the informal conversations we had had previously. I could see that in such situations, I was an 'international' researcher collecting data, and then a 'home', familiar person, as soon as the interview ended.

8.6. Suggestions for further research

This section presents some recommendations for further research. Some of these recommendations stem from this study's strengths and limitations.

- In the existing body of literature, studies around academic professional identity, although recognise the socially-constructed nature of identity, tend to place their focus on academics' voices and understandings of their experiences, without taking into

account other faculty and/or other society members, such as staff and family. In my study, for example, the female students' voices were pertinent in explaining in greater detail many aspects about the environment. Further research could shed a great deal of light on how university students shape academics' professional identities. In addition, my data revealed that some women academics' family members – mainly partners and in-laws – seemed to have impacted upon their practices and identities. Further research could include them, and other family members as participants, and thoroughly explore their views;

- Longitudinal ethnographic studies, or large-scale studies, could comprehensively report how women academics' professional identities are (re)constructed over a long period of time, and probably unveil other personal, professional and contextual factors shaping the process;

- The present study extensively relied on ethnographic observations, semi-structured interviews, and informal conversations as the main data tools. Another way of investigating women academics' professional identities is through using reflective journals to track women academics' practices on a daily basis, and eventually how these shape their academic professional identities.

8.7. My PhD journey in retrospect

This section aims to discuss my reflective thoughts with regard to my PhD journey. Carrying out this doctoral research has been enriching both at the academic and personal levels. As I stated in the introductory chapter, prior to starting this PhD, TEFL (Teaching English as a Foreign Language) represented my academic comfort zone. Therefore, my unexpected encounter with the field of gender/women's studies and my decision to merge it with the field of education took me out of my comfort zone on a new academic adventure which I had enjoyed, despite the countless struggles. On this solo adventure, in which my supervisors were the compass and the torch, I not only gained knowledge about the aforementioned fields, as I had expected, but I also found myself 'indulged' in other academic areas I had never heard of, such as environmental psychology.

Methodology-wise, coming from a higher education context that overvalues quantitative over qualitative data, I felt compelled to devote a considerable amount of time to familiarise myself with the principles of qualitative research. Qualitative research, as I explained in my methodology chapter, has a lust for stories more than numbers. In the process of collecting

these stories, the researcher plays a crucial role. Embracing this role was a threat to my identity as an introvert, particularly during the data collection process in which I had to come out of my shell and manage conversations with complete strangers. Therefore, at the end of each interview or informal conversation, I felt that it was worth celebrating, albeit intrapersonally, that big achievement. I must admit, however, that it was a much-needed training for me as a prospective teacher-researcher whose work consists of meeting unfamiliar people, both students and colleagues. The effect of qualitative (ethnographic) research on my introvert identity will be covered in a future autoethnographic paper on my experience in academia as an introvert researcher.

Over the course of my data collection, I learnt to control my reactions and emotions as well. As a friend, for example, I sometimes feel that I am over-empathetic. That is, I try to give my all to help my friends solve their problems and I eventually carry the weight of their issues on my shoulders until they are solved. Hence, being in situations where my empathy was very restricted had affected me deeply at first. I still remember how challenging it was to hold back my tears during some interviews until I left the institution. Some other experiences were not necessarily emotional, but very shocking to me. Hence, I had to have control over my facial expressions, which were not always cooperating. This was another kind of training from which I have learnt to adjust my empathy based on the situation in which I am.

Moreover, the findings of this study were eye-opening. As a prospective woman academic, I am now aware that the environment in which I live and myself play a significant role in shaping my own academic professional identity. With regard to the surrounding environment, I have discovered how much it is important to raise my family's awareness of the nature of my academic work, in order to hopefully get their understanding and support. In relation to the workplace, although academics' autonomy is desired, it becomes problematic when it is imbued with individualism. Collective work and unity are crucial in an academic setting, and this is something I will surely embrace for my own benefits and the university in which I will be working. Lastly, I should add that as much as it is necessary to analyse the influence of the environment on oneself, it is also crucial to carefully analyse one's own actions at a deeper level.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Ref: 17/EDU/043- Fatima Boukeffa

7th August 2018

Dear Fatima,

Thank you for sending your application to the FREC Committee. I am very pleased to approve your application.

Please could you let Emma Miles know when you have completed the research so that she can update our records.

I wish you all the best for your research.

Best wishes

Professor Sacha Powell

Chair

Faculty of Education Research Ethics Committee

Appendix B

Women academics' Interview Schedule

Self-mirror (introductory questions)

1. How do you perceive yourself as a teacher?

2. How do perceive your career as an EFL university teacher/lecturer?

3. What was your main motivation to be an English teacher/lecturer in Higher Education?

4. Were you a former student at this university? Why have you chosen to work (and remain) at this specific university?

Perceptions about the need for Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

1. Do you believe that it is necessary for teachers to develop themselves professionally and update their own knowledge? Why?

The participant's experience of ongoing development as an EFL University teacher/lecturer

1. What activities are you engaged in with an aim to update yourself professionally?

2. What forms of ongoing learning and development do you prefer using? Explain your preference, please.

3. What is your aim behind your continuing professional development?

4. What institutional support is available for the ongoing learning and development of teachers?

Gender (questions only for female EFL teachers)

1. How does it feel to be an Algerian female English teacher in Higher Education?

2. How do you describe your experience as a female English teacher in Higher Education?

3. What can affect the process of engaging in professional development as a female university teacher?

Institutional vs. Non-institutional environment

1. How do you perceive your working environment?

2. How is your relationship with your female and male colleagues?

3. How is your relationship with your female and male students?

Concluding question

1. If you have the ability to change anything inside the institution you work in, what would it be?

Appendix C

a Department

* Librarian → inf conversation → list of book titles
  └ Library   → Explanation of how the Algerian HE works

* Secretary → inf conv   طالب جامعي (تسجيل) → inf. conversation [طالب غير قادر]
     incomparable qo.

[female teacher (Gh) → O.k   Quote   white → board

[female teacher (A) → classroom obs

10:45   females more than males (in the front)   most   ▯ ▯ ▯ — males
    (students)   back   Time

* no data show in the room
    (written Expression)

* T dictates the exercise _ students write

* T asks questions → females and males participate

* noise → T → stop the noise, [listen]
    — Are there any questions? (students ask) T responds.

— T gives an assignment _ students wan

— T (Gh) ⟹ provided data related to my research topic
without knowing (me explaining what my research is about)
   └ Lack of training, family responsibilities, autonomous learning.
[[internet]
=   complaint about students' research topics.
[[outdated]
[lack of resources. [ماعندناش نتا والو]

— kind request ⟹ help with journal articles

— T (A) ⟹ مهنة تشرف ك أساتذة   Quote   → "I either know or
les profs, malgré   كيش قوة ك أساتذة   I don't, I never
les conditions, néanm   يدوروا في الأنترنات   give something I'm
        internet.   not sure about."
                           [admission of ignorance]

[A] — [male student] — complaint about his mark

Canterbury
Christ Church
University

CONSENT FORM

Title of Project: **'The effect of socio-economic and cultural factors on female EFL university teachers' careers through Continuing Professional Development (CPD): female and male perceptions from an Algerian University'**

Name of Researcher:Fatima Zohra BOUKEFFA

Contact details:

Address:	N Holmes Rd, Canterbury CT1 1QU

Tel:	+447********* or +2137********

Email:	f.z.boukeffa126@canterbury.ac.uk

Please initial box

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet for the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions.

2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason.

3. I understand that any personal information that I provide to the researchers will be kept strictly confidential

4. I agree to take part in the above study.

_____   _____   _____

Name of Participant   Date   Signature

_____ _____ _____

Name of Person taking consent Date   Signature

(if different from researcher)

_____ _____ _____

Researcher   Date   Signature

Copies: 1 for participant

     1 for researcher

'The effect of socio-economic and cultural factors on female EFL university teachers' careers through Continuing Professional Development (CPD): female and male perceptions from an Algerian University'

<u>PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET</u>

A research study is being conducted at Canterbury Christ Church University (CCCU) by Fatima Zohra BOUKEFFA.

Background

This qualitative research seeks to gain deeper insight into the socio-economic and cultural factors affecting Algerian female EFL teachers' careers through Continuing Professional Development in higher education. There seems to be no consensus about one definition of Continuing Professional Development (CPD), but it generally refers to any formal or informal learning that goes beyond the initial training (pre-service training). Differently stated, it does not only refer to one-off workshops, national/international conferences or seminars but also to peer collaboration, peer observation, reading, daily conversations with colleagues, online search etc.

Different views have also been provided on the importance of ongoing learning for teachers (Continuing Professional Development, lifelong learning etc.). For many researchers and scholars, CPD is deemed to be needed to help teachers improve/update their knowledge as well as their pedagogical skills and teaching practices. In this respect, any positive/supportive or negative/unsupportive contextual (social, economic, cultural, institutional) factors might have a certain impact with regard to teachers' outcomes and dedication for further learning.

What will you be required to do?

You will be required to:

❖ Participate in a semi-structured interview which will turn around the socio-economic and cultural factors affecting female EFL teachers' careers through continuing professional development (CPD) once or more than once if there are follow-up questions. The interview might take up to one hour and can be held in the language of your choice (Arabic, Algerian Arabic, French or English).

To participate in this research you must meet one of the following criteria:

❖ A female EFL teacher/lecturer in higher education.

❖ A male EFL teacher/lecturer in higher education.

Procedures

❖ Contacting you via emails or face-to-face (initial contact).

❖ Explaining what the research is all about.

❖ Explaining what your participation involves.

❖ Explaining that you can withdraw at any time from the study.

❖ Explaining that anonymity and confidentiality are provided and that all data collected is securely stored and used for research purposes only.

❖ Asking you to sign the consent form after you understand and agree upon everything.

Feedback

By the end of the fieldwork, the researcher will provide you with a thank you letter for your collaboration. Your participation is highly valued and has a great a significant contribution to the emergence of the findings.

Confidentiality

All data and personal information will be stored securely within CCCU premises in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998 and the University's own data protection requirements. Data can only be accessed by <u>Fatima Zohra BOUKEFFA</u> and are anonymous in the thesis. After completion of the study, all data will be destroyed.

Dissemination of results

The results of the study will be displayed in my thesis. They will also be disseminated through conference and seminar papers and posters and available upon request.

Deciding whether to participate

If you have any questions or concerns about the nature, procedures or requirements for participation do not hesitate to contact me. Should you decide to participate, you will be free to withdraw at any time without having to give a reason.

Any questions?

Please contact me for further questions or concerns

Fatima Zohra BOUKEFFA

E-mail:<u>f.z.boukeffa126@canterbury.ac.uk</u>

Canterbury Christ Church University/ School of Education

N   Holmes   Rd,   Canterbury   CT1   1Q

Appendix E

Broad Categorisation of Ranks	Academic Ranks	Promotion Criteria	Role Requirements	Weekly Teaching Schedule
Assistant Lecturer ['*Maître-Assistant'*] [' استاذ مساعد']	Assistant Lecturer class B ['*Maître-Assistant classe B'*] [' استاذ مساعد ب']	Either PhD holders whose recruitment is based merely on their qualifications, or Magister degree (Masters degree of the classical system) holders appointed upon their success in a national competitive examination.	• Fulfilment of the weekly teaching schedule. • Correction of exam papers. • Participation in the examination committee's deliberation. • Involvement in pedagogical practices with the committee. • Assistance and orientation of students up to three hours per week.	Nine hours of teaching in a form of tutorials or twelve hours of practical work/lab work ['*travaux pratiques'*].
	Assistant Lecturer class A ['*Maître-Assistant classe A'*] [' استاذ مساعد أ']	Access to class A assistant lecturer status is open to all class B assistant lecturers who can demonstrate that they have enrolled in a doctoral programme for three consecutive years.	• Fulfilment of the weekly teaching schedule. • Preparation and constant update of their lessons. • Correction of the exam papers. • Participation in the examination committee's deliberation. • Involvement in pedagogical practices with the committee. • Assistance and orientation of students up to three hours per week.	Six hours of teaching including two non-repetitive lectures. When required, nine hours of tutorials ['*travaux dirigés'*] or twelve hours of practical work/lab work ['*travaux pratiques'*].

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Broad Categorisation of Ranks	Academic Ranks	Promotion Criteria	Role Requirements	Weekly Teaching Schedule
Lecturer ['*Maître de Conférence*'] ['أستاذ محاضر']	Lecturer class B ['*Maître de Conférence classe B*'] ['أستاذ محاضر ب']	Access to class B lecturer status is open to academics who have obtained a doctorate.	• Fulfilment of the weekly teaching schedule. • Publications of books and articles. • Preparation and constant update of their lessons. • Participation in the examination committee's deliberation and correction of exam papers. • Involvement in pedagogical practices with the committee. • Supervision, assistance and orientation of students up to three hours per week.	Six teaching hours including two non-repetitive lectures.
	Lecturer class A ['*Maître de Conférence classe A*'] ['أستاذ محاضر أ']	Access to class A lecturer status is open to teachers who have attained university accreditation.	• Fulfilment of the weekly teaching schedule. • Publications of books and articles. • Preparation and constant update of their lessons. • Participation in the evaluation and revision of the teaching curriculums. • Providing assistance for assistant lecturers A and B in the preparation of their tutorials. • Taking responsibility of the examination process, participation in the examination committee's deliberation and correction of exam papers. • Supervision of the pedagogical training for novice academics. • Involvement in pedagogical practices with the committee. • Supervision, assistance and orientation of students up to three hours per week	Six teaching hours including two non-repetitive lectures.

Broad Categorisation of Ranks	Academic Ranks	Promotion Criteria	Role Requirements	Weekly Teaching Schedule
Professor ['*Professeur*'] ['أستاذ تعليم عالي']	Professor ['Professeur'] ['أستاذ تعليم عالي']	Access to professor status is open to class A lecturers with five years of experience and who have been placed on a list of capable, favourably viewed candidates by the National Academic Committee.	• Fulfilment of the weekly teaching schedule. • Publications of books and articles. • Preparation and constant update of their lessons. • Participation in the evaluation and revision of the teaching curriculums. • Providing assistance for assistant lecturers A and B in the preparation of their tutorials. • Taking responsibility of the examination process, participation in the examination committee's deliberation and correction of exam papers. • Supervision of pedagogical training for novice academics. • Involvement in pedagogical practices with the committee. • Supervision, assistance and orientation of students up to three hours per week.	Six teaching hours including two non-repetitive lectures.